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THE TRULY BLESSED MAN  
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A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 13, 1864.

**“Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly; nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.  
But his delight is in the Law of the Lord: and in His Law does he  
meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper.” Psalm 1:1-3.**

IT is an old saying and possibly a true one, that every man is seeking after happiness. If it is so, then every man should read this Psalm, for this directs us where happiness is to be found in its highest degree and purest form! “Blessed,” says David, “is such-and-such a man,” and the word which he uses is, in the original, exceedingly expressive. It implies a sort of plurality of blessedness—“Blessednesses are to the man” and it is scarcely known whether the word is an adjective or a noun, as if the blessedness qualified the whole of life and was, in itself, better even than life itself! The very highest degree of happiness is blessedness, “these blessednesses,’’ as Ainsworth says, “heaped up, one upon the other.” Surely this is the very highest to which the human heart can aspire! Let us then, this evening, come with attentive hearts to consider in the Light of Revelation, the character of the blessed man. We will begin by considering—

I. WHO THE “BLESSED MAN” IS.  
The description given of him is simply this, that he is a man. There are moral qualities given, but the only thing said of him, in the first place, is that he is a man. Here is something very suggestive, for he is a person subject to the common sorrows of humanity. If we hear of a person greatly blessed by the sense of Christ’s Presence and so enabled to walk in holiness and much usefulness, we cherish the delusion that he must have been better than the ordinary run of men, certainly not such an one as ourselves! Ah, but how great is the mistake! God fashions all hearts alike and if there are distinctions, they are of Divine Grace, not of being better by nature! The most blessed man is still a man. He must suffer pain, or pine in sickness, endure losses and crosses—and yet in it all be a blessed man!  
Being a man, he is also subject to infirmities—perhaps of a quick temper, or of a high and haughty spirit. He may be tempted to sloth or a besetting sin of another kind. Still being a man he must have some infirmity and yet, none the less is he blessed. Do not dream that the best of men are yet without fault! They will confess to you that they have— *“To wrestle hard as we do still  
With sins and doubts and fears.”*  
More than this, it appears that he has to endure the same temptations that we have. “The way of sinners” often crosses his path. The “seat of the scornful” is sometimes next door to his own—or even under the same roof. He is not blind—he is obliged to see the dust which struts through the street. He is not deaf—he is forced to hear the lascivious song as it floats on the midnight air. He is subject to like passions and tempted in all points as we are, and yet he is blessed! Only a man, but much more than he would have been had not God blessed him!  
Observe, too, he does not hold any eminent position. It is not, “Blessed is the king, blessed is the scholar, blessed is the rich,” but, “Blessed is the man.” This blessedness is as attainable by the poor, the forgotten and the obscure, as by those whose names figure in history and are trumpeted by fame! It is not to the hermit who lives alone, but to the workman toiling among his fellows. Not to the man who wears a surplice and assumes the exclusive title of, “priest”—but it comes to any man, or woman in fustian, or corduroy—who loves God and seeks to obey Him. His position has nothing to do with it. His character has everything to do with it! He is a man and nothing but a man, though Divine Grace makes him much more.  
The Psalm reveals to us, too, that in order to secure his blessedness, he is a man needing help. He is likened to a tree. It must drink of the rivers of water and so this man must live upon Divine Grace. “His way” is said to be “known to the Lord,” implying that God’s approval of his way brings him strength. The best of men cannot live upon themselves. Our hearts are like the fire in the Interpreter’s house which the enemy tried to quench, but blazed the more because a man stood behind the wall and fed the flame from a vessel of oil in his hands. His is a secret and mysterious power—the work of the Holy Spirit—who “works in us to will and do of God’s good pleasure.” In ourselves we are as weak as we can be, and left to ourselves would soon fall into some sin.  
There is in the Psalm, however, one word which truly describes this man, and that is that he is a righteous man! Observe the last verse—“The Lord knows the way of the righteous.” The balance of this man’s nature has been readjusted by the Divine Scale-Maker. He was once all out of gear—put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter—but now his judgment is rectified and in spirit and character he is a righteous man. Once he was naked and defiled, but he has been washed in the fountain filled with blood and clothed with the Righteousness of Christ, a garment glittering with gold and silver threads—and all by faith!  
This is the description of the “blessed man,” but still I beg you to remember he is only a man. Some such were born in the lowliest paths of life, educated in the most slender fashion, yet they have been among the finest witnesses and most heroic martyrs for their Lord. The brightest spirits that now wave the palm branch and strike the golden lyres most rapturously, were but sons and daughters of Adam, like ourselves. Ezekiel, privileged to see more visions, perhaps, than any other Prophet, is constantly called “son of man,” as if God would keep him humble, reminding him of the hole of the pit from where he was dug. However blessed you may get, my Brothers and Sisters, it is still only, “Blessed is the man.” So I have tried to put the ladder down to you who are beginners in the heavenly life, to show you that there is not a long step to take at first. You are a man, and the text comes to you with, “Blessed is the man!” May it be true of all of us! Now, we get following on this—  
II. WHAT THE “BLESSED MAN” AVOIDS.  
There is, I believe, a book published which is entitled, What to Eat, Drink and Avoid. I should imagine the third section to be by far the largest portion, for there are a thousand things to be avoided. Now in this Psalm it appears that the Divinely blessed man avoids the common way of ungodly persons. The ungodly are not necessarily drunks or swearers. These are ungodly, of course, but not all ungodly persons are like they. The ungodly are just your go-easy sort of people. They may go to Church or Chapel, or go nowhere. They are often very respectable, good neighbors, kind to the poor. They may hold public office and enter Parliament. There is no place they may not fill, for it is not considered an offense among men to be “ungodly.” The tragic folly and sin of these people is that they have neglected the chief thing to be remembered, namely, that there is a God, that they are His creatures and, being His creatures, ought to live to Him. But they give God no part of their lives and He is in none of their thoughts. They will think of their neighbors, remember their friends and acquaintances. The duties of the second table of the Law of God they observe in a measure, but the first table is despised as though it had never been written!  
The blessed man, however, avoids this. He sees that God, who fills all things, ought to fill His thoughts and that the great end of his being should be “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” It is chiefly here that the godly man differs from others. He does not consider first how the world regards a thing but how God looks at it. If they ask, “Is it fashionable?” he replies, “the fashion of this world passes away.” “But will you gain by it?” “Ah,” he says, “that is not the measuring line I carry. I am content to lose, so that I can keep my word and serve God.” The first thought of the truly blessed man is how he can best glorify the name of Christ and in so doing he avoids “the counsel of the ungodly.”  
In the next place he avoids “the way of sinners.” Sinners live for pleasures. The Christian has his, but they would never please the worldling, nor would the worldling’s gratify his new tastes. The sinner can do a thousand things which the saint cannot do and would not if he could— and the Christian can do a thousand things of which the sinner knows nothing. Let a thing be labeled, “sin,” in God’s Book, and though men may laugh at it, call it a mere joke, a piece of fun, a peccadillo, the godly man accepts God’s labeling of it and leaves the “way of sinners” let it be ever so smoothly turfed, and grassed ever so attractively.  
The true Christian shuns “the seat of the scornful.” It makes his blood boil when he hears God’s name profaned. His heart is full of horror because of the wicked who obey not God’s Law. Though he is told to “prove all things,” he knows that a very slight test is enough for some things and he puts them quickly aside to hold fast only that which is good. Some professors like to sit near the seat of the scornful, “for argument’s sake,” they say. ‘Twas thus that Mother Eve ruined the whole world, by listening to the serpent’s suggestions—and much mischief has been done in a similar way since then to Christian faith and simplicity! Ah, the further I can get from the scorner’s seat, the better, and there let him sit alone! Away! Away! Away, for behold the day comes when like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the profane shall go down alive into the Pit! Happy is the man who shall escape that horror by keeping far, far away. These are some of the things the truly “blessed man” avoids—and the more he avoids them, the more blessed he is!

Once more, he avoids the very persons of sinners except as far as he has to deal with them in civil matters and the common courtesies and duties of life. They are not his bosom friends—he would never dream of being unequally yoked with them in marriage! He shuns their company all he can, for his congenial associates are elsewhere. Their ways, example, words, he avoids. As he would keep from plague-infected places and people, so he strives to keep aloof from men who blaspheme, lest their profanity should taint and defile him. “Father,” said a young fellow, “I can go into such-and-such company and not be hurt.” The father stooped down to the fireplace and picked up a piece of coal. “There,” said he to his son “take that in your hands.” The son shrank from the black cinder. “Why,” said the father, “it will not burn you!” “No! but it will blacken me,” he replied. Ah, bad company can blacken even where it does not burn, so stay away from it! You can never retain this blessedness unless, like the man described here, you walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, you stand not in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. And now for the third Truth of God here insisted on—  
III. WHEREIN THE “BLESSED MAN” DELIGHTS.  
“His delight is in the Law of the Lord.” Man must have some delight, some supreme pleasure. His heart was never meant to be a vacuum. If not filled with the best things, it will be filled with the unworthy and disappointing. As we remarked the other night when our text was, “Then the devil left Him and, behold, angels come and ministered unto Him”—man

cannot be alone, for if evil departs, [See Sermon #2236, Volume 37—PRODIGAL LOVE FOR THE PRODIGAL SON—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] good will come—but if good is driven away, evil will come. If you do not fill the measure with wheat, the arch-enemy will fill it with chaff. If the river flows not with sparkling sweet water, it will soon reek with pestilent discharge! Take care to have something worthy to delight in! I do not know how those people go through the world who never have any sort of pure excitement, but always go moping about from the first of January to the last of December. Life must be a sorry drag to them. The sparkling eyes and the smiling face are the things God meant men to have, and they do not realize life’s full beauty unless at times they posses them. Why, the Christian, above all men, should have what the world calls his, “holidays and bonfire nights”—his days of rejoicing, times of holy laughter, seasons of overflowing delight. No! I think he should strive to always have them, for we are told, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” If we take our religion as men do medicine, it is of little good to us. Some folks go to the House of God as you might suppose criminals would go be the whippingpost. But I like to see people come up to the House of God with cheerful willingness, like children going home, or like those who are bound for the place—

*“Where my best friends and kindred dwell, Where God my Savior reigns!”*

The true Christian has his holy delights and chief among them is his reveling in the Law of the Lord, the Word of God. Of course, David had not a fourth of what we possess—it was a very little Bible, then—but it has gone on increasing like a majestic river, until it is the wondrous volume we have! We, therefore, should take ten times more delight in it than the Psalmist did. Why do Christians delight in it? Because it is God’s Law! Anything belonging to God should delight the Believer! A child far from home is intensely pleased with anything that his father gave him. A letter from home is a welcome and joyous thing. Here is a letter from home telling us of our Father’s Grace and permitting us to read the precious secrets of His heart of love for us. We delight in it because it comes with Divine Authority to us and so brings confidence and joy to our hearts!

The other day I was reading a book in which six reasons were given why the Christian delights in God’s Law. First, because of its antiquity. Many people delight in old coins. Some will go down to the Thames and buy pieces of old iron that are rusty, under the idea that they are antiques—which they may or may not be. Ah, there is nothing so old as this Book! The first writings of Hesiod fall short at least 500 years of the writings of Moses, so that that part of the blessed volume has Divine Antiquity about it, and is radiant with Divine Inspiration. Let us always delight in it!

We delight in it because of the justice of it. There is a law revealed in it, if perfectly carried out, no man would hurt his neighbor, but love him as he loves himself! No rank or class would press heavily upon another and each would remember, consider, try to bless the other. It is made as no human law can be made, and every person yielding to it feels it in his conscience to be just.

We prize the Book, too, because of its lofty wisdom. There is more wisdom for the life here than anywhere else. We do not come here for astronomy, or geology, but we come here for the highest of all wisdom—the science of God—for, though Pope says—

*“The proper study of mankind is man,”*  
we beg his pardon! A yet more proper study of mankind is God and here, in this Book of God, we learn of His love to us in the Person of Christ Jesus and grasp the science—heavenliest wisdom—of a crucified Redeemer!

We delight in the Book, also, because it is true. Fiction may be read or not, as men’s tastes may direct, but it is of infinite value to have a book in which every word stands fast, when like a dream, Heaven and earth shall have melted away.

Again, we delight in it because it is pleasant. There are sweetnesses in it better than the honey droppings from the honeycomb. When we read it, it makes the godly heart to beat at a high and glorious rate and sometimes takes him on the wings of eagles bearing him to a loftier Pisgah than Moses ever stood upon, and so helping him to see the land on the further side of Jordan—his eternal rest and heritage!

Lastly, the Christian delights in “the Law of the Lord,” because it is profitable. This book enriches with the best of wealth and stored-up treasures for all eternity! Now gathering up all these reasons I want to earnestly ask each one of us here, “Do you delight in this Book?” Not, do you read it—but do you read it with delight? To go to it dragged there by duty, is miserably to miss its best messages and is no evidence of true godliness. To put a sentence of it under the tongue as a sweet morsel, to grow healthy upon it when you are sick, rich upon it when poor—this is one of the truest tests of being a “blessed man”—but if you do not enjoy this, God help you to begin at the foundation! Repent of sin, seek the Savior, or otherwise where God is you can never go!

But I must hasten on to ask—  
IV. WHAT OCCUPIES THE “BLESSED MAN’S” TIME?  
“In His Law he does meditate day and night.” By day he gets little intervals of time to read it, so he steals from his nightly rest, moments in which to meditate upon it. Reading reaps the wheat, meditation threshes it, grinds it and makes it into bread. Reading is like the ox feeding— meditation is it digesting when chewing the cud. It is not only reading that does us good, but the soul inwardly feeding on it and digesting it. A preacher once told me that he had read the Bible through 20 times on his knees and had never found the Doctrine of Election there. Very likely not. It is a most uncomfortable position in which to read. If he had sat in an easy chair, he would have been better able to understand it. To read on one’s knees is like a Popish penance! Besides, he read in the wrong way—if instead of 20 times galloping through, he had read once and pondered continually—he probably would have seen clearer than he evidently did.

It is said of some horses that they “bolt their oats.” This good brother was “bolting” Holy Scripture, and so getting little nutriment out of it! The inward meditation is the thing that makes the soul rich towards God. This is the godly man’s occupation. Put the spice into the mortar by reading, beat it with the pestle of meditation—so shall the sweet perfume be exhaled.

May I ask whether there are not some here who do not meditate on God’s Word at all? If so, then this solemn thought will seize us—if you have not the blessedness of God’s Word, you must inherit its curse! Let us see to it and now, beginning at the Cross of Jesus Christ, study the mystery of His wounds for our sin, and then go on afterward to meditate in His Law day and night.

This brings us now to the very center of the Psalm’s teaching. V. WHEREIN IS THIS MAN SO DIVINELY “BLESSED”?  
Very briefly on each point. He is blessed first of all, for life. “He shall

be like a tree.” Not a dry, dead, sapless pole. His life is such that unregenerate men are strangers to it. He has been begotten again unto a living hope. The sap of God’s Grace is in him—he is united to Christ, his Root— and because He lives and lives in him, he lives also. He has stability. The tree planted. Well-rooted in the ground. The wicked are like the chaff which the wind drives away, but the Christian’s life is stable. “Solid joys and lasting pleasures” are his portion. He has, too, the gladness of growth. The tree remains not the sapling, but grows upward, downward, abroad, spreading its branches. So the godly man is always learning more of his Heavenly Father and endeavoring to be more conformed to the image of his Lord. He has the blessing, too, of favored position. Planted by God, Himself—not self-sown or the foundling of the wind. If he is a servant, he believes God has put him where he should be. Poor or rich, he learns to be content for he is a tree Divinely planted. He is well sustained. Whatever is really good for him, God has pledged Himself to give. Not a tree in the desert, but placed where the water comes rippling to his roots. He hears his Master say, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.”

He has yet again, beauty in God’s sight. Beauty of an unfading kind— “his leaf, also, shall not wither.” When personal beauty decays by reason of old age, and beauty of wit and learning are assailed by approaching death, still he shall be fair, in the likeness of his Master, as a young olive tree, and grow as a cedar in the court of his God! And to crown all, he has constant prosperity. “Whatever he does shall prosper.” He may not grow rich, but he still prospers. His ships may be broken at El-Geber, but he can thank God even for that, for their breaking may help him to heavenly Grace through his very tribulations—so he is content to lose his possessions if his soul is made wealthy in faith and love and sweet submission to God’s will. This metaphor of the flourishing tree is a very beautiful one. See it there, always green, loaded with fruit, standing where it can never know drought. If God has taught us to delight in His Law, that is our true picture and portrait. Is it ours?

But to close, here we are made to ask—  
VI. WHO IS THIS BLESSED MAN’S GUARDIAN? There must be somebody who takes care of him, or he could not be so blessed as he is. Ah, “The Lord knows the way of the righteous.” If you are resting in Christ for salvation, the Lord knows your way. The minister knows nothing of your trials—you half wish you might dare tell him so that he might guide and comfort. But if he knows not, the Lord knows all your way. Are you sorely depressed? Do waves of grief roll over your soul? Well, pour out your heart to God, for He knows, and knows how to help! If the Lord did not look after us in our best days, we would perish by the sunstroke of too much prosperity! And if He did not watch us in our worst days, we should be frost-killed by the cruel Arctic winds of adversity!

But says one, “How may I begin this way?” “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” and this is the fear of the Lord—to trust your soul in the hands of God’s appointed Savior and know you are safe! Say from your very heart—

*‘‘Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Your blood was shed for me,  
And that You bid me come to You.  
O Lamb of God, I come!”*

If your very soul sings that, you are on the road to true blessedness and all that is in this Psalm shall be yours in life, in death and throughout eternity! May God bless you thus, for Jesus’ sake. Amen

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 32.**

“ A Psalm of David, Maschil,” that is to say, an instructive Psalm. I suppose that David wrote it after he had been forgiven and restored to Divine favor. I think we may read it as a part of our own experience— either of conversion or when restored after backsliding.

Verses 1, 2. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. Twice he says “blessed.” He had felt the weight of sin. He had been sorely troubled. And now that Nathan is sent to him with the word of pardon, “The Lord has put away your sin, you shall not die,” he counts himself doubly blessed—blessed not the man who has never sinned, blessed is he who having sinned, is forgiven—not the man who has no sin, but whose sin is covered. Wonderful word! Both in English and Hebrew it sounds very much alike, the sacred kopher, the cover which covers sin so that it is hidden even from the eyes of God, Himself! A wondrous deed! Blessed is the man who knows that Divine covering! ‘‘Blessed,” says he, “is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile.” All along after David’s sin, he became very crafty and very cunning, full of guile! You know the dodges that he had to cover up his sin—he tried to play some of his tricks on God, Himself, but he felt it was a mischievous thing to do— he was uneasy, he was unhappy. We have sometimes heard it said that after David sinned, he remained insensible for nine months until he received the Divine rebuke, but it was not so. He remained very sensitive, very depressed, very unhappy and he was trying this way and that to cover up his sin and guile. He could not do it! So he sought to make a clean breast of it and confess it before God—giving up his crooked ways and his ideas of excusing himself. And when he had done that—when he had given up his guile and his guilt, too—then he got the double blessing! “Blessed, blessed!” If there are any of you who are treading crooked ways with God and man, give them up! I know of nothing that will make you give them up like knowing free, full, perfect pardon through the precious blood of Christ and the free Grace of God. The two things go together, guilt and guile—the two things go out of us together—when guilt is pardoned, guile is killed! Now hear how David felt while he was conscious of his sin and yet was not right with God.

3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. A wanton glance, the sin with Bathsheba—where was the pleasure of it when it cost him all this? Such groaning that his very bones got old as if they were rotten, and his heart was heavy as if he wished to die!

4. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. God was pressing him heavily with His hand, forcing his sin home upon him, making him say, “My sin is always before me.” Oh, the misery of sinning to a child of God! Do not dream that we can ever have any pleasure in sin—the worldling may, but the Believer never can. To him it is a deadly viper that will fill his veins with burning poison!

4. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. When he tried to pray, it was a dried-up prayer. He tried to make a Psalm but it was a dried-up song. He tried to do some good, for he was still a good man, but it was all withered without the Spirit of God! His moisture was gone out of him, turned into the drought of summer, and summer in David’s country was a very droughty thing, indeed! Every human thing despaired. The grass seemed to turn to dust—it was so with him. If you go into sin, this is what will happen to you. If you are a true child of God, you will have all the joy of God taken from you, all the moisture of your heart dried up and you will be like a parched, withered thing. “Selah.” It was time to have a pause in the music, he was on so base a key, he had need now to tighten the harp strings and rise to something a little sweeter.

5. I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. He must come to confession—full, spontaneous, unreserved—there must be a resolution! “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord”—a firm determination to hide nothing, to see the sin yourself and to tell the Lord that you see it—and to confess it with great grief and sorrow. What a wonderful word that is, “I said I will confess and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” God took away the sin! Yes, the very pith and marrow of it—“the iniquity of my sin”—taking the bone away and the marrow of the bone, too. “You forgave the iniquity of my sin”—it has all gone, wholly gone! By one stroke of God’s Divine Grace, the sinner was pardoned! “Selah”—again.

6. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him. For this (because of this), and for this blessing, “shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found.” The pardoning God must be sought. There is an attraction in the greatness of His mercy. They that are godly, even though they have offended and gone astray, must come back and seek for pardon in a time when You may be found. “Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him.” The godly man is safe when the floods are out. There are times when great waters prevailed in David’s country—the brooks sometimes turned to rivers and came down with a rush when they were least expected. And here he says that when such a thing as that shall happen, yet God’s people shall be saved. They shall come, but they shall not come near unto them. Let me read those words again. If you have gone to God in the day of your sin, and have found pardon, He that took away the sin will take away the sorrow. “Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him.”

7. You are my hiding place. Precious words! “You are my hiding place.” Not, “You are a hiding place,” but “You are my hiding place.” A man who is beset by foes does not stand still and say, “Yes, I can see there is a hiding place there,” but he runs to it! Beloved, run to your hiding place this evening! Each one of you who can have a claim and interest in Christ, run to Him now, and say—

7. You shall preserve me from trouble, You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. David has come up to us out of the roaring to the singing! All daylong he roars, and now all daylong he sings! He sees songs everywhere! He lives in a circle of music, his heart is so glad. Well may he put another “Selah,” for he has smitten the strings very joyfully and they again need tuning!

8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes. Here the Speaker is changed. “I will instruct you.” “I have forgiven you.” “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go.” “I have prayed you back to the way, now I will teach you in the way you shall go.” “I will guide you with My eyes”—your own might lead you astray. “I will guide you with My eyes.” I will be on the path. I will fix My eyes upon you. “I will guide you with My eyes”

9. Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto you. “Be you not as the horse,” not only David, but all of you! If God will guide you, be guided. If He will teach you, be teachable. If He will be gracious to you, be gracious towards Him!

10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.” David had found that out—his sin had brought him a transient pleasure, but a lasting misery! He shall have a bodyguard of mercy, God will be gracious to him, tender to him and will not leave him if he is trusting in the Lord.

11. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart. “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you righteous.” Be glad. Well, but you cannot always be glad, says one. “Be glad in the Lord.” You may always be glad in Him! Here is an unchanging source of joy. “Rejoice, you righteous, and shout for joy.” Here, the man that was silent has now gone as far as shouting. Is it not enough to make him so? Twice he was blessed in the first and second verses—and now, he has been pardoned, he has been delivered, he has been compassed about with mercy! Why, he must be glad! “Shout for joy all you that are upright in heart.” God bless you in the reading of His Word.

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THE CHAFF DRIVEN AWAY  
NO. 280

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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“The ungodly are not so: but are like the  
chaff which the wind drives away.”  
Psalm 1:4.**

AND who are the ungodly? Are they open and willful sinners—men who take God’s name in vain and curse and blaspheme—men who break the laws of man, the laws of the State—men who are scarcely to be trusted with liberty? Certainly these are included, but these are not mainly intended. While such men come under the category of “sinners” and “scorners,” there is another class expressly aimed at by the term “ungodly.”

And who are the ungodly? Are they the men who deny God’s existence, who neglect the outward forms of religion, who scoff at everything that is sacred and make a ribald jest of things at which angels tremble? These are included, most certainly, but neither are these the men specially aimed at. They are the scornful, the pestilent—these are the men whose iniquities have gone beforehand to judgment against them and whose sins are clamoring before the throne for justice. Another class of men is intended under the term “ungodly.”

And who are they? Surely, my Brethren, the answer may well strike you with awe. I do trust there are not many in this hall who may be called scorners. And, perhaps, not very many who would come under the denomination of open profligates and rebels. But how large a proportion of all those who attend our places of worship may justly be ranked under the character of the ungodly! What does this mean, exactly? Let me just show its differences, once again, and then more precisely define it.

We sometimes call men irreligious. And, surely, to be irreligious is bad enough. But to be religious is not good enough. A man may be religious, but yet he may not be godly. There are many who are religious. As touching the law outwardly they are blameless—Hebrews of the Hebrews, Pharisees of the straightest sect. They neglect no rubric, they break no law of their Church, they are exceedingly precise in their religion. Yet, notwithstanding this, they may rank under the class of the ungodly. For to be religious is one thing and to be godly is quite another.

To be godly, then—to come at once to the mark—to be godly is to have a constant eye to God, to recognize Him in all things, to trust Him, to love Him, to serve Him. And the ungodly man is one who does not have an eye to God in his daily business, who lives in this world as if there were no God. While he attends to all the outward ceremonies of religion, he never goes to their core, never enters into their secret heart and their deep mysteries. He sees the sacraments, but he sees not God therein. He hears the

preaching, he comes up to the house of prayer—into the midst of the great congregation—he bows his head, but there is no present Deity to him, there is no manifest God. There is no hearing of His voice, there is no bowing before His Throne.

Doubtless, there are a large number here who must confess that they are not trusting in the blood of Christ. They are not influenced by the Holy Spirit, they do not love God. They cannot say that the bent and tenor of their fires is towards Him. Why, you have been the last six days about your business, occupying all your time—and quite right is it to be diligent in business—but how many of you have forgotten God all the while? You have been trading for yourselves, not for God. The righteous man does everything in the name of God—at least this is his constant desire. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he desires to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. But you have not recognized God in your shop. You have not acknowledged Him in your dealings with your fellow men. You have acted towards them as if there had been no God whatever.

And, perhaps, even this day you must confess that your heart does not love the Lord. You have never gone into His company. You do not seek retirement. You do not relish private prayer. Now God’s children cannot be happy without sometimes talking to their Father. The sons of God must have frequent interviews with Jehovah. They love to cling to Him. They feel that He is their life, their love, their all. Their daily cry is, “Lord, draw me to Yourself; come to me, or draw me up to You.” They pant to know more of God. They long to reflect more of His image, they seek to keep His Law. And it is their desire that they may be saturated with His Spirit. But such are not your desires. You have no such longings as these. It is true you are not addicted to strong drink, you do not swear—you are no thief, you are no harlot—in all these things you are blameless.

But yet you are ungodly—without God in the world. He is not your Friend, He is not your helper. You do not cleave to Him with purpose of heart. You are not His child. You have not “the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” You could do as well without a God as with one. In fact you feel that the thought of God, if you think of it solemnly, strikes you with terror and excites in your breasts no emotions of delight. You are ungodly. Well then, mark—whatever I have to say this morning belongs to you. Don’t be looking round you and saying, I wonder how this will suit my neighbor? Do not, I beseech you, be thinking of some thriftless loon who has spent his estate in extravagance and debauchery, but be thinking of yourself.

If you are not born again, if you are not a partaker of the Spirit, if you are not reconciled to God, if your sins are not forgiven, if you are not this day a living member of the living Church of Christ, all the curses that are written in this Book belong to you—and that part of them in particular which it will be my solemn business to thunder out this morning. I pray God that this part may be applied to your soul, that you may be made to tremble before the Most High and seek Him who will certainly be found of you, if you seek Him with all your hearts.

You will readily perceive that my text may be divided into three parts. You have, first, a fearful negative—“The ungodly are not so.” You have in the next place a terrible comparison—“they are like the chaff.” Then you have, thirdly, an awful prophesy—“They are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”

I. First, then, you have here A FEARFUL NEGATIVE. The vulgate Latin version, the Arabic and Septuagint, read this first sentence thus—“Not so the ungodly, not so.” For according to their version there is a double negative here—“Not so the ungodly, not so.” Now in order to understand what is meant by this negative you must read the third verse. The righteous man is said to be “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither. And whatsoever he does shall prosper”—“Not so the ungodly, not so.”

To explore the negative, we must take each clause of this sentence. The ungodly are not like a tree planted. If they may be compared to a tree at all, they are as trees “twice dead plucked up by the roots.” Or if they are to be compared to anything that has life, then are they like the tree in the desert which is planted there by a chance hand, which has nothing to nourish it. It is the peculiar characteristic of the Christian man that he is like “a tree planted.” That is to say, there is a special Providence exercised in his position and in his culture. You all know the difference between a tree that is planted and a tree that is self-sown.

The tree that is planted in the garden is visited by the husbandman. He digs about it. He fertilizes it. He trims it, prunes it and looks for its fruit. It is an object of property and of special care. The wild tree in the forest—the tree which is self-sown upon the plain—no one owns, no one watches over it. No heart will sigh if the lightning flash shall shiver it. No tear will be wept if the blast should light upon it and all its leaves should wither. It is no man’s property. It shelters no man’s roof. No man cares for it. Let it die, why does it stand there to suck nourishment from the soil and yield no fruit?

The ungodly are, it is true, the subjects of a universal Providence, even as everything is ordered of God. But the righteous have a special Providence over them. They are trees planted. Everything which takes place works together for their good. The Lord their God is their Guardian. He watches the earth that it should bring forth for them its fruit. The precious things of the heavens, the dew and the deep that couches beneath and the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and the precious things put forth by the moon—these are their heritage.

He watches everything round about them. If pestilence stalk through the land, He permits not one of its shafts to hit, unless He sees it is for good. If war arises, behold, He stretches His protection over His children. And if famine comes, they shall be fed and in the days of scarcity they shall be satisfied. Is it not a glorious thing for the Christian to know that the very hairs of his head are all numbered, that the angels of God keep watch and ward over him? The Lord is his Shepherd, and therefore he

shall not want. I know this is a doctrine that often comforts me. Let what will, happen, if I can but fall back upon the thought that there is a Providence in everything, what do I need? A Providence in the great and in the little there assuredly is to every child of God.

It may be said of every tree of the Lord’s right hand planting—“I the Lord do keep it and will water it every moment. Lest any hurt, it I will watch it night and day.” Upon the righteous there are not only ten eyes, but there are all the eyes of the Omniscient ever fixed both by night and day. The Lord knows the way of the righteous. They are like the planted tree. Not so you that are ungodly, not so you. There is no special Providence for you. To whom will you carry your troubles? Where is your shelter in the day of wrath? Where is your shield in the hour of battle? Who shall be your sun when darkness shall gather about you? Who shall comfort you when your troubles shall encompass round you? You have no eternal arm to lean upon. You have no compassionate heart to beat for you. You have no loving eye to watch you. You are left alone! Alone! Alone! Like the heath in the desert, or like the forest tree which no man regards, until the time comes when the sharpened axe shall be lifted up and the tree must fall. “Not so,” then, “the ungodly, not so.” It is a fearful negative—the ungodly man is not the object of the special Providence of God.

But we must proceed. The righteous man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Now a tree that is planted by the rivers of water sends out its roots and they soon draw sufficient nourishment. The tree that is planted far away upon the arid desert has its times of drought. It depends upon the casual thunder-cloud that sweeps over it and distils the scanty drops of rain. But this tree planted by rivers of water has a perennial supply. It knows no drought, no time of scarcity. Its roots have but to suck up the nourishment which pours itself lavishly there.

“Not so the ungodly, not so.” They have no such rivers from which to suck their joy, their comfort and their life. As for the Believer, come what may, he can—even if earth shall fail him—look to Heaven. If man forsakes him, then he looks to the Divine Man, Christ Jesus. If the world should shake, his inheritance is on high. If everything should pass away, he has a portion that can never be dissolved. He is planted not by brooks that may be dried up—far less in a desert, which only has a scanty share—but by the rivers of water. Oh, my beloved Brethren, you and I know something about what this means. We know what it is to suck up the promises, to drink of the rivers of Christ’s fullness.

We know what it is to partake and satisfy ourselves with marrow and fatness. Well may we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, for our storehouse is inexhaustible, our riches can never be spent. We have wealth that cannot be counted—a treasury that never can be drained. This is our glory, that we have a something to rely upon which can never fail us. We are trees planted by the rivers of water.

Ah, but not so you that are ungodly, not so. Your days of drought shall come. You may rejoice now, but what will you do upon the bed of sickness, when fever shall make you toss from side-to-side, when head and heart shall be racked with anguish, when death shall stare upon you and shall glaze your eyes? What will you do when you come into the swellings of Jordan? You have joys today, but where will be your joys then? You have wells now, but what will you do when these are all stopped up, when these shall all fail, when your skin bottles are dried when your broken cisterns have emptied themselves of their last drop—what will you do then, you ungodly? Surely, this negative is full of awful threats to you.

You may have a little mirth and merriment now, you may enjoy a little excitement at present, but what will you do when the hot wind comes upon you—the wind of tribulation? And above all, what will you do when the chilling blast of death shall freeze your blood? Ah, where, oh where will you then look? You will look no longer to friends, nor to the comforts of home. You cannot find in the hour of death, consolation on the bosom of the most loving wife. You will be quite unable then to find peace in all your riches or your treasures. As for your past life, however good it may seem, if you are ungodly, you will find no comfort in the retrospect. And as for the future, you will find no comfort in the prospect, for there will be for you nothing but “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.” Oh, my ungodly Friends, I beseech you, think upon this matter—for if there were nothing worse—the first sentence of my text sounds like the trumpets of doom and has in it bitterness like the vials of the Revelation.

Again we must go forward. It is said of the righteous man, that he, “brings forth his fruit in his season.” “Not so the ungodly, not so”—they bring forth no fruit. Or if there is here and there a shriveled grape upon the vine, it is brought forth in the wrong season when the genial heat of the sun cannot ripen it and therefore it is sear and worthless. Many people imagine that if they do not commit positive sins they are all right. Now let me give you a little sermon in the midst of my sermon. Here is the text—“Curse you Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof. Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” First, what has Meroz done? Nothing. Secondly, is Meroz cursed? Yes, cursed bitterly. What for?—for doing nothing. Yes, for doing nothing. “Curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof”—for what they did not do—“because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

Did Meroz fight against God? No. Did Meroz put on a buckler and boldly lay on shield and spear and go forth against the Most High? No. What did Meroz do? Nothing. And is it cursed? Yes, cursed bitterly, with the inhabitants thereof, “because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Preach that sermon to yourselves when you get home. Draw it out at length and perhaps while you are sitting down you will say, “Meroz! Why, that is myself. I don’t fight against God, I am no enemy to Christ, I do not persecute His people—in fact, I even love His ministers—I love to go up and hear the Word preached. I should not be happy if I spent my Sunday anywhere but in God’s House. But still that must mean me, for I do not go up ‘to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’ I do nothing. I am an idle do-nothing. I am a fruitless

tree.”

Ah, then remember you are cursed and cursed bitterly, too. Not for what you do, but for what you don’t do. So here it is—one of the sad curses of the ungodly—that they bring forth no fruit in their season. Why look at many of you. What is the good of you in this world? With regard to your families, you are their main-stay and prop. God bless you in your work and may you train up your children well. But as to the Church, what good are you? You occupy a seat—you have had it these years. How do you know but that you have been occupying a seat which might have been the place where some other sinner would have been converted had he been there? It is true, you sit and hear the sermon. Yes, but what of that, if that sermon shall add to your condemnation?

It is true that you make one among many, but what if you should be a black sheep in the midst of the flock! What are you doing for Christ? Of what value are you? Have you added one stone to His spiritual temple? Have you done as much as the poor woman who broke the alabaster box upon His head? You have done nothing for Him. He has nourished you and brought you up and you have done nothing for Him. “The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib,” but you do not know, you do not consider. Behold, the Lord has a controversy with you this day—not for what you have done, but for what you have not done. He has sent you the ministry. You are invited every Sabbath. With tears running down my cheeks have I warned you and invited you. You are hearing the Word continually. You are enjoying privileges. God is feeding you in His Providence, clothing you in His compassion and you are doing nothing for Him. You are a cumberer of the ground, bringing forth no fruit at all.

O my dear Hearer, I beseech you lay this to heart, for this is a curse as well as a sign to you. It is not only a bad trait in your character, but it is a curse from God. You are ungodly and therefore fruitless. You love Him not, therefore you are useless. You trust not in Christ, and therefore you are not like the tree which “brings forth his fruit in his season.” Continue with the description—his leaf also shall not wither. “Not so the ungodly, not so.” The ungodly man’s leaf shall wither.

I see before me this day many proofs that God’s promise is verified to His people. Look round and behold what a large number of gray-headed men assemble every Lord’s Day to hear the Word. There are many of them who loved Christ in their youth. Then they had “a joy unspeakable and full of glory” in making a profession of His dear name. And now they have come into what men call the sear and yellow leaf of life, but they do not find it so, for they still bring forth fruit in old age, they are still fat and flourishing to show that the Lord is upright. Their leaf has not withered, they are just as active in the cause of Christ as ever they were and perhaps ten times more happy. Instead of bringing forth no fruit, they bring forth richer and more luscious clusters than ever they did before.

Walking in the midst of the younger ones they shine as lights in the midst of the world. Or to return to the simile, they are like trees whose branches hang down by reason of the abundance of their fruit, even as their heads bow down by reason of the abundance of their years. What a mercy it is, dear Brethren, to have Christ for your portion in youth and such a Christ, too, as will last us all our life long. To see good old Rowland Hill preaching when he was tottering on the borders of the grave and talking of the faithfulness of Christ—what a glorious sight! There was a proof! That leaf did not wither—was there ever a tree like this that would maintain its greenness eighty years and yet not wither? Was there ever a religion like this that would make the old men youthful and make their tottering feet leap for joy? And yet this is the religion of Christ. Our leaf withers not.

But oh, “Not so the ungodly, not so.” Your leaf shall wither. At least when they that look out of the windows are darkened, when the grinders fail because they are few, when your days of old age shall come upon you and the grasshopper shall be a burden, if not before, shall your leaf wither. And how many there are whose leaves do wither! There comes a blight from God and the tree which looked once green becomes brown and dead and at last it blackens and has to be removed. We have seen such in our lives. Men that seemed to be getting on in this world, rich and happy and respected by almost everybody—but they had no solid background, they had no rock to stand on—no God to trust. I have seen them spreading themselves like a green bay tree and I have often envied them as the Psalmist did, but “I looked and lo, they were not.” I passed by and lo, there was not so much as a stump of them left—God had cursed their habitation. As a dream when one awakes, their image had been despised, as the wax before the fire, they had melted away—like the fat of rams had they been consumed. Into smoke did they consume away.

“Not so the ungodly, not so,” says the text and surely experience proves it—the ungodly man’s leaf must and shall wither. And then it is added concerning the righteous man, “whatsoever he does, shall prosper.” Godly men, it is true have many tribulations, but I am not sure that they have more than the wicked. I do think that when a man is converted he will find it to be true that religion’s “ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace,” and he has a better hope of even worldly prosperity when he becomes a Christian, than the ungodly man has. Christian habits are the best business habits, if men would but believe it. When a man mixes his religion with his business and allows every act of his life to be guided by it, he stands the best chance in this world, if I may be allowed such a secular expression, for, “Honesty is the best policy” after all, and Christianity is the best honesty.

The sharp cutting competition of the times may be called honesty—it is only called so down here, it is not called so up there, for there is a good deal of cheating in it. Honesty in the highest sense—Christian honesty— will be found, after all, to be the best policy in everything and there will ordinarily be a prosperity, even worldly prosperity, attending a good man in the patient industrious pursuit of his calling. But if he does not have that success he craves, still there is one thing he knows, he would have it if it were best for him. I often know Christian men talk in this fashion,

“Well, I do but very little business,” says one, “but I have enough coming in to live upon comfortably and happy. I never cared much for push and competition. I never felt that I was fit for it and I sometimes thank God that I never thrust myself out into the rough stream, but that I was content to keep along shore.”

And I have marked this one thing—and, as a matter of fact, I know it cannot be disproved—that many such humble-minded men are the very best of Christians. They live the happiest lives and whatsoever they do certainly does prosper, for they get what they expected though they did not expect much and they get what they want though their wants are not very large. They are not going in for anything very great and therefore they do not come out plucked and empty handed, but they just hold on their way, always looking to Providence, for their supplies and they have all they require. And whatsoever they do, prospers.

The man that has no God, has no prosperity. Is he fat? He fattens for the slaughter! Is he in adversity? Behold the first drops of the fated storm have begun to fall on him. To the ungodly man there is nothing good in this life. The sweet that he tastes is the sweetness of poison. That which looks fair is but as paint upon the harlot’s face—beneath there are loathsomeness and disease. There may be a greenness and a verdure upon the mound, but within there lies the rotting carcass, the loathsomeness of corruption. Whatsoever the Believer does, it shall prosper. “Not so the ungodly, not so.” Surely this first part of my text is quite bad enough—to have the gate of blessedness shut against you, to have the promises denied you, to be without the blessing which is given to the godly—this punishment of the lost surely were enough to make us start in dismay.

II. Now very briefly upon the second point. Listen awhile to THE TERRIBLE COMPARISON. “The ungodly are like the chaff.” They are not like the wild tree, for that has life and they are dead in sin. They are not compared here even to the dead tree plucked up by the roots, for that may be of some service. Floating down the stream, the hand of poverty may recall it from the water and kindle its fire and relieve its cold. They are not even like the heath in the desert, for it has some uses and tends to cheer the arid waste. They are like nothing that has life, nothing that is of any value. They are here said to be like chaff which the wind drives away.

Now you will at once see how terrible is this figure, if you look at it a moment. They are like chaff. Chaff envelopes good corn, but when the wheat is cut down and carried into the barn, the corn alone is useful, the grain alone is looked at and that chaff which has grown side by side with the good living wheat is now become utterly useless and is to be separated and driven away. And the wicked are compared to chaff—think for a moment, of two or three reasons. First, because they are sapless and fruitless. Chaff has no sap of life in itself. It is of no use, of no service. Men do but desire to get rid of it. They take the fan into their hands that they may thoroughly purge their floor. They cast up the wheat before the wind with the winnowing shovel, that the breath of the air may blow away the chaff and leave the wheat pure. All that they care for the chaff is that they may get rid of it—that it may be blown away to waste—for it is sapless and fruitless.

Then again, you notice that it is light and unstable. The wind sweeps through the wheat, the wheat remains unmoved, the chaff flies away. When cast up in the shovel, the wheat soon finds its place and returns to the spot from which it has been lifted up. But the chaff is light, it has no stability. Every eddying wind, every breath moves it and carries it away. So are the ungodly. They have nothing stable. They are light, they are but as the froth upon the water. They are but as a bubble on the breaker— seen today and gone—here and there and then carried away forever.

Again—the wicked are compared to chaff because it is base and worthless. Who will buy it? Who cares for it? In the East, at least, it is of no good, no use whatever can be made of it. They are content to burn it up and get rid of it and the sooner they are rid of it, the better pleased are they. So is it with the wicked. They are good for nothing, useless in this world, useless in the world to come. They are the dross, the offal of all creation. The man who is ungodly, however much he may value himself, is as nothing in the estimation of God. Put a gold chain round his neck, put a star upon his breast, put a crown upon his head and what is he but a crowned heap of dust? He is useless, perhaps worse than useless—base in God’s sight, He tramples them beneath His feet.

The potter’s vessel has some service and even the broken potsherd might be used. Some Job might scrape himself with it. But what shall be done with the chaff? It is of no use anywhere and no one cares for it. See, then, your value, my Hearers, if you fear not God. Cast up your accounts and look at yourselves in the right light. You think, perhaps, that you are good for much, but God says you are good for nothing. You are “like the chaff which the wind drives away.” I linger no more upon this comparison, but choose, rather to dwell upon the third head, which is:

III. THE AWFUL PROPHECY contained in the verse—“They are like the chaff which the wind drives away.” How near the chaff is to the grain! It is, in fact, its envelope. They grow together. My Hearers, I wish to speak now very pointedly and personally. How nearly related are the ungodly to the righteous? One of you, it may be, now present, an ungodly man, is the father of a godly child. You have been to that child what the chaff is to the wheat. You have nourished the child—cherished it in your bosom—you have been wrapped about it like the chaff about the grain. Is it not an awful thing for you to think that you should have been in such close relationship to a child of God, but that in the great day of division you must be separated from it? The chaff cannot be taken into Heaven with the wheat.

I point to another. You are the son of a godly mother. You have grown up at her knee. She taught you, when you were but a little one, to say your little prayer and to sing the little hymn—

*“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child.”*

That mother looked upon you as her joy and her comfort. She is gone now. But you were once to her what the chaff is to the wheat. You grew, as it were, upon the same stock, you were of the same family and her heart was wholly wrapped up in you. You were her joy and her comfort here below. Does it not cause you one pang of regret that, dying as you are, you must everlastingly be separated from her? Where she is you can never go.

Perhaps, too, I have here a mother who has lost several infants. She has been to those infants what the chaff is to the wheat—wrapped up in her bosom for a little while she fondled them. And they, God’s good wheat, have been gathered into the garner and there they are now in Jesus’ floor. There are their little spirits rejoicing before the Throne of the Most High. The mother who is left thinks not of it, but she is the mother of angels and, perhaps, herself a child of Hell. Ah, Mother! What do you think of this? Is this separation from your child eternal? Will you be content to be found at God’s great winnowing-day, the chaff and will you be driven from your children? Shall you see them in Heaven—them in Heaven and yourselves then cast out forever? Can you bear the thought? Has your heart become brutish? Is your soul harder than a nether mill-stone? Surely, if it is not, the thought of your present intimate connection with God’s people and of your sure separation will make you tremble.

And oh, my Hearers, here are some of you sitting side by side with the godly. You sing as they sing, you hear as they hear. Perhaps you assist the outward wants of the Church. You are to the Church just what the chaff is to the wheat. You are the outward husk, the congregation which surrounds the inner living nucleus of the Church. And must it be—must you be separated from us? Are you content to go from the songs of the saints to the shrieks of the doomed? Will you go from the great convocation of the righteous to the last general assembly of the destroyed and cursed in Hell? The thought checks my voice. I must speak slowly on this matter for awhile. Well, dear Brethren, well I know that this thought used to be dreadful to me. My mother said to me once, after she had long prayed for me and had come to the conviction that I was hopeless, “Ah,” said she “My son, if at the last great day you are condemned, remember your mother will say, “Amen” to your condemnation.”

That stung me to the quick. Must the mother that brought me forth and that loved me say “Amen” to my being condemned at last? Yet such things must be. Does not the wheat say, “Amen” to the chaff being blown away? Is it not, in fact, the very prayer of the wheat that it may be separated from the chaff? And surely when that prayer is heard and awfully answered, the wheat must say, “Amen” to the chaff being blown away into fire unquenchable.

Think, my dear Hearers, think again. And must it be—must I bid farewell to her I love, who served the Lord in spirit? Must I see her body committed to the grave and as I stand there must I bid her a last, a final farewell? Must I be forever separated from her, because I fear not God, neither regard Him and therefore cannot have a portion among the Lord’s chosen ones? What? Have you lost your relatives forever? Are your pious fathers and mothers buried in a “sure and certain hope” to which you are strangers? Will you never sing the song of rejoicing with them in Heaven? Is there never to be another salutation? Is death a gulf that cannot be bridged to you?

Oh, I hope it is the joy of some of us to know we shall meet many of our kindred above and as we have lost one after another this has been our sweet consolation—they are gone, but we shall soon follow them. They are not lost but gone before. They are buried as to their flesh, but their souls are in Paradise and we shall be there, also. And, when we have seen our Savior’s face and have rejoiced in that glorious vision, then shall we see them, also, and have deeper and purer fellowship with them than we ever had before in all the days of our lives.

Well, here is a sad prophecy! The wicked are “like the chaff which the wind drives away.” But you will remark that the awful character of my text does not appear upon the surface. They “are like the chaff which the wind drives away.” Where—where—where? Where are they driven? The man is in health. The sun shines, the sky is calm, the world is still about him. Suddenly there is seen a little cloud the size of a man’s hand. A little signal overtakes him. The hurricane begins to rise but first it is but a faint breath. The wicked man feels the cold air blowing on him, but he screens it with the physician and he thinks that surely he shall live. The storm is on. God has decreed it and man cannot stop it. The breath becomes a gale, the gale a wind, the wind a storm, the storm a howling hurricane. His soul is swept away.

To go to Heaven on angels’ wings is a glorious thing. But to be swept out of this world with the wicked is an awful thing—to be carried, not on wings of cherubs—but on the eagle wings of the wind. To be borne, not by yon songsters up to their celestial seats, but to be carried away in the midst of a howling tempest by grim fiends. The wicked are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Do you not catch the thought? I do not know how to bring out the fullness of its poetry—the great storm sweeping man from the place on which he stands. He is driven away. And now cannot your thoughts go further on while I again repeat the question, Where is he driven? Ah, Where is he driven? I see him driven from the solid shore of life. He is carried away. But—

*“In vain my fancy strives  
To paint the moment after death.”*  
I cannot tell you into what state that soul at once enters, that is to say, I

cannot tell you by any guess of my own—that were frivolous and were to play with a solemn matter. But I can tell you one thing, Jesus Christ Himself has said it—“He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” You die, but you die not. You depart, but you depart to fire that never shall be quenched. I will not dwell upon the topic. I return again to ask the question—“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Who here is prepared to make his bed in Hell? Who shall lie down and rest forever in that lake of fire? You will, my Hearers, if you are ungodly, unless you repent.  
Are there any of you here who have been living without Christ and without hope in the world? Are there any of you? Surely there are some such. I beseech you, think of your destiny—death—and after death the judgment. The wind and after the wind the whirlwind and after the whirlwind the fire and after the fire, more fire—forever, forever—forever lost, cast away, where ray of hope can never come. Where eye of mercy can never look upon you and hand of grace can never reach you. I beseech you, oh, I beseech you by the living God, before whom you stand this day, tremble and repent!

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” “Tophet is ordained of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large. The pile thereof is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it.” “Turn you, turn you, why will you die O house of Israel?” “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts—and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Oh, I pray God the Holy Spirit to touch some ungodly hearts now and make you think. And remember my dear Hearers, if there is in your bosoms this morning one desire towards Christ, cherish it, blow the little spark till it comes to a flame. If your heart melts ever so little this morning, I beseech you resist not, quench not the heavenly influence. Yield up yourselves and remember the sweet text of last Sunday morning, “whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.” I thunder at you, but it is to bring you to Christ. Oh that you would but come to Him! Oh poor hearts would that you did but feel! Oh, that you knew how to weep for yourselves as I could weep for you now! Oh, that you knew what a fearful thing it will be to be cast away forever into Hell!

Why will you die? Is there anything pleasing in destruction? Is sin so luscious to you that you will burn in Hell forever for it? What? Is Christ so hard a Master that you will not love Him? Is His Cross so ugly that you will not look towards it? Oh, I beseech you by Him whose heart is love, the crucified Redeemer, who now speaks through me this morning and in me weeps over you. I beseech you look to Him and be saved, for He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost and he that comes to Him He will in nowise cast out, for “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.”

Today, O Spirit bring sinners to Yourself. I exhort you, Sinners, lay hold on Christ! Touch the hem of His garment now. Behold, He hangs before you on the Cross. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is Jesus lifted up. Look, I beseech you, look and live! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. As though God did beseech you by me, I pray in Christ’s place, be reconciled to God. And O, may the Spirit make my appeal effectual! May angels rejoice this day over sinners saved and brought to know the Lord. Amen.

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AN EARNEST INVITATION

NO. 260

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 3, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Psalm 2:12.**

IT will not be needful for me this morning to be controversial in my discourse. For but two Sabbaths ago I addressed you from that text, “The mighty God,” and endeavored with the utmost of my ability to prove that Christ must be “very God of very God”—co-equal and co-eternal with His Father. Without, then, attempting to prove that, let us drive onward towards the practical issue. For, after all, practice is the end of preaching— or, if you will have it, I will put it into Herbert’s words —

*“Attend sermons, but prayers most,  
Praying’s the end of preaching.”*  
And that, too, is in the text, for what lip can give the kiss of sincerity to the Son of God, save the lip of prayer? We drive onward, then, towards the

practical conclusion. May God the Holy Spirit assist us.

Now it has sometimes been disputed among most earnest and zealous ministers which is the most likely means of bringing souls to Christ— whether it is the thunder of the threat, or the still small whisper of the promise. I have heard some ministers who preferred the first. They have constantly dwelt upon the terrors of the Law and they have certainly, many of them, been eminently useful. They have had Scripture for their warrant, “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” With “terrible things in righteousness” declaring the just anger and judgment of God against sin, they have alarmed those who were sitting at ease in a graceless state and have thus been the means in the hands of God of inducing them to flee from the wrath to come.

Some, on the other hand, have rather decried the threats. They have dwelt almost entirely upon the promises. Like John, their ministry has been full of love. They have constantly preached from such texts as this— “Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”—and such like. Now, these also have been eminently useful. And they, too, have had Scriptural warrant in abundance, for thus spoke Christ’s Apostles full often and thus spoke Jesus Christ Himself, wooing with notes of mercy and melting with tones of love those whom the Law’s terrors would but have hardened in their sins.

My text, however, seems to be a happy combination of the two and I take it that the most successful  
ministry will combine both means of bringing men to Christ. The text thunders with all the bolts of God—“Lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” But it does not end in thunder, there comes a sweet soft, reviving shower after the storm— “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

This morning I shall endeavor to use both arguments and shall divide my text thus—First, the command, “Kiss the Son.” Secondly, the argument used, “lest He be angry and you perish from the way.” And thirdly, the benediction with which the text closes—“Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” This benediction being a second reason why we should obey the commandment.

I. First, then, THE COMMAND—“Kiss the Son.” This bears four interpretations. A kiss has many meanings in it—progressive meanings. I pray that we may be led by grace from step to step, so that we may understand the command in all its fullness by putting it in practice.

1. In the first place, it is a kiss of reconciliation. The kiss is a token of enmity removed, of strife ended and of peace established. You will remember that when Jacob met Esau, although the hearts of the brothers had been long estranged and fear had dwelt in the breast of one and revenge had kindled its fires in the heart of the other—when they met they were pacified towards each other and they fell upon each other’s neck and they kissed—it was the kiss of reconciliation. Now, the very first work of grace in the heart is for Christ to give the sinner the kiss of His affection, to prove His reconciliation to the sinner. Thus the father kissed his prodigal son when he returned. Before the feast was spread, before the music and the dance began, the father fell upon his son’s neck and kissed him.

On our part, however, it is our business to return that kiss. And as Jesus gives the reconciling kiss on God’s behalf, it is ours to kiss the lips of Jesus and to prove by that deed that we are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” Sinner, you have up to now been an enemy of Christ’s Gospel. You have hated His Sabbaths. You have neglected His Word. You have abhorred His commandments and cast His Laws behind your back. You have, as much as lies in you, opposed His kingdom. You have loved the wages of sin and the ways of iniquity better than the ways of Christ. What do you say? Does the Spirit now strive in your heart? Then, I beseech you, yield to His gracious influence and now let your quarrel be at an end. Cast down the weapons of your rebellion—pull out the plumes of pride from your helmet—and cast away the sword of your rebellion. Be Hs enemy no longer, for, rest assured, He wills to be your Friend.

With arms outstretched, ready to receive you, with eyes full of tears, weeping over your obstinacy and with a heart moved with compassion for you, He speaks through my lips this morning and He says, “Kiss the Son.” Be reconciled. This is the very message of the Gospel—“The ministry of reconciliation.” Thus speak we, as God has commanded us. “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God.” And is this a hard thing we ask of you, that you should be at friendship with Him who is your best Friend? Is this a rigorous law, like the commands of Pharaoh to the children of Israel in Egypt, when He bids you simply strike hands with Him who shed His blood for sinners? We ask you not to be friends of death or Hell. We beg you rather to dissolve your league with them. We pray that grace may lead you to forswear their company forever and be at peace with Him who is incarnate love and infinite mercy. Sinners, why will you resist Him who only longs to save you? Why scorn Him who loves you? Why trample on the blood that bought you and reject the Cross which is the only hope of your salvation? “Kiss the Son.”—

*“Bow the knee and kiss the Son,  
Come and welcome, sinner, come.”*

That is the first meaning of the text—the kiss of reconciliation. The Spirit of God must work a change in man’s heart before he will be willing to give this kiss. It is my heart’s desire, that by the words which shall be uttered this morning, the Spirit may bow the obdurate heart and lead you to give Christ the kiss of reconciliation this very day.

2. Again—the kiss of my text is a kiss of allegiance and homage. It is an Eastern custom for the subjects to kiss the feet of the king. No, in some instances their homage is so abject that they kiss the dust beneath his feet and the very steps of his throne. Now Christ requires of every man who would be saved, that he shall yield to His government and His rule. There are some who are willing enough to be saved and take Christ to be their Priest—but they are not willing to give up their sins—not willing to obey His precepts, to walk in His ordinances and keep His commandments. Now salvation cannot be cut in two. If you would have justification you must have sanctification, too. If your sins are pardoned they must be abhorred. If you are washed in the blood to take away the guilt of sin, you must be washed in the water to take away the power of sin over your affections and life. Oh, Sinners, the command is, “Kiss the Son.” Bow your knee and come and own him to be a monarch and say, “Other lords have had dominion over us. We have worshipped our lusts, our pleasures, our pride, our selfishness, but now will we submit ourselves to Your easy yoke. Take us and make us Yours, for we are willing to be Your subjects”—

*“Oh, Sovereign Grace our hearts subdue, We would be led in triumph too,  
As willing captives to our Lord,  
To sing the triumphs of His Word.”*

You must give Him the kiss of fealty, of homage and loyalty. And take Him to be your king. And is this a hard thing? Is this a rigorous commandment? Why look at Englishmen, how they spring to their feet and sing with enthusiasm—

*“God save our gracious Queen,  
Long live our noble Queen,  
God save the Queen!”*

And is it a hard thing for you and me to be bid to cry, “God save King Jesus! Spread His kingdom! Let Him reign, King of kings and Lord of lords! Let Him reign in our hearts”? Is it a hard thing to bow before His gentle scepter? Is there any cruelty in the demand that we should submit ourselves to the law of right, rectitude, justice, and love? “His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace.” “His commandments are not grievous.” “Come unto Me,” says the Lord, “and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you.” It is not heavy, “take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

O Sinner, leave that black monarch—turn your back upon the king of Hell. May grace enable you now to flee away from him who deludes you today and shall destroy you forever. Come to the Prince Immanuel, the Son of God and now declare yourselves to be the willing subjects of His blessed kingdom. “Kiss the Son.” It is the kiss of reconciliation and the kiss of homage.

3. Again—it is the kiss of worship. They that worshipped Baal kissed the calves. It was the custom in the east for idolaters to kiss the god which they foolishly adored. Now the commandment is that we should give to Christ Divine worship. The Unitarian will not do this—he says, “Christ is but a mere man.” He will not kiss the eternal Son of God. Then let him know that God will not alter His Gospel to suit his heresy. If he rebelliously denies the Godhead of Christ, he need not marvel if in the last day Christ shall say—“But those My enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before Me.” It is no marvel if he who rejects the Godhead of Christ should find that he has built his house upon sand and when the rain descends and the flood comes, his hope shall totter and great shall be the fall thereof. We are bid to worship Christ and O, how pleasant is this command, to kiss him in adoration! It is the highest joy of the Christian to worship Jesus. I know of no thrill of pleasure that can more rejoice the Christian’s breast and thrill his soul to music, than the song of—

*“Worthy is He that once was slain,  
The Prince of Peace that groaned and died, Worthy to rise and live,  
And reign at His Almighty Father’s side.”*

Surely that shall be the very song of Heaven, to sing “Worthy the Lamb,” and yet again to shout louder still, “Worthy the Lamb! Worthy the Lamb!” Well, Sinner, you are bid to do this—to acknowledge Christ your God. “Kiss the Son.” Go to Him in prayer this very day. Cast yourself on your knees and worship Him. Confess your sins committed against Him. Lay hold of His righteousness. Touch the hem of His garment. Adore Him by your faith, trusting in Him. Adore Him by your service, living for Him. Adore Him with your lips, praising Him. Adore Him with your heart, loving Him and surrendering your whole being to Him. God help you in this way to, “kiss the Son.”

4. There is yet a fourth meaning and I think this is the sweetest of all. “Kiss the Son.” Ah, Mary Magdalene, I need you this morning! Come here, Mary—you shall explain my text. There was a woman who had much forgiven and she loved much and as a consequence, loving much she desired much the company and the presence of the Object of her affection. She came to the Pharisee’s house where he was feasting, but she was afraid to enter for she was a sinner. The Pharisee would repulse her and tell her to go away. Why was a

 harlot there in the house of a holy Pharisee? So she came to the door, as if she would peep in and just get a glimpse of Him whom her soul loved. But there He lay beside the table and happily for her, the Pharisee had slighted Christ, he had not put Him at the head of the table, but at the end and therefore His feet—laying backward as He declined—were close against the door.

She came and oh, she could not dare to look upon His head. She stood at His feet, behind Him, weeping. And as she wept, the tears flowed so plenteously that she washed His feet—which the Pharisee had forgotten to wash—with her tears. And then unbraiding her luxurious tresses, which had been the nets into which she had entangled her lovers, she began to wipe His feet with the hairs of her head. And stooping down she kissed His feet and kissed them yet again. Poor Sinner, you that are full of guilt, if you have played the harlot, or if you have been a sinner in other ways, come, I beseech you, to Jesus now. Look to Him, believe in Him—

*“Trust in His blond, for it alone  
Has power sufficient to atone.”*

And this done, come and “kiss the Son”—kiss His feet with love. Oh, if He were here this morning, methinks I would kiss those feet again and again. And if any should enquire the reason, I would answer—

*“Love I much? I’ve much forgiven,*

*I’m a miracle of grace.”*  
Jesus, do You permit me to kiss Your feet with the kisses of affection? And may I pray like the spouse in the Canticles—“Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Your love is better than wine”? May I so pray? Then, glory be to Your name, I will not be slow in praying it! If I may be so highly favored I will not lose the favor through negligence and coldness of heart. Even now my soul gives the kiss of deep and sincere affection—

*“Yes, I love You and adore,  
O for grace to love you more.”*

“Kiss the Son.” Do you see, then, the meaning of it? It is a kiss of reconciliation, a kiss of homage, a kiss of worship and a kiss of affectionate gratitude. “Kiss the Son.”

And what if in this great assembly there should be some soul that said, “I will not kiss the Son, I owe Him nothing, I will not serve Him, I will not be reconciled to Him”? Ah, Soul, there are tears for you. Would God that all the people of Christ would weep for you until your heart were changed—for the terrible part of the text which we are to read belongs to you—and before long you shall know its fearful meaning. But may we not hope better things? Have we not somewhere in this great hall some poor trembling penitent, who with the tear in his eye is saying, “Kiss Him and

be reconciled to Him!—Oh that I might. My fear is, Sir, if I should try to draw near to Christ, He would say, ‘Get you gone, I will have nothing to do with you. You are too vile, too hardened. You have too long resisted the Word, too long despised My grace—get you gone.’ ”

No, Soul, Jesus never said that yet and He never will. Whatever are your sins, as long as you are in the body there is hope. However great your guilt, however enormous your transgression, if you are now willing to be reconciled, God has made you willing and He would not have put the will if He did not intend to gratify it. There is nothing that can keep you from Christ if you are willing to come. Christ casts out none that desire to be saved. There is in His heart enough for all that seek Him, enough for each, enough for evermore. Oh, think not that Christ is ever slower than we are. We never love Him before He loves us. If our heart loves Him, His soul loved us long ago. And if we are now willing to be reconciled to Him, let us rest assured that Jehovah’s melting heart yearns to clasp His Ephraims to His breast. May God bless this exhortation to every heart now present and to Him be the glory.

II. This brings us to the second part of the text. “Kiss the Son”—and THE ARGUMENT is “Lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Read it—“Lest He be angry.” And can He be angry? Is He not the Lamb of God? Can a lamb be angry? Did not He weep over sinners? Can He be angry? Did not He die for sinners—can He be angry? Yes, and when He is angry, it is anger, indeed! When He is angry it is anger that none can match. The most awful word, I think, in the whole Bible is that shriek of the lost, “Rocks hide us! Mountains, fall upon us and hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.”

What a fearful conjunction of terms—“the wrath of the Lamb”? Can you picture that dear face of His, those eyes that wept, those hands that bled, those lips that spoke notes of love, such words of pity—and can you believe that one day those eyes shall know no tears, but shall flash with lightning? That those hands shall know no mercy, but shall grasp a rod of iron and break the wicked into pieces like potter’s vessels? And those feet shall know no errands of love, but He shall tread upon His enemies and crush them, even as grapes are trod by the wine pressers and the blood thereof shall stain His garments and as He comes up from their destruction they shall ask Him, “Who is this that comes”—not from Calvary, not from Gethsemane, but “Who is this that comes from Edom”—the land of His enemies—with dyed garments from Bozrah”?—The land of His stoutest foes—“this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength”?

And what shall be the answer? It is most terrible. Who is this that has trod His enemies and crushed them?—“I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why, Jesus, if You had said, “Mighty to destroy,” we might have understood You. But “mighty to save”!—and so He is—this gives the edge to the whole sentence, that when He shall destroy His enemies, He that is mighty to save will be mighty to crush, mighty to damn, mighty to devour and rend His prey in pieces! I know nothing, I repeat, more fearful than the thought that Christ will be angry and that if we live and die finally impenitent, rejecting His mercy and despising His sacrifice we have good need to tremble at this sentence, “Kiss the Son lest He be angry.”

And now do you see again that if Christ once is angry, it must be all over with our hopes or our rest? We will suppose now some poor girl who has stepped aside from the paths of right. She has persevered in her iniquity despite many warnings. Friends rise up to help her, but they drop off one by one, for she becomes incorrigibly wicked. Others come to help her, but as often as they rise they fall again, for she sins and sins and sins again. There is, however, one who has oftentimes received her to his bosom, erring though she is—her father. He says, “Shall I forget the child I have begotten? Sinner she is, but she is still my child,” and often as she sins and goes away he will not reject her. He receives her to his house again. Tainted and defiled, again he gives her the kiss of fond affection.

At last she perseveres in her iniquity and goes to such a length that one day in her desperate despair, someone says to her, why not seek a friend to deliver you in this your awful hour of distress and anguish on account of sin? “Oh,” says she, “I have none left.” “But there is your father. Have you not father or a mother?” “Yes,” says she, “but he is angry and he will do nothing for me.” Then her last door is shut and her hope is over. What wonder that—

*“Mad from life’s history,  
Glad to death’s mystery,  
Swift to be hurled —  
Anywhere, anywhere,  
Out of the world”—*

she ends her life because her only helper is angry and her hope is gone? Despair must seize her then, when her best, her only helper is angry with her.

Let me give you another picture—a simpler one. There is a dove long gone out of Noah’s ark. Suppose that dove to have been flying many hours till its wings are weary. Poor, poor dove! Across the shoreless sea it flies and finds never a spot whereon its weary feet may rest. At last it remembers the ark. It flies there, hoping there to find a shelter—but suppose it should see Noah standing looking through the window with crossbow to destroy it—then where were its hope? Its only hope has proved the gate of death. Now let it fold its wings and sink into the black stream and die with all the rest. Ah, Sinner, these two are but pictures of the desperateness of your despair when once the Lamb is angry—He who is the sinner’s friend, the sinner’s wooer, He of whom we sometimes say—

*“Jesus, lover of my soul.”*  
When He is angry, where, where, oh where can sinners hide? When He is angry, when He takes a bow and fits an arrow to the string, where is your shelter then?—where your defense and refuge? Sinners, “Kiss the Son,” bow before Him now and receive His grace. Acknowledge His sway, lest

He be angry with you and forever shut you up in black despair, for none can give you hope or joy when once He is angry.

And now mark the effects of Christ’s anger. “And you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Let me give you a picture. You have seen the maid light the fire. At first it is the match, the spark and there is a little kindling. A kindling but a little. What is that compared with the fire that is to succeed? You have heard of the prairie burning. The traveler has lit his fire and dropped a spark—the fire is kindling but a little and a small circle of flame is forming. You cannot judge what will be the mighty catastrophe when the sheet of flame shall seem to cover half the continent. And yet, mark you, your text says that, “when God’s wrath is kindled but a little.” it is even then enough to utterly destroy the wicked, so that they, “perish from the way.” What a fearful thought it presents to us if we have but eyes to see it! It is like one of Martin’s great pictures—it has more cloud in it than plain outline. It has in it great masses of blackness. There is only this little kindling and there is the sinner destroyed.

But what is that! Black thick darkness forever. What must become of the sinner, then, when the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone shall blow up Tophet till its flames reach above all thought and till the fire burns, beneath, even to the lowest Hell? His wrath is kindled but a little, then! Calvin, together with several other excellent commentators, gives another interpretation to this—“In but a little,” and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled very soon, or, “in but a little time.” So it may be well translated without any violence whatever to the original. God’s anger kindles very speedily when once men have rejected Him. When the period of their mercy is passed away, then comes the hour of their black despair and His wrath is kindled in a little time. This should make each one of us think about our souls—the fact that God may take us away with a stroke and a great ransom cannot deliver us.

We had, last Sabbath Day a terrible picture of how soon God can take away a man with a stroke. On our common, you will remember, at Clapham, a man sought shelter beneath a poplar tree and in a moment a bolt fell from Heaven and rent his body in pieces and he died. I should not have marveled if last night, when I was reading my text by the glare of the lightning, thinking it over amidst the roaring of the thunder, if many such deaths had occurred. God can soon take us away. But this is the wonder, that men will visit that tree by which their fellow died and go away and be just as careless as they were before. You and I hear of sudden deaths and yet we imagine we shall not die suddenly. We cannot think God’s wrath will be kindled in a little time and that He will take us away with a stroke. We get the idea that we shall die in our nests, with a slow and gradual death and have abundance of time for preparation. Oh, I beseech you, let no such delusion destroy your soul! “Kiss the Son now, lest He be angry in a little while and you perish from the way.” Now bow before Him and receive His grace.

However, I return to the old reading of the text, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” How terrible is the doom of the wicked! The little kindling of God’s wrath kills them. What shall the eternal burnings be? Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall abide with everlasting burnings? There is a land of thick darkness and despair where dwells the undying worm, which in its ceaseless folds does crush the spirits of the damned. There is a fire quickly burning, that dries up the very marrow of body and soul and yet destroys them not. There also is the pit that knows no bottom, the hopeless falling without a thought of ever coming to an end. There is a land where souls linger in eternal death and yet they never die—crushed, but not annihilated—broken, but not destroyed. Forever, forever, forever, is the ceaseless wave which rolls its fresh tide of fire upon a shore of agony, whose years are as countless as the sands of the sea.

And shall it be your lot and mine to dwell forever with the howling spirits of the damned? Must these eyes weep the briny tear that cannot assuage thirst? Must these lips be parched with infinite heat? Must this body be everlastingly tormented and this soul, with all its powers, become a lake of grief into which torrents of Almighty wrath shall roll ceaselessly with black and fiery streams? Oh, my God, and can the thought be uttered—there may be some in this hall this morning, who, before long, shall be in Hell? If you should see an arrow fitted to a string pointed in yon direction, would you think it a hard prophecy if I should say, that, before long, the arrow would find its mark over yonder? “No,” you would say, “it is but nature that it should go in the way in which it is directed.” But, Sinners, some of you are this day fitted on the bow of sin. Sin is the string that impels you forward. No, more than this. Some of you are whistling onward towards death, despair and Hell. Sin is the path to Hell and you are traveling in it with lightning speed. Why do you think me harsh if I prophecy that you will get to the end before long and reap the harvest to your soul?

Oh, “kiss the Son,” I beseech you. For if you kiss Him not, if you receive not His grace and mercy, you must perish. There is no hope for you— desperate, without remedy—your end must be, if you will not yield your pride and submit to Jesus. Oh, what language shall I use? Here were a task for Demosthenes, if he could rise from the dead and be converted and preach with all his mighty eloquence and exhort you to flee from the wrath to come. Here is a text that might exhaust the eloquence of the Apostle Paul, while with tears running down his cheeks, he would plead with you to flee to Christ and lay hold upon His mercy.

As for me, I cannot speak my soul out. Would that my heart could speak without my lips to tell of the agony I feel just now concerning your souls. Oh, why will you die? “Why will you die, O house of Israel?” Will you make your beds in Hell? Will you wrap yourselves about with flames forever? Will you have the merriment of sin in this life and then reap the harvest of destruction in the world to come? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you by the living God, by death, by eternity, by Heaven and by

Hell. I implore you, stop! Stop, and “kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way.”

Oh, the terrors of the Lord! Who shall speak them?! Last night, we saw, as it were, the back parts of the terrible God, when His garments of light swept through the sky. He made clouds His chariot and He did ride upon the wings of the wind. Sinners, can you stand before the God of thunder? Can you war against the God of lightning? Will you resist Him and despise His Son and reject the offer of mercy and dash yourselves upon His spear and rush upon His sword? Oh, turn! Turn now! Thus says the Lord— “Consider your ways.”—

**“Bow the knee and kiss the Son;  
Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”**  
III. And now give me your attention just a moment or two longer while

with all earnestness I endeavor to preach for a little while upon THE BENEDICTION WITH WHICH THE TEXT CLOSES. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” I have been beating the big drum of threat and now let us have the soft, sweet harp of David, of sweet, wooing benedictions. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Do you put your trust in Him, my Hearer? Beneath the wings of God we nestle and we know of no security elsewhere. This is enough for us. Now the text says that those that trust in Him are blessed. And I would observe, first, that they are really blessed. It is no fiction, no imaginary blessing. It is a real blessedness which belongs to those that trust in God—a blessedness that will stand the test of time, the test of life and the trial of death. A blessedness into which we cannot plunge too deeply, for it is none of it a dream, but all a reality.

Again—those that trust in Him have not only a real blessedness, but they oftentimes have a conscious blessedness. They know what it is to be blest in their troubles, for they are in their trials comforted and they are blest in their joys—for their joys are sanctified. They are blest and they know it, they sing about it and they rejoice in it. It is their joy to know that God’s blessing is come to them. Not in word only but in very deed. They are blessed men and blessed women—

*“They would not change their blest estate For all the world calls good and great.”*

Then, further they are not only really blessed and consciously blessed, but they are increasingly blessed. Their blessedness grows. They do not go downhill, as the wicked do, from bright hope to black despair. They do not diminish in their delights—the river deepens as they wade into it. They are blessed when the first ray of heavenly light streams on their eyeballs. They are blessed when their eyes are opened wider still, to see more of the love of Christ. They are blessed the more their experience widens and their knowledge deepens and their love increases. They are blessed in the hour of death and, best of all, their blessedness increases to eternal blessedness—the perfection of the saints at the right hand of God. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” Time fails me to enter into this blessed benediction and therefore I pause and come back to my old work again, of endeavoring to reach you by earnest entreaty, while I urge you to “kiss the Son.”

Sinner, you are bid to trust in Christ this morning. Come, this is your only hope. Remember, you may do a hundred things, but you will be none the better. You will be like the woman mentioned in Scripture who spent all her money on physicians and was none the better, but, rather, grew worse. There is no hope for you but in Christ. Rest assured that all the mercy of God is concentrated in the Cross. I hear some talk about the uncovenanted mercies of God—there is no such things. The mercies of God are all emptied out into the Covenant. God has put all His grace into the Person of Christ and you shall have none elsewhere. Trust, then, in Christ—so you shall be blessed, but you shall be blessed nowhere else.

Again—I urge you to “kiss the Son,” and trust Christ, because this is the sure way. None have perished trusting in Christ. It shall not be said on earth nor even in Hell shall the blasphemy be uttered, that ever a soul perished that trusted in Christ. “But suppose I am not one of God’s elect?” says one. But if you trust in Christ you are. And there is no supposing about it. “But suppose Christ did not die for me?” If you trust Him, He did die for you. That fact is proved and you are saved. Cast yourself simply on Him. Dare it, run the risk of it—venture on Him, venture on Him, (and there is no risk). You shall not find that you have been mistaken. Sometimes I feel anxiety and doubt about my own salvation. And the only way I can get comfort is this—I go back to where I began and say—

*“I the chief of sinners am.”*  
I go to my chamber and once more confess that I am a wretch undone, without His Sovereign Grace and I pray Him to have mercy on me yet again. Depend on it, it is the only way to Heaven and it is a sure one. If you perish trusting in Christ, you will be the first of the kind. Do you think God would allow any to say, “I trusted in Christ and yet He deceived me. I cast my soul on Him and He was not strong enough to bear me”? Oh, do not be afraid, I beseech you.

And I conclude now by noticing that this is an open salvation. Every soul in the world that feels its need of a Savior and that longs to be saved, may come to Christ. It God has convicted you of sin and brought you to know your need, come, come NOW—come, come NOW! Come NOW—trust now in Christ and you shall now find that blessed are all they that trust in Him. The door of mercy does not stand ajar, it is wide open. The gates of Heaven are not merely hanging on the latch, but they are wide open both night and day. Come, let us go together to that blessed house of mercy and drive our wants away. The grace of Christ is like our street drinking fountains, open to every thirsty wanderer. There is the cup, the cup of faith. Come and hold it here while the water freely flows and drink. There is no one can come up and say it is not made for you. For you can say, “Oh, yes it is, I am a thirsty soul. It is meant for me.” “No,” says the devil, “you are too wicked.” No, but this is a free drinking fountain. It does not say over the top of the fountain, “No thieves to drink here.” All that is wanted at the drinking fountain is simply that you should be willing to

drink, that you should be thirsty and desire. Come, then—  
*“Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream.  
All the fitness He requires  
Is to feel your need of Him.”*

He has given you this. Come and drink. Drink freely. “The Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that hears say come. And whosoever is thirsty, let him come and take the water of life freely.”

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AN EARNEST ENTREATY  
NO. 3550

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1917.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”  
Psalm 2:12.**

LET us have a little quiet talk tonight. I have known a simple, earnest conversation turn the whole current of a man’s life. I recollect a good man, who lived at a certain market town in Suffolk. He was no preacher, as far as I know. He had never tried to preach, yet he was a mighty soulwinner. He had noticed how commonly it happened in that town, as in most of our smaller towns, that the lads, as they grew up, sought employment in London, or in some other large center of industry and, consequently, they left their home, their parents, guardians and the associations amidst which they had been trained, to enter a new sphere—where they would lack much of the oversight that had hitherto checked them when prone to wander. His watchful eyes and ever-listening ears having ascertained within a little when any young man was going, he sent a polite invitation to tea. And at that tea table the words he used to speak, the cautions he gave, and the necessity he urged of being decided for Christ before leaving, and especially the earnest prayer with which he concluded the evening—these things have been remembered by scores of young men, who, on removing to the larger towns, could never shake off the impression which his quiet, devout conversation had made! Some of them even traced their conversion to God, and their subsequent perseverance in the paths of righteousness, to the evening they had spent with that humble, but wise and earnest individual! I wonder whether any of us remember, in our young days, any such talk as that which exerted an influence upon us? I wonder more if, instead of trying to preach anything great tonight which is not much in my line, I try to talk very seriously and pointedly to all present who are unconverted, whether God will not bless it by His Holy Spirit and make it a turning point to decide the present course and eternal destiny of some of my hearers?

Our text contains some very sound advice. Let us ask— to whom was it originally addressed? And to whom is it appropriately addressed now?  
I. TO WHOM WAS IT ADDRESSED.  
“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry.” Look at the 10th verse, “Be wise now, therefore, O you kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth.” Thus to monarchs and potentates of this world—to those who made and those who administered the laws, in whose hands were the liberties, if not the lives of their subjects—were these words spoken! People make a great fuss about a sermon preached before Her Majesty. I must confess to having wasted a shilling once or twice over those productions. I could never make out why they should not have been sold for a halfpenny, for I think better sermons could have been bought for a penny. But, somehow, there is always an interest attached to anything that is preached before a king or a queen, and still more so if it is pointedly preached to a king. Now this was a little private advice given to kings and judges. Still, it offers counsel by which persons of inferior rank may profit. You, Sir, are not so great in station but this advice may be good enough for you! If it was meant for those who sat on thrones, wielded scepters and exercised authority, you will not have to humble yourself much to listen earnestly, and receive gratefully this admonition of wisdom!  
Let me take you by your coat, and hold you for a minute, and say, Be wise now. This is the day for reason. Exercise a little judgment—put on your considering cap—do not spurn the monition, or put it on one side with a huff and a puff, as though it were not discreet or urgent. This was language meant for kings—listen to it—it may be a royal word to you! Perhaps—for strange things happen—it may help to make you a king, too, according to that saying which is written, “He has made us kings and priests unto God.” The language which would command the attention of kings would certainly claim heed of such humble and obscure persons as are here assembled! Surely, when the expostulation proceeds from the mouth of God, and when it is spoken to the highest in the world, you might account it a privilege to have the matter made privy to yourselves! And as it intimately concerns you, there is the more cause that you take heed thereunto.  
The words were spoken to those who had willfully opposed the reign of our Savior, the Son of God, the Lord’s Anointed. They had determined to reject Him. They said, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” A terrible, a disastrous course to resolve upon in the teeth of a destiny that no plot can hinder, no confederacy can avert! Hence, the caution and the counsel appeal to all or to any who have been opposers of Christ and of true religion. I do not suppose there are many such here, who are actively and ostensibly revolting against the Gospel, yet there may be some such and, if there are, I would sound an alarm and ring loudly the warning, “Be wise now, therefore! Be instructed! Do listen a little!” It is good to be zealous in a good cause. But suppose it is a bad cause? Saul of Tarsus was vehement against Christ, but after some consideration, he became quite as enthusiastic for Him. It may cost you many regrets another day to have been so violent against that which you will find out to have been worthy of your love rather than of your fierce opposition! Every wise man, before he commits himself to defend or withstand a policy, should make quite sure, as far as human judgment can, whether it is right or wrong—to be desired, or to be deprecated! Surely I do not speak to any who would willfully oppose that which is good. Or, if prejudice has prompted you, there is all the more reason why your judgment should now be impartial. Stop, therefore, and give ear! It may be your relenting will be kindled, and wisdom will enlighten your heart. These words were spoken to those who ought to have been wise—to kings and judges of the earth. Those mighty ones had been mistaken, otherwise the rebuke would have been untimely and superfluous—“Be wise now, therefore, O you kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth.” It appears they had rebelled—partly through ignorance, but mainly through jealousy and malice—they had rebelled and revolted against the Christ of God. Doubtless they did not rightly understand Him. Perhaps they thought His way was hard, His Laws severe, His government tyrannical. But He meets your wild rage with His mild reasoning! To the gusts of your passion, He responds with the gentle voice of His mercy, “Be wise, O you kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth.” Learn a little more. Get a little more knowledge—it may correct your vain imaginations. A ray of light shining into your minds might make you shudder at the darkness in the midst of which you dwell! A view of the right might, perhaps, show you that you have been wrong. It might take the tiller of your soul and turn the vessel around into another course. We are, none of us, so wise but we could profit by a little more instruction! He that cannot learn from a fool, is a fool himself. When a man says, “I know enough,” he knows nothing! He who thinks that his education is “finished,” had need begin his schooling afresh, for a fair start he has never yet made. With a sound basis, the edifice of education may proceed satisfactorily, but it never can be completed. Excelsior is the student’s motto. He sees higher and higher altitudes as he rises in attainment—and as long as he sojourns in this world, fresh fields of enquiry will continue to open up before him!  
Once again, I believe the words of our text leave an especial reference to those who are thoughtless and careless about their best interests. The kings of the earth were deliberating how they might successfully oppose Christ, but they were strangely and culpably negligent of their real interest. Hence the remonstrance, “Be wise now; be instructed, you judges of the earth.” The general lack of intelligence in the present day with respect to religion is, to my mind, appalling. The knowledge with which most men are content is superficial in the extreme. They do not think! They do not take the pains to make reflections and draw inferences from the facts within their reach, but they allow themselves to drift with the tide of what is called “public opinion.” Were it the fashion for people to carry brains in their heads, some religions which are now very rife would soon come to an end! I have stood aghast with wonder and with awe at the sublime folly of mankind, when I have seen how eagerly and devoutly they will bow down before baubles and street shows, while they vainly imagine that they are worshipping God! Have they no brains within their skulls? Have they no faculty of thought? Have they no reasoning power? What singular defect can be traced to their birth, or with what fatal folly have they renounced their commonsense? Ought we to pity, to chide, or to scorn them? In indictments for witchcraft, I suppose, you punish the impostor as a knave, while you laugh at the victim as a dupe. But in cases of priestcraft, you divide the scandal more equally. So the Sunday theatricals run their course till the force of thought, the voice of conscience, and, I might add, the love of liberty, shall pronounce their doom! People do not think. Some of them are of the religion of their ancestors, whatever that may be! You hear of Roman Catholic families and Quaker families. Not conviction, but

 tradition shapes their ends. Others are of the religion of the circle in which they live, whatever that may be. They are good Protestants, they say—had they been born in Naples, they would have been as good Papists! Or had they been born at Timbuktu, they would have been as good heathens—just about as good in any case! Thought, reason, or judgment never entered into their reckoning. They go up to their place of worship—they pray as others do, or they say, “Amen,” in the service. Thought they have none. They sing without thought, hear without thought and as the thing is to be done, I suppose, they preach without thought!  
Talk of preaching, I have specimens at home of sermons which can be bought for nine pence each. They are underlined, so that the proper emphasis is apparent—and the pauses to be made between the sentences are fairly indicated. Preaching made easy! We shall be favored, one of these days, with preaching machines—we have already got down to hearing machines. The mass of our hearers is not much more animated than an automaton figure. Life and liveliness are lacking in both. Preaching and hearing may both, perhaps, be done by steam! I would it were not so. Men are evidently thoughtful about other things. Bring up a sanitary problem and there are men that will work it out somehow. Is some new invention needed, say, a gun or a torpedo, to effect wholesale destruction of life? You shall find competitors in the arena, vying, one with another, in their study of the murderous science! Man seems to think of everything but of his God—to read everything but his Bible—to feel the influence of everything but the love of Christ, and to see reason and argument in everything except in the inviolable truth of Divine Revelation. Oh, when will men consider? Why are they bent upon dashing into eternity thoughtlessly? Is dying and passing into another world of no more account than passing from the parlor to the drawing room? Is there no hereafter? Is Heaven a dream and Hell a bugbear? Well, then, cease to play with shadows! No longer foster such delusions! Be these things true or false, your insincerity is alike glaring. Like honest men, repudiate the Scriptures if you will not accept their counsel. Do not pretend to believe the solemnities of God’s Word and yet trifle with them! This is to stultify yourselves, while you insult your Maker! I appeal to the conscience of every thoughtless person here, if reason or commonsense would justify such vacillation. Having thus tried to find out the people to whom my text applies, let me now direct your attention to the advice it gives them.  
II. THE ADVICE WHICH IS GIVEN.  
The advice is this—rebel no more against God. You have done so, some of you actively and willfully. Others of you, by ignoring His claims and utterly neglecting His will. It is not right to continue in this rebellious state! To have become entangled in such iniquity is grievous enough, but to continue therein any longer were an outrageous folly and a terrible crime. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Do you say, “We hear of advice and are willing to take it—our anxiety now is to find out the way in which we can become reconciled to God. How can we be restored to friendship with Him whom we have so bitterly wronged and so grossly offended?” Here is the pith of the advice. “Kiss the Son, pay Him homage, yield the affectionate fealty of your hearts to the Son of God.” Between you and the great King, there is an awful breach. You can obtain no audience of Him. So grievous has been your revolt, that He will not see you. He has shut the door and there cannot be any communication between you and Himself. He has hung up a thick veil, through which your prayers cannot penetrate. But He refers you to His Son. That Son is His other Self—One with Himself in essential Deity, who has condescended to become man, has taken your nature into union with Himself, and in that Nature has offered unto Divine Justice an expiatory Sacrifice for human guilt. Now, therefore, God will deal with you through His Son. You must have an Advocate—as many a client cannot plead in court, but must have some counselor to plead for him who is infinitely more versed in the law and better able to defend his cause than he is—so the Lord appoints that you, if you would see the face of your God, must see it in the face of Jesus Christ! The short way of being at peace with God is not to try and mend your ways, or excuse yourself, or perform certain works, or go through certain ceremonies, but to repair to Christ, the one and only Mediator, who once was fastened to the Cross, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. He is now at the right hand of God, and you are required to worship Him, to trust in Him, to love Him. Thus do, and the reconciliation between you and God is effected in a moment! The blessed Jesus will wash you from your guilt, and the righteousness of Christ will cover you with beauty which will make you acceptable in the sight of God. “Kiss the Son.” It means render Him homage, just as in our own country they speak of kissing the Queen’s hands when certain offices are taken and homage is required. So come and kiss the Savior! No hard work this! Some of us would gladly forever kiss His blessed feet! It would be Heaven enough for us. Oh, come and pay your homage to Him! Acknowledge that Christ is your King! Give up your life to His service. Consecrate all your powers and faculties to do His will. But do trust Him. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” That is the true kiss! Trust Him, rely upon Him, depend upon Him—leave off depending upon yourself, and rely upon Jesus! Throw yourself flat down upon the finished work of Christ! When you have so done your faith has reconciled you to God, and you may go your way in peace. Only go your way henceforth to serve that King whose hand you have kissed, and to be the willing subject of that dear Redeemer who ought to have you because He bought you with His precious blood!  
This advice is urgent. Do it at once. I am not speaking, now, after the fashion of the orator, but I am talking to you as a friend. I wish I could pass along those aisles, or over the tops of those pews, and gently take the hand of each one, and say, “Friend, God would gladly have you reconciled to Him, and it only needs the simple act of trusting Jesus and accepting Him to be your Leader and your King.” Do it now. If it is ever worth doing, it is worth doing at once! It is a blessed thing to do. Why delay? It is a simple thing to do! Why hesitate? It is the very least thing God could ask of you, and even that He will not require you to do in your own strength. Are you willing, but weak? He will help you to do what He commands you to do! Now, as you sit in your pew, what say you to this? “I will think it over,” says one. Does it need any thinking over? If I had offended my father, I should wish to be at peace with him immediately— and if my father said to me, “My son, I will be reconciled to you if you will go and speak to your brother about it,” well, I would not think it difficult, for I love my brother as well as my father, and I would go to him at once—and so all would be well. God says, “Go to Jesus. I am in Him. You can reach Me there—go round by His Cross—you will find Me reconciled there. Away from the Cross I am a Judge and my terrors will consume you. With the Cross between you and Me, I am a Father, and you shall behold My face beaming with love to you.” “But how am I to get to Jesus?” you ask. Why, have I not told you?—simply to trust Him—to rely upon Him! Faith is trusting Christ. This is the Gospel, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Put your entire trust in Him. Renounce all lordship that has ever been exercised over you by any other master and become Christ’s servant! Rely on Him to land you safely at the right hand of God, and He will do it. “Kiss the Son.” Oh, Friend, I cannot make you do it—it must be done of your own will. God alone can lead that will of yours to yield itself up to Christ’s will! But I pray you do it—kiss the Son, and do it now! Pursuing our quiet talk, I come to my third point, which is—  
III. HOW IS THIS ADVICE PRESSED HOME UPON US?  
The vanity of any other course is made palpable. Be reconciled to God because there is no use in being at enmity with Him. The kings of the earth opposed God, but while they were plotting and planning, God was laughing. “Yet,” says He, “have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” I think if I were a king and had the misfortune to be driven to go to war, I would not like to fight one that had ten times my own strength! I would rather engage in a somewhat equal combat, with a prospect that by dint of valor and good generalship, victory might be gained. To contend against Omnipotence is insanity! For any man, I care not who he may be, to put himself in opposition to God is utter folly! I have often watched, as doubtless you have done, the foolish moth attracted by the glare of the candle or the gas. He plunges at it, as though he would put it out, and he drops, full of exquisite pain, upon the table. He has enough wing left to make another dash at the flame, and again he is filled with another pain, and unless you mercifully kill him outright, he will continue as long as he has any strength to fight with the fire which destroys him! That is an apt picture of the sinner’s life—and such will be the sinner’s death! Oh, do not so, dear Friend—do not so! Speak I not with voice of reason when I thus dissuade you? If you must fight, let it be with someone that you can overcome. But sit down now and reckon whether you can hope to win a victory against an Almighty God! End the quarrel, Man, for the quarrel will otherwise end in your death and eternal destruction!  
We are further pressed to the duty commanded by the claims of the Son. “Kiss the Son.” As I read the words, they seem to me to have a force of argument in them which explains itself and vindicates its own claims. Kiss! Kiss whom? “Kiss the Son.” And who is He? Why, He is Jesus, the Well-Beloved of the Father! And among the sons of men, the Chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely! Surely Christ is such a princely One that He ought to receive homage of mankind! He has done such great things for us and He has shown such good will towards us, that to pay Him reverence seems not so much the call of duty as the natural impulse of love! The worship which is His due should flow spontaneously from the instincts of Grace rather than be exacted by the fiat of law! Even those who have denied the authenticity of Inspiration have always been charmed with the Character of our Lord, and you will notice that the most astute opponents of Christianity have had little, if anything, to say against the Founder of it, so transparent His virtue, so charming His humility. Oh, Kiss the Son, then! He is God—trust Him. He is Man, a perfect Man—confide in His friendship. He has finished the work of human redemption, therefore, hail Him as your King and pay your homage to Him now! Oh, that God’s eternal Spirit may lead you so to do without hesitation or objection!

Were I talking to some of you in a quiet corner I might gather an argument from the simplicity of the promise here offered you. “Kiss the Son.” Is that all? Pay Jesus homage. Is that all? The Emperor of Germany, in the olden times when Popes were Popes, had offended his Unholiness—and before he could be restored to favor, he had to stand for three days (I think it was) outside the castle gate, in the deep snow, in the depth of winter, and do penance. I have seen, myself, in Rome and elsewhere, outside of the older churches, places uncovered and exposed to wind and rain, to the heat of summer and the frost of winter, where backsliders were made to stand, sometimes for years, even, before they were restored, if they had committed some offense against ecclesiastical statutes! You will sometimes see in old country churches of England little windows that run slanting and just look toward the communion table, through which poor offenders who professed repentance, after some months of standing in the church yard, or perhaps outside of it, were at last allowed to take a peep at the altar, at the expiration of their weary term of penance! All this is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, for the spirit of the Gospel is, “Come, now, and let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool.” The spirit of my text is, “Kiss the Son, now”—and that is all. Though those lips were once blaspheming, let them kiss the Son! Though these lips have uttered high words and proud words, or perhaps lying and lascivious words, “Kiss the Son.” Bow down at those dear pierced feet and trust Emmanuel, and acknowledge yourself His servant, and you shall be forgiven—forgiven at once, without delay and this night you shall be accepted in Christ! I am right glad I have got so good a message to tell! I would that you would receive it with gladness. May it drop like the snowflakes on the sea, which sink into the waves. May each invitation sink into your soul, there to bless you henceforth and forever!  
Moreover, the exhortation of our text is backed up with felicitations for those who yield to it. “Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him.” Those of you who do not know anything about trusting in Christ must have noticed how joyously we sang that hymn just now—  
*“Oh, happy day that fixed my choice  
On You, my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.”*  
Don’t you think there was some fervor in our tones? Was it not sung as if we meant it? If nobody else meant it, I did! And I could see by the look of your eyes that a good many of you were stirred with grateful recollections. It was the happiest day in all our lives when Jesus washed our sins away! Far be it from us to deceive any of you by saying that to be a Christian will save you from the sorrows of the world, or from trials and tribulations, from physical pain or from natural death. Nothing of the kind! You will be liable to sickness and adversity in their manifold forms, as other men are, but you will have this to comfort you in every dark, distressing hour—that these light afflictions, which are but for a season—will come to you from a loving Father’s gentle hand, with a gracious purpose, and they will be dealt out to you in weight and measure according to His judgment, while some sweet consolations will always be sent with them. And, above all, there is perpetual joy and perennial satisfaction in that man’s heart who knows that he is right with God. Although his house may not be as he would have it, yet he has accepted God’s way of reconciliation—he is reconciled by the blood of Christ! God loves him and he loves God! He is confident, therefore, that whether he lives or dies, he must be blessed, because he is at peace with God! Oh, happy day, happy day, thrice happy day, when a man comes into this blessed state! I have heard many regret that they have pursued the pleasures of sense and been fascinated with them, but I never yet heard of one who had found the dear delights of faith pall on his taste! It has never fallen to my lot yet to attend a dying bed where I have heard a Christian regret that he put his trust in his Savior! Neither have I ever heard at any time of anyone who died believing in Jesus who has had to say, “Had I but served the world with half the zeal I served my God I should have been a happier man.” Oh, no! Such bitter reflections on misspent and misused talents befit the worldling, and the world’s poet put it into the dying man’s mouth in another form from that in which I gave it, for, “what we might have been,” and, “what we might have done,” make the sum of life’s bewailing when death in view makes such repentance unavailing! The Christian’s satisfaction is, on the other hand, only shaded by the wish all feel that they had loved the Savior more intensely, trusted Him more confidently and served Him more diligently! Never have I heard any other kind of compunction and self-reproach.  
“Come along, then, Friend, Come along,” they say to us! “What matters so long as you are happy?” I have often heard them say so. And let me say to you, if that is one of your slogans and you really do seek after happiness, you cannot do better than pay homage to the Son of God, end the awful rupture between you and your Creator, and henceforth put your trust in Him. One other motive I must mention. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” A striking expression! If Christ gets a little angry, men perish from the way! Then what must His great anger be? If His anger, kindled but a little, burns like a devouring fire, and men perish from the way of life, and from all hope of salvation, what must His great wrath be? Is there a fear suggested here that anybody will provoke Christ to fiercer anger? There is. Alas, there is! Shall I tell you the likeliest person to do it? Not, I think, that abandoned sinner who was born and bred in an immoral atmosphere and has followed a vicious course to the present hour. To him I would say, “Come to Jesus, and He will wash you now, and cleanse you from all your pollution.” But the man I tremble for as most likely to make Him swear in His wrath is such a one as I was— privileged with godly parents, watched with jealous eyes, scarcely ever permitted to mingle with questionable associates, warned not to listen to anything profane or licentious—taught the way of God from his youth up! In my case there came a time when the solemnities of eternity pressed upon me for a decision and when a mother’s tears and a father’s supplications were offered to Heaven on my behalf. At such a time, had I not been helped by the Grace of God, but had I been left alone to do violence to conscience, and to struggle against conviction, I might have been at this moment perhaps dead, buried, and doomed, having, through a course of vice, brought myself to my grave! Or I might have been as earnest a ringleader among the ungodly as I desire to be for Christ and His Truth! When there is light given, when one is not left to grope in darkness, when conscience is kept tender, a little provocation may then very much anger Christ!  
I am afraid some of you young people that are growing up here stand in deep need of remonstrance. You have got good parents. You have been instructed in the Scriptures from your infancy and you have had great many deep impressions while sitting in these pews listening to the sound of the Gospel—and yet you are playing with them, you are trifling with them! Nothing bad about you, so you think. You are not conscious of having grossly violated any moral law. But have you never heard of a gentleman in India who had a tame leopard that went about his house? It was as playful as a cat, and did no one any harm till one day, as he lay asleep, the leopard licked his hand and licked until it had licked a sore place and tasted blood. After that there was nothing for it but to destroy it—for all the leopard-nature was aroused by that taste of blood! And some of you young people, with all the godly associations that are round about you, will—I am always afraid—get a taste of the devilry outside, of the world’s vice and sin. And then there is the leopard’s nature in you. If you once get the taste and flavor of it, you will be prone to be always thirsting for it. Then, instead of the hope we now cherish, that we shall soon see you at your parents’ side, serving Christ—see you take your father’s place, young man, in later years—see you, young woman, grow up to be a matron in the Church of God, bringing many others to the Savior—we may have to lament that the children are not as the parents, and cry, “Woe is the day that ever they were born.” I, therefore, want you to decide, lest you perish from the way—from the way of God and the way of righteousness—while His wrath is kindled but a little, lest He say, “Let them alone,” and throw the reins on your neck, for if He should once do that, woe the day! Nothing can happen worse to a man than to be left to himself. Kiss the Son, then!  
Affectionately and earnestly do I entreat you—not standing here exofficio to deliver pious platitudes, but from my very soul, as though I were your brother or father, I would say, Young man, young woman, kiss the Son now! Yield your heart up to Jesus now! Blessed are they who trust in Him now. Oh, tonight, tonight, tonight—your first night in Grace, or else your last night in hope! Tonight, tonight! The clock has just struck. It seemed to say, “Tonight.” God help you to say, “Yes, it shall be tonight, for God and for Christ!”—  
*“Songs of triumph then resounding  
From your happy lips shall flow!  
In the knowledge of salvation  
You true happiness shall know,  
Through Christ Jesus,  
Who alone can life bestow.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 7:36-48.**

Verse 36. And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. They sat according to the Eastern custom of sitting, which was rather lying at length, with the feet far out upon the couch or sofa.

37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner. In a particular sense, a sinner—one whose very trade was sin.  
37, 38. When she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at His feet, behind Him, weeping. As she could do, you see, without coming into the room, except for a few yards, especially if the Savior’s feet were close against the door.  
38. And began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. For water she gives her tears, for a towel, her hair—to heal the blisters of His weary pilgrimage, there are her soft lips for liniment and then, for ointment, comes this precious salve.  
39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spoke within himself, saying, This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is who touches Him; for she is a sinner. “She is a sinner, and does He let her touch Him, kiss His feet and show such tokens of affection? What Man must He be who allows a harlot’s kiss, even though it is upon His feet?” Ah, poor foolish Pharisee! He judged according to the sight of the eyes, or else he might have known that the best of men would never be angry at a harlot’s tears, for the tears of repentance, come from whatever heart they may, are always like diamonds in the esteem of those who judge rightly.  
40-42. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto you. And he said, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay—And were, therefore, likely to be cast into prison, and to be sold as slaves.  
42-43. He frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, You have rightly judged. There were no bonds, no promises of what they would do in the future, but he frankly forgave them both.  
44. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, See you this woman? I entered into your house—And it was, therefore, your duty to attend to Me.  
44. You gave Me no water for My feet. Though that was the common custom.  
44, 45. But she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head You gave Me no kiss. Which was the customary welcome to every honored guest—a kiss upon the cheek or upon the forehead.  
45. But this women since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss My feet. She has done what you ought to have done; she has done it better than you could have done it; she has done it when there was no claim upon her to do it, except that she has been forgiven much, and, therefore, loved much.  
46. My head with oil you did not anoint. This, too, was the usual custom.  
46-48. But this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Therefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. And He said unto her, Your sins are forgiven.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #495 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GREATEST TRIAL ON RECORD  
NO. 495

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed.”  
Psalm 2:2.**

AFTER our Lord had been betrayed by the false-hearted Judas, He was bound by the officers who had come to take Him. No doubt the cords were drawn as tight, and twisted as mercilessly as possible. If we believe the traditions of the fathers, these cords cut through the flesh even to the very bones, so that all the way from the garden to the house of Annas, His blood left a crimson trail. Our Redeemer was hurried along the road which crosses the brook Kedron. A second time He was made, like unto David, who passed over that brook, weeping as he went.

And perhaps it was on this occasion that he drank of that foul brook by the way. The brook Kedron, you know, was that into which all the filth of the sacrifices of the temple was cast. And Christ, as though He were a foul and filthy thing, must be led to the black stream. He was led into Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate, the gate through which the lambs of the Passover, and the sheep for sacrifice were always driven. Little did they understand, that in so doing, they were again following out to the very letter the significant types which God had ordained in the law of Moses.

They led, I say, this Lamb of God through the Sheep Gate, and they hastened Him on to the house of Annas, the ex-high priest, who, either from his relationship to Caiaphas, from his natural ability, or his prominence in opposing the Savior, stood high in the opinion of the rulers. Here they made a temporary call, to gratify the bloodthirsty Annas with the sight of his victim. And then, hastening on, they brought Him to the house of Caiaphas, some little distance off, where, though it was but a little past the dead of night, many members of the Sanhedrim were assembled.

In a very short time, no doubt informed by some speedy messenger, all the rest of the elders came together and sat down with great delight to the malicious work at hand. Let us follow our Lord Jesus Christ, not, like Peter, afar off, but, like John. Let us go in with Jesus into the high priest’s house. And when we have tarried awhile there, and have seen our Savior despitefully used, let us traverse the streets with Him, till we come to the hall of Pilate. And then to the palace of Herod, and then afterwards to the place called “the pavement,” where Christ is subjected to an ignominious competition with Barabbas, the murderer. And where we hear the howling of the people, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

Brethren, as the Lord gave commandment concerning even the ashes and offal of the sacrifices, we ought to think no matter trivial which stands in connection with our great Burnt Offering. My admonition is, “Gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost.” As gold

Sermon #490 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1  
smiths sweep their shops to save even the filings of the gold, so every word of Jesus should be treasured up as very precious.

But, indeed, the narrative to which I invite you is not unimportant. Things which were purposed of old, prophesied by Seers, witnessed by Apostles, written by Evangelists and published by the ambassadors of God, are not matters of secondary interest. They deserve our solemn and devout attention. Let all our hearts be awed as we follow the King of kings in His pathway of shame and suffering.

I. Come we, then, to the hall of Caiaphas. After the mob had dragged our Lord from the house of Annas, they reached the palace of Caiaphas, and there a brief interval occurred before the high priest came forth to question the Prisoner. How were those sad minutes spent? Was the poor Victim allowed a little pause to collect His thoughts, that He might face His accusers calmly? Far from it—Luke shall tell the pitiful story—“And the men that held Jesus mocked Him and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote You? And many other things blasphemously spoke they against Him.”

The officers were pausing until the chairman of the court should please to have an interview with the Prisoner, and instead of suffering the Accused to take a little rest before a trial so important, upon which His life and Character depended, they spend all the time in venting their bitter malice upon Him. Observe how they insult His claim to the Messiahship! In effect, they mock Him thus—“You claim to be a Prophet like unto Moses. You know things to come. If you are sent of God, prove it by discovering your foes. We will put You on trial and test You, O Man of Nazareth.”

They bind His eyes and then, smiting Him one after another, they bid Him exercise His prophetic gift for their amusement, and prophesy who it was that smote Him. Oh, shameful question! How gracious was the silence, for an answer might have withered them forever. The day shall come when all that smite Christ shall find that He has seen them, though they thought His eyes were blinded. The day shall come, Blasphemer, Worldling, careless Man, when everything that you have done against Christ’s cause, and Christ’s people, shall be published before the eyes of men and angels—and Christ shall answer your question—and shall tell you who it is that smote Him.

I speak to some this morning who have forgotten that Christ sees them. And they have ill-treated His people. They have spoken ill of His holy cause, saying, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” I tell you, the Judge of men shall, before long, point you out and make you, to your shame and confusion of face, confess that you smote the Savior when you smote His Church.

This preliminary mockery being over, Caiaphas, the high priest came in. He began, at once, to interrogate the Lord prior to the public trial, doubtless with the view of catching Him in His speech. The high priest asked Him, first, of his disciples. We do not know what questions he asked. Perhaps they were something like these—“What do You mean, to allow a rabble to follow You wherever You go? Who are You, that You should have twelve persons always attending You, and calling You Master? Do You intend to make these the leaders of a band of men? Are these to be Your lieutenants, to raise a host on Your behalf?

“Or do You pretend to be a Prophet, and are these the sons of the Prophets who follow You, as Elisha did Elijah? Moreover, where are they? Where are Your gallant followers? If You are a good man, why are they not here to bear witness to You? Where are they gone? Are they not ashamed of their folly, now that Your promises of honor all end in shame?” The high priest, “asked Him of His disciples.” Our Lord Jesus, on this point, said not a syllable. Why this silence? Because it is not for our Advocate to accuse His disciples. He might have answered, “Well do you ask, ‘Where are they?’ The cowards forsook Me. When one proved a traitor, the rest took to their heels.

“You ask, ‘Where are My disciples?’ There is one yonder, sitting by the fire, warming his hands, the same who just now denied Me with an oath.” But no, He would not utter a word of accusation. He whose lips are mighty to intercede for His people, will never speak against them. Let Satan slander, but Christ pleads. The accuser of the Brothers and Sisters is the prince of this world—the Prince of peace is ever our Advocate before the Eternal Throne.

The high priest next shifted his ground and asked him concerning His doctrine—what it was that He taught—whether what He taught was not in contradiction to the original teachings of their great lawgiver Moses—and whether He had not railed at the Pharisees, reviled the Scribes, and exposed the rulers. The Master gave a noble answer. Truth is never shamefaced—He boldly points to His public life as His best answer. “I spoke openly to the world. I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, where the Jews always resort. And in secret have I said nothing. Why ask me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.”

No sophistries—no attempt at evasion—the best armor for the truth is her own naked breast. He had preached in the market places, on the mountain’s brow, and in the Temple courts. Nothing had been done in a corner. Happy is the man who can make so noble a defense. Where is the weakness in such a harness? Where can the arrow pierce the man arrayed in so complete a panoply? Little did that arch-knave Caiaphas gain by his crafty questioning. For the rest of the questioning, our Lord Jesus said not a word in self-defense. He knew that it availed not for a lamb to plead with wolves. He was well aware that whatever He said would be misconstrued and made a fresh source of accusation.

And He willed, moreover, to fulfill the prophecy, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” But what power He exerted in thus remaining silent! Perhaps nothing displays more fully the Omnipotence of Christ than this power of self-control. Control the Deity? What power less than Divine can attempt the task? Behold, my Brothers and Sisters, the Son of God does more than rule the winds and commend the waves, He restrains Himself. And when a word, a whisper would have refuted His foes and swept them to their eternal destruction, He “opened not His mouth.” He who opened His mouth for His enemies, will not utter a word for Himself.

If ever silence were more than golden, it is this deep silence under infinite provocation.

During this preliminary examination, our Lord suffered an outrage which needs a passing notice. When He had said, “Ask them that hear Me,” some over-officious person in the crowd struck Him in the face. The margin in John 18:22 very properly corrects our version and renders the passage, “with a rod.” Now, considering that our blessed Lord suffered so much, this one little particular might seem unimportant, only it happens to be the subject of prophecy in the book of Micah 5:1, “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.”

This smiting while under trial is peculiarly atrocious. To strike a man while he is pleading in his own defense, would surely be a violation of the laws even of barbarians. It brought Paul’s blood into his face and made him lose his balance when the high priest ordered them to smite him on the mouth. I think I hear his words of burning indignation—“God shall smite you, you whited wall! For do you sit to judge me after the Law, and command me to be smitten contrary to the Law?”

How soon the servant loses his temper! How far more glorious the meekness of the Master. What a contrast do these gentle words afford us—“If I have spoken evil, bear witness to the evil. But if well, why do you smite Me?” This was such a concentrated infamy, to strike a man while pleading for his life, that it well deserved the notice both of Evangelist and Prophet.

But now the court are all sitting. The members of the great Sanhedrim are all in their various places, and Christ is brought forth for the public trial before the highest ecclesiastical court. It is, mark you, a foregone conclusion that by hook or crook they will find Him guilty. They scour the neighborhood for witnesses. There were fellows to be found in Jerusalem, like those who in the olden times frequented the Old Bailey—“straw witnesses”—who were ready to be bought on either side. And, provided they were well paid, would swear to anything. But for all this, though the witnesses were ready to perjure themselves, they could not agree one with another.

Being heard separately, their tales did not tally. At last two came with some degree of similarity in their witness. They were both liars, but for once the two liars had struck the same note. They declared that He said, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands,” Mark 14:58. Now here was, first, misquotation. He never said, “I will destroy the temple.” His words were, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” See how they add to His words, and twist them to their own ends? Then again, they not only misquoted the words, but they misrepresented the sense, willfully, because He spoke concerning the temple of His body, and not the literal temple in which they worshipped.

And this they must have known. He said, “Destroy this temple”—and the accompanying action might have showed them that He meant His own body, which was raised by His glorious resurrection after destruction upon the Cross. Let us add, that even when thus misrepresented, the witness was not sufficient as the foundation for a capital charge. Surely there could be nothing worthy of death in a man’s saying, “Destroy this temple and I will build it in three days.” A person might make use of those words a thousand times over—he might be very foolish, but he would not be guilty of death for such an offense.

But where men have made up their minds to hate Christ, they will hate Him without a cause. Oh, you that are adversaries of Christ—and there are some such here today—I know you try to invent some excuse for your opposition to His holy religion! You forge a hundred falsehoods! But you know that your witness is not true, and the trial in your conscience, through which you pass the Savior, is but a mock one. Oh that you were wise, and would understand Him to be what He is, and submit yourselves to Him now. Finding that their witness, even when tortured to the highest degree, was not strong enough, the high priest, to get matter of accusation, commanded Him by the Most High God to answer whether He was the Christ, “the Son of the Blessed.”

Being thus entreated, our Master would not set us an example of cowardice—He spoke to purpose—He said, “I am,” Mark 14:62, and then, to show how fully He knew this to be true, He added, “you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven.” I cannot understand what Unitarians do with this incident. Christ was put to death on a charge of blasphemy, for having declared Himself to be the Son of God. Was not that the time when any sensible person would have denied the accusation? If He had not really claimed to be the Son of God, would He not now have spoken?

Would He not now, once and for all, have delivered our minds from the mistake under which we are laboring, if, indeed, it is a mistake, that He is the Son of God? But no, He seals it with His blood. He bears open testimony before the herd of His accusers. “I am.” I am the Son of God, and I am the sent One of the Most High. Now, now the thing is done! They want no further evidence. The judge, forgetting the impartiality which becomes his station, pretends to be wonderfully struck with horror. He rends his garments, turns round to ask his co-assessors whether they need any further witness. And they, all too ready, hold up their hands in token of unanimity and our precious Master is at once condemned to die.

Ah, Brothers and Sisters—and no sooner condemned, than the high priest, stepping down from his divan—spits in His face! And then the Sanhedrim follow and smite Him on His cheeks. And then they turn Him down to the rabble that had gathered in the court, and they buffet Him from one to the other, and spit upon His blessed cheeks, and smite Him. And then they play the old game again, which they had learned so well before the trial came on. They blindfold Him for a second time, place Him in a chair, and as they smite Him with their fists, they cry. “Prophet! Prophet! Prophet! Who is it that smote You? Prophecy unto us!”

And thus the Savior passed a second time through that most brutal and ignominious treatment. If we had tears, if we had sympathies, if we had hearts—we should prepare to shed those tears, to awake those sympathies, and break those hearts now. O Lord of Life and Glory! How shamefully were You treated by those who pretended to be the curators of holy Truth, the conservators of integrity, and the teachers of the Law!

Having thus sketched the trial as briefly as I could, let me just say that throughout the whole of this trial before the ecclesiastical tribunal, it is manifest that they did all they could to pour contempt upon His two

claims—to Deity and to Messiahship. Now, Friends, this morning—this morning, as truly as on that eventful occasion—you and I must decide on which of two sides we are on. Either this day we must cheerfully acknowledge His Godhead and accept Him also as the Messiah, the Savior promised of old to us. Or else we must take our post with those who are the adversaries of God and of His Christ.

Will you ask yourself the question, on which side will you now stand? I pray you, do not think that Christ’s Deity needs any further proof than that which this one court gives. My dear Friends, there is no religion under Heaven, no false religion, which would have dared to hazard such a statement—for that yonder Man who was spit upon, and buffeted, was none other than incarnate God. No false religion would venture to draw upon the credulity of its followers to that extent. What? That Man there who speaks not a word, who is mocked, despised, rejected, made nothing of—what?—He is “very God of very God?” You do not find Mohammed, nor any false Prophet asking any person to believe a doctrine so extraordinary!

They know too well that there is a limit, even to human faith. And they have not ventured upon such a marvelous assertion as this, that yonder despised Man is none other than the Upholder of all things. No false religion would have taught a truth so humbling to him who is its founder and lord. Besides, it is not in the power of any man-made religion to have conceived such a thought! That Deity should willingly submit to be spit upon to redeem those whose mouths vented the spittle! In what book do you read such a wonder as this? We have pictures drawn from imagination— we have been enchanted along romantic pages—and we have marvelled at the creative flights of human genius. But where did you ever read such a thought as this?

“God was made flesh and dwelt among us”? He was despised, scourged, mocked, treated as though He were the offscouring of all things? He was brutally treated, worse than a dog, and all out of pure love to His enemies? Why, the thought is such a great one, so God-like, the compassion in it is so Divine, that it must be true! None but God could have thought of such a thing as this stoop from the highest Throne in Heaven to the Cross of deepest shame and woe. And do you think that if the doctrine of the Cross were not true, such effects would follow from it?

Would those South Sea Islands, once red with the blood of cannibalism, be now the abode of sacred song and peace? Would this island, once itself the place of naked savages, be what it is, through the influence of the benign Gospel of God, if that Gospel were a lie? Ah, hallowed mistake, indeed, to produce such peaceful, such blessed, such lasting, such Divine results! Ah, He is God. The thing is not false.

And that He is Messiah, who shall doubt? If God should send a Prophet, what better Prophet could you desire? What Character would you seek to have exhibited more completely human and Divine? What sort of a Savior would you wish for? What could better satisfy the cravings of conscience? Who could commend Himself more fully to the affections of the heart? He must be, we feel at once, as we see Him, One alone by Himself, with no competitor—He must be the Messiah of God.

Come, now, Sirs, on which side will you set yourselves? Will you smite Him? I put the question—“Who is it that will smite Him this day? Who is it that will spit upon Him this day?” “I will not,” says one, “but I do not accept nor believe in Him.” In that you smite Him, Fool! “I do not hate Him,” says another, “but I am not saved by Him.” In refusing His love, you smite Him. Whoever among you will not trust Him with your soul—in that you smite Him, smite Him in the most tender part—since you impugn His love and power to save.

Oh, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” That suffering Man stands in the place of everyone that will believe on Him. Trust Him! Trust Him!—you have then accepted Him as your God, as your Messiah. Refuse to trust Him!—you have smitten Him. And you may think it little to do this today—but when He rides upon the clouds of Heaven you will see your sin in its true light, and you will shudder to think that ever you could have refused Him who now reigns, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” God help you to accept Him, as your God and Christ, today!

II. But our time flies too rapidly and we must hasten with it and accompany our Savior to another place.  
The Romans had taken away from the Jews the power to put a person to death. The Jews sometimes did it still, but they did it, as in the case of Stephen, by popular tumult. Now, in our Savior’s case, they could not do this because there was still a strong feeling in favor of Christ among the people. A feeling so strong, that had they not been bribed by the rulers, they would never have said, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” You will remember that the priests and rulers did not arrest Him on the feast day, “lest,” they said, “there be a tumult among the people.”  
Besides, the Jewish way of putting a person to death, was by stoning— therefore, unless there was a sufficient number of persons who hated Him, a person would never get put to death at all. That is why the method of putting to death by stoning was chosen, because if a person was generally thought to be innocent, very few persons would stone him. And although he would be somewhat maimed, his life might possibly be spared. They thought, therefore, the Savior might escape as He did at other times, when they took up stones to stone Him.  
Moreover, they desired to put Him to the death of the accursed. They would identify Him with slaves, and criminals, and hang him like the Canaanite kings of old. Therefore they took him away to Pilate. The distance was about a mile. He was bound in the same cruel manner, and was doubtless cut by the cords, He had already suffered most dreadfully. Remember the bloody sweat of last Sunday week. Then remember that He has already twice been beaten. And He is now hurried along, without any rest or refreshment, just as the morning is breaking, along the streets to the palace where Pilate lived.  
Perhaps the tower of Antonia, close to the Temple itself—we are not quite sure. He is bound and they hurry Him along the road. And here the Roman writers supply a great number of particulars of anguish out of their very fertile imaginations. After they had brought Him there, a difficulty occurred. These holy people, these very righteous elders, could not come into the company of Pilate, because Pilate, being a Gentile, would defile them! Now there was a broad space outside the palace, like a raised platform, called “the pavement,” where Pilate was likely to sit on those high days, that he might not touch these blessed Jews.  
So he came out on the pavement, and they, themselves, went not into the hall, but remained before “the pavement.” Always notice that sinners who can swallow camels will strain at gnats! Crowds of men who will do great sins are very much afraid of committing some little things which they think will affect their religion. Notice, that many a man who is a big thief during the week, will ease his conscience by rigid Sabbatarianism when the day comes round. In fact, most hypocrites run for shelter to some close observance of days, ceremonies and observations—when they have slighted the weightier matters of the Law.  
Well, Pilate receives Jesus bound. The charge brought against Him was not, of course, blasphemy. Pilate would have laughed at that, and declined all interference. They accused Him of stirring up sedition, pretending to be a king, and teaching that it was not right to pay tribute to Caesar. This last charge was a clear and manifest lie. He refuse to pay tribute? Did not He send to the fish’s mouth to get the money? He say that Caesar must not have his due? Did He not tell the Herodians—“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s?” He stir up a sedition?—the Man that had “not where to lay His head?” He pretend to snatch the diadem from Caesar?—He, the Man who hid Himself, when the people would have taken Him by force and made Him a king? Nothing can be more atrociously false.  
Pilate examines him and discovers at once, both from His silence and from His answer, that He is a most extraordinary Person. He perceives that the kingdom which Jesus claims is something supernatural. He cannot understand it. He asks Him what He came into the world for—the reply puzzles and amazes him, “To bear witness to the truth,” says Jesus. Now, that was a thing no Roman understood—for a hundred years before Pilate came, Jugurtha said of the city of Rome, “a city for sale”—bribery, corruption, falsehood, treachery, villainy. These were the gods of Rome, and truth had fled the seven hills. The very meaning of the word was scarcely known.  
So Pilate turned on his heel and said, “What is truth?” As much as to say, “I am the procurator of this part of the country. All I care for is money.” “What’s truth?” I do not think he asked the question, “What is truth?” as some preach from it, as if he seriously desired to know what it really was, for surely he would have paused for the Divine reply and not have gone away from Christ the moment afterwards. He said, “Pshaw! What’s truth?” Yet there was something so awful about the Prisoner, that his wife’s dream, and her message—“See that you have nothing to do with this just Person,” all worked upon the superstitious fears of this very weak-minded ruler.  
So he went back and told the Jews a second time, “I find no fault in Him.” And when they said, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning at Galilee to this place,” Pilate caught at that word “Galilee.” “Now,” he thought, “I will be rid of this Man. The people shall have their way, and yet I will not be guilty.” “Galilee?” said he. “Why, Herod is ruler there. You had better take Him to Herod at once.” He thus gained two or three points—he made Herod his friend—he hoped to exonerate himself of his crime—and yet please the mob.  
Away they go to Herod. Oh, I think I see that blessed Lamb of God again hounded through the streets! Did you ever read such a tale? No martyr, even in Bloody Mary’s time, was ever harried thus as the Savior was. We must not think that His agonies were all confined to the Cross. They were endured in those streets—in those innumerable blows, and kicks, and strikes with the fist, that He had to bear. They took Him before Herod and Herod, having heard of His miracles, thought to see some wonderful thing, some piece of jugglery, done in his presence. And when Christ refused to speak and would not plead before, “that fox,” at all, Herod treated Him with a sneer. “They made nothing of Him.”  
Can you picture the scene? Herod, his captains, his lieutenants—and on down to the mean soldiers—treat the Savior with a broad grin! “A pretty king,” they seem to say. “More like a miserable beggar! Look at His cheeks, all bruised where they have been smiting Him—is that the color of royalty’s complexion?” “Look,” they say, “He is emaciated, He is covered with blood, as though He had been sweating drops of blood all night. Is

 that the imperial purple?” And so they “made nothing of Him,” and despised His kingship.  
And Herod said, “Bring out that costly white robe. If He is a king, let us dress Him so,” and so the white robe is put on Him—not a purple one— that, Pilate put on afterwards. He has two robes put on Him—the one put on by the Jews, the other by the Gentiles, seeming to be a fit comment on that passage in Solomon’s song, where the spouse says, “My beloved is white and ruddy”—white with the gorgeous robe which marked Him King of the Jews, and then red with the purple robe which Pilate afterwards cast upon His shoulders, which proved him King of nations, too.  
And so Herod and his men of war, after treating Jesus as shamefully as they could, looking at Him as some madman more fit for Bedlam than elsewhere, sent Him back again to Pilate. Oh, can you not follow Him? You need no great imagination—as you see them dragging Him back again! It is another journey along those streets. Another scene of shameful tumult, bitter scorn and cruel smiting. Why, He dies a hundred deaths, my Brothers and Sisters, it is not one—it is death on death the Savior bears, as He is dragged from tribunal to tribunal.  
Look, they bring Him to Pilate a second time! Pilate again is anxious to save Him. He says, “I have found no fault in this Man touching those things whereof you accuse Him—no, and neither Herod—I will therefore release Him!” “No, no,” they say. And they clamor greatly. He proposes a cruel alternative, which yet He meant for tender mercy. “I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.” He gave Him over to his lictors to be scourged. The Roman scourge was, as I have explained before, a most dreadful instrument.  
It was made of the sinews of oxen and little sharp pieces of bone, which, you know, cause the most frightful lacerations, if by accident you even run your hand over them. Little sharp pieces, splinters of bone, were intertwisted here and there among the sinews. Every time the lash came down, some of these pieces of bone went right into the flesh and tore off heavy large pieces, and not only the blood but the very flesh would be rent away.  
The Savior was tied to the column and thus beaten. He had been beaten before—but this of the Roman lictor was probably the most severe of His flagellations. After Pilate had beaten Him, he gave Him up to the soldiers for a short time, that they might complete the mockery, and so be able to witness that Pilate had no idea of the royalty of Jesus, and no complicity in any supposed treason. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head and bowed before Him and spat on Him. They put a reed in His hands. They drove the crown of thorns into His temples. They covered Him with a purple robe.  
And then Pilate brought Him out, saying, “Behold the Man!” I believe he did it out of pity. He thought, “Now I have wounded Him and cut Him to pieces. I will not kill Him. This sight will move their hearts.” Oh, that Ecce Homo ought to have melted their hearts, if Satan had not made them harder than flints, and sterner than steel. But no, they cry, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” So Pilate listens to them again, and they change their tune. “He has spoken blasphemy.” This was a wrong charge to bring—for Pilate, having his superstition again aroused—is even more afraid to put him to death.  
And he comes out again, and says, “I find no fault in Him.” What a strong contest between good and evil in that man’s heart! But they cried out again, “If you let this man go you are not Caesar’s friend.” They hit the mark this time, and he yields to their clamor. He brings forth a basin of water, and he washes his hands before them all, and he says, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.” A poor way of escaping! That water could not wash the blood from his hands, though their cry did bring the blood on their heads—“His blood be on us, and on our children.”  
When that is done, Pilate takes the last desperate step of sitting down on the pavement in royal State. He condemns Jesus and bids them take Him away. But before He is taken to execution, the dogs of war shall snap at Him again. The Jews, no doubt, having bribed the soldiers to excessive zeal of scorn, they a second time—(oh, mark this! Perhaps you thought this happened only once. This is the fifth time He has thus been treated)— the soldiers took Him back again, and once more they mocked Him, once more they spat upon Him, and treated Him shamefully.  
So, you see, the first time was when He first went to the house of Caiaphas. Then after He was condemned there. Then Herod and His men of war. Then Pilate after the scourging. And then the soldiers, after the ultimate condemnation. Do you see, now, how manifestly, “He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief”? “We hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”  
I do not know when I ever more heartily wished to be eloquent than I do now. I am talking to my own lips, and saying, “Oh, that these lips had language worthy of the occasion!” I do but faintly sketch the scene. I cannot lay on the glowing colors. Oh, that I could set forth Your grief, You Man of Sorrows! God the Holy Spirit impress it on your memories, and on your souls, and help you pitifully to consider the griefs of your blessed Lord!  
I will now leave this point, when I have made this practical application of it. Remember, dear Friends, that this day, as truly as on that early morning, a division must be made among us. Either you must this day accept Christ as your King, or else His blood will be on you. I bring my Master out before your eyes and say to you, “Behold your King.” Are you willing to yield obedience to Him? He claims, first, your implicit faith in His merit—will you yield to that? He claims, next, that you will take Him to be Lord of your heart and that, as He shall be Lord within, so He shall be Lord without. Which shall it be? Will you choose Him now? Does the Holy Spirit in your soul—for without Him you never will—does the Holy Spirit say, “Bow the knee and take Him as your king?”  
Thank God, then. But if not, His blood is on you, to condemn you. You crucified Him. Pilate, Caiaphas, Herod, the Jews and Romans, all meet in you. You scourged Him. You said, “Let Him be crucified.” Do not say it was not so. In effect you join their clamors when you refuse Him. When you go your way to your farm and to your merchandise, and despise His love and His blood—you do spiritually what they did literally—you despise the King of kings. Come to the fountain of His blood and wash and be clean, by His Grace.  
III. But we must close with a third remark. Christ really underwent yet a third trial. He was not only tried before the ecclesiastical and civil tribunals, but He was really tried before the great democratic tribunal, that is, the assembly of the people in the street.  
You will say, “How?” Well, the trial was somewhat singular, but yet it was really a trial. Barabbas—a thief, a felon, a murderer, a traitor—had been captured. He was probably one of a band of murderers who were accustomed to come up to Jerusalem at the time of the feast, carrying daggers under their cloaks to stab persons in the crowd and rob them, and then he would be gone again. Besides that, he had tried to stir up sedition, setting himself up possibly as a leader of the bandits.  
Christ was put into competition with this villain. The two were presented before the popular eye, and to the shame of manhood, to the disgrace of Adam’s race, let it be remembered that the perfect, loving, tender, sympathizing, disinterested Savior was met with the word, “Crucify Him!” And Barabbas, the thief, was preferred. “Well,” says one, “that was atrocious.” The same thing is put before you this morning—the very same thing! And every unregenerate man will make the same choice that the Jews did—only men renewed by Divine Grace will act upon the contrary principle.  
I say, Friend, this day, I put before you Christ Jesus, or your sins. The reason why many come not to Christ is because they cannot give up their lusts, their pleasures, their profits. Sin is Barabbas—sin is a thief—it will rob your soul of its life. It will rob God of His glory. Sin is a murderer—it stabbed our father, Adam—it slew our purity. Sin is a traitor—it rebels against the King of Heaven and earth. If you prefer sin to Christ, Christ has stood at your tribunal and you have given your verdict that sin is better than Christ.  
Who is that man? He comes here every Sunday. And yet he is a drunkard? Where is he? You prefer that reeling demon Bacchus to Christ. Who is that man? He comes here. Yes. And where are his midnight haunts? The harlot and the prostitute can tell! You have preferred your own foul, filthy lust to Christ. I know some here that have had their consciences openly pricked, and yet there is no change in them. You prefer Sunday trading to Christ. You prefer cheating to Christ. You prefer the theater to Christ. You prefer the harlot to Christ—you prefer Satan, himself, to Christ—for Satan it is that is the father and author of these things.  
“No,” says one, “I don’t, I don’t!” Then I do again put this question, and I put it very pointedly to you—“If you do not prefer your sins to Christ, how is it that you are not a Christian?” I believe this is the main stumbling stone, that, “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” We come not to Christ because of the viciousness of our nature, and depravity of our heart. And this is the depravity of your heart, that you prefer darkness to light, prefer bitter for sweet, and choose evil as your good. Well, I think I hear one saying, “Oh, I would be on Jesus Christ’s side, but I did not look at it in that light. I thought the question was, ‘Would He be on my side?’ I am such a poor guilty sinner that I would stand anywhere, if Jesus’ blood would wash me.”  
Sinner! Sinner! If you talk like that, then I will meet you right joyously. Never was a man one with Christ till Christ was one with Him. If you feel that you can now stand with Christ, and say, “Yes, despised and rejected, He is, nevertheless, my God, my Savior, my King. Will he accept me?” Why, Soul, He

 has accepted you! He has renewed you, or else you would not talk so. You speak like a saved man. You may not have the comfort of salvation, but surely there is a work of Divine Grace in your heart! God’s Divine election has fallen upon you and Christ’s precious redemption has been made for you, or else you would not talk so.  
You cannot be even willing to come to Christ, and yet Christ reject you. God forbid we should suppose the possibility of any sinner crying after the Savior, and the Savior saying, “No, I will not have you.” Blessed be His name, “Him that comes to Me,” He says, “I will in no wise cast out.” “Well,” one says, “then I would have Him today. How can I do it?” There is nothing asked of you but this—Trust Him! Trust Him! Believe that God put Him in the place of men—believe that what He suffered was accepted by God, instead of their punishment. Believe that this great equivalent for punishment can save you.  
Trust Him. Throw yourself on Him—as a man commits himself to the waters, so do you—sink or swim! You will never sink, you will never sink—for, “he that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life and shall never come into condemnation.”  
May these faint words upon so thrilling a subject bless your souls! And unto God be glory, forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

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CHRIST’S UNIVERSAL KINGDOM AND HOW IT COMES  
NO. 1535

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 25, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Ask of Me and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron;**

**You shall dash them in pieces  
like a potter’s vessel.”  
Psalms 2:8, 9.**

OBSERVE, dear Friends, the wonderful contrast between the violent excitement of the enemies of the Lord and the sublime serenity of God Himself. He is not disturbed though the heathen so furiously rage and their kings and mighty ones set themselves in battle array. He smiles at them—He has them in derision. You and I are often downcast and depressed and our forebodings are dark and dismal, but God sits in His eternal peacefulness and serenely overrules tumult and rebellion. The Lord reigns and His Throne is not moved, nor His rest broken whatever may be the noise and turmoil down below. Notice the sublimity of this Divine calm. While the heathen and their princes are plotting and planning how to break His bands asunder and cast His cords from them, He has already defeated their devices and He says to them, “Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion.” “You will not have My Son to reign over you, but nevertheless He reigns. While you have been raging I have crowned Him. Your imaginations are, indeed, vain, for I have forestalled you and established Him upon His Throne. Hear Him as He proclaims My decree and asserts His filial sovereignty.”

God is always beforehand with His adversaries—they find their scheming frustrated and their craft baffled even before they have begun to execute their plans! By God’s decree the Ever-Blessed Son of the Highest is placed in power and exalted to His Throne. The rulers cannot snatch from His hand the scepter, nor dash from His head the crown—Jesus reigns and must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. God has set Him firmly upon Zion’s sacred hill and raging nations cannot cast Him down! The very idea of their doing so excites the derision of Jehovah, He disturbs not His great soul because of their blustering. As if it were a banquet rather than a conflict, the Lord God, as Himself King, speaks to the King’s Son, even to His Anointed on His right hand and having acknowledged His royal rank, confers upon Him the highest honors.

At great feasts many a monarch has been known to say to his favorite, “Ask what I shall give you and nothing shall be denied you this day.” Even thus does the great Father say to His glorious Son, the Prince of Peace, “Ask of Me and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.” He bids Him open His mouth wide and request a boundless dominion! He will give Him distant nations, yes, and the whole round earth to be His kingdom. There is an air of regal festivity and peaceful joy about all this which strangely contrasts with the uproar of the adversaries.

Brothers and Sisters, I wish we could enter, in some measure, into this sublime quiet. We may well be confident since God is so. If the Captain is assured of victory, it behooves the common soldier to be bravely hopeful. The battle is the Lord’s and since He is the Lord God Omnipotent, fear about the issue of the conflict is foolish and wicked. All events are in His hands—His hands who can dash whole worlds to dust or create them when it pleases Him. What can stand against the almighty will? Who shall say unto Jehovah, “What are You doing?” In this eternal All-Sufficiency is our rest and we may, therefore, cease from anxiety! Stand still, my weary Brother, and see the salvation of God! Put not forth your timorous hands to stay the trembling ark, but know that Jehovah can protect His own!

Lay your Martha cares aside, my Sister—sit at your Savior’s feet and listen to His voice! He will tell you that God still reigns and that His Anointed shall reign, also. Things are not as they seem—all is well when all looks ill. If the heavens are clouded, the sun is not put out! If the evening has darkened, even to midnight, yet the morning comes! To the moment shall it break, nor can all the powers of darkness hinder the dawning day! Jehovah’s fixed decrees remain engraved as in eternal brass, nor can the craft of Hell efface a single line nor stay the execution of a single purpose! Despite all opposition, the sacred purpose will blossom into the actual Providence and the Providence will ripen into salvation. God’s plan will be carried out without failure in any point and there is no cause for alarm.

If we were more calm and restful we would do our work better, for do we not gather both wisdom and courage when we abide in quietness and confidence? The joy of the Lord is the strength of His saints. The assurance of faith, if we were filled with it, would make us go forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.” Alas, our short-sighted fretfulness, our anxious mistrust and our timorous suspicion cause us needless distress, weaken us for service and expose us to the assaults of our adversaries! Without the preparation of the Gospel of peace our feet are unshod and we are unfit for the heavenly pilgrimage.

Groveling here below among the troubles of the hour, the majority of Christians are a timorous people and act like the tribe of Reuben in the day of Barak’s battle, to whom Deborah cried, “Why abide you among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleating of the flocks?” O you who lie among the pots and do servile work in abject fear, arise to a braver spirit! Up to the everlasting hills and breathe a purer air—gird yourselves with the belt of confidence in God and you shall be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!” May God grant that the subject of this morning may help us out of the depressing influences which surround us and raise us into fellowship with the calm in which Jehovah sits smiling and out of which He says, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

Our text suggests to us this morning, first, that the kingdoms of the earth and the earth itself are Christ’s inheritance—“I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance.” Leave out those little words which the translators have inserted, for they but feebly help the sense. “I will give the heathen, Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth, Your possession.” When we have dwelt upon that we shall then notice that this is to be had for the asking—“Ask of Me and I shall give.” Thirdly, we shall note that the power by which the dominion shall be gained is altogether of God—“I shall give.” And fourthly, we shall remark that in order to complete the conquest of the world all existing and all future confederacies against the Lord and against His Christ shall be utterly destroyed—“You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

I. For our comfort let us notice the teaching of the text that THE LORD WILL GIVE TO CHRIST THE HEATHEN AS HIS INHERITANCE AND THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH AS HIS POSSESSION. This I take to refer to our Lord as Man. Already as God, the kingdom of the Divine Son rules over all. There never was a limit to the reign of Jesus as God, not even when He was hanging on the Cross—He was the everlasting Father even when He was “the Child born, the Son given.” It is in His wondrous Nature as God-Man Mediator that these words may be understood, for so the Apostle Paul evidently interpreted them.

The mysterious sentence, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You,” may refer to the deep and secret Truth of God of the Eternal Filiation of our Lord, whatever that may be. But Paul quotes it in the 13th chapter of Acts as referring to His Resurrection. Here are His Words, “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You.” It is in resurrection power that Christ comes forth and God gives to Him dominion over the earth and all that is upon it.

Because He lives and was dead He has the keys of Hell and of death. By virtue of His humiliation He reigns. For the suffering of death He is crowned with Glory and honor. The heavenly host proclaim His worthiness to take the Book and open its seven seals, singing, “For You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.” He descended that He might ascend above all things and fill all things! He laid aside His Glory that He might be crowned with this new Glory and honor and might have all things put under His feet as the Son of Man. We speak, therefore, of Jesus Christ the Risen One, who once died, but has now risen from the tomb and quit this earth for the splendors of the New Jerusalem.

Our conviction is that this same Jesus is to reign over the whole world. I shall not enter into the question whether this will be accomplished before His Second Advent or will be the result of His glorious appearing. I should not like to assert that this consummation will be reached before His Advent, for that might seem to work against our duty to watch for His coming which may be at any moment. On the other hand, I would not venture to assert that the Gospel cannot be universally victorious before His coming, because I perceive that this opinion is a pillow for many an idle head and is ruinous to the hopeful spirit of missionary enterprise.

It is enough for me that a wide dominion will be given to our Lord at some time or other and that assuredly His kingdom shall embrace all the nations of mankind. The whole earth shall yet be filled with His Glory! The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head and clear the world of his slimy trail!

For the next few minutes you will be so good as to keep your Bibles open, for the appeal must be to God’s own Word. I gather that the kingdom of Christ is to be so extensive as to comprehend all mankind, first, because, of the exceeding breadth of the prophecy of it which was made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. That is an old Covenant promise which refers to Abraham as the father of the faithful and to his one great seed, even Jesus, the promised Messiah. Here are the far-reaching words—“In you shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Assuredly they are not as yet all blessed in him to such an extent as to exhaust the Divine meaning. When God, in Covenant, promises a blessing it is no light thing and, therefore, I am sure that this grand Covenant blessing of the nations is something more than a name.

Though I doubt not that the whole earth is, to some extent, the better because of the coming of Christ and His peace-making death and the spread of His pure faith, yet I cannot believe that multitudes who live and die in the thick darkness of ignorance and idolatry are really blessed in Christ in such a sense as to make it a Covenant blessing. How much are Tartary, China and Tibet blessed by the Gospel? There must yet be something better for all the families of the earth than anything they have up to now received. All the families of the earth shall yet know that the promised Seed has lived and died for them and some of every kindred and tongue shall find salvation in Him.

Jacob, too, when He spoke concerning the Shiloh in Genesis 49:10, said, “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” By the people is not meant the seed of Israel, but the nations, or the Gentiles. So the Septuagint and the Syrian understand it and so, indeed, it is. Jesus, our great Shiloh, sets up the standard and His chosen rally around in ever growing numbers till the dispersed of Babel shall find in Him a new center and a pure language shall be given to them in Him. The words mean not, “gathering,” only, but a willing obedience, the fruit of faith and the expression of piety. To this is parallel the word of Paul in Romans 15:12—“And again, Isaiah says, There shall be a root of Jesse and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust.”

It is evident, then, that the nations shall come to trust in the Messiah and thus shall they find life eternal. Moses, too, in Deuteronomy 32:21, to which passage Paul, in Romans, so especially refers, speaks of the heathen nations when he says, “I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” Truly this is fulfilled in these days when the Gospel line has gone out throughout all the earth and its words unto the ends of the earth—and this, our own foolish nation, this once barbarous people which seemed shut out from God, worshipping idols with all the cruel rites of the Druids, has been brought into Covenant with God and made to rejoice in Him!

Degraded heathens in all lands have become Believers and so shall all nations be brought believingly to Jesus’ feet, that Israel may be angered and provoked to jealousy until her time shall come when she shall look on Him whom she has pierced and shall mourn for Him and turn to Him with full purpose of heart. When we reach the Psalms, we come into the clear light of prophecy concerning the kingdom of our blessed Master. Our text stands first and is sufficient in itself—the heathen are to be His inheritance and the utmost bounds of the world are to be His possession!

Turn to that famous passion Psalm, the twenty-second. Its pathos with regard to the griefs of the Crucified One is deep and touching. You see Him hanging on the tree, a laughingstock to scoffers, with His tongue cleaving to His jaws and His heart melting like wax in the midst of His bowels—and yet before the Psalm closes the plaintive gives place to the triumphant and the dying One cries—“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and He is the Governor among the nations. All they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive His own soul.”

On the Cross this prospect cheered our dying Master’s heart, that the kingdoms should be the Lord’s and that all the kindreds of the nations should come and worship before Him! Let it cheer us, also. Do you think that the crucified Lord will be disappointed of the end for which He died? Will you venture to assert that a single drop of His blood was shed for nothing? Rest assured that He shall see of the travail of His soul, till even His great loving heart shall be content! God has said it, “I will divide Him a portion with the great and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He has poured out His soul unto death.” And you can be calmly confident that the Word of the Lord will stand!

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 66:4 and there you come upon another word of comfort—“All the earth shall worship You and shall sing unto You; they shall sing to Your name.” This sentence is not merely the passionate hope of an enthusiastic worshipper, but a voice inspired of the Holy Spirit plainly declaring that all peoples shall adore their Maker with hearty praise and joyful song! How glowing is the language of Psalm 72. Can we expect too great things for our King when we remember the gracious words beginning at the 8th verse—“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.”

Read on at verse 17—“His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” These terms include the most barbarous tribes that exist and they specially mention nations which boast that they were never conquered, such as the untamed rovers of the wilderness who centuries ago laughed at the Roman power. The legions which subdued all other peoples could not conquer the sons of Ishmael! Fleet of foot as a rabbit and swift as a young roe, they fled over the desert sands out of reach of the pursuer. Yet these shall bow before our Lord and joyfully pay Him homage! He will sway His scepter where scepter was never acknowledged before! He shall set up a throne where all other authority has been laughed to scorn!

You will not be wearied if I ask you to look at Psalm 86:9. There you will find it written, “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord; and shall glorify Your name.” It is not to be mere outside worship that shall be paid, for the nations are to glorify His name which is a high form of praise! All nations are to glorify the Lord and this they have not done as yet. We expected to find and we are not disappointed in our expectation, that Isaiah would be sure to speak concerning these things. I would rather you heard the Word of God by far than my word and, therefore, we will keep to our reading.

It will bring you encouragement and cheer your heart to know what Prophets said in the olden times when only Israel had the light. They did not think the light would be confined to the one peculiar people, but they expected that light would break on all the nations which sat in darkness and they, also, would seek the Lord. Turn to Isaiah and read. See what he says in his second chapter. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths for out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

I can but give samples. The passages abound all through Isaiah in which there is the intimation of the general spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. Turn to Isaiah 49:6, 7—“It is a light thing that You should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give You for a light to the Gentiles, that You may be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to a Servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful and the Holy One of Israel and He shall choose You.” And now, verse 12—“Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.” And verse 18—“Lift up your eyes round about and behold: all these gather themselves together and come to you.”

Nor is Isaiah alone in such prophecies as these. I cannot detain you by reading what Ezekiel says concerning the ever deepening waters which shall carry life to all lands and I will only mention one word of Jeremiah, because it so peculiarly proves that the homage paid by heathen nations to our Lord will be that of their hearts—and that the reign of Christ, whatever else it may be, will certainly be a spiritual reign. Jeremiah 3:17— “They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” Christ will work a heart-change when He shall win the nations to allegiance and this shall lead to a manifest change of life—“neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.”

Daniel, that John of the Old Testament, of course saw more clearly than any, the coming kingdom of the Anointed One. Listen what he says beginning in 7:18—“But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Can anything be more positive than this last word?

Look how the idols are to be destroyed according to the Prophet Zephaniah (2:11)—“The Lord will be terrible unto them: for He will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship Him, everyone from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.” Zechariah says, to the same effect, (9:10)—“He shall speak peace unto the heathen and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” Lest I should weary you, I dare not quote any more. To me it is evident beyond all contradiction that according to the whole run of Scripture the kingdom of Christ is to extend over all parts of the earth and over all races and conditions of men and, therefore, I charge you never despair for the grand old cause!

An infidel notion is abroad that these different religions have sprung up at different times as developments of the religious instinct and that they may all profitably exist side by side with ours. It is admitted that the religion of Christ is excellent and that it deserves a large following, but still other religions have their advantages and must not be despised—as if to say that something better than the Gospel of Christ may yet be discovered. This is the current talk in certain circles and we would at once express our horror at it! Jesus is not to share a divided Throne! Cast with abhorrence from your souls every such blasphemous thought! Jesus must reign till all enemies are put under His feet and to Him all rivals are enemies!

If Jesus is King, He is the only Potentate. Christians are enlisted under a banner which does not allow another standard side by side with it! They serve a Prince who will not share dominion with others—who will not submit that even a province shall be torn away from His government! He shall reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Like a burst of thunder let all hearts that love Him say, Amen!

II. It appears from our text that THIS UNIVERSAL DOMINION IS TO BE ASKED FOR. Thus says the Father to His glorious Son, “Ask of Me and I will give You.” Beloved, Jesus fails not to ask. We do not doubt that He responds to the Father’s invitation and asks for His inheritance. This is the way in which the Psalm before us touches upon the priestly character of Christ as combined with His kingly office. He always lives to intercede and a part of His daily intercession is to ask that the heathen may be His inheritance.

Now, Beloved, this is a lesson to us. We belong to Christ. We are members of that body of which He is the mystical Head and it is ours to act with Him in His lifework—as He asks, we are to ask with Him. As Jesus suffers in His people, so He pleads in them. Let us cry day and night unto God for the coming of the kingdom of our Lord! Let the Throne of the Highest be surrounded by our perpetual prayers! Let us urge for the Lord Jesus His suit in the courts above, that the heathen may be His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. We are so truly one with Him that His sympathies and hopes are ours! His Glory is our glory! His victory our victory and, therefore, our supplications should naturally and spontaneously arise for Him every day of our lives.

Our union with Him has given us a kingdom, the same kingdom as that which He claims. He Himself has said it, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” As surely as He sets His Son upon His holy hill of Zion, so surely will the Lord bring us all there! Our prayers, therefore, should daily rise together with the pleading of the great Intercessor, Himself. O Lord, Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory! Let Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven! This prayer is one which is commanded by God Himself. About its fitness we can, therefore, have no doubt. Your Savior taught you to say, “Your kingdom come.” In this text we find it prescribed as a prayer to the Well-Beloved—“Ask of Me”—and, therefore, it is certainly a proper prayer for us and we may use it without question.

We are highly honored in being permitted to present such a petition—to be allowed to pray for myself is mercy, to be permitted to pray for my fellow man is favor—but to be allowed to pray for Jesus is an honor! It is written, “Prayer also shall be made for Him continually,” and thus there is a special honor put upon those who intercede. My Lord’s prayer for me saves me, but when He bids me pray for Him, He dignifies me and I say with David, “Your gentleness has made me great.” Whatever else we forget, never from our private intercessions let us omit the prayer that the heathen may come to glorify Christ! It is a joy to know that this prayer will be effectual to the fullest. It is no vain desire, no dream of a fevered brain—the infinite wisdom of God, Himself, suggests it, for He says, “Ask and I shall give You.”

This union of precept and promise is found attached to every Covenant blessing, but here it is conspicuously and distinctly stated in so many words—“Ask and I shall give You.” Concerning this thing,, the promise of God is definite! We may, therefore, pray with full assurance. Let us avail ourselves of this plain direction every hour of our lives. O Church of God, ask, on Christ’s behalf, and the Lord God will give Him the kingdom! Heir of Heaven, ask on behalf of the Elder Brother, for the Elder Brother pleads in you and God will hear both you and Him and He will grant the united request! My heart is full of confidence when pleading upon this subject! What surer guarantee do we need than, “Ask and I shall give You”?

Let our prayer be wide and far-reaching. Let our desires embrace the world. Pray not only for your own country, though it needs it and God, alone, knows how much—but pray for the colonies, the continent and the far off lands. Ask that all heathens may become Christians! Plead that the whole round earth may be the Lord’s—that the uttermost parts of the earth may resound with songs in His praise! On this earth His blood has fallen! The precious drops could not be gathered up again and so this globe remains blood-marked—the one star upon which the Son of God poured out His life! It must be the Lord’s! The Sacrifice of Calvary has made it sacred to the Son of God! As our Government marks with the broad arrow those stores which belong to it, so did Christ, upon the tree, when the blood fell from His hands and feet and side, mark, as it were, with something more full of meaning than the broad arrow—this round earth on which He bled—and it must be forever and ever His by right of purchase and ransom!

It was made subject to vanity for a little season, but it is to be redeemed from it—and when it shall be purified and beautified in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, you will not know it, for it will come forth as “a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.” Its sister stars have long wondered at its silence, or its discord, but at the sight of its restoration to the choirs of holiness, they will sing in deep delight and chant a new song unto the Lord! With what admiration will they perceive, rising up from this once beclouded orb, a flame of unquenchable praise with pillars of perfumed smoke, the incense of eternal gratitude! Sweeter the offering of this once fallen world than that of any other sphere, for it has been redeemed and upon it have been seen marvels of free Grace and dying love such as no other world has known.

Oh, may this soon come to pass! May the prayer be heard and God be praised. But it can only be accomplished through His own appointed method, the asking of Christ, the pleading of the Church. Oh, awaken, Church, to ask! Awake from your unholy lethargy and cry day and night unto God! Cease not, but with anguish, like a woman in travail, cry aloud and spare not until He gives the risen Lord the heathen for His inheritance and makes His Throne higher than the kings of the earth!

III. Thirdly, THIS DOMINION IS TO BE GAINED BY THE POWER OF GOD. Notice the text, for it is very explicit—“Ask of Me and I shall give You.” The power and Grace of God will be conspicuously seen in the subjugation of this world to Christ. Every heart shall know that it was worked by the power of God in answer to the prayer of Christ and His Church. I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the length of time spent in the accomplishment of the Divine plan has, much of it, been occupied with getting rid of those many forms of human power which have intruded into the place of the Spirit. If you and I had been about in our Lord’s day and could have had everything managed to our hand, we should have converted Caesar straight away by argument or by oratory. We should then have converted all his legions by every means within our reach. And, I guarantee you, with Caesar and his legions at our back we would have Christianized the world in no time, would we not?

Yes, but that is not God’s way at all, nor the right and effectual way to set up a spiritual kingdom! Bribes and threats are, alike, unlawful. Eloquence and carnal reasoning are out of court. The power of Divine Love is the one weapon for this campaign. Long ago the Prophet wrote, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord.” The fact is that such conversions as could be brought about by physical force, or by mere mental energy, or by the prestige of rank and pomp are not conversions at all! The kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of this world, otherwise would His servants fight! It rests on a spiritual basis and is to be advanced by spiritual means. Yet Christ’s servants gradually slipped down into the notion that His kingdom was of this world and could be upheld by human power.

A Roman emperor professed to be converted, using a deep policy to settle himself upon the throne. Then Christianity became the religion patronized by the State—it seemed that the world was Christianized, whereas, indeed, the Church was heathenized! Hence sprang the monster of a State Church, a conjunction ill-assorted and fraught with untold ills. This incongruous thing is half human, half Divine! As a theory it fascinates, as a fact it betrays! It promises to advance the Truth of God and is, itself, a negation of it! Under its influences a system of religion was fashioned which, beyond all false religions and beyond even Atheism itself, is the greatest hindrance to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Under its influence dark ages lowered over the world. Men were not permitted to think. A Bible could scarcely be found and a preacher of the Gospel, if found, was put to death! That was the result of human power coming in with the sword in one hand and the Gospel in the other and developing its pride of ecclesiastical power into a triple crown, an Inquisition and an “infallible Pope”! This parasite, this canker, this incubus of the church will be removed by the Grace of God and by His Providence in due season. The kings of the earth who have loved this unchaste system will grow weary of it and destroy it.

Read Revelation 17:16 and see how terrible her end will be. The death of the system will come from those who gave it life—the powers of earth created the system and they will, in due time, destroy it! Frequently do we meet with the idea that the world is to be converted to Christ by the spread of civilization. Now civilization always follows the Gospel and is, in a great measure, the product of it, but many people put the cart before the horse and make civilization the first cause. According to their opinion, trade is to regenerate the nations! The arts are to ennoble them and education is to purify them. Peace Societies are formed, against which I have not a word to say, but much in their favor. Still, I believe the only efficient Peace Society is the Church of God and the best peace teaching is the love of God in Christ Jesus!

The Grace of God is the great instrument for lifting up the world from the depths of its ruin and covering it with happiness and holiness. Christ’s Cross is the Pharos of this tempestuous sea, like the Eddystone lighthouse flinging its beams through the midnight of ignorance over the raging waters of human sin, preserving men from rock and shipwreck, piloting them into the port of peace! Tell it among the heathen—the Lord reigns from the Cross—and as you tell it believe that the power to make the peoples believe it is with God the Father and the power to bow them before Christ is in God the Holy Spirit. Saving energy lies not in learning, nor in wit, nor in eloquence, nor in anything except in the right arm of God who will be exalted among the heathen, for He has sworn that surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The might of the Omnipotent One shall work out His purposes of Grace and as for us, we will use the simple processes of prayer and faith. “Ask of Me and I shall give You.” Oh, that we could keep in perpetual motion the machinery of prayer! Pray, pray, pray and God will give, give, give— abundantly and supernaturally above all that we ask, or even think! He must do all things in the conquering work of the Lord Jesus. We cannot convert a single child, nor bring to Christ the humblest peasant, nor lead to peace the most hopeful youth! All must be done by the Spirit of God, alone, and if ever nations are to be born in a day and crowds are to come humbly to Jesus’ feet, it is Yours, Eternal Spirit, YOURS to do it! God must give the dominion or the rebels will remain unsubdued!

IV. Thus the power of God works to bring about the kingdom of Christ and THIS INVOLVES THE BREAKING UP OF ALL THE CONFEDERACIES WHICH NOW EXIST OR EVER SHALL EXIST FOR THE HINDRANCE OF THE REDEEMER’S KINGDOM. Our text employs a figure which is very full of meaning. “He shall break them with a rod of iron.” He breaks not the subject nations, nor the inherited heathen, but the kings of the earth who stood up and took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed. Against these He will lift up His iron rod of stern justice and irresistible power!

Over His own inheritance He will sway a silver scepter of love. Over His own possession He shall reign with gentleness and Grace, but as for His adversaries, He will deal with them in severity and display His power in them. How shall they stand out against Him? They have formed their confederacy with great care and skill—as when men prepare clay and make it pliable for the potter’s use, so have they made all things ready—they have set their design upon the wheel and caused it to revolve in their thoughts and with great skill they have fashioned it. Lo, there it stands—finished and fair to look upon! Yet at its very best it is nothing more than a potter’s vessel. It may be of the purest clay and of such exquisite workmanship that it shall enchant every man of taste, but it is nothing more than an earthen vessel and, therefore, woe unto it when the rod of iron falls upon

it. Woe to all human societies and brotherhoods which are framed to resist the Lord! Mark the conflict and its end! It is brief enough. A stroke! Where is the hope of the Lord’s adversary? Gone, gone, utterly gone! Only a few potsherds remain. Oh for such a smiting of the apostasy of Rome! Oh for one touch of the iron rod upon the imposture of Mohammed! Oh, for a blow at Buddhism and a back stroke at the superstition of Brahmanism and at all the idols of the heathen! Woe unto the gods of the land of Sinim in that day! A single stroke shall set the potsherds flying. Why, then, should we fear, although they plot and plan? Although a solemn conclave of cardinals is held. Though the “Pope” fulminates his bulls. Though the Sultan ordain that every convert to Christianity shall be put to death. Though the scoffers still revile at Christianity and say that it spreads not as once it did, a speedy answer shall confound them, or if not speedy, yet the stroke shall be sure!

Our King waits a while. He has leisure. Haste belongs to weakness. His strength moves calmly. Only let Him be awakened and you shall see how quick are His paces! He redeemed the world in a few short hours upon the Cross and I guarantee you that when He gets that iron rod once to working, He will not need many days to ease Him of His adversaries and make a clean sweep of all that set themselves against Him! If you want to see how it will be done, read, I pray you, Daniel 2:31—“You, O king, saw and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before you; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

It was a strange conglomeration—all the metallic empires are set forth as combined in one image—which image is the embodied idea of monarchical power which has fascinated men even to this day. The Prophet goes on to say, “You saw still that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

And so it is to be—the vision is being each day fulfilled. The Gospel stone, which owes nothing to human strength or wisdom, is breaking the image and scattering all opposing powers. No system, society, confederacy, or cabinet can stand which is opposed to the Truth of God and righteousness. I, even I, that am but of yesterday and know nothing, have seen one of the mightiest of empires of modern times melt away all of a sudden as the frost of the morning in the heat of the sun. I have seen monarchs driven out of their tyrannies by the powers of a single man and a free nation born as in an hour. I have seen states which fought to hold the Negro in perpetual captivity subdued by those whom they despised, while the slave has been set free!

I have seen nations chastened under evil governments and revived when the yoke has been broken and they have returned to the way of righteousness and peace. He who lives longest shall see most of this. Evil is short-lived. Truth shall yet rise above all. The Lord says, overturn, overturn till He shall come whose right it is and God shall give it to Him. Woe unto those that stand against the Lord and His Anointed, for they shall not prosper. “Be wise now, therefore, O you kings: be instructed, you judges of the earth. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

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Sermon #3276 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST’S GLORY TURNED TO SHAME  
NO. 3276

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 1, 1865.

**“O you sons of men, how long will you turn My Glory into shame?” Psalm 4:2.**

DAVID had many times been the subject of cruel mockery and, therefore, while writing this Psalm probably in the first place about himself, he also described in it one of the bitterest of our Savior’s sufferings. What an illustration this is of the union which exists between Christ and His people in the matter of experience! He had a Cross to bear and so have they. He was “despised and rejected of men,” and so are they. The Church of God is not like the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, which had a head of gold and feet of iron and clay, but as is the Head, such are also the members. As the Head had to endure cruel mocking, the members must not expect to be exempted from similar treatment. This is why so many of the Psalms of David are equally applicable to David and to his Lord. And I believe that we have, in this verse, a reference not only to David, himself, but also to “great David’s greater Son.” In the case of both of them, the sons of men turned their glory into shame, but I want especially to call to your remembrance the sufferings of our Savior in this respect.

I. So, in the first place, notice that EVERYTHING ABOUT OUR SAVIOR THAT WAS GLORIOUS WAS MADE THE SUBJECT OF SCORN.  
Begin with His glorious Person, and think how shamefully that was treated by the sons of men in the time of His humiliation. He was betrayed, but the betrayer was one who had been His disciple and who, in the very act of betrayal called Him, “Master.” This was shameful cruelty on the part of Judas, not only to betray Him to His enemies, but to hail Him as “Master,” in mockery and to kiss Him in scorn. There was shame even in the way in which they went to Gethsemane to arrest the Savior— with swords and staves, lanterns and torches—as though He had been some desperate malefactor who would resist to the utmost the officers of the law. No lanterns or torches were needed to show the way to the Light of the World! And their swords and staves would have availed them nothing if He had chosen to put forth His Omnipotent power! When He was dragged before Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, His precious Person was the constant subject of scorn, so that He could truly say, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” “The soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They put on Him a purple robe and said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they struck Him with their hands.” And when Pilate brought Him forth to the people and cried, “Behold the Man!” instead of pitying Him in His distress, they shouted, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” His agonies upon the Cross provided further subjects for their contempt and scorn. He could truthfully employ the language of the 22nd Psalm—“All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.” They looked upon His Person as being so utterly contemptible that they desired that He should suffer death in its most ignominious form, “even the death of the Cross.”  
And while they treated thus shamefully the Human Person of our Lord, we cannot forgot the jeers and taunts with which they assailed His Deity. When He said, “Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven,” the high priest tore his clothes and charged Him with being a blasphemer, while the whole assembly declared that He was guilty of death! And to show their contempt for Him, “then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.” Even when He was enduring all the agony of the crucifixion, we read that, “they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross.” Was it not sufficient to degrade His spotless Humanity? No, the Glory of His Deity must also be turned into shame—in both His Natures, as Son of God and Son of Man, He must be “despised and rejected of men.” Alas that for so long the Prophet’s words were true concerning us, “we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not.”  
Not only was Christ’s blessed Person thus despised, but all His offices were the subject of scorn. I do but tell you what you all well know. I do but point you to the picture upon which you have often gazed. Remember how they mocked Him as a Prophet. “When they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that struck you?” They treated His prophetic office as though it had only been worthy of a jest or a jeer. He claimed to be the King of the Jews, so with ribald shouts they cried, “A king! Bring here His throne and seat Him upon it! Bring His royal robes and let Him be fitly adorned.” Their idea of fitness was some soldier’s discarded mantle cast over His shoulders in mockery of the royal purple. They put a reed into His hand as a mock scepter. And the only crown they thought worthy for Him to wear was made of thorns! To show their contempt for His royalty, they mockingly bowed the knee before Him and rendered Him only the semblance of homage. The only gifts they brought to Him were cruel blows and coarse insults which must have been peculiarly trying to His gentle, gracious spirit. I must not stay to tell how they turned the Glory of His office as our Great High Priest into shame, but all His offices were treated with the utmost contempt and scorn.  
They even laughed contemptuously at His deeds of love. “The chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others. Himself He cannot save.” It seems to me that they meant thus to cast contempt upon His miracles of mercy. “He saved others.” Yes, that He did, He saved the famishing by multiplying the loaves and fishes and feeding thousands of people! He saved the sick by touching them or by speaking the word which made them perfectly whole! He saved even the dead by calling them back from the unseen world to live again in the abodes where they had before lived! Yet all these miracles of mercy are now to have contempt poured upon them because He does not choose to come down from the Cross at the mocking call of the scoffing priests and scribes and elders! “O you sons of men, how long will you turn His Glory into shame?” It was His Glory that He had saved others and it was also His Glory that He could not save Himself—yet both of these were turned into subjects for shame by those who had no pity for Him even when they had hounded Him to His death!  
Perhaps it was worst of all when these wicked men scoffed at Christ’s pangs and prayers. If you have hurt yourself and someone laughs at the accident, you feel indignant. If you are tossing to and fro upon a bed of sickness and someone sneers at your pains, you know how such unkindness cuts you to the quick. If you were dying and in your agony you cried aloud to God—and somebody ridiculed your prayer—it would be a terrible trial to you. So must it have been to Christ when He was dying upon the Cross, forsaken by His friends, forsaken even by His Father because He was then occupying the place that we ought to have occupied. Then, when He uttered that heart-melting cry, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?”—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”—the heartless spectators made a sort of pun upon His words and mockingly said that He was calling Elijah, though many of them must have recognized the quotation from the beginning of the 22nd Psalm! To mock a man’s prayers when he is dying seems to me the very lowest depth of cruel contempt! I do not remember ever reading of any other mob but this one that was so brutal as to turn into mockery the last cries of One who was in his death agony! Yet, at Calvary, the last expiring groans of our blessed Savior were the subject of the mocking mirth of the rabble around the Cross. How all this must have pained His sensitive spirit and made Him cry out with David, “O you sons of men, how long will you turn My Glory into shame?”  
II. NOW, secondly, THE GLORY WHICH CHRIST OUGHT TO HAVE RECEIVED AMONG MEN WAS RENDERED TO HIM ONLY IN SHAME.  
A German writer has given us an outline of the way in which worldlings mockingly honored Christ. First of all, he says, they gave Him a procession of honor. When a victorious general returns from the wars, he rides through the streets amidst the plaudits of the crowds that gather to welcome him. And when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was to be honored by the world, He also had a procession, and what a procession it was! “He bearing His Cross went forth”...“and there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him.” That weeping and wailing company of the daughters of Jerusalem was the only element of real honor in the whole procession—all the rest was mockery and shame—and what a shameful thing it was! O men of the world, if you had known that He was the King of kings and Lord of lords, would you have crucified the Lord of Glory? Instead of a band of children and a fickle mob strewing palm branches in His way and crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” kings and princes, judges and senators ought to have felt honored by being allowed to cast their royal robes and costly garments in His road, that He might ride in state over them amid the welcoming shouts of the whole race of mankind! Instead of that, see the poor weary Man of Sorrows painfully toiling on and presently sinking beneath the burden of the Cross on which He was about to die in ignominy and shame—while all around Him the clamorous multitude is hoarsely crying, “Away with Him! Crucify Him!!” That was the kind of procession of honor that men gave to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, they gave Him a cup of honor. When a great man comes as a visitor from a foreign country, it is the custom to honor him with a grand banquet and other marks of hospitality. But when Christ came to this earth on a mission of mercy, what did they give Him? First, a stupefying draft which He would not drink, for He would not have any of His powers deadened by any drug. And then, when He was so parched that He cried, “I thirst,” “they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.” And Luke expressly says that this was done in mockery by the soldiers, who at the same time tauntingly said to the Savior , “If you are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” Thus again men turned His Glory into shame.  
Then, they gave Him a guard of honor. Men who have performed deeds of renown often have a bodyguard allotted to them to attend them wherever they go and to ensure their safety where they stay. But what bodyguard did the world allot to the Savior—a guard of gamblers! The soldiers parted His other garments among them, and then cast lots—probably throwing dice—to see which of them should have His seamless coat, little thinking that they were thus fulfilling the prophecy that had been written hundreds of years before! But what a guard was this for Him who was King of kings, and Lord of lords—rough, cruel men whose hearts had been shriveled and in whose breasts no sign of tenderness remained! Thus also was His Glory turned into shame.  
Then, they gave Him a seat of honor. We are accustomed to conduct our noble visitors to the platform at the end of the hall and to lead them to the chair of state or the most honorable position we can find. And the world conducted its honored Guest down the Via Dolorosa with a bodyguard of gamblers around Him up to the seat of honor! There it is—the accursed tree! He will have little rest there, for the great nails will be roughly thrust through the most tender parts of His hands and feet, making every nerve in His body quiver with pain! And then, as they brutally jerk the Cross down into the hole prepared for it, His whole frame will be so jarred and shaken that He will cry out, in the language of the Psalmist, “I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint.” Thus they turned His Glory into shame.  
Then, once more, they gave Him a title of honor. When the Queen wishes to put special honor upon any of her subjects, she makes them knights, or baronets, or peers of the realm. But the world only thought Christ worthy of the title of “King of thieves.” You will perhaps tell me that they called Him, “the King of the Jews.” It was Pilate who did that, and he would not alter it even when the chief priest asked him not do so. But the Jewish and Gentile world practically called Him “King of thieves” by crucifying Him between two thieves as though He had been the worst of the three. He was no thief. He had never injured anyone, but had scattered blessings broadcast with both His hands. He had given Himself and all that He had to save the lost, yet their called Him, “King of thieves,” by their actions if not by their words. Thus again they turned His Glory into shame.  
O Beloved, I wish I could speak upon this theme in appropriate language! Yet I feel that there is no tongue that can adequately describe the Savior’s griefs, and no pen or pencil that can worthily depict Him in His agonies! You must yourselves sit down at the foot of the Cross and look, and look, and look again at your blessed Lord and Master as He hung there for your sakes. It used to be more common than it is now for godly men and women to spend hour after hour in solemn meditation upon the agonies of Christ upon the Cross. I tried, one day when I was alone, to get a vivid realization of that awful tragedy—and I succeeded to the breaking of my own heart—but I cannot describe the scene to you. That is a matter for private meditation rather than for public speech. So, when many of us gather presently around the Table of our Lord in obedience to one of His last commands, let us try to realize what it meant to Him when wicked men turned His Glory into shame even when He was in the very throes of His death agony.  
When the Savior was nailed to the accursed tree, there was a great crowd before Him composed of all sorts of people from the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees down to the lowest rabble of Jerusalem. And there were doubtless, as on the day of Pentecost, “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.” How did this great mixed multitude treat the august Sufferer upon the Cross? I have already quoted to you our Lord’s own words, “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn.” And Mark further says, “They that passed by railed at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, You that destroys the Temple, and builds it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the Cross.” With the exception of a little band of timid disciples, all that vast crowd exerted itself to the utmost by hideous gestures and grimaces and by cruel taunts and jeers, to show its contempt and scorn for the Christ of God, His only-begotten and wellbeloved Son! I suppose this great congregation now gathered in the Tabernacle is but a mere handful in comparison with the enormous throngs that assembled to see that great sight, but if I had to be the unhappy victim of the malice and scorn of all of you—if you were all seeking by some word of contempt or expression of loathing and hatred, to set me at nothing and mock me—what a dreadful position mine would be! But this was not the treatment accorded to a man in full vigor of health and strength, as I am just now, who might be able to defy his foes to do their worst, or who might stand unmoved amidst the hail of calumny and obloquy! Christ’s was the case of One who was dying in indescribable agony, forsaken even of His God—and you can hardly conceive how such an experience as that takes all one’s strength away. Yet, do you know? As I meditated upon this sad scene—while my eyes were streaming with tears on the Savior’s account, it seemed to me that the ribald crowd was unconsciously honoring Him, after all, because contempt from such people was true honor for Jesus. If they had applauded Him, He might have blushed at the disgrace of being praised by such miscreants! But when they despised and rejected Him, it brought Him true honor! Thus virtue received the homage of vice and the beauty of holiness was the more plainly manifested in contrast with the ugliness of sin! They must have felt that although they seemed to be victorious over Him, Christ was really the Conqueror, or they would not have been so anxious to show how much they despised Him. They must have had some sort of consciousness of the true dignity of His Character or they would not have vented their malice so ferociously in mocking Him.  
While I have been trying to bring before your minds this picture of the suffering Savior, as it has been all vividly present to my own mental vision, I wonder if anyone here has been saying, “Oh, Sir, I also have to endure the cruel mocking of the ungodly! They call me this name and that, and I feel that I cannot endure it.” What? Are you—  
*“A soldier of the Cross,  
A follower of the Lamb”*—

and do you need to turn coward when they mete out to you something of the treatment that they gave to Him? Look at your Master in the hour of His agony on the Cross and never be afraid again! Remember how He forewarned His followers concerning this very matter—“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” Cheerfully accept all the contempt and scorn that the world pleases to pour upon you—take it as a tribute to the likeness to Christ that even worldlings can see in you—and praise the Lord that you are counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s name’s sake!

Perhaps some self-righteous person says, “I wish I had been there. I would have taught those miserable wretches not to treat the Savior in such a shameful fashion!” Ah, that is the way one of our English kings once talked. “I wish,” said he, “that I had been there with my soldiers—I would have cut them in pieces!” But somebody who stood by said, “Ah, that speech shows that you have not yet learned how to be like He.” He could have cut them all in pieces in a moment! He could have asked for more than 12 legions of angels to come to His rescue! But how, then, could He have accomplished the purpose for which He came to this earth? And how would the Scriptures have been fulfilled? It was written concerning Him, seven centuries before His birth, “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” And that prophecy was literally fulfilled when He stood silent before Caiaphas and before Pilate, and when He endured without a murmur all the insults of the mocking crowd at Calvary!

I think I hear someone say, “If I had been there, I would not have mocked the Savior as they did.” Ah my Friend, I am not so sure that you would not! Do you love Him now? Do you love His people? Do you love His ways? Do you love His Word? Do you love His House? Do you love Him? If you do not, I do not see why you should imagine that you would have behaved better than most of the men and women at that time did. You would not have known the Lord of Life and Glory any more than they did, and you would probably have joined them in heaping scorn and contumely upon Him! His stern rebukes of your sin would have made you as angry as they were. “He that is not with Me is against Me,” is still one of the infallible tests by which He tries the sons of men! And if you are not with Him, you are against Him! If you are not out-and-out for Him, you are mocking Him in your way even as the Jews did in theirs!

Possibly somebody asks, “Why did the Savior endure all that mockery and scorn?” Ah, some of us can tell! We once mocked religion and perhaps even poured contempt upon the name of Jesus, so He was mocked even while He was making Atonement for our sin of mockery! Besides, sin is always so contemptible a thing that it ought to be held up to derision by all sane men—and as Christ took upon Himself the sins of all His people—it was necessary that He should be despised even when He was only by imputation bearing the sins of others—

*“For sins not His own*

*He came to atone”*  
and, therefore, as the Sin-Bearer, the Substitute for His people, He had to bear all the scorn that their sins deserved.

Now, in closing, I say to you, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, your Master has been despised for your sakes, mind that you greatly honor Him. He was made nothing of, as far as that was possible to men—see that you make much of Him. For every thorn that pierced His blessed temples, give Him some precious pearl that you highly prize. For every hiss of scorn that greeted His holy ears, give Him a song of grateful praise. Oh, how I wish that we could continually lift Him up higher and higher before the sons and daughters of men! If He would but make us as the dust beneath His feet so that He might be exalted so much more in the eyes of sinners, we would count it our highest Glory to be trampled beneath His feet. Oh, for more crowns to put upon His blessed head!—

*“Crown Him with many crowns,*

*The Lamb upon His throne.”*  
It shall be the Heaven of Heaven to us when He gives us the crown of life, the crown of righteousness and the crown of glory, and we cast them all at His feet crying, “Not unto us, O Lord, be the Glory,” but, “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. To Him be Glory and dominion forever and ever.” But why not begin to honor Him here? I hope many of us are doing so already, but let us do it more and more! O Lamb of God, bleeding, languishing, despised, rejected, what can I do to honor You more than I have ever done before? Is not that the language of your heart, my Brother, my Sister? Come to His Table and honor Him by obeying this as well as all His other commandments, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” And then go tomorrow into the world wherever your business and your duty call you, and say—

“ **Now for the love I bear His name  
What was my gain I count my loss.  
My former pride I call my shame,  
And nail my glory to His Cross.  
Yes, and I must and will esteem  
All things but loss for Jesus’ sake—  
Oh, may my soul be found in Him,  
And of His righteousness partake.”**

Is there anyone here who has despised and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ? Alas, I fear that many, even in this assembly, have done so. Have you set Him at nothing? Have you thought nothing of Him? Have you mocked Him? Have you put a crown of thorns upon His head? Oh, if you have hitherto been numbered among His enemies, quit their ranks this very hour, bend your knees before Him in true homage and submission, give Him your hearts to be His royal throne, give Him yourselves to be His loyal subjects and servants forever! Look unto Him as He was upon the Cross and as He is upon the Throne of God! Trust Him with your whole heart, for whoever believes in Him has everlasting life! God bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 4; 5.**

Verse 1. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: You have enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. Good men want to be heard when they pray. They are not satisfied with merely praying—they must have God’s answers to their supplications. See how David pleads the past mercy received from God—“You have enlarged me when I was in distress.” Cannot my own heart look back to God’s loving kindness to me in days gone by? Oh, yes! Then, as He is the same God, what He has done in the past is an argument for what He will do in the future! There are some of us here who can adopt the Psalmist’s language and say, “You have enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.”

2. O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you slander me, how long will you slander God, how long will you turn the Gospel into ridicule, how long will you resist the Spirit of God?

2. How long will you love vanity, and seek leasing? That is, after falsehood, after lying. Why do men seek after falsehood? What attraction can it have for them? Why, only this attraction—that it suits a fool’s heart to feed on falsehood.

3. But know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for Himself.  
[See Sermon #2530, Volume 43—“A PECULIAR PEOPLE”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] You cannot hurt him, for God has hedged him about. You may say what you please against him, but God loves him and will take care of him.

3. The LORD will hear when I call unto Him. What a sweet assurance! O Brothers and Sisters, the Mercy Seat is always open to us! It will be a blessed thing if everyone of us can say with David, “The Lord will hear when I call unto Him.”

4. Stand in awe, and sin not. This is good advice to ungodly men! Let them feel aright the awe of God’s Presence and they must turn from sin. Holy reverence is a great preservative from sin.

4. Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Hold private communion with yourself, in a private place, at a private hour. “Be still.” We are far too noisy—most of us talk too much. It would often make men wiser if they were more still. If a still tongue does not make a wise head, yet it tends that way.

5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD. This is a capital rule for the whole of life. Serve God and trust in Him—do what is right, and rest in the God of Right.

6. There are many that say, who will show us any good? We all need to see anything that is really good, we do not care who shows it to us, even if it is the devil himself. “Who will show us any good?” That question may have another meaning, for there are some who have no desire for spiritual good—for such good as God calls good.

6. LORD, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us. David began the Psalm with a personal petition, “Hear me when I call,” but now he begins to glow in spirit and, as his prayer burns more vehemently, he prays for others, also—“Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us.” This is our highest joy, this is our greatest good—to walk in the light or God’s Countenance! If we have the favor of God, and know that we have it, we need ask for nothing else, for every other blessing is assured to those who have the favor of God!

7. You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. The harvest and the vintage were the two seasons of greatest joy in the East. They shouted, “Harvest Home,” with gladness that the fruits of the earth had again been ingathered, and they drank the new wine and danced for joy. But David says to the Lord, “You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.” When God puts gladness in the heart, it is real gladness, for God is not the Giver of a sham joy! It is lasting gladness, for God does not give temporary gifts.

David says, “You have put gladness in my heart,” and then he compares it with the gladness of the sons of men, and he says that his joy was greater than theirs when their earthly stores were increased. Boaz went to sleep on the threshing-floor, but he that sleeps upon the bosom of God has a far softer bed than that!

8. I will lay me down both in peace, and sleep: for You, LORD, only  
make me dwell in safety. [See Sermon #2033, Volume 34—PLAIN DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO WOULD BE SAVED FROM SIN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He who has Jehovah as his God is at home even when he is abroad! He is well guarded even when he has none upon earth to protect him! And he can go to sleep in calm confidence when others would be disturbed in mind and too timid to close their eyes!

**Psalm 5.**Verse 1. Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Sometimes we pray right off, as David did when he cried to the Lord, “Hear me when I call.” At other times, we sit down to meditate, and think over what we want to say to the Lord in prayer, as David did when he said, “‘O Lord, consider my meditation.’ What I have considered do You consider.” A well-considered prayer is very likely to succeed with God.

2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry—“When I have not confidence or comfort enough to present a well-ordered prayer to You—but, like a child in pain, cry unto You, ‘Hearken unto the voice of my cry’”—

2. My King, and my God. What? Will a king hearken to a cry? Men generally prepare elaborate petitions when they come into the presence of royalty, but although the Lord is far greater than all earthly sovereigns, He is far more condescending than they are.

2. For unto You will I pray. I trust that we all pray. I am sure that all Believers do, but let us pray more, let us pray much more than we have done and let us, each one truly say to the Lord, “Unto You will I pray.” He is a King, so serve Him with your prayers! He is God, so adore Him with your prayers! And if you can put both your hands on Him and say, as David did, “My King, and my God,” what abundant motives you have for abounding in prayer to Him!

3. My voice shall You hear in the morning, O LORD. “When the dew is on all Nature, and on my spirit, too, then shall You hear my voice in prayer. Before I go out into the world, my first thoughts shall be of You.” Never see the face of man, Beloved, until you have seen the face of God.

3. In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You, and will look up. Adjust your prayer as the archer fits his arrow on the bow. Look up as you shoot it and keep on looking up and looking out for an answer to your supplication. You cannot expect God to open the windows of Heaven to pour you out a blessing if you do not open the windows of your expectation to look for it! If you look up in asking, God will look down in answering. It is always well to take good aim in prayer. Some prayers are like random shots, they cannot be expected to hit the target. But David’s prayer was well aimed and he expected it to prevail with God—“In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You, and will look up.”

4. For you are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with You. In both of these Psalms there is a clear line drawn between the righteous and the wicked, this is a line which still needs to be kept very clear, and we must all seek to know on which side of that line we are.

5, 6. The foolish shall not stand in Your sight: You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy them that speak lies: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. These are strong words, but not too strong— God is not tolerant of evil and those who are most like He in other respects will be like He in this matter, also.

7. But as for me, I will come into Your House in the multitude of Your mercy. “I will be like a child who goes in and out of his father’s door as often as he pleases because he is at home. I will not go there on my own merits, but ‘in the multitude of Your mercy.’”

7. And in Your fear will I worship toward Your holy Temple. There was no temple on earth when David wrote this Psalm, but God was his Temple, and so the pious Jew opened his window and looked towards Jerusalem. So do we look towards God upon the Throne of Grace in Heaven and seek to worship Him in the beauty of holiness.

8. Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies, make Your way straight before my face. David does not say, “Make my way straight.” He does not want to have his own way, but he wants to walk in God’s way. Thus sweet submission blends with a desire for perfect obedience. “Make Your way straight before my face.”

9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth. You cannot expect ungodly men to speak that which is right. “There is no faithfulness in their mouth.”

9. Their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulcher. Pouring out foul, putrid gas. They cannot speak without using filthy or blasphemous expressions, or if they do, there is falsehood lurking behind their words, for deceit and evil of all kinds are in their hearts.

9. They flatter with their tongue. Always beware of people who flatter you, and especially when they tell you that they do not flatter you and that they know you cannot endure flattery—for you are then being most fulsomely flattered—so be on your guard against the tongue of the flatterer!

10. Destroy You them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against You. “It does not matter what they do against me, but O Lord, ‘they have rebelled against You.’” David speaks here like a judge pronouncing sentence upon the guilty—not out of malice, but out of loyalty and devotion to God!

11, 12. But let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them always shout for joy because You defend them: let them also that love Your name be joyful in You. For You, LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor will You compass him as with a shield.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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“A PECULIAR PEOPLE”  
NO. 2530

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, AUGUST 15, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“But know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call to Him.”  
Psalm 4:3.**

If you read this Psalm through, you will notice that when David wrote it, he had been pestered and troubled by certain ungodly men who had made a mockery of that which was his greatest delight. They had turned his glory into shame and had proved that they loved folly and falsehood. So he said to them, “O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity and seek after leasing”—or, “lying?” In order that he might stop them from angering him, he reminded them of two great facts. “But know”—he said—understand, do not doubt it, rest assured of it, “know that Jehovah has set apart him that is godly for Himself: Jehovah will hear when I call to Him.” Why did David want these men to know those two facts?

Well, first, that they might cease to oppose him, for, if they did but know that the man whom they mocked was really a child of God, set apart by the Most High by a Divine choice to be His own peculiarly favored one, surely they would not go on with their persecution! Those who put Christ to death did it in ignorance, “for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.” And we are persuaded that there are many men who now oppose the servant of God who would not do so if they did but know that he really was a servant of God, and that God looked upon him with delight. Therefore David, to stop the cruel mocking of his persecutors, said to them, “Know that Jehovah has set apart him that is godly for Himself: Jehovah will hear when I call to Him.”

He may also have had a still better motive and I think that he had— namely, to draw these men towards his God. There is no better way of taking flies than with honey and no better way of getting men to Christ than by drawing them to Him by a display of the privileges and advantages which belong to a godly life. “Know, then,” he said, “you who are saying, ‘Who will show us any good?’ And who are seeking after mere vanities that never can satisfy you—know you that in true religion there is to be found that which will delight you, and which will give you rest and peace. Know this, ‘that Jehovah has set apart him that is godly for Himself.’” I would to God that some to whom we describe the choice privileges of the people of God may be moved to cry—

*“With them numbered may we be,  
Now and through eternity!”*

But, whether this Truth of God has either or both of these effects upon the minds of men, or whether it shall have no effect at all, still it is a Truth never to be denied, “that Jehovah has set apart him that is godly for Himself.” So, as God may help me at this time, I shall briefly speak, first, upon a peculiar character. “Him that is godly.” Secondly, upon a peculiar honor. “Jehovah has set apart him that is godly for Himself.” And, thirdly, upon a peculiar privilege. “Jehovah will hear when I call to Him.” Oh, that every one of us may possess the character, receive the honor and enjoy the privilege of which our text speaks!

I. First, then, let us notice A PECULIAR CHARACTER—“him that is godly.”  
On reading the Psalm, it is very clear that this is a man misunderstood, or, not understood on earth. The ungodly cannot comprehend the godly! They scoff at them, they turn their glory into shame because they, themselves, love vanity and seek after lying. The godly man is not understood by the people among whom he dwells—God has made him to be a stranger and a foreigner in their midst. They who are born twice have a life which cannot be comprehended by those who are only born once! Those who have received the Spirit of God have a new spirit within them which is so amazing that the carnal mind cannot perceive what it is! Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. When a man has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, the old creatures round him cannot make heads or tails of him. They look at him, they see him actuated by motives which they cannot understand! They see that he is kept in check by forces which they do not acknowledge, that he is constrained by energies of which they are not partakers and that he looks for a something which they do not desire. So the Christian becomes, in a measure, like Christ, Himself, of whom the poet sings—  
*“The Jewish world knew not their King,  
God’s everlasting Son.”*  
“Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.” “You are a very peculiar person,” said one to a Christian. “I thank you for that testimony,” answered the Christian, “for that is what I desire to be, as Peter says, ‘You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.’” “Ah,” said the other, “but there is a strangeness about you that I do not like. I feel, sometimes, that I cannot endure your company.” “I thank you again,” replied the Christian, “for you only fulfill our Lord’s words, ‘Because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.’”  
Yes, dear Friends, it is so, and if you never strike the worldling as being a strange person. If you never get the mocking laughter of the ungodly. If they never slander you. If you never detect any difference between yourself and them—and they never discover any between themselves and you—it must be because you are not a genuine child of God. Ishmael will mock Isaac. It is not possible that the two seeds—the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman—should agree together if they act according to their nature. Do not wonder, therefore, if you, like David, have to bear persecution from those who cannot comprehend your new life, “for you are dead,” and the world says, “Bury the dead out of sight.” “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” But the worldling does not understand the peculiar character of the godly, or delight in it.  
But notice that, according to our text, this peculiar character is understood in Heaven. God knows what godliness is, for He has created it, He sustains it, He is pledged to perfect it and His delight is in it! What matters it whether you are understood by your fellow men or not, so long as you are understood by God? If that secret prayer of yours is known to Him, seek not to have it known to anyone else. If your conscientious motive is discerned in Heaven, mind not though it is denounced on earth. If your designs—the great principles that sway you—are such as you dare plead in the Great Day of Judgment, you need not stop to plead them before a jesting, jeering generation. Be godly and fear not! And if you are misrepresented, remember that should your character be dead and buried among men, there will be “a resurrection of reputations” as well as of bodies! “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” Therefore be not afraid to possess this peculiar character, for though it is misunderstood on earth, it is well understood in Heaven!

Let us inquire what this character is which is misunderstood on earth, but understood in Heaven. What does the text mean when it mentions, “him that is godly”?  
Well, it means, first, a God-fearing man. This is a common term, “a God-fearing man.” There are many who have not the fear of God before their eyes. Whether there is a God or not, is a matter of small consideration to them. They do not care which way the discussion terminates, for God is not in all their thoughts and, as long as He is not there, it does not matter to them whether He is anywhere! There are some who are not afraid of the terrors of God even with regard to the world to come! At any rate, they flatter themselves that they shall die at ease even if they live in wickedness and, for the present, they even dare to defy the Most High! They have been heard—and our blood has chilled as we have heard them—they have been heard to invoke condemnation from His hand as they have blasphemed His holy name!  
The godly man is one who fears God. He would not take God’s name in vain, he would not willfully violate God’s Law, he would not do anything that would grieve the Most High. And when he does so through infirmity, or sudden temptation, he is, himself, grieved that he should have grieved his God, for the fear of the Lord is upon him! He would not wish to stand at the judgment-bar of God, to be judged according to his works, apart from Jesus Christ, his Lord. He would dread such a thing! The name of God, the Person of God—the Character of God—these are matters of holy awe with him. His soul is filled with hallowed trembling while he thinks thereon—and everything that has to do with God is sacred to him. Heaven is no trifle and Hell is no trifle to him. The Book of God is no fable to him, the Day of God is hallowed by him and the Church of God is dear to him, for he is a God-fearing man! Often would he have done this or that, but he said, with Nehemiah, “So did not I, because of the fear of God.” When he is sorely tempted to evil, he asks, with Joseph, “How, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”  
Now, dear Friend, if you go no further than that, and are a God-fearing man, I have great hopes for you and I ask you to look at my text with hope—“Know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.”  
But, advancing another step, a godly man is a God-trusting man. He is one who has learned to entrust his soul to the hands of God as unto a faithful Creator, one who has trusted his sin with God, beholding it laid upon the Divine Substitute. He has trusted his eternity with God. He believes that he shall die the death of the righteous and that his last end shall be like His. He is resting in the living God, he trusts God about the present, he takes his troubles to God, yes, and if the day opens without trouble, he will not enter upon it without taking his day to God, nor will he fall asleep without committing his night to God. He trusts in God for little things, saying, “Give us this day our daily bread.” He trusts in God for great things, saying, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.”  
So, dear Friend, if you are a God-trusting man, as well as a Godfearing man, take my text—for it tastes like a wafer made with honey— lay it on your tongue and let it dissolve into your soul and sweeten your whole life! “Know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.”  
Then advance still further and understand the word, “godly,” as meaning a God-loving man. A godly man loves God! He is one whose heart has gone out after God. He loves his dear ones here below, but his God he loves more than all of them! He loves them in God and loves God the more for giving them to him, but God, Himself, has become his great object of delight! I am sure that he is a saved man who can follow David in saying, “God, my exceeding joy.” When one comes to joy in God, it is a sure evidence of godliness! The hypocrite has no delight in God. He may have a delight in the outward parade of religion, or in the name of godliness—possibly he has a delight in the bliss of Heaven which he sometimes hopes that he may enjoy—but in God, Himself, he has no delight. Whereas, to the true Believer, God is Heaven—  
*“Were I in Heaven without my God,  
‘Twould be no Heaven to me.”*  
“Delight yourself, also, in the Lord,” says David, and the genuine Believer does! He can say of his God—  
*“You are the sea of love,  
Where all my pleasures roll.  
The circle where my passions move,  
The center of my soul.”*  
So that he is a godly man who is a God-loving man.  
And, assuredly, he is a godly man who is a God-knowing man. He does not merely fear and trust and love God but he has come into personal acquaintance with God. The other day I saw a book entitled, “Is God Knowable?” Well, dear Friends, that is a question that can be answered by some of us. We can say, “We know Him. We have spoken to Him and He has spoken to us. Our spirit has come into actual contact with the Divine Spirit! We do not need anybody to prove this Truth of God to us, for it is a matter of faith, no, of joyous, ecstatic, delicious experience!— *‘My God, the spring of all my joys,  
The life of my delights,  
The glory of my brightest days,  
And comfort of my nights.’”*  
“My God, it is a fact that I have touched You and that You have touched me—that I have spoken to You and that You have spoken to me—and it is that fact which has forever made me glad.” O Beloved, if you know not God, what do you know? How are you a child of God if you do not know your Father? How are you saved if you do not know your Savior? How can you come to the Table to remember Him whom you never knew? And must you not expect to hear Him say at the last, “Depart from Me; I never knew you”? If we know Him, we are known of Him—the two things go together and are much the same—but, if we know Him not, then He knows us not in the sense of acquaintance and of love.  
Once more, a godly man is a God-like man. We reach this point, you see, by steps—the man is God-fearing, God-trusting, God-loving, Godknowing and then, God-like. Can a man be like God? Ah, me, what a wide discrepancy there must always be between God and the best of men! We are unlike God even in our likeness to Him! He who is most like God is only like He as a dewdrop is like the sea, or as a glowworm is like the sun! Yet Grace does make us like God in righteousness, true holiness and especially in love. Has the Holy Spirit taught you, my dear Friend, to love even those that hate you? Have you a love that leaps out like the waters from the smitten rock so that every thirsty one may drink? Would you gladly love the poorest and the most depraved into the wealth and glory of your Master’s love? Do you love even those that render you no love in return, as He did who gave His life for His enemies? Then are you, to that extent, made like God. And do you choose that which is good? Do you delight yourself in peace? Do you seek after that which is pure? Are you always gladdened with that which is kind and just? Then are you like your Father who is in Heaven! You are a godly man and this text is for you—“Know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.”  
II. This leads me to dwell with pleasure upon A PECULIAR HONOR which has been conferred upon this peculiar character. “The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.”  
You see, then, that God discerns godliness in men. There is a great deal of dross in all of us, but God spies whatever gold there may be. If there is any gold in the ore, God preserves the lump because of the precious metal that is in it. I know, my dear Brother, that you are not perfect. Perhaps you are, at this moment, grieving over a great fault. If so, I am glad you have the godliness that makes you grieve over sin. I know, my dear Friend, that you are not what you want to be, or wish to be, or ought to be. Still, you do fear the Lord and you do trust Him and you do love Him. Now, the Lord can spy all that out and He knows about the good that is in you. He casts your sin behind His back, but that which is of His own Grace, He sets apart for Himself—and He sets you apart for Himself because of the good which is in you. I like to notice, in Scripture, that although God’s people are described as a very faulty people, and although the Lord is never tender towards sin, yet He is always very gentle towards them. If there is any good point about them, He brings it out and He is most gracious to them—and His love casts a mantle over a thousand of their mistakes and errors! If God’s people mentioned in the Old and New Testaments had all been perfect, I should have despaired, but, because they seem to have just the kind of faults that I grieve over in myself, I do not feel any more lenient toward my faults, but I have the more hope that I, also, am among those whom the Lord sets apart for Himself because they are godly.  
And, dear Friends, know yet further that God makes those who are really godly to differ from the world. He will not let them be like the world. Some of them try to be so, but they must not. And the world sometimes gets the victory over them for a time and makes them like itself—but they soon get out of its power. Poor Samson told the secret of his great strength and the Philistines cut off all that long hair of his which used to hang down his back till he seemed to be like a wild man of the woods! The Nazarite told his secret and then they clipped away his hair and set him to grind in the mill when they had put out his eyes! They should have had a razor drawn over his head every morning, but they forgot to do that—and when his hair had grown, again, he pulled the pagan temple down upon his enemies and, in his last moments, won a glorious victory for his nation, Israel!  
If the devil ever does cut the Nazarite locks of a true child of God, they will grow again in time. They must grow again and they grow when the devil is not noticing them—and then the old strength of Grace comes back again. I have known a child of God fall, like Peter did, when he denied his Master. Yet, when the locks of his consecration had grown, again, in a short time there was Peter preaching a sermon that brought 3,000 to Christ! And the devil had not made much of a gain of Peter, after all, when once he came back to his Lord. But, oh, what a mercy it is to be kept so as never to lose those locks of consecration! Oh, that we may differ from the world in a thousand respects, so that we may go through it as Mr. Bunyan pictures his pilgrim going through Vanity Fair! “Buy, buy, buy,” the merchants cried, but he did not buy any of their wares. And when they pressed him very hard, he said, “We buy the truth and sell it not.” All he had to do was to go through the fair—and that is what you and I have to do. Let us go through the world as those who are in it but not of it—the Lord always, by His Grace, making us to differ from other men! There is no need to take off the collar of your coat, or to talk differently or to dress differently from ordinary folk. Dress and talk like other people who act as they should, but let your difference from the world be

 spiritual—real, true, not merely indicated by some outward emblem or badge—but seen in the deportment and carriage of your entire life!  
Further, the Lord sets apart him that is godly for Himself by dealing with His people differently from others. I fancy that I hear somebody say, “I stoutly deny that!” Well, deny away, brother, if you like, for, apparently the Lord does not deal with His people differently from what He does with others, and it says, even in Scripture, “All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and the wicked.” Here is a man of God, but the Sabeans steal his oxen and his asses. The Chaldeans carry away his camels, the fire of God burns up his sheep and his servants. And his children are destroyed by a great wind from the wilderness. Yes, yes, yes! But read the whole of Job’s story and see that when God turns, again, his captivity and gives him twice as much as he had before, and enables him to gain a great victory over the devil, after all, God did not deal with Job as He dealt with others!  
“Oh,” says another, “but whom the Lord loves, He chastens!” Yes, and that is one of the ways in which He differs in His dealings with them and with others, for, sometimes, He does not chasten the ungodly, but lets them have no trouble in their lives and no pangs in their death. He lets them have as much pleasure as they can have, for what they get here is all they will ever have! Whereas He chastens His own people for their present and eternal good. My dear Friend, there is never exactly the same Providence to the ungodly as to the godly. There is a difference, somewhere. There is a difference in the end, if nowhere else, for to you and to me, as God’s people, “all things work together for good.” But they do not work together for good to the ungodly! There may, apparently, be the same causes at work, but they do not produce the same results.  
So God does make a difference between the godly and the rest of mankind. And there is one peculiar point of difference—He has set them apart for Himself! For what purpose? That they may be His Friends, and that He may converse with them. God does not usually come to this earth to talk with kings and princes—the greatest king is but a brother-worm like the rest of us—but God has often been here to converse and commune with His poor people. If men are godly, whether they are rich or poor, God has fellowship with them! It seems amazing to me that God should so often be unknown in His own world. The great majority of His creatures never hear His voice and never give a response to His call! But the godly, when they hear the voice of their God saying to them, “Seek you My face,” cry out at once, “Your face, Lord, will we seek!” There are thousands at this moment speaking with God, but all of them are godly people. And God is speaking to them. The Holy Spirit is holding high communion with many of the sons and daughters of Adam, but only with those who are godly! Even now there is a great gulf between God and the ungodly—their backs are turned to Him and, at the last He will bid them keep on doing what they have been doing, for He will say to them, “Depart from Me, you cursed.”  
But His people are always coming, coming, coming to Him and, at the last He will bid them continue to do what they are now doing, for to them He will say, “Come, you blessed of My Father.” Oh, yes, amazing as it is, it is true that we do have conversation with God, for “the Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself” to be His friend and His constant companion!  
Moreover, God has also set apart him that is godly that He may use him. If you are a godly man, God will make you His own servant and He will send you on His errands. And He will be with you all the while. He will employ you to carry messages of comfort, messages of warning, messages of invitation to those who need them. If you are godly, God will use you! He will not use dirty vessels, but when we are clean, washed by His own hands in the cleansing Fountain, then He will use us for His own purposes. He has reserved us, He has monopolized us for Himself alone! We sometimes sing—  
*“Take my hands, and let them be,  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.”*  
We say to God, “Take my lips, my eyes, my ears, my feet, my whole being; reserve me for Yourself.” That is exactly what the Lord has done with the godly! You sometimes see certain things marked, “Reserved.” That is the label that God has put on every Christian—“The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.” Nobody but your God is to have you in His possession or control, for you belong wholly unto the Most High!  
Know this, Beloved, for, at the last, God will acknowledge you as His. Before astonished worlds, when ungodly men shall not dare to lift up their faces, God will acknowledge you in that day as belonging to Him if you are godly. Your righteousness shall come forth as the light and your judgment as the noonday, for God has made you His own and set a hedge about you! And none shall destroy you, or separate you from His Son. “They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels,” for He has set apart the godly for Himself!  
III. Now I must close by speaking briefly of a peculiar privilege. “The Lord will hear when I call to Him.”  
This means, first, “He will grant me an audience. He will hear what I have to say.” There were certain princes of Media and Persia who had the right to come to the king whenever they pleased. Such is the right of all the godly—whenever you desire to speak with God, God is waiting to hear you. Oh, what a privilege is this! There are none of us who could go to see earthly kings and queens whenever we liked—we would have to be properly introduced and go through all manner of forms and ceremonies. But through the one Mediator between God and men, we have the right at any moment of the day or night to have an audience with the King of kings and Lord of lords!

It means, next, “The Lord will not only hear, but He will answer me.” Answer is intended in the word, “hear”—“The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” Ask what you will, O you children of the King, and it shall be done unto you! Ask Him not merely for the half of His Kingdom, but for the whole of it, and you shall have it. “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?”

I am not going to preach about that part of my subject, I only want to apply it. Many of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, desire to commune at the Lord’s Table, yet I hear one say, “I feel so dull, I do not know whether I dare come to the Table. I seem as if I were dead and I cannot get out of this cold, lethargic state.” Let me whisper this message in your ear—“The Lord will hear you when you call to Him.” Now, then, pray, “Lord, quicken me.”—

*“Dear Lord! And shall we ever lie  
At this poor dying rate?  
Our love so faint, so cold to You  
And You to us so great?  
Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Your quickening powers,  
Come, shed abroad a Savior’s love,  
And that shall kindle ours.”*

You need not be dull, you need not be lethargic—up with you, for you have wings! Ask the Lord to help you to stretch them out that you may rise superior to everything earth-born and groveling, up into communion with the Most High. Try the power of prayer now!

“Ah,” sighs another, “but I feel so desponding, I am as heavy as lead. If I were thrown up, I should fall down again. I have so many doubts, I have such a sinking of spirit that I often question whether I am a child of God at all.” Now listen to our text—“The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” Call unto Him, “Lord, bring my soul out of prison! Lord, appear to Your poor servant!”—

*“Shine, Lord, and my terror shall cease,  
The blood of Atonement apply.  
And lead me to Jesus for peace,  
The Rock that is higher than I.”*

There is no need for you to be “down in the dumps.”—  
*“Why should the children of a King  
Go mourning all their days?”*

Come, Brothers and Sisters, you can get rid of those clouds— *“Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw, Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above.”*

Try it now, believing and expecting that the Lord will hear you! You see, He has set you apart for Himself—you belong to Him, you are His treasure, His jewel, the signet on His finger, the delight of His heart! Your name is engraved on the palms of His hands! Do you think He wishes you to be in this miserable state? Oh, no, He has sent the Comforter to deal with just such as you are! One Person of the Divine Trinity has undertaken the office of comforting the people of God, therefore He must want you to be happy and comfortable. Cry to Him to bring you up out of your low estate.

But I hear a Brother say, “I have a great trouble on me, I have sustained a very heavy, a very serious loss in my business.” Another says, “I have lost a dear child and there is another loved one sickening.” “Ah,” cries one, “if you were to step into my house, you would find it like the wards of a hospital! Everybody in it seems to be ill. I am the man that has seen affliction?” Are you, dear Brother? Then you are the very man who ought to pray and to say, “The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” He will either take your trouble away, or else make you glad that it ever came. He will either take your burden off, or else He will give you a strong back to bear it! I do not think it matters much which it is— whether He takes off the burden or strengthens the back. You know, the deeper your troubles, the louder shall be your song at the last—and God will get more glory out of you by a life of trial than if you had a smooth path all the way. Come, then, call to Him!

“The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” This seems a very wonderful sentence. What is there in me which is a reason why the Lord should hear me when I call to Him? Let me explain this marvel. There is a little boy who lives at your house and I say to him, “I have called to see your father, but he will not see me.” “Oh,” says the lad, “he always sees me.” “Your father will not let me speak to him.” “He always lets me speak to him,” says the boy. What is there in that little child that makes the man hear

 him when he will not hear me? Why, you see, it is his own boy! And the father will, of course, see and hear his own child. And you are the Lord’s own child, so He will hear you! Therefore take your troubles to Him. If the father will not hear his boy in ordinary times, yet when the lad cries, “O father, I feel so ill!” the loving parent says, “Come here, my child, and tell me all about it.” That is what the Lord says to you now, my poor, weary, heavy-laden Brother. The Lord will hear you, I am quite sure of it. Therefore call on Him and get rid of those burdens.

“Ah,” says one, “but my trouble is that I want to have my children converted.” Then, pray for them, pray for them! “Oh, but it is my husband who is not a Christian!” says another. Then, pray for him. “I have prayed,” says one. Pray on, dear Sister, and the Lord will hear you! “I am afraid my husband will not be saved.” Well, you must not be afraid, but say with David, “The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” “Ah,” says another, “but I have to go back tomorrow into business and I shall have to work with so many ungodly men—my life is one long struggle.” Well, never mind about that tonight—it is not Monday, yet. Let us get Monday’s Grace when Monday comes! And let us now enjoy ourselves as we repeat this precious text, “The Lord will hear when I call to Him.”

He will either stop those wicked men’s mouths, or else He will open yours. He will give you the right word by way of reply, or else He will not let them say anything that needs a reply. Only tell the Lord about them! You would like to come and see me and tell me about them, but I do not particularly want to hear it and I cannot do you much good if I do hear it. Go and tell my Master about it! “I want to speak with some Christian friend.” Well, do so, if you like, but remember that—

*“Were half the breath thus vainly spent, To Heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be,  
‘Hear what the Lord has done for me!’”*

“The Lord will hear when I call to Him.” Call unto Him now and He will hear and answer you! And so let us come to His Table, happy and joyful, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 119:25-32.**

Verse 25. My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken me according to Your Word. “I feel heavy, unhappy, dull. ‘My soul cleaves unto the dust.’ Or I feel worldly, lethargic, lifeless. ‘My soul cleaves unto the dust.’ There is nothing but the power of new life that can separate me from that dust! ‘Quicken me according to Your Word.’” Divine life is the great cure for most spiritual evils. When a man has vigorous life in his constitution, he throws off many diseases. And when the soul is full of spiritual life, it masters a great number of evils. “My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken me according to Your Word.” That is good pleading—“according to Your promise, for You have promised to quicken me. It is the nature of Your Word to be quick and quickening; therefore, Lord, ‘quicken me according to Your Word.’”

26. I have declared my ways, and You heard me: teach me Your statutes. “I have confessed my wrong; now, O Lord, teach me what is right! I have acknowledged my sin; now, O Lord, lead me in the paths of holiness! ‘Teach me Your statutes.’”

7. Make me to understand the way of Your precepts: so shall I talk of Your wondrous works. He who fully understands the way of God’s precepts must talk of His wondrous works. There is a power about that Truth of God in the heart to unloosen the most stammering tongue! We are bound to speak of that which God teaches us. “Make me to understand the way of Your precepts: so shall I talk of Your wondrous works.”

28. My soul melts for heaviness: strengthen me according to Your Word. Are any of you, dear Friends, in that condition? Do your hearts melt within you? It is a sore trouble, as I know full well. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity,” but when his very soul melts for heaviness, what is he to do, then? Why, even then he may pray! No, then he must pray and this may be the burden of his prayer, “Strengthen me according to Your Word.” Notice, Beloved, how the Psalmist keeps harping upon that string—“according to Your Word.” If your prayer is according to God’s Word, you may expect a comfortable answer, sooner or later. We know that God will not act contrary to His Word. He who is not a man of his word is despised and if there could be One who was not a God of His Word, what would be said of Him? But, my tried Friend, He will make His Word true to you to the very letter! Therefore still cry to Him, “Strengthen me according to Your Word.”

29. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me Your Law graciously. “Lord, let me not be pestered by liars, and let me never fall into any measure of falsehood myself.” There is a way of thinking better of yourself than you deserve, which is a form of lying. There is a method of supposing that you have experienced what you never have experienced and that you have attained to what you never have attained—that also is a way of falsehood. May God remove it from us and may we have the Law of the Lord written on our hearts! “Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me Your Law graciously.”

30. I have chosen the way of Truth. “I want to be true, I want to know the Truth of God, I want to feel the Truth, I want to practice the Truth—‘I have chosen the way of Truth.’”

30. Your judgments have I laid before me. “Like a map, so that I might follow the way of Truth as I see it drawn out in letters of light in Your Word.” The man who spreads out God’s Word before him, like a map of the road, is not likely to make a mistake in his journeying!

31. I have stuck to Your testimonies. I like that word, “stuck.” “I have stuck to Your testimonies.” “I could not be drawn or dragged away from them. Some have told me of some fine new ideas and modern grand discoveries, but ‘I have stuck unto Your testimonies.’ They came before me with something very artistic and scientific, but ‘I have stuck unto Your testimonies’”

31. O LORD, put me not to shame. You may rest assured that He never will! If a man clings to God, God will cleave to him. If we are not ashamed of God, He will never put us to shame, but we shall go from strength to strength glorying in His Truth and Grace.

32. I will run the way of Your commandments, when You shall enlarge my heart. There is an enlargement of the heart that is very dangerous, but this kind of enlargement of the heart is the most healthy thing that can happen to a man! A great heart, you see, is a running heart. A little heart goes slowly, but an enlarged heart runs in the way of God’s Commandments. Oh, for a heart full of love to God! And then to have that heart made larger, so as to hold more of God’s love! Lord. enlarge my heart in that sense! Let me feel at home and at liberty with You! Let the last link of my bondage be snapped. Amen.

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PLAIN DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO WOULD BE SAVED FROM SIN  
NO. 2033

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, JULY 15, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.”  
Psalm 4:4, 5.**

DAVID was surrounded with many wicked and cruel enemies. They touched him in a tender place when they mocked his religion and so turned his glory into shame. They invented all kinds of lies against him. But the worst of all was that they said, “There is no help for him in God.” As much as to say, “God has cast him off. Therefore, let men cast him off. He that is forsaken of the Lord is not fit to sit upon the throne of Israel. Let us set up Absalom in his place.” This was malice, indeed.

David first made his appeal to God in prayer. Herein he showed his wisdom. You can drive a better business at the Mercy Seat than in the world’s jangling markets. You will get more relief from the righteous Lord than from ungodly men. To enter into debate is never so profitable as to enter into devotion. Carry not your complaint into the lower courts but go at once to the Court of King’s Bench, where the Judge of All presides. Imitate David and David’s Lord, who in the days of His flesh with strong crying and tears poured out His soul before the Father.

After David had prayed, he expostulated with his adversaries. The first showed his sonship towards God, the second his brotherliness towards men. There is nothing of bitterness in the words I have read to you—they have a kindly voice in them. If his foes had been at all reasonable they would have listened to his pleadings. But it is to be feared they were otherwise minded. He urges them to cease from sin and he teaches them the way to do so. In four sentences he helps them to escape from their evil ways and to become better men. Had God’s Spirit applied David’s words to their consciences, they would have been pricked in their hearts and there would have been no need for them to be smitten on the cheekbone, that their cruel teeth might be broken.

Upon these four precepts I would speak this morning as the Holy Spirit shall give me utterance, trusting, hoping, believing that many who desire a better life may find it while I speak. May God begin with them that they may begin with God! I have no confidence in my own persuasions. Yet, being called to use them, I trust in Him that sent me to make them effectual.

David mentions four things as helpful towards ceasing from sinning. The first is, feel reverent awe—“Stand in awe and sin not.” The second is, use thoughtful self-examination—“Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.” The third advice is make a right approach to God— “Offer the sacrifice of righteousness” and the fourth is the greatest of them all—exercise faith—“Put your trust in the Lord.” Here are four steppingstones across the filthy slough of sin—may you mark them well and step from one to the other by the help of God’s Spirit—till you reach the other shore and stand on safe and clean ground!

I. First, FEEL REVERENT AWE—“Stand in awe.” It might be translated, “Tremble and sin not.” Hardened sinners sin and tremble not. Penitent sinners tremble and sin not. Gracious work in the heart usually begins with trembling. I cannot believe a man has been saved if he has never trembled before God because of the evil of sin. The old house of depraved nature shakes before it comes down. The returning prodigal must feel, “I am not worthy to be called Your son,” or he will never be called a son. He seeks his Father’s face with much trembling, because he has so grievously offended.

Awe is not a common emotion nowadays. This is a flippant age. Men are rather triflers than tremblers. If there is any doctrine which has peculiar weight and solemnity about it, they try to pare it down to less terrible proportions. Sin is not exceeding sinful to them, nor its punishment exceeding terrible. They would not have us know the terrors of the Lord, though by these very terrors we persuade men. True religion must have a savor of awe about it—“My heart stands in awe of Your Word,” is the expression of one that knows God and is reconciled to Him.

Let me say, then, to you who have been thoughtless and careless about your souls until now—we earnestly desire you to consider these words— “Stand in awe.” Remember, there is a God—whatever you may think, or others may declare, there is a God who made you and in whose hand your breath is. There is a God that sits in Heaven, who beholds all the sons of men—and however much you may dislike the thought, there He is, and there He ever will be—and you will have to deal with Him and He with you, before long.

God is everywhere present, at all times. He has seen all your evil ways and heard all your hard speeches. No night is so dark as to hide from His eyes. No chamber so retired as to shut Him out. He has even read your thoughts and imaginations. He notes all and forgets nothing. All things are ever present to Him. The days of your youth and the years of your manhood lie open before Him like a book. If men could but realize that God is there, how could they dare to sin before His very eyes? If at this moment anyone of my hearers who is without Christ could only be filled with this one thought, “God, You see me,” surely he would stand in awe and at least desire to sin no more.

Well may the preacher speak very solemnly when he feels that he is surrounded with God and that God is within him as well as around him! Well may his hearers tremble if he feels that all his thoughts are at this moment read by God! Stand in awe, I pray you, of God, who is now filling this house and is in your own houses. Will you sin in God’s Presence? Can you blaspheme Him to His face? Will you disobey Him while His eyes are fixed upon you? I pray you stand in awe of the eternal God, in whom you live and move and have your being!

Remember that this God, who is everywhere, and sees everything, is your Judge. He is pure and holy and cannot bear iniquity. He is angry with the wicked every day and will surely visit them for their transgressions. Every sinful act shall have its recompense of reward. Do not doubt it. The world is all in a tangle now but there will be a day when the Lord will draw out a straight thread for each man. Today the wicked prosper but God will turn their way upside down. And though the righteous are often under a cloud, He will bring forth their judgment as the noonday. Men respect an earthly judge. Therefore, I pray you, stand in awe of the Judge of all the earth.

Do not forget, also, that your God is almighty. He has but to will it and the strongest of us would be crushed more easily than a moth. There is no escaping from the Lord—neither the heights of Carmel nor the depths of the sea could afford shelter for a fugitive from the Lord. Neither can any resist Him, for none have any power apart from Him. You have heard His thunder, and trembled at the bolts of His lightning. Behold how dreadful is God in arms! How dare you sin against a God so great! Stand in awe. Even holy Job, when he came near to the Lord, exclaimed, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eyes see You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” How can you feel Him near and not be filled with awe?

Stand in awe of God because He is infinitely good. To me, personally, some little time ago, the Lord drew very near in a most special and memorable Providence. As I saw the hand of the Lord stretched out so marvelously, I felt my very flesh creep, not with alarm but with a joyful awe of One who could work so tenderly and condescendingly for His tried servant. I knew that He was God by His marvelously gracious care over me and nearness to my soul in adversity. Verily Jehovah is God and a great King above all gods. He is to be had in reverence of them that are round about Him. I know now why Jacob said at Bethel, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven.”

He was filled with a holy dread and solemn awe because God had been so near. I therefore say to you—stand in awe of God, because He is infinitely great and good. The illustration which I quoted from my own personal experience, I could not withhold, because it is, even at this hour one of the most vivid recollections of my life. God has dealt with me very graciously. Oh, His great goodness! A sense of it is overwhelming. We fear and tremble for all the goodness which the Lord makes to pass before us. Think of sin forgiven, of righteousness imputed, of spiritual life imparted, of that life preserved, supplied, nurtured.

Think of Providence with all mindful foresight and abounding supplies. The love of God should make us reverent as angels and humble as penitents. If the impudence of pride might dare to insult justice, yet it should scorn to injure love. There is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared—His Grace, if not His Glory, should command the reverence of the most obdurate hearts. I pray you stand in awe of God and sin not. If thoughts of this kind could but dwell in men’s minds they would surely perceive that sin is a great wrong to the Lord and they would flee from it, crying like Joseph, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

My dear Hearers, stand in awe in reference to a future state. You do not doubt the Truth of God which the Holy Spirit has revealed that when you die you will not cease to be. There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust—“for we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.” Oh, that all persons would remember this wherever they go! I have heard of a soldier—I think he was employed in the survey of Palestine—who was in the valley of Jehoshaphat, outside Jerusalem, and someone remarked that it was reported by some that this valley would be the scene of the Last Judgment and in that place the multitudes would be gathered.

The soldier, hearing this, said, “What a crowd there will be! I shall be there and I will sit on this stone.” He sat down to realize the scene and his imagination acted so powerfully that he seemed to himself to be among the throng and to behold the Great White Throne. He was seen to swoon and fall to the ground. Do you wonder? If anyone of us could, in our inmost souls, behold that scene, should we not be overcome? I wish I could so speak this morning that some of you would picture that last tremendous day for which all other days were made. Behold that “diesirae” that Day of Wrath, that day when justice will sit upon the throne! Behold it by anticipation, for it will soon be upon you in very deed.

As surely as you live, you will live again—and for every act on earth you must give an account in that last assize. Trifle not, for the Judge is at the door. We may hear His trumpets before this day is over. Let not this thought be driven from you—rather welcome it and let it abide in your minds—if you were to think of nothing else for a time you might be justified, since it is of such overwhelming importance that you prepare for your final state. Shall a man live and never think of the end of life? Can a man think it wise to occupy himself with frivolities throughout the whole of his earthly existence? While he is shaping his eternal condition, will he do nothing else but sport?

Will he never think of that day when his position shall be fixed by the verdict of the great Judge? O my dear Hearers, do not forget that you have to live in a future state and that you will see Him who died upon the Cross, seated on the Throne in that day when all nations shall be gathered before Him and He shall divide them, the one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. May the thought of the eternal reward also rest on your minds! Hear you, even now, that word of the King to the righteous—“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Hear, also, that dread sentence to those on his left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh, think of these things and “stand in awe, and sin not”! This awe is one of the strongest moral disinfectants—use it largely. There is no fear of your having too much of it. He that has no fear of God before his eyes sins with a high hand but awe of the Lord leads to purity of life.

II. In the second place, David admonished the ungodly to practice THOUGHTFUL SELF-EXAMINATION. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.”

I am not trying, my dear Hearer, to preach a sermon this morning—I am longing to take you by the hand and to lead you in the right way. I pray the Holy Spirit to make you willing to follow my gentle guidance. My dear Friend, you are now asked to think about yourself—“commune with your own heart.” When once men choose the way of evil they run in it with their eyes shut. They do not wish to consider. It is easier to go blindly on. They will think about their worldly concerns, their profits and losses, their pleasures and amusements. But they refuse seriously to consider their condition before God.

O my Friend, think of what you are and where you are, what you have done, what you are doing, what it will all lead to! Are you such a fool that you will not consider? Then put on the cap and bells, and wear a clown suit and take to your proper trade. And yet, even if you were a merry Andrew, it would become you sometimes to be wise as well as merry and to take a look into the future, lest you have to take a leap in the dark, at last.

Especially think of the state of your heart. This is the vital point. Are you right with God? Do you serve your Maker? Have you truly repented of former sin? Have you fled to Christ as your Refuge? Have you been born again? Are you the subject of sanctifying grace? “Commune with your own heart” upon these essential points—he that would have his face clean must look in a glass to see his spots. And he that would have his heart clean must gaze into the mirror of God’s Word that he may discover his secret faults.

Your heart may be diseased while your cheek seems ruddy with health. Look within you, Man, and be not deceived as to the fountain of your being. Have you really passed from death to life? Does the Spirit of the God of Truth dwell in you? Such questions as these are all-important. I pray you answer them as before the living God, without partiality or negligence.

Think by yourself, alone and in quiet. Oh, how I wish I could induce you to spend an hour or two closeted with yourself! “Commune with your own heart upon your bed”—at that time when companions are out of the way—when the jest is silenced and the common talk is hushed. Get by yourself, when you think of yourself or it will be an impossible task. Choose the hour of night when all is still around you and darkness lends its solemnity. You can forego a little natural sleep, if thereby you may be aroused from the sleep of spiritual death. The bed and sleep are instructive emblems of the grave and death—they may aid you in the serious work of examining your hearts.

Remember that as you put off your clothes and go to your bed, so you must put off your body and quit the scene of life’s activities. Are you ready for that undressing? Make your bed the place of your contrition, even as David did when he said, “All the night make I my bed to swim.” The earth outside has its dews, let your heart have its tears. Think by yourself, of yourself and then think for yourself. You have been carried away by your companions. You have tried to think as they think. The general opinion of the age may have influenced you towards indifference. With a family round about you, you have looked at things too much in the light of business and personal benefit.

But it will be wise to lay aside all this. As you will have to die alone and to put in a personal appearance at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it will be prudent to divest yourself of your surroundings and “commune with your own heart.” I commend this text most heartily to your immediate practice. If you are unsaved—think, rather than sleep. The tendency of most men with regard to eternal things is to go to sleep and let matters drift—I pray you, don’t do it. I dare not let you take your rest while all is wrong with you. Sleep, if you like, in a house that is on fire. Sleep, if you like, in a ship that is settling down and rapidly sinking. But I charge you do not sleep while you are an unforgiven man and your soul is nearing the eternal judgment—“Commune with your own heart upon your bed”—use your bed for seeking instead of sleeping.

I remember the time when I dared not go to sleep, for fear I might wake up in Hell. Many, when under conviction of sin, have at length resolved not to sleep until they found Christ. I wish that some such feeling as that would steal over you at this moment.

Keep on thinking till you come to be still. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still.” Do you know what that means? There comes a time with men whom God is saving that all grows quiet within them. Their old pleasures and desires are hushed. The voice of the outside world is still and they hear in the silence of their souls “the still small voice” of conscience. Oh, that you were at this moment still enough to hear that warning note! Memory also commences her rehearsals—it tells of the past and brings forgotten things before the soul, Oh, that all of you would remember and think yourselves that God requires that which is past.

Best of all, God speaks in the soul. It was at night, when young Samuel was on his bed, that the Lord said to him, “Samuel, Samuel.” And it is when the heart at last has grown still that God’s voice of mercy is heard calling to the man by name. Oh, that in such a case you may have Divine Grace to answer, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears”!

I beseech you, give yourselves space for thought, before thought becomes the worm of eternal misery to you. Remember, before you hear that voice from Heaven which spoke to the rich man in Hell and said to him, “Son, remember.” You slaves of fashion and frivolity, think, I pray you! You serfs of daily money-grubbing, rest a while and hear what God the Lord shall speak to you! You can hardly hear the great bell of St. Paul’s when the traffic is thundering around but it sounds solemnly in the stillness of night. We who live in the more remote suburbs hear Big Ben of Westminster at night but we seldom note it amid the stir and noise of the day. Do give an opportunity for the eternal voices to pierce the clamors of the hour.

Do, for God’s sake and for your soul’s sake, hear what wisdom teaches concerning everlasting things! O Lord, give Your Grace to my dear Hearers, that they may consider their ways and turn unto Your statutes!

III. Very briefly, let us note that David gives a third piece of advice, which in essence means APPROACH UNTO GOD ARIGHT—“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness.”

Now, I do not quite know what David, himself, may have intended by it, but this is how I interpret it. Come to God. Come to God in His own way. Come as Israel came to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, bringing their sacrifices with them.

When they brought their sacrifices, the first thing they did was to lay their hand on the victim and make a confession of sin. Come, then, with broken and contrite hearts unto the Lord. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” Own your shortcomings and transgressions. Do not cloak or excuse your sins. Get to your chamber and tell the Lord what you have done. Pour out your hearts before Him—turn them upside down, as it were, and let all flow out, even to the dregs. Confess your pride and unbelief, your Sabbath-breaking, your dishonesty, your falsehood, your disobedience to parents, your every breach of the Divine Law. Whatsoever you have done amiss, confess it before Him and thus go to Him in the only way in which He can receive you, even as sinners owning your guilt.

Go also to the Lord with gracious desires to be rid of sin. Entreat reconciliation, saying, “I would no longer be what I have been. I throw down the weapons of my rebellion, I pluck out the plumes of my pride. O Lord, I stand before You guilty and I pray You will forgive me and then rid me of the tyrant evils which now rule me so terribly! Oh, that I may sin no more! If I have been a drunkard, help me from this day to relinquish the intoxicating cup. If I have been a swearer, wash out my mouth. May I, henceforth, speak nothing but that which will be acceptable to You! If I have been unchaste, cleanse my mind, that I may keep my body pure!” In this way come to God with contrite hearts. How much do I long that you may draw near to God with true repentance and hearty resolves to conquer sin!

The main thing, however, is to bring unto the Lord the offering which He has Divinely appointed and provided. You know what that is. There is one sacrifice of righteousness without which you cannot be accepted. Come to God by faith in Jesus Christ. Plead the precious blood of atonement and say, “My Lord, for His dear sake who died upon the tree, receive Your wanderer and now be pleased to grant me that repentance and remission of sins which He is exalted to give.”

My Hearers, am I talking so as to reach your hearts? If not, I do not want to talk any longer. I had far rather be silent lest I minister to your condemnation. Hearts that have forgotten your Lord till now, oh, may His Spirit constrain you to return to Him this day through the sacrifice of Jesus! If you come through Christ, you will never be cast out. The Father will receive any sinner that pleads the name of Jesus. And Jesus is willing that you should plead His name. He died on purpose to be the propitiation for our sins—God grant that you may accept Him as such!

Come to your God—this is the great necessity of the hour. Say, “I will arise, and go to my Father.” If the prodigal had said, “I will arise and go to my brother,” he would have made a great mistake, for the elder brother would have shut the door in his face. Even if his brother had been of a kinder sort, he could not have forgiven the transgressor—his father alone could do that. Come, then to your God with earnest prayer. For it prevails with Heaven. Come also with humble praise. For it is much that you are yet alive and not yet cast into the pit. Come to your God and Father with the resolve to render Him your life’s service, saying, “O Lord our God, other lords beside You have had dominion over us—but by You only will we make mention of Your name!”

IV. I must now close with the fourth point, which is, in some respects, the most important of all—EXERCISE FAITH. When holy awe and thoughtful self-communion have led us to seek the Lord, then we are prepared for the great precept which follows. It is the command of the Gospel in its Old Testament form—“Put your trust in the Lord.” In whom should a man trust but in his God? It may seem reasonable to trust our fellow creature. But, alas, man is a frail thing and to lean upon him ensures a fall. It is, therefore, unreasonable to trust in the creature but to rely upon the Creator is the dictate of pure reason. May God the Holy Spirit, lead you at once to a childlike faith in our faithful God!

“Put your trust in the Lord.” First, trust Him as willing to receive you, to forgive you, to accept you and to bless you. Are you despairing? Do you say, “There is no hope”? “Put your trust in the Lord.” Are you saying, “I am without strength and therefore cannot be saved”? Why not? “Put your trust in the Lord.” Does the Evil One say that God will not receive you? “Put your trust in the Lord,” who is infinitely gracious and full of compassion. He says, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. But that the wicked turn from his way and live.”

Surely, you may trust in Him whose mercy endures forever. Especially trust in the Lord as He reveals Himself in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. In Him you see love written out in capital letters. “Put your trust in the Lord” as having provided the one sacrifice for sin whereby He has put away forever all the sins of those who believe in Him. God is just, and the Justifier of him that believes. Believe that the precious blood can make you whiter than snow, scarlet sinner as you are. Come with that daring trust which ventures all upon the bare promise of a faithful God.

Say, “I will go in unto the King and if I perish I perish.” If you do not trust in Christ, you must be lost. Therefore come and try the Divine way of salvation. The Lord Jesus is God’s unspeakable gift, freely bestowed on all who by faith receive Him. Dare to grasp what God holds out to you as the one hope of your spirit. Put your trust in the Lord, I beseech you. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, I entreat you to trust in the Son of God, who has once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Trust in the Lord, next, that by the work of His Holy Spirit He can renew you. The glorious Lord, who made the world out of nothing, can make something out of you. If you are given to anger, the Holy Spirit can make you calm and loving. If you have been defiled with impurity, He can make you pure in heart. If you have been groveling, He can elevate you. I may be addressing a forlorn man who thinks that nothing can be made of him. I tell you, you have no idea what God can do with you. He can put heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. He can set you at last among the heavenly choristers, that your voice, sweeter than that of angels, may be heard among their everlasting symphonies.

He will even here put you among the children and set you with the princes of His people. Believe that the Holy Spirit can create you anew, can raise you from your dead condition and can make you perfect in every good work to do His will. Put your trust in the Lord for this. In fact, “Put your trust in the Lord” for everything. Poor Sinner, when you begin to trust God, you will look to Him mainly to put away your sin. But when that benefit is received, you may go on to trust Him about all your affairs. You may look to Him concerning your poverty, your sickness, your bereavements, your children, your business. You may trust Him for time, and trust Him for eternity—trust Him about little things, trust Him about great things. Once under the shadow of His wings you are covered altogether. Nothing is left out in the cold. To trust in God is to be your perpetual business, “For the just shall live by faith.”

My closing theme is this—it has been asserted by certain of the modern school that we preach up salvation by a simple intellectual operation— salvation by merely believing a certain doctrinal statement. This is their way of stating, or mis-stating, justification by faith, which we do assuredly preach and preach most distinctly and confidently. We are not responsible for their caricatures of our teaching but we would be moved thereby to be more and more explicit. As far as faith is an intellectual operation, it is simple enough. But simple faith is no trifle. Fire is a simple element but it has a measureless power. Connected with faith there are forces of the mightiest kind for influencing character and purifying life.

Faith is the surest of all sin-killers—in fact its tendency is to extirpate sin. The moral and spiritual change which accompanies faith and grows out of it is of the most remarkable kind. Faith’s work in the soul is something to be wondered at and to be admired to all eternity. For, mark— when a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ—when he believes that Jesus so died for him that he is effectually redeemed, when he believes that the Lord Jesus has cleansed him and that he is saved—the result upon his heart and life cannot be common-place. A Divine persuasion operates upon his whole nature—he is filled with adoring gratitude and that gratitude breeds an intense love—which fervent love sets itself to work for the glory of God by the purification of the soul for sin.

“My Jesus died because of my sin,” says the pardoned sinner, “therefore no sin shall abide in my heart. Away, O sin! Away, forever.” Some favorite sin cries, “Let me lodge within you,” but he cries, “It cannot be, for I love Jesus.” Sin slew our Savior—how can we be on friendly terms with it? We hate it with perfect hatred. Sin pleads, “Is it not a little one?” But the grateful heart sees great evil in a little sin, since the great Father abhors all iniquity. If the little sin was not the spear which pierced the Lord, it helped to make the crown of thorns which tore His blessed brow and therefore away with it, away with it—

*“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol is,  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only You.”*

Nothing creates more indignation and revenge against sin than a grateful sense of “Free Grace and dying love.” Surely this is no mean help towards moral purification. Faith in God is effective for the noblest ends upon the soul because it elevates the mind. The man who is hoping to be saved by his own works and efforts begins on earth and ends there. But the habit of looking up to God is in itself a blessing. It is something to have learned to look beyond this dunghill of fallen humanity in which no one will ever find a pearl. It is something, I say, to wait upon God because your expectation is from Him.

Trust in the sacred Trinity teaches us to be familiar with higher and better things than we can find in ourselves or in this poor world. A hold of Heaven is a help towards drawing us there. I find that those who do not put their trust in the Lord are by no means spiritual men, nor men whose conversation is in Heaven. But the faith which they despise puts our foot on that ladder the top of which reaches up to God.

Faith in God brings new ideas of God’s demands. When we do not know God, we read His Law and judge it to be harsh. “This is too strict. This is too holy. How can we obey this hard Law?” But when we have faith in God, we correct our estimate and judge that these laws of our heavenly Father are all meant for our good. He only forbids what would harm us and He only commands what is most truly for our benefit. By faith we look upon the Law as a loving directory—a chart of life’s voyage showing what channel to follow and what rock to avoid. “His Commandments are not grievous.” He takes from us no real pleasure and imposes no crushing burden.

To form so much better an estimate of God’s Law is a great moral change, is it not? Must it not greatly affect the man’s behavior? The man who puts his trust in the Lord sees the pleasures of sin in a new light. For he sees the evil which follows them by noting the agonies which they brought upon our Lord when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Without faith a man says to himself, “This sin is a very pleasant thing, why should I not enjoy it? Surely I may eat this fruit, which looks so charming and is so much to be desired.” The flesh sees honey in the drink but faith at once perceives that there is poison in the cup. Faith spies the snake in the grass and gives warning of it. Faith remembers death, judgment, the great reward, the just punishment and that dread word—eternity.

Faith sees the end as well as the beginning. Faith, while the feast is going on, reminds the revelers of the reckoning. Faith feels that she cannot buy the transient joys of earth at the countless cost of an immortal soul. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Faith destroys the power of temptation. When Satan says, “You are in trouble and here is an easy way of escape—only do a little wrong and you will get a great good.” “No,” says faith, “it is God’s business to get me out of my trouble and I will not go to the devil for his aid.” “Ah,” says Satan, “everybody else does so!” Faith answers, “I have to do with nobody but God and that which is right.”

Ah, Brethren! If Satan should offer us all the kingdoms of this world if we would do his bidding, true faith would baffle him by saying, “What can you offer me? I have all these things already—for all things are mine in Christ Jesus my Lord.” When faith is in its true place, covering the Believer, all the wicked suggestions of the Evil One are caught upon it and quenched by it like fiery darts which fall upon a shield. We are preserved from temptation by the buckler of faith.

Moreover, faith is always attended with a new nature. That is a point never to be forgotten. No man has faith in God of a true kind unless he has been born again. Faith in God is one of the first indications of regeneration. Now, if you have a new and holy nature, you are no longer moved towards sinful objects as you were before. The things that you once loved you now hate and therefore you will not run after them. You can hardly understand it but so it is, that your thoughts and tastes are totally changed. You long for that very holiness which once it was irksome to hear of and you loathe those very pursuits which were once your delights.

When the Lord renews us it is not half done. It is a total and radical change. If there were no work of the Holy Spirit connected with faith and if faith were nothing more than human assent to truth, we might be blameworthy for preaching salvation through it. But since faith leads the van in the graces of the Spirit of God and turns the rudder of the soul, we are more and more concerned to place faith where God places it and we say without hesitation, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

Remember you will thus be saved from the power of sin and from the practice of sin by being saved from the love of sin. O Brothers and Sisters, I am not afraid to preach to you justification by faith alone! Look to Jesus and live! I would bid the sinner come to Jesus just as he is and take Him to be his complete salvation. We do not preach to you the hope of going to Heaven and yet keeping your sins—indeed, till sin is stopped, there can be no Heaven. Our Lord Jesus has opened a hospital and into it He receives all manner of sick folk. Yet He does not receive them that they may continue sick but that He may heal them and make them whole.

He receives the sinful that He may make them holy. He saves men by changing their natures and infusing into them a heavenly life. Come, then, you leprous in heart, come to Him whose touch can make you clean! Come, you with withered limbs, incapable of holy exercise—He can, with a word, restore you! Come here, you blind, for He will give you sight! Yes, rise, you dead, for He shall give you life! Repentance and remission are twin gifts which He is exalted to bestow. Come now to Him and receive out of His fullness!

The thought of death is constantly forced upon me by the largeness of this congregation and the fact that there seldom passes a week but what some one among you is taken away. Soon your bodies will lie beneath the greensward and your souls will be in the eternal state. In due time you will stand where your past will be revived. For the books shall be opened and you will be judged out of the things which are written in those books. What a record you have written within the Book of Remembrance, to be read aloud in that day! Oh, you ungodly ones, what will you do then? Christ-rejecting Sinner, how will you bear to hear those items read before the assembled world?

If from this pulpit I were to read out certain incidents of your past lives, I do not suppose you would get up to go out, for that would convict you. But you would want to go very badly. How, then, will you endure to have your sins laid bare by the hand of God while every eye beholds them? How will you bear that shame and everlasting contempt which will be the result of your true character being blazoned abroad? How infinitely good it will be if all your past offenses shall be blotted out! How joyful to be wholly absolved by the Lord of Pardons! If by believing in Christ Jesus you receive a change of nature and live a different life and stand at the Last Day accepted in the Beloved, what bliss it will be!

What joy will be yours when Jesus comes, when His smile shall light up the universe, and when He shall acknowledge you before the angels of God! You were with Him in His humiliation, you shall be with Him in His exaltation. You loved Him and served Him here below, you shall sit upon His Throne and reign with Him forever and ever. Ah, then, whatever little you may have suffered for His sake will be as nothing in comparison with the exceeding weight of glory. Whatever struggling of heart and pain of soul you felt in escaping from the sin which enthralled you will be your joy when the result is seen in your eternal perfection. The bliss of beholding the face of our Beloved will be Heaven enough for us.

Even now I feel eager to quit this feeble body at the bare thought of being with the Bridegroom of my soul—  
*“My eyes shall see Him in that day,  
The God that died for me;  
And all my rising bones shall say,  
Lord, who is like to You?”*

May you and I, by God’s Grace, behold our Redeemer when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth! Amen.  
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THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS  
NO. 3105

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 1908. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“There are many who say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us.”  
Psalm 4:6.**

THIS is a text which, by the rich assistance of the Holy Spirit, may serve as a touchstone to try our state. See, here are two classes of men— the many panting after the good of this world—and the few turning the eyes of faith to their God and begging that He would lift up the light of His Countenance upon them.

I. Let us contemplate with sadness and with searching of heart, THE MANY—trembling lest we should find ourselves among the number!  
“THE MANY.” What multitudes of thoughts cluster around these two words! The million-peopled city, the populous town, the wide-spread country, this isle, kingdoms, empires, continents, the world—all seem to issue forth like armies from the hundred-gated Thebes, at the mention of those two words, “The many.” Here we see the toiling peasant and his lordly squire, the artisan and the princely merchant, the courtier and the king, the young and the old, the learned and the unlearned all gathered within the compass of a word.  
And all that form this vast gathering of human souls are joining in one cry and moving in one direction! This is a thought at which the faithful may well weep, for their cry is SELF, their course is SIN. Here and there are the chosen few struggling against the mighty tide, but the masses, the multitude, as in the days of David, are hurrying along their mad career in search of a fancied good and reaping the fruit of their futile search in disappointment, death and Hell! O my Hearer, are you like the dead fish floating with the stream—or are you, by constraining Grace, drawn onward and upward to the bliss prepared for the elect? If a Christian, I beseech you to pause and admire the Grace which has made you to differ. If your heart is right with God, I know you will confess that there is no intrinsic natural goodness in you, for, like your friend the speaker, I doubt not that you are made to groan over a strong propensity within which often tempts you to join in the world’s chase and leave “the fountain of Living Waters” for the “broken cisterns” of earth and, therefore, you will join with the preacher in singing—  
*“‘Tis all of Free Grace we were brought to obey, While others were allowed to go  
The road which, by nature, WE chose as our way, Which leads to the regions of woe.”*

Come then, with me and behold the evil and the folly of the world. Listen to their never-ceasing cry, “Who will show us any good?”

Mark, first, its sensual character: “Who will SHOW us any good?” The world desires something which it may see, taste and handle. The joys of faith it does not understand. We, by Divine Grace, do not walk by sight. But the poor sons of earth must have visible, present, terrestrial joys. We have an unseen portion, an invisible inheritance—we have higher faculties and nobler delights. We need no carnal showman to bid the puppet joys of time dance before us. We have seen “the King in His beauty” and, spiritually, we behold “the land which is very far off.” Let us pity the worldling who is seeking water where there is none, in a salt land, a thirsty soil. Let us earnestly intercede for poor, short-sighted man, that he may yet have “the wisdom that is from above,” and the eyesalve of Divine Illumination—then will he no more seek for his happiness below, or look for pleasure in things of time and sense.

Take care, my Hearer, that you do not suffer under the same delusion! Always pray that you may be kept from hunting in the haunts of sense and fixing your affection on earthly things for, be sure of this—the roses of this world are covered with thorns! And her hives of honey, if broken open, will surround you with stinging remembrances, but not a drop of sweetness! Remember to lay to heart the words of a holy poet—

*“Nor earth, nor all the sky  
Can one delight afford.  
No, not a drop of real joy,  
Without Your Presence, Lord.”*

Notice, next its indiscriminating nature. “Who will show us ANY good?” The unregenerate mind has no discernment in its choice. One good is to it as desirable as another. Men easily allow toleration here. The intoxicating cup is the “good” of the winebibber. The indulgence of lust is the object of the voluptuary. Gold is the miser’s god and fame or power the choice of the ambitious. To most men, these are all “good” in their way—if not esteemed good morally, they are looked upon as forbidden fruits, only untasted because of the penalty and not abhorred because of a real distaste. O my Hearer, have you sufficient judgment to see that any good will not suit you? Have you made an election of “solid joys and lasting pleasures,” and are the dainties of time tasteless to you? You are not like the bee, which can find her food in nettles and poisonous weeds. “The Rose of Sharon” is the flower of your choice and, “the Lily of the Valley” is to you the perfection of beauty. No longer can you ask for ANY good, for you have found the one, the only good and in HIM is such a fullness, such an abundance, that your song will always be—

*“God is my all-sufficient good,  
My portion and my choice.  
In Him my vast desires are filled  
And all my powers rejoice.”*

Remark attentively the selfish nature of the question, “Who will show US any good?” Here the poor man of this world is seeking for himself and his fellows, but not for God or the good of others. He has no fear of God, nor any love, nor reverence for Him. Let but his barn be stored, his purse filled, his body fed, his senses gratified and the great Maker and bounteous Giver may be forgotten! What does he care whether there is a God, or whether He is worshipped or not? To him Venus, Brahma, Woden and Jehovah are all alike gods! He cares not for the living and true God—he lets others have religion—to him it would be a weariness and a labor. Or, if he puts on the outward guise of religion, he is but a Gibeonite in the Temple, “a hewer of wood and drawer of water.” He is selfish in his worship, selfish in his praises and his prayers.

But we, Beloved, are, we trust, no longer lovers of self. We have become adorers of God and purely from gratitude we pay our glad homage at His Throne! We do not now put self foremost—we wish to experience a self-annihilation, a death to self. We have learned to sacrifice our own desires on the altar of Divine Love and now one passion concentrates our power and truly we exclaim—

*“Christ is my light, my life, my care,  
My blessed hope, my heavenly prize!  
Dearer than all my passions are,  
My limbs, my heart, or my eyes.”*

Observe, also, the futility of the enquiry—“WHO will show us any good?” Echo might answer, “Who?” Where lives the fortunate discoverer, the man who has stumbled on this pearl of price unknown? Ah, Sinner, call again, like the priests of Baal, for there is neither hearing nor answering! Go to those Arcadian groves of poetry and find them a fiction! Taste the nectar of the epicure and find it gall! Lie on a bed of down and loathe the weakness which effeminacy engenders! Surround yourself with wealth and learn its powerlessness to ease the mind! Yes, wear a royal crown and mourn a king’s uneasy head. Try all—like the preacher of wisdom, open each cabinet in the palace of pleasure and ransack each corner of her treasure house! Have you found the long-sought good? Ah, no! Your joys, like bubbles, have dissolved at your touch! Or, like the schoolboy’s butterfly, have been crushed by the blow which won them!

Pause here and realize the emptiness of sublunary joys. Entreat the Spirit of all Grace to reveal to your soul the hollowness of terrestrial baubles. Take earth and, as Quarles has it, “Tinnit inane”—it sounds because it is empty. Despise the world, rate its jewels at a low price, estimate its gems as paste and its solidities as dreams. Think not that you shall thus lose pleasure, but rather remember the saying of Chrysostom, “Despise riches and you shall be rich. Despise glory and you shall be glorious. Despise injuries and you shall be a conqueror. Despise rest and you shall gain rest. Despise earth and you shall gain Heaven!”

Here may you and I close our review of the foolish multitude by learning the three lessons spoken of by Bonaventure, “The multitude of those that are damned, the small number of the saved and the vanity of transitory things.”

II. A happier sight now awaits us. Yonder is a company whose constant utterance is widely different from the enquiry of the many. These are THE FEW—not so many as the moralist and formalist believe them, but at the same time not so few as Bigotry in her narrowness would make them, for God has His hidden thousands whose knees have never bowed to Baal!

These seek not a good, for they have found it! They ask not a question, but they breathe a prayer! They apply not to mortals, but they address to their God this petition, “Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us.”

Let us tarry on the very threshold of these words and devoutly ask for Divine searching, lest we should be deceived in our belief that this is our prayer. Let us not take the words lightly on our unhallowed lips, lest we ask for our own damnation. Perhaps, my Hearer, if the light of God’s Countenance were at once to shine upon you, your heart is so far from God, so full of hatred to Him, that it would suddenly destroy you, for remember, He is “a consuming fire.”

Let us, however, if the answer of conscience and the inward witness are agreed to give us hope, behold the Countenance of our God.  
For, first, it is a reconciled Countenance. “Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.” “I have sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.” The anger of God towards Believers in Jesus is forever appeased! They are so perfect, in the righteousness of Christ, that He sees no spot of sin in them. Though of “purer eyes than to behold evil,” He does yet regard poor sinners with affection and towards you, my Christian Brother or Sister, He has no sentiments but those of unmingled love. Think of your glorious condition—reconciled! Beloved! Adopted!  
Next, it is a cheering Countenance. The smile of a fond friend will nerve us to duty. The approving glance of a wise man will give us courage in trial. But the looks of God, the smiles of our Father who is in Heaven— these are better than the applause of a colossal audience, or the shouts of an empire of admirers! Give me the comforts of God and I can well bear the taunts of men. Let me lay my head on the bosom of Jesus and I fear not the distraction of care and trouble. If my God will always give me the light of His smile and the glance of His approval, it is enough for me. Come on, foes, persecutors, fiends, yes, Apollyon, himself, for “the Lord God is a sun and shield.” Gather, you clouds and cover me—I carry a sun within! Blow, wind of the frozen North, I have a fire of living coals within! Yes, Death, slay me, but I have another life—a life in the light of God’s Countenance!  
Let us not forget another sweet and precious consideration. It is a peculiar Countenance from the fact that it is transforming, changing the beholder into its own likeness. I gaze on beauty, yet may be myself deformed. I admire light and may yet dwell in darkness. But if the light of the Countenance of God rests upon me, I shall become like He—the lineaments of His visage will be on me and the great outlines of His attributes will be mine. Oh, wondrous mirror which thus renders the beholder lovely! Oh, admirable mirror which reflects not self with its imperfections, but gives a perfect image to those that are uncomely! May you and I, Beloved, so fix our contemplations upon Jesus and all the Persons of the Godhead, that we may have our unholiness removed and our depravity overcome! Happy day when we shall be like He! But the only reason of it will be that, then “we shall see Him as He is.” Oh, could we look less to the smile and favor of man and more to the regard and notice of Heaven, how far would we be in advance of what we are! Our puny spirits would become gigantic in stature and our feeble faith would, through Grace, wax mighty! We would no longer be the sport of temptation and the pliant servants of our corruptions. O our God, amid our folly and our sin, we turn to You with strong desire, crying out, “Lord lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us!”  
We will only note, in concluding our brief but instructive musings, that God’s Countenance is unchanging. The light may seem to vary, but the face is the same. Our God is the Immutable Father of Lights. He does not love now and cast away in the future. Never did His love begin and never can it cease. It is from eternity and shall be to eternity. The things of time are mutable, confessedly and constantly so, but the things of eternity are always the same. Away with the horrid suggestion that God may forget and forsake His own children! Oh, no! The face which was once radiant with love is not now clouded with wrath—the heart which overflowed with affection is not now filled with anger! Great as my sins have been, they are not so great as His love! The file of my backsliding shall not be permitted to divide the golden links of the chains of His mercy. If my gracious Lord and Savior has assured me that my name was always enrolled among the sons of Zion, then “the powers of darkness” cannot “erase those everlasting lines.” Go, poor menial of Satan, pursue your weary drudgery. Go seek the unsteady will-o’-thewisp of carnal delights, but I have a surer joy, a substantial happiness beyond your reach. My Hearer, it will be well with you if you can pity the many, and join with the few, singing—  
*“Turn, then, my Soul, unto your rest.  
The merits of your great High Priest  
Have bought your liberty—  
Trust in His efficacious blood,  
Nor fear your banishment from God,  
Since Jesus died for thee.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 66; ROMANS 8:1-9.**

PSALM 66:1, 2. Make a joyful noise unto God all you lands: sing forth the honor of His name! Make His praise glorious. In a company of advanced saints, silence may be sometimes profitable. The first verse of the previous Psalm should read, according to the Hebrew, “Praise is silent for You, O God, in Zion.” Full-grown saints may have their times of waiting in silence before the Lord, but when the heathen are to be brought in—and when new hearts are to be taught new songs—then there must be a noise! And not merely a noise, but a noise that is full of joy—“Make a joyful noise unto God all you lands.” This should be the chief point about it, that it should be a joyful noise. Many of the newly invented tunes which have put the good old tunes out of favor appear to have been made to rattle through the hymn as quickly as possible, as though the composer had written, “Let us praise God at express speed and get it done. And the quicker, the better.” But I prefer those tunes in which we can sometimes repeat the words and roll them under the tongue until our heart gets thoroughly saturated with the spirit of them.

“Make a joyful noise unto God all you lands,” but let that joyful noise be orderly, not like the shouts of those who cry around the car of Juggernaut. Let it be joyful singing unto the Lord! “Sing forth the honor of His name.” God is worthy of the highest honor, so let our praise of Him be given in such a way that it shall really honor Him. “Make His praise glorious.” It is only giving back to God what rightly belongs to Him when we give Him glory, and it is our highest earthly glory to be giving glory to God. We are never so near to the condition of the glorified saints above as when we are, with heart, and soul, and voice, glorifying God!

3. Say unto God, How terrible are You in Your works! Our praises should be directed to God—“Say unto God.” Our hymns should be a form of speaking unto the Most High, and an ascription unto Him of His own Glory. The first attribute of God that influences men is the attribute of power—which fills them with terror of His awful majesty and might. Afterwards, they perceive more of His love, goodness, wisdom and other attributes. But, at first—yes, and perhaps at last—there is a time in which there is much solemn stately music in this utterance, “How terrible are You in Your works!”

3, 4. Through the greatness of Your power shall Your enemies submit themselves unto You. All the earth shall worship You and shall sing unto You; they shall sing to Your name. From the marginal reading of the 3

rd verse, it appears that God’s enemies will only “yield feigned obedience” to Him. But whether the submission is feigned or real, it shall not be possible for any man or any power to finally resist His Omnipotence— and the day shall come when all the earth shall worship Him and sing unto Him!

4. Selah. Here is a little pause for the lifting up of the heart and of the strain, and well there may be, for what a joyful thing it is to think of all the earth worshipping God and singing unto Him! I know of no topic that is more calculated to excite the admiring gratitude of God’s servants than the prospect of the universal supremacy of our God and of His Christ!

5, 6. Come and see the works of God: He is terrible in His doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land. You must often have noticed that the sweet singers of Israel are never singing very long unto God without mentioning that wonderful deliverance that He worked at the Red Sea. What God did when He brought His people out of Egypt will be the subject of joyous and grateful song unto God forever, for even in Heaven “they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” The Red Sea as the grand type of redemption and the Lamb as the great Worker of redemption are joined together in that triumphant song of “them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.” Here the Psalmist sings of what God did for His people at the Red Sea—“He turned the sea into dry land.”

6. They went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in Him. Perhaps some of you say, “But we were not there.” No, we were not personally there, but do you not remember what the Prophet Hosea says about God meeting with Jacob at Bethel? It is written, “There He spoke with us.” We were not personally there, yet Believers have been everywhere in the Bible where other representative Believers have been before them! “No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” What God spoke to any one of His people, He has spoken to all of whom that one was typical. Paul tells us that the Lord has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” yet it was to Joshua that He said that. But, as He said it to Joshua, He virtually said it to me, for I am a Believer even as he was. All the promises belong to us who are in Christ Jesus, for the heavenly inheritance is left to all the spiritual seed. And if we are in the Lord’s family, we shall share alike with all the rest of the children.

“There did we rejoice in Him.” Then if we rejoiced in the Lord there, let us rejoice in Him here! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us rest assured that when our turn to go through the sea shall come, we shall find that the Lord has “turned the sea into dry land” for us, whether it is a sea of troubles or the sea of death. “They went through the flood on foot” and so shall we! The God who made a way for them through the sea, virtually made a way for us, also, for the army of God is one and when the first ranks of the innumerable host passed through the flood, the army itself began to pass through, and that army can never be divided. So we are passing through the flood at this moment and rejoicing in the God who cleaves the sea in two to make a highway for His people.

7. He rules by His power forever. What He did in the past, He is still doing in the present and He will do in the future.  
7. His eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. The rebellious may, for a while, exalt themselves, but they will, sooner or later be pulled down. These eagles may fly as high as they will, but God’s arrow can always reach them. The Lord pulled down the haughty Pharaoh from his throne, but He lifted up the people whom the proud monarch had trodden down and oppressed. The Lord overthrew the hosts of Egypt, but as for His people, He led them forth like sheep and guided them through the wilderness, even as He is doing at this very moment.  
7. Selah. That is, pause again and lift up the heart and the sacred strain, too. And when all the strings of your heart and of your harp are tightened, then go on with your music again.  
8, 9. O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: which holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved. I bless God for this verse and as many of you as have found it true should also praise and bless Him. Observe the two things that are mentioned here—living and standing. “Which holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved.” There are some who have a certain standing in the Church and who keep up their reputation among their fellow members, yet they are not spiritually alive. It is a dreadful thing to be standing and yet not living—like those in Sardis who were only living in name. Then there are those who are living, but not standing—at least not standing fast. They are often caught tripping, falling and wounding themselves. They go with broken bones on their way towards Heaven by reason of their many falls. But what a blessing it is to be kept both living and standing, and what reason there is to bless God for this great mercy—not congratulating ourselves on our steadfastness and being exalted and proud, but magnifying the Lord for His Grace in granting to us this double blessing—living and standing!  
10. For You, O God, have proved us: You have tried us, as silver is tried. That is, with fierce furnaces, and with carefully graduated heat, for silver needs delicate refining. Christ still sits as the Refiner of silver, patiently watching until the process is complete.  
11. You brought us into the net. Did not our enemies entangle us? Oh, yes, but God often uses our enemies to carry out His Divine purposes! He rules over all things. So, when you are caught in the net, do not sit down and say that such-and-such a person did it, or that the devil did it. No, but look to the Great First Cause. If You strike a dog with a stick, he tries to bite the stick because he does not know any better. But you are not a dog, so do not look at the second cause of your troubles, but learn to sing, as the Psalmist does here, “You brought us into the net.”  
11. You laid affliction upon our loins. Not merely upon our backs, where we might be better able to bear it, but right on our loins, so that we were pressed and squeezed almost out of our very life.  
12. You have caused men to ride over our heads. And when they mount their high horse, they vow and exalt themselves over God’s afflicted servants.  
12. We went through fire and through water. They were subjected to a double test, for what fire does not burn, water will drown, yet God’s people “went through fire and through water.” There is no fire that can burn them. Nebuchadnezzar tried it and failed. And there is no water that can drown them. Even though their bodies may be burned or drowned, their real selves shall still survive and stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, triumphant over both fire and water!  
12. But You brought us out into a wealthy place. That is to say, the Lord brought the Israelites out from all manner of oppression under Pharaoh and brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey. Nothing that Pharaoh could do could destroy the chosen nation. He tried to kill all the male children that were born, yet the Israelites still increased and multiplied, and they came at last to Canaan! It will be just so with God’s people in all times and all climes, they shall not die, but live and shall ultimately come into that most wealthy of all places, even the heavenly and better Canaan! We cannot fully tell what joy awaits us there. We cannot measure the height of our joy by the depth of our sorrows, for, after all, our sorrows are shallow, but the Glory of God, which the saints are to share, is a depth unfathomable, a height that no man can measure. O Lord, bring us into that wealthy place right speedily if it is Your holy will!  
13. I will go into Your house with burnt offerings. Here is one worshipper breaking away from the rest—a child of God who is not satisfied by merely joining in the general praise of the whole assembly, so he brings his own personal thanksgiving and thank-offering to God. Dear Brother, dear Sister, try to do this! Break away from all the rest of us, and say to the Lord, “I will go into Your house with burnt offerings.”  
13-15. I will pay You my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth has spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto You burnt sacrifices of fatlings. “I will give You the best that I have.”  
15. With the incense of rams. Not only one of the best, but the best of two kinds of offerings.  
15. I will offer bullocks with goats. “I will present to You great services and smaller sacrifices. I will obey You in the great ordinances and in the lesser ordinances, also. I will bring both bullocks and goats. I will make an all-round offering. I will try to do all that I can for You, my God, since You have done so much for me.”  
15. Selah. Here the Psalmist pauses again while the smoke of the sacrifice ascends. Let us also pause and meditate upon the better Sacrifice which Christ offered for the sins of all who put their trust in Him.  
16, 17. Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. I cried unto Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. “I mixed crying and singing together. I cried when I was in trouble, and I extolled the Lord as soon as He delivered me from it. No, by faith expecting to be delivered, I began to extol Him even while I was yet crying unto Him!”  
18, 19. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: but verily God has heard me. It is a blessed thing to be able to say that. And if you can truthfully say it, I pray you to say it—“Verily God has heard me.” Some people tell us that there is no such thing as an answer to prayer. They say that it is a piece of superstition on our part. Well, I believe that I am as honest a man as anyone who denies the power of prayer, and I can truthfully say, “God has heard me.” There are scores of us—there are hundreds of us—there are thousands of us who can stand in the witness box and each one of us can say, “Verily God has heard me.” If our testimony is not accepted by unbelieving men, we cannot help that. We know what we know, and we know that God has heard and answered our prayers again and again!

19, 20. He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me. ROMANS 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. My Hearers, we are, each of us, by nature, under the condemnation of God. We are not only subject to condemnation, but we are condemned already! And, on account of sin, there is judgment recorded in God’s book against everyone of us, considered in our fallen state. But if we “are in Christ Jesus,” if we are made partakers of Jesus, if we have hidden ourselves in the cleft of the Rock, Christ, and if our trust is solely in Him, oh, precious thought, “there is therefore now no condemnation” for us! It is blotted out. The old judgment that was recorded against us is now erased and in God’s book of remembrance there is not to be found a single condemnatory syllable, nor one word of anger written against any Believer in Christ Jesus! Glorious freedom from condemnation! How may I know whether I have been thus set free? This is the question that should enter into each of our hearts. The answer is, “Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” My Hearers, after which of these are you and I walking? Are we following the flesh? Are we seeking to please ourselves—to indulge our bodies, to gratify our lusts, to satisfy our own inclinations? If so, we are not in Christ Jesus, for those who are in Christ Jesus “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” and everyone of you who is fleshly and carnal is not in Christ, but is still under condemnation!  
2, 3. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of sin and death. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. He did accomplish it. The Law could not condemn sin so truly and so thoroughly as God did when He condemned sin in the Person of Christ. O Believer, let not your sins grieve you—however great or however tremendous they may have been, weep over them, but do not be distressed about them, for they have been condemned in Christ Jesus! They may have been enormous, but if you are in Him, Christ was punished for you and God’s justice asks not for a second punishment for one offense. Christ offered once a complete Atonement for all Believers, and if I am a Believer in Him, there is no possible fear of my ever being condemned. There cannot be, for Christ was condemned for me—my sins were laid upon His head—and in the awful moment when He sustained the stroke of His Father’s vengeance, those sins ceased to be and, “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”  
4. That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Mark, again, how Paul brings us to this as the great evidence of our being in Christ Jesus—the not walking after the flesh. Now, every man, as he is born into the world, left to himself, is sure to “walk after the flesh.” It is only the man who has the Spirit of God put into his soul—who has the heavenly gift from on high— who will “walk after the Spirit.” It is not talking after the flesh, but it is walking after it, that condemns us, and it is not talking after the Spirit that will save us, it is walking after the Spirit that is the evidence of salvation—not talking, but walking! How many of you are there who are talkative, who can talk religion and give us as much as we like of it, but whose life and conversation are not such as become godliness? “Be not deceived! God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” If you sow to the flesh, you “shall of the flesh reap corruption,” but if you sow to the Spirit, you “shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”  
5-7. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. That mind with which we are all born is enmity against God! And however much refined or polished a man may be, however amiable or polite, however he may shine among his fellow creatures—if he has not had a new heart and a right spirit—he is at “enmity against God” and he cannot enter Heaven until there has been a Divine change worked in him. Some of you suppose because you have never been guilty of any vice, because you have not indulged in any great transgression, that therefore you do not require the work of regeneration in your hearts. You will be mightily mistaken if you continue under that delusion until the Last Great Day. “For to be carnally minded,” even though that carnal mind is in a body that is dressed in silks and satins, “To be carnally minded is death,” even though it is whitewashed till it looks like a spiritual one. “To be carnally minded,” even though you sow the carnal mind with a few good garden seeds of the flowers of morality, will still be nothing but damnation to you at the last. “To be carnally minded is death”—only “to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.”  
7. For it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. The opponents of the Free Grace Gospel, which it is our delight to preach, assert that men can be saved, if they will—that men most certainly can repent, can believe, can come to God of their own free will and that it is not through any defect in any powers that they have if they are not saved. Now, we are not over prone to controvert that point, but at the same time, we do not understand the meaning of this verse if what they say is correct. It says here, “The carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.” Some say that men could repent if it were their inclination. Exactly so, but that is what we assert—that it never will be and never can be their inclination, except they are constrained to do so by the Grace of God.  
Rowland Hill uses a very singular and odd metaphor in his “Village Dialogues.” Two parties are speaking together on this subject and one of them, pointing to the cat sitting on the hearth says, “Do you see that cat? She sits there and licks her paws and washes herself clean.” “I see that,” said the other. “Well,” said the first speaker, “did you ever hear of one of the hogs taken out of the sty that did so?” “No,” he said. “But he could if he liked,” said the other. Ah, verily, he could if he liked, but it is not according to his nature and you never saw such a thing done! And until you have changed the swine’s nature, he cannot perform such a good action—and God’s Word says the same of man. We do not care about fifty thousand aphorisms, or syllogisms, or anything else—God’s Word against man’s any day! Jesus said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him.” “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Men cannot come to Jesus unless the Father draws them to Him. We assert that from first to last, the work of salvation is all of Grace and we are not afraid of any licentious tendency of that Doctrine, or anything of the kind. God’s Word, in all its simplicity, must be preached and we leave Him to take care of His own Truth. Blessed be God, this humbling Truth of God is of far more use than the other doctrine which puffs men up with pride, telling them that they can perform what most assuredly they cannot do! “It is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.”  
8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. No man “in the flesh” can please God. Oh, what a sword this is—a sharp two-edged sword against many of you, my Friends! Some of you who regularly attend this House of Prayer, and others of you who stray in here in the evening, you, “are in the flesh” and you “cannot please God.” Perhaps you have been attempting to do it. You have said, “I will attend the House of Prayer regularly.” You cannot please God by doing that, as long as you are “in the flesh.” You may be as moral as you please and we beseech you to be so, but unless you have the Spirit of God—unless you are really changed in heart and made new creatures in Christ Jesus—all that you can do, as long as you are “in the flesh, cannot please God.” Virtues in unregenerate men are nothing but whitewashed sins! The best performance of an unchanged character is worthless in God’s sight! It lacks the stamp of Grace upon it and that which has not the stamp of Grace is false coin. Be it ever so beautiful in model and finish, it is not what it should be. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot praise God.”  
9. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. O Beloved, we have need, each of us, to put ourselves in this scale! Come, Preacher, be not too sure of your own salvation. Come, Church Member, do not be too certain of your own regeneration. Come, Christian, put yourself in this scale—“If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” If he has not the Holy Spirit really dwelling in him, guiding him, directing him, teaching him, comforting him, supporting him—he is none of Christ’s! And if we do not exhibit the Spirit of Christ in our character—if we have not gentleness, meekness, purity, holiness, benevolence— we are none of Christ’s! Ah, this will take some of your flimsy Christians to pieces! Half of your professors, we fear, will at the last be found not to have had “the Spirit of Christ.”  
It is one thing to profess religion, Beloved—it is quite another thing to possess vital godliness. We may sit down at the Communion Table, but oh, if we never had the Spirit of Christ, we “are none of His.” We may plead our own goodness before the Throne of God at the last, but Jesus Christ will say, “You have not My Spirit. You are none of Mine.” And then, however much we may have striven to serve God, unless we have the Spirit of Christ, there shall be nothing for us but the fearful curse, “Depart! Depart! Depart!” “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” Let us ask Him for His Spirit! Let us plead with Him for His Grace and though some of you have never had it, yet if you now ask for it, our God is a gracious God, full of mercy and pity—whoever calls upon His name shall be saved! And though the chief of sinners, if you sincerely ask for pardon and for Grace, you shall receive it at His hands. The Lord help you so to pray, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2146 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JOY, JOY FOREVER  
NO. 2146

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them always shout for joy, because You defend them: let those also that love Your name be joyful in You.”  
Psalm 5:11.**

“THE Lord does put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.” There is an ancient difference which He has made in His eternal purpose and this is seen in every item of the Covenant of Grace. “The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself.” But it is also written, “The foolish shall not stand in Your sight: You hate all workers of iniquity.” You that have believed are of the house of Israel and heirs according to promise, for they that are of faith are the true seed of faithful Abraham. See that you make manifest this difference by the holiness of your lives. “Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.”

Display this difference always by the joyfulness of your spirits. Let not noisome cares invade you, for we read, “I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there.” Fear not that the wrathful judgment of God will fall indiscriminately, for we read, “Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.” The servants of the Lord should wear the royal garments—those garments are made of the fine cloth of holiness, trimmed with the lace of joy! Take care that you exhibit both holiness of character and joyfulness of spirit, for where these two things are in us, and abound, they prove that we are not barren nor unfruitful.

To us there should be joy to strikingly contrast with the unrest of the unbeliever. Over all the land of Egypt there was darkness which might be felt, even thick darkness, for three days—“They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days—but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” If it is so with you, that the Lord has given you the light of joy, let your faces shine with it! If you walk in the light as God is in the light, go forth and let men see the brightness of your countenances and take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him His gracious calm as well as His holiness. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Your Lord desires that your joy may be full. He gives you a joy which no man takes from you—it is His legacy. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you.”

The subject for this morning is joy, the joy of faith, the joy which is the fruit of the Spirit from the root of trust in God. May we not only talk about it at this hour, but enjoy it now and always! It is pleasant to read and hear and think about joy—but to be filled with joy and peace through believing is a far more satisfying thing! I want you to see not only the sparkling fountain of joy, but to drink deep drafts of it—yes, and drink all week and all month, and all the year—and all the rest of your lives, both in time and in eternity! “Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.”

I. First, let us speak a little upon THE KIND OF JOY WHICH IS ALLOTTED TO BELIEVERS—“Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them always shout for joy, because You defend them: let those also that love Your name be joyful in You.” Note, first, concerning this joy, that it is to be universal to all who trust— “Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice.” This is not only for the healthy, but for the sick—not only for the successful, but for the disappointed. It is not only for those who have the bird in the hand, but for those who only see it in the bush. Let all rejoice!

If you have but a little faith, yet if you are trusting in the Lord, you have a right to joy. It may be your joy will not rise so high as it might do if your faith were greater but still, where faith is true, it gives sure ground for joy. O you babes in Divine Grace! You little children! You that have been newly converted and sadly feel your feebleness—rejoice, for the Lord will bless them that fear Him—“both small and great”! “Fear not, you worm, Jacob.” “Fear not, little flock.”

There is a joy which is as milk to nourish babes—a joy which is not as meat with bones in it—for the Lord adds no sorrow to it. The little ones of the flock need not vex themselves concerning the deep things of God, for there is joy in those shallows of simple Truth where lambs may safely wade! The joy of the Lord is softened down to feeble constitutions lest it overpower them. The same great sea which floods the vast bays also flows into the tiny creeks. “Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice.” You, Miss Much-Afraid over yonder, you are to rejoice! You, Mr. Despondency, hardly daring to look up—you must yet learn to sing. As for Mr. Ready-toHalt, he must dance on his crutches and Feeble-Mind must play the music for him. It is the mind of the Holy Spirit that those who trust in the Lord should rejoice before Him.

This joy, in the next place, is to be as constant as to time as it is universal as to persons. “Let them always shout for joy.” Do not be content that a good time in the morning should be followed by dreariness in the afternoon! Do not cultivate an occasional delight—aim at perpetual joy! To be happy at a revival meeting and then go home to groan is a poor business. We should “feel like singing all the time.” The Believer has abiding arguments for abiding consolation. There is never a time when the saint of God has not great cause for gladness—and if he never doubts and worries till he has a justifiable reason for distrust he will never doubt nor worry! “Rejoice in the Lord always and again”—what? “Always” and yet does the Apostle say, “and again”? Yes, he would have us rejoice and keep on rejoicing and then rejoice more and more! Brothers and Sisters, go on piling up your delights! You are the blessed of the Lord and His blessing reaches “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.”

Next, let your joy be manifested. “Let them always shout for joy.” Shouting is an enthusiastic utterance, a method which men use when they have won a victory—when they divide the spoil, when they bear home the harvest, when they tread the vintage—when they drain the goblet. Believers, you may shout for joy with unreserved delight! Some religionists shout and we would not wish to stop them—but we wish certain of them knew better what they were shouting for. Brothers and Sisters, since you know Whom you have believed and what you have believed and what are the deep sources of your joy, do not be so sobered by your knowledge as to become dumb! Imitate the children in the Temple, who, if they knew little, loved much and so shouted in praise of Him they loved. “Let them shout for joy.”

A touch of enthusiasm would be the salvation of many a man’s religion. Some Christians are good enough people—they are like wax candles—but they are not lit. Oh, for a touch of flame! Then would they scatter light and thus become of service to their families. “Let them shout for joy.” Why not? Let not orderly folks object. One said to me the other day, “When I hear you preach I feel as if I must have a shout!” My Friend, shout if you feel forced to do so. [Here a Hearer cried, “Glory!”] Our Brother cries, “Glory!” and I say so, too. “Glory!” The shouting need not always be done in a public service, or it might hinder devout hearing—but there are times and places where a glorious outburst of enthusiastic joy would quicken life in all around. The ungodly are not half so restrained in their blasphemy as we are in our praise! How is this? They go home making night hideous with their yells. Are we never to have an outbreak of consecrated delight? Yes, we will have our high days and holidays and we will sing and shout for joy till even the heathens say, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

This joy is to be repeated with variations. One likes, in music, to hear the same tune played in different ways. So here you have it. “Let them rejoice. Let them always shout for joy. Let them be joyful in You.” There is no monotony in real joy. In the presence of mirth one grows dull, but in living joy there is exhilaration. Commend me to the springing well of heavenly joy—its waters are always fresh, clear, sparkling—springing up unto everlasting life! Joy blends many colors in its one ray of light. At times it is quiet and sits still beneath a weight of glory. I have known it weep, not salt drops, but sweet showers. Have you never cried because of your joy in the Lord? Sometimes joy labors for expression till it is ready to faint and others it sings till it rivals the angels! Singing is the natural language of joy, but oftentimes silence suits it even better. Our joy abides in Christ whether we are quiet or shouting, whether we fall at our Lord’s feet as

dead, or lean on His bosom in calm delight.

This joy is logical . When I was a child and went to school, I remember learning out of a book called, “Why and Because.” Things one learns as a child stick in the memory and therefore I like a text which has a “because” in it. Here it is: “Let them always shout for joy, because You defend them.” Emotions are not fired by logic and yet reasons furnish fuel for the flame. A man may be sad though he cannot explain his sadness, or he may be greatly glad though he cannot set forth the reasons for his joy. The joy of a Believer in God has a firm foundation—it is not the baseless fabric of a vision. The joy of faith burns like coals of juniper and yet it can be calmly explained and justified. The joyful Believer is no lunatic, carried away by a delusion—he has a “because” with which to account for all his joy—a reason which he can consider on his bed in the night watches, or defend against a scoffing world! We have a satisfactory reason for our most exuberant joy—“The Lord has done great things for us; thereof we are glad.” Philosophers can be happy without music and saints can be happy despite circumstances. With joy we draw water out of deeper and fuller wells than such as father Jacob dug. Our mirth is as soberly reasonable as the worldling’s fears.

Once more, the happiness is a thing of the heart, for the text runs thus—“Let them that love Your name be joyful in You.” We love God. I trust I am speaking to many who could say, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Is it not a very happy emotion? What is sweeter than to say, with tears in one’s eyes—“My God, I love You, too!” To sit down and have nothing to ask for, no words to utter, but only for the soul to love—is not this heavenly? Measureless depths of unutterable love are in the soul and in those depths we find the pearl of joy. When the heart is taken up with so delightful an object as the ever-blessed God, it feels an intensity of joy which cannot be rivaled. When our whole being is steeped in adoring love, then Heaven comes streaming down and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I feel I am talking in a poor way about the richest things which are enjoyed by saintly men. Many of you know as much about these matters as I do, perhaps more. But my soul does even now magnify the Lord and my spirit does rejoice in God my Savior. Although I feel unworthy and unfit to speak to this vast throng, yet I have a great sympathy with my text, for I am “glad in the Lord.”—

*“Oh, what immortal joys I feel,  
And raptures all divine  
For Jesus tells me I am His,  
And my Beloved mine!”*

If you sit before the Lord at this time and indulge your souls with an outflow of love to God and His Son Jesus Christ—and at the same time perceive an inflowing of heavenly joy—it will not much matter how the poor preacher speaks to your ear, for the Lord Himself will be heard in your soul and Heaven will flood your being!

II. Now I come to the second head, where we will consider THE GROUND AND REASON OF HOLY JOY. I am bound to speak upon this matter, for I have told you that the joy of the Believer is logical and can be defended by facts and so, indeed, it is. First, the Believer’s joy arises from the God in whom He trusts. “Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice.”

When, after many a weary wandering, the dove of your soul has at last come back to the ark and Noah has put out his hand and “pulled her in unto him,” the poor, weary creature is happy. Taken into Noah’s hand and made to nestle in his bosom, she feels so safe, so peaceful! The weary leagues of the wild waste of waters are all forgotten, or only remembered to give zest to the repose. So, when you trust in God your soul has found a quiet resting place, a pavilion of repose! The little chick runs to and fro in fear. The mother hen calls it home. She spreads her soft wings over the brood. Have you ever seen the little chicks, when they are housed under the hen, how they put out their little heads through the feathers and peep and twitter so prettily?

It is a chick’s Heaven to hide under its mother’s bosom! It is perfectly happy. It could not be more content. Its little chick nature is full to the brim with delight. This is your joy, also—“He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust: His Truth shall be your shield and buckler.” My Nature gets all its needs supplied, all its desires gratified when it rests in God. Oh, you that have never trusted God in Christ Jesus, you do not know what real happiness means! You may search all the theatres in London and ransack all the music halls, clubs and public-houses, but you will find no happiness in any of their mirth, or show, or wine! True joy dwells where dwells the living God and nowhere else. In your own home with God, even though that home is only a single room and your meal is very scanty, you will see more of Heaven than in the palaces of kings! Have God for your sole trust and you shall never lack for joy!

Our joy arises next from what the Lord does for us. “Let them shout for joy, because You defend them.” God always guards His people from whomever may attack them. “The Lord is your keeper.” Angels are our guardians, Providence is our protector—but God Himself is the Preserver of His chosen. “You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday.” No fortress guards the soldier so well as God guards His redeemed. The God of our salvation will defend us from all evil. He will defend our souls. “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”

Further, our joy arises out of the love we have towards our God. “Let them that love Your name be joyful in You.” The more you love God, the more you will delight in Him. It is the profusion of a mother’s love to her child which makes her take such delight in it. Her boy is her joy because of her love. If we loved Jesus better, we should be happier in Him. You do not, perhaps, see the connection between the two things—but there is a connection so intimate that little love to Christ brings little joy in Christ— and great love to Christ brings great joy in Christ. God grant that in a full Christ we may have a full joy!

Do you see what I mean? When a man comes to God in Christ and says, “This Savior is my Savior. This Father is my Father. This God is my God forever and ever,” then he has everything and he must be joyful! He has no fear about the past—God has forgiven him. He has no distress about the present—the Lord is with him. He is not afraid about the future for the Lord has said—“I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” If you understand my text and put it into practice, you possess the quintessence of happiness, the essential oil of joy! He that has joy on his barn floor may see it bare! He that has joy in his wine vats may see them dry! He that has joy in his children may bury that joy in the grave! He that has joy in himself will find his beauty consume away—but he that has joy in God drinks from “the deep which lies under”—his springs shall always flow, “in summer and in winter shall it be.”

I have pointed to the deep sources from which the joy of the Believer wells up, but I must also add, it is by faith that this joy comes to us. Faith makes joyful discoveries. I speak to those of you who have faith. When you first believed in Christ you found that you were saved and knew that you were forgiven. Some little while after that you discovered that you were chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. Oh, the rapture of your soul when the Lord appeared of old unto you, saying, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you”! The glorious doctrine of election is as wines on the lees wellrefined to those who by faith receive it. It brings with it a new, intense and refined joy such as the world knows nothing of.

Having discovered your election of God, you looked further into your justification—“for whom He called, them He also justified.” What a pearl is justification! In Christ the Believer is as just in the sight of God as if he had never sinned! He is covered with a perfect righteousness and is accepted in the Beloved. What a joy is justification by faith, when it is well understood! What bliss, also, to learn our union to Christ! Believers are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Because He lives we shall live also. One with Jesus! Wonderful discovery, this! Equally full of joy is our adoption! “Beloved, now are we the sons of God,” “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Faith thus heaps fuel on the fire of our joy, for it keeps on making discoveries out of the Word of the Lord!

The more you search the Scriptures and the nearer you live to God, the more you will enjoy that great goodness which the Lord has laid up in store for them that fear Him. Though “eye has not seen, nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him,” yet, “He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit” and thereby He puts gladness into our hearts more than increasing corn and wine could bring!

Furthermore, faith gives cheering interpretations. Faith is a Prophet who can charmingly interpret a fearsome dream. Faith sees a gain in every loss, a joy in every grief. Read aright and you will see that a child of God in trouble is on the way to greater blessing. Faith views affliction hopefully. Sorrow may come to us, as it did to David, as a chastisement for sin. Faith reads—“Whom the Lord loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.” Better to be chastened with God’s children, here, than to be condemned with the world hereafter! Faith also sees that affliction may be sent by way of discovery to make the man know himself, his God and the promises better. Faith perceives that affliction may be most precious as a test, acting as does the fire when it shows what is pure gold and what is base metal.

Faith joys in a test so valuable. Faith spies out the Truth of God that affliction is sent to develop and mature the Christian life. “Ah, well!” says Faith, “then, thank God for it. No trial for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it works out the peaceable fruit of righteousness in those that are exercised thereby.” Faith sees sweet love in every bitter cup. Faith knows that whenever she gets a black envelope from the heavenly post office, there is treasure in it. When the Lord’s black horses call at our door they bring us double loads of blessing.

Up to this moment I, God’s servant, beg to bear my unreserved testimony to the fact that it is good for me to have been afflicted. In spiritual life and knowledge and power, I have grown but little except when under the hand of trouble. I set my door open and am half-inclined to say to pain and sickness and sadness, “Turn in here, for I know that you will leave a blessing behind. Come, crosses, if you will, for you always turn to crowns.” Thus faith glories in tribulations, also, and in the lion of adversity finds the honey of joy.

I have said that trial comes to us as chastisement, as we see in the case of David—as a discoverer of Divine Grace, as we see in Abraham—or as a test, as we see in Job. It can also be a

 preventive, as in the case of Paul, who wrote, “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” In every tribulation God is moved by love to His people and by nothing else. If He cuts the vine with a sharp knife, it is because He would have fruit from it. If He whips His child till he cries, like David, “All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning,” it is for his profit, that he may learn obedience by the things which he suffers. All things work together for the Believer’s good—

and so faith interprets sorrow itself into joy.

Moreover, faith believes great promises. This opens other wells of joy. I cannot stop to quote them to you this morning, but the Book of the Lord is full of them. What more can the Lord say than He has said? The promises of God are full and as varied as they are full, and as sure as they are varied and as rich as they are sure. “Exceedingly great and precious promises.” When I wrote “The Check Book of the Bank of Faith” I was at no loss to find a promise for every day in the year—the difficulty was which to leave out! The promises are like the bells on the garments of our Great High Priest forever ringing out holy melodies. When a man gets a promise fairly into the hand of faith and goes to God with it, he must rejoice! The children of the promise are, all of them, worthy to be called Isaac, that is, “Laughter,” for God has made him to laugh who lives according to promise. To live on the promises of man would be starvation—but to live on the promises of God is to feed on fat things full of marrow!

Above all, faith has an eye to the eternal reward. She rejoices in her prospects. She takes into her hands the birds which to others are in the bush. To be with Christ in Glory is the joy of hope, the hope which makes not ashamed. Our hope is no dream—as sure as we are here today, we who are trusting in Christ will be in Heaven before long—for He prays that we may be with Him where He is and may behold His Glory! Let us not wish to postpone the happy day! Shall our bridal day be kept back? No, let the Bridegroom speedily come and take us to Himself. What a joy to know that this head shall wear a crown of glory and these hands shall wave the palm branch of victory! I speak not of myself alone, my Brothers and Sisters, but of you, also, and of all them that love His appearing. There is a crown of life laid up for you which the righteous Judge will give you. Therefore, have patience a little while. Bear, still, your cross. Put up with the difficulties of the way, for the end is almost within sight—

*“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long: So we’ll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”*May the Lord give us the ears of faith with which to hear the bells of Heaven ringing out from afar over the waters of time!

Faith has always reason for joy since God is always the same, His promises are the same and His power and will to fulfill are the same. In an unchanging God we find unchanging reasons for joy! If we draw water from the well of God, we may draw one day as well as another and never find the water abated. But if we make our joy to depend in part upon creatures and circumstances, we may find our joy leak out through the cracks in the cistern. Last Sunday morning I cried out to you, “Both feet on the Rock! Both feet on the Rock!” and the words led one poor heart to try the power of undivided faith in God. This is the road to joy and there is no other!

Drink waters from your own fountain and do not gad abroad after others. Is not the Lord enough for you? Is it not sufficient to say, “All my fresh springs are in You”? Neither life, nor death, nor poverty, nor sickness, nor bereavement, nor slander, nor death, itself, shall quench your joy if it is founded in God alone!

III. We will look, for a minute or two, into a third matter which is THE FAILURES REPORTED CONCERNING THIS JOY. I think I hear somebody say, “It is all very well for you to tell us that Believers are joyful and have logical reasons for gladness, but some of them are about as dull as can be and create dullness in others.” I am obliged to speak very carefully here, for I am afraid that certain Christians give cause for this objection.

Let me say to some of you who love to raise objections, What do you know about this joy? Are you unbelievers? Well, then, you are out of court—you are not competent to judge. The griefs of Believers you do not know and with their joy you cannot intermeddle. You have no spiritual taste or discernment and what judgment can you form? A genuine Believer may be as happy as the angels and yet you may not know his joy because you are not in the secret. You have not a spiritual mind and the carnal mind cannot discern spiritual things. I would have you speak with bated breath when you talk on this matter. When a blind man goes to the Royal Academy, his criticisms on the pictures are not worth much, but they are quite equal in value to yours when you speak of spiritual things! You cannot know what joy in the Lord means for, alas, you are a stranger to such heavenly things.

Alas, some professors of religion are mere pretenders—these have no joy of the Lord. To carry out their presence, these persons even imagine that it is necessary to pull a long face and to talk very solemnly, not to say dismally! Their idea of religion is that black is the color of Heaven. But, dear Friends, we cannot prevent hypocrites arising—it is only a proof that true religion is worth having. You took a bad half-sovereign the other night, did you? Did you say, “All half-sovereigns are worthless, I will never take another”? Of course not!—you became more careful—and you were quite sure that there were good half-sovereigns in currency, or else people would not make counterfeit ones. It would not pay anybody to be a hypocrite unless there were enough genuine Christians to make the hypocrites pass current. Therefore do not say too much about hypocritical weepers, lest you slander true men.

Next, remember that some persons are constitutionally sad. They cried as soon as they were born. They cried when they cut their teeth and they have cried ever since. Their spirits are very low down and when the Grace of God gets into their hearts it lifts them a great deal to bring them up to a decent level of joy. Think of what they would have been without it! Many would have died in despair if it had not been for faith. The Grace of God has kept them up or they would have lost their reason. I am sorry there should be persons who have bad livers, feeble digestions, or irritated brains, but there are such. Pity them, even if you blame them. They must not so pity themselves as to make an excuse for their unbelief—but we

must remember that often the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

When you have met with Christians who are not happy, did it never strike you that their depression might only be for a time under very severe trial? You may go to the South of France, where the days are sunny and you may happen to be there for a couple of days, only, and it may rain all the time—it would be unfair on that account to say that it is a gloomy place! So it may be that the Christian is under extreme pressure for the time and when that is moderated he will be very joyful. I do not excuse his loss of joy but still, there is a November of fogs in the year of most men. Judge no man by the day, but watch his spirit on a larger scale and see whether he does not usually delight himself in God.

Moreover, I would like to say a very pointed thing to some people who charge the saints with undue sadness. May you not be guilty of making them so? There is an unkind, morose, wicked, drinking husband and he says, “My wife’s religion makes her miserable.” No. It is not her religion, but her husband! You are enough to make 20 people unhappy—you know you are—and therefore do not blame the poor woman, if, when she sees you, tears are in her eyes. Alas, when she thinks of your going down to Hell and knows that she will be parted from you forever, the more she loves you the more sad she is to think of you.

“Oh,” says some wild boy here, “my mother is wretched!” I do not wonder! I should be wretched, too, if you were my son! If any of you are living ungodly lives, it makes your parents’ hearts ache to see you going headlong to perdition. Is it not abominable that a man should make another miserable and then blame him for being so? If you were but saved, how your mother’s face would brighten up! If your father saw his boy turn to the Lord, he would be as happy as the birds in spring! Speak tenderly on this matter lest you accuse yourself!

If you say that some Christians are unhappy, must you not also admit that many of them are very happy? I was once waited upon by an enthusiast who had a new religion to publish. Numbers of people have a crack which lets in new light and this man was going to convert me to his new ideas. After I had heard him, I said, “I have heard your story, will you hear mine?” When I talked to him of my lot and portion in the love of a Covenant God and the safety of the Believer in Christ, he said, “Now, Sir, if you believe all this, you ought to be the happiest man in the world.” I admitted that his inference was true and then I said to him, which rather surprised him, “So I am. And I am going to be more so all the rest of my life.”

If a man is chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. If he is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. If he is quickened by the Holy Spirit and renewed in the spirit of his mind. If he is one with Christ and on his way to Heaven—if he is not happy, he ought to be! Surely we ought to rejoice abundantly, dear Friends, for ours is a happy lot! “Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.” If God’s people are not happy at times,

it is not their faith which makes them unhappy— ask them. It is not what you

 believe that makes you unhappy—it is your lack of faith, is it not? If a man begins to doubt, he begins to sorrow, but as far as his faith goes, he has joy. Oh, for more faith! Faith does create joy. We can answer all objections by the fact that “we that have believed do enter into rest.”

IV. I close by mentioning THE ARGUMENTS FOR ABOUNDING IN JOY. You cannot argue a man into gladness, but you may possibly stir him up to see that which will make him happy. First, you see in my text a permit to be glad—“Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice.” You have, here, a ticket to the banquets of joy! You may be as happy as ever you like. You have Divine permission to shout for joy! Yonder is the inner sanctuary of happiness. You cry, “May I come in?” Yes, if by faith you can grasp the text, “Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice.” “But may I be happy?” asks one. “May I be glad? May I? Is there joy for me?” Do you trust in the Lord? Then you have your passport—travel in the land of light!

But the text is not only a permit, it is a precept. When it says, “Let them shout for joy,” it means that they are commanded to do so. Blessed is that religion wherein it is a duty to be happy! Come, you mournful ones, be glad! You discontented grumblers, come out of that dog house! Enter the palace of the King! Quit your dunghills! Ascend your thrones! The precept commands it—“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” We have here more than a permit and a precept, it is a prayer. David prays it—the Lord Jesus prays it by David. Let them rejoice, let them be joyful in You! Will He not grant the prayer which He has inspired by causing us to rejoice through lifting upon us the light of His Countenance? Pray for joy yourself, saying with David, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation.”

The text might be read as a promise—“All those that put their trust in You shall rejoice.” God promises joy and gladness to Believers. Light is sown for them—the Lord will turn their night into day. Listen to the following line of argument which shall be very brief. You only act reasonably when you rejoice. If you are chosen of God and redeemed by blood and have been made an heir of Heaven, you ought to rejoice. We pray you act not contrary to Nature and reason. Do not fly in the face of great and precious Truths of God. From what you profess, you are bound to be joyful. You will best baffle your adversaries by being happy.

“They say.” “They say”—let them say! “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.” But the attack is cruel. No doubt it is, but the Lord knows all about it. Do not cease to rest in Him. If your heart is full of God’s love you can easily bear all that the enemy may cast upon you. Abound in joy, for then you will behave best to those who are round about you. When a man is unhappy he usually makes other people so—and a person that is miserable is generally unkind and frequently unjust. It is often indigestion that makes a man find fault with his servants and wife and children. If a man is at peace with himself, he is peaceful with others.

Get right within and you will be right without. One of the best medicines for a good temper is communion with God and consequent joy of heart.

You yourself, also, if you are happy, will be strong—“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” If you lose your joy in your religion, you will be a poor worker—you cannot bear strong testimony, you cannot bear stern trial— you cannot lead a powerful life. In proportion as you maintain your joy, you will be strong in the Lord, and for the Lord. Do you not know that if you are full of joy you will be turning the charming side of religion where men can see it? I should not like to wear my coat with the seamy side out—some religionists always do that. It was said of one great professor that he looked as if his religion did not agree with him.

Godliness is not a rack or a thumbscrew. Behave not to religion as if you felt that you must take it, like so much medicine but you had rather not. If it tastes like nauseous medicine to you, I should fear you have got the wrong sort and are poisoning yourself! Believe not that true godliness is akin to sourness. Cheerfulness is next to godliness! “When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast.” Weed out levity, but cultivate joy. Thus will you win other hearts to follow Jesus. Remember that if you are always joyful, you are rehearsing the music of the skies. We are going there very soon—let us not be ignorant of the music of its choirs. I should not like to crowd into my seat and hear the choirmaster say, “Do you know your part?” and then have to answer, “Oh, no, I have never sung while I was on earth, for I had no joy in the Lord.”

I think I shall answer to the choirmaster and say, “Yes, I have long since sung, ‘Worthy is the Lamb’”—  
*“I would begin the music here  
And so my soul shall rise:  
Oh, for some heavenly notes, to bear  
My passions to the skies!”*

With joy we rehearse the song of songs! We pay glad homage now before Jehovah’s Throne. We sing unto the Lord our gladsome harmonies and we will do so as long as we have any being. Pass me that score, O chief musician of the skies, for I can take it up and sing my part in bass, or tenor, or treble, or alto, or soprano as my voice may be! The key is joy in God! Whatever the part assigned us, the music is all for Jesus! May some of you that have never joyed in Jesus Christ learn how to praise Him today by being washed in His precious blood! You that have praised Him long, may you learn your score yet more fully and sing in better tune from now on and for evermore! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalms 4 and 5.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136 (SONG I); 4; 103 (VERS. II). Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #106 New Park Street Pulpit 1

TURN OR BURN  
NO. 106

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 7, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword;  
He has bent His bow and made it ready.”  
Psalm 7:12.**

“IF the sinner turns not, God will whet His sword.” So, then, God has a sword and He will punish man on account of his iniquity. This evil generation has labored to take away from God the sword of His Justice. They have endeavored to prove to themselves that God will, “clear the guilty,” and will by no means, “punish iniquity, transgression and sin.” Two hundred years ago the predominant strain of the pulpit was one of terror—it was like Mount Sinai. It thundered forth the dreadful wrath of God and from the lips of a Baxter or a Bunyan, you heard most terrible sermons, full to the brim with warnings of judgment to come! Perhaps some of the Puritan fathers may have gone too far and have given too great a prominence to the terrors of the Lord in their ministry. But the age in which we live has sought to forget those terrors, altogether, and if we dare to tell men that God will punish them for their sins, it is charged upon us that we want to bully them into religion! And if we faithfully and honestly tell our hearers that sin must bring after it, certain destruction, it is said that we are attempting to frighten them into goodness! Now we care not what men mockingly impute to us—we feel it our duty, when men sin, to tell them they shall be punished—and as long as the world will not give up its sin, we feel we must not cease our warnings. But the cry of this age is that God is merciful, that God is Love! Yes, who said He was not? But remember, it is equally true God is Just, severely and inflexibly Just! If He were not God, He would not be Just! And He could not be merciful if He were not Just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind! Rest assured, however, that He is Just and that the words I am about to read you from God’s Word are true—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.” “God is angry with the wicked every day.” “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. He has also prepared for Himself, the instruments of death; He ordains His arrows against the persecutors.” Indeed, because this age is wicked, we are told it is to have no Hell—and because it is hypocritical, it would have but feigned punishment! This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the Gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the Day of Wrath. How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come! They preach of God’s love and mercy as they ought to do and as God has commanded them—but of what use is it to preach mercy unless they also preach the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they “turn not, He will whet His sword”? I fear that in too many places the Doctrine of future punishment is rejected and laughed at as a fancy and a fantasy—but the day will come when it shall be known to be a reality!

Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he would never come home alive. The men of Noah’s generation laughed at the foolish old man (as they thought him), who bid them take heed, for the world would be drowned. But when they were climbing to the treetops and the floods were following them—did they then say that the prophecy was untrue? And when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab and he said, “Take me from the battle, for I must die,” did he then think that Micaiah spoke a lie? And so it is now. You tell us we speak lies when we warn you of judgment to come, but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars, then? Will you then turn round and scoff and say we spoke not the Truth of God? Rather, my Hearers, the highest gift of honor will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God! I have often trembled at the thought that here I am, standing before you, and constantly engaged in the work of the ministry, but what if, when I die, I should be found unfaithful to your souls? How doleful will be our meeting in the world of spirits! It would be a dreadful thing if you were able to say to me in the world to come, “Sir, you flattered us. You did not tell us of the solemnities of eternity. You did not rightly dwell upon the awful wrath of God. You spoke to us feebly and faintly. You were somewhat afraid of us—you knew we could not bear to hear of eternal torment and, therefore, you kept it back and never mentioned it!” Why, I think you would look me in the face and curse me throughout eternity, if that should be my conduct! But by God’s help it never shall be! Come fair or foul, when I die I shall, God helping me, be able to say, “I am clear of the blood of all men.” So far as I know God’s Truth, I will endeavor to speak it. And though on my head disgrace and scandal is poured to a ten-fold greater extent than ever, I’ll hail it and welcome it—if I may but be faithful to this unstable generation, faithful to God and faithful to my own conscience! Let me, then, endeavor, and by God’s help I will do it as solemnly and as tenderly as I can—to address such of you as have not yet repented—most affectionately reminding you of your future doom if you should die impenitent. “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

In the first place, what is the turning, here meant? In the second place, let us dwell on the necessity there is for men’s turning, otherwise God will punish them. And then thirdly, let me remind you of the means whereby men can be turned from the error of their ways, and the weakness and frailty of their nature amended by the power of Divine Grace.

I. In the first place, my Hearers, let me endeavor to explain to you the NATURE OF THE TURNING, HERE MEANT. It Says—“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

To commence, then. The turning, here meant, is actual, not fictitious—not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts of life! Possibly one of you will say, this morning, “Lo I turn to God! From this time forth I will not sin and I will endeavor to walk in holiness. My vices shall be abandoned, my crimes shall be thrown to the winds and I will turn unto God with full purpose of heart.” But, perhaps, tomorrow you will have forgotten this. You will weep a tear or two under the preaching of God’s Word, but by tomorrow every tear shall have been dried and you will utterly forget that you ever came to the House of God at all. How many of us are like men who see their faces in a mirror and straightway go away and forget what manner of men we are? Ah, my Hearer, it is not your promise of repentance that can save you—it is not your vow. It is not your solemn declaration, it is not the tear that is dried more easily than the dewdrop by the sun. It is not the transient emotion of the heart which constitutes a real turning to God! There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in everyday life. Do you say you are sorry and repent, and yet go on, from day to day, just as you always have gone? Will you now bow your heads and say, “Lord, I repent,” and in a little while commit the same deeds, again? If you do, your repentance is worse than nothing and shall but make your destruction yet more sure— for he that vows to his Maker and does not pay, has committed another sin, in that he has attempted to deceive the Almighty and lie against the God that made him! Repentance, to be true, to be evangelical—must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

In the next place, repentance, to be sure, must be entire. How many will say, “Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other, but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold.” O Sirs, in God’s name, let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor 50 sins, which is true repentance—it is the solemn renunciation of every sin! If you harbor one of those accursed vipers in your heart, your repentance is but a sham! If you indulge in but one lust and give up every other—that one lust, like one leak in a ship—will sink your soul! Think it not sufficient to only give up your outward vices. Fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of your life—it is all or none which God demands! “Repent,” says God, and when He bids you repent, He means repent of all your sins, otherwise He can never accept your repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the race—not in the individual—in the mass, not in the particular. He says, “Gild you as you will, O sin, I abhor you! Yes, cover yourself with pleasure, make yourself gaudy like the snake with its azure scales—I still hate you, for I know your venom and I flee from you, even when you come to me in the most specious garb.” All sin must be given up or else you shall never have Christ! All transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of Heaven will be barred against you! Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be sincere, it must be entire repentance.

Again, when God says, “If he does not turn, He will whet His sword,” He means immediate repentance! You say when we are nearing the last extremity of mortal life and when we are entering the borders of the thick darkness of futurity, then we will change our ways. But, my dear Hearers, do not delude yourselves! It is few who have ever changed after a long life of sin. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? If so, let him that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well.” Put no faith in the repentances which you promise yourselves on your deathbeds—here are ten thousand arguments against one, that if you repent not in health—you will never repent in sickness. Too many have promised themselves a quiet season before they leave the world, when they could turn their face to the wall and confess their sins—but how few have found that time of repose! Do not men drop down dead in the streets—yes, even in the House of God? Do they not expire in their business? And when death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Many a saint has said on his deathbed, “Oh, if I had to seek my God, now—if I had to cry to Him, now, for mercy—what would become of me? These pangs are enough, without the pangs of repentance! It is enough to have the body tortured, without having the soul wrung with remorse.” Sinner! God says, “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me and proved Me.” When God the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, they will never talk of delays! You may never have another day in which to repent! “Therefore,” says the voice of Wisdom, “Repent now.” The Jewish Rabbis said, “Let every man repent one day before he dies—and since he may die tomorrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways today.” Even so, we say immediate repentance is that which God demands, for He has never promised you that you shall have any hour to repent in, except the one that you have now!

Furthermore, the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is hearty repentance. It is not a mock tear. It is not hanging out the ensigns of grief while you are keeping merriment in your hearts. It is not having an illumination within and shutting up all the windows by a pretended repentance. It is the putting out of the candles of the heart! It is sorrow of soul which is true repentance. A man may renounce every outward sin and yet not really repent. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life. It is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be His, forever and ever—it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart as well as the crimes of the life! Ah, dear Hearers, let none of us fancy that we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance. Let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature! Let us not dream that we have savingly turned to God, when, perhaps, we have only turned to ourselves. And let us not think it enough to have turned from one vice to another, or from vice to virtue. Let us remember it must be a turning of the whole soul, so that the old man is made new in Christ Jesus. Otherwise we have not answered the requirement of the text—we have not turned unto God.

And lastly, upon this point, this repentance must be perpetual. It is not my turning to God during today that will be a proof that I am a true convert—it is forsaking of my sin throughout the entire of my life—until I sleep in the grave. You need not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved—it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The change which God works is neither a transitory nor a superficial change—not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an eradication of it! Not the sweeping away of the dust of one day, but the taking away of that which is the cause of the defilement! In old times, when rich and generous monarchs came into their cities, they made the fountains run with milk and wine. But the fountain was not, therefore, always a fountain of milk and wine—on the morrow it ran with water as before. So you may, today, go home and pretend to pray. You may, today, be serious— tomorrow you may be honest and the next day you may pretend to be devout. Yet if you return, as Scripture has it, “like the dog to its vomit and like the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire,” your repentance shall but sink you deeper into Hell, instead of being a proof of Divine Grace in your hearts!

It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance. However, there are certain marks whereby they may be distinguished and, at the risk of tiring you, we will just notice one or two of them—and may God grant that you may find them in your own souls! Legal repentance is a fear of damning—evangelical repentance is a fear of sinning. Legal repentance makes us fear the wrath of God—evangelical repentance makes us fear the cause of that wrath—sin. When a man repents with that Grace of repentance which God the Spirit works in him, he repents not of the punishment which is to follow the deed, but of the deed, itself. And he feels that if there were no pit dug for the wicked, if there were no ever-gnawing worm and no unquenchable fire, he would still hate sin! It is such repentance as this which everyone of you must have, or else you will be lost. It must be a hatred of sin. Do not suppose that because when you come to die, you will be afraid of eternal torment, therefore, that will be repentance. Every thief is afraid of prison, but he will steal tomorrow if you set him free. Most men who have committed murder, tremble at the sight of the gallows, but they would do the deed, again, could they live. It is not the hatred of the punishment that is repentance—it is the hatred of the deed itself! Do you feel that you have such a repentance as that? If not, these thundering words must be preached to you again—“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

But one more hint, here. When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance—I mean the Gospel repentance which saves the soul— he not only hates sin, for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no repentance of his own can avail to wash it out! And he acknowledges that it is only by an act of Sovereign Grace that his sin can be washed away. Now, if any of you suppose that you repent of your sins and yet imagine that by a course of holy living you can blot them out—if you suppose that by walking uprightly in the future, you can obliterate your past transgressions—you have not yet truly repented—for true repentance makes a man feel that—

*“Could his zeal no respite know,  
Could his tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Christ must save and Christ, alone.”*

And if it is so in you, that you hate sin as a corrupt and abominable thing—and would bury it out of your sight—but you feel that it will never be entombed unless Christ shall dig the grave, then you have repented of sin. We must humbly confess that we deserve God’s wrath and that we cannot avert it by any deeds of our own. And we must put our trust solely and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ! If you have not so repented, again we exclaim in the words of David, “If you turn not, He will whet His sword.”

II. And now the second point—it is a yet more terrible one to dwell upon—and if I consulted my own feelings, I would not mention it. But we must not consider our feelings, in the work of the ministry, any more than we would if we were physicians, of men’s bodies. We must sometimes use the knife where we feel that mortification would ensue without it. We must frequently make sharp gashes into men’s consciences in the hope that the Holy Spirit will bring them to life. We assert then, that there is a NECESSITY that God should whet His sword and punish men, if they will not turn! Baxter used to say, “Sinner! Turn or burn! It is your only alternative—TURN OR BURN!” And it is so. We think we can show you why men must turn, or else they will burn.

1. First we cannot suppose the God of the Bible could suffer sin to be unpunished. Some may suppose it. They may dream their intellects into a state of intoxication so as to suppose a God apart from justice—but no man whose reason is sound and whose mind is in a healthy condition can imagine a God without justice. You cannot suppose a king without it to be a good king, much less of God, the Judge and King of all the earth, without Justice in His bosom. To suppose Him all Love and no Justice, were to undeify Him and make Him no longer God! He were not capable of ruling this world if He had not Justice in His heart. There is in man a natural perception of the fact that if there is a God, He must be Just. And I can scarcely imagine that you can believe in a God without also believing in the punishment of sin. It were difficult to suppose Him elevated high above His creatures, beholding their disobedience and yet looking with the same serenity upon the good and upon the evil! You cannot suppose Him awarding the same praise to the wicked and to the righteous! The idea of God presumes justice—and it is but to say, Justice, when you say God.

2. But to imagine that there shall be no punishment for sin and that man can be saved without repentance is to fly in the face of all the Scriptures! What? Are the records of Divine History nothing? And if they are anything, must not God have mightily changed if He does not, now, punish sin? What? Did He once blast Eden and drive our parents out of that happy garden on account of a little theft, as man would style it? Did He drown a world with water and inundate Creation with the floods which He had buried in the bowels of this earth? And will He not punish sin? Let the burning hail which fell on Sodom tell you that God is Just! Let the open mouth of the earth which swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram, warn you that He will not spare the guilty! Let the mighty works of God which He did in the Red Sea, the wonders which He worked on Pharaoh and the miraculous destruction which he brought on Sennacherib, tell you that God is Just! And it were, perhaps, out of place for me in the same argument to mention the judgments of God even in our age, but have there never been such? This world is not the dungeon where God punishes sin, but still, there are a few instances in which we cannot but believe that He actually did avenge it. I am no believer that every accident is a judgment. I am far from believing that the destruction of men and women in a theater is a punishment upon them for their sin, since the same thing has occurred in Divine Service to our perpetual sorrow. I believe judgment is reserved for the next world. I could not account for Providence if I believed that God punishes here. “Those men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think you that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you no.” It has injured religion for men to take up every Providence and say, for instance, that because a boat was upset on the Sabbath, it was a judgment on the persons that were in it. We assuredly believe that it was sinful to spend the day in pleasure, but we deny that it was a punishment from God! God usually reserves His punishment for a future state. But yet, we say, there have been a few instances in which we cannot but believe that men and women have been, by Providence, punished in this life for their guilt. I remember one which I scarcely dare relate to you. I saw the wretched creature, myself. He had dared to imprecate on his head the most awful curses that man could utter. In his rage and fury, he said he wished his head were twisted on one side, that his eyes were put out and that his jaws were made fast. But a moment afterwards the lash of his whip— with which he had been cruelly treating his horse—entered his eye. It brought on first, inflammation, and then lock-jaw—and when I saw him, he was in the very position in which he had asked to be placed, for his head was twisted round, his eyesight was gone and he could not speak except through his closed teeth! You will remember a similar instance happening at Devizes, where a woman declared that she had paid her part of the price of a sack of meal when she had it in her hand and, immediately dropped down dead on the spot! Some of these may have been singular coincidences. But I am not so credulous as to suppose that they were brought about by accident. I think the will of the Lord was in it! I believe they were some faint intimations that God was Just and that although the full shower of His wrath does not fall on men in this life, He does pour a drop or two on them, to let us see how He will, one day, chasten the world for its iniquity!

3. But why need I go far to bring arguments to bear on you, my Hearers? Your own consciences tell you that God must punish sin. You may laugh at me and say that you have no such belief. I do not say you have, but I say that your conscience tells you so—and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief! As John Bunyan said, Mr. Conscience had a very loud voice and though Mr. Understanding shut himself up in a dark room, where he could not see, yet he used to thunder out so mightily in the streets that Mr. Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr. Conscience said. And it is often so. You say in your understanding, “I cannot believe God will punish sin”— but you know He will! You would not like to confess your secret fears, because that were to give up what you have so often most bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast and bombast, I imagine you do not believe it, for if you did, you would not need look so big while saying it! I know this, no sooner than you are sick, you cry out for mercy! I know that when you are dying, you will believe in a Hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all and makes us believe, even when we say we do not, that God must punish sin!

Let me tell you a story. I have told it before, but it is a striking one and sets out in a true light how easily men will be brought, in times of danger, to believe in a God and a God of Justice, too, though they have denied Him before. In the backwoods of Canada there resided a good minister who, one evening, went out to meditate, as Isaac did, in the fields. He soon found himself on the borders of a forest which he entered and walked along a track which had been trod before him, musing, still musing until, at last, the shadows of twilight gathered around him and he began to think how he would spend a night in the forest. He trembled at the idea of remaining there, with the poor shelter of a tree into which he would be compelled to climb. All of a sudden he saw a light in the distance among the trees and imagining that it might be from the window of some cottage where he could find a hospitable retreat, he hastened to it. But to his surprise he saw a space cleared and trees laid down to make a platform and upon it a speaker addressing a multitude. He thought to himself, “I have stumbled on a company of people who, in this dark forest, have assembled to worship God and some minister is preaching to them at this late hour of the evening concerning the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” But to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer, he found a young man declaiming against God, daring the Almighty to do His worst upon him—speaking terrible things in wrath against the Justice of the Most High and venturing most bold and awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state! It was altogether a singular scene. It was lighted up by pine-knots, which cast a glare here and there, while the thick darkness in other places still reigned. The people were intent on listening to the orator and, when he sat down, thunders of applause were given to him, each one seeming to emulate the other in his praise! Thought the minister, “I must not let this pass. I must rise and speak. The honor of my God and His cause demands it!” But he feared to speak, for he knew not what to say, having come there suddenly. He would have left, anyway, had not something else occurred. A man of middle age, hale and strong, rose, and leaning on his staff he said, “My friends, I have a word to speak to you tonight. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator. I shall not criticize his style, I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered, but I shall simply relate to you a fact—and after I have done that— you can draw your own conclusions. Yesterday, I walked by the side of yonder river. I saw on its floods, a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable. It was going fast towards the rapids. He could not use the oars and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony. By-and-by he gave up the attempt to save his life. He kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, ‘O God! Save my soul! If my body cannot be saved, save my soul!’ I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer. I heard him vow that if his life were spared, he would never be such again. I heard him implore the mercy of Heaven for Jesus Christ’s sake and earnestly plead that he might be washed in His blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood. I plunged in, brought the boat to shore and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you and cursed his Maker. What do you say to this, Sirs?” The speaker sat down. You may guess what a shudder run through the young man, himself, and how the audience in one moment changed their notes and saw that, after all, while it was a fine thing to brag and bravado against Almighty God on dry land, when danger was distant, it was not quite so grand to think ill of Him when near the verge of the grave! We believe there is enough conscience in every man to convince him that God must punish him for his sin. Therefore we think that our text will wake an echo in every heart—“If he does not turn, He will whet His sword.”

I am tired of this terrible work of endeavoring to show you that God must punish sin! Let me just utter a few of the declarations of His Holy Word, and then let me tell you how repentance is to be obtained. O Sirs! You may think that the fire of Hell is, indeed, a fiction and that the flames of the nethermost pit are but popish dreams! But if you are believers in the Bible, you must believe that it cannot be so! Did not our Master say, “Where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched.” You say it is metaphorical fire. But what meant He by this?—“He is able to cast both body and soul into Hell”? Is it not written that there is reserved for the devil and his angels, fearful torment? And do you not know that our Master said, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment”? “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”? “Yes,” you say, “but it is not philosophical to believe that there is a Hell, it does not consort with reason to believe there is.” However, I should like to act as if there were, even if there is no such place. For as the poor and pious man once said, “Sir, I like to have two strings to my bow. If there should be no Hell, I shall be as well off as you will. But if there should, it will go hard with you.” But why need I say, “if”? You know there is! No man has been born and educated in this land without having his conscience so far enlightened as to know that to be a Truth of God. All I need to do is to press upon your anxious consideration this thought—Do you feel that you are a fit subject for Heaven right now? Do you feel that God has changed your heart and renewed your nature? If not, I beseech you, lay hold of this thought—unless you are renewed—all that can be dreadful in the torments of the future world must inevitably be yours! Dear Hearer, apply it to yourself, not to your fellow men, but to your own conscience and may God Almighty make use of it to bring you to repentance!

III. Now briefly what are the MEANS of repentance? Most seriously I say, I do not believe any man can repent with evangelical repentance of himself. You ask me, then, to what purpose is the sermon I have endeavored to preach, proving the necessity of repentance? Allow me to make the sermon of some purpose, under God, by its conclusion. Sinner! You are so desperately set on sin that I have no hope you will ever turn from it of yourself. But listen! He who died on Calvary is exalted on high, “to give repentance and remission of sin.” Do you, this morning, feel that you are a sinner? If so, ask Christ to give you repentance, for He can work repentance in your heart by His Spirit, though you cannot work it there yourself! Is your heart like iron? He can put it into the furnace of His love and make it melt! Is your soul like the nether millstone? His Grace is able to dissolve it like the fog is melted before the sun! He can make you repent, though you cannot make yourself repent! If you feel your need of repentance, I will not now say to you, “repent,” for I believe there are certain acts that must precede a sense of repentance. I would advise you to go to your houses and if you feel that you have sinned and yet cannot sufficiently repent of your transgressions, bow your knees before God and confess your sins. Tell Him you cannot repent as you should. Tell Him your heart is hard. Tell Him it is as cold as ice. You can do that if God has made you feel your need of a Savior! Then if it should be laid to your heart to endeavor to seek repentance, I will tell you the best way to find it. Spend an hour, first, in endeavoring to remember your sins—and when conviction has gotten a firm hold on you, then spend another hour—where? At Calvary, my Hearer! Sit down and read that Chapter which contains the history and mystery of the God who loved and died. Sit down and look at that glorious Man, with blood dropping from His hands and His feet gushing rivers of gore! And if that does not make you repent, with the help of God’s Spirit, then I know of nothing that can! An old divine says, “If you feel you do not love God, love Him till you feel you do. If you think you cannot believe, believe till you feel you believe.” Many a man says he cannot repent while he is repenting! Keep on with that repentance till you feel you have repented. Only acknowledge your transgressions—confess your guiltiness—acknowledge that He were just if He should destroy you. And say this, solemnly—

*“My faith does lay its hand  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.*

Oh, what would I give if one of my hearers should be blessed by God to go home and repent! If I had worlds to buy one of your souls, I would readily give them if I might but bring one of you to Christ! I shall never forget the hour when I hoped God’s mercy first looked on me. It was in a place very different from this, among a despised people, in an insignificant little chapel, of a peculiar sect. I went there bowed down with guilt, laden with transgression. The minister walked up the pulpit stairs, opened his Bible and read that precious text, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside Me there is none else.” And as I thought, fixing his eyes on me, before he began to preach to others, he said, “Young man! Look! Look! Look! You are one of the ends of the earth. You feel you are. You know your need of a Savior. You are trembling because you think He will never save you. He says this morning, ‘Look!’” Oh, how my soul was shaken within me, then! What, thought I, does that man know me and all about me? He seemed as if he did. And it made me “look!” Well, I thought, lost or saved, I will try. Sink or swim, I will run the risk of it. And in that moment I hoped, by His Grace. I looked upon Jesus! And though desponding, downcast, ready to despair and feeling that I would rather die than live as I had lived—at that very moment it seemed as if a young Heaven had had its birth within my conscience! I went home, no more cast down! Those about me, noticing the change, asked me why I was so glad, and I told them that I had believed in Jesus and that it was written, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

Oh, if one such should be here this morning! Where are you, you chief of sinners, you vilest of the vile? My dear Hearer, you have never been in the House of God, perhaps, these last 20 years, but here you are, covered with your sins, the blackest and vilest of all! Hear God’s Word—“Come, now, let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool and though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” And all this for Jesus’ sake! All this for His blood’s sake! “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved,” for His Word and mandate is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.”

SINNER! TURN OR BURN!  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.  
END OF VOLUME 2 Sermon #1445 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD GLORIFIED BY CHILDREN’S MOUTHS  
NO. 1545

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 27, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE CENTENARY OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

**“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength because of Your enemies, that You might still the enemy and the Avenger.”  
Psalm 8:2.**

THIS Psalm sings of the grandeur of God as seen in creation. Who has not been impressed with the sight of the starry sky and the moon walking in her brightness? Truly, God is great! Who can stand at night and gaze upward to yonder distant worlds without saying, “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your Glory above the heavens.” The Psalm with equal vigor treats of the condescension of God which is all the better seen when we have a view of His greatness and Glory. It is not for us to stoop—we are so low already. We sometimes use the word, condescension, in reference to man, but worms were never raised so high above their meaner fellow worms as to be capable of real condescension—that belongs to God alone. “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?”

Because of this Divine condescension great honor is put upon man by God and the Psalm sings of it, telling of the exaltation of man who, in his original, was made a little lower than the angels, but by God’s gentleness has been made great and crowned with glory and honor. Hence the inspired poet sings of the Glory of God in man, for he never thinks of extolling man. He only means to say that God is glorious on account of the great things which He has done in and for such a poor creature as man is. So when he has said that man is made to be the viceroy of God over this earth and is set over the works of God’s hands, he concludes, not by praising man, but by reverently singing, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!”

Mark right well the greatness of God, stooping to the littleness of man and glorifying itself thereby—the stupendous grandeur of the Highest bowing down to the lowest and uplifting it into a place hard by itself and so getting to itself abundant renown. This morning our subject is the power of God displayed in human weakness—strength out of babes’ mouths—the way He glorifies Himself by using the very least and causing them to show forth His praise to the confusion of His adversaries. There is a Glory of God to be seen in creation, but in redemption there are peculiarly bright manifestations.

In creation there was no opposition. When God framed this world there was no opposing force to fight against Him—“He spoke and it was done.” Absolute nothingness was no hindrance to the creation. “In the beginning” neither chaos or darkness were resisting forces in the framing of the world. “Let there be light,” said God, and there was light. He speaks life and things live! No trace of rebellion is seen. It is in the sphere of

 moral and spiritual things that “the enemy” is met with and here is a labor worthy of God—to overthrow this enemy and still the evil voice which curses the sons of men. It is in conquering the opposition of the powers of evil that God gets to Himself a Glory more remarkable than that which He obtains by the greatest feats of creative power.

I. So our first thought is that THERE IS A CONFLICT. Our text speaks of “enemies” and of “the enemy and the Avenger.” We know who the enemies are. Are they not the seed of the serpent? Are they not the men of this world, the children of darkness? The enemies of God are all men who have not been renewed in the spirit of their minds—all who have not been turned “from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.” God has—alas that we should have to say it!—many enemies and, above all, there is the enemy, that leading spirit, the “prince of the power of the air,” who has dominion over the children of disobedience and over those apostate angels whom he seduced into mutiny so that they revolted, with him, from beneath the standard of God.

Satan is the enemy who contends against the cause of the Truth of God and love, which is the cause of God. He is spoken of as “the Avenger” because he seeks to revenge himself on God. Through his own sin and folly he was expelled from Heaven. The “Son of the Morning” became the Prince of Darkness by his own willful deed and he wanders up and down the universe of God seeking to take revenge upon the just and holy Judge for the sentence which He has passed upon him. There always rages a tremendous battle between good and evil, between God and this avenger and the evil powers associated with him. This battle rages from day to day and will never cease till the Lord has put all enemies under the feet of His glorious Son who is manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

Victory shall crown the strife between good and evil and the cry shall be heard, “Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” This strife began—I hesitate to conclude the sentence for the origin of evil is not revealed, but the first historic circumstance we know of was the revolt of the angels who kept not their first estate. How they fell we think we know, but to a large extent our notions are, as a rule, drawn rather from poetical imagination than from positive history. But we do know that the devil was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth (1 John 8:44) and that, “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell” (2 Peter 2:4). Satan carried the warfare into this world at the Fall. Finding a happy pair in Eden, he assumed a serpent’s form and seduced them with a lie, leading them to partake of the fruit of which their God had said, “In the day that you taste thereof you shall surely die.”

From that moment the conflict has never ceased throughout the whole human family and you find everywhere the seed of the serpent in conflict with the “Seed of the woman.” God leads the armies of the right and the true against the spiritual wickedness which maintains the throne of wrong and falsehood. The serpent’s seed has continued to fight against the Lord Jesus and against His chosen ones, using all sorts of weapons against them—by lying and slandering, by false doctrine, by soft temptations, by cruel persecutions, by death itself, the enemies have sought to destroy the children of the living God! It is a battle royal here below, even as it was above, for we read, “There was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels and he prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in Heaven.”

The day shall come when there shall be no place found for evil upon earth. But until then the god of this world seeks to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ and all that are in Him and we must wrestle with him until we prevail. On God’s part, this conflict is mainly carried on by moral and spiritual means. He does use other means at times and He will, in the end, use all the resources of Nature for the overthrow of His adversaries. Remember the song of the Red Sea where God used the great deep to destroy His foes? Even now I hear the jubilant voices of the maidens as they answer one another saying, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” For the most part, however, this battle is not with weapons of Nature, but with weapons of Grace.

And as far as we have to do with it, it is never with the confused noise of warriors and garments rolled in blood, for “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” though they are “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” The warfare of which we speak is the battle of good against evil, of right against wrong, of holiness against sin—in a word, of love against hate. And God uses the weapons of His Truth, of His Gospel, of the love of man and especially of the sweet life and Divine power of the Holy Spirit to bring men to the feet of Jesus Christ, “whom He has appointed heir of all things,” that He might reign over them and “reconcile them unto God, even the Father.”

This strife goes on every day around us and within us and you and I are taking one side or the other in it. We are either enemies of God by nature, or we are “reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” We are under the banner of “the Avenger,” or else we follow the standard of the Redeemer— one of these two. I invite you, at the outset of our discourse, to earnestly ask yourselves on whose side you are. “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” Are you for God and for His Christ, or are you still at enmity with your Maker, alienated from God by wicked works? With this fact we have opened our discourse—there is a conflict.

II. Secondly, in this conflict THE WEAPONS ARE VERY SINGULAR. What are those weapons? The text replies, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength.” Bring here yon sweet babe and let us look into its lovely face! See that little mouth—it challenges a kiss! And note with joy that God may use that little mouth as His conquering weapon against the devil! By men’s mouths God’s warfare is carried on and all mouths that have ever spoken for Him were once the mouths of “babes and sucklings.” I have seen many ancient cannons upon which were molded in bronze the words—“The last argument of kings.” Yes, but the gracious arguments of the King of kings are sent home by a human mouth—these mouths are fashioned and framed on purpose to hurl against the enemy the hot shot of the Gospel!

Of our Lord Jesus, Himself, we read, “He went forth conquering and to conquer,” and it is written concerning Him, “Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.” O mouth of a little child, it seems strange that out of you should come the great strength of God which shall silence His enemies and yet so it shall be! “The Lord gave the Word: great was the company of those that published it. Kings of armies did flee and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.” It was the publication of the God-given Word by human tongues which won the victory! The tongue is the glory of man’s frame and by it the Glory of God is exceedingly manifested and His foes are baffled.

It must greatly anger Satan to think that his craft is not met by craft, nor his clever devices by the wisdom of the world, but that God uses the foolishness of preaching to overthrow him! When our Lord sent out His Apostles, He did not commission them to assemble squadrons of soldiers, but He bade a tongue of fire sit on each one of them! He did not charge them to establish His religion by the authority of earthly princes and seek the endowments of the State for it, but He gave them the endowment of the Holy Spirit and the power to speak His Gospel! In them was fulfilled the promise made to Ezekiel, “I will give you the opening of the mouth in the midst of them and they shall know that I am the Lord.”—

*“What gifts, what miracles He gave!  
And power to kill and power to save!  
Furnished their tongues with wondrous words, Instead of shields and spears and swords. Thus armed, He sent the champions forth, From east to west, from south to north— ‘Go and assert your Savior’s cause;  
Go, spread the mystery of His Cross.”’*

Already the testimony of feeble men has been used as the great power of God to subdue the nations to Himself. Satan’s kingdom has been shaken and the empire of Jesus extended by the gracious words which have proceeded out of human mouths—mouths which once were those of sucklings. See there, fiend of Hell, the armory of God? Do you see, in yonder infant class, the weapons which the Lord is preparing against you? The child that sucks at its mother’s breast is born to smite you with the Word of God and, before long, when the Spirit of God shall rest upon him, he shall batter down your high places with his proclamation of the Gospel! O smiter of the human race, the youngest, weakest, feeblest of the sons of Adam shall yet tread you under foot! God shall make use of children’s mouths to vanquish and silence the enemy and the Avenger.

How are these amazing weapons used? These strangely soft, yet sharp, feeble, yet mighty weapons—how are they used? They smite the enemy by prayer. Children pray while they are children and, blessed be God, their little pleas are heard in Heaven. I like to remember the words of Luther when things were going very badly. He went into a room and found a number of children in prayer and he exclaimed, “It is well, for the children are praying for us: God will be sure to hear them.” And so He will, Brothers and Sisters. He will not let the cries of Samuels and Timothies remain unheard. Thus, from the heavenward side, the prayers uttered by children’s mouths will bring prosperity to the great cause.

As these children grow older it is by their mouths that they shall bombard and batter the power of the enemy from the ramparts of prayer and so shall bring an overthrow upon evil and error and God’s Word shall be triumphant. O blessed power of prayer, nothing can stand against you! The man, the child, the babe who knows but how to pray shall certainly prevail with God and “still the enemy and the Avenger.”—

*“Prayer is the simplest form of speech*

*That infant lips can try,”*  
and yet it is one of the most effectual forms of assault against the powers of darkness. These little mouths, too, shall be used for praise and that is another powerful blow against the Avenger. For whenever we praise God we cast down the pride of the great enemy. Praise glorifies God and that is what Satan cannot bear. In proportion as God is glorified, he feels himself degraded and, therefore, it is a blessed thing to magnify the Lord. Little children, when they are rightly taught, praise the Messiah early and, as they grow up with deeper voices and fuller volume of sound, but perhaps not, even then, with truer hearts, they praise and bless the God of their fathers. The mouths of babes and sucklings are used by God to lower the pride of His adversaries, while they cry, “Hosanna!” and sing the praise of Jesus’ name.

Nor is this all, for out of man’s mouth God sends forth testimony by His Holy Spirit and this is the sharpest blow of all. The enemy dreads nothing so much as witness-bearing to the Gospel, for he knows that it pleases God, “by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Under the head of testimony I would include all sorts of speech concerning our Lord Jesus and the Gospel of our salvation, whether it proceeds from the mouths of men, women, or children. The testimony of Jesus is strength, however feeble may be the voice which utters it. Whoever publishes the salvation of Jesus Christ is, with his mouth, smiting the enemy! When they that fear the Lord speak often, one to another, about the Glory of God—when they tell again and again, “the old, old story, of Jesus and His love”—then is God, out of human mouths, stilling the enemy and the Avenger!

How sweet to think, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we never know what one child’s mouth can do! One would like to have seen little George Whitefield when first he began to prattle. Who would have thought that the mouth of such a youngster would ultimately set two nations on fire by its zealous declaration of the Truth of God? I should like to have seen John Wesley, when he was a little child, on the knee of that remarkable woman, “the mother of the Wesleys!” Who would have thought that he would awaken the masses as he did? Out of the mouths of little George Whitefield and little John Wesley—out of those two babes’ mouths—how grandly did the Lord smite the adversary!

Aha! Aha! O Satan! To be overcome by behemoth or leviathan might make you angry! But to be smitten out of infants’ mouths causes you to bite the dust in utter dishonor! You are sorely broken, now that, “out of the mouth of babes and sucklings” you are put to shame! Mouths that pray and praise and publish salvation are the Lord’s pieces of ordnance with which He defeats His adversaries in the great battle of salvation. His Son is the Word, but these mouths supply the voices by which the Word is sounded forth in the ears of men! Jesus is not made known except through His people—they are His heralds, who cry, “Behold the Lamb.” This agency is “mighty through God” and so it was ordained to be, for it is according to the Divine ordinance that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings strength should come.

The Word of God, though it is spoken by the feeblest mouth, is essential strength, a thing of majesty and might. The Hebrew has it, “Have You found strength,” as if the very foundation of the strength of the Church lay, under God, in the mouths that God moves to speak. The preaching of the Gospel is at the bottom of the battle axe and weapons of everything— holy teachings are war of the Gospel campaign. The Septuagint, as quoted by our Lord, translates it—“Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings have You perfected praise.” From children’s mouths there will come the highest form of adoration. Praise perfected, which goes up before the Lord, does not come from cherubim and seraphim, but from human lips which once were those of infancy! Lips that press the mother’s breast are the instruments of music which yet shall be attuned to the sweetest of Heaven’s own songs! Glory be to His name for this! Let us bless Him that He graciously chooses such poor creatures to be the noblest of His choristers above.

III. Having dwelt long enough upon this point, let us notice, in the third place, that THE WARRIORS IN THIS WARFARE ARE VERY SPECIAL. The weapons are amazing and the warriors, themselves, are remarkable, for the text says that God perfects His praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. We may read this spiritually with the guarantee of Scripture for, first, such as are like babes in spirit are God’s chosen. Their character cannot be better described than by calling them, “newborn babes who desire the unadulterated milk of the Word of God.” Hear, dear Brothers and Sisters, your Master’s own words as He speaks in the 11th chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew—“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes.”

Childlike men and women, simple-hearted, honest, trustful, loving spirits are the chosen of God. Those who are so very wise and know such a great deal that they feel bound to quibble, pick holes and raise idle questions—these are not God’s elect. He does not choose the wise, but the foolish things—those who do not know, nor pretend to know, but take their instruction from the Divine Teacher. As to mere knowledge which puffs up so many, there are some things which Believers do not wish to know. There are some difficulties which they do not desire removed—they are glad to have ample room and space enough for faith—and though this causes wise people to despise them, they care little for that, since their names are written in Heaven—and it is out of their mouths, weaklings as they are, that God has ordained strength!

No, more than this, not only are such the Lord’s chosen, but such are His witnesses. I want to call attention to that, because in that 25th verse of the 11th chapter of Matthew our Lord was speaking to His Apostles. He had been sending them out to preach and the Evangelist records, “All that time Jesus answered and said.” That is to say, at the very time when He sent out these special servants of His who were, in the judgment of scribes and Pharisees, nothing better than poor babes, He thanked God because they were of a kind which He delights to use! He thanked God that He had not committed the Gospel Revelation to the wise and to the noble, but unto these child-like ones who had guileless minds and capacity for believing and nothing more.

These poor men could do little else but speak when they were spoken to and say what they were told—and that is the best qualification for a minister that I know of—for him to speak only when God speaks to him and then utter what God has said to him and nothing more. The Father chooses just such. See how Paul states this fact in the opening chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians—“For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.” See what strange champions God has ordained for His battle— the very weakest among men, babes and sucklings in their own esteem. These who are weakness, itself, are to go forth and contend for the Truth of God!

Such, my Brothers and Sisters, are those who proclaim the triumphs of Christ in the world. Our Lord would get little honor from our race if all children’s voices were hushed and all child-like spirits with them. Scribes and Pharisees never cry, “Hosanna!” they are so busy binding on their phylacteries, washing their hands and devouring widows’ houses. The first to cry, “Hosanna!” are the children and the next are those who are like they. Some say, “To shout and sing is children’s work.” So it is and it is ours because we are children, too! May God make us to grow in Grace till we are as little children and are, therefore, ready and eager to praise our great Father!

Those who are reputed to be wise men do not praise too much—they go upon the noncommittal principle and prefer criticism to gratitude. They are always criticizing the weather—if it is good for the turnips it is bad for the wheat—and if dry for hay-making, it is too dry for something else. The worldly-wise man never says, “Blessed be God for this delightful season; nothing can be better; we are highly favored.” No, he thinks he shows his wisdom by finding fault! God Himself cannot escape from his sage remarks. But if a man is not wise enough to be forever grumbling and is so foolish as to be happy, so foolish as to believe the Truth of God, so foolish as to trust in the most trustworthy of all beings, namely, his God—he is also the sort of man that praises God and from such hearts God gets His chief praises.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, not to ride upon an ass, or upon a colt, the foal of an ass, but to reign in Glory! And when He comes, the first to meet Him and salute Him will be those poor, babe-like ones who did not boast of culture, but believed in God; who knew little, but yet knew their Lord and longed for His appearing, sighing often, “Oh that He would come and end the strife! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” These are they who find Him first, as the shepherds found Him at Bethlehem when the wise men rambled round by Jerusalem. And these are they who joy and rejoice over Him while scribes and Pharisees quarrel about Him. The poor have the Gospel preached to them and the babes in spirit hear that Gospel and live!

Thus have I spoken to you concerning the warriors God has chosen. They are simple people, trustful people, unaffected people—made so by Divine Grace—converted into little children. They are ready to believe their God. They are not wise, or noble, or anything great in their own esteem and yet out of their mouths God has ordained strength and by their witness He silences the disputers of this world and all the wisdom of men.

IV. Now let us note, in the fourth place, that THE QUALIFICATION OF THESE WARRIORS LIES IN THEIR WEAK SIDE. If it lay on the strong side, the text would have been written in another manner and we should have read, “Out of the mouth of men of middle age, in the prime of life— out of the mouth of wise old men who have gray hairs upon their head, indicative of their long experience—out of their mouths God has ordained strength.” But He takes men at their weakest and speaks of “babes,” or children who are quite young. The word must not be confined to infants, for it includes young children who are able to run about the streets.

The sucklings, also, are older children than they would represent with us, for eastern mothers often nurse their children till they are three years of age, so that some sucklings speak distinctly. The idea is that if you take man at his least, out of his mouth God ordains strength. He regards not man as grown up and strong, but man in his greatest weakness and out of the mouth of weak man God ordains strength. What does this teach? I take it that whatever is weakest about man is that in which the Grace of God glorifies itself most. Man is not only a soul and spirit, but he is, in part, material and, therefore, a poor creature composed in part of the lower elements. He is not a pure spirit, like an angel, but linked on to mother earth by a cumbrous and hampering body of clay.

He is a worm and yet an angel—half-way between dust and Deity— brother to the worm and to corruption and yet immortal! Satan is, no doubt, filled with scorn of man when he looks at him and measures him with himself. “Is this the creature that is to be set over all the works of God’s hands—made of earth and water, phosphates and metals? I am far nobler than he! Can I not flash like lightning, while he must creep about the world to find himself a grave?” Yes, but herein is the Glory of God’s conflict and victory. The Lord intends to overcome the Prince of Evil by a poor creature like man, who is but of yesterday and is crushed before the moth! It is glorious, to my mind, that the Lord should deign to embody His power in weak creatures as we are and in that way make Satan see that the right and the true in the feeblest being is unconquerable and that in this form God carries the war into his own territory and defeats him.

Thus the Lord puts the adversary to a perpetual reproach. He pits a child against His giant foe and overcomes him. He hurls defiance to Satan out of a babe’s mouth! Go your way, O enemy! You are dishonored by the victory which feebleness gains over you. God is glorified in man’s grievous infirmity. Man is, at his best, of all creatures one of the feeblest and there is not so very much difference between full-grown men and babes. A few years ago we could not help ourselves at all, for we were abjectly weak in our infancy. But are we much better now? How did you feel yesterday afternoon in the storm, when the thunder rolled overhead and the lightning flashed and flamed across the sky? Did you not feel that you were helpless as a babe?

Put out to sea in a storm and you will soon learn your babyhood, I guarantee you, and feel that when “rocked in the cradle of the deep” you are as powerless as a child in its mother’s arms! We need not be ashamed of this, but glory in it because the power of God rests upon us! The great God seems to say to Satan, “It is by these poor feeble things that I will anger you, O haughty prince of the air! By such beings as these I will overthrow your usurped dominion! Though they suffer, though they are tempted, yet by My Grace they shall triumph over you.” We have the power to suffer and herein lies a great part of our qualification to do the Lord’s service before His enemies. It is our Redeemer’s qualification. He could not save us until He suffered! He could not redeem us until He died! Not His strength, but His weakness saved us, for He was crucified in weakness and by that Crucifixion He redeemed our souls!

Think of the men and women who have glorified God on beds of sickness, bearing their pains with patience and blessing God all the while. Think of the many on the rack and at the stake who have there extolled the Lord their God! Of all the music God ever heard, there is none that can equal in intense sweetness the cries of His dear, suffering, martyred people when every limb has been tormented by the persecutor and yet every particle of their body and every power of their soul had willingly yielded up itself to maintain His cause and glorify His name! True music lies not in the sound, but in the spirit of the song and, therefore, I say none can match, much less excel, the songs of the host of martyrs! Blessed be God that we can suffer! We should be denied a privilege if we had not been able to endure the will of God as well as to do it. Surely of all diadems, that crown which is set with rubies, the crown which adorns the martyr’s brow, is the most resplendent!

Yes, it is man’s weak side, his suffering and his dying side, by which God has shown the enemy that men can love their God even unto death, that virtue can triumph over all selfishness, that true hearts can make sacrifices, that mortal man can defy temptation and can, through God’s Grace, follow after that which is good to the uttermost of loss and pain. Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, dwell on this thought and meditate on the fact that our power to serve God lies on our weak side. He uses not our greatness, but our littleness. You know what the learned men say is the weak part of some of us—they put it something like this—“We regret the preacher’s total inability to keep abreast of the times. He has no capacity for modern thought and his lack of affection for the higher culture which is so much the characteristic of this marvelously enlightened century.” That is our weakness! Yes, and our strength and, therefore, we glory in it!

“I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” If all God’s servants will come to this, they will secure far more success than by the pretentious style of so-called “culture,” which is nothing but the science of growing more weeds than usual. That which is new in theology is not true! The Gospel was of full stature at its very birth! No man can add to it or take from it. It cannot be improved and it only needs to be told out in the power of the Holy Spirit and it will perform wonders even as of old. Our infirmity we will glory in, for we have this treasure in earthen vessels and if the vessel had not been of earth, we might never have received the treasure. “But,” cries one, “surely we need wisdom to guide us!” I answer, “Jesus Christ is made unto us Wisdom,” and we have but to learn of Him.

We hear much, nowadays, of “great thinkers,” but we prefer to be great believers! Deep thinking is a very shallow affair, after all, when the thoughts are our own. We only get into real depths when we receive the thoughts of God. So far as I can see, these “thinkers” generally empty their places of worship when they preach and the poor souls that most need comfort get none whatever. Rather than copy their example, we may well prefer to sing with Paul, “When I am weak then am I strong.” We will believe what God says and take it as a matter of fact, just as a child does. And oh, what a sweet thing a child’s faith is! Many a time when a dear little girl has come to join the Church and looked at me with her expressive, believing eyes which seemed to see Jesus, I have admired and envied her pure, unquestioning confidence.

Knowing nothing about those horrible doubts which are now sown like thistles everywhere, such as these have the rest of faith without its struggles! I have desired to be a little child again and wished that I had never heard of the existence of a quibbler. Those fine books of the broad school which came from Germany years ago, but which we now produce at home—it is a pity to have seen the binding of them. Even doctors of divinity favor us with denials of plenary inspiration and aid in that form of undermining work—they may have all their books so long as we can keep our Bibles and God gives us firm faith in Himself.

Let us but know Jesus and lean our heads on His bosom and the learned men may speculate as they please. Oh, when the Church gets back to her simple faith in Jesus she shall be qualified for victory! She shall vanquish the world when she has thrown away her wooden sword of carnal reason and has taken up the true Jerusalem blade of faith in God! Then out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God will do what He never will do out of the mouths of Scribes and Pharisees and wise men. Out of the mouths of weak people, who believe what God tells them—the mouths of weak people who have no capacity except the capacity of faith—out of these will God perfect praise and glorify Himself!  
V. That leads me, in finishing, to plead for a loving reverence for childhood. If the Lord uses the weak side of man and if He is engaged to win His ultimate victory over the devil by feeble man at his feeblest, then God bless the children! It seems to me that in the Lord’s battle there is always a babe in the fore-front. The armies of olden times placed a huge champion in their van, like Goliath of Gath. But it is not so in God’s army— there a babe leads the way! Pharaoh oppresses Israel and crushes the people down till their cry goes up because of their sore bondage. God is going to deliver them. How does the work begin? Here is the opening of the campaign—“And the daughter of Pharaoh went down to the river to wash herself.”

And there she spied a little ark made of bulrushes which she sent her maid to fetch and there was a Hebrew child within it. “And behold! The babe wept.” Thus was the champion of Israel introduced upon the scene! The goodly child whom his parents, in faith, had hidden was he by whom God would break Rahab in pieces! The still loftier story of the battle of the Lamb opens in like manner—“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” “She brought forth her first-born son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger.” That was the signal for the heat of the conflict—that Babe led the way! The Holy Child Jesus is at the head of all our marches! One may well honor infancy and childhood since this is the case!

Let our subject prevent our entertaining doubts about the possibility of children’s conversions—that would be insanity and almost blasphemy! Do you not know that unless you are converted and become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven? Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” The childlike spirit is no disqualification—in some respects it is a vantage ground. Christianity is the religion of children! Other religions, as a rule, aim at older folk and pretend to mystery. Other religions are not worth understanding, but yet they affect depth and secrecy—you must be initiated and pass through years of study before you can hope to derive any advantage from them. But the religion of Jesus Christ was meant for the poor and for the lowly. All that which is necessary for the saving of the soul can be speedily learned and understood, the Holy Spirit being the teacher.

As far as the practical, saving part of Christianity is concerned, it is the religion of children. If a preacher can interest a child, he can interest anybody. Is it not all a mistake when we say, “Oh, he is only fit to talk to children”? If he is fit to do this, he is fit to talk to Apostles! Let us heartily believe, also, in children’s praises. I am sure you must do so if you are like your Lord, for He delighted in them. He would not stop the boys when they shouted, “Hosanna!” The scribes sneeringly asked, “Do You hear what these say?” Yes, He did hear it, and He said, “Out of their mouths God has perfected praise.” Let the children sing and do not despise their hymns because they are more fit for children than for you. Let the children sing and thank God they sing. Never despise them. Do not say, “Oh, they are only a parcel of boys and girls.” What if they are? May they not be a better parcel than some of you? If we were half as free from guile and unbelief as boys and girls, it would be better for us! If we could get the simple trustfulness of childhood back, again, it would be a great gain to character. Let us not undervalue their praises or their service.

My text supports me in the strongest appeal which I can make. Hear it yet again—“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength.” Let the children serve God and let us put forms of service in their way. That is a sweet verse—“And Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.” The child Samuel and the Lord Jehovah! What an amazing combination! God who fills all things and Hannah’s little boy! God give us to see our boys and girls ministering before the Lord while they are yet in their frocks and pinafores! The linen ephod is as suitable for a child as for an ancient priest. No robe is more glorious than the garment of service and whether it is worn by old or young, it is a right royal dress.

Last of all, let us expect victory to come to the Church through little children. It may happen that God will bring the world to Christ’s feet by the children. It is written, “A little child shall lead them.” Who knows how many are led to Jesus by children? This city of ours is better evangelized by our Sunday schools than by all the rest of us put together! I don’t mean to flatter Sunday school teachers, but I must speak well of the children. When they go home they find that father is hardly dressed. He has not been to a place of worship, but he has been reading the Sunday paper. He does not need any of your singing and preaching. Little Mary and Tommy come back and they don’t ask him anything about it, but they begin to sing. And when they have their dinner they talk about what teacher said and, perhaps, they say something about the sermon and so Father gets more singing and preaching than he bargained for.

When they go to bed they clasp their little hands and pray for their father and he is obliged to hear them. Thus he gets praying as well as singing. The children are missionaries and they enter where others cannot. The city missionary may be shut out, but Father cannot shut out Tommy or Mary and they must be allowed to sing or they will cry and that is worse—so that their witness cannot be silenced! What little children are doing for London and for our great cities is impossible for us to calculate! The darlings die and in this they often do more than by their lives. How many hard hearts have been broken and stubborn wills subdued by the deathbeds of infants? How many a mother has had her first desires for Heaven kindled by the flight of her little cherub up to the bosom of Christ?

They do God’s work here below in a wonderful manner. It is true and will be truer every day, that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings the Lord has ordained strength, because of His enemies, that He might still the enemy and the Avenger. God’s blessing be with all of you who work among the children. Amen.

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Sermon #287 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

DILEMMA AND DELIVERANCE  
NO. 287

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 4, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.” Psalm 9:10.**

THERE are many men who are exceedingly well read in heathen mythologies. They can tell you the history of any of the heathen gods, but who at the same time know very little of the history of Jehovah and cannot rehearse His mighty acts. In our schools to this day there are books put into the hands of our youth that are by no means fit for them to read—books which contain all kinds of filth and if not always filth, yet all kinds of fables and vanities which are simply put into our hands when we are lads because they happen to be written in Latin and Greek. Therefore, I suppose it is imagined that we shall all the better remember the wickedness that is contained in them by having the trouble of translating them into our own mother tongue.

I would that instead of this, all our youth were made acquainted with the history of the Lord our God. Would that we could give them for classics some books which record what He has done, the victories of His glorious arm and how He has put to nothing the gods of the heathen and cast them down even into the depths. At any rate, the Christian will always find it to be useful to have at hand some history of what God did in the days of yore. The more you know of God’s attributes, the more you understand His acts. The more you treasure up His promises and the more you fully dive into the depths of His Covenant, the more difficult will it become for Satan to tempt you to despondency and despair.

Acquaint yourself with God and be at peace. Meditate on His Law both day and night and you shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Your leaf shall not wither. You shall bring forth fruit in your season and whatsoever you do shall prosper. Ignorance of God is ignorance of bliss. But knowledge of God is a Divine armor by which we are able to ward off all the blows of the enemy. Know yourself, O man, and that will make you miserable. Know your God, O Christian, and that will make you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, this morning, in addressing you, I shall divide my text into three parts. First, I shall note a certain fiery dart of Satan. Secondly, I shall point out to you Heaven’s Divine buckler, as hinted at in the text—“You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek you.” And then, in the third place,

I shall notice man’s precious privilege of seeking God and so of arming himself against Satan.

I. First, then, I am to dwell for a little time upon A CERTAIN FIERY DART OF SATAN WHICH IS CONSTANTLY SHOT AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF GOD. There are many temptations, there are many suggestions and insinuations—and all these are arrows from the bow of the Evil One. But there is one temptation which exceeds all others, there is one suggestion which is more Satanic, more skillfully used in effecting the purposes of Satan than any other. That suggestion is the one referred to in these words of the Psalmist—the suggestion to believe that God has forsaken us. If all the other arrows of Hell could be put into one quiver, there would not be so much deadly poison in the whole as in this one. When Satan has used up every other weapon, he always betakes himself to this last, most sharp, most deadly instrument. He goes to the child of God and pours into his ear this dark insinuation, “Your God has forsaken you. Your Lord will be gracious no more.”

Now, I shall remark with regard to this arrow, that it is one that is very often shot from Satan’s bow. Some of us have been wounded by it scores of times in our life. Whenever we have fallen into any sin, have been overtaken by some sudden wind of temptation and have staggered and almost fallen, conscience pricks us and tells us we have done wrong. Our heart, like David’s heart, smites us. We fall upon our knees and acknowledge our fault and confess our sin. Then it is that Satan lets fly this arrow, which comes whizzing up from Hell and enters into the soul—and while we are making the confession, the dark thought crosses our soul—“God has forsaken you. He will never accept you again. You have sinned so foully that He will blot your name out of the Covenant. You have stumbled so fearfully that your feet shall never stand upon the rock again—you have stumbled to your fall. You have fallen to your destruction.”

Have you not known this, Christian? When for a season you have been led to backslide, when you have lost your first love and have become degenerate, when you have put out your hand to touch the unlawful thing through some sudden surprise—has not this been thrown in your teeth? “Ah, wretch that you are, God will never forgive that sin—you have been so ungrateful, such a hypocrite, such a liar against the Lord your God, that now—now He will cast you away, throw you upon a dunghill like salt that has lost its savor and is fit for nothing.” Ah, Friends, you and I know what this means. And I dare say, David did, too. He had to feel all the power of this poisoned arrow after his great sin, when he went up to his chamber and wept and bemoaned himself and there cried out in agony, “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

A select opportunity this for shooting this arrow. Just where the sin has been Satan marks and then he sends a suggestion. Wherever there is a wound of sin, it is wonderful how this arrow will work and what a burning it will give to our blood till every vein becomes a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on. And all our flesh is made to tingle with this evil thought, “I have sinned and the Reprover of man has reproved me to my face and cast me from His presence and He will be gracious to me no more.”

Another season when Satan usually shoots this arrow is the time of great trouble. There is a broad river across your path and you are bid to ford it. You go in and you find the water is up to your knees. As you wade on it becomes breast-high. But you comfort yourself with this thought, “When you pass through the waters I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.” Cheered with this you go on. But you sink and the water becomes deeper still. At last it is almost gurgling in your throat! It is flowing over your very shoulders.

Just then, when in the very deepest part of the stream, Satan appears on the bank, takes out his bow and shoots this fiery arrow—“Your God has forsaken you.” “Oh,” says the Christian, “I feared not as long as I heard the voice saying, ‘Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God.’ But now,” says he, “my God has forsaken me.” And now the Christian begins to sink, indeed, and if it were not for the mighty power of God, it will not be Satan’s fault if he does not drown you in the midst of the flood. What a malicious devil is this—that must always send us a fresh trouble and most grievous of all,  
send it when we are in our very worst distress.

He is a coward, indeed. He always hits a man when he is down. When I am up and on my feet I am more than a match for Satan, but when I begin to stumble through great trouble, out comes the dragon from the pit and begins to roar at me and to draw his sword and hurl his fiery darts. For now, says he, “man’s extremity shall be my opportunity. Now that his heart and flesh fails—now will I make a full end of him.” You also know, some of you, what that means. You could bear the trouble well, but you could not bear the dreary thought that God has forsaken you in your trouble.

Another season, too, in which Satan shoots this fiery dart is before some great labor. I am often vexed and perplexed with this dark thought when I have to appear before you on the Sabbath-Day. I frequently come here with that ringing in my ears—“God will forsake you. You shall fall before the congregation. The Word shall not go home with power. You shall labor in vain and spend your strength for nothing.” Thousands of times have I preached the Gospel, yet to this day does that same arrow come flying up and still does it vex and perplex my heart.

If there is anything greater for a Christian to do than he has been accustomed to do in former times, it is generally then that Satan levels this battle. When there is a deep soil to be plowed and the plow is heavy and the oxen are faint and the plowman thinks he shall not accomplish his weary work—then it is that up comes this dark thought—“The Lord has

forsaken you and where are you now?” The like does he do at another season, namely times of unanswered prayer. You have been up to God’s throne asking for a blessing. You have been five, six, twelve times and you have had no answer. You go again. And you are just wrestling with God and the blessing seems as if it must come. But no, it does not come and you bring your burden away on your back once more.

You have desired to cast all your cares upon God and come away rejoicing. But now you find that prayer has no return of blessing. It seems to be a waste of words. Then up comes Satan, just at the moment and he says, “God has forsaken you, if you were a child of God, He would answer your prayer. He would not leave you crying so long in the dark as this, if you were one of His beloved children. Why, He hears His people! Look at Elijah how He heard him. Remember Jacob—how he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Oh,” says Satan, “God has forsaken you.”

Ah, Satan we have heard that before. “Yes, but,” says he, “His mercy is clean gone forever. The heavens have become like brass, the Shekinah is gone up from between the wings of the cherubim, His house is left empty and void. Ichabod is written on your closet. You shall never have an answer again. Go speak to the winds, spread your griefs to the pitiless sea, for God’s ear is shut and He will never move His arm to work deliverance for you.”

Now, am I not justified in saying that this arrow is very often shot? I may not have mentioned all the instances in which it has been shot at you, but I am certain that if you are a child of God, there have been times and seasons when this desperate insinuation has come up from Hell— “God has forgotten you. He has cast you off. You are left to yourself and you shall perish.” At any rate, if you have never said it, remember it is written in God’s Word that Zion says, “My God has forgotten me.” And call to your recollection that gracious answer, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.” The arrow, then, is often shot.

Then let me remark with regard to this arrow, again, that it is most grievous. Other troubles only wound the Christian’s flesh. They do but pierce with skin deep wounds. But this is a shot that goes right deep into his heart. When Satan is shooting other arrows we can laugh at him, for they rattle against our buckler. But this one finds out the joints of the harness and it goes right through from one side to the other, till we are compelled to say, “As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is your God?” This is hitting the target in the very center. This is skillful, indeed, when Satan is able to send this arrow right into the eye of the soul.  
Other troubles are like surface storms. They toss the ocean into an apparent storm and there are big waves on the top, but all is still and calm down in the caverns beneath. But this dark thought makes the ocean boil to its very bottom. It stirs the soul up until there is not one place in which there is rest—neither a cavern of the heart, nor a corner of the conscience in which the spirit has peace. This arrow, I say, is one of Hell’s masterpieces. There is more craft and skill in it than anything else Satan has ever done. It is the worst of his arrows because it grieves the Spirit exceedingly. And there is another thought I must throw out.

Not only is this arrow grievous, but it is very dangerous. For if, my Brethren, we believe this accusation against God, it is not long before we begin to sin. Let the Christian know that his God is with him and temptation will have little power, but when God has forsaken us, as we think that He has, ah, then, when Satan offers us some back door by which to escape from our troubles, how very easily shall we be tempted to adopt his expedients. A merchant who knows that his God is with him, may see trade going from him and his house near bankruptcy, but he will not do a dishonest thing. But let him imagine that God is against him, then Satan will say, “See, Merchant, one of God’s children, you have been deceived, He will never help you.”

And then, he is tempted to do something which in his conscience he knows to be wrong. “God will not deliver me,” he says—“then I will try to deliver myself.” There is great danger in this. Take heed to yourself, then, that you “take unto you the whole armor of God,” and “above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” I will make but one other observation upon this fiery dart. And that is, it bears the full impression of its Satanic maker. None but the devil could be the author of such a thought as this—that God has forsaken His people. Look it in the face, Christian, and see if it has not got the horns of the Evil One stamped on its brow! Does not the cloven foot peep out? Look at it—why, it is the devil’s own child. Why, Christian, this Evil One is making you doubt your own Father. He is bidding you distrust a faithful God.

He is calling in question the promise which says, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” He is making you accuse God of perjury. As if He could break His oath and run back from the Covenant which He has made with Christ on your behalf. Why, none but the devil could have the impudence to suggest such a thought as that! Cast it from you, Believer. Fling it away to the very depths of the sea. It is unworthy of you to harbor it for a moment. Your God forsake you? Impossible! He is too good. Your God forsake you? It is utterly impossible! He is too true. Could He forsake His children, He would have forsaken His integrity. He would have ceased to be God when He ceased to succor and help His own. Rest, then, in that and ward the fiery dart off. For hellish, indeed, it is and the name of its maker is

stamped upon it legibly.  
II. In the second place, let me notice THE DIVINE BUCKLER WHICH  
GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR HIS CHURCH AGAINST THIS FIERY DART.  
Here it is—it is the fact that God never has forsaken them that fear Him  
and that, moreover, He never will do so.  
Ah, my Brethren, if we could but once believe the doctrine that the  
child of God might fall from grace and perish everlastingly, we might, indeed, shut up our Bible in despair. To what purpose would my preaching  
be—the preaching of a rickety Gospel like that? To what purpose your  
faith—a faith in a God that cannot and would not carry on to the end? To  
what use the blood of Christ, if it were shed in vain and did not bring the  
blood-bought ones securely home? To what purpose the Spirit, if He were  
not omnipotent enough to overcome our wandering, to arrest our sins and  
make us perfect and present us faultless before the Throne of God at last? That doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is, I believe, as  
thoroughly bound up with the standing or falling of the Gospel as is the  
article of justification by faith. Give that up and I see no Gospel left. I see  
no beauty in religion that is worthy of my acceptance, or that deserves my  
admiration. An unchanging God, an Everlasting Covenant, a sure mercy—  
these are the things that my soul delights in and I know your hearts love  
to feed upon. But take these away and what do we have? We have a foundation of wood, hay, straw and stubble. We have nothing solid. We have a  
fort of earth-works, a mud hovel through which the thief may break and  
steal away our treasures. No, this foundation stands sure—“The Lord  
knows them that are His.” And He does so know them that He will certainly bring them every one to His right hand at last in Glory everlasting. But to return to our text and to offer you some few words of comfort  
which may tend to quench the fiery dart of the Wicked One. The Psalmist  
says, “You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.” I call up before  
you now, one by one, as witnesses, the saints of God in the olden time.  
You are in great trouble today and Satan suggests that now God has forsaken you. Come here, Jacob! We read your testimony. Were you a man of  
trouble? “Ah,” says he, “few and evil were my days.” Evil, man?—what do  
you mean? “I mean that they were full of sorrow, full of perplexity, full of  
fear and trouble.” And what is your testimony, Jacob? We have heard that  
you did seek God in prayer. Did you not wrestle with the angel at the  
brook Jabbok and prevail? Speak, Man, and tell these doubting hearts,  
did God forsake you?  
Methinks I see that hoary Patriarch lifting up his hands and he cries, “I  
trembled to meet my brother, Esau. I stayed at the brook Jabbok and I  
said, ‘Lord, give deliverance from him whom I think bloodthirsty.’ I  
crossed the brook full of fear and trembling, but tell it, O let it be known  
for the comfort of others in like trouble with me, I met my brother Esau and he fell upon my neck and kissed me! He would not take the tribute which I offered him. He became my friend and we loved each other. God  
had turned his heart and he took no vengeance upon me.  
“But,” continued the Patriarch, “I was always a doubting man, I was  
always a careful man. I had so much cunning and craft about me that I  
could not trust anything in the hands of my Covenant God and this always brought me into care and trouble. But,” says he, “I bear my witness  
that I never had need to have troubled myself at all. If I had but left it all  
in the hand of God, all would have been well. I remember,” says he, “and I  
tell it to you now, when my son Joseph was sold into Egypt what sorrow I  
had in my heart, for I said, ‘My gray hairs shall be brought with sorrow to  
the grave, for Joseph my son is, without a doubt, rent in pieces.’ And then  
it happened on a day that Simeon was taken away from me. And there  
came a message out of Egypt that Benjamin must go down. And I remember well what I said ‘Joseph is not and Simeon is not and now they will  
take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.’  
“But they were not against me,” says the old man, “they were for me,  
every one of them. Joseph, that I said was not, was. He was sitting upon  
the throne. He had prepared for me a habitation in Egypt. As for Simeon,  
he was a hostage there. And that was not against me, for perhaps I should  
scarce have sent my sons down at all if it had not been for the hope that  
they would bring Simeon back. And now,” says Jacob, “I retract every  
word I have said against the Lord my God and I stand before you to bear  
my testimony that not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God  
has promised. My shoes were iron and brass and as my days so was my  
strength.”  
I hear a mourner say, “Mine is not a case of trouble and sorrow—mine  
is a case of duty. I have a duty to perform that is too heavy for me and I  
am afraid I shall never accomplish it.” Here comes another of the ancients  
to bear his witness. It is Moses. Let him speak. “I thought,” said he, “when  
God called me from keeping the flocks of my father in the desert by the  
mount of Horeb, I thought I never could be strong enough for the office to  
which I had been ordained. I said unto my Lord, who am I, that I should  
go unto Pharaoh? And I said unto Him again, Lord, you know I am not  
eloquent. The children of Israel will not believe me, for I shall not have  
skill enough in oratory to persuade them to follow my words. But the Lord  
said, Certainly I will be with you.  
“And lo,” says Moses, “as my days so was my strength. I had strength  
enough to stand before Pharaoh, strength enough to shake the whole land  
of Egypt and strength enough to divide the Red Sea and drown all Pharaoh’s hosts. I had strength enough to endure with an evil generation forty  
years in the wilderness, strength enough to take their idol god and grind it  
in pieces and make them drink the water upon which I had strewn the atoms. I had strength enough to lead them on from day to day, to command the rock and it gushed with water, to speak to the heavens and they sent down the manna. And when I went up at last to my grave and looked from the top of Nebo, I, who had once been fearful, saw with transport the land to which the Lord’s people had been brought and my soul was taken away with a kiss and I departed in peace.” Hear that, then, O laboring one. The God that helped Moses will help you. Moses sought God and God did not  
forsake him. Nor will He forsake you.  
“But,” says another, “I am exposed to slander, men speak evil of me—  
no lie is too bad for them to utter against me.” Ah, my Friend, permit me  
to refer you to another ancient saint. It is the saint who wrote this  
Psalm—David. Let him stand up and speak. “Ah!” says he “from the first  
day when I went forth to fight Goliath even to the end of my life I was the  
subject of shame and slander. Doeg the Edomite, Saul and multitudes of  
men. The men of Belial, like Shimei, all accused me. I was the song of the  
drunkard. I was the harlot’s jest. Nothing was too bad for David. All my  
enemies went round about the city like dogs, that bay all night and rest  
not even at morning.”  
And what did you do, David? “Oh,” said he, “I said, ‘My soul, wait you  
only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.’” And did you prove that  
God was your deliverer? “Ah, yes—yes,” says he, “I have pursued my enemies and I have overtaken them.’ ‘You have smitten all my enemies upon  
the cheek-bone. You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.’ ” And so shall  
you find it, my Hearers, God has not forsaken you, even though you are  
slandered. Remember it is the lot of God’s greatest servants to bear the  
worst character among worldlings. Whose character is safe in these days?  
What man among us may not be accused of any indecency? Who among  
us can hope to stand immaculate when liars are so rife and charges are so  
abundant? Be content and bear the slander.  
Remember, the higher the tower the longer will be the shadow. And often, the higher a man’s character the fouler will be the slander that comes  
out against him. But remember, “no weapon that is formed against you  
shall prosper. And every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment  
you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and  
their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.”  
If you need any other witnesses I could bring them. Let Shadrach,  
Meshech and Abednego come forth. You Hebrew children, you stood in the  
midst of coals when the furnace was white with heat—did God forsake  
you? “No,” they say, “our hair was not singed, nor had the smell of fire  
passed on our garments.” Speak, O Daniel! You did stand a night in the  
midst of the furious lions, who had been starved for days that they might  
devour you in their hunger. What do you say? “My God,” says he, “has  
sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths. My God, whom I serve, has not  
forsaken me.”  
But time would fail me if I should tell you of those who have “shut the  
mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, obtained promises, wrought  
victories, put to flight the armies of aliens.” Yet we might enlarge for a  
moment upon the history of great martyrs. Has God left one of them?  
They have suffered at the stake. Their limbs have been stretched on the  
rack. Every nerve has been strained, every bone has been dislocated. They  
have had their eyes plucked out. They have had their flesh rent away  
piecemeal to the bone with hot pincers. They have been dragged at the  
heels of horses, burnt on gridirons, hung up before slow fires. They have  
seen their infants cut in pieces before their eyes, their wives and daughters ravished, their houses burned, their country laid desolate. But has  
God forsaken them? Has the world triumphed? Has God left His children? “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that  
loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor  
principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor  
height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us

from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
Another question is suggested, however, for your comfort, Christian. I  
have brought many witnesses to prove that Christ does not forsake His  
children. Let me ask you to step into the witness box. You say that God  
has forsaken you—I will put a question or two to you. When your wife lay  
sick and there were three little ones in the house and she approached  
death and you cried in agony to God and said, “God, You have forsaken  
me. My business fails me and now my wife is to be taken from me! What  
shall I do with these little ones?”  
Answer this question—did God forsake you then? “No,” you say, “my  
wife still lives, she was restored to me.” But when one of your children lay  
dying and the others were seized with fever, you then said, “My wife again  
is sick. What shall I do with this house of sickness? Now, God has forsaken me. I shall never bear this trial.” Did you bear it? “Oh, yes,” you  
say, “I passed through it and I can say, ‘Blessed be the name of God, the  
affliction was sanctified to me.’ ” Do you remember the heavy loss you  
sustained in business? Not one but many—loss came after loss—every  
speculation in which you had been engaged broke down under you. You  
had many bills coming in and you said, “Now, I shall not be able to meet  
them.” And as a Christian man you shuddered to think of bankruptcy.  
You even went up with your wife into your chamber—and you two went on  
your knees and poured out your case before God and asked Him to help  
you.  
Did God leave you? “No,” you say, “as by a miracle I was delivered. I  
cannot tell how it was, but I came out of it clean.” And yet again, another  
question to another one of you. Do you remember when you were in sin,  
before you had received pardon, your guilt was heavy upon you and you  
sought God and cried to Him. Did God deny you? “No,” you say, “blessed be His name, I can remember the happy day when He said, ‘your sins which are many are all forgiven.’ ” Well, you have often sinned since then. But let me ask you, when you have made confession of sin, have you not been restored? Has He not lifted up upon you once more the light of His  
countenance? “Well,” you say, “I must say He has.”  
Then I ask you in the name of everything that is true and holy—no, in  
the name of everything that is reasonable—how dare you say that God has  
forsaken you now? Retract the word! Slay the thought! It cannot, must not  
be—  
*“Each sweet Ebenezer you have in review, Confirms His good pleasure  
To help you quite through.”*  
He would not have done this much for you if He meant to leave you. Thus,  
it cannot be, that He who has been with you in six troubles will leave you  
in the seventh. He has not brought you through so many fires to let you  
be burned at last. No, take heart—  
*“His grace shall to the end  
Stronger and brighter shine,  
Not present things, nor things to come, Shall quench the spark Divine”*  
within your heart—much less quench the fire even which still burns in  
His infinite breast. God has not forsaken you as yet.  
Still further to drive the thought away, I will very rapidly run through a  
few precious things. Were you not cold on your way here this morning.  
Did you not see the snow upon the ground and do you dare to doubt God?  
He has said, “While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, summer  
and winter, cold and heat shall never cease.” And He keeps His word. And  
yet you think though He keeps that word He will forget the word that He  
has spoken concerning you? You come here in trouble this morning. Do  
you not see that God is true?—that your very trouble is a proof that He  
has not forsaken you? If you never had any trouble, then God would have  
broken His promise, for did not Jesus Christ leave you it as a legacy? “In  
the world you shall have tribulation.”  
There, you have got it. That proves that God is true. Now you have a  
part of the legacy. You shall have the rest—“In the world you shall have  
tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” So that the  
very weather without and your troubles within ought to forbid your doubting the faithfulness of your God. But look here. Has not God made you a  
promise, saying, “I will never leave you nor forsake you?” Would you like  
to be called a promise-breaker? Shall I point my finger at you and say,  
“There’s a man whose word is not to be relied on”? Will you point that  
same finger at God and say, “His word is not to be taken, He is not to be  
trusted”? What? Do you think your God is dishonorable? That He will give  
a promise and break it?—not keep it? Forget it? Fail to remember it?  
What? God, the God of Glory, prove dishonorable?  
It must not, cannot be. Recollect again—He has given you His oath.  
Can you think that He will break that? Because He could swear by no  
greater He swore by Himself. Shall God be perjured? You would not think  
that of your meanest fellow creature—will you think that of your greatest  
and best Friend? Again, would you leave your child? Would you forsake it  
utterly? You might hide your face from it for awhile to do it good, because  
it had been disobedient—but will you chasten your child always? Never  
kiss it, never caress it, never call it your loved one? It is not in a father’s  
heart to be always angry with his child. And will God forsake you? Will He  
cast you out into this wide, desolate world and let you die and become the  
prey of His great enemy?  
Oh, think not so harshly of your Father. If any man should come to me  
and tell me that my father had said such-and-such things about me that  
were unkind and disrespectful, I would show him the door and say, “Get  
you gone! My father would never do that—he loves me too much to do  
that.” And when the devil comes and says, “Your Father has forgotten  
you,” tell him to be gone—you know too much of your Father ever to believe that. Say to him, “Get you gone! It cannot be! Get you gone, Satan!  
Tell it to your own companions, but tell it not to the heir of Heaven.” Then again, Christian, you believe that God has loved you from before  
the foundation of the world. And yet after having loved you so long He has  
left off loving you now? Strange thing! Love without a beginning, yet such  
love to have an end! Singular thing! Eternal at one end and temporal at  
the other. Strange supposition! Put it away from you. Besides, can Christ  
forget you! Are you not a member of His body, of His flesh and His bones?  
Has the Head forgotten a finger? Has He, who did hang upon the tree and  
who wrote your name in wounds upon His hand and on His side—has He  
forgotten? What? Jesus your own Brother, your Husband, your Head,  
your All, what? He forget? He forsake? Down with the blaspheming  
thought! Back to the Hell from which you did spring! Down! Down! Down!  
My soul lifts up her head triumphantly and cries, “You, Lord have not forsaken them that seek You,” nor will He do so, world without end. III. I now come to the third and last point and on this I shall dwell very  
briefly—MAN’S PRECIOUS PRIVILEGE TO SEEK GOD IN HIS DAY OF  
TROUBLE.  
To what use, to what purpose is the buckler if we wear it not? Of what  
service the shield if it is permitted to rust in the house? We must take  
hold upon the promise of a faithful God. We must seize the comfort which  
He offers. But how is it to be done? Why, in prayer. Seek the Lord you  
tried and troubled ones and you shall soon find your troubles stayed, your  
trials sweetly alleviated. We go rambling round and round and round to  
find peace. Would that we could stay at home in our closets with our God.  
We should find peace much better there. We go to our neighbors, we call  
our friends, we tell them our woes and ask their sympathy—

*“Were half the breath that’s vainly spent,  
To Heaven in supplication sent,  
Our cheerful song would oftener be,  
Hear what the Lord has done for me.”*

Go, Christian Brothers and Sisters in your troubles and seek God. It is not possible that you can perish praying. If you could perish singing, you could not perish praying on your knees. Do you think that while you can plead a Father’s love and cry with the Spirit of adoption to Him, that you can be forsaken? If you forsake the Throne, then may you indeed have a fear that you are forsaken. But when the Spirit draws you to the Mercy Seat, such a fear must vanish. For if you are at the Mercy Seat, God is there, too. God loves the Mercy Seat better than you do. He dwells between the cherubim. You only go there sometimes. But that is His abiding place, His Mercy Seat, where He always sits. Go then, I tell you, and you can not be destroyed—your ruin is impossible, while you cry—

*“Let us pray!”*

And have I here this morning some that are oppressed with guilt? Dear Hearer, however great your sins may have been, if you seek God, you can not perish, for, “You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You.” Methinks, I hear someone say, “Oh, that just suits me. I fear I have no faith. I am afraid I don’t repent as I ought. But I know I seek Christ. I am sure I am seeking Him.” Ah, so then this promise is yours. Take it home with you. Suck it—get at its juice. Here, indeed, is a cluster full of new wine for you. Take it home with you— “You, LORD, have not forsaken them that seek you.” Seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall surely be opened to you.

May God now grant His blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #344 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

TENDER WORDS OF TERRIBLE APPREHENSION!  
NO. 344

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 4, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all  
the nations that forget God.”  
Psalm 9:17.**

MANY of God’s ministers have been accused of taking pleasure in preaching upon this terrible subject of “the wrath to come.” We were, indeed, strange beings if so doleful a subject could afford us any comfort. I should count myself to be infinitely less than a man if it did not cause me more pain in delivering myself of the impending sentence of condemnation, than it can possibly cause my Hearers in the listening to it. God’s ministers, I can assure you, if they feel it to be often their solemn duty, feel it always to be a heavy burden to speak of the terrors of the Law.

To preach Christ is our delight. To uplift His Cross is the joy of our heart. Our Master is our witness—we love to blow the silver trumpet and we have blown it with all our might. But knowing the terror of the Lord, these solemn things lie upon our conscience. And while it is hard to preach of them, it were harder still to bear the doom which must rest upon the silent minister. The unfaithful watchman, who does not warn the sinner, must, therefore, eternally bear the sinner’s blood upon his head, because he warned him not.

Think not, this morning, that I am about to speak upon the terrors of the world to come. I shall not do so. I shall but open the subject by making one or two remarks which may, in some measure, shield us from the enmity of those who accuse us of harshness of spirit when we lay bare these predicted woes. You must confess, my dear Hearers, that Jesus Christ was the most tender-hearted of men. Never was there one of so sympathetic a disposition. But not all the Prophets put together—though some of them as stern as Elijah, though many of them seemed commissioned expressly to dwell upon terrible things in righteousness— not all of them put together can equal in thunderclaps the sound of that still voice of Him, who albeit He did not cry nor lift up His voice in the street, spoke more of Hell and the wrath to come than any that preceded

Him.  
The loving lips of Jesus have furnished us with the greatest revelations  
of God’s vengeance against iniquity. None ever spoke with such terrible  
emphasis. No preacher ever used figures of such glaring horror, as did  
Jesus Christ the Son of Man, the friend of Publicans and sinners. Let me  
remind you that the wrath of God and the judgment of the Day of the Lord  
cannot be a trifling matter. How emphatically are we told in Scripture,  
that, it is “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Upon  
such a subject we cannot afford to trifle. Besides, the mystery of Calvary  
indicates to us that sin must deserve at God’s hand a terrible penalty. Did Jesus suffer so bitterly to save men and will not the unsaved  
endure bitterness indeed? Must the eternal and holy Son of God, upon  
whom sin was only an imputed thing—must He bleed and die and offer up  
His life, with His soul exceedingly heavy even unto death—and is the  
world to become a thing about which men can afford to sport or idly  
dream? Foreshadows have fallen on our path, from which we dismally  
recoil. You know that sin, even in this world, is a tormentor of unequalled  
cruelty. How miserable are some men when they are chased by  
conscience, when the furies of sin have been let loose upon them even in  
this world!  
Some of you may know, if you are not given up to hardness of heart,  
what it is to be conscious of guilt and to be hunted about in every place,  
whether you sleep or whether you wake, with a consciousness of your  
transgression. Many a man has hurried himself to a premature grave, has  
sought to end his misery by the knife or by the halter, not because he was  
enduring Hell but only of the present penalty of sin. What, then, must be  
“the wrath to come”?  
Again, I say, it cannot be a theme at which any but fools would  
presume to jest, nor can it be such that we can, any of us, afford to  
disregard its trumpet-tongued warning. That dread sentence in our text  
ought to ring like a death knell in your ears, if you are among the wicked.  
“The wicked shall be cast into Hell”—the drunkard, the swearer, the  
fornicator and such like shall receive their well-deserved portion in the  
bottomless pit. God will not treat them with leniency. He will not wink at  
their follies. He will not pass over their sins, as though they were but  
mistakes, or little errors. He will mete out punishment for such serious  
offenses.  
But observe the companions of the wicked, those who are to be the  
sharers with these profane ones in their eternal punishment. They are  
such as forget God. If I mistake not, I am addressing a very large number  
of those who forget God. It may be I have a few here of the outwardly wicked. Let them hear the text in all its fullness. But, doubtless, I have many hundreds who come under the second description—they forget God. Oh, let them feel the full force of such a text as this. They must be companions hereafter with those whom they would not associate with now. They must have the destiny of men, whom perhaps they now look down upon with contempt—they must be cast into Hell with the wicked, with those who are infidels in the sight of God and demoralized among  
men.  
Now, this morning, I shall first endeavor, as God’s servant, to charge  
this sin upon the conscience of men. Secondly, to unmask the real  
reasons for this forgetfulness of God. Thirdly, to refute such excuses any  
heart may make. And then, come lovingly and earnestly to persuade you  
to repentance of this sin.  
I. First, let me CHARGE THIS SIN UPON YOU.  
I wish not now to preach to you in the mass, but to each man as an  
individual. You can each judge in your own conscience how far what I say  
is applicable to you. If the fear of God and the love of Jesus are in your  
hearts, these accusations belong not to you. Occupy yourself with  
earnestly praying that the Word may go where the reproof is needed—that  
the arrow may reach its mark. You who have faith in Christ, lift up your  
souls and pray, “O Lord, send home Your arrow in the heart that is  
forgetful of You.”  
Sinner! I charge you with forgetting God—for sure I am you forget His  
infinite majesty. Do you know what it is to be overawed with a sense of the  
glory of God? Have you ever thought of Him, before whom the angels veil  
their faces with their wings and solemnly cry, “Holy, holy, Lord God of  
Hosts”? Why, you know very well that the glory of God is to you as much a  
mere matter of speculation, as the glory of some great eastern prince. As  
you are never affected with the splendor of the Persian Court, so are you  
just as little subdued and overawed by the splendor of the King of Heaven. Do you not walk about this world as though God had no Throne, or as  
if the Throne of the universe were entirely vacant? To Him you give no  
songs. Before Him you offer no prayers. To Him you have made no  
confession of your littleness and unto Him you have ascribed no songs of  
praise for His greatness. You are unconscious of His majesty. The thought  
never strikes you, it never humbles you, never casts you down. If now and  
then, when you behold the starry heavens, you are a little subdued by the  
power which the mighty works of God will certainly have upon your  
intellect—if sometimes in the midst of thunder and lightning your spirit  
bows before the awful majesty of God—these are but as fits and starts in  
the slumber of your habitual forgetfulness. This is not your abiding condition of soul, it is but a spasm. The spirit of your heart is not  
adoration of His majesty, but forgetfulness of His glory.  
Remember, too, oh Sinner, that you have forgotten God in His mercies.  
Day after day you have fed at the table of His bounty. He has supplied  
your means of livelihood. You have lacked nothing. But how seldom have  
you ever thought of thanking Him? You have ascribed your wealth to your  
own prudence. Your competence to your own industry. If you have a god  
at all, that god is your strong self. You thank yourself for the clothes that  
are upon your back and for the meat which cheers your spirit. And all this  
while you know not that the breath in your nostrils comes from Him. You know not without Him there were no marrow in your bones—no  
power in your nerves. Without Him you would fall back to your mother  
dust and crumble to the earth which brought you forth. Why, you do not  
praise Him! You have songs for your lusts, but none for your God. You  
have praise for your earthly friends and thanks for those who help you  
here. But He is as much forgotten by you as He is by the beasts that  
perish. You call not your family about you, you say not unto your little  
ones, “Come, bless your father’s God.”  
You lift not holy hands over your table, thanking God for every mercy  
that is there. You live as though these things came to you by chance. God  
is not in all your thoughts. And though He draws your curtain every night  
and sheds light upon you every day—though it is His earth upon which  
you tread, His air which you breathe, His water which you must drink—  
yet He is as much forgotten by you as though He were dead and had  
ceased to be.  
Consider how constantly you forget his Laws. When there is an action  
proposed to you, how seldom do you pause and say, “Is this right in the  
sight of God?” You are careful of the laws of men, but the Laws of God are  
waste paper to you. You would not cheat your neighbor. You would not  
rob your companion. But how often will men rob God! Men who are  
scrupulously honest in giving to man his due and in “rendering unto  
Caesar the things which are Caesar’s,” give not, “unto God that which is  
God’s.”  
Man is proud and self-willed. He loves to be his own master and to have  
his own way and he cries, “Let me break His bands asunder and cast  
away His cords from me.” He finds that the easiest way to do this is to  
ignore the fact that God ever made laws—or that He is the world’s moral  
governor—or that He will reward and punish. So the sinner goes on in his  
iniquity. God is not in all his thoughts. I charge this home upon many,  
many of you now present. Look to your own heart and see if the  
accusation is not just. Surely many of you must plead guilty to it. You  
forget His majesty, as though He were not “King of kings and Lord of lords.” You forget His mercies, as though He were not the giver of every good and perfect gift. And you forget His Laws, as though He had not a right to your service—as though His service were not freedom, and  
obedience to His Laws a delight. The wicked forget God.  
And oh how often do you forget His Presence, too! In the midst of a  
crowd, you are conscious every one of you, of the presence of man, but  
perhaps this very moment you are ignoring the fact that God is here. In

your shop on the morrow how carefully you will take heed that your  
conduct is circumspect if the eye of your fellow man is observant of you.  
But before the Presence of God, with the Eternal eye upon you, you can  
presume to practice the paltry tricks of trade, or to do that which you  
would not have revealed to mortals for all the world.  
You are careful to shut the door and draw the curtain and hide  
yourselves in secret from men—strangely forgetting that when the curtain  
is drawn and the door is shut, God is there, still. No walls can shut Him  
out. No darkness can conceal the deed from His eyes. He is everywhere  
and sees us in all things. Why, my Hearers, we are all guilty in this  
respect, in a measure. We forget the actual Presence and the overlooking  
eyes of God. We talk as we dare not talk if we were thinking that He heard  
us. We act as we would not act if we were conscious that God was there.  
We indulge in thoughts which we should cast out if we could but bear in  
perpetual remembrance the abiding Presence of God, the Judge of the  
whole earth.  
Forgetting God is so common a sin that the Believer, himself, needs to  
repent of it and ask to have it forgiven, while the unbeliever may solemnly  
confess this to be his crying sin, a piece of guilt in respect to which he  
dare not profess innocence—God is not in all, perhaps not in any of your  
thoughts.  
And, O sinner! How forgetful you have been of God’s justice! How  
seldom do you set before your eyes—  
*“The pomp of that tremendous day,  
When He with clouds shall come.”*  
You sin as though sin were a thing of today and would not be thought of  
tomorrow. You go to your follies and your pleasures as though God had  
no book of remembrance in which to write down your sins and no tablets  
of brass on which to engrave, as with an iron pen, all your iniquities. Why, if sin were but a mistake, if iniquity never could be punished, if  
Hell had resolved itself into a few dying embers, if the Throne of God were  
shaken—if the balances were dashed from His hand, if His sword had  
grown blunt, men could not be more callous, or more careless than they  
are now! What is it but forgetfulness of God, who has sworn that He will by no means clear the guilty? What is it but obliviousness of the fact that God avenges and that He will surely give to every transgression its just recompense of reward? What is it but this, that leads men to sin with both hands greedily and to go on in their iniquities as quietly and as peaceably as though they were serving God with all their hearts and hoping to stand  
before Him accepted in their own righteousness?  
If a heathen were to come and walk among us, would he ever suspect  
us of having a God at all? In the old days of the Spaniards, when the  
Spaniards had invaded Mexico, a large number of Indians had fled to  
Cuba for shelter. One of them, the chief of the tribe, gathering together his  
companions, assured them that the Spaniards’ god was gold and having a  
chest of it, he thought that it would be best for them to propitiate the  
Spaniards god that they might be no more subject to the Spaniards’  
cruelty.  
They accordingly offered sacrifice before this box of gold and danced  
around it till they had wearied themselves, and then fearing the presence  
of so great a god in their midst, they cast it into the depths of the sea that  
it might not in future disturb them even if they had made a mistake in  
their prayers. Sensible heathens those! Very sensible heathens, indeed!  
For surely, if they should walk through London among many men, they  
might make the same mistake but it would be a very little mistake—it  
would be as near the truth as possible. Their wealth, their substance,  
their worldly business, as it were, painted on their retina—always before  
their eyes—but the God to whom they build their temples, being behind  
their backs, utterly and entirely forgotten!  
Why, Sirs, if God were taken away—if there were no God—it would be  
but a very little loss to some of you. You would not be like Micah of old,  
who, when the sons of Dan stole his seraphim, ran after them crying,  
“They have taken away my gods.” No, surely, you love not the true God, as  
much as He loved the false one. Were God taken away, you might clap  
your hands for very joy, for you would say, “He was never a Person whom  
I esteemed. I never had any reverence for Him. I can do better without a  
God than I could do with one, I can feel vastly more comfortable in my  
course of life without God to pry into all my ways, weigh all my actions  
and declare that He will award to me, at last, a recompense for all my  
sins.”  
I charge home, then, upon your consciences this guilt, that you belong  
to the number of those who forget God. If it is not so with you, thank God  
and rejoice before Him. But if you do forget God, let this great trumpet  
sound in your ears like the trump of the day of doom, “The wicked shall  
be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.”  
II. Now I want to UNMASK THE REASONS OF THIS FORGETFULNESS  
OF GOD.  
Sinner, you who forget God, I tell you that the reason of your  
forgetfulness of Him is as great a sin as the forgetfulness itself! In the first  
place, you do not remember Him because the thought of Him makes you  
afraid. You know that you have offended Him, you are conscious that you  
can not meet Him with joy and peace and, therefore, you are like Adam,  
when he hid himself among the trees of the garden and God has need to  
cry unto you, “Adam, where are you?” If you had not sinned, nothing  
would give you greater delight than the society of God as the Father from  
whom you did derive your being. And if your sin were now washed away  
and your heart renewed by the Spirit, instead of dreading the thought of  
God, it would be full of delight to you.  
You would say, “As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my  
soul after You, O God. When shall I come and appear before God?” It is  
your sin that makes you dread the Presence of your Judge. He who knows  
that he is innocent, though he may lay in jail, longs for the day when the  
sessions shall come round, or when the assizes shall be held. And if he  
hears the trumpet in the street proclaiming that the judge has come, he is  
glad, for says he—“Now shall I have deliverance.” But the guilty man  
always dreads the eye of the judge. But is this wise on your part?  
Remember, while you forget Him He does not forget you.  
You may cover your head, but you cannot escape by merely hiding from  
yourself the thought of your doom. The foolish ostrich when driven by the  
hunter buries its head in the sand and fancies it is safe, whereas it is all  
the more certain to meet with death. It is so with you. You shut your eyes  
upon a doom which is certain. It were greatly wise if you would but open  
your eyes. It were the most prudent act that you could do—instead of  
shunning your God—to sit down solemnly and think of Him.  
Let His justice impress your heart. Let His mercy encourage you to seek  
His face. And His love, working in your spirit, shall renew your soul.  
Forgetfulness of God is profound folly, but remembrance of God is to the  
soul her highest wisdom. You dread God, oh Sinner! and therefore, it is  
why you forget Him.  
Besides, the thought of God is irksome to you. It affords you no joy.  
Were I to make you sit down for ten minutes and think of nothing but  
God, you would impatiently look at the clock till the ten minutes were  
passed. Even now, though I speak in earnest, you would rather I were  
speaking upon some other theme. Your heart revolts. You say, “Why  
should I think of God? It will not make my heart dance within me, nor my  
eyes sparkle.” And why? Because you do not love God. We seek the company of those whom we love and if you did love God, you would like to hear of Him. Your spirit would long to get nearer and nearer to Him and your desire would be to be like He, and at last to see Him face to face. You love not God. It is a solemn charge to bring against you. But as long as  
you forget Him, I cannot help accusing you.  
Yet another sin underlies the fact that you do not like to have God in  
your thoughts. Your real reason is became you find that thinking of God  
and going on in sin, are two things that are incompatible with one  
another. You say, “I cannot go to the theater and carry God in my heart  
with me there. I cannot sit down at the ale-house with the profane and  
have a thought of God’s Presence with me there. It is not easy for me to go  
to any haunt of vice or sin and still carry with me the recollection of the  
Omniscient eye.”  
No, Sinner, dishonest in business, you know you could not practice the  
arts of your trade if you did always keep God before your eyes. You are  
conscious that the two things will not suit each other. You are quite  
certain that these are two principles that will no more mix than fire and  
water, or light and darkness. So you prefer your sins, before God. You love  
the lusts of the flesh and the delights thereof—the sins of this world and  
the reward thereof—better than you love Him who made you and who, if  
you love Him, will take you up to dwell with Himself forever.  
Sin once hated, God is loved—but sin loved, God is abhorred. When a  
man knows that he has been stealing something and has a parcel of goods  
about him which is not his own, he will take care not to go on the same  
side of the street with the policeman. And when a man has been doing  
something wrong, he is quite certain not to go near his God, for he wishes  
not to be discovered—he desires not to be detected. He is like Adam in his  
nakedness, he would sew fig leaves together and run from the Presence of  
God, because he knows that he is naked and cannot stand before his  
Maker’s face.  
These are solemn considerations. Let them sink deep into your heart.  
Steel not your conscience against them. If they are true let them have full  
weight with you and who knows, while I thus speak but the arrows of  
conviction may be piercing your heart? And what are they? Are they not  
gracious weapons by which God slays us first, in order that He may

afterwards renew us with the Divine life?  
III. Oh, that I could SLAY EVERY EXCUSE WHICH ANY OF YOU MAY  
BRING FOR FORGETFULNESS OF GOD!  
“But,” you say, “is not a man excusable for forgetting God if he has not  
had enough in early youth to impress God upon his memory?” Ah, Sir,  
then some among you in this respect are inexcusable, indeed. You can  
remember that one of the first sounds your ears ever heard was the name of Jesus. One of the first sights your infant eyes ever beheld was your mother, with her lips moving in silent prayer while tears were falling upon  
your infant brow.  
She was praying, then, that you might be dedicated to God. Do you  
remember that family meeting which was held each morning, when the  
big Bible was opened and your father read from Holy Scripture the Words  
of Truth! Have you forgotten the prayers which he then put up for you,  
when he said, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You! Oh Lord, save the  
kindred of Your servant. May they all be bound up in the bundle of life  
with the seal of the Lord my God.”  
Have you forgotten your mother’s personal appeal to you! The Bible in  
which she wrote your name with that prayer—and you little knew how  
well she meant that prayer—that prayer in the beginning of the book, that  
you might know Him whom that Bible had revealed? Have you forgotten  
that earnest charge your father gave you when you first came to London  
to be bound apprentice, or to take a situation in some large shop—how he  
conjured you by the living God not to be led astray?—Not to fall into sin? And now gray hairs are on your head and your children are grown up,  
too, and perhaps, the grandchild may sit upon your knee and your  
father’s prayers have not dwindled from your memory. Nor have your  
mother’s tears been utterly blotted out. I say, if you remember not God,  
you cannot plead the excuse of the heathen, even if they are without  
excuse—for God is to be seen in the visible world—you are without any  
cloak for your sin, for you have had the name, the Person, the Being of  
God represented to you by those who could best reach your heart and  
best enlist your attention.  
If some of you—and I may be speaking to such—if some of you have  
ceased to attend the House of God—if you have given up even the outward  
observances of religion, at least let this be on your mind—that in the Last  
Great Day you cannot look your father in the face and say, “Sir, you who  
did bring me forth, my blood is on your head.” Nor can you look on her  
that bare you and say to her—“Woman, I curse the breast on which I  
hung, because the heart beneath it yielded no sympathy for my eternal  
state and never beat with anxious prayers that I might be saved.” I strip  
you of this excuse—what other have you now to make?  
Maybe you tell me that to think of God always and not to forget Him is  
very hard. Be it so, but let me ask you—have you ever made the attempt?  
Have you ever tried to think of God? No. You know that instead thereof  
you have often strived to thrust the thought out of doors. And when it has  
come into your heart you have looked upon it as an intruder and you have  
either said to it with the politeness of Felix, “Go your way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for you.” Or else with the harshness but honesty of Ahab you have said, “Have you found me, O  
my enemy?”  
You know right well that you do not check yourself in the middle of a  
speech with the thought—“But I am forgetting God.” You do not correct  
yourself in the very center of an action and turn from it because you are  
conscious that you are permitting the Word of God to slip from your  
memory. No, Sir, you have tried to remember a thousand things, but you  
never tried to remember your God! You make memoranda of your  
business. Take out from your pocket that little ivory tablet now and see  
how the engagements for the next week are scored there that they may  
not be forgotten.  
Do you ever make any such memoranda with regard to God? Did you  
ever say to your soul, “My Soul, be fixed and abide hard and fast near to  
God this week”? Did you ever charge your spirit, saying, “Keep the Lord  
always before you and set Him at your right hand”? Whatever you have  
tried, you have never even made the attempt to think of God. How, then,  
do you know that it is hard work? And if it is hard, what excuse is it for  
you when you have not even made the attempt?  
But, further, you tell me that you cannot—but even if you could not,  
you are still guilty, for I put it thus to you—Did you ever weep because  
you had forgotten God? Though you have found it hard to remember him,  
the least thing you could have done would be to have been sorry because  
you could not do it. Did you ever charge your eyes to weep because you  
have forgotten Him who gives them light? Did you ever bid your heart  
dissolve with anguish because it would not cleave to Him who made it  
beat? Oh no, Sirs, you know that sin is sweet to you and forgetfulness of  
God is a dainty morsel to you and you roll it under your tongue. Oh, were it bitter to you, then indeed, you would soon be cured of it. If  
once forgetfulness of God became a burden and a plague, then you would  
seek grace that you might escape it. But instead it sits so sweetly upon  
your shoulders—it is not like a chain of iron but rather like a chain of  
gold. It is not like a yoke, but like a pleasant burden which you are only  
too glad to carry. I charge this on you, that you do willfully and wickedly  
forget the Lord your God. For if it were not willful and wicked you would  
repent and be sorry that you had forgotten Him.  
Oh Sirs! Vain are your excuses—while in forgetting God you have,  
indeed, to strain yourselves and divert your attention to do it. If you would  
but let the world speak to you it would make you remember Him. There is  
not a star in the sky which would not look out of Heaven and whisper to  
you—“Man, remember Him who lives above the skies.” There is not a  
blade of grass in the meadows which would not speak to you and say, “Consider, consider the God who has made you as the grass and before whom you must soon wither away.” Oh, if you would only hear, the very mountains and the hills would break out before you—preaching to you of their God—and the very trees of the field clapping their hands in  
adoration.  
Besides, go to your own house—look into the eyes of your child, sit  
down at your table—eat your bread and that which God has added  
thereunto. Go to your bed and dream—wake up and find yourself alive  
and see if all these things do not tell you of God. Why, God’s name is  
printed on every part of your  
habitation, God’s name is written on the very streets along which you  
walk. Does He not fill Heaven and earth and is He not everywhere? Surely  
if you forget Him you are without excuse.  
What warnings some of you have had! You have been at sea and the  
timbers of the ship have creaked and she seemed to be as an egg-shell in  
a giant’s hand. And then you thought you would never forget God again.  
When the thunderclap made you deaf for a moment with horror and the  
lightning flash seemed to blind you with dismay, you thought, then, that  
you could never forget God. Remember too, that little room and the fever,  
think of the street you live on and the cholera as it stopped at door after  
door and it passed you by.  
Think, I pray you, of the many times you have been exposed to instant  
or sudden death and say—has not God spoken to me, not only once but  
twice? Has consumption begun its deadly work with you, fair maid? It is  
God’s solemn voice to you—“Prepare to meet your God.” Has some disease  
taken a deep root in your frame, O strong man? Has the physician warned  
you that it may carry you off and that, right suddenly? Has he said your  
heart is so diseased that you may fall dead in the streets? God has spoken  
to you. Shall the Eternal find you turn a deaf ear?  
Oh, no, I bid you now, however much you have forgotten Him—forget  
now all the world besides and think of Him. Better to have no memory and  
no thought for the most important things of time, than to give all your  
attention to this present world of shadows and to forget the world of  
substances and the God who gives solemnity to them. God bless these my  
words and pluck your excuses away from you and rend them in pieces  
before your eyes.  
IV. May God now give you a heart to listen while I seek to PERSUADE  
YOU TO REPENTANCE. This is my closing task.  
You who have forgotten God! You are standing self-condemned and  
convicted this morning! I have two arguments to ply you with—two great  
Truths of God which I would force home upon your conscience. But, alas, it is not I who can do it. Only God the Holy Spirit can bless the Word. Well, forgetter of God, I would first plead with you by the tenor of the Law—“Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Law, we persuade men.” You will soon be forced to remember God. You shall lie upon your dying bed and the thought of a God so long neglected, whose Gospel has been rejected, whose Son has been defied, shall then be as gall unto you. The remembrance which might be sweet to you now, shall be as gravel in your  
mouth, then, to break your teeth in sunder.  
You shall lie upon your bed and toss from side to side with a pain  
which medicine cannot cure. You shall know anguish to which even sleep  
itself can give no respite. Many such have I seen, and fearful has been the  
sight—men whom nothing could pacify, whose pain drugs could not allay,  
whose peace utterly departed. Their bodies and souls seemed as if they  
were rent in pieces of lions—as if they were set on fire of Hell before their  
time.  
Nor will you be able to forget Him at the Day of Judgment, when your  
soul shall come up from the place of its separate existence, when your  
body shall spring up from the grave and the two shall be re-united. You  
will see the Lord, whom you have despised, sitting upon His Throne of  
Glory and what would you give if you could shut your eyes then, or if you  
had never shut your eyes upon Him before? Then will you say, “Would to

God I had now a time of respite. Would that mercy could again be  
proclaimed to me. That there was still found some minister of Christ,  
some open Bible, some sanctuary, some space for repentance, some  
pleading terms, some praying ground on which I might yet stand hopefully  
before my God!”  
But, no! All through the time of the preparation of that judgment, the  
trumpet waxing exceeding loud and long, shall ring destruction in your  
ears. The black darkness shall blot out hope from you and the everflashing lightning shall slay your pride and your pretensions. And when  
the sentence is pronounced—when Christ has discharged the awful  
volleys of His wrath against you—you will not be able to forget Him then.  
In Hell the thought of God shall be as a dagger in your soul—a viper  
nestling in your bosom, poisoning the fountains of your life and sending  
hot venom through all your veins.  
“Son, remember!” That was the cry of Abraham from Heaven and  
doubtless an awful cry to Dives in Hell—“Son, remember!” It is the voice of  
mercy today. “Son, remember!”—it shall be the voice of judgment  
tomorrow. Son, remember! Son, remember! Son, remember the invitations  
neglected. Son, remember the warnings despised. Son, remember that  
solemn Sabbath, when the minister preached, “As though he never might  
preach again, a dying man to dying men.”  
“Son, remember,” the open Word of God—remember your mother’s  
prayers—your father’s exhortations. Son, remember yours oaths, your  
blasphemies, your sins, your follies, your laughing at the Word, your  
despising of Christ. It will tear your hearts asunder only to look back, with  
that sounding ever in your ears—“Son remember, Son remember.” I bid  
you then, by the terrors of the Law, to repent of this great sin of having  
forgotten God. Oh, Spirit of God, grant repentance now! Will you make  
your bed in Hell, will you abide with everlasting burnings? I pray you be  
not foolhardy—there are other ways of being a fool besides damning your  
soul.  
Come, dress in motley attire, paint your face and play the clown if you  
must be a fool, but damn not your soul to prove yourself full of folly. Dash  
your head against a wall—spend your money for that which is not bread.  
Hurl your purse into the sea, but don’t destroy yourself. Is there no  
happiness in this world except the happiness of entailing eternal torment?  
Oh, could I plead with you as my heart longs to do. Could I speak to you  
as my Master would speak if He were here this morning, surely I might  
reach your hearts! Ah, but unless the sacred Spirit is here, vain are the  
most earnest entreaties, vain the sternest attacks against the barricades  
and bulwarks of a hard and iron heart. Oh, Lord, turn the sinner and by  
the terrors of the Law drive him to Yourself!  
But now to use perhaps a more forcible argument. God send it home.  
By the mercies of God, Sinner, I bid you to forget Him no more. He is not a  
hard Taskmaster, or an austere God. His own words are, “As I live, says  
the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather  
that he should turn unto Me and live.” He is stern—justly so. He is  
severe—He must be so. To be judge of all the earth He must do right. But  
this is the day of Divine Grace, this is the time of mercy. You are not shut  
up in Hell. The gates of the grave have not yet enclosed you. The iron door  
is not fast bolted yet. There is hope—hope even for the negligent—hope for  
the despiser of Christ.  
And let me tell you—that hope lies not in anything that is in you, but in  
Christ Jesus. “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”  
“Whoever seeks finds and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” If you  
shall come to yourself this morning, as the prodigal did in the midst of the  
swine, and if you shall say—“I will arise and go to my Father and will say  
unto Him, ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before You and am  
no more worthy to be called Your son’ ”—then, Sinner, God will rejoice to  
see you come to Him. He will have eyes of mercy for you to see you afar  
off. He will have feet of mercy to run and meet you. He will have arms of  
mercy to receive you.  
He will have kisses of mercy to cheer you, He will have depths of mercy to wash you. He will have garments of mercy in which to clothe you—jewels of mercy with which to adorn you. And feasts of mercy and music of mercy to make you glad. If I, today, had made my father angry with me. If I had left his house voluntarily and spent his substance, I might be afraid to come back to my father’s house. “Lo,” I might say, “he will never forgive me, I fear he is a stern man.” But if a messenger should come from him and say to me, “Young man, your father’s heart yearns to press you to his bosom, he does not wish you to be a stranger to him any longer. He bade me tell you to come to him just as you were—rags and  
ulcers, sores and filth—just as you are”  
Why, I think I can say that the sight of my father’s messenger,  
especially if it were my own brother, with tears in his eyes saying to me,  
“Brother, come back, come back, our father loves us still. I was like you  
once and father received me—come and he will do the same for you.” I  
think I would put my unreluctant hand into his and say, “My Brother, I  
will go with you to my father’s house and I will fall upon my knees and  
confess my folly and my fault and perhaps he will admit my plea. Perhaps  
he will hear my prayer.”  
In the name of God our Father I plead with you. As vile as any of you  
have been, I have been—but I know I am forgiven. I bear Him witness He  
has blotted out my sins. He will do the like with you. Is there no Brother  
here who will say, “I’ll go with you to Jesus—at His Cross I’ll bow and at  
my Father’s face offer my prayer”?  
Two little parables by way of further encouragement and I have done.  
There may be one here who says, “Sir, I don’t know how to pray. I don’t  
know how to find my way to Christ, for I have learned the language of sin  
so well that I cannot speak the language of grace.” Oh, Sinner, if you only  
know what it is you want and have a desire to find it, you shall find it. I  
compare you to a woman whom I met last Friday. We were walking up the  
lane near where I live and there was a poor woman who accosted us. She spoke in French. This poor soul had some children at Guildford—  
she was wanting to find her way to them, but did not know a single word  
of English. She had knocked at the doors of all the gentlemen’s houses  
down the lane, and of course the servants could do nothing for her, for  
they could not understand a word she said. So she went from one place to  
another and at last she did not know what would become of her. She had some thirty miles to walk—she did not mind that—but then,  
she did not know which way to go. So I suppose she had made up her  
mind she would ask everybody. All she knew, she had written on a piece  
of paper—the word “Guildford.” And she held it up and began to ask in  
French on the road. She had met with someone who could tell her the path and beautifully did she express her distress. She said she felt like a poor little bird who was hunted about and did not know how to find her way to the nest. She poured a thousand blessings on us when we told her  
the way.  
And I thought—how much this is like the sinner when he wants to find  
the way to Heaven. All he knows is, he wants Christ. That is all he  
knows—but where to get to Him and how to find Him—he does not know.  
And he knocks at one door and then at another door. And perhaps the  
minister at the place of worship does not understand the language of  
human sympathy. He cannot understand the sinner’s need, for there are  
many servants in my Master’s house, I am sorry to say, who do not  
understand the language of a sinner’s cry.  
Oh, Sinner, you shall surely find Christ, though you know not how to  
find Him. He will say to you, “Whom do you seek?” and you will say, “I  
seek Jesus,” and He will say—“I that speak unto you am He.” I am much  
mistaken this morning, if He who speaks in your heart is not the very  
Jesus whom you seek. His speaking in your heart is a token of His love.  
Trust Him, believe in Him and you shall be saved.  
There is a story told concerning Thomas a’Becket—a story connected  
with his parentage. His father was a Saxon gentleman, who went into the  
crusades and was taken prisoner by the Saracens. While a prisoner  
among the Saracens, a Turkish lady loved him and when he was set free  
and returned to England, she took an opportunity of escaping from her  
father’s house—took ship and came to England. But she knew not where  
to find him she loved. All she knew about him was, that his name was  
Gilbert. She determined to go through all the streets of England, crying  
out the name of Gilbert, till she had found him.  
She came to London, first, and passing every street, persons were  
surprised to see an Eastern maiden, attired in her Eastern costume,  
crying, “Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert!” And so she passed from town to town,  
till one day as she pronounced the name, the ear for which it was  
intended caught the sound and they became happy and blessed. And so, Sinner, today you know little perhaps of religion, but you know  
the name of Jesus. Take up the cry and go today, and as you go along the  
streets, say in your heart, “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!” When you are in your  
chamber say it still, “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!” Continue your cry and it shall  
reach the ear for which it is meant. If your relations laugh, say, “Ah, I did  
not call for you.” If your friends say that you are mad, reply, “Ah, it may  
seem so. The riddle is always foolish till you know the meaning of it.” But if you should cry, “Jesus,” till Jesus shall answer you, oh happy  
shall it be! There shall be a marriage between Him and your soul and you, with Him, shall sit down at the marriage supper in the glory of the Father and dwell with Him forever and ever. God add His own blessing for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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GOOD CHEER FOR THE NEEDY  
NO. 2878

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1904.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 16, 1876.

**“For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”  
Psalm 9:18.**

These words will fall upon different ears with quite different effects. If any of you are, in the Scriptural sense, “poor and needy,” God the Holy Spirit will enable you to see much in these gracious sentences, but if you fancy that you are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” you will care nothing whatever for such words as these. You know right well that the value of a text to any soul depends upon the condition of that soul. I know not how many stars may be visible at the present moment. I do not think that I even looked up at them before I came here and, perhaps, you have not. But to the mariner, who needs to know his position when far out upon the sea, even one lone star gleaming amid the clouds may be very precious. So, if you are among the poor and needy ones, the Light of God in this text will be most joyful to your heart! But if you are not among them, perhaps you will scarcely condescend to look up to see its light. When Richard I was shut up within the gloomy walls of a foreign prison, you remember that he heard a song sung by his faithful friend who was traversing all Europe, as a troubadour, to try to find him. There were many ears that heard that strain and, possibly, some of the listeners had noticed the sweetness of the music—yet there was nothing very special in it to them. But the imprisoned king, when he heard that song, could sing the refrain to it and, therefore, it had a peculiar value to him, for it re-opened his communion with the world outside and ultimately led to his release! So, it may be that my text has a refrain that you do not know, and if it is so, you will not care for it. But if your heart is very poor—if you are consciously very needy—if you are reduced to spiritual destitution, then these simple words, “The needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever,” will awake echoes in your soul which will be the means of bringing you great joy!

Here let me remark what a blessed thing it is to be poor in spirit and down among the lowly in heart. The best things come to those who are in such a condition! Up there, on the mountaintops, you are in a conspicuous but very cold position. If there are any storms about, they will be sure to gather around the mountain’s brow, but if there are brooks, they will be sure to flow down there in the quiet seclusion of the valley where the nourishing grass grows for the feeding of the sheep. He who dwells in the Valley of Humiliation lives in a place where he may delight himself with safety because he is certain, while he abides there, to give all the glory for his delight to his God. It is not a land that every man chooses— it lies too low for some men’s tastes. There are those who love the high places of the earth where they can exalt themselves. But he who is wise will choose to be numbered among the hungry whom the Lord fills with good things and not among the rich whom He sends away empty. He will delight to be reckoned among those that are of low degree, whom God exalts, even the humble and the meek—and he will not wish to be gathered with the proud, against whom the Lord has registered His solemn declaration that He will stain the pride of their glory.

If you look at our text as it stands, it bears, first of all, the literal and natural meaning that God will take care of the poor and needy. As a general rule, they are forgotten. In the regulations of many kingdoms, no provision whatever has been made for the poor. Christianity has done much to cause modern governments to make some recognition of the rights of the poor and needy—and also to provide, to some extent, for them—yet this provision is often handed out to them with great coldness and sternness. Our poor laws are not, even with the best intentions, always administered justly. And there are lands where everything seems to be done to increase the riches of the rich and to make the poor still poorer. Well, it will not always be so! There are better days coming for you that are despised, poor and needy. You need not fight, strive and be envious and make discord—there is One in Heaven who is your Helper— and He is coming down to earth again! And when He comes, “He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy and shall break in pieces the oppressor.” The reign of Jesus Christ, though it may seem to be long in beginning, will assuredly come at the appointed time! And when it comes, then all tyranny and oppression and wrongdoing shall be speedily ended. “In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures.” In His days shall no man be robbed of his rights—no man be down-trodden—no man be oppressed. Behold, the Lord has laid help upon One who is mighty! He has exalted One chosen out of the people! His coming is the world’s hope! His appearing will be the signal for the world’s deliverance from all that is opposed to Him and to His Gospel!

But I am going to take our text in a spiritual sense and refer it to those who are “poor and needy” in the Scriptural meaning of those words. This is a description that is very frequently applied to the people of God. They have been taught, by the Spirit of God, to realize their poverty. They know it and they confess it. They also feel that they have many needs— indeed, they seem to themselves to now have more needs than they ever had before! And were it not for the Infinite fullness which is treasured up in Christ, the very thought of their needs would crush them and drive them to despair! “Poor and needy” is a fair and full description of all those who have been taught of the Lord to see themselves as they really are in His sight.

I want to give some good cheer to the poor and the needy, and my text seems to me to refer to three pairs of things which concern them. First, it speaks of two bitter experiences which will come to an end. Then, two sad fears which are removed by the text. And, thirdly, two precious promises which are given to us in the text.

I. First, there are TWO BITTER EXPERIENCES which many of God’s people—no, all God’s people have more or less had, especially if they happen to be poor and needy in temporal things as well as in spiritual.

The first bitter experience is that they have been forgotten. The text says, “The needy shall not always be forgotten,” plainly implying that they have been forgotten—forgotten by those who used to know them, forgotten by those who fed at their table and who landed and flattered them in the days of their high estate. They do not know you now. You are the same, but your coat is different, your house is different, your purse is different and, therefore, though they loved you—oh, so fervently!—their love is now gone because the various adjuncts, which, after all, were the real ground of their love, have departed.

The leaves are withering, so the swallows, which gathered in the summer, are all gone before the winter comes. Many friends are of that sort—their friendship withers like the leaves of autumn and, like the swallows, they are gone to find other summers somewhere else! If you become prosperous, again, and get another summer, they will come back and seek to ingratiate themselves with you again. Like dogs, they will follow you as long as you have a bone to give them, but, unlike many dogs, they will not stay with you even when you have nothing to bestow upon them. If you are a poor man, who was once better off, you have passed through this bitter experience, I have no doubt, and have been forgotten because your circumstances have changed.

Possibly, you have been forgotten ever since you have been a Christian. While you were self-righteous, like other men, they knew and respected you. You helped to keep each other’s self-righteousness up, just as tradesmen, with their accommodation bills, help to keep each other financially afloat. But you suddenly became poor in spirit—you began to see that you needed a better righteousness than your own. They called you melancholy and no wonder that they did, for you were, indeed, melancholy! You were very uncongenial company for them. You used to heave a deep sigh when they would rather have heard a noisy laugh and now that you have gone right over, as they say, to the Puritan Party, and left their merry-making, they have forgotten you—they do not know you—they look down upon you and despise you! They say, sometimes, “You are a canting hypocrite,” and they have other equally pretty names that they apply to you. If they remember you, it is that they may scoff at you—but they say they have forgotten you and it is a great mercy if they have! And it will be another great mercy if you also forget them.

There is a message in the 45th Psalm which may be addressed to you— “Forget also your own people, and your father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for He is your Lord; and worship you Him.” You are to go outside the camp, bearing Christ’s reproach, and to be forgotten by your former friends and acquaintances because of your religion. It will be a painful ordeal to you, but you may go through it without any very serious loss.

Possibly, too, dear Friends, you have often thought that you have been forgotten in the arrangements of God’s people since you have come among them. You are so needy, perhaps in pocket, but certainly in spirit, that when arrangements have been made for the help and relief of others, you fancy that you have been overlooked. Do not be quite certain that it is so, for I have known some poor people who have been a little too sensitive on these points and have suspected unkindness when everything has been really planned for the best. Do not be ready to misjudge your fellow Christians if they are better off than you are. As it would be a sin, on their part, to be proud, it would be equally a sin, on your part, to be envious. It would be wrong for them to be unkind to you, but it would be just as wrong for you to be unkind to them by thinking that they are unkind when they are not. Still, I should not wonder if it does sometimes happen that you fancy yourself forgotten even in the arrangements that are made in connection with the House of God.

So, too, you may have had the experience of seeming to be forgotten in various regulations which are passed by your fellow Christians. For instance, someone has been declaring the proportion that every Christian should give to the cause of God out of his substance. It has been laid down by some, as a hard and fast rule, that nobody should give less than a tenth—a good rule, mark you, and a rule applicable to nearly everybody, but, sometimes there is a needy saint who says, “I could not spare a tenth from my poor pittance. I can scarcely spare a penny from the little that I have, so this rule presses hard upon me.” Well, then, give what you feel to be right, and do not trouble yourself about the matter. When we speak to various classes, we cannot always mention the exceptions— you know that there are exceptions to all rules and we do not wish any rule to press hard upon anyone. The poor widow gave her two mites and so may you, but do not fret and worry, though I have no doubt it sometimes pains you when, in such utterances, you seem to be forgotten.

It is also very painful to a Christian who is poor and needy in spirit, when, in the preaching of the Gospel, there seems to be nothing for the poor lame sheep, for the halting, for those that are weak-kneed, for those who are ready to perish. I have heard sermons which have related to very glorious experiences in which I have taken some delight. But I have felt, all the while, “I wonder what the poor weaklings of the flock think of this, when they hear about this experience and are told that they can have it if they like, and that they must have it, or else they have no real saving faith at all?” At such a time, my mind always goes to those who can only touch the hem of the Savior’s garment, or say to Him, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” My witness is that some of the best children in the whole family of God never have the enjoyment of full assurance, but they are so careful, so watchful, so sensitive that their very sadness of heart drives them close to Christ. They seem to be so conscious of their own weakness and so afraid of sinning against God, that though in them there is not the perfect love that casts out fear—I wish it were—yet I would be the last to condemn them.

There is One who will not condemn them—even He who carries the lambs in His bosom and who is tender and full of pity to all the weak ones in His flock. We must mind, when we are preaching experience, that we do not so put the experience of the strong as to make it the standard for the weak. That is almost as wrong as to make the experience of the weak to be the standard of the strong, as some have done. The fact is, there is no experience that is a real standard of the Christian life except the experience of a change of heart and of simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, dear Heart! I know what you mean when, after listening to a sermon, you have said, “Alas, I am forgotten! There seems nothing there for me. There are no crumbs for those who have lost their teeth and have only sore gums! There is no bread and milk for the children. It is all rounds of beef—strong meat for grown-up men, but, woe is me, there is nothing that I can eat.” I should not wonder if that is what you have felt, but, if so, do not feel it any longer, “for the needy shall not always be forgotten.”

And, perhaps, up till now, you have even experienced a forgetfulness on the part of Providence as you have understood the term. Others of your family have risen in the world, but you have not. Your friends have set up in business and have done well, but you have not. You have sought to obtain a competence, but you have not secured it yet. You wished, at any rate, to get out of financial trouble, but you are still in it and you are apt to fear that when the Lord distributes His favors, He forgets you—at least, as far as His Providential mercies are concerned. Well, now, let this fear be gone, I pray you! Let this bitter experience come to an end! Believe that you are not forgotten, after all, by Him who is in Heaven and who beholds all His people—and if you have experienced, in some measure, a sort of forgetfulness, real on the part of man, but never real on the part of God—believe that it will not last forever.

The second painful experience is that you have been disappointed, as well as fancied that you have been forgotten. Our text says, “The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever,” which implies that it has sometimes perished.

Now, dear Friend, I know that if you are a Christian, you have had some of your expectations that have perished and a good many of them, too. Why, you expected, at one time, to find your own way to Heaven— you expected that your own righteousness would make you acceptable to God and that you could do everything that was necessary to gain His favor! That foolish expectation has perished forever, has it not? Your selfrighteousness is such a mass of filthy rags that you never mean to try to patch those old rags together and make them into a garment to wear in the sight of God.

Then, you thought that you might expect, when you believed in Jesus Christ, that you would have perfect peace directly. Yet, possibly, you did not have it. Believer as you were, you had to live by faith without much experience of inward joy. And you also expected that you would never be troubled any more with any sort of bitter experiences, certainly not with any sins. You had lost your burden at the foot of the Cross and you meant to go singing all the way to Heaven! In fact, you imagined that you were to ride there in a carriage—in a most luxurious and delightful style, having two heavens—one here—and another hereafter! That expectation has not been realized, has it? You have found that the way to Heaven is a rough road, that there are many hardships in the pilgrim’s pathway and that there are giants to be fought and slain. Alas, also, there are sins within that have to be contended with from day to day.

Perhaps you had even entertained some very high expectations that you were going to be one of the brightest stars that ever shone among the spiritual constellations of God! Oh, what wonders you were going to do! You were going to be the leader among the people of God. There would be no diminution of zeal in you—no lack of life in you, no declension from Grace in you—no neglected prayer in you. You would be the very paragon of virtue! You would push the world before you and drag the Church behind you. I do not know how high your expectations soared, but I would not wonder if some of them have perished before now and you have come down to be, even in your own estimation, a very ordinary sort of person! In fact, you have continued to grow smaller and smaller ever since you have known Christ, till now you have come down to be nothing—and you are on the way to being less than nothing! And you will be wonderfully near the mark when you get down to that point.

How many human expectations turn out to be mere wind? As I studied my text, turning it over and over again, it occurred to me that the needy, the poor, are generally the people who have the greatest expectations. I have talked with many poor men and I have found, over and over again, that they have a great, great uncle somewhere or other, who may leave them a lot of money some day. Or else they think they are entitled to property somewhere, only the lawful owner keeps them out of it! They have proofs that there was someone in their family who left—well, I do not know whether it was some millions of money that now lie in the Bank of England and they are expecting to get it! Ah, he that butters his bread with such expectations will find it very dry. And he who waits till expectations of that kind are fulfilled will, I am afraid, find that he is waiting in vain. But poor people generally have plenty of expectations and, as a rule, those expectations come to an end. This is a part of the bitter experiences of life and always will be—so, let us bear it patiently, for our text assures us that our disappointment shall only be temporary.

II. Now, in the second place, there are TWO SAD FEARS WHICH THE TEXT REMOVES.

The first sad fear is that, perhaps, we may be forever forgotten of God. Oh, what, a sad day it would be for us if God should ever forget us! You remember what varied experiences David had. Once he wrote, “In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong: You did hide Your face, and I was troubled.” At another time, he wrote, “Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” Ah, that is how the greatest saints have to sometimes talk, but what a fall in the barometer that indicates! From being up there at, “set fair,” it has gone down to, “much rain” and “storms.” “Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.” This fear will come to the child of God at certain times. It may take this shape, “What if God should forget me in my present trouble? None but He can get me out of it. I am so bowed down and distressed that without Divine Consolation I know that I shall surely sink in the deep waters! Yet the consolation does not come, the help I need does not arrive. I cannot see any way of escape and I am as much in perplexity, now, as I was six months ago. I have made it a matter of prayer and waiting on the Lord, but I sometimes fear that He has forgotten me. What shall I do if He never helps me? If it had not been the Lord who was on my side, I would long ago have sunk into despair—but what shall I do if He deserts me now? I can never escape out of this difficulty without Him.”

Possibly the Believer is not so much in temporal trouble as burdened under a sense of sin. He used to feel joy and peace through believing in Christ, but he has wandered away from fellowship with his God and God is walking contrary to him because he is walking contrary to God. He is dwelling under his Father’s frown—He is smarting under his Father’s rod. Now he says within himself, “What will happen to me if He should never again give me the kiss of reconciliation?” He cries, “Deal mercifully with Your servant, O Lord, and restore unto me the joy of Your salvation!” Yet still he walks in darkness and sees no Light. He is under a cloud and his cry is, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him whom my soul loves!” There comes to his heart the horrible fear that God has forsaken him. It is a horrible fear, but it is quite unfounded—there is no real reason for it. God cannot forget His chosen ones whom He has engraved upon the palms of His hands. And though a woman may forget her sucking child, God cannot forget any of His people, sorrowful or sinful though they may be.

Then, too, this thought will come—“I am sick. My health is failing. I have less strength every day and, soon I shall have to go through the cold river of death. And what if, then, I should be without my God? It will be hard to suffer and harder, still, to die—to leave the warm precincts of this house of clay and, as a disembodied spirit, to be launched into an unknown world. What if there should be no guardian angels around my dying bed and no Savior to receive my departing spirit? What if, after all, my hope should turn out to be a delusion, my faith a fiction and my experience a dream?” I do not wonder, when such thoughts as these cross your minds, that you should feel distressed, as hundreds before you have been, “who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” But our text is a blessed cure for this sad fear—“For the needy shall not always be forgotten.”

The other dreadful fear is, lest, after all, your expectation should perish. Your expectation, Beloved, is that since you have trusted in God, you shall never be confounded—and that because you have relied upon the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, you shall be numbered with His saints in Glory everlasting. Yet, sometimes you sorrowfully say, “Shall I hold on to the end? Shall I be able to persevere? I am so weak, so unstable, so apt to slip and slide, that I fear what will happen to me. Will my hope endure to the end?” Then you look around and see the strong temptations that beset your path—you live, perhaps, where there are few Christians to help you and where everything seems to go against your progress in the Divine Life and you say, “I shall surely one day fall by the hand of the enemy. How can I hope to outlive these many perils and dangers?”

Possibly your constitutional temperament is a hindrance to you and you cry, “Woe is me, because I have such corruptions within—such a fierce temper—such a cold heart—such a stingy disposition. Can I ever, after all, be fashioned into the likeness of my Lord? Can such gritty granite as my soul is made of ever be melted down and run into the Divine Mold, or be turned like wax to the Divine Seal?” It does make you fear and tremble, especially when trials come, the likes of which you never saw before! And you say, “My expectation will perish. I thought that, by God’s Grace, I should leap over a wall and break through a troop. I hoped that I should continue to trust in the Lord even though all creature aid should fail. But now I tremble and fear! I have run with the footmen and they have wearied me. What shall I do when I have to contend with horses and, above all, what shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?” Well, now, this is the sort of fear that arises in the hearts of God’s children— yet that fear need not be entertained for a single moment! It is your duty and privilege to shut it out of your heart, for thus says the Lord, “The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”

III. Now I come to our third and last point—TWO PRECIOUS PROMISES ARE HERE GIVEN TO US.  
The first is given to the needy and it declares that they shall not always be forgotten. Possibly some of you think that you have been forgotten in the arrangements of Providence. Listen, troubled one. If you can only wait with patience and stand still and see the salvation of God, you will find that the needy shall not always be forgotten. Have you ever noticed how a father carves for a large family. You do not expect him, at a single stroke, to carve enough to fill every plate, do you? There is a little child who is ill, so there must be a suitable portion sent away for that one. And, likely enough, that will be the first portion sent from the table. Then the father serves his other children according to a certain order which he has in his own mind and there must be some who come after the others. I have known carvers keep someone waiting till they have reached the most juicy part of the meat—they only made him wait till they could give him something especially choice! So, if you are kept waiting for your portion, you will not lose anything by waiting a while. Patience is rewarded in due season. If ships are longer on their voyage, we expect them to bring home all the richer freight. If the trees are slower than usual, this year, in putting forth their buds—if the peach blossoms or the apricots are not visible as soon as in other seasons—let us hope that it will be all the better for the ultimate fruit-bearing of the trees. Be you content to come last rather than first, for sometimes last is best and, “there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.” Poor as you are, you shall not always be forgotten! There is a portion in reserve for you—even for you.  
You shall not be forgotten at the Mercy Seat. You have been there many times without receiving an answer to your petitions. Perhaps, poor heavy Heart, you have prayed seven times and no reply has yet come. Possibly you have gone to your God as often as the poor widow went to the unjust judge and you have gone as importunately as she went. But so far there has been no sweet relief such as your soul longed for. Yet you shall not be always forgotten, so, continue in prayer! If the promise tarries, wait for it, for, in due season, the answer shall surely come.  
You shall not always be forgotten in the Word. You have been reading it, yet no promise has seemed to comfort you. In fact, as you turn over the pages of your Bible, you find bitter things recorded there, as if they were written against you. But read on! Read on and one of these days you will come to a passage that will seem to leap up out of the Scriptures to meet you! It will woo you—the very sight of it will fascinate you and you will say, “The Lord has spoken this message to my soul—and I bless and praise His holy name!”  
You shall not always be forgotten from the pulpit. Perhaps there is someone here who has long been listening to the Gospel and who sorrowfully says, “I find that others are comforted, but I am not. God seems to give a portion to all the rest of His people, but none to poor me. Alas, I come and I go, but it seems to be all in vain! I love to go where I see others getting a blessing, yet I find no comfort there for myself.” Well, you shall not always be forgotten! God will bid His servant drop a handful on purpose for you. Perhaps this very text is a message to your heart just now!  
You shall not always be forgotten at the Lord’s Table. You have gone there hoping that He who often reveals Himself to His servants in the breaking of bread will be pleased to manifest Himself to you at His own Table. Yet you have not had a smile from Him. You have sat with others at the King’s Table, but the King, Himself, did not seem to sit there with you. You ate the bread, but you did not spiritually feed upon His flesh. You drank the wine, but you did not spiritually drink His precious blood. Well, you shall not always be forgotten! If you are really trusting in Jesus, there are brighter days yet in store for you. The King shall yet bring you into His banqueting house and His banner over you shall be Love and you shall see such changes that you shall sing—  
*“My mourning, He to dancing turns,  
For sackcloth, joy He gives,  
A moment, Lord, Your anger burns,  
But long Your favor lives.”*  
And you shall not always be forgotten in the service that you are rendering unto God. You have not yet seen a soul converted through your instrumentality, but you shall not always be forgotten in that respect. And in the sufferings that you are called to bear for Christ’s sake, you shall not always be forgotten. Patience will yet have her perfect work and the suffering will end when it has accomplished its purpose. You are persecuted and despised, perhaps, but you shall not always be forgotten. You shall yet learn the sweetness of being reproached for Christ’s sake. You may seem to be forgotten for a little while, but you shall not really be so. God, the Holy Spirit, will not forget you—He will sustain, instruct, illuminate and console you. God the Son will not forget you. He paid too high a price for you to ever forget you. You are His bride! He loves you as He loves Himself. You are part and parcel of Himself, so He will never forget you. And God the Father will not forget you. You have been His from all eternity and He has “begotten you again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” You will die soon, but you will not be forgotten, for the holy angels will convoy you home to Heaven!  
The rich man died and was buried with many waving plumes over his mourning coach. His will was read, his property was squabbled over and that was the end of him. Everybody soon forgot him. But the angels carried Lazarus into Abraham’s bosom! They had not forgotten Lazarus. The dogs had licked his sores, but the angels had loved him! The dunghill was his couch, but Abraham’s bosom was his throne! If you are a Believer in Jesus, you are not forgotten up in Glory! Rowland Hill, when he was very old, used to like to go and see aged people when they were dying and he used to say to them, “When you get to Heaven, give my love to the three glorious Johns up there, and be sure to tell them that poor old Rowley hopes they have not forgotten him.” There is no fear that they will forget any of you who are going there! There is a crown in Heaven which will fit nobody’s head but yours and that crown must hang as a useless thing until you get there to wear it! There is a mansion in Glory that nobody but you can inhabit and you cannot suppose that it will be allowed to stand empty forever, can you? Oh, no! You must be there to occupy it and you may rest assured that He who is preparing the place for His people will bring His people to it, for He has not gone to Heaven to prepare a place for His people without resolving that His people shall not perish on the way there!  
“The needy shall not always be forgotten.” They will be especially remembered when Christ comes and He says to them, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” They will be remembered as they enter into the joy of their Lord and then, throughout the eternal ages, they will never be forgotten of Him! They may well bear whatever comes upon them now in the anticipation of the Glory that is yet to be revealed!

The other promise in our text is that “the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.” What is your expectation—you who have believed in Jesus, yet who feel very poor and needy? You have been expecting to get peace, have you not? You shall have it in due time. A friend said to me, quite recently, “Supposing a person has believed in Jesus, but does not feel immediate peace, what then? Is that person to believe that he is saved? What is his evidence that he is?” I replied, “God says that whoever believes in His Son is not condemned, so I need not ask to have peace within my soul in order to corroborate the declaration of God. I am bound to take the Truth of God as it stands and believe myself to be saved, whether I feel any peace or not. If I will do this, then I shall have the peace. But if I say that I will not believe myself saved till I feel peace, then I am not really believing God at all—I am asking Him to give me peace to corroborate His evidence, as if the evidence in the Word were not strong enough to satisfy me.” Dear Friend, it may be that you have not yet enjoyed peace because your faith is not as simple and as clear as it should be. But if you are really poor and needy and cast yourself on the promises of God, you may depend upon it that the expectation that you have rightly founded upon the Gospel shall not be disappointed. You shall have peace! Yes, and you shall have perfect peace one day. “The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.”  
You are expecting, too, that you shall triumph over sin. God has promised that sin shall not have dominion over you. It may struggle very hard and, for a while, you may seem to be under its power. No, more— you may come under its power in a measure, but it never shall reign over you! Sin may, for a time, conquer a part of Mansoul, but it can never conquer the citadel of the heart! So rest assured of that. “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly,” and you shall yet feel the power of holiness and the mighty work of the Eternal Spirit in your soul. “The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”  
You have been expecting, too, to get out of trouble. Well, you shall get out of trouble. You have been expecting to see good come out of evil. Well, good will come out of evil. I cannot tell you when you shall be delivered, but delivered you shall be, for thus it is written, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” One of these days you will receive a warrant that will set you free from all trouble forever and ever! How soon it may come, I cannot tell, but, till it does, you may patiently wait and quietly hope for the salvation of God.  
You have also been expecting to enjoy the full assurance of faith and your expectation, in that respect, shall not perish forever. The Lord will make your faith grow—every day’s experience will help to establish it and even your difficulties and troubles will tend to strengthen it. If a boy is apprenticed to a blacksmith, I should not wonder if, for months, his arm aches dreadfully through swinging the big hammer. But keep on, Boy, keep on! Your muscles will grow hard, your sinews will get braced and you will become strong just where you need to be strong. So, dear Friend, shall it be with your faith—you shall become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.  
You expected to have very special spiritual joys, did you not? You expected that your soul would be made like the chariots of Amminadib, did you not? You expected to be in such a condition that whether in the body or out of the body, you could not tell. Well, you shall realize all that in due season, for God will reveal it unto you when it seems good in His sight. As for myself—and I may also speak for all who love the Lord—I am expecting to be with Him where He is, to behold His Glory. I am expecting to be like He and to overcome and sit with Him upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and has sat down with His Father upon His Throne.  
And, Brothers and Sisters, if this is your expectation, it shall not perish forever, but it shall be blessedly realized. I have told you before some of the last words of my venerable grandfather, but I may venture to repeat them to you. One of my uncles said to him, “You know, Father, that hymn of Dr. Watts—  
*“‘Firm as the earth Your Gospel stands,  
My Lord, my hope, my trust.  
If I am found in Jesus’ hands,  
My soul can never be lost’”?*  
“Ah, James!” he replied, “I do not like the metaphor that Dr. Watts uses there, ‘Firm as the earth.’ Why, the earth is sinking from under my feet! I need something much firmer than that. I like better what the Doctor says when he sings—  
*“‘Firm as His throne His promise stands, And He can well secure  
What I’ve committed to His hands,  
Till the decisive hour.’”*  
“That will do for me now, James,” said the dying saint, “that is Divine Sovereignty. The Lord is King and, as surely as He is King and sits upon His Throne, so surely will He fulfill His promise to a poor feeble worm like I, so I shall behold His face with joy.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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JOY IN SALVATION  
NO. 3503

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 30, 1871.

**“I will rejoice in Your salvation.”  
Psalm 9:4.**  
I DESIRE to continue the topic of the morning, [See Sermon #1003, Volume  
17—YOUR OWN SALVATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at  
http://www.spurgeongems.org.] only we will look at another side of the same important matter.

We spoke this morning, as you have not forgotten, upon these words, “Your own salvation.” I trust most of us—would God I could hope all of us—were earnest about our own personal salvation! To those who are earnest, this second text will be the complement of the first. They desire that their own salvation shall be secure. It is their own salvation when they obtain it—but here is the guide as to what is the right salvation— what our own salvation ought to be. It is not our own in another sense— it is God’s. “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” While it becomes our own by an act of faith, it is not our own so that we can claim any merit or take any part of the glorying to ourselves. The only salvation that is worth being our own is that which is God’s. “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Having this morning somewhat at length explained what salvation is, showing that it was not a mere deliverance from wrath to come, but from the present wrath of God and yet more essentially from sin, from the power of evil within us, there is no need that we should go over that again, I trust. But we shall begin by noticing the speciality which is in the text, dwelling upon the Divine Salvation. “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” So, then, we look at once at—

I. A DIVINE SALVATION.  
The salvation we have already spoken of is God’s and it is God’s salvation in many ways. It was His in the planning. None but He could have planned it. In His Infinite Wisdom He devised it. The salvation which is revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ in the Gospel is, every part of it, in all its architecture the fruit of Divine skill! We may say, “Or with whom took He counsel and who instructed Him and who taught Him knowledge?” In every part the Divine hand may be seen—it is of God’s planning and ordaining, before the earth was. So is it of God’s providing. You have salvation wrapped up in the gift of the Person of Jesus Christ. All of it lies in Christ. Because He died, our sin is put away. Because He lives, we shall also live. And Christ is the pure gift of God. All salvation is in Him and, therefore, all salvation is thus procured by God. It is God’s salvation. And what is more, God not only plans and procures, but He also applies salvation. I believe in free agency, but I never yet met with a Christian who was able to say that he came to Christ of his own free will without being drawn by the Spirit of God! Whatever our doctrinal view may be, the experimental fact is the same in every case. All Believers will confess that they are God’s workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus. “No man can come unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him.” There is a need of power. “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” There is a need of will and the Spirit of God, therefore, applies the salvation which God has planned and which God has provided. And as the first application of this salvation is of God, so is it all the way through. I do not believe, dear Brothers and Sisters, that our religion is like the action of a clock wound up at first by a superior hand and then left to go alone. No! Every day the Holy Spirit must continue to work upon us and in us, to will and to do according to God’s good pleasure. And if you and I should ever get right up to the gate of pearl and should hear the songs of the blessed within that gate, we should not be able to take the last step, but should turn back to our sin and folly if He that began a good work in us should cease to carry it on! He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. “Salvation is of the Lord,” from first to last. He makes the rough draft of it in conviction upon our conscience. He goes on to complete the picture and if there is one touch in the picture that is not of God, it is a blot upon it! If there is anything of the flesh, it will have to be wiped out—it is not consistent with the work of God. Of God is it in all respects!  
Now we know that this salvation is of God, not only because we are told that He planned it, provided it and applies it, but because it has the marks of God upon it. There is a certain line of poetry. I know it is Shakespeare’s. Well, you know, I cannot quite tell you why, but yet I am sure no one ever wrote exactly in that way. I am reading the Psalms through and I read and I say, “That is David’s.” I observe certain critics who say, “No, this belongs to the time of the captivity.” I am certain it does not. And why? Because there is a Davidic ring about it! The son of Jesse, and he, alone, could have said such things! Now in salvation there are the marks of Divine Authorship. I once saw a painting by Titan at Venice— and he had written, “

Fecit, fecit Titian.” He claimed it twice over, as if to make sure that someone else should not claim it. And God has put it three times over that there should be no doubt, whatever, that salvation is of God and He must have the glory of it. Now observe the marks of God—what I may call the broad arrow of the King—set on salvation. It is full of mercy. Here is salvation for the blackest of sinners—salvation for all manner of sin—forgiveness for all manner of sin—salvation so full of Grace that only God could have conceived it. “Who is a pardoning God like You?” But this salvation is equally congenial with justice, for God never absolutely forgives a sin. There is always punishment for sin in every case! Jesus Christ, the Substitute, comes in and satisfies Justice before the word is spoken to the sinner, “Your transgression is blotted out.” In the salvation which God has provided on the Cross by the death of His dear Son, there is as much justice as there is mercy—and there is an infinity of both! Now this is God-like! Man, if he brings out one quality, usually clouds another with it. But God exhibits His Character in harmonious completeness—as merciful as if He were not just, and as just as if He were not gracious! In the Gospel, on this account, we also see Divine Wisdom. Whatever some may say about the Doctrine of Substitution, Christ is still the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. The way, so simple, yet so sublime, by which God is just and yet the justifier of him that believes, exhibits the Infinite Wisdom of the Most High!  
But I won’t keep you by mentioning all the Divine attributes. It is certain they all shine in the Gospel, nor can any tell which of the letters are written best —the Power, the Wisdom, or the Grace . They are all there, proving the salvation to be of God!  
And there is one other matter. True salvation is of God because it draws toward God. If you have God’s salvation, you are being drawn towards your heavenly Father, nearer and nearer every day. The ungodly forget God. The awakened seek God. But the saved rejoice in God! Ask yourself this question, “Could you live without God?” The ungodly man would be happier without God than he is with Him. It would be the best piece of news in the newspaper to thousands, if we could publish it tomorrow, that God was dead! To ungodly men it would be like ringing the bells of universal joy—they would run riot after their own will! And where would the Believer be? He would be an orphan! His sun would be blotted out! His hopes would be dead and buried! Judge by this whether you are saved. If you are saved, you are drawn to God, you seek to be like God, you desire to honor God. If there are none of these things in you, then I charge you see to it, for you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! God have mercy upon you! I need not further say that the salvation is of God and God must have all the glory of it. All on earth who are saved and all in Heaven who are saved will ascribe their salvation entirely to the ever blessed God and join with Jonah, who in the very depths of the sea made this, his confession of faith, “Salvation is of the Lord.” But now, secondly, our text (having noticed the Divine Salvation in it) has—  
II. AN OUTSPOKEN AVOWAL.  
“I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Here is someone springing out from the common crowd and saying, “I have heard of God’s salvation. I will rejoice in it! I will rejoice in it! Some despise it. They hear it and they turn a deaf ear. When they have listened to it the longest, they are most weary of it. But I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Here is a distinguished character, who is made so, doubtless, by distinguishing Grace! Oh, I hope there are many of us here who could stand up and say—if this were the time and place—“Let others say what they will and count the Cross a thing to mock and Jesus Christ to be forgotten, I am His servant—I will rejoice in His salvation.” There are some that rest in another salvation. We all did so once. But he who speaks in the text throws aside self-righteousness as filthy rags! He puts it all aside and says, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” If I were righteous, I would not say so. Had I a perfect holiness, I would not mention it in comparison with the righteousness of Christ, but being an unworthy sinner without a single merit of my own, I will not be so foolish as to patch up a fictitious righteousness, but I will rejoice in Your salvation! You see them there!—those worshippers of the scarlet woman—they are resting in their priest! He puts on millinery, blue, pink, scarlet, white and I know not what—all kinds of little toys to please fools with! And there are some that rejoice in that salvation that comes from an “infallible” sinner—that comes from a sham priest of God! But we are looking to Christ who stands before the Eternal Throne of God and pleads the merits of His own blood. We say—  
*“Let all the forms that men devise  
Assault our faith with treacherous art,  
We’ll call them vanity and lies  
And bind the Gospel to our heart.”*  
“I will rejoice in Your salvation.” There may be some tonight to whom I shall speak who are rejoicing in God’s salvation through His abundant Grace who have very little else to rejoice in. You are very poor. Ah, how welcome you are to this house! How glad I am that you have come! I feel it always a joy that the people have the Gospel preached to them. Well, you have no broad acres, you have no gold rings on your fingers—you come in the garb of toil—never mind, my Brother or Sister, lay hold on eternal life and say, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Perhaps you are sick tonight—your poor weak body could scarcely drag itself up to the assembly of God’s people. Well, well, it is a heavy thing to have to suffer so, but if you cannot rejoice in a hale body, yet rejoice in His salvation! Look tonight to Jesus! Put your trust in Him, alone, and you will have a sufficient wellspring of joy if you have nothing else! Possibly some of you who lay hold on Christ and rejoice in Him will have hard times of it at home—your father will mock at you, your mother will not sympathize with you. Your workmates, tomorrow, if they hear that you are converted, will laugh and jest, and jeer at you. What say you? Are you a coward? Will you back out of it because it demands a sacrifice? Oh, if it is so, then you are, indeed, unworthy of the name and you count yourself so! But if you are what you should be, you will say, “Let them laugh at me as they will, and spit upon me as they please, I will rejoice in Your salvation.”—  
It takes some pluck, but we ought to have it in the cause of Christ. Your mean, miserable wretches that will only go out to follow Christ in sunny weather, but disappear when a cloud darkens the sky, deserve well the wrath that comes upon them! They are like the Nautilus, very well on the placid sea, but the first billow that arises, they furl their sails and drop into the deep and are seen no more! Oh, beware, beware, beware of a sunny-weather religion! Beware of a religion that will not stand the fire, but be you such that if all the world forsook Christ, you would say, “I will rejoice in His salvation.” And if you were turned out of doors—if you were turned out of the world, itself, and thought not fit to live—you would yet be content to have it so—if you might be numbered with the people of God and be permitted to rejoice in His salvation! Does this, as I try to speak it, awaken a holy emotion in any soul here? Is there someone who has been a stranger to my Lord, who tonight can say, “I desire to rejoice in His salvation”? I cannot forget, when I sat as a young lad under the gallery of a little place of worship, hearing the Gospel simply preached— the blessed moment when I was led to resolve to follow Christ! I have never been ashamed of having done so. I have never had to regret it. He is a blessed Master! He has handled me roughly lately, but He is a blessed Master. I would follow at His heels if only like a dog, for it is better to be His dog than to be the devil’s darling! He is a blessed Master, let Him say what He wills and do what He wills. Oh, is there no young man here, no youth, no child, no girl— is there no gray-headed one who will say, “I will rejoice in Your salvation”? O eternal Spirit, come and touch some heart and make this their spiritual birthright, that they may say, “I—I—I will rejoice in Your salvation!”  
But we must pass on, for time presses. We have, in the third place, to consider in the text—  
III. A DELIGHTFUL EMOTION.  
We have noticed the Divine Salvation and the outspoken avowal. Now we will notice the delightful emotion. “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” It is an unfortunate thing that Christianity gets associated with melancholy. I will not forbid the blahs, for they are not very near of kin, but I wish they were further apart every day. It is a good thing for the melancholy to become a Christian—it is an unfortunate thing for the Christian to become melancholy! If there is any man in the world that has a right to have a bright, clear face and flashing eyes, it is the man whose sins are forgiven him and who is saved with God’s salvation! In order for any man, however, to rejoice in God’s salvation, he must, first of all, know it. There must be an intelligent apprehension of what it is. Next, he must grasp it by an act of faith as his own. Then, having grasped it, he must study it to know the price at which it was bought and all the qualities— the Divine Qualities that follow from it. Then he must hold it fast and seek to get out the sweetness from it. What is there in God’s salvation that should make us rejoice? I do not know what to select, for it is all joy and all rejoicing! It is enough to make our heart to ring with joy to think that there should be a salvation at all for such poor souls as we are! We may well hang out all the streamers of our spirits and strew the streets of our soul with flowers, for King Jesus has come to dwell there! Ring every bell! Give Him a glorious welcome. Let all the soul be glad when Jesus enters and brings salvation with Him, for the salvation of Christ is so suitable that we may well rejoice in it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are saved, I know the salvation of Christ suited you! It did me—exactly— it was made on purpose for me! I am as sure of it as if there were no other sinner to be saved. It was the Gospel that brought power to the weak, no, it brought life to the dead! It brought everything to those that had nothing. It is just the sort of Gospel for a penniless, bankrupt sinner like myself. We rejoice in

 the suitability of the Gospel. We rejoice in the freeness of it. We have nothing to pay—we have no price to pay, neither of promise, nor of anything that was our own. Salvation was freely given to us in Christ Jesus. Let us rejoice in it, then! Oh, rejoice in the richness of that salvation! When the Lord pardoned our sins, He did not pardon half of them and leave some of them on the book, but with one stroke of the pen He gave a full receipt for all our debts! When we went down into the fountain filled with blood, and washed, we did not come up half-clean, but there was no spot nor wrinkle upon us—we were white as driven snow! Glory be to God for such a rich salvation as this! And He did not in that day save us with a perhaps and a chance salvation that set us on a rock and said, “Keep yourself there—you must depend upon yourselves.” No, but this was the Covenant He made with us—“A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you.” It was a complete salvation which would not permit a failure!  
The salvation which is given to the soul that believes is on this wise, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” “The water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” I believe the perseverance of the saints to be the very gem of the Gospel! I could not hold the Truth of Scripture if this could be disproved to me, for every page seems to have this upon it, if nothing else, that “the righteous shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger.” In this my soul rejoices, that I have a salvation to preach to you which, if you receive it, will effectually save you if your hearts are given to Christ and will keep you, and preserve you, and bring you into the eternal Kingdom of His Glory. I will rejoice in the certain and abiding character of that salvation. Oh, there is enough in the salvation of Christ to make Heaven full of bliss! There is enough to make us full of praise! Let us take up the theme. Let us talk by the way to one another about it! Let us talk to sinners about it. Let us recommend religion by our cheerfulness. Levity be far from us, but happiness let it be the happiest sphere in which we live if we have little else to rejoice in, we have enough here! Whatever may be our condition or prospects, we may still rejoice in God’s salvation—and let us not fail to be filled with this most blissful emotion!  
And now I must close. The text has in it a word of the future which we must not quite overlook. Here is a joyful Gospel, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” You may read it, if you like, “I shall”—“I shall” or, “I will”—it would be quite right. The Hebrew has no present. It seems to have given up all tenses—like God, Himself, who Was, and Is, and is to come. I shall rejoice in Your salvation! Now here is—  
IV. A BLESSED PROSPECT.  
You may live to grow old. Well, we shall never grow weary of Christ. If we are His people, we shall never have any cause to part from Him. “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” I could bring up to this platform an aged Brother whom all of you would know, who has infirmities and has age creeping upon him. But there is not a happier soul in this house than he! And when I had made him speak to you, I could bring you many more aged women, too, and I would ask them what they think of Christ and I am sure they would say with greater emphasis than I can, “I will rejoice in Your salvation!” I almost wish my grandfather were alive and behind me tonight, for on one occasion I preached with him in the pulpit and when I came to speak of experience, he pulled my coattail and came to the front and said, “My grandson can tell you that he believes it, but I can tell you experimentally”—and on the old gentleman went with it! Well, many an aged Christian can tell you he has rejoiced in God’s salvation! He does rejoice and, instead of age making the joy of his youth to become dim, it has mellowed and sweetened the fruit which was sweet even at the first! Oh, that we may, when these hairs grow gray with years and the snows of many winters lie white upon our head—may we still rejoice in God’s salvation! But then, whether we reach old age or not, there is one thing that is certain—we shall assuredly die—and when we come to die, what shall we do? I know what you are thinking. You say, “I will groan.” Yes, Sinner, you are thinking of the friend that is wiping away the clammy sweat from the brow and those closed eyes. Now those may never occur! We often hear them mentioned in reference to dying beds, but they are not so constantly there as to be necessary. And if they were there, if we did lose sight itself before life fails—what then? Why, the vision of the Christ, who is our salvation, and in whom we rejoice, shall then be more gloriously clear and radiantly beautiful—because the sights and sounds of earth will have vanished from us!  
Now, instead of looking at these outward parts of dying, think of this, “I will rejoice in Your salvation.” When I parted from our dear brother, Cook, a few days ago, he could not say much. He was very, very weak, but what he did say was just this, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is All.” Well, I talked, and read, and prayed, and so on, and when we had done, he simply said, “The blood—the blood, the blood—that is all my hope.” Why, he looked as calm in prospect of dying as any of you do in sitting here! And he was as delighted with the hope of being where Jesus is as ever bride was at the coming of the marriage day! It was delightful to see the blessed calm and peace that was upon that man of God! And when I come to die, whoever I may be, however little my standing in the Church of God is, if I am in Christ, I will rejoice in His salvation! I will make the dark valley ring with His praises! I will make the river of Death, itself, roll back as the Red Sea did of old, with my triumphant songs! I will enter Heaven with this upon my heart and upon my lips, “I will rejoice in Your salvation! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor, and power, and dominion, and glory forever and ever!” And, Brothers and Sisters, if that is what we may do in dying, this is what we shall do forever and ever—“I will rejoice in Your salvation.” Millions of ages, throughout all the cycles of years that interpose before Christ delivers up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and then onward, even through eternity—this always shall be our own ground of rejoicing—“I will rejoice in Your salvation.”  
Now I cannot come and stand at the door and speak to everyone as the congregation withdraws, but if it were possible, I would like to stand there and shake the hand of everyone that has been in the house tonight, and say, “Well, Friend, how fares it with you? Can you say, ‘I will rejoice in Your salvation?’” If I cannot do that, I wish it were possible to speak in the silent shades of night to you when you awoke, so that you might hear a voice ringing in your ears, “Do you rejoice in God’s salvation?” Perhaps some of you may have come a long distance across the sea. You may be, by-and-by, on shipboard again. It may be that you will be in peril, or it may be that afterwards you shall be in sickness. Well, may this evening’s congregation in this day of July rise up before your minds. And if you forget the preacher (and that will not matter), yet if you hear a voice that says, “Can you rejoice in God’s salvation?” I hope that, even if it is 20 years to come, it may then be as the voice of God to your soul and bring you to the Savior! But better far would it be if you would come to Him tonight—and you may! May the Spirit of God bring you! Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life! The whole of the Gospel is wrapped up in Christ’s message which He has sent by His Apostles, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To you each this—this—is the word, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and your house.” God add His own blessing, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**“If on my face for Your dear name, Shame and reproach may be.  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame, For You’ll remember me!”**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 THESSALONIANS 5.**

Verses 1, 2. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. The great point is that it comes— will certainly come, and it will come when it is least expected. There are certain signs given, by which the righteous shall know of its appearing, but all study of dates and fixing of the time is contrary to the very spirit of the Christian dispensation! We are to abide, always looking for it, believing it may come today, believing it may not come today—believing that the secret of the time is with God. You err if you say it shall be this or that season! You equally err if you say it shall not be then. Let it remain as it is—a secret in the heart of God—you yourselves always ready, expecting it to come.

3. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. Sudden and acute shall be the terror of the ungodly when the Lord Jesus in flaming fire shall be manifested!

4. But you brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. You are brought out of darkness into His marvelous light! Your element is light. “You are all the children of light.” “You are not in darkness that the day should overtake you as a thief.” You know the signs and, being watchful, you will observe them when the hour comes.

5, 6. You are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. It is the proper and fitting season for it. That the children of darkness should slumber is no wonder! They are the children of a sleepy time. You are the children of the day—if you sleep, you will be acting contrary to your nature.

7. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunk, are drunk in the night. People were a little more decorous in the Apostle’s day than they are now, for there are some who are drunk in the day, now-adays, and though we have certainly improved in some things, we seem to have gone back in this! But at any rate, drunkenness may seem suitable to night persons, but it is not suitable to those who profess to have the light of God’s Grace!

8. But let us who are of the day, be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. We are of the day, but it is a day of battle. Therefore put on armor! Be as soldiers that are covered with a panoply. Especially take care of your heart—put on the breastplate. Faith and love are the sacred protection for this. Take care that you have both. Take care of your head—that also is a vital part. Put on the helmet. Hope will do that. A good hope in Christ Jesus will guard you from many violent attacks that will be made upon your judgment.

9. For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no ordination to condemnation. Believing in Christ, we have the evidence that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the spirit and obedience, and sprinkling of blood.

10, 11. Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do. It is a good Church of which we can say this, especially if we can say it of all the members, that they edify one another. Living stones in a living temple should seek to build each other up! May we all try to have a sacred commerce in our knowledge and other gifts as one trading with another. All may enrich and edify one another. “As also you do.” Why did he tell them to do it, then, if they were doing it? Answer—that they might keep on doing it! The horse that runs best may still be the better for a spur.

12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Consider them in your prayers! Give them all the help you can. Do not be strangers to their office and to the burden which it brings. God has set them over you. Regard them in that light. Esteem them very highly, not as masters, as though they were lords, but as being over you—

*“Esteem them highly in love for their works’ sake.”*

13 . And be at peace among yourselves. There is an end to Church prosperity when there is an end of peace!  
14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly. There are some that never will be ruled—their very idea of being a Christian is that they shall do just as they like! It is a somewhat happy circumstance that there are sects where they can do so. There are formed, now-a-days, you little knots of people, who will have no rule and church government, and who meet to edify one another. Though they speedily go to pieces, it is perhaps the better for the churches that they are quit of them!  
14. Comfort the feeble-minded. They need cheering. You needed it once—return the benefit you have received. Do not be out of patience with them for being so foolish. If their minds are feeble, you cannot expect much better from them.  
14. Support the weak. Give them something to cling to. As some climbing plants put out their tendrils and need to be helped up, so may you be a prop to these climbers.  
14. Be patient toward all men. Think of what patience God has with you. “Be patient toward all men.”  
15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man. Not in any case. The world advises you to pay a man in his own coin, but if he pays you bad coin, he is wrong—and if you pay him bad coin there will be two wrongs. Do not do it!  
15, 16. But always follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. You have always something to rejoice in—make the world ring with Christian music.  
17. Pray without ceasing. Praise and prayer are fit companions. You will soon leave off rejoicing if you leave off praying! By spurts, keep up your prayers while at your books. You will not disturb your avocations by continuing still in supplication and prayer. That provender hinders no man’s journey.  
18. In everything give thanks. Try to do so for everything, but if you cannot do it, in everything give thanks for something else—when you are in circumstances which do not excite your thankfulness just then.

18. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. God wills it. This moved the Crusaders to war. Let this suffice to move you in thanksgiving.

19. Quench not the Holy Spirit. Do not hinder His movements in yourself. Do not try to hinder them in others. If any man has a gift which he might use to edification, do not discourage him, but rather encourage him to get more Grace. God may find him opportunities of making use of it. Quench not the Holy Spirit.

20. Despise not prophesying. If they are vain and false, despise them if you will, but that prophecy especially which deals with the Word of God, for the Word here does not signify merely prophecies of the future— it is often used in regular preaching. Despise not anyone who speaks in God’s name! He may speak with blunders of grammar—forget them! If he is correct in his teaching of Divine Truth. If he speaks to your heart. If he warns you. If he warns under the Spirit of God, never despise him!

21. Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. That first sentence is got to be quite a proverb, but that last, I believe, is taken away, which is another instance of the common truth that half the truth is a lie. You must give it all or none. “Prove all things,” is mischievous teaching unless you “hold fast that which is good.” And, after all, in the very first sentence it is not so much, “Prove all things,” as, “Prove all things”—that is, take nothing on trust. Do not believe it because you are told so. Search the Scriptures! Test what you have received, but when you have tested it, do not go about to be forever proving it. Hold it fast. Grip it. Grapple it to you as an ox to the stall. Hold fast that which is good.

22. Abstain from all appearance of evil. By which is not meant, as some read it, “from everything that somebody likes to say looks like evil.” This would be to mar the Christian liberty! But wherever evil puts in an appearance, when it appears to be good, when it has been dressed out— for the word may refer to a Roman spectacle, or grand procession. Avoid evil even when dressed out in its best, when it comes on in all its gallant show to attract you. Avoid every species and kind of evil—that might almost be the translation—abstain from it altogether!

23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Christian there is a trinity. His nobler nature is that which he got when he was regenerated, and it is his spirit. His soul he has got in common with other men. His body he has in common with animals. All, however, must be fully consecrated to God. I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it. What a word of good cheer that is! Sanctification often seems to be a thing far off, but He will do it. He that called will perfect. The work which His wisdom began, the arm of His strength will complete. His promise is yes and amen. God never did forget yet.

25. Brethren, pray for us. Because sometimes people think that those of high spiritual attainments do not need their prayers. Remember, if they have a higher position, they have greater dangers.

26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. This was the token of friendship in the East. To attempt to import it to the West would not only be absurd, but wicked! I may properly read, then, “Greet all the brethren with a hearty handshake. Keep up the outward form of fellowship, for if you don’t, you will soon forget the fellowship itself.” The kiss was the Oriental custom—it was to be kept up. The handshake is our Western custom. Let it be kept up. And I delight to see it when Christians meet and cordially greet each other after the custom of their land.

27. I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren The Pope would charge you that it be read to nobody! But who is he? It seems that this Epistle was intended to be read by all the Churches, and so also the whole Bible. It is said it is not safe to trust it with the brethren—it is not safe to trust them without it! It is not safe to keep back God’s Word from any man! Let the whole Book be read, and I am sure the more read, the better, especially if the last verse is true of every reader—

28. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.  
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THE POOR MAN’S FRIEND  
NO. 3059

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 8, 1873.

**“The poor commits himself unto You.”  
Psalm 10:14.**

GOD is the poor man’s Friend. The poor man, in his helplessness and despair, leaves his case in the hands of God and God undertakes to care for him. In the days of David—and I suppose, in this respect, the world has but little improved—the poor man was the victim of almost everybody’s cruelty and sometimes he was very shamefully oppressed. If he sought redress for his wrongs, he generally only increased them, for he was regarded as a rebel against the existing order of things. And when he asked for even a part of what was his by right, the very magistrates and rulers of the land became the instruments of his oppressors and made the yoke of his bondage to be yet heavier than it was before. Tens of thousands of eyes, full of tears, have been turned to Jehovah and He has been invoked to interpose between the oppressor and the oppressed, for God is the ultimate resort of the helpless. The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed—He undertakes the cause of all those that are downtrodden.

If the history of the world is rightly read, it will be found that no case of oppression has been allowed to go long unpunished. The Assyrian empire was a very cruel one, but what is now left of Nineveh and Babylon? Go to the heaps of ruins by the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates and see what will become of an empire which is made to be only an instrument of oppression in the hands of an emperor and the great men under him. It has ceased to be more than a name—its power has vanished and its palaces have been destroyed. In later times there sprang up the mighty empire of Rome and even now, wherever we wander, we see traces of its greatness and splendor. How came it to fall? Many reasons have been assigned, but you may rest assured that at the bottom of them all was the cruelty practiced towards the slaves and other poor people who were absolutely in the power of the aristocracy and oligarchy who formed the dominant party in the empire. There is a fatal flaw in the foundations of any throne that does not execute justice—and it matters not though the empire seems to stand high as Heaven and to raise its pinnacles to the skies—down it must come if it is not founded upon right. When ten thousand slaves have cried to God, apparently in vain, it has not really been in vain, for He has registered their cries and in due season has avenged their wrongs! And when the poor toilers who have reaped the rich man’s fields have been deprived of their harshlyearned wages and have cast their complaints into the court of Heaven, they have been registered there and God has, at the right time, taken up their cause and punished their oppressors!

For many years the Negro slaves cried to God to deliver them and, at last, deliverance came to the joy of the emancipated multitudes, yet not without suffering to all the nations that had been concerned in that great wrong. And here, too, if the employers of labor refuse to give to the agricultural laborer his just wage, God will surely visit them in His wrath. At this very day we have serfs in England who, with sternest toil, cannot earn enough to keep body and soul together and to maintain their families as they ought to be maintained. And where masters are thus refusing to their laborers a fair remuneration for their work, let them know that whoever may excuse them and whatever may be said of the laws of political economy, God does not judge the world by political economy! He judges the world by this rule, that men are bound to do that which is just and right to their fellow men—and it can never be right that a man should work like a slave, be housed worse than a horse and have food scarcely fit for a dog! But if the poor commit their case to God, He will undertake it and I, as one of God’s ministers, will never cease to speak on behalf of the rights of the poor. The whole question has two sides—the rights of the employers and the rights of the men. Let not the men do as some workmen do, ask more than they ought—yet, on the other hand, let not the employers domineer over their men, but remember that God is the Master of us all and He will see that right is done to all. Let us all act rightly towards one another, or we shall feel the weight of His hand and the force of His anger.

Now, having thus given the literal meaning of my text, I am going to spiritualize it, which I should have no right to do if I had not first explained the primary reference of David’s words, “The poor commits himself unto You.”

I. THERE ARE SPIRITUALLY POOR MEN and these do what other poor men have done in temporal things—they commit their case into the hands of God.

Let me try to define the spiritually poor. They are, first, those who have no merits of their own. There are some people in the world who are, according to their own estimate, very rich in good works. They think that they began well and that they have gone on well—they hope to continue to do well right to the end of their lives. They do confess, sometimes, that they are miserable sinners, but that is merely because that expression is in the Prayer Book. They are half sorry it is there, but they suppose that it must have been meant for other people, not for themselves. So far as they know, they have kept all the Commandments from their youth up. They have been just in their dealings with their fellow men and they do not feel that they are under any very serious obligations even to God, Himself. I have nothing to say to such people except to remind them that the Lord Jesus Christ said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Christ came to bring healing to those who are spiritually sick—you say that you are perfectly well, so you must go your own way and Christ will go in another direction—towards sinners.

Further, the poor people of whom I am speaking are not only totally without anything like merit, absolutely bankrupt of any goodness and devoid of anything of which they could boast, but they are also without strength to perform any such good works in the future. They are so poor, spiritually, that they cannot even pray as they would—and they do not even feel their poverty as they would like to feel it. After having read this Bible, they wish they could re-read it with greater profit. And when they weep oven sin, they feel their sin in their very tears and need to weep in penitence over their tears. They are such poor people that they can do absolutely nothing without Christ and so poor that in them, that is, in their flesh, there dwells no good thing. They did once think that there might be something good in them, but they have searched their nature through most painfully and they have discovered that unless Divine Grace shall do everything for them, where God is they can never come.

Perhaps some of you say, “These must be very bad people.” Well, they are no better that they should be, yet I may tell you another thing concerning them—they are no worse than many of those who think themselves a great deal better. They have this lowly opinion of themselves because the Grace of God has taught them to think rightly and truthfully about themselves in relation to God. They are, in outward appearance, and as far as we can judge, quite as good as others and better than some. In certain respects, they might be held up as examples to others. This is what we say of them, but they have not a good word to say of themselves. Rather, they put their finger upon their lips and blush at the remembrance of what they feel themselves to be. Or if they must speak of themselves at all, they say, “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to his own way.”

II. That brings me to notice, secondly, WHAT THESE POOR PEOPLE DO. They commit themselves unto God. This is a very blessed description of what true faith does. The poor in spirit feel that their case is so desperate that they cannot keep it in their own charge and, therefore, they commit it to God. I will try to show you how they do that.

First, they commit their case to God as a debtor commits his case to a surety. The man is so deeply in debt that he cannot pay his creditors even a farthing in the pound. But here is someone who can pay everything that the debtor owes and he says to him, “I will stand as security for you. I will be bondsman for you. I will give full satisfaction to all your creditors and discharge all your debts.” There is no person who is deeply in debt who would not be glad to know of such a surety, both able and willing to stand in his place and to discharge all his responsibilities! If the surety said to this poor debtor, “Will you turn over all your liabilities to me? Will you sign this document, empowering me to take all your debts upon myself and to be responsible for you? Will you let me be your bondsman and surety?” “Ah,” the poor man would reply, “that I will, most gladly!” That is just what spiritually poor men have done to the Lord Jesus Christ—committed their case with all their debts and liabilities into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ—and He has undertaken all the responsibility for them!

I think I hear someone say, “But will Christ really stand in the sinner’s place in such a way as that?” Oh, yes, for He did stand, in anticipation, in the sinner’s place before the foundation of the world and He actually stood there when He died upon the accursed tree. By His death He obtained a full discharge of the debts of all those whose Surety He had

become. [See Sermons #694, Volume 12—SIN LAID ON JESUS and #925, Volume 16— INDIVIDUAL SIN LAID ON JESUS—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Dear Soul, will you not commit all your affairs into His hands? Are you not willing to let Him stand as your Surety, to clear you of all your liabilities? “Willing?” you say! “Ah, that I am and not only willing, but right glad shall I be for Him to take my place and relieve me of the burden that is crushing me to the dust.” Then it is done for you and so done that it can never be undone! Suppose that one of you had taken all my debts upon you and that you were quite able and willing to pay them? I would not go home and fret about my debts. I would rejoice to think that you had taken them upon yourself and that, therefore, they would no longer be mine! If Christ has taken your sins upon Himself— and He has done so if you have truly trusted Him—your sins have ceased to be! They are blotted out forever! Christ nailed to His Cross the record of everything that was against us and now every poor sinner who is indebted to God’s Law and who trusts in Christ, may know that his debt is cancelled and that he is clear of all liability for it forever!

Next, we commit our case to Christ as a client does to a solicitor and  
advocate. [See Sermon #515, Volume 9—THE SINNER’S ADVOCATE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] You know that when a man

has a suit at law, (I hope that none of you may ever have such a suit), if he has an advocate to plead his cause, he does not plead for himself. He will probably get into trouble if he does. It is said that when Erskine was pleading for a man who was being tried for murder, his client, being dissatisfied with the way in which his defense was being conducted, wrote on a slip of paper, “I’ll be hanged if I don’t plead for myself.” Erskine wrote in reply, “You’ll be hanged if you do!” It is very much like that with us—if we attempt to plead for ourselves, we shall be sure to go wrong. We must have the Divine Advocate who alone can defend us against the suits of Satan and speak with authority on our behalf even before the bar of God. We must commit our case to Him, that He may plead for us—and then it will go rightly enough.

Remember also that any man who has committed his case to an advocate, must not interfere with it himself. If anybody from the other side should wait upon him and say, “I wish to speak to you about that suit,” he must reply, “I cannot go into the matter with you. I must refer you to my solicitor.” “But I want to reason about it. I need to ask you a few questions about the case.” “No,” he says, “I cannot listen to what you have to say—you must go to my solicitor.” How much trouble Christians would save themselves if when they have committed their case into the hands of Jesus, they would leave it there and not attempt to deal with it on their own account! I say to the devil, when he comes to tempt me to doubt and fear, “I have committed my soul to Jesus Christ and He will keep it in safety. You must bring your accusations to Him, not to me. I am His client and He is my Counselor. Why should I have such an Advocate as He is, and then plead for myself?” John does not say, “If any man sins, let him be his own advocate”—he says, “If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” Dear Brothers and Sisters, leave your case with Christ—He can handle it wisely—you cannot! Remember that if the devil and you get into an argument, he is much older than you are and far more clever than you are—and he knows a great many points of Law that you do not know. You should always refer him to the Savior, who is older than he is and knows much more about Law and everything else than he does—and who will answer him so effectually as to silence him forever! So, poor tried and tempted Soul, commit your case to the Great Advocate and He will plead for you before the Court of King’s Bench in Heaven—and your suit will be sure to succeed through His advocacy!

Further, sinners commit their case to Christ as a patient commits his case to the physician. We, poor sin-sick Sinners, put our case into the hands of Jesus that He may heal us of all our depravities, evil tendencies and infirmities. If anyone asks, “Will He undertake my case if I come to Him?” I answer—Yes, He came to be the Physician of souls, to heal all who trust Him. There never was a case in which He could not heal, for He has a wonderful remedy, a catholicon, a cure for all diseases. If you put your case into His hands, the Holy Spirit will shed abroad His love in your heart—and there is no spiritual disease that can withstand that wondrous remedy! Are you predisposed to quickness of temper? He can cure that! Are you inclined to be indolent? Is there a sluggish spirit within you? He can cure that! Are you proud, or are your tendencies towards covetousness, worldliness, lust or ambition? Christ can cure all those evils! When He was on this earth, He had all manner of patients brought to Him, yet He never was baffled by one case. And your case, whatever it may be, will be quite an easy one to Him if you only go and commit it into His hands! This building seems to me like a great hospital

[See Sermon #2260, Volume 38—CHRIST’S HOSPITAL—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org. ] full of sin-sick souls and I pray the Great Physician to come here and heal them all! No, I must correct myself, for He is here and as He walks through these aisles, and around these galleries, I beseech you to say to Him, “Good Master, I commit myself to You. I take You to be my Savior. O save me from my constitutional temperament, my besetting sins and everything else that is contrary to Your holy will!” He will hear you, for He has never yet refused to heed the cry of a poor sin-sick soul. Do not let Him go by you without praying to Him, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Come, Lord, and lay Your hands upon each one of us and we shall be made perfectly whole!

As to the future, the spiritually poor commit themselves to Christ in the same way in which the pilgrims described in The Pilgrim’s Progress commit themselves to the charge of Mr. Greatheart, that He might fight all their battles for them and conduct them safely to the Celestial City. In the old war times, when the captains of merchant vessels wanted to go to foreign countries and they were afraid of being captured by the privateers of other nations, they generally went in company under the convoy of a man-of-war to protect them. And that is the way you and I must go to Heaven. Satan’s privateers will try to capture us, but we commit ourselves to the protection of Jesus, the Lord High Admiral of all the seas! And we poor little vessels, by His Grace, sail safely under His convoy! When any enemy seeks to attack us, we need not be afraid. He can blow them all out of the water if He pleases, but He will never suffer one of them to injure a solitary vessel that is entrusted to His charge. Sinner, give yourself up to the charge of Jesus to be convoyed to Heaven! And you over-anxious children of God, lay down all your anxieties at the feet of Jesus and rest in His Infinite Power and Love which will never let you be lost!

I might thus multiply figures and illustrations of how we commit ourselves to Christ. We do it very much in the way in which our blind friends, sitting under the pulpit, got here this evening—they came by committing themselves to the care of guides. Some of them can walk a good long way without a guide, but others could not have found their way here tonight without some friend upon whose arm they could lean. That is the way to get to Heaven, by leaning upon Jesus! Do not expect to see Him, but trust yourself to Him and lean hard upon Him. He loves to be trusted and faith has a wonderful charm for Him. I was once near the Mansion House and as I stood there, a poor blind man, who wished to cross over to the bank, said to me, “Please, Sir, lead me across. I know you will, for I am blind.” I was not sure that I could do so, for it is not an easy task to lead a blind man across that part where so many cabs and omnibuses are constantly passing, but I managed it as best I could. I do not think I could have done it if the poor man had not said to me, “I know you will,” for then I thought that I must. And if you come to Christ and say, “Lord Jesus, will You lead me to Heaven?” and tell Him that you are sure that He will never let a poor blind soul miss its way, that you are sure you can trust Him, that He is such a kind-hearted Savior that He will never thrust away a guilty sinner who thus commits himself into His hands—I am sure that He will be glad to save you and that He will rejoice over you as He leads you safely home to Heaven! If any of you can see with your natural eyes and yet are spiritually blind, be glad that there is a blessed Guide to whom you can commit yourself! Christ leads the blind by a way that they know not and He will continue to lead them until He brings them to the land where they will open their eyes and see with rapture and surprise the splendors of Paradise and rejoice that they are all their own forever!

Is not this work of the poor committing themselves to Christ a very easy task? It is a very easy thing for a debtor to commit his debts to his surety, for anyone to commit his case to his advocate, for a patient to trust himself to his physician, for a pilgrim to feel safe under a powerful convoy and for a blind man to trust in his guide—all this is very simple and easy. It does not need much explanation—and faith in Jesus is just as simple and just as easy as that! Why is it that we sometimes find that faith is difficult? It is because we are too proud to believe in Jesus. If we did but see ourselves as we really are, we would be willing enough to trust the Savior—but we do not like going to Heaven like blind people who need a guide, or like debtors who cannot pay a farthing in the pound. We want to have a finger in the pie. We want to do something towards our own salvation. We want to have some of the praise and glory of it. God save us from this evil spirit!

While it is a very simple thing for the spiritually poor to commit themselves to Christ, let me also say that it is an act which greatly glorifies God. Christ is honored when any soul trusts in Him—it is a joy to His heart to be trusted. When the feeble cling to Him, He feels such joy as mothers feel when their little ones cling to them. Christ is glad when poor sin-sick souls come and trust Him. It was for this very purpose that He came into the world—to meet the needs of guilty sinners. So this plan, while it is easy for us, is glorifying to Him.

And I will add that it is a plan that never fails any who trust to it. There never was a single soul that committed its case to Christ and then found Him fail—and there never shall be such a soul so long as the earth endures! He that believes in Christ shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life,” and everlasting life can never be taken away from one who has received it!

I close by asking a question—If the spiritually poor commit themselves unto God, what comes of it? Why, it makes them very happy! But are they not sinful? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to God’s Grace and His Grace blots out all their sins forever! Are they not feeble? Oh, yes, but their feebleness leads them to commit themselves to His Omnipotence—and His strength is made perfect in their weakness. Are they not needy? Oh, yes, but then they bring their needs to Him and they receive out of His fullness, “Grace for Grace.” But are they not often in danger? Oh, yes, in a thousand dangers! But they come and hide beneath the shadow of God’s wings and He covers them with His feathers and there they rest in perfect security! His Truth becomes their shield and buckler so that they need not fear any foe. But are they not apt to slip? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to Him who gives His angels charge over them—to keep them in all their ways and to bear them up in their hands, lest they should dash their feet against a stone. But are they not very fickle and changeable? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to Him who says, “I am Jehovah, I change not.” But are they not unworthy? Oh, yes, in themselves they are utterly unworthy! But they commit themselves to Him who is called The Lord Their Righteousness—and when they are clothed in His Righteousness, they are looked upon by God as being “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But have they no sickness? Yes, but they commit themselves to Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord the Healer—and He either heals their sickness, or gives them the Grace to endure it. Are they not poor? Yes, many of them are extremely so! But they commit themselves to the faithful Promiser and so bread is given them and their water is sure. But don’t they expect to die? Oh, yes, unless the Lord should first come, but they are not afraid to die! This is the point, above all others, in which the spiritually poor commit themselves unto God. They have learned that sweet prayer of David so well that it is often on their tongues, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” They committed their spirit into God’s hands years ago and He has kept them until now— and they know that He will not fail them in their dying hour.

In conclusion, I pray every spiritually poor heart to commit itself to God. I like to do this every morning. Satan often comes and says, “You are no Christian! All your supposed Christian experience is false.” Very well, suppose it has been false? Then I will start afresh—saint or no saint! I will begin over again by trusting Christ to be my Savior. When you, dear Friend, wake tomorrow morning, let this be the first thing that you do—commit yourself to Jesus Christ for the whole of the day. Say, “My Lord, here is my heart which I commit to You. While I am away from home, may my heart be full of the fragrance of Your blessed Presence. And when I return at night, may I still find my heart in Your kind keeping!” And every night, before we go to sleep, let us pray—

*“Should swift death this night overtake us, And our couch become our tomb,  
May the morn in Heaven awake us,  
Clad in light and deathless bloom!”*

Are you going to a foreign land? Then renew the committal of your life to God. Are you going to change your state, and enter upon the joys and responsibilities of married life? Then commit yourself to God. Are you going to a new situation, or opening a new business? Is any change coming over you? Then make a new committal, or a re-committal of your soul to the Lord Jesus—only take care that you do it heartily and thoroughly—and make no reserve. I rejoice to feel that I have committed myself to Christ as the slave of old committed himself to his master. When the time came for him to be set free under the Jewish Law, he said to his master, “No, I do not want to go. I love you, I love your children, I love your household, I love your service. I do not want to be free.” Then you know that the master was to take an awl and fasten him by the ear to the doorpost. I supposes this was done to see whether the man really wanted to remain with his master or not. Ah, Beloved, some of us have had our ears bored long ago! We have given ourselves up to Christ and we have a mark upon us which we can never lose. Were we not buried with Him by Baptism unto death—a symbol that we are dead to the world and buried to the world for His dear sake? Well, in that same way, give yourself wholly up to Jesus! Commit yourself to Him. As that young bride commits all her life’s joys and hopes to that dear bridegroom into whose face she looks so lovingly, so, O Souls, commit yourselves to that dearest Bridegroom in earth or Heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ! Commit yourselves to Him, to love and to be loved—His to obey, His to serve and His to be kept—His in life—and you need not add “till death us do part,” but you may say, “till death shall wed us more completely and we shall sit together at the marriage banquet above and be forever and forever one before the Throne of God.”

Thus the poor soul commits itself unto Christ, is married unto Christ, gets the portion which Christ possesses, becomes Christ’s own and then lives with Christ forever! Oh that this might be the time in which many a man and many a woman would commit themselves to Christ! I do not merely mean you who are poor in pocket, but you who are poor in spirit—I am asking you to commit yourselves to Christ. Do not put it off, but may this be the very hour in which you shall be committed to Christ and He shall take possession of you to be His forever and forever! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 31.**

Verse 1. In You, O LORD, do I put my trust. This is a good beginning. This is the fulcrum which will give us the necessary leverage for lifting any weight of sorrow or trouble that may be burdening us—“In You, O Jehovah, do I put my trust.” Can each of us truthfully say that to begin with? If so, we may go on with David to the petitions that follow.

1. Let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Your righteousness. It would be to us the shame of shames if God, in whom we put our trust, could fail us. Then, indeed, might the scoffers say, “Where, now, is their God?” And what should we then be able to say of the righteousness of God? He has pledged Himself that He will never fail nor forsake any of His people. So, if He ever did fail them, what would become of His honor?

2. Bow down Your ear to me. “Listen to me, O Lord! Stoop down out of Your Glory to catch the faint accents of my sorrowing, almost expiring spirit.”

2. Deliver me speedily. “My case is urgent, Lord, for I am in deep distress. Delay will be dangerous and may be even fatal—‘Deliver me speedily.’”

2. Be You my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me. David was so accustomed to hide in the rocks of Engedi and similar fastnesses, that we do not wonder that he found such a comparison as this come naturally to his mind—“Be You my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me.”

3. For You are my rock and my fortress. Why did David just now pray God to be to him what he here says that God is? Surely it was in order that he might know experimentally what he already knew doctrinally—he wanted the Truth of God, in which he already believed, to be proven in his own experience, so he prayed to the Lord, “Be You my strong rock...for You are my rock and my fortress.”

3. Therefore for Your name’s sake. “For Your glory’s sake, for Your honor’s sake.”  
3. Lead me and guide me. “Lead me as a child needs to be led. Guide me as a traveler in a foreign land needs to be guided. I need You to both lead and to guide me.”

4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privately for me: for You are my strength. Sometimes the Believer gets so entangled that he sees no way of escape. He is caught like a bird in the fowler’s net and he is so surrounded by it that he cries to the Lord, “Pull me out of the net.” He feels that he can only be delivered by the putting forth of God’s power— and that is the reason why he adds, “O Lord, use Your strength on my behalf! Give a desperate tug and pull me out of the net that they have laid privately for me; for You are my strength.”

5. Into Your hands I commit my spirit. The dying words of Jesus may well be the living words of each one of His redeemed people. We ought continually to commit our spirit into our great Father’s hands, for there is no other place that can be so safe and blessed as between the strong, almighty, never-failing hands of the eternal God!

5. You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth. Redemption is such a blessed ground for confidence in God. Even the ordinary redemptions, such as David had experienced when the Lord had redeemed him out of the hand of his enemies and redeemed him out of troubles of many kinds, were great sources of consolation to David. But what shall we say of that rich, full, free redemption which Christ accomplished for His people upon Calvary’s Cross? Think you that God will not keep those whom He has purchased with the blood of His own dear Son? Will He suffer those to perish who have cost Him so dearly? Oh, no! None shall pluck them from His hands. This is a sound argument that David uses— “Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.”

6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities. That is, those that trusted in their idol gods which he calls by this contemptuous name, “lying vanities.” David was not very respectful to false religions. He called them vanities and lies, and said, “I have hated them that regard them.”

6, 7. But I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy: for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities. “‘You have considered my trouble.’ You have looked at it, weighed it, understood it.” When a wise man gives his consideration to a thing, we respect his judgment, but what shall we say of the consideration of God? This is a wonderful expression—“You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities.” “When I hardly knew myself, and could not make out what I was or where I was, You have known all about me. You have known me when I was in rags and tatters, when I was so down at the heel that nobody else would acknowledge me. You did not discard me—‘You have known my soul in adversities.’”

8-10. And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: You have set my feet in a large room. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: my eyes are consumed with grief. Yes, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. That is better than spending our years in sinning! Yet it is a painful experience when every breath seems to be drawn with a pang and the effort to live is itself a struggle, as it is in certain trying diseases.

10, 11. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors. They were the nearest to him and, therefore, could smite him the most keenly.

11. And a fear to my acquaintance. They did not like to acknowledge him even as an acquaintance. They were afraid of him. Yet what a light this verse throws upon David’s previous declaration, “You have known my soul in adversities”!

12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. The very man in whose honor, in the former times, the women out of all the cities of Israel sang, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” now had sorrowfully to say, ‘I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.”

12. I am like a broken vessel. “Men think me of no more value than a piece of broken crockery that is flung away on the dunghill as utterly useless.”

13. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side. The very best of men have had to smart under the wounds caused by that cruel, accursed thing, slander! No quality of purity, no degree of piety can screen a man from the tongue of slander. In fact, as the birds peck most at the ripest fruit, it is often the best of men who are most slandered.

13, 14. While they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in You, O LORD: I said, You are my God. That is a grand utterance of the Psalmist! Now he is coming back to the point where he began—the Psalm is now in harmony with its keynote.

15. My times are in Your hands. My times are not in the hands of my enemies—they cannot hurt me without God’s permission.  
15, 16. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant. Oh, for the shining of God’s face! How blessed and glorious they are! It is Heaven on earth to dwell within the circle of that light—but if we get out of the range of those rays, what joy can we have?  
16. Save me for Your mercies’ sake. That is a prayer for a sinner and a prayer for a saint—a prayer for every day of the year. “Save me for Your mercies’ sake.”  
17-19. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon You: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You. Then be of good courage, you tried ones! Think of all the good things that are laid up in store for you—the treasures that are put away for the present. Nor is this all— “How great is Your goodness.”  
19. Which You have worked for them that trust in You before the sons of men! So there is goodness in the present as well as goodness in the future—goodness worked out as well as goodness stored up!  
20. You shall hide them in the secret of Your Presence from the pride of man: You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

There is nothing much worse than the strife of tongues. A pack of wolves would not be half as bad as a pack of tongues let loose upon a man! Wolves do but tear the flesh, but tongues devour a man’s character and eat up his very life. Oh, how blessed it is to be kept secretly in God’s royal pavilion from the strife of tongues!

21. Blessed be the LORD; for He has showed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city. He has kept me in safety, and preserved me from every foe. Blessed be His holy name!

22, 23. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes: nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You. O love the LORD, all you His saints. It seems as if David felt that he could not love the Lord sufficiently by himself, so he calls upon all the saints to bring their hearts full of love and yield their treasure unto God.

23. For the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer. He gives him a sharp blow with the back of His hand, but He gives to the righteous a full-handed mercy!

24. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the LORD. Your heart is faint, but the Lord will put strength where there now is weakness. Therefore “be of good courage.” Cowardice weakens, fear saps a man’s strength—so “be of good courage,” for your strength shall be equal to your day—and you shall yet win the victory, “all you that hope in the Lord.”

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THOUGHT-READING EXTRAORDINARY  
NO. 1802

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 5, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble: You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.”  
Psalm 10:17.**

NOTICE at the outset, the logic of this verse. It is very simple, very forcible, very accurate logic. It runs thus—“You have”—“You will.” “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble: You will prepare their heart.” When you know that the Lord God is immutable, “the same yesterday, today and forever,” you may conclude without mistake that what He has done, He is prepared to do again. The argument from the past to the future would be a sorry one if you were dealing with fallible man, for what man has done is no sure guarantee of what he may do! He is such a creature of freaks and whims, but when you have to deal with the Eternal God, who is faithful and true, and changes not, you may reckon with safety that the thing which has been is the thing which shall be. Well did the Apostle say, “Who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”

On looking at the text, again, you will see that the same blessed logic is carried a step farther, for you read, “You will,” and then, again, “You will”—“You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.” Faith, first of all, concludes that God will bless because of former blessings. And then she is so sure of her conclusion that upon it she is prepared to build up a further confidence. This is a noble faith, worthy of imitation—but it is by no means common—not a hundredth part as common as it ought to be! To doubtful minds it is difficult, even, to infer the future from a present fact immediately before their eyes, but to the believing heart it is an easy thing to do something more than that! Namely, to draw an inference of hope from a former inference of hope.

Faith builds a sure abode with invisible stones. She expects, because she has experienced, and experiences what she expects! Why not? Is not faith the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen? Since that which we believe is sure, it is worthy to be the foundation of further faith. We are very fond of that verse—

*“And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.”*

By such language we praise God for mercy not yet received. And our text suggests another practical use of “things not seen as yet,” namely, to make them, as apprehended by our faith, the basis of a still higher confidence in God. This is to be built up on our most holy faith. Rest assured that this is not constructing castles in the air, for our faith is no delusion! It is made of solid, substantial stuff, before which even the supposed infallibilities of science are trifles light as air.

Because our Good Shepherd has made us to lie down in green pastures, we argue that there is no cause for fear though we walk through the valley of death-shade—and from that we surely gather that goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives. Such reasoning is as accurate as the demonstrations of geometry! The Lord will never leave us to be ashamed of our hope. Learn this logic and it will keep you in good stead in times of distress, when nothing but certainty will sustain you. The Lord is good and, therefore, He will be good! He will keep the feet of His saints and because He will do this, we shall enter His palace with joy.

Apply this logic to prayer. God has answered prayer and, therefore, He will answer it! Of this first statement many of us are witnesses. The evidences of that Truth of God are with us in daily experience—we have proofs of the power of prayer as innumerable as the stars of Heaven. Because the Lord has heard us out of His holy place, we infer that He will still hear us and, therefore, as long as we live, we will we call upon Him. This is no casual thing, but it is Jehovah’s perpetual name and standing memorial—the God Who Hears Prayer! Never while the earth endures will He forsake the Throne of Grace and turn a deaf ear to the cries of His suppliant Israel!

The subject of this morning is thus introduced to you. It is necessary that you pray, for the needy must cry to their helper. And it is profitable that you pray, for the bosoms of suppliants are filled with benedictions. It is not a vain thing to wait upon God—it is your comfort, your strength, your life! If you seek honor, it should be your delight to pray, for nothing is more ennobling than to win the ear of the Lord of All! A man admitted to audience with the Most High is honored in an unspeakable degree. We shall speak, this morning, in the way of five observations drawn from our text. May each one be made profitable to us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I. Our first observation is written upon the surface of the Scripture before us—THE LOWLIEST FORM OF PRAYER MAY BE MOST TRUE AND ACCEPTABLE. And what is that lowliest form of prayer? Is it not described in the text? “The desire of the humble.” It is not the prayer of the serene faith of Abraham, nor the wrestling of energetic Jacob, nor the intercession of prevailing Moses, nor the pleading of holy Samuel, nor the commanding cry of Elijah shutting and opening Heaven—it is only a desire—a motion of the heart towards good things! And yet the Lord hears it. Indeed, the lowliest form of prayer may be the truest, for the essence of all real prayer is desire. Words are but the habitation of prayer, the living tenant is desire.

We see from our text that desires are prevailing prayers, for the Lord has made a point of hearing them—“You have heard the desire of the humble.” Other forms of prayer may be attractive to man and yet they may have no influence whatever with the living God. But this manner of supplication has been successful from of old, even as it is written—“He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him.” And again, “The desire of the righteous shall be granted.” In fact, prayer is desire, as our poet puts it—

*“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.”*

The lowest form of true prayer secures the ear of the Highest and what more is needed?

Observe, it is only a desire—“the desire of the humble.” A desire may be altogether unattended by speech. The suppliant may not be able to put his desire into words at all. He may be too sorrowful; his emotions may choke his utterances. He may be too quiet and so may be quite unversed in the use of speech. He may be only able to pour forth groans that cannot be uttered and tears whose eloquence is silent—yet God is pleased to hear the desire which lacks expression! Many prayers are very prettily expressed. In fact, they are expressed so grandly that their tawdry fineries will not be tolerated in Heaven! Those prayers will never enter Heaven’s gate which are meant to catch the applause of man! God will say, “They were meant for men, so let men have them.” He does not stoop to accept man’s leftovers and if a prayer is meant to be a feast for

 man, God will not be a second-rate guest at its table!

On the other hand, many sincere persons condemn themselves because they cannot offer public prayer as their Brethren do—they even tremble, perhaps, to pray before their families—and this is a grief to them. I think, if they are men, they should prove their manhood by overcoming such diffidence. I would urge them to make the attempt with much resolution and perseverance—and should they fail in it through positive inability, there will be cause for regret—but no reason for self-condemnation. There may be more prayer in the silent than in the fluent. God has heard prayers which nobody else could possibly have heard because there was no vocal sound about them. So quick is the ear of God that He hears that which is not properly the subject of hearing—the true prayer which abides in silence shall not meet with a silent God!

This desire may not be recommended by any conscious attainments on the part of the offerer. The man may reach far in his desire, but he may have attained to little beyond. He may have a wealth of desire and a poverty of everything else and yet he may be heard of the Lord. Possibly his confession may run thus—“I desire to be humble, but I lament my pride. I desire to be strong in faith, but I mourn my unbelief. I desire to be fervent, but I sigh over my lukewarmness. I desire to be holy, but I confess my transgressions. I desire my prayer should be such as God can accept, but I fear that I waver, or ask amiss.” Now such a confession, if penitently presented, will not prevent our obtaining the promise, for the Lord has heard the desire of the humble.

If your heart seethes and boils with desires, the steam thereof will rise to Heaven! If your stock-in-trade is made up of empty vessels and of little else, the Lord can deal with you as He did with the Prophet’s widow, “who had empty vessels not a few.” Your little oil of Grace He can multiply till every vessel is filled to the brim! Have you desires?—great, hungry, thirsty desires? Then bring them to the Lord! Are your desires as insatiable as the horseleech, which is always sucking, but which always craves for more, crying always, “Give, give, give”? Then say with David, “All my desires are before You,” and be assured that the Lord satisfies the desire of every living thing! Be comforted if your desires are awake. You are praying and your cry is being heard! You shall yet say, “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him.” Your desires have voices of their own—they knock hard at Heaven’s door and it shall be opened unto them.

Note, again, that this desire may be unaccompanied by any confident expectation. When you pray you ought to believe the promise and expect its fulfillment. It is the duty and the privilege of every suppliant to believe that when he prays in the name of Jesus, he must and shall be heard. But sometimes humility, which is a good thing, is attended by a lack of faith— which is an evil thing—and this much hinders prayer. Humility is deceived by unbelief and so it gives way to the dark thought that its poor feeble prayer will not speed with God. I fear that in some cases this lack of expectancy is an effectual barrier to prayer and prevents its being answered. But it is forgiven to naturally despondent, heavily-laden spirits whose fears are not so much doubts of God as a deeply humiliating judgment of themselves.

It is not so much the case that their faith is sinfully defective as that they have a painfully acute sense of their own unworthiness—and so when they cry they hope that the Lord will hear them and they mean to wait upon Him till He does—but they are sorely afraid. They will go nowhere else, for they have no other hope but that which lies in the Free Grace and sovereign mercy of God. But they do not exercise that happy expectancy which the sure promise warrants their enjoying. My Brothers and Sisters, I would chide your unbelief, but I would still encourage your desires, for that desire which God hears is not to be despised! The text says, “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble,” and the Lord will yet hear your humble sighs and groans! And you shall be surprised to find the Lord doing for you exceeding abundantly above what you asked or even thought! May your faith grow exceedingly, being fed upon the heavenly food which the Lord deals out to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

This leads me to observe that this commencing form of prayer which the Lord nevertheless hears, is here further described as, “the desire of the humble.” It has this advantage about it, that it is free from pride! Some men’s prayers, if they were to pray them as their foolish hearts really desire, would be requests that they might be made famous. Be not startled when I say it—I fear that many men proudly ask to be humble! They desire to be humble in order that they may be admired for it! I have no doubt, whatever, that some professors seek great Grace that they may be highly thought of and greatly set by in the market of the Church. Have we not all found that in the rushing stream of our earnest zeal there will be some backwater which runs not towards God but towards ourselves? Have we not even strived to win souls that we might be notable as soulwinners?

Yes, and have we not sought to glorify God that we might shine in the reflection of that glory? “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord,” has been the language of many a Jehu! Oh, it is hard to keep out pride! This Psalm says much concerning the proud man and the oppressor, whom God abhors, and will surely visit in judgment! But then this bright word shines forth like a lone star in a dark night! Never was a precious pearl found in a rougher oyster shell! May the Lord keep us humble if we are so—and make us humble if we are not! I believe every Christian man has a choice between being humble and being humbled. Now, to be humble is a sweet thing—there is no lovelier spot on the road to the Celestial City than the Valley of Humiliation—he that lives in it, dwells among flowers and birds, and may sing all day long, like the shepherd boy whose song ran thus—

*“He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low no pride.  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.”*

If you do not choose to be humble you will have to be humbled—and that is not at all a desirable thing. To be humbled is to be sorely smitten and made to suffer shame in the estimation of your fellow men, both ungodly and godly. Certain persons who have carried their heads very high have struck them against the beam and have had to go with bruised foreheads for the rest of their lives! God resists the proud, but gives Grace to the humble. Therefore may God help us to offer before Him, “the desire of the humble.” “The desire of the humble” is saturated with a Gospel spirit and, therefore, is acceptable with the God of all Grace! Pride seems born of the Law, though I scarcely know why it should be, for the Law censures and condemns. Humility is the child of the Gospel and is brought up upon the knees of Grace. If you would be a child of God, you must be lowly in your own esteem. If you would be heard in prayer, you must come to God as needy and empty. Low thoughts of ourselves are the companions of prevailing prayers. No man may expect to receive out of the fullness that is treasured up in Christ Jesus until he is willing to confess his own poverty. Grace for Grace will be given only to those who feel need upon need—all successful pleading must find their argument in Free Grace!

We must never urge claims against the Lord as though He were our debtor, for then Mercy will not deal with us—we have appealed unto the Caesar of justice and unto Caesar we must go! Let us have done with merits and rewards! Let this be our cry, “For Your mercy and for Your truth’s sake, and for Your Son’s sake, hear You the voice of my prayer.” This is the proper Gospel spirit. If we plead in any other fashion, we shall be sent away empty. Still, this, “desire of the humble,” is apt to be somewhat restricted and straitened. If we contract our desires to the measure of our just deserts, they will shrivel into nothing, for our deserts are less than nothing! It is ill to pray according to your sense of what you have a right to ask. You have a legal right to ask for nothing but justice! And who among us can abide its action apart from Jesus? “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

You had better pray according to God’s command—and that runs thus—“Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” The truest humility is that which is immediately obedient to the gracious precept and accepts, without question, that which the Lord so freely gives. We have a natural right to nothing—but when the Lord commands us to open our mouth wide, He thereby gives us a Covenant right to all things! Yet, dear Brothers and Sisters, if your humility should cramp your desire. If you feel as if you would desire a great gift but dare not ask, still it is a desire. If you say, “I see the sweetness of the mercy, but it seems too good for such a soul as mine,” yet I spy at the back of your humility a true and strong desire and I pray that the Lord may hear that desire and answer you for His mercy’s sake. Forget not this first Truth of God—that what seems to be the lowliest form of prayer is, nevertheless, true prayer.

II. Our second point is full of comfort to those who have begun to pray. GOD IS QUICK TO HEAR THE LOWLIEST PRAYER—“You have heard the desire of the humble.” This must be a Divine science—this art of hearing desires. We have heard a good deal, lately, about thought reading. I give no opinion of that matter among men, but here is a wonderful instance of it with the Lord. “You have heard the desire of the humble.” This kind of desire reading is the prerogative of God, alone! He knows our desires even when we do not know them, ourselves! Sitting in this Tabernacle you are desiring, but it is quite impossible for the person sitting next to you to know your wishes—and it is quite as well, perhaps, that it is so.

Certain it is that the servant of God, Eli, himself, fresh from the shrine of the Most High, could not read Hannah’s desires. Her lips were moving and one would think if anything could be learned, it might be from the moving of the lips. But Eli thought her drunk and, therefore, chattering to herself, and so he rebuked her. Was it not a mercy for Hannah that God heard her humble desire and knew all about it? Beloved, the Lord is reading your thoughts now! My dear Sister, your groaning out of the very deeps has ascended to the heights! You would not like to tell your inward feelings—perhaps your secret is too painful to be told—never mind, God’s ear is so quick that He can hear your desires! Wonderful art! We would be very glad if the Lord had promised to hear us when we speak, but He has gone far beyond that—He hears the unspeakable and unutterable!

Was there ever power and pity like this? Be comforted, you that are full of desires, this morning, and are sitting here with hearts ready to break, crying in your spirit, “Oh that the Lord would hear me! Oh that He would give me peace! Oh that the days of my mourning were ended! Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!” Do not sink in despair! There is no reason for fear—your case is among the most hopeful—for it is the way of the Lord to hear the desire of the humble.

It is an art which has been exercised by God in all ages. He does not merely possess the power, but He exercises it! I like my text for putting it in the past tense—“You have heard the desire of the humble.” It is a matter of frequent fact and not merely a possible event! It is not the bare assertion of a power, but the record of a deed! All along through history, wherever gracious men have lived, their hearts have talked with God as well without words as with them. The pulsing of human spirits, God has heard as surely as if they had been loud as the beat of a drum! The sigh of the soul has come up before Him as clearly as if it had been the note of a clarion! The Lord’s ear is never heavy. He is not weary of the feebleness and faults of the poor man’s petition. The Lord still hears in the day of trouble—and the name of the God of Jacob defends us—

*“When God inclines the heart to pray,  
He has an ear to hear!  
To Him there’s music in a groan,  
And beauty in a tear.”*

Today let this be told ! It ought not to be buried in ungrateful silence. It is mentioned in the text, let it be mentioned in your conversation. If some here present had the opportunity, we could tell you how God has heard our desires and how, at times, before the desire has actually been formed in the soul the answer has come, according to that Word of God, “Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” We had a desire laid upon our heart which we never communicated to any living person except the living God—and we carried that desire in our heart for weeks and months, constantly allowing it to burn in our bosom, and frequently letting it break out in groans and broken cries—and in due time our sighs reached the heart of God! As surely as we have sown in prayer, we have, in due season reaped a harvest of blessing!

Our Lord, even in Gethsemane, was heard in that He feared—sure pledge to all His redeemed that they shall be heard in their hour of darkness! Happy are they who dwell in God, for they may have what they please at the Mercy Seat. Is it not written, “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of yours heart”? Has it not been so with you, O you who abide under the shadow of the Almighty? I charge you, then, to abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness! Fail not to tell your experience of the Lord’s faithfulness—for God loses much glory and poor sinners and saints, too, lose much encouragement to pray— when children of God are silent about their success at the Throne of Grace.

Oh, I wish I could be the means of stirring some, this morning, to pray the prayer of faith while sitting here! You may say, “I will pray when I get home.” You may do so, if you please, but I am urging you to something more speedy! Remember the publican? It was in God’s house that he prayed and though he did not dare to lift his eyes to Heaven, yet He sighed in his soul this prayer—“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” And he went down to his house justified rather than the other! I do not ask you to withhold that prayer till you reach home, but would it not be a grand thing to be saved here, and to go home justified? You shall have that unspeakable blessing, now, if your desire is a true one and you pour it out at once, believingly, before the Lord! He has heard the same many times and is prepared to hear you in the same manner.

Why should not this first Sunday in October be a day of Grace unto your souls? “Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near.” This is an accepted time! The Spirit of God is near! If God is now inclining you to pray, do not resist the gentle movement of His Spirit, but let your prayer come forth, encouraged by the sweet language of my text. Say unto the prayer-hearing God, “You have heard the desire of the humble. Why should You not hear my desire at this hour, and bless me, even me, also, O my Father?”

III. Thirdly, we will remark that THE HEART IS THE MAIN MATTER IN PRAYER. That is clearly shown in the text—“Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.” Desires are the fruit of the heart. “You will prepare their heart.” When God comes to deal with men in a way of Grace, His first business is to prepare their heart so that, most assuredly, the state of the heart is of prime importance. The heart is the source, the seat and the essence of supplication. Prayer with the heart is the heart of prayer—the cry of our soul is the soul of our cry.

Without the heart, prayer is a wretched mockery . There is as much Divine Grace in the bark of a dog or the grunt of a swine as in a form of prayer if the heart is absent. And God is as likely, no, more likely, to hear the cry of ravens and young lions, than to regard prayers uttered in Chapels, Churches, Meeting Houses or Cathedrals, if the mind is not in earnest. Do not say, “I read my collect this morning”—you may read 50 collects and be none the better! Do not say, “I went through the prayers which I learned from a godly mother”—you may go through them 20,000 times and yet never pray once! Unless the heart speaks with God, you have done nothing for your own good with all your “Pater Nosters” or other goodly words—no, you may have done something to your own hurt in all this pretence of praying!

I fear that much so-called public prayer is nothing better than presumptuous sin. If your child should come to you and ask a favor in an affected voice, would you notice him? If, instead of saying, “Dear Father, I want such-and-such,” he should take up a book and intone such words as these, “Dearly beloved Father, I have to request of you that you, in your great affection, will give unto me such-and-such things,” you would not regard his nonsense! You would say, “Come, boy, what do you want? Tell me plainly!” And if he continued to intone, you would drive him out of the room, perhaps, with the aid of your foot! I fear that this praying in singsong is the most fearful mockery God ever hears. Fancy Peter, when he was beginning to sink, intoning, “Lord, save me!” When the heart really gets to speak with God, it cannot talk in affected tones—it throws such rubbish overboard!

But cannot a man pray with his heart and yet use a written prayer? Certainly he can! Many have done so for years. If you cannot walk without your crutches, I would sooner you walked with them than not at all. Still, it is not the best words put together by the most devout men that ever lived, nor the holiest language composed extemporaneously by yourself, that can make up prayer if the heart is gone. Words are seldom more than the baggage of prayer. Language, at best, is but the flesh in which prayer is embodied. The desire of the heart is the life of the prayer! See you to your heart, for God sees to it—“You will prepare their heart.” Sometimes the Lord puts words into men’s mouths. He says, “Take with you words, and come unto Me,” and thus He prepares words for their use. But in general, the main concern with God is that the heart is prepared to plead with Him.

Without the heart, prayer is a nullity and when there is but little heart, prayer is a failure. He that prays with little desire asks God to refuse him. If you go through your prayer and your mind is wandering up and down about a thousand vanities, your desires are feeble and your supplication will have little effect. Prayer must be fervent to be effectual. It must be ardent to be acceptable. If the utter failure of your prayer would not greatly grieve you and if its success would not much gratify you, then depend upon it, you will have to wait long at Mercy’s wicket before it will admit you. “The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.” Importunity is indispensable! Our Lord has given us many parables to that effect. To play at praying will never do—your heart and soul must be fully awake, for no sleepy prayer can enter Heaven. We must praise God with our whole heart and we must pray in the same manner. If double-minded man may not expect to receive anything of the Lord, neither may a half-hearted man. Above all things, keep yours heart with all diligence if you would speed at the Throne of God.

Success comes to the prayer of a glowing heart . When the soul grows warm, the spirit is fervent and desires are strong, then, Brothers and Sisters, do not spare your prayers! We are not always in that condition—let us pray much when we are. We are bound to prepare ourselves for prayer, but I believe the best qualifications are strong desires and intense longings. No preparation for food is equal to intense hunger. You have the best sauce with your meat when you are hungry. It will be your wisdom, when your desires are sharp, to pray more than you ordinarily do. You cannot always pray alike, but when good times come, use them! When a fair mind fills the sails of desire, then make all possible headway. Set apart a longer season for private devotion when the soul is all alive and active in it. At another time you may have to try very hard and make but small progress, for the chariot wheels may be taken off—let it not, at such a time, be a source of regret that you wasted a happier season. Cease not to obtain blessings beyond number both for yourself, for the Church and for a perishing world—but take heed that your heart is found greatly exercised with longings of soul before God.

IV. Fourthly, GOD HIMSELF PREPARES THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE. “You will prepare their heart.” I am greatly rejoiced by this statement that God will prepare our hearts to pray, because it is a most important business on which so much depends. On the heart, the whole machinery of life depends and it needs preparing, especially for devotion. You cannot spring out of bed and, on every occasion, pray in a moment without thought or reflection. You cannot say to yourself, “I have just been listening to ungodly talk and now I am going to pray.” It will be poor, pitiful praying which springs up from the barren soil of thoughtlessness. We need preparation in coming into the courts of the Lord’s house—the soul has to take her shoes off her feet because the place is holy.

But this preparation is often as difficult as it is necessary and, therefore, it is a great mercy that our God undertakes to work it in us. Surely none but the Lord can prepare a heart for prayer! One old writer says it is far harder work to raise the big bell into the steeple than to ring it afterwards. This witness is true. When the bell is well hung you can ring it readily enough—but in that uplifting of the heart lies the work and the labor. Before musicians begin to play, they attend to their strings and see that their instruments are in order—you wish, perhaps, that the operation could be dispensed with, but it cannot be—it is one of the most necessary parts of the musician’s work. Until he has learned to tune his instrument, what does he know? Until he has tuned it, what can he do? I wish we were all made ready, as a people prepared for the Lord.

These processes by which the heart is prepared may have commenced far back. Our gracious God may have prepared the heart of a man to pray today by a work which He worked upon him, or for him, 20 years ago. The Lord may be working a man up to a certain prayer by years of sorrow or joy. The poet who composes a sonnet may not be able to tell you why the inspiration came to him at that particular moment, for it may have been the outcome of his soul throughout the whole of his life. That which the songster threw into words, today, may have lain hidden in his soul from his boyhood. He was not prepared for penning his stanzas, then, but his later life trained him to speak in numbers and to clothe noble thoughts in the dress of attractive language. So may it be with our prayers—they may be the juice of a life-vintage, the ripened harvest of youth and manhood. In any case, God prepares the heart to be blessed when He is prepared to bless it.

One of the most difficult things in preparation for prayer is the restraining of loose and wandering thoughts. I do not know how perfect Brothers and Sisters keep themselves free from every evil thought, for I find myself defeated often when I would shut out these vile intruders! Honestly, I may express my belief that these carnal boasters have as many vain thoughts as other people. The ravenous birds will come down upon the sacrifice even when Abraham offers it—and it costs infinite pains to drive them away. Intruding thoughts surround us like a plague of flies—they are here, there, and everywhere! It is well, indeed, that God should prepare our hearts, for in this one point our weakness is complete. Egypt suffered from a plague of flies which all Pharaoh’s armies could not drive away, but when the Lord heard the prayer of Moses, it is said, “The Lord removed the swarms of flies: there remained not one.” That was a deliverance, indeed—truly this was the finger of God!

When the Lord comes to prepare His people’s hearts by His Spirit, He chases away every wandering thought so that there remains not one. Tradition says of Solomon’s temple that though much meat was consumed there, and this naturally attracts flies, yet there was never a fly in the holy place. I wish it were so with our holy place! O that it might be so that whenever we pray, all evil thoughts may be driven out. This is a miracle, and none can perform it but the Lord our God. “You will prepare their heart.”

Next, the Lord prepares His people’s hearts by giving them a deep sense of what they need. I know your grief, your temptation, your misery and the crying out of your spirit under the lashes of conscience, but all this is right, thus you are instructed in the art and mystery of supplication. Nobody cries to Christ so well as the man who is beginning to sink. Jonah’s cry in the whale’s belly was the most intense prayer he ever prayed. When the iron enters into your soul, then you cry unto the Lord in your trouble! A sentence of death in your own soul is a mighty quickener of supplication. When your spirit is overwhelmed with sorrow, then look up to Christ, the Savior, and find Him to be your soul’s joy! Our desires are apt to sleep, but when the Lord, by His Spirit, reveals to us our spiritual poverty, we long, pine and sigh for spiritual blessings.

When a man, out of the anguish of his heart cries for mercy, then he begins to search out and lay hold upon the promise. To bring the promise to remembrance is a part of the Holy Spirit’s work—He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. Oh, how blessedly a man can pray when he gets hold of a promise, when he is sure that God has a blessing in store for him, when he is positive that the Lord is faithful to His covenant and will not withhold any good thing from him! The Lord also works in us strong faith, holy perseverance and high expectancy. And in all these ways He prepares our hearts to pray.

Nor is this all. The text does not say that God will only prepare the heart to pray, but it says, “You will prepare the heart,” and this is a wider work, making ready for other matters besides prayer. He will prepare the heart to receive the answer, for many of us are not as yet ready to enjoy what God is ready to bestow. Do you need anything which Jesus can give you? Give your heart up to the Holy Spirit, that He may prepare you to seek the blessing and prepare you to receive the blessing when the time comes for the Lord to grant it. “You will prepare their heart”—this is wonderful condescension on God’s part—and on our part we ought to feel the utmost encouragement to prepare our own hearts for earnest supplication.

V. Lastly, PRAYER FROM PREPARED HEARTS MUST BE HEARD. “You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.” I wish you would join these two sentences together in your minds and carry them home with you. Let the two bells ring in harmony—“You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.” Ring them over and over, again, and let their blended music linger in your ears.

First, if God has had love enough to prepare your heart to pray, He has Grace enough to give you the blessing. The more difficult thing of the two is not to give the blessing, but to prepare your heart to cry for it! If He has done the one, He will certainly do the other. Consider the truthfulness, the faithfulness and the goodness of God—and you will see that it is not possible that He should teach a man to pray for a blessing which He will not give! I cannot imagine any of you tantalizing your child by exciting in him a desire that you do not intend to gratify. It were a very ungenerous thing to offer alms to the poor and then, when they hold out their hand for it, to mock their poverty with a denial. It were a cruel addition to the miseries of the sick if they were taken to the hospital and left there to die untended and uncared for.

Where God leads you to pray, He means you to receive. You find a holy desire in your heart? The Lord put that desire into your heart and, for the honor of His infinite majesty, lest He stain His goodness and dishonor His great name, He must hear you! With what comfort would I address those here who are beginning to pray. I know I speak to some who are uneasy, unrestful. You tell us you are seeking peace, that day and night a desire for salvation occupies the entire chamber of your soul. Well, this did not come from your own nature—neither the devil nor the old Adam has taught you to pray!

Dear Hearer, you can be sure that the great Father who is moving you to cry to Him is hearing you! He is inclining His ear to catch the faintest moan of your spirit. Believe that He is hearing you. Cast yourself at the feet of His dear Son. Behold the wounds of Jesus—let them invite you to draw near to God. I know of no such eloquent mouths as the wounds of the dying Lord! Let them persuade you to come to Jesus—to trust, to rest at His dear feet—for since He has inclined your heart to pray, He is about to hear you and bless you! The Lord be with you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 102.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—34 (VERSION II), 998, 86. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2342 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A NEW YEAR’S RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT  
NO. 2342

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JANUARY 7, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THE EVENING OF NEW YEAR’S DAY, 1871.

**“LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble: You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.” Psalm 10:17.**

IT has been sometimes said that a good Sabbath makes a good week. Sir Matthew Hale long ago said—  
*“A Sabbath well spent  
Brings a week of content,”*

while George Herbert quaintly wrote—  
*“The Sundays of man’s life  
Threaded together on  
Time’s string,  
Make bracelets to adorn the wife  
Of the eternal, glorious King.  
On Sunday, Heaven’s gate stands ope,  
Blessings are plentiful and rife;  
More plentiful than hope.”*

Sunday is the market day of the week and if a man does well at market, he considers that he has done well for all the week. The Sabbath oils the wheels of the week—its bodily rest is useful, but its spiritual anointing is far more so!

Now, if that is the case, and I think it is, I might venture to say that a good first Sabbath in the year will go a long way towards making a good year. Very often things go on as they begin. It is very seldom that troubles come alone and it is still more seldom that mercies are given to us singly. We may always say, when we get a blessing, “Gad, a troop comes.” So I would that we might receive a great blessing on this first Sabbath of another year, that a troop of blessings might follow on the heels thereof, and that a host of mercies might continue to come to us even till we reach the last day of the year—and then that we might begin, again, with new tokens of our Lord’s loving kindness and tender mercy~

I thought our text might be a very serviceable Word of God for this first Sabbath evening in the year of Grace, 1871. It is intended to be of use, not only for tonight’s sermon, but to be remembered all the year round. I think there is something in it which will render it suitable to all of us at all times during the next 12 months and, indeed, during the whole of the rest of our lives. We do not know, as we said in prayer just now, which way our pilgrimage may lead us, but I feel persuaded that, with this Inspired passage laid up in our hearts, if we make a right use of it, beneath the cover of Jehovah’s wings we may go happily on from this place till again we pitch our tent upon the borders of another year.

Looking at the text, we may divide it into two parts. In the first portion, we have a very blessed fact—“Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.” In the second part, we have two very blessed assurances—“You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.”

I. We will begin with what the text says about A VERY BLESSED FACT—“Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.”  
I call this a very blessed fact, first, because it always has been a fact. In all ages and in all places, wherever there has been a humble heart that has lifted up its desire to God, the Lord has heard that desire! Whether Jew or Gentile, whether in the palace or in the poorhouse, whether in sickness or in health, whether in poverty or in wealth, whether in life or in death, no difference has ever been made—if the desire has been a humble one, from the first man who ever prayed down to this present time—God has always been ready to hear.  
And, blessed be His holy name! It is not only an old fact, it is as much a fact, tonight, as it was when David first penned these words, “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.” At this very moment, God’s ear is hearing the beating of your hearts. O humble Soul, Jehovah’s heart discerns the throbbing of your desire though they are unexpressed in words! His eyes of fire, which pierce us through and through, are reading every longing desire of every anxious bosom here.  
It is so now and it will be a fact all through this year, God will hear the desire of the humble. It is a fact of the olden times, but it is also a fact of present import and of the future, too. Notice how the Psalmist puts this fact—“Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.” David does not say, “You have heard the prayer of the humble.” He means that, but he also means a great deal more. Sometimes we have desires that we cannot express—they are too big, too deep—we cannot clothe them in language. At other times we have desires which we dare not express—we feel too bowed down, we see too much of our own unworthiness to be able to venture near the Throne of God to utter our desires—but the Lord hears the desire when we cannot or dare not turn it into the actual form of a prayer. I know you have sometimes said, “I wish I could pray like So-and-So.” Often you have thought, “If I could only put a great many beautiful sentences together into goodly shape, then I might be heard.” Do not talk so foolishly! If you cannot put two words together correctly, if your desire is right, God will hear the desire—  
*“Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed.”*

Prayer is not in the expression or the non-expression—prayer is the soul’s sincere desire. The very heart of prayer is in the desire—the essence of the whole matter, the kernel of the nut—is the desire of the heart, not the utterance of the lips. Words without the desire are mere empty husks, but the desire, even without words, is sweet to God, and He accepts it. Can you catch the blessedness of this thought? I say again, before your desire takes a shape in which language could cover it, God will hear it!

You sometimes can hear people’s desires, yourself. Many a mother hears her boy’s desire. He has gone to sea, but before he went, his mother packed his box. She did not tell him all she put into it—there are some things there that he has not yet seen and he will not find them till he searches to the bottom of the chest. How did she know that he would desire those things? Because she foresaw the position in which he would be placed and the needs which would arise in such a case—and she gathered, from that foresight—what her boy’s desire would be. You have seen a poor hungry person shivering in the cold. If he has not accosted you and asked you for alms, yet you have heard the desire beating beneath that ragged coat and you have said to yourself, “That man needs help.” You have heard his desire by just looking at him—his very silence seemed to speak to you of his great need. O Soul, God can hear your needs! Jehovah can hear your anguish! The Lord can hear what no one else can hear and what you cannot express!

I have always thought that to be a very clever way of begging, when a man sits down and huddles himself up at a street corner and just writes on the pavement with a piece of chalk, “I am starving.” But perhaps it is quite as efficient a plea if the beggar does not write the words—but only if his face looks like starvation and his whole body appears emaciated with need and hunger. You know the man’s desire from his very looks. And oh, how sweet it is to think that God looks down with a comprehensive glance, upon humble souls, takes in their whole condition and position with His compassionate eyes and hears their desire though they are unable or afraid to express it!

Notice, however, that David does not say, “Lord, You will hear the desire of the humble,” but, “Lord, you have heard the desire of the humble. As soon as ever it was born, You heard it.” You desire and God hears the desire at the same moment! No, let me correct myself and say that before it was a desire in your heart, God knew it would be there and He heard it. He had looked on you when as yet you had not looked on Him and, even then, it might have been truly said, “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.”

What kind of a desire is it that God hears? He does not accept all desires. Some are trifling, some are vain, some are foolish, some are wicked and He is not pleased with such desires. It is the desire of the humble that the Lord hears. “Ah,” says one, “I am afraid I am not humble.” Brother, Sister, it is one mark of a truly humble man that he does not think himself humble. If you meet with a person who says he is humble, you may conclude at once that he is proud, for, usually, there is no boasting in the world that is so full of pride as the boasting of the man who talks of his humility! You humble? Ah, Sir, you need to be humbled a great deal before that will be the truth! The very man who mourns over his pride is, probably, the really humble man.

A humble desire, or the desire of a humble man, has this characteristic—the man knows there is no merit in his desire. If it is a good desire that he has in his heart, he feels, “It will be all through the infinite mercy of God if this desire is realized.” He does not compliment himself and say, “Well done, Self, you have right desires in your heart—there is something good in you.” No, but he fears lest the desire should not be sincere and, when it is deepest and truest, he still strips himself of all rags of selfrighteousness, for he cannot see any good, whatever, in the desire that is in his own heart.

A humble man does not desire anything of God for his own honor. He thinks too little of himself to wish to exalt himself and he longs, in all things, to glorify God. He desires his own salvation, but he knows that he does not deserve it, and he, therefore, gives God all the glory even while he rejoices in his own deliverance from going down into the Pit. He sings, with Toplady—

*“Not to myself I owe  
That I, O Lord, am Thine.  
Free Grace has all the shades broke through And caused the light to shine.  
Me You have willing made  
Your offers to receive—  
Called by the voice that wakes the dead,  
I come to You and live.”*

A humble desire is one which leaves everything in God’s hands. The man who has it, says, “Now, though I desire this, it may be it is not a right desire. Lord, I desire only to desire what I ought to desire! My desire is that Your desire should be written on my heart, that I may desire what You desire. Your will be done in my Soul, in my body, in my circumstances and in me, in all respects.”

Now, beloved Friends, I think it will not be very difficult for you to see whether you have that desire of the humble which God hears. But to help you still further, let me give you some of these desires.

This is one of the desires of the humble—“Lord save me! I am lost unless Your mercy comes to my rescue. I am guilty! Forgive me! I have been an enemy to You! Reconcile me! I am diseased with sin! Heal me, for You are the only Physician!” I cannot hear your desires. Let me stop and listen as long as I may, I cannot hear the longings of anyone here who wants God to save him, but, oh, dear Soul, wherever you are and whoever you are, there is a better ear than mine that has heard your desire, and that ear belongs to One who will fulfill your desire! Surely, some of you are praying that prayer that I uttered just now—perhaps one who seemed least likely to offer it—God has dropped a hot coal of desire right into his bosom, right into her soul, and he or she is saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner!”

That is one of the desires of the humble that God hears. I will suppose, however, that the Lord has heard that desire in your case and that He has graciously fulfilled it. Now I think I hear some humble soul saying, “Lord, save my children! Lord, convert my boys and girls! I have tried to train them up for You, but I dare not hope that any teaching of mine will be effectual for their salvation unless You put Your hand to the work.” I cannot hear the beating of your hearts as you plead for your children. I cannot hear the wife’s desires as she inwardly cries, “Lord, save my husband!” Neither can I hear that Sister’s longing as she says within her spirit, “O Lord, let my sister live before You! May my brother learn to know Christ!” But, though I cannot hear those desires—and no human being can hear them—God hears them! “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble.” Make yours a large desire, beloved Friends! Take in all your kinsfolk, take in mine, take in my hearers, take in all this congregation, take in this city of London and let the desire go up that God would save tens of thousands of souls, for He will hear the desire of the humble!

Another desire should be this—“Lord, guide me aright this year!” The young man who feels the force of his passion, should pray, “Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil!” The merchant who knows the deadening influence of the cares of this world, should cry, “Quicken me, O Lord, according to Your Word!” The housewife who looks forward to, she knows not what, of trouble in the family—a suitable prayer for her is, “Let Your Grace, O Lord, be always sufficient for me! Guide me, O Lord, lead me in a plain path! Direct my footsteps and let me, this year, walk in holiness!” I say again, I do not know who is breathing that petition. I hope many of you are doing so, but there is One sitting in the highest heavens, hearing the songs of cherubim and seraphim, who yet condescends to hear the desire of the humble when it takes such a form as this.

I think I know some of you, tonight, who are saying, “Lord, glorify Yourself in me!” I do hear that desire in one heart here, I can hear it in my own heart. And God hears it, I trust, in many others. The Sunday school teacher is saying, “Lord, honor Yourself in my class this year! Bring my boys, my girls, to the Savior’s feet.” You who are preachers are saying, “Lord, glorify Yourself in our ministry. Give us many souls that shall be our crown of rejoicing, but Your Glory forever!” You who have not had any particular form of duty are saying, “Lord, give me something to do this year! Do not let me be an idler—suffer me not to be a barren tree—get honor to Yourself out of me this year, I beseech You!” Now, wherever such a desire is going up, God hears it! I trust, also, that you are not only desiring God’s Glory through yourself, for, if so, that may not be a humble desire, but that you are also desiring God’s Glory through all His servants. Let this be your petition, “O Lord, prosper every minister of Christ, every Sunday school teacher, every visitor of the sick, every tract distributor, everyone who is doing anything for You! O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! O send out Your Light and Your Truth! Let multitudes of sinners be saved!” If that is your heart’s desire, be thankful that God hears the desire of the humble this night and be earnest in presenting that desire at the Throne of Grace.

Now I will leave this first part of my subject. I really think there is much in it which, while it causes you joy as you think of it this evening, may also cause you joy tomorrow and every other day in the year. Suppose you are in a workshop and cannot kneel down to pray—you can desire and God will hear that desire even if it is not expressed in words. Perhaps you work where there are ungodly men and you cannot vocally offer your petition to the Lord. If so, you can desire. Therefore, thank the Lord that He hears the desire of the humble. Whatever can stop my voice, nothing can stop my heart’s desire! I can go on desiring and, Glory be to God, He will go on hearing the desire of my heart!

II. Now we must pass on to the second part of our subject, TWO VERY BLESSED ASSURANCES—“You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear.”

The first assurance is this, “You will prepare their heart.” Turn this declaration into a prayer, “Lord, prepare my heart!” We ought all to make some sort of preparation for coming days as far as prudence suggests and circumstances allow. There is a laying up in store for a rainy day that every sensible man will make as far as he is able, but, Brothers and Sisters, the best preparation for the future lies in having a prepared heart! If you get all else prepared, but the heart is not, you have left the major part undone. But if the heart is prepared and a good deal else, unprepared, things may yet come right in the end. All gets right when the heart is right. Out of the heart are the issues of life and those issues of life are true and good when the heart is right. God only can prepare the heart for that which is right—He alone can prepare it for holy living, for happy dying—and for eternity! I want you to get hold of this assurance as a promise for you all through this year, “You will prepare their heart.” How shall we understand this expression?

First, God will prepare the heart of the humble to receive Christ. “Oh,” says one, “I do not feel fit to come to Christ.” All the fitness that is needed, God will give you. “You will prepare their heart.” You need to be empty, to be broken, to be wounded—all this, the Spirit of God will work upon your conscience by the operation of the Law of the Lord. Do not stand back from Christ because you are unprepared to come to Him. God will prepare you for Christ as He has already prepared Christ for you.

Next, “You will prepare their heart” to receive more of Christ. Those of us who have had Christ as our hope and our trust want to get more of Him. I should be very sorry if I thought that, this year, I should not learn something more of my Master than I have known before. I should think it a dreary year if it should pass over my head and I should have no fresh instruction concerning the beauties of His Person and the excellence of His Character. Oh, that we might all receive Christ more fully into our heart! The heart needs sweeping, cleaning and preparing—and here is the promise that this work shall be Divinely performed! “You will prepare their heart.” Not only for Grace, but for more Grace, will God prepare the heart of the humble!

This year, dear Brothers and Sisters, we shall need heart-preparation for the many duties we shall have to perform for God. Look forward to them with trust in God. Those who examine the palms of the hand and pretend to foretell the future are fools! Those who believe them are not wise. We cannot tell what a day may bring forth, but we know that every day will bring its need of service. Well then, God will prepare our hearts for it. “You will prepare their heart.” I like to think that nothing shall come for me to do but God will fit me for it. I may be called to a work that I have never attempted before. If so, I shall have Grace given which I never had before! You may change your condition of life this year, my dear Friend, but you shall be prepared for that change! You may have to emigrate to the other side of the world and find fresh duties awaiting you there—but you shall be prepared for your new sphere of service. You may be called from being a servant to be a master, or you may have to come down in the world and from being a master, you may have to become a servant, yet, whatever God shall put before you to do, He will prepare your heart for it. Only plead this declaration in prayer and you may expect to have it fulfilled!

In addition to our active service, there may be and probably will be, for many of us, a great deal of passive service—we may have to endure suffering this year. Poverty may fall upon some who are now in a comfortable position in life. Bereavement may make a widow of that smiling sister, or that happy father over yonder may be left childless. Before the year has run its course, who of us may have to toss upon the bed of sickness by the month, together? Who may be slandered? Who may be persecuted? It is not for us to know, but here is something we may know—“You will prepare their heart.” It is wonderful how God gets His people ready for trouble when it is coming. You remember what Solomon said about the wise woman? “She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet.” She has made such warm garments for them that she says, “Let the snow come if it likes. They are prepared to resist the cold.” So God’s wisdom and Grace will clothe us all with such warm garments of consolation that, when trouble comes, we shall be fully prepared to bear it. For duty, or for suffering, “You will prepare their heart.”

And ah, this year, some of us may have to die. Many of our members passed away last year. Some dear sweet souls—the very pick of this Church—were taken up to Heaven. It may be my lot, it may be your lot, dear Brother or Sister, to go Home this year, but we will fall back on this gracious assurance, “You will prepare their heart.” Why, it seems to me that if I can keep this Word of God in my heart and on my tongue all this year, nothing shall be able to disturb me! I shall be like the man of whom it is written, “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings—his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” “You will prepare their heart” and, therefore, they shall not be afraid of all the enemies that can come against them! You shall not be afraid of sickness, of famine, or of death, itself, for God will prepare your heart to meet it! Slip aside, now and again, during this year, when an unexpected trouble comes, and say, “Lord, prepare my heart for this sorrow!” When you meet with a strong temptation that comes all of a sudden, hasten away into some quiet corner and pray, “Now, my Master, prepare my heart to resist this assault of the adversary!” He will keep your sword sharpened for you! He will have your shield well bossed for you! He will keep you strong, He will keep you happy, He will keep you blessed, He will prepare your heart!

Now for the last part of my text. You do not know, perhaps, that I have a license to keep on as long as I like, to-night, for my pulpit clock has stopped! I am obliged to look round to see how the time flies. Before I close, I should like to say a little about this last part of my subject, the second blessed assurance—“You will cause Your ear to hear.” I think, Brothers and Sisters, that this preparation of the heart means, in the first place, that God will prepare His people’s hearts to pray and then He will cause His ear to hear their prayers. But I will take it out of its connection for just a minute or two.

“You will cause Your ear to hear.” I understand by this phrase that the Lord will hear us soon. Sometimes, when we pray, the answer does not come directly. Pray again, Brother, Sister, for if God has not caused His ear to hear, yet, He

 will cause His ear to hear! The answer to your prayer shall come speedily. Do not postpone your expectations too long. Prepare to wait if God tarries, but be prepared for the reply if He does not tarry. Some Christians do the first, but not the second—they seem so ready to wait that God makes them wait! Oh, prepare with such vigor and earnestness, when you are pleading for your own salvation, or for the salvation of others, that God shall make haste and at once cause His ear to hear! He will hear you soon—expect, during this year, many speedy answers to your prayers!

“You will cause Your ear to hear.” That means, next, I think, that the Lord will always hear us. He will, as it were, exert Himself to hear your supplication. “You will cause your ear to hear.” This is a blessed Word of God for this new year! My God, how earnestly I will pray, now that I know I have Your ear! I remember that dear Mr. Cowper said, when he was in despondency and distress, writing to Mr. Bull, of Newport Pagnell, “You have advised me to pray, but there is no reason in the world in my praying, there is no passage of Scripture that gives me any right to pray.” He was, of course, insane at the time. Yet he said, “If there were such a text, I would never leave off praying as long as I lived. You tell me that Jonah prayed in the whale’s belly, but I am in a worse plight than he was in. If I were only as bad as Jonah was, I would pray to God night and day.”

I catch at that thought—if I am permitted to pray, then I will pray. And if I may have whatever I ask of God in the name of Jesus, oh, I will ask! Do use your privilege in praying to the Lord, for He will cause His ear to hear. If you had the ear of the great ones at court and could get whatever you liked, I am sure that you would use the privilege! And now that you have the ear of the great King of Kings, O you intercessors, you who are the Lord’s remembrancers, plead with Him day and night “and give Him no rest till He establishes, and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth,” for He will cause His ear to hear you! The Lord will always hear you, Sinner, if you call upon Him! He will soon hear you—He will effectually hear you.

When it is said, “You will cause Your ear to hear,” does it not mean that the Lord will so hear as to answer our petitions? As a Church we have prospered by prayer. Glasgow flourished by the preaching of the Word and the Tabernacle has flourished by the prayers of Believers. That has been the secret of our strength! Therefore let us still believe in the efficacy of prayer. God listens to the voices of His children. He regards the cry of the humble. He is moved by the desires of His own people. Let us, then, during this year, be more in prayer than ever! Let us pray in faith, pleading the precious blood of Jesus and the promises of God’s Word. And let us hear the Lord saying to us, “Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning My sons and concerning the work of My hands, command you, Me.” There is need of a great revival of religion—the wave of the late revival has gone and now we need another. We have had a long winter, spiritually—we need to have an awakening springtime, a glorious summer and a golden autumn in the Church. Let us pledge ourselves to pray for it—and not merely pledge ourselves, but really pray! Let us cry mightily till the Lord shall hear us and bring in tens of thousands who shall be the reward of the Savior’s sufferings and death! The Lord bless you, dear Friends, and make this year to be very rich in fruit-bearing to God’s Glory in every one of us!

And as for such as were not saved when they came into the Tabernacle this evening, I trust that God will, this very night, make them desire to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—and He will hear their desire and lead them to look to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! As we who love the Lord come to the Communion Table, we can use our text, for I am sure the desire of the humble is that they may see Christ in the Supper. “Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble: You will prepare their heart.” Oh, it is sad to go to the Lord’s Table with an unprepared heart! Lord, prepare our heart to come to Your banqueting table, tonight and then, “You will cause Your ear to hear.” You will grant us Grace to feed upon Christ and to be satisfied! May it be so to every communicant! The Lord bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 103.**

One’s heart naturally turns to this passage when one desires to magnify the Lord. It is specially suitable for a New Year’s meditation.  
Verse 1. Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Come, my Soul, wake up! Bestir yourself! You have great work to do, such work as angels do forever and ever before the Throne of God. Let no power or faculty exempt itself from this Divine service! Come, my memory, my will, my judgment, my intellect, my heart—all that is in me, be stirred up to magnify and bless His holy name! “Bless the Lord, O my Soul”—for the music must begin deep down in the center of my being—it must be myself, my very self, that praises God!  
2. Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all His benefits. This shall be the first note—“We love Him because He first loved us.” We have not to go abroad for materials for praise, they lie at home. Forget not all His benefits to you, my Soul—His overwhelming, His innumerable benefits which have to be summed up in the gross as “all His benefits”—forget them not!  
3. Who forgives all your iniquities. Come, come, my Soul, can you not praise God for sin forgiven? That is the first note, and it is the sweetest note in our song of praise. “Who forgives all your iniquities”—not some of them but the blessed Scapegoat has carried into the, “No man’s land of oblivion,” the whole mass!  
3. Who heals all your diseases. He is the Physician for you, my Soul— your diseases are the worst of all diseases, for they would drag you down to Hell if they were not cured. But Jehovah Rophi heals all your diseases!  
4. Who redeems your life from destruction. Oh, my Soul, praise God for redemption! If you cannot sing about anything else, sing of Free Grace and dying Love. Keep on ringing those charming bells.  
4. Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. What? Can you wear a crown and not praise Him who placed it on your head? Can you wear such a crown as this, made up of loving kindness and tender mercies, and not bless the Lord? Oh, let it not be so! Let us each break forth in spirit in one song, tonight, and say, “My soul does magnify the Lord.”  
5. Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. Heavenly feasting on heavenly bread! Divine satisfaction from the finished work of Christ! Oh, my Soul, pray to God to give you new life, tonight, so that your youth may be renewed, so that your wing feathers may grow, again, and that you may mount as eagles do! Surely, dear Friends, this little list of mercies, so small in number, contains an immensity of mercy! Let us bless the Lord for every one of them.  
6. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Let the poor and the down-trodden sing unto the Lord. He will take care of you! He is the Executor of the needy and the Executioner of the proud. “The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.”

7. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. Therefore, let us bless Him, the God of Revelation, who does not hide Himself from His creatures, but who makes known His ways and His acts unto His people! An unknown God is an unpraised God, but when He shows Himself to His people, they cannot refrain from blessing His name.

8. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Praise Him for this! Bless His name at every single mention of His Divine attributes. Let your hearts beat to the music of praise tonight!

9. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever. Let the afflicted praise Him! Let the downcast and the despondent sinner praise Him! If he cannot sing about anything else, let him bless the name of the Lord that He will not keep His anger forever.

10. He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Let us thank God we are not in Hell—we are yet on praying ground and on pleading terms with Him. Some of us will never go into Perdition, for He has saved us with an everlasting salvation. Truly, if we did not bless Him, every timber in this building and every iron column beneath this roof might burst out in rebukes for our ingratitude! We must bless His name!

11. For as the Heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. Look up into the blue sky—up, up beyond the stars and say to yourself—“So great is His mercy.” Let us, therefore, praise Him accordingly. “Loud as His thunders, shout His praise and sound it lofty at His Throne.”

12. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. There is neither latitude nor longitude for praise. God’s Grace is boundless! Let us, therefore, unstintedly praise Him.

13. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. He has a tender heart. He never strikes without regret, but His love always flows freely. No father or mother is half so mild and loving as is the Lord of Hosts!

14. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Our bodies are but animated dust and even our souls might be compared to dust in His sight. Not iron or granite, but we are mere dust. It is a wonder that men live so long when there are such mighty forces, even in Nature, arrayed against them. Who can control earthquakes and volcanoes? And when men Cross the sea in times of storm, it is a wonder that they come to land, again!

15. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. You are like the primrose by the river’s brim, or the buttercup and the daisy in the field that is visited with the scythe. That is all we are—not cedars, not oaks, not rocks—but flowers of the field.

16. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. Some of the hot winds of the East come over a meadow and it is immediately burned up. I have seen the fairest and loveliest flowers look, in a short time, as if they had been burned with a hot iron when the Sirocco had blown across from Africa—and such are we. We speak of the breath of the pestilence—it is but a puff of wind—and we are gone.

17, 18. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children to such as keep His Covenant, and to those that remember His Commandments to do them. “But”—and this is a blessed, “but.” “But the mercy of the Lord”— that is not a fading flower, that is not a withering wind—“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.” Here are ten thousand blessings in one! You have everlasting mercy, Covenant mercy. Oh, if we do not praise God when we think of the Covenant, what has happened to us? We must be possessed with a dumb devil if we do not praise the name of Him whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting!

19. The LORD has prepared His Throne in the heavens; and His Kingdom rules over all. Now, children of a King, will you go mourning all your days? You that dwell in the Light of His Throne, will you not be glad? Rejoice, O Zion, for your King lives and reigns forever! “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice.”

20. Bless the LORD, you His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. “Bless the Lord, you His angels.” We cannot do it well enough, but help us, then, you angels that excel in strength. Put out all your strength when you praise Him, “you that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.” Your actions are your praises, O you angels! Would God that we had learned to do His commandments as you do them! We are praying for this, even as our Lord taught His disciples to say, “Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.”

21. Bless you the LORD, all you His host; you ministers of His, that do His pleasure. All living things, and all the forces and powers of Nature are calling upon men to praise the Lord! And all the hosts of God, the organs of Omnipotence, ring out the grand chorus, “Bless you the Lord.”

22. Bless the LORD, all His work, in all places of His dominion: bless the LORD, O my Soul. I must not go grumbling up to Heaven, nor stumbling among the works of God. I must gratefully come to Him and, myself, praise Him! And so, with the Psalmist, I cry, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—1037, 10, 1042. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #691 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

AN IMMOVABLE FOUNDATION

NO. 691

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalm 11:3.**

WE are walking along through the vineyard of this Psalm, plucking the clusters on the right hand and on the left, when suddenly, with a tremendous roar, the “if” of our text, like a young lion, leaps out upon us. What shall we do with it? Let us play the man, like Samson, and rend it as though it were a kid and doubtless we shall find honey in it, and shall have again to put forth our riddle, “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” These “ifs” are terrible lions, but when Divine Grace enables us to slay them, they become good storehouses for sweetness.

As the children of Israel spoiled the Egyptians and made themselves rich from the spoils of their oppressors, both when they left Egypt and after the passage of the Red Sea, so let us gather riches of comfort and arms for future warfare from this “if” which threatens to enthrall the mind of the Christian and hold him in the chains of fear and doubt. It comes to us as a keen shaft from the camp of the foe, but by the Grace of God we will fit it to our string, and with the arms of faith shoot it back again and may God in mercy guide it to the joints of some foeman’s harness.

This “if” may have a bitter taste at first, but I am persuaded that it will have a wholesome effect upon us to use it. Yes, it will yield some spiritual sustenance to our souls. We will welcome its searching and shaking power now, as it will only tend to prepare us for the time when the four winds may come upon our house and the blast of the Terrible One be as a storm against the wall. If we use this giant battering ram “if,” now, it will show us our weakness and our strength so that we may correct the one and rejoice over the other.

We shall take this “if” in two ways. First, we shall consider it as an “if” which is nothing but an “if.” And secondly, we shall consider it as an “if” which is a great deal more than an “if.”

I. We shall first CONSIDER THIS “IF” AS BEING NOTHING BUT AN “IF.” “If the foundations are removed, what can the righteous do?” My Brethren, there are certain spiritual foundations which God has laid in Zion which never can be removed. There are certain foundations against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail—which time cannot shake—and which eternity will only confirm. If we venture to speak of these foundations being removed, it can only be in hypothetical terms and with the word, “if”— for there must always be in our souls the conviction that the foundations of God stand sure.

I will mention a few of these foundation—things which we know cannot be removed, but we will ask the question—if they should be removed, what then? First we will take the foundation Book. This Word of God, this Revelation of Himself which He has made to us by Prophets and by seers, by Apostles and by evangelists, and by His own dear Son. This Book we believe to be true even in its jots and tittles. Whatever form of thought we may adopt as to the method of inspiration, we believe this Book to be inspired throughout, and we accept all its utterances as the teachings of the Most High.

From the first Word of it to the last we give our “unfeigned assent and consent” to it as being nothing less and nothing more than the Word of Jehovah, the Lord our God. But if it should not be so, what can the righteous do, then? If, after all, the attacks of modern skeptics should have some force in them. If they can dislodge part of the Word of God from its sure resting place. If first one stone shall topple from the summit of the battlements and then another shall be loosened from the embankment, and by-and-by its enemies should come to work with their great bars upon the very lowest and most valuable stones in the wall—what then?

What if the Book should be a delusion? What if it should be false? Ah, then, my Brothers and Sisters, what can the righteous do? Oh, it had been better for us that we had never been born than that the Bible should not be true! Here is the only balm that heals the wounds that sin has made! Here is the only bread that satisfies the hungering of our spirits! If that is not true, O God, why did You create us, and why did You suffer such a Book as that to come across our path to mock us, supplying, as it does, all that hope can desire, and all that our deepest interests can crave after?

Oh, cruel God, to permit so sweet a dream to charm us even for a while, if it is not true! But oh, Beloved, we come back with a sacred recoil to this—it is true—it must be true and if for no other reason because it so suits the craving of our inward consciousness. Because it so uplifts us out of the natural beggary and meanness of our condition and puts us on such a heavenly footing. It makes us commune with the Most High and fills us with such rapt and heavenly thoughts! It must be true, or else what could we do?

Cling, then, to the Divine authority of the Scriptures with a death grip! Let those give up the Inspiration of the Bible who can afford to do so, but you and I cannot! Let those cast away the sure promise of God who have got something else to comfort them—who can go to their philosophy or turn to their self-conceit. But as for you and for me, it is a desperate matter for us if this Book is not true, and therefore let us be ready to defend it at all costs, and if need be, to die for it! Oh, Brethren, it were better to die, this Book being true, than to live, this Book being false!

It were better for us that all the miseries of this life should fall upon us, this Book being an unmoved foundation, than for all the joys of life to be ours if this Book is once taken away. Clasp it to your heart! Enfold it in your bosom! Hold it as the very core of your life’s comfort and the very strength of your existence! Remember that if this is removed there is nothing for the righteous to do but despair and die. I hope we shall always sing—

*“Should all the forms which men devise Assault my soul with treacherous art, I’ll call them vanity and lies,  
And bind this Bible to my heart.”*

But now we turn from the foundation Book to the foundation doctrine. What is the foundation doctrine? I shall not shock any one of you if I say that it is admitted by all evangelical Christians that the standing or falling in the Church is that of justification by faith. The Church which holds that doctrine is in the body—the church which is tampering with that doctrine is not in the body. I will not merely say the church that is not holding it, but the church that is not holding it in the most distinct form is not to be acknowledged as a part of the body of Christ.

Justification by faith alone is such a Truth of God that it must not be hidden. To obscure those words, legible in their own light—“Believe and live”—is to commit high treason against the majesty of God and to make one’s self an outlaw from God and from mercy! The great standing or falling doctrine, then, is this—“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “Therefore we are justified by faith, and not by the works of the Law.”

We hold that it is of faith that it might be of Divine Grace through Christ Jesus. Holding this Truth of God—that every soul who believes in Christ is thereby made a partaker of the merit of His passion and is saved—what joy and peace are opened up to us! Some of us live in a sense of pardon. Oh, Brethren, this is a river to swim in, when we can sing*—*

*“Now freed from sin I walk at large,  
My Savior’s blood my full discharge.  
At His dear feet my soul I lay,  
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*

Oh, the blessedness—as Ainsworth translates it—“The heaped-up blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.” Oh, the blessedness of being justified by faith, and of possessing peace with God! But if that is removed, what can the righteous do? My Brethren, the righteous can do nothing! They can do nothing, and they must at once give up their peace, give up their joy, give up their hopes— and then give up existence altogether. This one thing I know—though I have preached my Master’s Gospel with perpetual industry and have sought to honor Him—yet I have no more hope of Heaven apart from the merits of Christ than the greatest criminal that is banished from his country for his crimes.

That poor wretch who was, till lately, under sentence of death for many murders, would have as good a hope of entering into eternal life as the best among you were it not for this precious doctrine—that is to say, she would have no hope, and you would have no hope, either—for we are all alike shut up under condemnation. Good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, we are all alike condemned under the Law of God, and there would be no more hope for one than for another if this doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ were not true. We are all in this one boat together—I mean as many of us as have believed—the weakest cannot sink unless the ship goes down, and the strongest cannot float unless the ship should bear them.

If this foundation were removed, I will ask you gray-haired saint, hoary with many years of service, what could you do? You bow your head and say, “Alas, my master, what could I do but die in despair?” I would ask the bravest of Christ’s Apostles, the most earnest and indefatigable of the servants of the living God, what could they do if salvation was not the result of faith in Christ, and they would reply unanimously, “We were of all men the most miserable if our only hope were gone!”

But oh, Brethren, we will come back to this, that it is by faith in the blood of Jesus that we are saved. For this doctrine let us be prepared to bear any reproach. And for the spread of this doctrine let us make any exertions. Let us publish it to every wind! Let us invoke the help of every wave to bear it abroad! My Brothers and Sisters, help those of us who are engaged in telling out this precious truth of salvation by faith, and then proclaim it far and wide yourselves.

Distribute it in a printed form! Speak of it with your warm and loving lips! Tell it, tell it the wide world over that there is a foundation already laid in Zion—a cornerstone elect and precious! Proclaim that “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the righteous!” Proclaim that “whoever believes in Him is not condemned.”

We will now go a step further. We have had the foundation Book and the foundation doctrine, and now we come to the foundation fact. The fact upon which our faith rests is this, that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The great fact on which genuine faith rests is this, that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” and that having taken upon Himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of man, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, for us.

The great Truth which makes the Gospel worth proclaiming is the Truth that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” that Christ also has suffered for sin, “the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.” “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” In one word, the great fact on which the Christian’s hope rests is substitution.

The vicarious sacrifice of Christ for the sinner. Christ suffering for the sinner. Christ’s being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Christ offering up a true and proper expiatory and substitutionary sacrifice in the place and stead of as many as the Father gave Him, who are recognized by their trusting in Him—this is the cardinal fact of the Gospel. Now, if this is true, what will we not do? Do? Why, we will sing of Christ in time, and sing of Him in eternity! We will sit at the foot of His Cross and—

*“View the flowing  
Of the Savior’s precious blood.  
With Divine assurance knowing  
He has made our peace with God.”*

We will praise Him when we get to Heaven and sing, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” But—oh, horrible “but”! If this is not true—if God was never Incarnate, if God never did in the Person of His Son Jesus bleed and die—if no Atonement was ever made for human guilt, then howl because of it! Let each man put his hands upon his loins as a woman in childbirth, and let sorrow pierce the heart of every child of Adam—for sin must be punished—and if it was never punished in Christ it must be punished upon each one of us! Wrath, and a certain terrible looking for judgment and fiery indignation— these are all that await us!

“As when a man wipes a dish and turns it,” said the Prophet, even so will it be with us—wiped out and turned upside down if it were not true that Christ died. As when the potter with a rod of iron breaks the vessel into shivers, so should we, too, be broken into shivers with each particle to be full of pain and covered with grief, if it were not that Jesus died. Oh, if this foundation were removed what could we do? But it cannot be removed! We know it! We rest on it! We trust in it! And our joy is to hold it, to understand and to study it, to be actuated and moved by it in every part of our life and conversation. But if it were removed what could the righteous do?

There is just now, and there has been for many years, a direct attack made upon the doctrine of the Atonement. Men cannot bear substitution. They gnash their teeth at the thought of the Lamb of God bearing the sin of man. Ah, but we will proclaim it in defiance of them and hurl it in their teeth! We will neither dilute it, nor change it, nor fritter it away in any shape or fashion. It shall still be Christ a positive Substitute, bearing human guilt and suffering in the place of men, for if this is not so what could we do?

We cannot, dare not give it up for it is our life! I have thus given you three matters, and now just a word upon another point, namely, the foundation work. The blood of Jesus, Brethren, must be applied by the Spirit of Divine Grace, and the foundation of our inward confidence must be in the work of Grace in our own souls.

Now the foundation in us was laid in repentance, and in faith in Christ—and we have gone on to build thereon, much, I am afraid, of wood, hay, and stubble, but still, something of gold, and silver, and precious stones. Now, if the Grace of God could cease to work. If the eternal love of Jehovah could be removed, and if the effectual might of the Holy Spirit’s arm could be withdrawn, what could you and I do? Would it not be as hard to get to Heaven by the Gospel as by the Law if it were not for the work of Grace in us?

Brethren, Calvary is no nearer to Heaven than Sinai if the Spirit of Grace works not in us. If Christ is not crucified in us, His being crucified for us will be of no avail! We must have Christ formed in us the hope of Glory. Now, what do you say, Brothers and Sisters? Suppose this foundation work were all removed—what could you do? Do? Why the brightest of you would become as smoking flax without light! You who are pure as crystal now in your daily life would become like a polluted stream! You who now are the delight and joy of the Church of God would be as reprobate silver cast out, or as salt that has lost its savor and is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill.

We must ever keep in mind that we are only channels for Divine Grace—we are not even pools and reservoirs—we must have a continual supply of Divine gifts. We must have an abiding union with the fountain of all good or we should soon run dry. And only as fresh streams flow into us are we kept from becoming mere dry beds of sand and mire. But we know that He will never fail us. This spring is high up in Heaven near the Eternal Throne and it ripples down through the means of Grace from the God of all Grace—and we receive daily of His fullness Grace for Grace.

Joyful truth for us, that because He lives we must live also! Till Jesus bows His head in death, we, the living members of His mystic body, can never droop or fail. His might is our strength. His resources our never failing supply. And we, through His Spirit, are daily tended and sustained—

*“Oh! To Grace, how great a debtor,*

*Daily I’m constrained to be!”*  
Were that Grace once gone what should I do? Hold fast, then, to that which you have received, that no man take your crown. Cling to the doctrine of the work of the Spirit with a death grip! Never give it up. Having begun in the Spirit do not seek to be made perfect in the flesh. Do not look to excitement. Do not let your faith stand in the wisdom or the speech of man, but in the power of God, and in the invincible might and majesty of the Holy Spirit! If you go anywhere else, the foundation will be removed and then what can you do? O God! You have begun the good work and You will carry it on and perfect it unto the day of Christ. This foundation shall not be removed.

Once more, there is also a foundation hope—something which we may, I think, call a foundation—since our joy and our peace very much depend upon it. You and I possess tonight, dear Friends, a hope which is sometimes called “a blessed hope,” and at another time, “a good hope.” It is a hope partly that Christ may come and a hope that

 when He comes, “we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” It is a hope that whether He comes in our lifetime or not, yet, if we fall asleep, we shall sleep in Jesus. We have a hope that sometimes bursts out into a song and then we tune it in warbling such as this—

“ **On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,  
And cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan’s fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie.”**

Or sometimes it is *—  
“Jerusalem! My happy home! Name ever dear to me.  
When shall my labors have an end, In joy, and peace, and you?”*

Or, perhaps it is *—  
“Jerusalem the golden,  
With milk and honey blest.  
Beneath your contemplation  
Sink heart and soul oppressed.  
We know not, oh! we know not,  
What joys await us there!  
What radiance of Glory,  
What bliss beyond compare.”*

At any rate, whatever notes we may use to warble out the hope, the hope is still the same—  
*“It is the hope, the blissful hope,  
Which Jesus’ Grace has given.  
The hope when days and years are past,  
We all shall meet in Heaven.”*

Now, if that were removed, what could we do?—  
*“What is there here that I should wait?  
My hope’s alone in You.  
When will You open Glory’s gate,  
And take me up to You?”*

“Whom have I in Heaven but You? There is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” Take Heaven away, and the world to come, and what a dreary desert, what blackness and darkness, what a gulf of mad despair it would speedily become! But, oh, Brethren, that foundation cannot be removed! Because He lives, we shall live also. “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” That hope abides sure and steadfast! Let us think of it more than we do.

Let us plume our wings of flight every now and then. Come, you birds of Heaven, you eaglets of God—how is it that you keep below upon the earth as though you had no wings? Come, plume your callow pinions and begin to fly! The clouds are your atmosphere—beyond there is the blue sky where all is fair and clear. Up with you! Up, nearer to God, nearer to eternity, nearer to your home, nearer to your everlasting mansion. Re

member that you— *“Nightly pitch your moving tent*

*A day’s march nearer home,”*  
and let the thought that you shall soon be—  
*“Forever with the Lord”*  
come over your hearts and sweep like the touch of some master harpist’s hand as he sweeps the ten-stringed instrument and wakes it up to thunders of sacred melody. Be glad in the Lord, you righteous, and shout for joy, you upright in heart! This foundation cannot be removed and you need not fear!  
II. And now we change our note for a few minutes. Let us TAKE THIS “IF” AS BEING SOMETHING MORE THAN AN “IF.” The foundations may be removed—not the spiritual foundations at all, but the temporal foundations. The foundations of civil government, the foundations of commerce, the foundations of one’s estates, the foundations of trust between man and man—these may be removed. They have been grievously and terribly shaken during the last few days.  
War may arise. There seem to be many indications of a coming tempest and when the eagles are gathered together to the prey, the fight will probably thicken. And instead of a few combatants it may be that there will be a multitude of nations engaged in a terrible slaughter and the foundations of the various kingdoms of Europe may be removed. Revolution, too, may come. We remember 1848, and some of you, perhaps, are old enough to go farther back than that, to dates when revolutions were the order of the day.  
There are some who are always putting on their blue spectacles and who can see very wonderful revolutions here. May their heads never ache before their predictions come to pass, but still these things may occur, for men are men, and if they should, what then? If the foundations should be removed, what would the righteous do? A panic has come and man does not trust his fellow man. But he plays the fool, the wild lunatic in the street, destroying commerce for the sake of commerce—and to get gain, himself—destroying the tree that bears the fruit.  
I suppose no greater proof of folly could have been known in the nineteenth century than might have been seen last Friday in Lombard Street. If anyone had whistled for a thousand fools, he need not have traveled a thousand yards, but might have found them on the spot! Now, if there should be such a thing, there may be ground for all this fear, for the foundations of human things are not made by God—they are only man’s management, and consequently they may be shaken—but what then? I am going to suppose the very worst—that the social fabric is rocking like the walls of old Jericho and that the very foundations are falling. I will even suppose that the cornerstone is being removed. What then? What can the righteous do? Well, he can do as well as another man and he can do a great deal better! Let me tell you what he can do. The first thing he can do, if the worst comes to the worst, is that he can bear it with a holy equanimity. He can say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” If the ship is wrecked, his treasure is not aboard it. He knows that if the banks should break, he will only part with some of his odd spending money—His true treasure is up there—not in an iron chest where the burglar can break through, but—

*“Hid with Christ in God*

*Beyond the reach of harm,”*  
so that if the worst comes, he can still fold his arms and say, “It is written, ‘I will never leave and never forsake you,’ and so long as I have bread to eat and raiment to put on, so long will I bless the name of the Lord Most High from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.”

Now, dear Friends, prove this if it should happen to you. Do not do as the worldling does, who puts his hand to his fevered brow and says, “I am a ruined man!” You cannot be a ruined man. Do not say, “I have lost my all!” You cannot lose your all—your all is Christ—and Christ is not to be lost. Just accept the blow. Kiss the rod. Touch the hand that smites, and say, “Blessed be You, my Father, for it is the Lord.”

Then the Christian not only bears the worst patiently but the next thing he can do is to hope for the best cheerfully. I think if there is any man who can see clearest, even a spot of blue sky, it should be the Christian. “Oh,” he says, “things are not what they seem. The dark cloud has a silver lining! Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.” It is very much in the struggle of life to keep a brave heart. And you, Christian, have many arguments for doing so. Why bow your head at yonder crested billow as though you should be drowned by it? O Man, it will only wash your face!

It is all that it will do for you, and you shall lift your brow, when the spray has cleared it, towards Heaven, and shall see your God the better because the dirt is washed out of your eyes. Therefore, look cheerfully for something bright in the midst of the darkness. Out of all this apparent loss, God can bring for you true gain in spiritual things. You may part with things temporal with equanimity, if they are likely to be restored to you transmuted by God’s alchemy into things spiritual and eternal.

If God takes away from His people, He can restore again, as in the case of Job, twice as much as they had before, even in worldly goods—and with these a gracious work of His Spirit in the heart—which is more to be desired than gold, yes, than much fine gold. Adam was laid asleep and God took a rib and made it into a helpmeet for him. If God shall take anything from you, yes, though it lies near your heart, do not mourn as one that has no hope.

In patience possess your soul. Rest on the Lord, for He will bring it to pass that out of all this shall come a spiritual power which, in after days shall gladden your heart and make you the joyful parent of much good to others in this world of sin and woe. Christ became poor that He might make many rich. And in His poverty He was as a lamb before its shearers dumb, and opened not His mouth. His prayer was, “not My will, O Father, but Yours be done.” So may we hold our peace, if God has done it. Never charge God foolishly, but say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

If the foundations are removed what can the righteous do? Why, they can do one thing—they can do the right. They cannot guarantee results, but they can do the right. They cannot tell whether they shall fail in business or not, but they can be upright. They cannot tell whether the fall of this house or the crash of that bank may injure them, but they can tell that they will have clean hands and come out of it all with a spotless character. And when everything is lost there is but little lost if honor still remains, and if, by Divine Grace integrity is still preserved. He that wears the herb hearts-ease in his bosom is richer than he that can wear diamonds upon his fingers, if those fingers are stained with guilt.

It is comparatively easy to be correct and upright when these things pay—when we can, by them, secure the esteem of our fellow men and that confidence which is as good as money to a man in business, because of the credit it brings with it. But it is quite another thing to do the right when it means to strip oneself of all and to give up long-loved and cherished possessions, hopes, and prospects, both for ourselves and family.

This is the hour of temptation when Satan comes with his glory and wealth in one hand and a suggestion of evil in the other. He bids us open our lap to receive them, reminding us that to deny him is to close with injury and loss to reputation, to our business, and to our loved families at home. How many have made the dread compact with the Prince of Darkness! They have gained the world but lost their soul! They have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage and bartered Heaven for Hell! Time has been taken and eternity rejected. The honor of men has been esteemed more than the praise of God.

They have grasped the gold and it has been a millstone round their neck, and into the deepest depths of woe it has dragged them. Lost! Lost! Lost forever! Oh, that men were wise, that they would remember this— that they would consider their latter end. For what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Come what may, trust in God and do the right.

There is another thing we can do if the foundations are removed, namely, if we have a hand to spare we will help a comrade. If the foundations are removed and there is a common calamity, when others are selfish the Christian man will hear his Savior’s words—“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” “Well,” he says, “it is a time of general suffering. And when a boat is at sea with a few survivors from a wreck, no man hoards his biscuit—no man keeps that little drop of pure fresh water wholly to himself—but like a generous man he divides his biscuit with his fellow sufferers and drinks his drop with the rest.”

So will the righteous do. When things are bad they will say, “Now is the time for me to exhibit some degree of generosity.” I like the action of a man who was once waited upon for a subscription, and contrary to expectation, gave the minister who asked him a very large check—I think it was one hundred pounds. The minister was about to retire when the merchant, happening to open one of his letters, found that he had lost a vessel worth from ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds. He called the minister and said, “You must give me back that check, I have just opened a letter and found that I have been a very great loser.”

The poor country minister, whose chapel was in a very bad plight, looked very blank about the matter. But the merchant said, “I find my money is going fast. I suppose I have not made good use of it, and so the Master has taken it away, but I will save some of it anyhow.” And he wrote out another check for five hundred pounds. Now, this was a right way of acting—provided, of course, the money was his own—for no man has a right to give away other people’s property.

But if it were his own, this was the true and wise pathway to choose to make some of it safe—a much better plan than when my lord comes fresh from his bank with his money in his hand, and says, “Go and do likewise, my brave fellows! Get your money out like this!” And then finds five minutes afterwards that somebody else has his money without giving him a receipt for the deposit, or anything of the kind—for it has gone into the hands of a pickpocket who is not so much to be blamed, perhaps, in such cases as he might have been in some others.

Now, I can recommend to you when things are going bad, to make good investments. “Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for you know not what evil may be upon the earth.” “Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of righteousness, that when you fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” Once again. There is something more which the righteous man can do if the foundations are removed, and that is, he can trust in God that it will be well in the end. The worldling says, “It will be all the same a hundred years from now.” The Christian says, “I do not want to look so far ahead as that. It is all right now.”

But the wind blows! “It is all right.” But the waves dash! “It is all right.” But all the sails are reefed! “It is all right!” But the ship flies before the wind! “It is all right.” But there are rocks ahead! “It is all right.” Why? “Because He who is at the helm knows all about it. He created both wind and wave and He knows how to cope with the storm. I cannot see that it is right, but I know that it is, and I walk by faith, and not by sight.” Oh, Christian, this is what you can do! If the foundations are removed you can bring faith into heavenly exercise, and you can sail against the wind.

The night may be dark and dreary but it will usher in the brighter morn! And merrily will the celestial music and songs greet his ears as the fresh dawning light triumphs over the fleeing darkness and spreads itself till it bathes with its splendor all things which were even in the darkness working together for the good of God’s people. Yes, the rough March winds and the dreary April showers were all fulfilling their task then—and now we can see it and rejoice in it as well as in their result. We will sing in our dungeon with Paul and Silas, for all is well now as it will be hereafter in Heaven. It is only in degree and realization that earth’s joys differ from Heaven’s to the true Believer in Christ.

Lastly, if the foundations are removed, the righteous can commune with Christ therein. We should never have such fellowship with Jesus as we do if we had not such troubles as we have. You cannot see the stars in the daytime but they tell us that if you go down into a well you can. Sometimes God sinks wells of trouble and puts His servants into them—and then they see His starry promises. You might hunt in vain for glowworms by day, but they shall all be seen at night—and so shall the comfortable words and thoughts of Holy Scripture.

The fireflies shall flash best at night when the sunlight is gone, and so oftentimes the light of the promises is better seen in the night of trouble than in the day of outward prosperity. The black foils of trouble shall bring out the brighter jewel of Divine Grace. You cannot know Christ except by following in His footsteps. Poverty will reveal Him who for our sakes became poor. Sickness will show Him whose visage was more marred than any man’s. Shame will teach you His shame—and suffering will reveal to you His suffering.

And even death itself, which shall remove the foundations, shall give you conformity to His death that you may have part in His resurrection. Courage then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, and to the question, “If the foundations are removed, what can the righteous do?” give this answer, “We can do as the righteous ought to do. We can do as God enables us to do.” Let us go and show the world what that will be and let the superiority of our faith and of our religion reveal itself in our times of darkness and in our hours of suffering.

I have been thinking all the while I have been thus talking that this text has an application to those who are not righteous because if the righteous cannot do anything if the Grace of God fail, then what can the wicked do? They can do nothing, but then they can do as much as the righteous, who can do nothing either—and so here is comfort for the very worst, and for those who feel themselves to be farthest from God. So long as the foundation stands there is hope for every soul that believes, and though you are the worst of the worst, yet if you trust Christ there is hope for you! Though there would not be any if the foundations were removed, even if you were the best of the best.

Come, then, needy Sinner! Come, though years of sin have heaped up their iniquities upon you! Come to Jesus—He can cleanse you. Trust Him, trust Him! Trust Him now, and you are saved and shall be His in the day of His appearing! Build on this foundation! Christ Jesus died for the ungodly. Trust Him to save you and when the floods arise, and the rain descends, and the winds blow, your house shall never fall because it is built upon a rock, a foundation that can never be removed!

I would that some here tonight would learn to leave the treacherous path of sin and seek an interest in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know that the road you tread is undermined and that sooner or later you will fall through, and sink on, on, on through the grave into the pit which has no bottom, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone? Turn! Turn! Why will you die? There is a sure foundation which cannot move—on which you may build and never fear an overthrow!

Come, then, with all your load of guilt, and rest at once and forever on Him who says, Come unto Me, and him that comes I will in nowise cast out. Heaven and earth may pass, but He will save to the uttermost all who come by faith to Him. God bless these remarks to you according to His will, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.—

*“Yes! He is mine! And nothing of earthly things, Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth, or power, The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings  
Could tempt me to forego His love an hour. ‘Go, worthless world,’ I cry, ‘with all that’s yours. Go I to my Savior’s am, and He is mine.  
Whatever may change, in Him no change is seen, A glorious sun that wanes not, nor declines. Above the clouds and storms He walks unseen, And sweetly on His people’s darkness shines: All may depart—I fret not, nor repine,  
While I my Savior’s am, and He is mine.”*

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A SUITABLE WATCHWORD  
NO. 3097

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1908.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “Help, LORD.”  
Psalm 12:1.

THIS was a prayer of David. It was offered under peculiar circumstances. He had been treacherously betrayed again and again. He delivered the city of Keilah from the Philistines and then had to flee from the place, or the men of Keilah would have delivered him up to his enemy, Saul. He went to the wilderness of Ziph and the men of Ziph at once ran to Saul to betray him. Doeg was present when David received some help from Ahimelech the priest and he set off straightway to inform the king. Everyone seemed to act treacherously with David while he was in his state of wandering. He therefore turned away altogether from men in whom he could put no confidence—and he cried, “Help, Lord.”

Let us spend a few minutes, first of all, in remarks upon the prayer itself. Then let us offer a few suggestions as to when it may be used. And we will close up with some encouragement to expect and answer.

I. First as to THE PRAYER ITSELF.  
That which strikes you at once is its shortness—“Help, Lord.” Two words—and one of these is rather the direction of the prayer than the prayer itself. It is the very soul of brevity. “Help, Lord.” I may, however, say that it is none too short for all that for there is a fullness and suggestiveness in it which could not readily be exhausted. It is no fault in our prayers if they are short. And I think in our public petitions, especially at Prayer Meetings, it is a virtue to be aimed at to be brief. Mr. Jay says, with regard to his sermons, that he knew there were some excellences which would cost him much pains to attain, “But,” he said, “there was one I knew to be within my reach, namely, brevity, and therefore I made not the sermon too long.” Praying, indeed, being a more spiritual exercise than even preaching, must not be protracted. It is remarkable, if you remember, that Joshua’s arm never grew weary while he was fighting the Amalekites, but Moses’ hands grew weary while he was up on the mountain in prayer. Because prayer is a more spiritual exercise than fighting and, consequently, the spirit being our weaker part, we feel the weakness the sooner there. Let us not, then, pray our members into a good frame and then pray them out again—but when we have expressed our desires with that fewness of words which is proper in the Presence of God, let us close our supplications and let some other Brother take up the note. This is a short prayer.

Do you not see, dear Friends, that those of you who have been saying, “We do not pray because we have not time,” are guilty of a great falsehood? It cannot be lack of time. “Help, Lord.” Why, it takes scarcely a second to offer such a prayer as that! It is not lack of time—it is lack of heart and lack of inclination. People talk about praying as though they needed an hour to pray every morning and every night. I grant you it would be a very blessed thing if we could get the hour. I wish that, like the Puritans, we could always get an hour for devotion every morning and likewise at evening, but this is not absolutely necessary. You working men must not say, “We cannot pray because we have not time.” Why, in your work, in the midst of your goings to and fro, if God has given you the heart of prayer, you will be lifting up your soul to God! I think it is a good thing to have some small change of prayer about you. I compare this prayer to our small change. It has been said of some great men that they could not talk in company—when they got upon their feet and had a prepared discourse, they could speak very much to edification, but in general society they could not edify anyone. Someone said they had gold, but it was all in bullion—it was not minted—they could not put it into a shape so that it might be current in society. Well now, we must have the bullion of prayer, so as to be able to wrestle with God by the hour together if necessary, but to have the minted small change of brief or exclamatory prayer, to send a thought up to Heaven—the glance of an eye, a tear-bedewed word to let drop before the Throne—that, also, is well! I invite you to adopt the prayer, brief as it is, and use it tonight, tomorrow, all your days—“Help, Lord.”  
Besides being very short, it was very seasonable. It is well to have seasonable prayer, for those prayers speed best that spring out of an emergency which, as with a fair wind, drives the soul to the Throne of God. The worst of those forms of prayer which are of merely human composition, I think, is that they are very much like those ready-made clothes which we see for sale—they are intended to fit everybody, and yet rarely do they fit anybody. Forms of prayer must, from the necessity of the case, be unseasonable. That is the best prayer which draws its adaptation from my present circumstances, its intensity from my present feelings and its aspiration from my present faith. It makes me cry in just such language and plead just such promises that I could not plead any other—I could not wish for any other, I could not ask in any other style than I now do. That is a seasonable prayer. David, you see, had been betrayed and deceived. He had met with flattering lips and deceitful hearts. He found all men in his day gone aside from honesty and so he turned right away from those broken cisterns that were leaking at every point, to cry to the great Fountain that he might have a draught from the cooling stream! “‘Help, Lord!’ Men will not help me. I am reduced to an extreme so far as the creature is concerned. Now is Your turn, O You gracious One! Put out Your mighty arm, now that man’s puny arm is broken. ‘Help, Lord!’ Help, I pray You!”  
How distinct this prayer is! There are many, many prayers that one has heard, but when uttered, you could not say what had been asked. If anyone should ask you, “What has that Brother been praying for?” you would think and say, “I really do not know. He has said, ‘Lord, bless us!’ but what particular blessing he desired, I was not able to make out.” Many of our dear Brethren edify us with an account of their experience and with a little exposition of the Doctrines of Grace—very edifying and proper in any other shape—but as a prayer—terribly out of place! The Lord knows your experience, He knows the Doctrines of Grace and does not need you to inform Him upon these matters. This prayer is to the point, “Help, Lord.” The man knows what he needs and he asks for it. He does not ask wealth, health, long life—he needs help. He has come to a dead lift and he cannot lift his burden, so he cries, “Help, Lord.” It is one word, but that one word goes straight to the mark. What a mercy it is to be able to pray pointed prayers! David said, “In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You.” Now, according to some scholars, the Hebrew there is, “I will marshal up my prayers.” “As the sergeant sets the soldiers in a row when he is about to drill them and marshals them, and as the commander-in-chief forms them into battalions and so on, even so will I set my desires in proper order and marshal them in battalions before the Mercy Seat, that I may show that I am not uttering the crude, undigested thoughts of a careless mind, taking solemn words upon a thoughtless tongue, but that I am speaking to God that which has caused me thought—which fills me with emotions and comes from my soul with an intent and a desire, myself knowing what that intent and desire may be.” Oh, let us stand fast in prayer to direct petitions—short, but seasonable and direct!  
We have something else to say of it—it is rightly aimed. The Psalmist evidently looked straight up to God. He says, “Help, Lord.” It is no roundabout way of praying. It is no crying, “Help, you saints and intercede for me! Blessed Virgin, plead for me!” It is, “Help, Lord.” Straight to the Throne he goes! There is no knocking at the doors of second causes and human helps. “Straightforward makes the best runner.” He runs immediately to his God—there is no beating around the bush to ask that he may have Providential assistance, or that a friend may be raised up for him, or that in some way he may be delivered—it is simply this, “Lord, I leave all the rest to You. Only do, You Yourself, come and undertake my cause. Put Your arm where the weight is. Put Your shoulder to the wheel. This surpasses my power and I turn entirely from all creatures to You. ‘Help, Lord.’” It is a well-aimed prayer. He knew to Whom he was speaking, to One full of love and faithfulness, strength and wisdom—and so he says at once, “Help, Lord.”  
Nor can you fail to observe that this prayer has in it a confession of weakness. A man does not cry for help—at least, a man with such a heart as David had does not cry for help unless he needs it. Shall I ask of God for that which I already have? No, a sense of need makes me pray. David has been striving with all his might, but he finds his strength inadequate to the task. He has been looking about for help everywhere, but he finds there is no help and, sensible of his own utter nothingness and vanity, he turns at once to God. It is well when prayer is steeped in the oil of repentance, when it is dipped in a sense of need. No prayer speeds so well with God as that which comes with an empty hand before His Throne. If you bring your pitchers full, you shall take them all away empty—but if you bring your pitchers empty, you shall take them away full! “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he has sent away empty.” Lord, help me always to come as an emptyhanded beggar to the Throne of Your mercy, that I may go away as a fullhanded rejoicing saint!  
And yet, with a confession of weakness, I think there is also here a resolution to exert oneself. The very word, “Help,” seems to imply that he did not expect to sit still and do nothing. In the matter of our own personal salvation, all the work is done for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, “it is finished.” But in the matter of Christian service and Christian labor, it is not done for us. We are expected, having the New Life within, to set about working out our own salvation “with fear and trembling.” He who has saved us expects us to run the race as pilgrims, to fight the fight as warriors, to plow the fields as husbandmen, to build the walls as laborers together with God and to work in general for Him in all sorts of ways. Now, if I cry, “Help, Lord!” that means that I intend to exert myself. You have no right to sit down and say, “Lord, help me,” and not go out to seek work. He will help you—yes, help you into the jail or workhouse, but no other kind of help will you get! You have no right, when you have a besetting sin, to fold your arms and say, “Well, I hope the Lord will help me to overcome it.” He will help you, but remember the old proverb, for it is true, “He helps those that help themselves.” When He has taught you to smite with your sword against sin, then He will smite too. He works with you. He works in you to will and to do. He does not work in us to sleep and to slumber after our own carnal propensity, but He works in us “to will and to do of His own good pleasure.” We hold not with salvation by works, but we do hold with works by salvation. We know that works cannot save—but we know that a man being saved produces good works. When I pray, then, “Lord, help! Help, Lord!” it is implied that if it is a case where I can do anything in the service of God, I shall put the strength which He has given me into active exercise and then lean upon Him.  
II. Well, now, SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE USE OF THIS PRAYER, “Help, Lord.”  
There are some articles of merchandise of which we are told on the label that they will keep in all climates, and will be useful at all times. I think I may say the same of my prayer. This prayer is a sword of two edges—it is an article that can be used for a thousand different things! It is a most handy prayer. It turns every way. You may use it in all cases, at all times. Let us take one or two.  
Temporal circumstances may involve you in difficulty. I suppose, Beloved, there are many of you who are often in trouble with regard to Providence. You work and do your best to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but no one can foresee crushing misfortunes. Sometimes employment fails. At another time the dishonesty of others may bring you down from competence to poverty. Sometimes sickness may fall upon you and you may be disabled. In a thousand ways you may be brought to feel that you need help in Providential matters. Now, dear Friend, today you may have been trudging all over the city looking for a friend. You have written letters and you have gone to all you know— and you are getting pretty near to the end of all your earthly hopes. I suggest that, before you leave this sanctuary, you pray this prayer, “Help, Lord.” Use it, appropriate it, expand it according to your faith and your feelings somewhat thus—“Help, Lord. You did feed Your servant Elijah by ravens and You made the widow’s cruse of oil and handful of meal to last. ‘Help, Lord.’ I do not expect a miracle, but I expect the same help which a miracle would bring me and expect it in the ordinary course of Providence. If You do not put Your hand out of Heaven to help me, You will assist me by some ordinary means which would not, however, have been available if You had not so arranged it. ‘Help, Lord.’” It really is marvelous, and most of our lives will prove it, how good the Lord is in a pinch. Just when you have said, “Now it is all over with me,” then it is that the Lord has appeared for your deliverance. When your hopes have been like Lazarus in the grave, not only dead, but something more, for Martha said, “Lord, by this time he stinks; for he has been dead four days”—yet even then, when Christ has appeared, there has been a resurrection to your circumstances and your comforts and you have again been able to rejoice!

Some of you are students of Scripture. Your difficulties are not pecuniary ones. You turn over, day by day, this precious Book and it is your desire to understand it, but you are vexed with certain perplexities. There are things in it which are hard to be understood and you need to arrive at definite, distinct truth, to know true knowledge. Let me suggest to you, dear Brother, that when you have studied the Scripture anxiously and carefully, and sought out the opinions and judgments of good and gracious men who were taught of God, that you should never forget to add to all this the prayer, “Help, Lord. Help, Lord!” There is more got out of the Bible by praying than by anything else. When a certain Puritan had a dispute upon matters of doctrine with another, he was observed to speak very fluently and with great power. While his opponent spoke, he was observed taking notes—and one desired to see his notes—and what do you think they were? They were just these words, “More light, Lord! More light, Lord! More light, Lord!” That is the best way of taking notes— a cry for more Light of God! All of a sudden, that very text of Scripture which seemed as hard as a flint, will fly open by a touch of the Holy Spirit’s finger when you have said in prayer, “Help, Lord.”  
This prayer will well suit those who are engaged in inward conflicts. I have heard of some Christians who do not believe in inward conflicts. Brother, take care lest you have to prove them beyond all other men. I heard today something which reminds me of how different our experience is at one time from what it is at another. A dear servant of the Lord was good Mr. Harrington Evans—perhaps a very model preacher, one who spoke very sweetly of Christ. A Brother was telling me today that he remembers hearing Mr. Evans say that he hardly liked a Christian to pray, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” He said, “I do not like it. The saint is forgiven. I know he sins, still he is thoroughly forgiven and there is a kind of clank of the chain about the prayer, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’” “Yet,” said my informant, “if I am not mistaken, on Mr. Evans’ tombstone are those words, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’” So that what he thought was a clank of the chain once, he came to look upon as being a most precious and comfortable prayer after all! And some of our Brothers do, at times, get a little top-heavy and say, “I do not make confession of sin.” More the pity, Brother—you are making a birch for your own back! You will have it before long, depend upon it. There is no position for the child of God so safe, so Scriptural, so true as that of still clinging to Jesus as you did at the first—still mourning for sin and rejoicing in the Atonement made for you as a sinner! I must confess that I cannot ordinarily get that comfort by drawing near as a saint which I can get by coming to Christ as a sinner! My evidences often fail me and when they do I give up all seeking after them and go straight away, without any evidences, to Christ over again as the sinner’s Savior and find fresh joy and peace in believing! May we be kept in such a frame of mind as this!  
How many of you are exercised with conflicts tonight? You do not know which will get the upper hand, good or evil. There is conflict and combat going on within as though a pitted battle were being fought there. The soil of your heart is torn up by the prancing of the hoofs of the enemy horses. You think, “I shall surely perish after all.” Brother, Sister, in your time of conflict here is a prayer for you, “‘Help, Lord. Help, Lord!’ Help the newborn babe to conquer the old man! Help the vital spark to keep its flame alive now that floods are poured out against it! Let not the dragon swallow up the man-child! ‘Help, Lord.’ Help! ‘O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ Help You me, Lord, and I will yet sing, ‘I thank God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord!’”  
Will not this prayer suit those of you who are just now desirous to honor God in your sufferings? You have lately fallen into sickness. You have to be much on your bed and you are afraid that you will get impatient. I know aged persons are sometimes troubled with the fear that if they should be long living in infirmity, they might get peevish and petulant—doubtless it is the vice of old age. Well, at such a crisis, dear Friends, whether aged or young, this prayer will suit you, “‘Help, Lord. Help, Lord!’ Help me if my pains multiply. Help me!” This is a prayer for dying saints at the stake. How often it has sprung from their lips! When the flames have leaped up upon them, they have prayed, “‘Help, Lord.’ Help me to burn! Help me to be faithful. Suffer me not to turn aside from my Master! ‘Help, Lord.’ Now I have more to suffer than the creature can bear, sustain me, Lord!”  
Not less meet is this prayer for those of you who are not suffering, but working. Most of us, I hope, are workers for Christ. And why should we ever go out to our work without the prayer, “Help, Lord”? And when we are in it, we cannot expect to prosper except the desire is still coming up, “Help, Lord.” And when we have done the work, it is a sweet evening’s prayer with which to close the day, “‘Help, Lord.’ Make my work to stand. ‘Help, Lord.’” I give this prayer to you, my Brothers and Sisters in the Church, elders and youngsters, overseers and deacons—to you, Brothers and Sisters, who teach the young of this flock. To you who are toiling in our classes. To you who preach in the streets, or go from place to place proclaiming the Word of God. Be this your prayer henceforth, “‘Help, Lord.’ Help us to declare the Gospel faithfully and fully, and to be the means of bringing souls to Yourself.”  
Indeed, I do not know where this prayer would not be suitable! There is Mary just going out to a new situation, leaving her mother’s roof, and she is thinking, “Now I do not know who my master may be, but I am a Christian and I hope I may be able, as a servant, to show what Christianity is.” I am glad, Mary, you have got that wish. Now pray before you go into that new situation—“‘Help, Lord.’ Help! I have not been all I ought to be. I have not always honored my Lord and Master, but now please help me to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things.’” And there is a dear Brother, perhaps, very young, who is just entering upon a new sphere of labor. It is labor new to him—his heart is in it, but still he does not quite understand it and he wants to do it so that God may be glorified. Well then, Brother, do not go out of the door till you have said, “Lord, help. Help, Lord, and sustain me!”  
And this is a prayer, I think, that we must take up, all together, in these days when Romanism is coming back all over the land. “In these perilous times, when the false prophets and the magicians are abroad seeking to entrap men with their gaudy ceremonies and their sumptuous shows, it is for us to protest and to preach the Word, but help, God of Luther! Help us to deal a death-blow to the dragon! Help, God of Calvin! Help us to unfurl the banner of the Gospel once again! Help us, God of Zwingli, to stand steadfast in the day of trial! ‘Help, Lord.’ It is only Your right arm that can save England from once again being under the hoof of the Pope of Rome! Come and deliver Your saints in this, their day of trial. ‘Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.’”  
III. By way of ENCOURAGEMENT TO EXPECT AN ANSWER, let me now address a few closing words.  
“Help, Lord.” We may expect that He will do so in the future because He has done so in the past. You remember your conversion— *“Many days have passed since then,  
Many changes I have seen,  
Yet have been upheld till now—  
Who could hold me up but Thee?”*  
You have had much help, dear Friend. Were you to write your history, could you remember all the interpositions of Divine Providence and put them down? It would make a strange story. So I sometimes think with regard to myself. Yet I am not sure that it would, for I suppose our stories would be very much alike! We have all had to say of the goodness and mercy of God, “By terrible things in righteousness will You answer us, O God of our salvation.” We have had judgment like a sentence of death in ourselves, but we have had deliverance like life from the dead! There have been drops of wormwood, but there have been seas of milk and honey! Our souls have to raise an Ebenezer here and we expect to raise one more on Jordan’s shore and to the last to sing, “Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.” I know what the devil tells you. He is telling you that you have got into an extraordinary position now and, though God helped you before, yet this is a new trial, a wilderness where there is no way out. Well, then, “His mercies are new every morning.” In new straits you shall have new mercies! Our God is the same “yesterday, today and forever,” but the phases of His mercy are as numerous as the phases of our grief. He has helped you, so go to Him and He will help you again!  
Take this thought to console and to comfort you—His relationship as a Covenant God to you as a sincere Christian necessitates His helping you. You have a child. That child is up to his neck in the mire and he will soon be swallowed up alive in the bog, but he cries, “Father, Father, help!” Now, some passerby who had a brutal heart might ignore the cry, but you are his father, you cannot resist his cry! “What? Not help my child?” Why, every man here feels that I would insult his manhood with the supposition that he could leave his child to perish who he might help! No, you would fly as on the wings of love to help your child! If we, being evil, would help our children, how much more shall our Father, who is in Heaven, help us?  
Moreover, He is related to us in another relationship— “Your Maker is your Husband.” Let any husband here imagine his wife to be in distress and she looks him in the face, and says, “My Husband, it is a time of emergency, my heart is breaking, help me.” Would she have to ask twice? Not of those of us who have learned the word, “Husbands, love your wives.” And surely God is the best of husbands! And if our heart can but feel the marriage-bond between our souls and Christ, we need not fear but that He will respond to our tears and to our cries. He will say, “Fear you not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God.” “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you: and through the rivers; they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” I might enlarge on this thought, but you can think it out for yourselves. God’s relationships necessitate that He should help us.

All the attributes of God are involved because they are pledged to the help of His people. Suppose He did not help us—then the enemy would say that He could not! That would be a reflection on His power. Or the foe would say that He would not. That would be an imputation on His love and, considering His promise, it would be a stain upon His Truth. He has brought us into our present condition and if He does not deliver us out of it, then that would be a stain upon His wisdom—and the enemy would say that He steered the ship where He could not manage it. But that could never be, so trust Him and fear not! Your life is secure. He will preserve His children to the end.  
But, Beloved, God will help us—we have the promise He has given. It is very beautiful to notice this in the Scriptures. When you get a prayer in one chapter, you get a promise in the next which is the very counterpart of the prayer. I may say that the promise is the type and the prayer is very often the copy printed off that type. Listen to this, “Help, Lord.” Then listen to this, “I will help you.” You know there is such a promise as this, “I will help you.” You say, “Help, Lord,” and He says, “I will help you.” Do you believe your God, Christian? “I will help you.” Do you believe Him? You dare not disbelieve Him! Well, then, lift up your head, brush away those tears, let those heavy hearts again be exalted and let that dull heart of yours begin to sing! You have asked for help and He has promised to give it. The thing is done. Go your way! Rejoice in your God and remember how He has said, “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”  
All this I have spoken to Christians, but there would be plenty of room and opportunity, if we had the time, to put this prayer into the lips of the sinner, too! In many respects it suits the sinner. “‘Help, Lord.’ I have a load of sin, take it from me. ‘Help, Lord.’ I have a hard, stubborn heart, melt it. ‘Help, Lord.’ I am blind, I am lame, I am sick. Here I lie at mercy’s gate, ‘Help, Lord.’” O Sinner, if you can only pray this prayer from the bottom of your soul and present it through the blood of Jesus Christ, you shall have help! I pray you, do not go to bed tonight, do not shut those eyes of your in slumber till from your heart you have uttered this prayer, “Help, Lord. Help, Lord!” And every morning rise with it. And every night retire with it till you shall have the answer! And then when you have got the answer, you may still go on and plead it in another shape, and in another form—even in the hour of death you may still plead it, “Help, Lord.” When the river Jordan swells up to your chin, you may still say, “Help, Lord.” Till you get up to the Throne of God and even there I was about to say, one might say, “Now, Lord, I do not need help any longer, except it be to praise You. Oh, help me to extol You, to magnify You! Give me more and more the seraph’s fire, the angel’s tongue. Help me to hymn Messiah’s name and praise the splendor of His Grace world without end.”  
I leave you, then, with the prayer, “Help, Lord.” May the Lord help you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 18.**

Verses 1-3. I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and my horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I shall call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies. At first he says, “I will love You,” then, “I will trust You.” Now he says “I will call upon You,” and that calling upon God is especially in the sense of praising Him. And when you have just experienced a Divine deliverance, how full your spirit is of sacred gratitude!

4-7. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of Hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His Temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was angry. God was angry with Saul and with all David’s persecutors because they hunted that good man like a partridge upon the mountains! The prayer of the poor suppliant called down the anger of God upon his adversaries.

8. There went up a smoke out of His nostrils and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. This is a wonderful picture of the anger of God. The Hebrews always connected manifestations of anger with the nose and mouth just as they ascribed various passions and feelings to the different members of the body. So David says, “There went up a smoke out of His nostrils and fire out of His mouth devoured.” Does someone ask, “Can prayer move God in this way?” Yes, it seems so. Of course David had to speak after the manner of men—there is no other way in which men can speak, so he describes God as being thus stirred by the cry of His poor child when it came up into His ears. Nothing brings a man’s temper into his face like an injury done to his child. And God, as a Father, cannot endure to have His children hurt. “He that touches you touches the apple of His eye.”

9, 10. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. So quick is God to come to the deliverance of His persecuted people!

11-13. He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before Him, His thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail storms and coals of fire. Behold the dread artillery of Heaven as God turns His terrible guns against the enemies of His people and pours out hot shot from His lofty bastion—“hail stones and coals of fire.”

14, 15. Yes, He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightning, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils. The Psalmist is evidently describing the passage of the Red Sea, and likening the descent of God to His individual help to that memorable descent of God to the rescue of His entire people. And indeed, God is as great in His help to one as in His help to all! He is never little. When God helps you, my Brother, He is a great God, and greatly to be praised, as greatly so as when He comes to the rescue of an entire nation! Therefore sing unto the Lord, whose arm is lifted up for you, even for you, as truly as it was lifted upon Israel when He brought them out of Egypt “with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with great terror.”

16. He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters.  
[See Sermon #1432, Volume 24—DIVINE INTERPOSITIONS—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Lord made another Moses of him. Pharaoh’s daughter gave the name of Moses, that is, one drawn out, to the child who was brought to her, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

17. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me; for they were too strong for me. Is that the reason why God interposed on David’s behalf? Then let all His weak children find comfort in the fact that when our enemies are too strong for us, God will come and deliver us! Let us be thankful for burdens that are too heavy for us to bear and cast them upon the almighty shoulders that can easily sustain them. If we could do without God, we would do without God, but as we cannot, God will come to us and help and deliver us!

18, 19. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me. What a sense of Divine love God’s gracious deliverance brings! Perhaps David would never have known how greatly God delighted in him if he had not been in such dire distress and had not had such a great deliverance.

20-24. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands has He recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also upright before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore has the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight. If God gives you Grace to be honest, upright, true and steadfast in the time of temptation, you may be quite sure that He will deliver you! In fact, He has already worked the greater part of your deliverance in thus keeping you from sin! The worst thing that a trouble can do for a Christian is to carry him off his feet and make him forsake his integrity.

25-27. With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with an upright man You will show Yourself upright; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the forward You will show Yourself forward. For You will save the afflicted people; but will bring down high looks. If your faith cannot endure testing and trying, it is but poor faith. It will not do to die with if it will not do to live with it. But if you cry to the Lord and He enables you in the time of your distress to be faithful to Him, then He will certainly give you deliverance sooner or later.

28-30. For You will light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect. If you practice selfreliance, but not God-reliance, you will be sure to fail. What poor strength that is which does not come from God! Is it worthy of the name of strength at all? Is it not impotence and impudence combined? May God keep us from imagining that we can do anything apart from Him! At the same time, may His gracious Spirit work in us the sure confidence that we can do everything He bids us do when He is our Helper! David had that confidence, for He goes on to sing.

30-37. The word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all those who trust in Him. For who is God says the LORD? Or who is a rock says our God? It is God that girds me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like hinds’ feet, and sets me upon my high places. He teaches my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by my arms. You have also given me the shield of Your salvation: and Your right hand has held me up, and Your gentleness has made me great. You have enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. I have pursued my enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. Remember that this is a soldier’s song—a song under the old covenant when men might fight as they may not fight now. We must, therefore, spiritualize this ancient war song as we read it.

38-45. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For You have girded me with strength unto the battle: You have subdued under me those that rose up against me. You have also given me the necks of my enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but He answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. You have delivered me from the strivings of the people; and You have made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. So it came to pass that the Philistines were afraid of David and he delivered his people from the attacks of all invaders, and brought them that blessed peace which Solomon enjoyed with them.

46-50. The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. It is God that avenges me, and subdues the people under me. He delivers me from my enemies: yes, You lift me up above those that rise up against me: You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore will I give thanks unto You, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Your name. Great deliverance gives He to His king; and shows mercy to His anointed, to David, and to his seed forevermore.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE POWER OF A SIGH  
NO. 2464

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 10, 1896. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1886.

**“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.”  
Psalm 12:5.**

YOU must all have noticed that David lived in very evil times. When he wrote this Psalm, the days were dark and his cry was, “Help, Lord; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men,” from which I gather that, bad as the times may be in which we live, there have been bad times before these. We are not the first persons who have had reason to complain of the evils by which we are surrounded. If we have to say that the love of many is waxing cold and the Truth of God is scarcely to be found, such experiences have happened to God’s servants many times before. Let us not think it strange concerning the fiery trial we have to endure, as though we were the first persons to whom that trial has come. No, dear Friends, I feel greatly comforted when I remember that all through the history of God’s people, there have been periods of darkness as black as that in which we live—times of trial and perplexity when it has seemed as if the whole course of nature was out of order—and as if the very foundations were removed, so that men were ready to cry, “What can the righteous do?” If it is so, that we are only weathering storms like those which tossed the boats of our fathers before us, and if their ships came safely into the harbor, notwithstanding the hurricane, let us take comfort and be assured that we, too, shall weather this raging tempest—and that for us there will yet be a season when we shall be glad because we are quiet, because the Lord has brought us into our desired haven.

My subject on this occasion leads me to speak to those who are in personal trouble and to say something concerning God’s gracious dealings towards them. The text seems to me to tell us three things. First, that God’s people may be in a very sad case. Secondly, that God’s people have a Friend at hand, a Friend who can hear even their sighs. And, thirdly, that this Friend will do them a good turn when once He arises and takes their cause in hand. And He is certain to do it, for the text is virtually a promise—“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.”

I. First, then, GOD’S PEOPLE—His own people—His elect people—His redeemed people—His well-beloved people—MAY BE IN A VERY SAD CASE.

Certainly, to begin with, they may be poor and, in addition to that, they may be needy, for I take it that the words, “poor,” and, “needy,” have not quite the same meaning. A man may be very poor and that condition is bad enough, yet his needs may not be many. When he puts on his hat, he covers his whole family, and when he takes a crust into his mouth, he feeds his whole family. But, alas, there are many who cannot say that, for, in addition to being poor, they are very needy. They have a number of mouths to feed and a number of backs to clothe—they have more needs than one person would have if he were by himself. A man may have many who are so attached to him by the ties of nature that their needs become his needs and, therefore, in addition to being poor, he is needy as well.

It should not surprise any of us if we find ourselves to be poor and needy. The poor will never cease out of the land and, until Christ shall come again, there will be afflicted and poor people left who shall trust in the name of the Lord. Let us not say that because we are poor and needy, therefore we are not the Lord’s. No, but let us rather argue the other way, for it is the poor to whom the Gospel is preached! It is often from among the poor that God chooses His very best and brightest servants. Certainly, if you take the line of history, you shall see electing love looking far more often into the cottage than into the palace! You shall see the redemption of Christ purchasing to itself precious souls more often among peasants than among peers and princes! They who have had least of this world’s good have often had most of the good of the world to come—and they who have had most of this world’s portion have, as a rule, had no portion at all in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Remember our Lord’s solemn warning, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” And forget not Paul’s words, “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence.” So the Apostle James writes, “Hearken, my beloved Brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?” You may, therefore, be poor and needy, and yet not only be among the Lord’s servants, but be among the very best of them, among the very richest of them, among those whom He loves best of all!

But, next, God’s best servants may be oppressed as well as poor and needy. The man who wrote this Psalm, the Lord’s servant, David, was a man much oppressed. In his boyhood I imagine that he was the most despised of his father’s family. I gather that from the fact that when his brothers came home to attend the sacrifice with Samuel, the Prophet, David was left alone to keep the sheep. Jesse brought all his sons except young David, and set them before the Prophet. And even Samuel, when he looked on Eliab, said, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me.” But it was not so and after the seven sons of Jesse had appeared, and been rejected, the Prophet asked, “Are here all your children?” And the father answered, “There remains yet the youngest and, behold, he keeps the sheep.” As soon as David came, the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”

When the stripling went down to the battle, he was snubbed by his eldest brother Eliab, although he was the one by whom the Lord meant to deliver Israel and to strike the Philistines! From his early days until the time when God set him in safety from him that puffed at him, David was terribly oppressed. Saul grew jealous as he heard the voices of the women singing, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” It soured the heart of the king of Israel and he could not bear to think of it! Gloomy and dark of mind, he thought of David as his supplanter and hurled a javelin at him, seeking to slay the one to whom he owed so much! David had to escape out of Saul’s sight—you know how the king pursued him all over the country and followed him to the caves of the wild goats and to the valleys of the desert. David, though perfectly inoffensive, had to flee from his father-in-law, whose life he disdained to take when it was in his power. He was always kind, generous and faithful to Saul, yet he was always the subject of slander and oppression.

So, you see that God’s servants may be oppressed. You may be a child of God and yet get a very bad name for yourself, yes, even through doing the things that are right and through being something more than what men ordinarily are! Poor Joseph was cast into prison, not through wrongdoing, but as the result of his chastity and purity. And many a child of God has brought upon himself an ill name by simply being faithful to the Truth and faithful to his God. Do not wonder if somebody who is set over you, deals very harshly with you. It may be that, in the Providence of God, it is intended that it should be so with you, especially in your youth. “It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth.” And there are some men I know of who had very hard times as apprentices and as journeymen, who, nevertheless, in later life were obliged to feel that it was good for them that they were thus broken in. It was a breaking in, but it was a rough colt that needed it—and though the treatment was unrighteous and unjust on the part of the oppressor—yet God overruled it and made it work for good! He often takes His Joseph, who is hated of his brethren, and makes all the sheaves to be obedient to that sheaf—and the sun and the moon and the eleven stars of the family are obliged to honor that lone star which once they had so much despised.

Do not be astonished if your way is rough on the road to Heaven! Rather wonder if you come to a smooth portion—and when people begin to speak well of you, look about you and be a little afraid of what they are trying to do! Be not at all surprised when they abuse and misrepresent and slander you. Take all that as a matter of course and go to God with it. But when they begin to cry, “Hosanna!” do not think much of it. The same folk who shout, “Hosanna!” today, may cry, before the week is out, “Away with him, crucify him, crucify him.” Palm Sunday is not far off from Good Friday. The day of acclamations is followed very swiftly by the day of crucifixion!

Further than that, God’s people may sometimes be so oppressed that they scarcely are able to speak for themselves at all. They may feel quite shut up and silenced. Read the text, “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy.” They dare not speak. They have to confine their language to a sigh! They dare not go and expostulate with the oppressor and state their claims to justice. They dare not go and tell a friend about the wrong, lest further mischief should come of it. They are so bound and shut up that they cannot come forth out of their prison—all that they can do is bear their burden in secret—and sigh like that holy woman whom God loved so much, whose adversary “provoked her sorely, for to make her fret.” Hannah was a woman of a sweet poetic mind, perhaps the greatest poetess mentioned in Scripture, but she was so broken down by her sorrow that when she went up to the House of the Lord, she could not speak out! “Only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.” She was so overcome with sorrow that the priest of God did not understand her real condition, but began to rebuke her as though she had been drinking, whereas the only wine she had tasted had been the bitter cup of wormwood which her adversary had made her drink. You also, my Hearer, may truly be a child of God and yet be in a similar state to that of Hannah—unable to utter a word, but obliged to resort for relief to deep sighing—that expressive token of an inward, unutterable grief.

Once more, we may be God’s people and yet we may be very much despised. The text speaks of the righteous man as being puffed at—“Him that puffs at him.” You know, those who act thus, say, “Oh, he! Pshaw! She—oh, well! She—pooh!” Just as if they could not say anything that would express their contempt of such persons and so they just cry, “Pooh, Pooh! Why, they are not worth mentioning!” They cast out your name as evil. They will not say what the evil in your character is—but that is always worse than stating it. I have occasionally heard a person say of another, “Oh, So-and-So! Humph!” with not another word, but only a shrug of the shoulders. That is an abominable way of attacking another! If you have anything to say against a person, say it out, and let us know what it is. But that, “Pooh!” or that shrug, which may mean so much and yet may have nothing in it, is dastardly! It is like a poisoned dagger which should never be used by an honest hand. We may be God’s people, yet we may be thus assailed.

Have not some of those who have fought their way to the front, some who have been the bravest champions for God, as David was, been puffed at? Eliab said to his young brother, “I know your pride, and the naughtiness of your heart, for you are come down that you might see the battle.” That was said to the ruddy youth before the fight with Goliath— but the mockers dared not talk like that when he came back bearing in his hand the giant’s gory head which he had cut off with the Philistine’s own sword! They puffed at him and yet he was the man whom God had chosen who should be honored and reverenced by all the people of Israel! He was to be famous among the greatest of kings, yet he must begin as a mere despised peasant boy! Never mind, young man, never mind what they say! They say, and they say, and they say—and when they have said it thrice, let them say it again as often as they please! As for you, go on in the path the Lord has marked out for you. Trust in God and serve Him faithfully and then fear not, and be not dismayed, whatever man may do to you!

Thus have I described the sad case in which a true child of God may be found.  
II. It is more pleasant to turn to the second head and say that GOD’S PEOPLE HAVE A FRIEND AT HAND.  
There is a Sister who may be in the congregation right now. If so, she will be pleased to hear that she gave me my text for this discourse. As many of you know, my dear wife very kindly selects for me the texts that make up the daily portions in our little penny Book Almanac—and she put down this passage among the others, “For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord.” And the dear child of God to whom I refer wrote a letter to say how remarkably God had blessed this text to her comfort. She was in sorrow and trouble and somewhat given to sighing— and she thought that, perhaps, God was grieved with her for sighing— but this text greatly cheered her. She gives a little picture of what she thinks the texts means. I will tell you what she writes, for it will be the best part of my sermon by a long way.  
She says, “When I am in bed and my little child wants its mother, if it utters a petulant cry, I do not take any notice of it. I know that it ought not to wake mother up and disturb her with its selfish cry. But if, instead of crying, it seems very weak, and very sad, and it gives a sigh, I cannot stand that, but go to it at once! When it does not cry to me, or cry for me, but I only hear it sigh, then I get out of bed at once and go over to the little cot to see what is the matter.” “Now will I arise, says the Lord.” See, it is the sigh that fetches the mother out of bed! There is great power about a sigh in the ears of a loving mother! If the child could speak and say, “Mother, come to me,” mother might answer, “Not so, my Dear, lie still.” Or if the child only cried out in hastiness, “Oh, come to me!” mother might reply, “Be still, child, be still. You are not suffering as much as you fancy you are.” But when the child involuntarily, in its weakness and sorrow, utters a little sigh, mother has heard it, and she is at once out of bed and by the side of her little sighing child! Is not that a capital explanation of the text, “For the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord”?  
See, then, the power that there is in the sorrows of God’s children to touch the heart of their great Father when He hears their sighs! When those sorrows come to be so bitter that the sufferers can scarcely pray. When they cannot find any language in which to express their grief. When even their desires seem to fail and they are so broken down and made so weak by the various troubles that have crushed them that it comes to just this sighing and nothing more, then God cannot be still, He must get up! He has gone away and hidden His face before, but now He sees that the time has come to manifest His unchanging love and Grace! “Now will I arise, says the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.” Yes, Brothers and Sisters, God hears our sighs even if we cannot hear them ourselves! When we think we have not prayed at all, we have often prayed the best! When we imagine that our groans have been empty, they have often been the fullest! When we sigh because we think we do not sigh, God hears that sort of sighing which is only a longing to sigh! He hears the grief when the grief has no voice. He hears the sorrow when the sorrow cannot find a tongue.  
Then note that as the Lord hears our sighs, those sighs touch His heart. The wicked have been puffing at the godly. They said, “Our tongues are our own, who is the ruler over us?” The Lord took no notice of them but let them blaspheme if they would. But there arose the sad sigh of His children and that touched Him! He could not bear that. It seems to me a very wonderful thing that the Almighty, the Infinite, to whom the Heaven of heavens is nothing, who takes up the isles as a very little thing, to whom all this system of worlds is but as the smallest grain of dust that does not turn the scale, yet is, as we say, “all there,” when His children sigh—and His heart is touched, His heart is moved—His whole being is full of an infinite compassion! He cannot bear that sighing. “Now will I arise, says the Lord. I will get up from My Throne of Glory that I may deliver My people. I have heard their sighs and I cannot stay away from them! Love masters My Omnipotence! I feel but one force—the force of my overwhelming love! It sways Me and impels Me to speed to their relief. I will get out of My hiding places, I will end my withdrawals from them, I will rend the veil and come out from between the cherubim. Now will I arise, says the Lord.” What has caused all this mighty movement? Nothing but the sighs of His needy people!  
Will you also think that as this sigh is heard by God, it is a wonderful thing that God should speak of Himself as being fully moved? “Now will I arise, says the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.” “Verily, you are a God that hides Yourself.” The thunder, the tempest are but the hiding of His power—who can understand the fullness of His might? What must God be when He says, “Now will I arise”—like one who leaves his couch, like one who rolls up his sleeve to make bare his arm— like one who sets himself with intent and purpose to do some work that will require all his skill and all his power? Think of God arising in His might! When He arises, He shakes the earth terribly—nothing stands before Him when He once arises! Poor, sick, needy, sorrowing, sighing child of God, it is you who can bring Him into this marvelous state of activity! I tremble while I try to describe it—God making Himself fully God—arising, lifting up Himself, putting forth His power!  
If you need a picture of it, remember Israel in Egypt. “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect to them.” Did you ever hear that text preached from by Handel in his masterly oratorio,

 Israel in Egypt? How he makes all the music of all the stringed instruments and the voices of all the singers bring out that sigh! “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage...and God heard their groaning.” Now I can understand all the rest of the song and all the rest of the music! I can understand how the chorus rings out with a great shout, “The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” The beginning, the meaning of it all is that they “sighed by reason of the bondage.” “Now will I arise, says the Lord.” And when He does arise, then the sea in the fullness of its strength is but the trembling instrument of His Omnipotence and soon Pharaoh and his horses and his chariots are drowned in its depths!  
The same God lives forever and ever, and lives for you as He lived for Jacob’s seed in the land of Mizraim! And you in your sorrow can still touch the heart of God as their sighing, because of their taskmasters, touched His heart in the days of old! And He will deliver you as He delivered them. Only sigh and cry to Him and He will come to you. He will come riding on a cherub, yes, riding upon the wings of the wind! And He will deliver you and you shall glorify Him, for what He has done, before, He will delight to do again, “for His mercy endures forever.” Hallelujah! Therefore, let His people, even in their sighing, learn to rejoice in Him!  
III. Now I must close by dwelling for only a few minutes upon the third point which is, WHEN GOD’S PEOPLE FETCH THEIR FRIEND BY THEIR SIGHS, HE WILL DO THEM A GOOD TURN. What does He say?” I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.”  
You know what God did for David. There was Saul, hunting him everywhere, and I do not doubt that David was strongly tempted, sometimes, to seek safety for himself. He did some few things that looked as if he meant to preserve himself from the hand of his adversary. But once, when he caught Saul in a cave, entirely in his hands, he only cut off the edge of the skirt of the king’s robe and let him go. It was a grand proof of the power of faith to abstain from touching the man who thirsted for his blood! That was another night of triumph for David when he went out with Abishai and they stole through all the ranks of the sleeping soldiers, threading their silent way till they came where Saul lay asleep in the trench, with his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster. And Abishai said to David, “God has delivered your enemy into your hands this day: now, therefore, let me strike him, I pray you, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not strike him the second time.”  
He was ready to grasp the spear and give one thrust at Saul and pin him to the ground. And there was David, with the remembrance of his bitter persecution hot upon him. But he laid hold of his companion’s hand and whispered, “Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless? David said, furthermore, “As the Lord lives, the Lord shall strike him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed: but, I pray you, take you now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.” So the two brave warriors threaded their way back through the sleeping host, taking with them the cruse of water and the spear that had been by the king’s head, that he might see how nearly he had lost his life and how completely he had been in their hands. No, David did not deliver himself from Saul’s oppression—and it is a splendid evidence of faith when faith can hold her hand!  
Perhaps you, also, have been oppressed. You have been ill-treated. You may have an opportunity of avenging yourself and if you are a child of the devil, you will do it. But if you are a child of God, you will say, “No, no, I have no vengeance to return. It is not mine to repay. The only vengeance I would return is to show sevenfold kindness for all the ills done to me. I will not lift my hand to deliver myself.” Then God says, “Now I will do it. I will do it. I have heard the sighing of my poor child under all his oppressions, ‘Now will I arise, says the Lord.’” And within a short space of time Saul falls by the arrows of the Philistines upon mount Gilboa and David is anointed first king over Judah, and, by-andby, king over Israel as well! Against him no dog dares to move its tongue—he is the delight of the united nation and leads them forth to victories against the Philistines—for God has set him in safety from him that puffed at him!  
Well now, God can take any of His children and do just the same for them! He can lift them out of their troubles and put them somewhere else where they shall be masters of those whose servants they formerly were. He shall lead your captivity captive and make you to come to the bright side of the hill if you have but had Grace enough to travel on the bleak side of it clinging only to your God! “I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.”  
The Lord does that in many ways. Sometimes He takes His servants and puts them quite out of the power of their adversaries. Many a time in Providence has He done it. Sometimes He does not do anything of the kind, but He lets their adversaries puff at them, only He makes them feel that all that they can do is puff. Well, they may puff if they like till they have puffed their breath away! I like that picture Mr. Bunyan gives us when he represents the pilgrims going by the cave where Giant Pope sits and the giant has grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he can now do little more than sit in his cave’s mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, biting his nails because he cannot come at them, and saying, “You will never mend till more of you are burned.” But he cannot burn them, so he may sit there and say what he likes! And, sometimes, the children of God get so much Grace and so much faith that those who puff at them may keep on puffing, but the godly are far above it all!  
Does it not sometimes happen that a Christian woman lives with a husband who makes everything very unpleasant, but her soul is so full of the love of God and she is taught so much patience that she is set in safety from him that puffs at her? Some child of God has to go and run the gauntlet of persecution and do battle in a workshop with ungodly blasphemers—but he walks so near to God and he is so peaceful and so full of the enjoyment of heavenly delights that, at last, he does not come to take any notice of all the puffing except that he is driven to more prayer and to a closer walk with God! “I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him.” I do not know which is the better of the two—to get right away from the persecutors—or to be allowed to stay where you are and feel, “It does not matter. All the bitterness is gone, all the injury is removed.” Whichever God thinks is better for us and more for His own Glory, He will do, and either way we are content!  
It may be that the one who puffs at some of us is neither a man nor a woman—we think that we could bear that kind of puffing—but it is the devil, himself. Oh, Sirs, we had better go a thousand miles around, over hedge and ditch, rather than once come into conflict with him! I have had a sharp brush with him now and again, but I still need to pray every morning that prayer, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One,” for all other temptations are as nothing compared with actual contact with that grim Evil One! He knows how to strike and he knows how to wound, but yet, if it were most for the good of others, if we, having to be leaders of others, must sometimes have a battle with the arch-enemy, it is a grand thing if the Lord so covers us with armor of proof from head to foot that He sets us in safety from him that puffs at us and we are made to feel that even the devil’s temptations are but as puffs!  
Yet, if that puff might bring a poisoned arrow into your soul, it is a blessed thing to feel that God can set you in safety from it all. For, “who is he that shall harm you?” Who is he? Our Master met him in the wilderness and fought him in a threefold duel and left the marks of His sword upon him. The scars are there and you and I may look that grim adversary in the face and tell him that we know his Master, and that he knows his Master, too, and that we are in that Master and that Master is in us and, as surely as He overcame, and triumphed once for us, so shall we overcome in His strength! So the weakest saint can say, “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.” With such a text as that, let us give him a deadly thrust and he shall spread his dragon wings and fly sway, discomfited by one whose sighs have brought God to his help, whose cries have brought Omnipotence to be infinitely more than a match for all the powers of darkness!  
Now I have finished my sermon, only I have been thinking that there are some here who will say, “Alas, we are not the children of God and yet we are in trouble.” Well, if you do not know yourselves to be the children of God and you are in trouble, yet the Lord our God is full of pity and full of compassion! He has pity, even, for natural and ungodly men when they are in trouble. I wish you would think of that, some of you who never prayed in your lives. If you are in trouble, now is the time to begin to pray! A Brother came to join the Church this week. He had been ill and sick for some time and he had gone to the hospital and obtained medicine, but it had not done him any good. He was about to take a dose of the medicine when it came to his thoughts, “I have never prayed to God to make me well.” So he stopped and prayed a prayer to God, whom he did not know, that He would help him in his sorrow and his sickness and give him health. And he came to tell me how God dealt with him in mercy and how he was led by that answered prayer to put up many other prayers and to trust Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul!

Now, if you are in sore sorrow and in deep trouble, whatever it may be, turn to your God! He hears the young ravens when they cry. They cannot pray spiritual prayers any more than you can and yet He hears their cries. Oh, if you are like the poor raven, yet let your cry go up to God and He will hear you! He is a God full of compassion. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” And He even has pity upon those who fear Him not! O my Hearers, try Him and trust Him for yourselves! Do not think harshly of my God! Fancy not that He is made of flint or granite. He will listen to your sighs, your cries and your tears. Only turn to Him with full purpose of heart and He will not cast you away. May He bless you now, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 119:137-152.**

Verse 137. Righteous are You, O LORD, and upright are Your judgments. It is well to be able to say this when you are being tried, when the hand of God lies heavy upon you. It is hard to kick against the pricks, but it is very sweet to submit and to say, “Righteous are You, O Lord, and upright are Your judgments.”

138. Your testimonies that You have commanded are righteous and very faithful. “Righteous” for the present, “faithful” for the future. There is no mistake about God’s Word—it will never fail—we may trust it implicitly and we shall never be disappointed.

139. My zeal has consumed me. The Psalmist had such zeal for God’s Word that he seemed like a sacrifice consumed with the fire upon the Lord’s altar!

139. Because my enemies have forgotten Your Words. First, they despised them, then they neglected them. At last they got as far as even to forget them! Forgetfulness of God’s Word is a very dreadful stage of disease of the heart.

140. Your Word is very pure: therefore Your servant loves it. To love God’s Word for its purity is an index of a pure heart. Some love it for its poetry, some love it for its doctrine, some love it for its mercy, but he is an advanced man in the kingdom of Grace who loves it for its purity.

141. I am small and despised: yet I do not forget Your Precepts. Others may, but I am not following their example. It is well when a Christian man is a contrast to other men. When they call him a mere nobody, he adopts their words and says, “Yes, I am nothing. ‘I am small and despised,’ yet I do not forget the Lord’s Precepts.”

142. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your Law is truth. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” Here is the best possible answer— “Your Law is truth.” Not only does it contain the truth, but it is the Truth. The Word of God is not only true, that is its quality—but it is the Truth of God, that is its essence. It is the cream of all truths. “Your Law is truth.”

143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet Your Commandments are my delights. “Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me.” Like two fierce dogs, they had fixed their teeth in him, yet even then he could say, “yet Your commandments are my delights.” What a riddle is the man who knows God! He has great trouble and is full of anguish, yet he is delighted! How can these things be? The child of God knows what it is to be troubled on every side, and yet not to be troubled within.

144. The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live. As if he could not live without it! He did not call it true living except as he understood and enjoyed the Precepts of His God!

145. I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep Your Statutes. Here we have both a prayer and a resolve; but the resolution grew out of the prayer and was connected with it. The Psalmist prays to God to help him to keep His Statutes. Are any of you hard put to it, just now, by strong temptation? I commend this verse to you—“Hear me, O Lord: I will keep Your Statutes.” Cry to God, “Help me, O Lord; let not strong temptation drag me away from You! I long to be holy, my whole heart’s desire is to keep Your ways; O help me, I pray You!” This verse begins with, “I cried,” and the next verse begins in the same way—

146. I cried to You. It is good when you can cry. The living child cries and it is the man of God whose prayer is a cry of almost inarticulate utterance and grief—“I cried.” “I cried.” What did he cry?

146 . Save me, and I shall keep Your Testimonies. David had no notion of salvation without obedience, so he prays, “Save me, and I shall keep Your Testimonies.” Is that the salvation you desire—salvation from sin? If so, you shall have it! God, the Holy One, delights to bestow holiness, and He will speedily hear and answer such a prayer as that.

147. I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried. The Psalmist was still crying, crying early in the morning. Before the sun was up, he was up, and crying to God.

147. I hoped in Your Word. It is well when hope goes with prayer, when you begin to see daylight even before the sun is up. “I hoped in Your Word.” Not in any enthusiastic impression of his own, but in God’s Word, itself, the Psalmist placed all his confidence!

148. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I might meditate in Your Word. As he was up before the sun, so he was praying before they set the guards for the night watch. And when they were changing guards and he heard the cry of the hour from the watchman, he was still crying to God! And at the same time he was meditating—“that I might meditate in Your Word.” Ah, that is the way to cry! Meditation is very much neglected nowadays. We read, perhaps, too much. We meditate, for certain, too little. And meditation is to reading like digestion after eating. The cows in the pasture eat the grass and then they lie down and chew the cud and get all the good they can out of what they have eaten. Reading snips off the grass, but meditation chews the cud! Therefore, “read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.” In this matter we often fail. We shall be wise to imitate David who devoted the early morning to prayer and the night watches to meditation.

149. Hear my voice—So the Psalmist used to pray aloud! It is a very great help in prayer if you can do the same. If we pray aloud to be heard of men, it is a sin. But if we pray aloud that we may hear ourselves, so that our devotion may be excited, we shall often find it very profitable. And if people hear us, by accident, so much the better—they are not hearing anything that will do them harm—they are hearing that which may do them good.

149. According to Your loving kindness. That is, do not hear it to judge it, to censure it, to criticize it, but hear it as a father hears his child, loving to hear its little voice speaking in broken accents.

149. O LORD, quicken me according to Your judgment. Just now, the Psalmist prayed, “Hear me, O Lord!” In the 146th verse, He cried, “Save me.” Now his prayer is, “O Lord, quicken me!” When God puts more life into us, then we have more strength to bear our burdens and, having more spiritual life, we have more power to resist temptation! Quickening is an essential mercy, containing within itself a multitude of blessings. “Quicken me according to Your judgment.”

150. They draw near that follow after mischief. He could hear the sound of their feet behind him—they were running after him and he could detect the pitter-patter of their malicious footsteps.

150-151. They are far from Your Law. You are near, O LORD. What a comfort that is! They are trying to get near, but You are near! I can hear the tread of their feet behind me, but I can see Your face close to me! How comforted is the Psalmist in the time of trouble! His adversaries may be as keen of scent as bloodhounds, but God is with him, therefore he fears them not.

151-152. And all Your Commandments are truth. Concerning Your Testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever. So that this Psalm was written by David when he was an old man. He had known the Lord’s Commandments when he was young and now, in his declining days, he can say, “I have known of old that You have founded them forever.” O young men, if you want to be happy old men, begin by knowing God’s Word! If you have known that God has founded His Word of old, you know that which will comfort you when you grow old! In fact, you have found a perpetual spring within your heart, if, from your youth up you have known in the fullest sense the Word of the Lord! Some are changing their creed every day in the week, as the weather changes, but blessed is that man who has so learned Christ to begin with that he keeps in the old way all his life! He is the man who can truly grow. Transplant a tree six times a year and you will not get any fruit from it. But blessed are they that are planted in the courts of the Lord, for they shall flourish there and shall still bring forth fruit in old age!

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THE BIBLE TRIED AND PROVED  
NO. 2084

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 5, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The Words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”  
Psalm 12:6.**

IN this Psalm our text stands in contrast with the evil of the age. The Psalmist complains that the “godly man ceases. The faithful fail from among the children of men.” It was a great grief to him and he found no consolation except in the Words of the Lord. What if men fail—the Word of the Lord abides! What a comfort it is to quit the arena of controversy for the green pastures of Revelation! One feels like Noah, when shut within the ark—he saw no longer the death and desolation which reigned outside. Live in communion with the Word of God and even in the absence of Christian friends you will not lack for company.

Furthermore, the verse stands in fuller contrast still with the words of the ungodly when they rebel against God and oppress His people. They said, “With our tongue will we prevail. Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?” They boasted, they domineered, they threatened. The Psalmist turned away from the voice of the boaster to the Words of the Lord. He saw the promise, the precept and the doctrine of pure Truth and these consoled him while others spoke every man vanity with his neighbor. He had not so many of the Words of the Lord as we have—but what he had made his own by meditation, he prized above the finest gold.

In the good company of those who had spoken under Divine direction he was able to bear the threats of those who surrounded him. So, dear Friends, if at any time your lot is cast where the Truths you love so well are despised, get back to the Prophets and Apostles and hear through them what God the Lord will speak. The voices of earth are full of falsehood but the Word from Heaven is very pure. There is a good practical lesson in the position of the text—learn it well. Make the Word of God your daily companion and then whatever may grieve you in the false doctrine of the hour, you will not be too much cast down. For the Words of the Lord will sustain your spirit.

Looking at the text, does it not strike you as a marvel of condescension that Jehovah, the Infinite, should use words? He has arranged for us, in His wisdom, this way of communicating with one another. But as for Himself, He is pure spirit and boundless—shall He contract His glorious thoughts into the narrow channel of sound and ear and nerve? Must the eternal mind use human words? The glorious Jehovah spoke worlds! The heavens and the earth were the utterances of His lips. To Him it seems more in accordance with His Nature to speak tempests and thunders than to stoop to the humble vowels and consonants of a creature of the dust. Will He in very deed communicate with man in man’s own way? Yes,

He stoops to speak to us by words. We bless the Lord for verbal inspiration, of which we can say, “I have esteemed the words of Your mouth more than my necessary food.” I do not know of any other inspiration, neither am I able to conceive of any which can be of true service to us. We need a plain revelation upon which we can exercise faith. If the Lord had spoken to us by a method in which His meaning was infallible, but His Words were questionable, we should have been rather puzzled than edified. For it is a task, indeed, to separate the true sense from the doubtful words. We would always be afraid that the Prophet or Apostle had not, after all, given us the Divine sense. It is easy to hear and to repeat words. But it is not easy to convey the meaning of another into perfectly independent words of your own.

We believe that holy men of old, though using their own language, were led by the Spirit of God to use words which were also the Words of God. The Divine Spirit so operated upon the spirit of the inspired writer that he wrote the Words of the Lord, and we, therefore, treasure up every one of them. To us “every Word of God is pure,” and full of soul nutriment. “Man does not live by bread, only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.” We can heartily declare with the Psalmist, “You are my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep Your words.”

Our condescending God is so well pleased to speak to us by words that He has even deigned to call His only-begotten Son, “The Word.” “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The Lord uses words not with reluctance but with pleasure. And He would have us think highly of them, too, as He said to Israel by Moses, “Therefore shall you lay up these My Words, in your heart and in your soul.”

We believe that we have the Words of God preserved for us in the Scriptures. We are exceedingly grateful that it is so. If we had not the Words of the Lord thus recorded we should have felt that we lived in an evil time, since neither voice nor oracle is heard today. I say we should have fallen upon evil days if the words that God spoke of old had not been recorded under His direction. With this Book before us, what the Lord spoke two thousand years ago he virtually speaks now—for “He will not call back His Words” (Isa. 31:2). His Word abides forever. It was spoken, not for one occasion, but for all ages.

The Word of the Lord is so instinct with everlasting life and eternal freshness that it is as vocal and forceful in the heart of the saint today as it was to the ear of Abraham when he heard it in Canaan. Or to the mind of Moses in the desert. Or to David when he sang it on his harp. I thank God that many of us know what it is to hear the Divine Word spoken again in our souls! By the Holy Spirit the words of Scripture come to us with a present inspiration—not only has the Book been inspired, it is inspired. This Book is more than paper and ink, it talks with us. Was not that the promise, “When you awake, it shall talk with you”?

We open the Book with this prayer, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.” And we often close it with this feeling, “Here I am, for You did call me.” As surely as if the promise had never been uttered before but had been spoken out of the excellent glory for the first time, the Lord has made Holy Scripture to be His direct word to our heart and conscience. I say not this of you all, but I can say it assuredly of many here present, may the Holy Spirit at this hour speak to you again!

In trying to handle my text there will be three points to dwell upon. First, the quality of the Words of God—“The Words of the Lord are pure words.” Secondly, the trials of the Words of God—“As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” And then, thirdly, the claims of these words derived from their purity and the trials which they have undergone. Eternal Spirit, help me to speak correctly concerning Your own Word and help us to feel aright while we hear!

I. First, then, beloved Friends, consider THE QUALITY OF THE WORDS OF GOD—“The Words of the Lord are pure words.”  
From this statement I gather, first, the uniformity of their character. No exception is made to any of the Words of God but they are all described as “pure words.” They are not all of the same character. Some are for teaching, others are for comfort and others for rebuke. But they are so far of a uniform character that they are all “pure words.” I conceive it to be an evil habit to make preferences in Holy Scripture. We must preserve this volume as a whole. Those sin against Scripture who delight in doctrinal texts but omit the consideration of practical passages.  
If we preach doctrine, they cry, “How sweet!” They will hear of eternal love, Free Grace and the Divine purpose. And I am glad they will. To such I say—Eat the fat and drink the sweet, and rejoice that there are fat things full of marrow in this Book. But remember that men of God in old times took great delight in the Commands of the Lord. They had respect unto Jehovah’s precepts and they loved His Law. If any turn on their heel and refuse to hear of duties and ordinances I fear that they do not love God’s Word at all. He that does not love it all loves it not at all.  
On the other hand, they are equally mistaken who delight in the preaching of duties but care not for the Doctrines of Grace. They say, “That sermon was worth hearing, for it has to do with daily life.” I am very glad that they are of this mind. But if at the same time they refuse other teaching of the Lord, they are greatly at fault. Jesus said, “He that is of God hears God’s Words.” I fear you are not of God if you account a portion of the Lord’s Words to be unworthy of your consideration.  
Beloved, we prize the whole range of the Words of the Lord. We do not set aside the histories any more than the promises—  
*“I’ll read the histories of Your love,  
And keep Your Laws in sight,  
While through the Promises I love  
With ever fresh delight.”*  
Above all, do not drop into the semi-blasphemy of some who think the New Testament vastly superior to the Old. I would not err by saying that in the Old Testament you have more of the bullion of Truth than in the New—for therein I should be falling into the evil which I condemn. But this I will say—they are of equal authority—and that they cast such light upon each other that we could not spare either of them. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” In the whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, the Words of Jehovah are found and they are always pure words.  
Neither is it right for any to say, “Thus spoke Christ Himself. But suchand-such a teaching is Pauline.” No! It is not Pauline. If it is recorded here, it is of the Holy Spirit. Whether the Holy Spirit speaks by Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or John, or James, or Paul, the authority is still the same. Even concerning Jesus Christ our Lord this is true. For He says of Himself, “The word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s which sent Me.” In this matter He puts Himself upon the level of others who were as the mouth of God. He says again, “For I have not spoken of Myself. But the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.”  
We accept the words of the Apostles as the Words of the Lord, remembering what John said—“We are of God: he that knows God hears us. He that is not of God hears us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). A solemn judgment is thus pronounced upon those who would set the Spirit of Jesus against the Spirit which dwelt in the Apostles. The Words of the Lord are not affected in their value by the medium through which they came. The revealed Truth is all of the same quality even when the portions of it are not of the same weight of metal.  
Abiding by the text, we observe next the purity of the Words of the Lord—“The Words of the Lord are pure words.” In commerce there is silver and silver, as you all know—silver with alloy and silver free from baser metal. The Word of God is the silver without the dross. It is as silver which has been purified seven times in a crucible of earth in the furnace till every worthless particle has been removed—it is absolutely pure. David said truly, “Your word is Truth.” It is Truth in the form of goodness, without mixture of evil. The Commandments of the Lord are just and right.

We have occasionally heard opponents carp at certain coarse expressions used in our translation of the Old Testament. But the coarseness of translators is not to be set to the account of the Holy Spirit, but to the fact that the force of the English language has changed and modes of expression which were current at one period become too gross for another. But I will assert this—I have never yet met with a single person to whom the Words of God have of themselves suggested any evil thing. I have heard a great many horrible things said, but I have never met with a case in which any man has been led into sin by a passage of Scripture.  
Perversions are possible and probable—but the Book itself is absolutely pure. Details are given of very gross acts of criminality, but they leave no injurious impression upon the mind. The saddest story of Holy Scripture is a beacon and never a lure. This is the cleanest, clearest, purest Book extant among men. No, it is not to be mentioned in the same hour with the fabulous records which pass for holy books. It comes from God and every Word is pure.  
It is also a book pure in the sense of truth, being without mixture of error. I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There may be, and there are mistakes of translation. For translators are not inspired—but even the historical facts are correct. Doubt has been cast upon them here and there and at times with great show of reason—doubt which it has been impossible to meet for a season. But only give space enough and search enough and the stones buried in the earth cry out to confirm each letter of Scripture!  
Old manuscripts, coins, and inscriptions are on the side of the Bible and against it there are nothing but theories and the fact that many an event in history has no other record but that which the Bible affords us. The Book has been of late in the furnace of criticism. But much of that furnace has grown cold from the fact that the criticism is beneath contempt. “The Words of the Lord are pure words”—there is not an error of any sort in the whole compass of them. These words come from Him who can make no mistake and who can have no wish to deceive His creatures.  
If I did not believe in the infallibility of the Bible, I would rather be without it. If I am to judge the Book, it is no judge of me. If I am to sift it, like the heap on the threshing floor, and lay this aside and only accept that, according to my own judgment, then I have no guidance whatever unless I have conceit enough to trust my own heart. The new theory denies infallibility to the Words of God but practically imputes it to the judgments of men. At least this is all the infallibility which they can get at. I protest that I will rather risk my soul with a guide inspired from Heaven than with the differing leaders who arise from the earth at the call of “modern thought.”  
Again, this Book is pure in the sense of reliability—it has in its promises no mixture of failure. Mark this—no prediction of Scripture has failed. No promise that God has given will turn out to be mere verbiage. “Has He said and shall He not do it?” Take the promise as the Lord gave it and you will find Him faithful to every jot and tittle of it. Some of us are not yet entitled to be called “old and gray-headed,” though the iron-gray is pretty conspicuous upon our heads. But up to now we have believed the promises of God and tested and tried them. And what is our verdict? I bear my solemn testimony that I have not found one Word of the Lord fall to the ground.  
The fulfillment of a promise has been delayed sometimes beyond the period which my impatience would have desired. But to the right instant the promise has been kept—not to the ear only—but in deed and in truth. You may lean your whole weight upon any of the Words of God and they will bear you up. In your darkest hour you may have no candle but a single promise and yet that lone light shall make high noon of your midnight. Glory be to His name! The Words of the Lord are without evil, without error and without failure.  
Furthermore, on this first head the text not only speaks of the uniform character of God’s Words and of their purity but of their preciousness. David compares them to refined silver and silver is a precious metal—in other places he has likened these Words to pure gold. The Words of the Lord might have seemed comparable to paper money, such as our own Bank notes. But no, they are the metal itself. I remember the time when a friend of ours used to go into the western counties, from one farm to another, buying cheese and he was in the habit of taking quite a weight of coin with him. He had found that the farmers of that period did not care for bank notes and would not look at checks. They were more ready to sell when they saw that they would be paid in metal, down on the nail.  
In the Words of God you have the solid money of Truth—it is not fiction but the substance of Truth. God’s Words are as bullion. When you have them in the grip of faith you have the substance of things hoped for. Faith finds in the promise of God the reality of what she looks for—the promise of God is as good as the performance itself. God’s Words—whether of doctrine, of practice, of comfort—are solid metal to the man of God who knows how to put them in the purse of personal faith. As we use silver in many articles within our houses, so do we use God’s Word in daily life. It has a thousand uses. As silver is the current coin of the merchant, so are the promises of God a currency both for Heaven and earth—we deal with God by His promises, and so He deals with us.  
As men and women deck themselves with silver by way of ornament, so are the Words of the Lord our jewels and our glory. The promises are things of beauty which are a joy forever. When we love the Word of God and keep it, the beauty of holiness is upon us. This is the true ornament of character and life and we receive it as a love-gift from the Bridegroom of our souls.  
Beloved, I need not enlarge in your presence upon the preciousness of the Word of God. You have, many of you, prized it long and have proved its value. I have read of a German Christian woman who was accustomed to mark her Bible whenever she met with a passage which was especially precious to her. But towards the end of her life she ceased from the habit, for she said, “I find it unnecessary. For the whole of the Scripture has now become most precious to me.” To some of us the priceless volume is marked from beginning to end by our experience. It is all precious and altogether precious—  
*“No treasures so enrich the mind,  
Nor shall Your Word be sold  
For loads of silver well refined,  
Nor heaps of choicest gold.”*  
Furthermore, this text sets before us not only the purity and preciousness of the Lord’s Words but the permanence of them. They are as silver which has passed through the hottest fires. Truly, the Word of God has for ages stood the fire—and fire applied in its fiercest heat—“tried in a furnace of earth”—that is to say in that furnace which refiners regard as their last resort. If the devil could have destroyed the Bible he would have brought up the hottest coals from the center of Hell. He has not been able to destroy one single line! Fire, according to the text, was applied in a skillful way—silver is placed in a crucible of earth, that the fire may get at it thoroughly.  
The refiner is quite sure to employ his heat in the best manner known to him so as to melt away the dross—so have men with diabolical skill endeavored, by the most clever criticism, to destroy the Words of God. Their object is not purification—it is the purity of Scripture which annoys them—they aim at consuming the Divine Testimony. Their labor is in vain. For the Sacred Book remains still what it always was—the pure Words of the Lord.  
But some of our misconceptions of its meaning have happily perished in the fires. The Words of the Lord have been tried frequently, yes, they have been tried perfectly—“purified seven times.” What more remains, I cannot guess, but assuredly the processes have already been many and severe. It abides unchanged. The comfort of our fathers is our comfort. The words which cheered our youth are our support in age. “The grass withers, the flower fades: but the Word of our God shall stand forever.”  
These Words of God are a firm foundation and our eternal hopes are wisely built on them. We cannot permit anyone to deprive us of this basis of hope. In the olden time men were burned rather than cease to read their Bibles. We endure less brutal oppositions but they are far more subtle and difficult to resist. Still let us always abide by the Everlasting Words, for they will always abide by us.  
Unchanged, unchangeable are the Words of the Ever Blessed. They are as silver without dross which will continue from age to age. This we do believe and in this we do rejoice. Nor is it a tax upon our faith to believe in the permanence of Holy Scripture—for these Words were spoken by Him who is Omniscient and knows everything. Therefore there can be in them no mistake. They were spoken by Him who is Omnipotent and can do everything. And therefore His Words will be carried out. Spoken by Him who is Immutable, these Words will never change. The Words which God spoke thousands of years ago are true at this hour, for they come from Him who is the same yesterday, today and forever.  
He that spoke these Words is Infallible and therefore they are Infallible. When did He ever err? Could He err and yet be God? “Has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Rest you sure of this—“The Words of the Lord are pure words.” But time hastens me on to the next point.  
II. Secondly and carefully let us consider THE TRIALS OF THE WORDS OF GOD. They are said to be as silver, which has been tried in a furnace. The Words of God have been tested by blasphemy, by ridicule, by persecution, by criticism, and by candid observation. I shall not attempt an oratorical flight while describing the historical tests of the precious metal of Divine Revelation—but I shall mention trials of a commonplace order which have come under my own notice and probably under yours also. This may be more homely but it will be more edifying. The Lord help us!

In dealing with the sinner’s obstinacy we have tested the Words of the Lord. There are men who cannot be convinced or persuaded. They doubt everything and with closed teeth they resolve not to believe though a man declare it to them. They are encased in the armor of prejudice and they cannot be wounded with the sharpest arrows of argument though they profess great openness to conviction. What is to be done with the numerous people who are related to Mr. Obstinate? You might as well argue with an express-train as with Mr. Obstinate—he runs on and will not stop though a thousand should stand in his way.  
Will the Words of God convince him? There are some in this place today of whom I should have said—if I had known them before their conversion—that it was a vain task to preach the Gospel to them. They so much loved sin and so utterly despised the things of God. Strangely enough, they were among the first to receive the Word of God when they came under the sound of it. It came to them in its native majesty, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It spoke with a commanding tone to their inmost heart. It threw open the doors that had long been shut up and rusted on their hinges and Jesus entered to save and reign!  
These who had defiantly brandished their weapons threw them down and surrendered unconditionally to almighty Love, willing Believers in the Lord Jesus. Brethren, we have only to have faith in God’s Word and speak it out straight and we shall see proud rebels yielding. No mind is so desperately set on mischief or so resolutely opposed to Christ that it cannot be made to bow before the power of the Words of God. Oh, that we used more the naked sword of the Spirit! I am afraid we keep this twoedged sword in a scabbard and somewhat pride ourselves that the sheath is so elaborately adorned. What is the use of the sheath? The sword must be made bare and we must fight with it without attempting to garnish it.  
Tell forth the Words of God. Omit neither the terrors of Sinai nor the love notes of Calvary. Proclaim the Word with all fidelity as you know it and cry for the power of the Highest and the most obstinate sinner out of Hell can be laid low by its means. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God— this is His one battering ram with which He casts down the strongholds of sin and self in those human hearts with which He effectually deals. The Word of God will bear the tests furnished by the hardness of the natural heart and it will, by its operations, prove its Divine origin.  
Here begins another trial. When you have a man fairly broken down he has but come part of the way. A new difficulty arises. Will the Words of the Lord overcome the penitent’s despair? The man is full of terror on account of sin and Hell has begun to burn within his bosom. You may talk to him lovingly but his soul refuses to be comforted. Until you bring the Words of the Lord to bear upon him “his soul abhors all manner of meat.” Tell him of a dying Savior. Dwell on Free Grace and full pardon. Speak of the reception of the prodigal son and of the Father’s changeless love. Attended by the power of the Spirit, and only by the Holy Spirit, these Truths will bring light to those who sit in darkness.  
The worst forms of depression are cured when Holy Scripture is believed. Often have I been baffled when laboring with a soul convicted of sin and unable to see Jesus. But I have never had a doubt that in the end the Words of the Lord would become a cup of consolation to the fainting heart. We may be baffled for a season but with the Words of the Lord as our weapons, Giant Despair will not defeat us. O you that are in bondage under fear of punishment, you shall come forth to liberty yet—your chains shall be broken if you will accept the Words of God. My Master’s Word is a great opener of prison doors—He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron asunder.  
That is a most wonderful Word, which, like a battle-ax smashes in the helmet of presumption and at the same time, like the finger of love, touches the tender wound of the bleeding and heals it in an instant! The Words of the Lord—for breaking down or lifting up—are equally effective. In certain instances, the Words of God are tried by the seeker’s singularity. How frequently have persons told us that they were sure there was nobody like themselves in all the world! They were men up in a corner—strange fish, the like of which no sea could yield. Now, if these Words are, indeed, of God, they—and nothing else—will be able to touch every case.  
The Words of God have been put to that test and we are amazed at their universal adaptation. There is a text to meet every remarkable and out-of-the-way case. In certain instances we have heard of an odd text, concerning which we could not before see why it was written. Yet it has evidently a special fitness for a particular person to whom it has come with Divine authority. The Bible may be compared to the locksmith’s bunch of keys. You handle them one by one and say of one—“That is a strange key, surely it will fit no lock that ever was made!” But one of these days the smith is sent to open a very peculiar lock. None of his keys open it. At last he selects that singular specimen. Look! It enters, shoots back the bolt and gives access to the treasure!  
The Words of this Book are proved to be the Words of God because they have an infinite adaptation to the varied minds which the Lord has made. What a gathering of locks we have here this morning! I could not describe you all—Bramah and Chubb and all the rest of them could not have devised such a variety—yet I am sure that in this Inspired Volume there is a key in every way suited to each lock. Personally, when I have been in trouble, I have read the Bible until a text has seemed to stand out of the Book and salute me, saying, “I was written especially for you.” It has looked to me as if the story must have been in the mind of the writer when he penned that passage.  
And so it was in the mind of that Divine Author who is at the back of all these inspired pages. Thus have the Words of the Lord stood the test of adaptation to the singularities of individual men. We frequently meet with people of God who have tested the Words of God in time of sore trouble. I make here an appeal to the experience of the people of God. You have lost a dear child. Was there not a Word of the Lord to cheer you? You lost your property—was there a passage in the Scriptures to meet the disaster? You have been slandered—was there not a Word to console you? You were very sick and depressed. Had not the Lord provided a comfort for you in that case?  
I will not multiply questions—the fact is that you never were high but the Word of the Lord was up with you. And you never were low but what the Scripture was down with you. No child of God was ever in any ditch, pit, cave, or abyss—but the Words of God found him out. How often do the gracious promises lie in ambush to surprise us with their loving kindness! I adore the infinity of God’s goodness, as I see it mirrored in the glass of Scripture.  
Again—the Word of God is tried and proved as a guide in perplexity. Have we not been forced, at times, to come to a pause and say, “I do not know what to think about this. What is the proper course?” This book is an oracle to the simple-hearted man in mental, moral and spiritual perplexity. Oh, that we used it more! Rest assured that you never will be in a labyrinth so complicated that this Book, blessed of the Spirit, will not help you through. This is the compass for all mariners upon the sea of life—by its use you will know where lies the pole. Abide by the Words of the Lord and your way will be clear.  
Beloved, the Words of God endure another test. They are our preservatives in times of temptation. You can write a book that may help a man when he is tempted in a certain direction—will the same volume strengthen him when he is attracted in the opposite direction? Can you conceive a book which shall be a complete fence encircling a man in all directions? Keeping him from the abyss yonder and from the gulf on the other side? Yet such is the Bible. The devil himself cannot invent a temptation which is not met in these pages. And all the devils in Hell together, if they were to hold parliament and to call in the aid of all evil men, could not invent a device which is not met by this matchless Library of Truth. It reaches the Believer in every condition and position and preserves him from all evil. “How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word” (Psa. 119:9).  
Lastly on this point, here is a grand test of the Book—it helps men to die. Believe me, it is no child’s play to die! You and I will find ourselves in that solemn article before we know it and then we shall need strong consolation. Nothing upon earth ever gives me so much encouragement in the faith as to visit members of this Church when they are about to die. It is very sad to see them wasting away or racked with pain, but the chief effect produced upon the visitor is gladsome rather than gloomy. I have this week seen a sister well known to many of you, who has a cancer in her face and may, in all probability, soon be with her Lord.  
It is a dread affliction and one knows not what it may yet involve. But the gracious patient knows neither murmurs nor fears. No one in this place, though in the flush of health, could be more calm, more restful than our sister is! She spoke to me with full confidence that living or dying she is the Lord’s and she had bright anticipations of being forever with the Lord. The little she could say with her voice was supplemented by a great deal which she expressed with her eyes and with her whole demeanor. Here was no excitement, no fanaticism, no action of drugs upon the brain—just a sweetly reasonable, quiet, and assured hope of eternal joy.  
Brethren, it is not hard to pass out of this world when we are resting on that old and sure Gospel which I have preached to you these many years. Personally, I can both live and die on the Eternal Truths which I have proclaimed to you. And this assurance makes me bold in preaching. Not long ago I sat by a Brother who was near his end. I said to him, “You have no fear of death?” He replied cheerfully, “I should be ashamed of myself if I had. After all that I have learned of the glorious Gospel from your lips these many years, it is a joy to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

Now, if this Inspired Volume with its wonderful record of the Words of God helps us in the trials of life—directs us in our daily paths and enables us to weather the last great storm—surely it is precious beyond description, “as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times.”  
III. Now thirdly, what are THE CLAIMS OF THESE WORDS OF THE LORD? The claims of these words are many. First, they deserve to be studied. Beloved, may I urge upon you the constant searching of Inspired Scripture?  
Here is the latest new novel! What shall I do with it? Cast it to the ground. Here is another piece of fiction which has been very popular! What shall I do with it? Throw it on one side, or thrust it between the bars of the grate. This Sacred Volume is the freshest of novels. It would be, to some of you, an entirely new book. We have a society for providing the Bible for readers but we greatly need readers of the Bible. I grieve that even to some who bear the Christian name, Holy Scripture is the least read book in their library.  
One said of a preacher, the other day, “How does he keep up the congregation? Does he always give the people something new?” “Yes,” said the other, “he gives them the Gospel. And in these days that is the newest thing out.” It is truly so. The old, old Gospel is always new. The modern doctrine is only new in name. It is, after all, nothing but a hash of stale heresies and moldy speculations. If God has spoken, listen! If the Lord has recorded His Words in a Book, search its pages with a believing heart. If you do not accept it as God’s Inspired Word, I cannot invite you to pay any particular attention to it. But if you regard it as the Book of God, I charge you, as I shall meet you at the Judgment Seat of Christ—study the Bible daily. Treat not the Eternal God with disrespect but delight in His Word.  
Do you read it? Then believe it. Oh, for an intense belief of every Word that God has spoken! Do not hold it as a dead creed but let it hold you as with an almighty hand. Have no controversy with any of the Lord’s Words. Believe without a doubt. The brother of the famous Unitarian, Dr. Priestly, was permitted to preach for his brother in his Chapel in Birmingham. But he was charged to take no controversial subject. He was obedient to the letter of his instructions but very rebellious against their spirit—seeing he took for his text—“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” Assuredly there is no controversy among spiritual men upon the glorious Truth of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus!  
So also, all the Words of the Lord are out of the region of debate—they are to us absolute certainties. Until a doctrine becomes an absolute certainty to a man, he will never know its sweetness. The Truth of God has little influence upon the soul till it is fully believed.  
Brothers and Sisters, obey the Book! Do it freely, do it heartily, do it constantly. Err not from the Commandment of God. May the Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do His will! “Whatsoever He says unto you, do it.” You that are unconverted, may you obey that Gospel Word— “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Repentance and faith are at once the commands and the gifts of God—neglect them not.  
Furthermore, these Words of God are to be preserved. Give up no line of God’s Revelation. You may not know the particular importance of the text assailed, but it is not for you to assess the proportionate value of God’s Words—if the Lord has spoken, be prepared to die for what He has said. I have often wondered whether, according to the notions of some people, there is any truth for which it would be worth while for a man to go to the stake. I should say not. For we are not sure of anything, according to the modern notion.  
Would it be worth while dying for a doctrine which may not be true next week? Fresh discoveries may show that we have been the victims of an antiquated opinion—had we not better wait and see what will turn up? It will be a pity to be burned too soon, or to lie in prison for a dogma which will, in a few years, be superseded. Brethren, we cannot endure this shifty theology! May God send us a race of men who have backbones! Men who believe something and would die for what they believe. This Book deserves the sacrifice of our all for the maintenance of every line of it.  
Believing and defending the Word of God, let us proclaim it. Go out this afternoon on this first Sunday of summer and speak in the street the Words of this Book. Go to a cottage meeting, or to a workhouse, or to a lodging house and declare the Divine Words. “Truth is mighty and will prevail,” they say—it will not prevail if it is not made known. The Bible itself works no wonders until its Truths are published abroad. Tell it among the heathen that the Lord reigns from the Tree. Tell it among the multitude that the Son of God has come to save the lost and that whosoever believes in Him shall have eternal life!  
Make all men know that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This thing was not done in a corner—keep it not a secret. Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. And may God bless you! Amen.

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HOWLING CHANGED TO SINGING  
NO. 2310

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 28, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY, EVENING, APRIL 28, 1889.

**“How long will You forget me, O LORD? Forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?...I will sing unto the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.”  
Psalm 13:1, 2, 6.**

THIS is a very short Psalm, there are only six verses in it, but what a change there is between the beginning and the end of it! The first two verses are dolorous to the deepest degree, but the last verse is joyful to the highest degree. David begins many of his Psalms sighing and ends them singing, so that I do not wonder that Peter Moulin says, “One would think that those Psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humor.” If I were asked, “Are there two men here, or is there only one?” My answer would be that there is only one, but that one is two, for every man is two men, especially every spiritual man. He will find within himself an old man and a new man, an old nature and a new nature—and even the new nature, itself, is subject to strange changes—so that, like April weather, we have sunshine and showers blended. Sometimes it seems as if all the showers were poured on top of the sunshine and the sunshine, itself, were quenched and could scarcely gladden us.

David was a wonderful man for changes of experience. God permitted him to go through many experiences, not so much for himself, as for the good of succeeding generations. Whenever you look into David’s Psalms, you may somewhere or other see yourselves. You never get into a corner but you find David in that corner. I think that I was never so low that I could not find that David was lower—and I never climbed so high that I could not find that David was up above me, ready to sing his song upon his stringed instrument, even as I could sing mine! These are two instantaneous photographs. The first one gives us the man complaining, the second one gives us the man rejoicing. I wonder whether we shall get two such photographs, tonight—some sitting here complaining, who, before the service is over, will go their way rejoicing? God grant that it may be so!

Possibly somebody here says, “I do not understand what you mean by each man being two men.” Well, let me say a little more on that point. Every man is a mystery. He is a mystery to other people, but, if he ever thinks, he is a great mystery to himself! And, if he never does think, why then, I think that he is a mystery, indeed, that he should have such a wondrous faculty as the power of thought, and yet should let it lie idle! He who does not study himself may think that he understands himself, but it is the judgment of folly. He who has been accustomed to make a friend of himself and has had himself for his companion, and talked to himself, and cross-examined himself, is the man who will say, “I am puzzled. I cannot make myself out. I am often at my wits’ end. I am such a strange mixture, and so dreadfully changeable.”

You must know yourself, dear Friend, in some measure, or else I am afraid that you will never know the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you do not know Him, then you do not know what eternal life means, for to know Him is eternal life! But why is it necessary for us to know ourselves, that we may know Christ? You must have some knowledge of the disease that you may know what the Physician can do—and there is also this Truth of God to be remembered—the Lord Jesus Christ is the model Man and only by knowing something about men do we know much about Him. Is it not strange that the Psalms are often so written that you do not know whether David is writing about himself or about the Lord Jesus? One verse can only be applied to Christ and you are certain that David is writing of the Messiah, but the next verse you can hardly apply to Christ, for there are some terms in it which would be derogatory to the Lord Jesus Christ, so it must refer to David. The fact is that there is a wonderful union between David and David’s Lord—there is a marvelous union between the saint and his Savior, between the Believer and Him in whom he believes—and you cannot always tell where one begins and the other ends.

So, if you have no knowledge of man, it is to be feared that you have no knowledge of that Son of Man, the Man of men, the Savior of men, the First-Born among many brethren, to whose likeness we are yet to be fully conformed. I invite anybody here who has not yet known the Savior, to pray to God to make him know himself. It may be that the discovery of what

 you are will necessitate your discovering what Christ is! A true estimate of your own poverty may compel you to resort to Him for wealth. A true sight of your own disease may force you to apply to Him for His allhealing medicine. Certainly it is to be urged upon you by the highest of motives that you do not, with all your understanding, forget to understand yourself and that, while you have many books on your shelf, you do not read them so as to forget this Book which lies within, this wonderful Book which concerns you more than all the writings of men, the Book of your own nature, your own needs, your own desires, your own changes! God make you familiar with them and then make you also familiar with the Book of Grace which is written in the life of the Son of Man!

Now, with that as a preface, I invite you to the study of our text.

First, you will see, in the first two verses, a man complaining. Go three verses farther on and you will get to a man singing, about whom we will talk in the second place. And then we shall close our discourse tonight by asking, What are the connecting links between the man complaining and the man singing? How did this complaining man get up to concert pitch and begin to sing before he had gone more than a little way further on the road?

I. First, then, here is A MAN COMPLAINING.  
Pardon me if I say that here is a man howling. Let me read the first two verses again—“How long will You forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?” Said I not truly, when I called it howling? There is so much of complaining here, so much of questioning—“How long? How long? How long? How long?”—four times over, that we may call it, as David did once call his prayer—“the voice of my roaring.” It is a kind of howling, roaring, moaning complaint before God in the bitterness of his soul. Let us take these four, “How longs?” and speak of them.  
Here is, first, the poor man’s grief, as it seems to him—“How long will You forget me, O Lord? Forever?” Think for a minute. Can God forget? Can Omnipotence forget? Can unchanging love forget? Can infinite faithfulness forget? Yet so it seems to David. So it has often seemed to men in the deepest of trouble. “How long will You forget me?” You have been praying for mercy and you cannot find it—and you think that God forgets. You have been, perhaps, a seeker after peace for years, and yet you have not found it, and you think that God forgets. Or, perhaps, years ago, you were one of the happiest of the happy and you bathed in the light of God’s Countenance. But now you are the unhappiest of the unhappy, you are at a distance from your God, you have been trying to get back and cannot get back, and you think that God forgets you. Or else wave upon wave of trouble has rolled over you—you have hardly had time to breathe between the surges of your grief. You are ready to perish with despondency and you think that God forgets you! That is how it looks to you, but it is not so, and cannot be so.  
God cannot forget anything, it is impossible! “Can a woman forget her sucking child?” Mark that expression, the child that still draws its nourishment from her bosom. That is just what you are still doing, for, albeit you think that God forgets you, you are still living on what He daily gives you and you would die if He did not give you of His Grace and strength. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.” Lay hold of that great Truth of God and dismiss that which can be only an appearance and an error. God has not forgotten to be gracious, nor has He forgotten you.  
The next, “How long?” the next piece of David’s howling, represents his trouble as it really is. “How long will You hide Your face from me?” That is as it really is with some of you—God has hidden His face from you—not His heart, nor His mind. He has not forgotten you, but He has taken away from you the comfort of His smile. Are you crying, tonight, “Lord, how long will You hide Your face from me?” I am glad you cry about it! The ungodly do not cry for God’s face to be revealed to them—they wish that God would always hide His face from them. They do not want either His face or His favor. But if you are longing to see His face, it is because that face is full of love to you. I do not wonder that you are unhappy if you have lost the light of God’s Countenance, for he who has ever had it, cannot lose it, no, not for a moment, without feeling his heart ready to break!  
“There are many who say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon us.” Only give us to know that You love us and we will not envy the man who owns the greatest estate, or enjoys the highest degree of human applause. This is enough for us, to have God with us! Oh, dear child of God, if you have lost the light of your Father’s Countenance, and you sigh after it, you shall have it, again! You shall have it very soon! By the degree of your longing, you may measure the length of His absence. If you long but little, He will be absent long, but if you long much, He will come to you soon. You will soon find that the hidings of His face are over and the light of His Countenance is once again your joy.  
This is what the trouble really is and a great trouble it is while it lasts, though it works for your good. What plants would grow if it were always day? Does not night make them grow as well as day? Brothers and Sisters, if we always had fine weather, should we ever have a harvest at all? The Arabs have a proverb, “All sun makes the desert.” If there is no rain, how can there be verdure? There is a ripeness given to the fruits by the moon as well as by the sun. Grieve when God hides His face from you, but do not despair as well as grieve, but believe that even in this, He still loves you. It is a face of love that you do not see. You believe that, yourself, or else you would not wish to see it. If it were a face of wrath, you would not be longing to see it again. It is a face of love that is hidden from you. Therefore, be of good courage, you shall see it, by-and-by.  
Notice next, that we have the man’s sorrow as it is within himself. “How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?” He talks to himself! That is the counsel he takes with himself and he does not get any very great help out of that. It is a mark of wisdom to talk with yourselves, sometimes, but not if you make yourself your own oracle. A man may talk to himself until he talks himself into despair, though there is a way of talking with yourself that will talk you up into the Light of God, such as David used when he said, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God.” That is the way to talk to yourself! But yet, as a rule, there is not much good comes of talking to yourself unless there is a third One present—that blessed One who can construe what self may say in mystery—and set right what self might twist into error. Oh, yes, I know some who pour out their hearts within them!  
Do you remember what David says in the 42nd Psalm? “I pour out my soul in me.” Now, if it were possible to pour the contents of a jug of water out into itself, the water would be there, all the same, would it not? That is a grand passage where David says, “You people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us.” Take your pitcher and turn it bottom upwards, and let the contents all run out. That is a true easement. To pour out from itself into itself is a poor change. To pour it out before God is to find instant relief. Beloved, it may be that you cannot get any relief and that daily, from morning until evening, you are still in a fret and a trouble. Well, that is the case with David, here—and my text is a photograph of you!  
And, once more, the fourth, “How long?” shows the man’s sorrow as it is without Him. “How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?” It adds very much to a man’s grief when somebody from the outside says, “Oh, you are always miserable! It makes anybody wretched to be near you.” It was thus when Peninnah exulted over Hannah’s barrenness and “provoked her sorely, to make her fret.” It happens to many Christians to have this sort of thing done by somebody, especially a very “candid friend.” A candid friend is only an enemy candied over with a little sugar, as a general rule, and one who takes the opportunity to say nastier things than a downright enemy would say. You may have some such person in your family. Above all, there is our great adversary, from whom may God deliver us, who also delights to triumph and exult over us whenever he can!  
And so our trouble outside is that Satan and his allies exult over us and we have not yet learned to say, as we ought to say, “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, when I fall, I shall arise.” That last touch may, perhaps, make the photograph depict somebody here who said, “I do not think that I shall see my portrait tonight. I have been roaming about and got into great trouble, and I am one by myself.” Well, but here is David, who is with you, and David’s Lord is with you, too!  
That is the first photograph—a man complaining.  
II. I am glad to pass from the first view and bring on the second one. The second picture of the same person is found in the sixth verse, where we see A MAN SINGING—“I will sing unto the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.”  
It is the same man that we saw before, but he has done with his howling and has taken to singing, for, first, his heart is rejoicing. Read the fifth verse. He says, “My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.” It is not merely the appearance of joy—it is real joy—his heart is rejoicing! Have you never seen a friend who has been suddenly lifted up by the Spirit of God out of great mourning and of whom you have said, “Well, I should not have known that it was the same person”? Grief throws a peculiar cast over the human countenance. Well do I remember, as a child, a lady who used to come to my grandfather’s house, whose face was terrible to look upon and when I asked who that sad lady was, they said, “Hush, child,” and they made me hold my tongue until she was gone. And then they told me that she was one who thought that she had committed the unpardonable sin. I do not know what it was that struck me, but there was something about her face which has never gone from my memory, though it must be pretty well 50 years ago that I saw her.

But when a person is full of joy, especially spiritual joy, have you ever noticed what a kind of transfiguration the face undergoes? You have been, yourself, to have your photograph taken, and the man places an iron clamp at the back of your neck and you go away, directly, I mean that you do. Your body stands there, but you, yourself, go traveling down the rod of iron, and you are not there at all, and the likeness is not yourself—it is your chrysalis, the case in which you used to be, but you are gone! Well, now, when you have joy in your heart, really in your heart so that everybody can see it on your countenance, your eyes begin to sparkle and your whole face is lit up, so that people say, “Well, really, he is only an ordinary-looking person as a general rule, but when he is in that state of mind, there is a wonderful kind of beauty about him!”  
Now, the Lord can work that change for some of you, so that when you go home, mother will say, “Why, Maria, you are quite different from what you were when you went to the Tabernacle! John, how changed you are! You went so dull and heavy, but now you seem to be quite another person.” Yes, the secret is that it is with him as it was with David—his heart is rejoicing!  
The next thing is that his tongue is praising. “I will sing unto the Lord.” That which is down in the well will come up in the bucket. That which is in the heart is sure to come up to the mouth before long—so the happy Believer begins to sing and, very likely, he breaks out with the children’s hymn—  
*“I feel like singing all the time,  
My tears are wiped away,  
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,  
I’ll serve Him every day.”*  
You may try, perhaps, to repress your emotion, but if the Lord has really brought you up out of the horrible pit, such as I have been describing, your emotion will not be altogether repressed. You will feel as if, should you hold your peace, the very stones would begin to cry out! A rejoicing heart soon makes a praising tongue!  
Notice, next, that the man’s judgment is content. That cool, calculating faculty now begins to read God’s dealings, and it comes to a very different conclusion from that which it arrived at before. Some of you used to learn, as children, a book called, “Why, and Because”—and it is a good thing to have a, “why, and because,” for your own feelings. Now, says David, “I will sing unto the Lord, because, after weighing and judging the matter thoroughly, I can testify that He has dealt bountifully with me. I thought that He had forgotten me, but He has dealt bountifully with me. I thought that He had hidden His face from me, but He has dealt bountifully with me. I said in my heart that He treats me very harshly, but I take all such language back, Lord! I eat my own words with bitter herbs and I regret that I should ever have used them! You have dealt bountifully with me.” “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” This poor man who thought that he was forgotten, now looks at the food which God has put upon his table and he finds that he has Benjamin’s portion—much more than was given to the rest of his brothers—and his verdict is totally changed, now, as to the dealings of the Lord with him. He, says, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”  
And now that his judgment has been set right, now that heart, tongue, judgement—all are right—his resolve is right, for he says, “I will sing unto the Lord.” “Not only am I singing now, but I will make up my mind to this, I have been sighing long enough, I will now sing. I have been groaning and complaining, now I will sing! I will sing unto the Lord.” I like this resolve, for it relates not only to present joy, but it is a resolution to project that joy throughout the whole of his life. “I will sing unto the Lord.” I trust that some of you will go out of the Tabernacle, tonight, saying, “Well, I will sing. Yes, I will. God helping me, I will. I will sing unto the Lord. I will sing at my work. I will sing on my bed. I will sing when I wake in the morning. I will sing when I go to bed at night. The Lord has put a new song into my mouth and I cannot keep it there—I must sing it out. I must sing His praises.” I am sure we will not try to stop you! We will encourage you to sing unto the Lord as much as possible.  
There is not half enough singing in the world. The music of the early mornings in the country, at this time of the year, always seems to chide me. The birds are up and they wake us up, and when they are up, the first thing they do is to sing! And there is a kind of contention among them, each one tries to sing the most sweetly and the most loudly. And one calls to another and the other answers him. They sing as they fly and they sing as they build their nests! And they make such a wonderful chorus of song that it often astonishes us that such little creatures can make such cataracts, such Niagara of music as they pour forth from their tiny throats! Oh, that God’s people would sing more! I remember a servant who used to sing while she was at the washtub. Her mistress said to her, “Why, Jane, how is it that you are always singing?” She said, “It keeps bad thoughts away.” I remember an old Methodist Brother who was pretty nearly eighty, and I never came across him, as he went along the street at a rather slow pace, without hearing him toot-tooting little bits of tunes as he walked. If you went by his door and heard a noise in his house, it was the old man singing! He never seemed to make any other noise but that of praising and blessing God. Oh, that we might do so continually!— *“Sing a hymn to Jesus,  
When the heart is faint!  
Tell it all to Jesus,  
Comfort or complaint,”*  
and, when you have done that, sing another! And when you have finished that, sing another! Whether it is a hymn of comfort or complaint, still sing to the praise of His name and make this your resolution as you go out tonight, “I will sing unto the Lord, my God, as long as I live.”  
There are the two photographs. Put them into your album and take care of them.  
III. But how came this change to take place? What are THE CONNECTING LINKS BETWEEN THE MAN COMPLAINING AND THE MAN SINGING? How did No. 1 get to be No. 2? How did this howler become a singer? What process did he pass through?  
If you read this 13th Psalm over again when you get home, you will notice that the first thing David did was, he pleaded with God. He stated his case to the Lord. He mentioned the separate particulars of it and then he pleaded, “Consider and hear me, O Jehovah, my God: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.” For you, mourners, the first step towards comfort is to go and take the matter to your God. You have Rabshakeh’s letter in your pocket—it is a dreadful letter, enough to make you sad. While I have been preaching, you have been sighing to yourself, “Ah, me! When I get home, I shall be thinking about that letter. I shall be awake thinking of it.” Some of you, who are rather of a nervous temperament, will let some little thing keep boring into you like an awl. You cannot get away from it.  
Now, I invite you to take that letter out of your pocket when you get home and spread it before the Lord. Many and many a time I have had great troubles—who can be the pastor of such a Church without them? I have done my very best with the matter that has perplexed me and I have only made it worse and, at last, I have laid it before the Lord and prayed over it. And in such cases I have always said to myself, “I will never have anything to do with that matter again; I have done with it.” I advise you to do the same. Cast your burden upon the Lord! Put it upon that shelf. But then if you take it down, again, what good have you done? No, leave it there! Leave it there and have done with it! The Lord will bring you out of the difficulty when you clear yourself of it. Do not go on hugging your trouble—take it to the Lord in prayer!  
If you have a solicitor and there is a suit at law, and the person against whom the suit is laid comes to you and says, “I want to hear what you are going to do,” do not say anything to him, except, “I have left that with my solicitor. You must be so good as to see him. I refer you to him.” If there are two of you to manage the business, one will be a fool and I think I know who that one will be! Either do not have a solicitor, and be your own lawyer, or else, if you have somebody to attend to the suit for you, let him do it! Why keep dogs and bark, yourself? So let it be in all things. If you lay the matter before God, then do not begin to take it on your own back, as well. That will be an absurdity!  
Although I made you smile, just now, by quoting an old proverb, I do seriously urge upon you, my Friends, the impropriety of attempting to undertake a case which you have laid before God in prayer. Leave it there. If you have done so, let your Advocate see you through with the business. Come, Beloved, you shall soon begin to change your mode of talking if you will go and tell your trouble to God, straight away. “Well, I shall see my brother, tomorrow.” Do not see your brother—go and see your Father! “Oh, but I want to call in a friend!” That is what I want you to do, but not the friend you are thinking of—call in the Friend of Friends! Tell Him everything about your trouble and your difficulty and when you have done that, have done with it and leave it with Him. You will, then, soon begin to sing.  
The next thing is that David, having prayed and brought his cause before God, trusted in the Lord. This is the chief point. Read the 5th verse and you will see that the whole story is made plain—“I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.” I seem as if I could leave all you troubled saints, now, just to say to any sinner here who is in deep soul trouble, what you have said to yourself, “That first photograph was very like me. I cannot say that I am at all like the second one.” No, but you will be like that second one if you will, from your heart, say this, “I have trusted in Your mercy.” This is the remedy for the disease of sin and for the disease of the heart—trust Jesus! There He hangs on yonder Cross. Trust Him! “I cannot realize that He is mine,” you say. Did I tell you to realize that? Trust Him! “Oh, but I do not feel as if I had a good heart to bring to Him.” Did I tell you to bring Him

 anything? Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him! Oh, child of God, this is the lesson you need to learn—TRUST! Oh, old sinner, this is the essential lesson for you if you would enter into Light of God and peace—TRUST!  
“I have so many sins.” TRUST! “But I have such tendencies to sin.” Trust Him to overcome those tendencies. “But I have tried.” No, I did not say, try, but TRUST. “But I, I, I will try.” No, do not try. I did not say, try. “Sir, I was going to say I will try to trust.” I did not say try to trust! Trying to trust is the very reverse of trusting! If Christ is a liar, do not trust Him. If He is true, trust Him. If He cannot save you, do not trust Him, but as He is the Almighty Savior, trust Him. Oh, that I could shout that word loud as a thousand thunders speaking at once, TRUST! O Soul, the way of the Law is OBEY—a hard word, with which you cannot comply, for you are too weak. But the Gospel way is trust, trust, TRUST! When you have learned that way, you shall afterwards learn how to obey and you shall obey through trusting! But the first thing is, trust! Is your leg broken, so that you can not walk? Lean on Him who can carry you. Have you a great weight? Lean hard, then. Is it greater than ever it was? Lean harder, then! Trust, implicitly trust! As the blind man puts his hand into the hand of him who can see, that he may lead him, so trust in Jesus. Put your hand into the hand of Him who was crucified and trust Him tonight.  
There, you may put away that first photograph. You may sit down, now, if you have trusted, and we will take your likeness again, and I am sure your likeness will agree with the 6th verse, and you will say, “I will sing unto the Lord; I will go home singing! I have trusted. I have found salvation!” Lord, lead these people to trust You! Why can they not trust You? What have You ever done that they should doubt You? Lord Jesus, if I had a million souls, I would trust them all with You, fully persuaded that You could wash them all whiter than snow! Trust, then, beloved Friends! Trust Jesus. God help you to trust, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON. **PSALMS 12, 13, 14.**

Psalm 12:1. Help, LORD; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. One might have thought that David still lived among us, his cry is so timely, so exactly true to the position of affairs today. What a prayer he offers! Driven away from confidence in men, be cries, “Help, Lord! You mighty One, put forth Your power! You faithful One, display Your Truth! ‘Help, Lord; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.’”

2. They speak vanity, every one with his neighbor: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. They speak vanity. There is nothing in it. It is all froth, no reality. Vain speech about vain subjects, having no real spiritual power to help the man that hears—“They speak vanity.” “With a double heart do they speak,” saying one thing and meaning another—trifling with words, orthodox to the ear—heterodox to the heart. Oh, how much there is of this falseness in these days! Still are there many who “speak with flattering lips and with a double heart.” It is some comfort to us to know that no new thing has happened to us—we are merely going through an old part of the road which David traversed long ago.

3, 4. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? There is the point in dispute! Man will be lord of himself and God will be Lord of all and everything—and there can be no compromise between these two. Not even a man’s lips are really his own. Who gave the gift of speech? Who created the mouth? Who is LORD over us? Why, the answer is simple enough! He that made us, He that redeemed us, He should be Lord over us. Let us willingly put ourselves in subjection to Him.

5. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the LORD. God takes notice of the oppression of poor men and, especially, of poor saints when they are tried by the wickedness of the age—“Now will I arise, says the Lord.”

5, 6. I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him. The Words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. There is no mistake about the words of this blessed Book. The very Words, themselves, are as accurate, as Infallible, as silver is pure when it has been refined seven times by the most skillful artist. There is no improving upon God’s Words. We dare not leave one of them out. We would not presume to put one of our own side by side with them—“The Words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

7, 8. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. When sin gets into the high places of the earth, then it becomes very abundant. Every evil man takes liberty to creep out into public life when some great leader in vice occupies the throne. God save the people when such is the case!

Psalm 13:1, 2. How long will You forget me, O LORD? Forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? When you and I have to spread our complaints before God, we are not the first who have done so. When we complain of God’s forsaking us, we are not alone. There was a greater than David who, even in the article of death, cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

3. Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death. When it is dark, very dark, we get drowsy. Sorrow induces sleep. Remember how the Savior found the disciples sleeping for sorrow? Therefore David asks for light. Light will help him to stay awake and he fears to sleep, so he prays, “Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.”

4, 5. Lest my enemy says, I have prevailed against him; and these that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But. What a precious, “but,” this is! You can hear the chain rattle as the anchor goes down to hold the vessel!

5, 6. I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing unto the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me. What a climb there is, in this Psalm, from the abyss of sorrow up to the summit of joy! “I will sing unto the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me.” I hope many of us know what this blessed change means. If any of you are in great sorrow, tonight, may my Lord and Master lighten your eyes!

Psalm 14:1. The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. He was a fool to think it. He was not fool enough, however, to say it except in his heart. Fools have grown more brazen-faced of late, for now they not only say it in their hearts, but they say with their tongues, “There is no God.” Oh, no, I have made a mistake! They do not call them, “fools,” now—they call them “philosophers.” That, however, is often exactly the same thing!

1. They are corrupt, It is always so. When they will have no God, they will have no goodness “They are corrupt.” That is the secret of infidelity. The Psalmist has put his finger on it—“They are corrupt.”

1, 2. They have done abominable works, there is none that does good.

The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. David represents God looking from the battlements of Heaven upon our fallen humanity and, at the time when He looked, He could see none that understood Him, or sought Him. By nature we are all in this condition. Until the Grace of God seeks us, we never seek God. Even God looked in vain. He was no stern critic—He was no hypercritic—“The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.”

3. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that does good, no, not one. “That was in old Testament times,” says one. If you turn to the Epistle to the Romans, you will find that Paul quotes it as being true in his day. It is always true and it always will be true, apart from the Grace of God—“There is none that does good; no, not one.”

4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Are they all so foolish?  
4. Who eat up My people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD. They think nothing of God’s people. They could swallow them at a mouthful, they so despise them. Notice, that whenever a man despises God, he soon despises God’s people—it is only natural that he should do so. Meanwhile, he, himself, will not call upon the Lord.  
5. There were they in great fear. What? These very people who would not call upon God? Were they in great fear? Yes, God can bring great fear upon the men who seem most bold. It is noticed that the boldest blasphemers, when they become ill, are generally the most timid persons. These are the people who begin to cry and give up what they boasted of, when they get into deep waters—“There were they in great fear.”  
5. For God is in the generation of the righteous. He is with His people. He always will be with His people and when He makes bare His arm, fear takes possession of His enemies.  
6. You have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge. They mocked at the idea of a man’s trusting in God for his daily bread, or trusting in God for his eternal salvation, but, mock as men may, there is no other refuge for a soul but God! When the floods are out, there is no safety but in the ark with God. Oh, that men would trust in Him!  
7. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. May that time soon come! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3512 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ARE YOU MOCKED?  
NO. 3512

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 18, 1916.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1871.

**“You have shamed the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge.” Psalm 14:6.**

GOD’S Word divides the whole human race into two portions. There is the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman—the children of God, and the children of the devil—those who are by nature still what they always were, and those who have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There are many distinctions among men, but they are not much more than surface deep. This one distinction, however, goes right through, and it is very deep. I may say that between the two classes, the saved and the unsaved, there is a great gulf fixed. There is as wide a difference between the righteous and the wicked as there is between the living and the dead! The Psalmist, David, in this particular Psalm, calls one class of men fools and another class the poor. You will observe that he begins by describing the fool, by which he does not mean one particular man, but the whole race as it is by nature—the whole of that portion of the human race that remains unregenerate. In our text he describes another class as the poor, in which he comprehends all the saved, all the godly, all the righteous, of whom our Redeemer has said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Now from the very first, between the two seeds there has always been an enmity—an enmity which has never been mitigated and never will. It displays itself in various ways, but it is always there. In some ages the enmity has burst forth into open persecution— Herod sought the young Child to destroy it. Haman sought to destroy the whole generation of Israel! Stakes have been erected and the faithful have been burnt. Racks and inhuman engines of cruelty have been fashioned by the art of man, through the malice of his heart, to exterminate, if it were possible, the children of the living God! For there is war— perpetually war to the knife—war always between the two generations. At this particular time the warfare is not less bitter, but the restraints of Providence do not allow it to display itself as it once did. It now generally takes the form of cruel mocking so that our text is as applicable to the present race as it was in David’s time, “You have shamed the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge.” The fool has made a mockery of the righteous man, called the poor man. And this has been the subject of his mockery, that the godly man has been fool enough, as he calls him, to put his trust in God and to make this the main point and purpose of his life. There may be some here who have done this—all of us do it to some extent until we are born-again. We ridicule, if not with the tongue, yet in our heart, those who have made God their refuge, but when we begin to value the people of God, it is a sign of some degree of Divine Grace in us—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren”—but until we come into that state of Grace there is a hatred or contempt, more or less developed, against those who are resting in the living God!

Now I shall at this time, first of all, speak of those who are mocked. Secondly, of the mockers. And thirdly, of how those who are mocked ought to behave towards those who try to put them to shame. First, then, let us take the subject—the objective—of the mockery of carnal minds.

I. WHO ARE MOCKED?  
Here we have three points—“You have shamed the poor,” that is, the persons. “The counsel of the poor,” that is the reasons for their faith. Then their faith itself, “but the Lord is his refuge.”  
To begin, it is very common for ungodly men to pour contempt upon God’s people, the poor—and oftentimes they will do it by the use of these words. It so happens that many of God’s people are poor in pocket and they often hear the observation, “Oh, these Methodists, these Presbyterians, these Baptists, they are a set of poor people, mechanics, and servant girls and so on!” And how often is that uttered with a sneer upon the lips! Well now, that is a fine thing to make fun of, isn’t it, for, after all, what is there to be ashamed of in honest poverty? I will stand here and say that if I could stand tomorrow morning in Cheapside, and pick out a dozen poor men—and then if I were to pick out a dozen middleclass men, and then a dozen rich men—I believe, as to character, there would be very much of a difference. You shall go, if you will, and pick out at random, 12 good princes, and see if you could do it. But I will pick you out 12 working men that shall be honest, upright, and chaste—which great men are not always. The poor are no worse than the rich, and have no more right to be despised. And if it were true that all who fear God were poor, it might, perhaps, be rather to their credit than to their dishonor, for, at any rate, nobody would be able to say that their pockets were lined with the result of fraud! If they were poor, they would, at any rate, be free from many of the accusations that might be brought against rich men! I care no more for one class than another, especially when I preach the Gospel—you are all alike to me, one as the other—but this I will say, that of all jests and all sneers, that is one of the most ridiculous and mean against godly people, because they are poor!  
But the sneer then takes another form. It is not that they are poor in pocket, so much as that they are very poor in education. “Ah,” they say, “these people—well, what do they know? They are not philosophical. They are not among those who cultivate the higher walks of literature. They are mostly plain, simple-minded people and, therefore, they believe their Bibles.” Well, I don’t believe that! Among Christian people there are many men of as high an education as among any class. The mind of Newton found root in Scripture and discovered depths which it could not fathom. But even if you say that, what of it? If these men have the wisdom which comes from above, they have something that will last when the wisdom which is merely of this earth will have perished! Go, take the skull of the wise man in your hand, and look at it. Is it not as brown, is it not as ghastly a sight as the skull of the peasant? And what matters it to him, now that he lies among the clods of the valley, that once he spent his nights with the lamp, pouring into ancient tomes, or walked with his staff to the skies to measure the distance of the stars, or bored into the depths of the earth? It in all one to him, and if he is a lost soul, ah, who would not give the preference to the man that was learned in the Kingdom of Heaven beyond the man that was only learned in the things of earth? Therefore I see no great reason for jest on the subject. And the sneer is, to say the least, ungenerous, for if the ungodly are so much the wiser, let them show their wisdom by not sneering at those who do not happen to possess their gifts, but who possess what is much more precious!  
And then it will take another shape—this shaming of the poor because of their poverty. They will say, “Ah, but they are poor in spirit—they have not good ideas of themselves. Hear them—they are always confessing sinfulness and weakness, and they appear to go through the world without self-reliance, relying upon some unseen power and always distrusting themselves! And they do not seem to have the pluck that the ungodly have. Why, we who know not God can drink, and they will stay away from where we can go. And we can let out an oath, but they are afraid. And there is many a song that we can sing that these fastidious folks would not dare to hear! And there is many an amusement which we can enjoy which they, poor creatures, are obliged to deny themselves.” Ah, well, well, if they choose to be miserable, I do not know that you could do better than pity them! It would be a pity to be angry with them for not enjoying what you enjoy. Don’t, therefore, sneer! And, after all, Sir, you know very well that there is more manliness in refusing to sin than there is in sinning—there is more pluck in saying, “No, I cannot,” than there is in being led by the devil, first into one sin, and then into another! And these men of the world who have this high spirit, and are so bold and brave—what is it better than the high spirit of a lunatic who dares to put his hand in the fire? I dare not do that which would dishonor God! I am thankful to be such a coward that I dare not venture it. But you shall not say that we are cowardly. Lived there ever a more earnest Christian than Havelock? Were there ever better soldiers than his Highlanders, who learned to bow the knee before Jehovah? But, O Sirs, they could fight! They were men brave enough in the day of battle, though they could not be brave in the way in which the ungodly are. Talk to us Christians about lack of courage? Do you ever wish to see the Ironsides again in England, with old Oliver Cromwell at their head? We hate war, but still we quote these instances to show that a man can bow before God like a sneaking Presbyterian, as you call him, and yet rise up and drive the Cavaliers like chaff before the wind! It is not true that we are poor in spirit in the sense that is often attached to us. We have as much of courage of the right kind as the ungodly have. But, Sir, we can afford to bear your jest. We are afraid to be damned! We are afraid to take a leap into the dark future, with wrath upon our heads! We do tremble before the living God, though we will tremble nowhere else! We count it no dim honor to fear Him who is a consuming fire. But this is commonly the cry, “They’re a poor set! They’re a poor set of milksops.” “You have shamed the counsel of the poor.”  
But now the next point—a very common jest—is the reasons that Christians give for being Christians. You notice the text says, “the counsel of the poor,” for the Christian, when he becomes a Believer in Christ, takes counsel about it. He does not believe his Bible because his grandmother did. He does not accept the Word of God because some priest has told him it is true. He takes counsel and considers! This counsel, however, is generally sneered at, as though there were no reasonableness in it. Therefore, let me just state it.

The Christian has taken counsel with his own weakness. He says, “I cannot trust myself. I am very apt to go wrong. Therefore will I put myself into the great Father’s hands and pray Him to lead and guide me. I will not go to my business in the morning until I have asked for His protection, nor will I close the day without asking, still, that I may be under His care.” His reason is because he feels himself to be a weak and fallible creature, and he needs protection. That looks to me to be very reasonable, but to some it seems to be the theme for laughter!  
The Christian has next taken counsel with his observations. He has looked about in the world and he could not see that ungodly men derive pleasure from their sins. He hears them shouting loudly enough, sometimes, but he knows who has woe, and who has redness of the eyes— “they that tarry long at the wine,” men of drink—“they that go to seek mixed wine.” He has seen the ungodly in their quieter moments and observed how unsatisfactory all their best things are, and, upon the whole, he considers that what the world offers to its devotees is not worth his seeking! Moreover, the Christian has sometimes seen the sinner die and, having seen him die, he has discovered that there is nothing in the principles of ungodliness to give a man comfort in his dying hour. Some of us have heard language from ungodly men in their deaths that we would hardly like to repeat—the very memory of which makes our blood chill! I remember once being at the bedside of a man who alternately cursed and asked me to pray. I could not pray as I would desire. I did what I could, and then he would tell me it was no good—his sins would never be forgiven him. And then he would turn again to blasphemy! It was a dread sight. I never saw—and I have seen many ungodly people die—I never saw one die of whom I could say, “Let me die the death of this sinner and let my last end be like his.” Nor do I think such sights are ever to be seen anywhere. The Christian, therefore, having taken counsel of that, looks for something better that may be his stay in the time of trouble and be his comfort in the time of his departure out of this life. That looks to me to be good reasoning! I think it is, and yet there are some who sneer at it.  
The Christian has also taken counsel with the Bible. Believing it to be God’s Word, he feels that one word of God is worth a ton weight of human reason! He would sooner have a drachma of Revelation than have all the weight of authority that could be brought to bear upon his mind. And assuredly, if God is true, he is not incorrect in his judgment.  
Moreover, the Christian has taken counsel with his own conscience and he finds that when he walks near to God, he is most happy. He discovers that in keeping God’s commandments, there is great reward, and though he does not expect to be saved by his works, yet he finds himself most sustained when he walks most carefully and jealously before the world, and when most near to his heavenly Father. Taking such counsel as this and finding it so much to his own inward advantage, I cannot blame him that he still puts his trust where he does!  
Moreover, the Christian takes counsel with his own experience. There are some of us who are as sure that God hears our prayers as we are sure that two times two make four. It is to us not a conjecture, no, nor even a belief, but a matter of fact! We are habitually in the custom of going to God and asking for what we need and receiving it at His hands. And it is no use anybody telling us that prayer is useless. We find it constantly useful! It is of no use for people to say these are happy coincidences. They are very strange, indeed—strange coincidences when they occur again and again, and again, and God continually hears our prayers! The witness that the Christian has to the truth of his religion does not lie in the books of the learned. He is thankful for them, but his chief witness lies here—in his own heart, in his own inward experience. Now we always say that you must speak as you find. The Christian has found God faithful to him. Has found Him support him in the time of trial. Has found Him answer his prayers in the hour of distress. And this is the counsel that he has taken for himself, and he, therefore, for these reasons relies upon God! Well, sneer as some may, I think we will do with our trust in God, my Brothers and Sisters, as the natives of a certain American State are said to have done when they, instead of making a law book, agreed that the State should be governed by the Laws of God until they had time to make better—we will continue to put our trust in God until somebody shall show us something better! We will still pray and get answered! We will still bear our troubles before God and get rid of them! We will still rely upon Christ and find comfort until somebody shall bring us something better, and it won’t be just yet! And, until then, sneers and laughter shall not much affect us!  
And now, once more, the great point at which the ungodly mostly aim their scoffs is the actual faith of the Believer. He has made God to be his refuge. And what, what do they say? Why, “It’s all canting talk.” I do not particularly know what that means, but if ever Christians are accused of being cants, they can make the retort by saying that the canting is quite as much on one side as the other, for of all cants, the cant against cant is the worst cant that ever was canted! But surely if a man shall speak the truth in other things, and you know he does, it is not fair to say he does not speak the truth when he says he puts his trust in God! The man is not insincere.  
“Oh,” but they will say, “it is ridiculous—a man trusting in God.” Yes, but you do not think it ridiculous to trust in yourselves. Many of you don’t think it ridiculous to trust in some public man. Half of the world is trusting in its riches, and is there anything ridiculous in leaning upon that arm that bears the earth’s huge pillars up? If so, ridicule on! To trust weakness seems to you to make sense. I say to trust Omnipotence is infinitely superior wisdom and we will continue to trust in God, for to us it seems to be no absurdity!  
“But,” they will say, “what does your God do for you? Some of you Christian people are very poor. Some of you very sick—very much in trouble.” Mark you, our God never said we would not be, but, on the contrary, told us it would be so. What He does for us is this—in six troubles He is with us, and in the seventh He does not forsake us. He never made us a promise that we would be rich. He never made us a promise of constant help. On the contrary, it is written, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” But our God does this for us—that we look upon those troubles as being so much fire that shall purge our silver! So much of the winnowing fan that shall drive away the chaff and leave the corn clean. We glory in tribulation and rejoice in the afflictions which God has laid upon us! Still, that will always be a point of jest. But there is one remark I will make before I leave this. I should like any man who doubts the reality of faith in God to go down to Bristol, and go to Kingsdown and see the orphan houses there which Mr. George Muller has built. Now there they stand—substantial brick and mortar, and inside there are 2,500 boys and girls. They eat a good deal, need a good deal of clothing, and so on. And how comes the money? All the world knows, and no man can deny it, that it comes in answer to prayer and as the result of Mr. Muller’s faith—that, that faith has often been tried, but has never failed! What God has done for Mr. Muller, He has done for scores of us after our own way, and in our own walk! And we glorify His name! Though that stands as a palpable witness, we are not less able to say than Mr. Muller, there is a God that hears prayer, and whoever may jest at faith, we continue in it, still, and glory in it, and rejoice! Now this is what is the matter of jest for the mockers. But my time flies, so I must now speak a few words only upon—  
II. WHO ARE THE MOCKERS?  
Our text says they are fools. Well, that is my opinion, but it does not matter what my opinion may be. The point that does matter, however, is that it is God’s opinion of every man who is not a Believer or trusting in Him. In plain English, every such man is a fool! That is God’s opinion of him—God who cannot err—who is never too severe, but who speaks the literal truth—that he who is not a Believer is a fool! Let me add, it will be that man’s opinion of himself one day. If he shall ever be converted—oh, that he may!—he will think himself a fool to have been so long an unbeliever! And if not, when the truth of Scripture shall be proved, and he shall be cast into Hell, then will he see his folly and acknowledge himself to be what God said before, he was, namely, a fool. O Sir, do not run the risk! There was an observation made by a countryman that is well worth quoting, when he said to the unbeliever, “I have two strings to my bow. You have not. Now,” he said, “suppose there is no God? I am as well off as you are! But suppose there is, where are you?” So can we say, “Suppose, after all, our religion should be a delusion? It has made us very happy up till now. But as for you—suppose it should be true? Ah, where are you, then, who have despised it and have turned away from God?” May each man who does not believe in his God know how foolish he is!  
Now as I gave you the reasons for the poor man’s faith, let me give you the reasons why the unbeliever usually is an unbeliever. It is principally because he knows not God and none of us like to trust a person we don’t know. He knows nothing of the Most High, has never communed with Him, nor even seen Him in His works and, therefore, he cannot trust Him. The unbeliever will also say that he cannot trust God because he cannot see Him, as if everything that is real must, therefore, be the object of sight as if there were not forces in Nature about which no doubts can be entertained that are far beyond the ken of sight! They will also say that they cannot trust God because

 they cannot understand Him. If we could understand God, He would not be God, for it is a part of the Nature of God that He should be infinitely greater than any created mind. I have heard of a man who went into a smith’s smithy one day and he began complaining of the wet weather. “Why,” said he, “smith, you talk about Providence! There is too much wet by half. If there were any Providence, it would manage things a great deal better! There is the wheat nearly all spoilt, and the barley is going. I tell you,” he said, “there is no Providence—things don’t go right.” The smith took no notice of his observations, but after a while he walked across the smithy and took down an odd-looking tool which he used in his craft, and said to him, “Do you know what this is used for?” “No,” he said, “I don’t.” “Look at it. Look at it and find out.” He did look, and then he said he did not know. The smith put up that tool and took down another, an ugly-looking tool, and he said, “Do you know what I use this for?” “No,” said the man, “I cannot conceive what you do with that.” You can’t? Look at it, and see! Perhaps you will find out.” He looked at the thing, and then he said, “No, I really do not know what is the use you put that to.” The smith put it up, and then walked leisurely back and said, “You are a great dunce! You do not know the use of my tools, and I am only a smith! But you set up to judge of the use of God’s tools, and say what is right and what is wrong! You don’t even know about a smithy, and yet you pretend to know about the whole world.”  
It is a most unreasonable reason not to believe in God because I cannot understand Him! The reason at the bottom is this—the ungodly man does not trust God because he is God’s enemy! He knows there is a quarrel between the two. He has broken the Law of God—he has become an enemy to his Maker—and how shall a man trust his enemy? Besides, he knows that God won’t do what he would like God to do. He would like God to give him good health to go on in sin! He would like Him to make him happy in his lusts! He would like Him to let him live a sinner and die a saint! He would like him to shape the world so that man might take his sinful pleasure and live as he liked, and yet, after all, receive the wages of a righteous life! And as God won’t do that—won’t bring Himself down to the sinner’s taste—therefore, the sinner says, “I cannot trust God,” and then he turns round and laughs at the man who can, just to quiet his own conscience and keep the little sense there is within him from rebelling!  
Now I spoke of the Christian’s faith. Now let me speak of the unbeliever’s faith. It takes much more faith to be an unbeliever than to be a Believer! I am sure the philosophies of the present age which are currently set forth would require a deal more credulity than I am the master of. I can believe Scripture readily and without violence to my soul, but I could not accept the theory even of the development of our race, which is so much cried up nowadays, nor a great many other theories. They seem to me to require a far greater sweep of credulity than anything that is written in the Word of God! To the ungodly man this seems reasonable—“It is reasonable to trust a great man and to hope that he will be the maker of you. It is reasonable to trust your own reason—to believe you can steer your own course. It is reasonable to be a self-made man, self-reliant. It is reasonable to look after the main chance—it is reasonable to get all the money you can—it is reasonable to put your confidence in it (of course, it has not any wings and won’t fly away)! It is a reasonable and discreet thing to live in this world as if you were to live forever in it and never think of another world at all.”  
To a great many it seems to be philosophy to get as far away from God as ever you possibly can, and then you will get to be a wise man—that the creature is wisest when it forgets its Creator! That is the world’s creed and I can only say that if they scoff at our creed, we can fairly enough scoff at theirs! Trust in yourselves? Why, you are fools to think of such a thing! Trust in your wealth? Have you not seen rich men disappear? How about a few years ago when—we must remember it well, and remember it sorrowfully—how a panic came and down went the towers of the great—and those who seemed to be rich burst like bubbles! And oh, the joys of earth! How soon are they scattered, how speedily do they disappear! What are they, after all, but a will o’ the wisp? If it is a wise thing to live in this world and never think of dying, God grant that I may be a fool! If it is a wise thing to think all about this poor body and never about my immortal soul, may I never know such wisdom! If it is a wise thing to go into the future as a leap in the dark, believing nothing, and only by that means kept from fear, may I never know such philosophy! Truly it seems to me to be wisdom that I, a creature who certainly did not make myself, should think of my Creator! That I, a sinner, should accept that blessed way of salvation which is laid before me in the Word of God! That I, weak and unable to steer my own course, should put my hand into the great Father’s hand and say, “Lead me, guide me by Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.” This may be jested at and sneered at, but it can bear a sneer and will outlive the mocker! Now, lastly—  
III. HOW OUGHT THOSE WHO ARE MOCKED BEHAVE towards those who mock them? Well, the first thing is never yield an inch. You young men in the great firms of London. You working men that work in the factories—you are sneered at. Let them sneer! If they can sneer you out of your religion, you have not got any worth having! Remember you can be laughed into Hell, but you can never be laughed out of it! A man may by ridicule give up what religion he thought he had, but if he casts away his soul, his companions who caused his loss cannot help him in the day of his travail, anguish and bitterness before the Throne of the Most High. Why be ashamed? “They called me a saint.” I remember once a person calling me a saint in the street. All I thought was, “I wish he could prove it.” Once a man passing me in the street, said, “There is John Bunyan.” I think I felt six inches taller at the least! I was delighted to be called by such a name as that. “Oh, but they will point at you.” Cannot you bear to be pointed at? “But they will chaff you.” Chaff—let them chaff you. Can that hurt a man who is a man? If you are a spineless creature with no backbone, you may be afraid of jokes, and jeers, and jests—but if God has made you upright, stand upright and be a man! Moreover, there is one thing you should always do when you are ashamed—pray. The next verse in the Psalm is, “Oh, that God would turn the captivity of Zion.” The best refuge for a Believer in times of persecution is his secret resort to God! Let him go on his knees and say, “My Lord, I have been counted worthy to be spoken ill of for Your name’s sake. Help me to bear it. Now is my time of trial. Strengthen me to bear this reproach. Grant that it may be no heavy burden to me, but may I rather rejoice in it for Your name’s sake.” God will help you, Beloved!  
Then next to that, pray always most for those who treat you worst. Make them the constant subjects of your prayer.  
And then I would say, in your actions prove the sincerity of your prayers by extra kindness towards those who are unkind to you. Heap coals of fire upon their head. That is an expression not always explained. When the crucible is to be brought to a great heat, and the metal to be thoroughly melted, it is not enough for the coals all around it to glow. The silversmith that is desiring to melt it thoroughly will heap them so that the metal shall be all surrounded by flames. Do so, I pray you, with any of your enemies—heap kindnesses upon them! A Christian woman had often prayed for a very ungodly and unkind husband, but her prayers were not heard. However she did this—she treated him more kindly than she had ever done before. If there was any little thing that she could think of that would please his palate, if she had to deny herself, that would be on the table. She kept the house scrupulously comfortable and did all she could. And one day someone said to her, “How is it that you, with such a husband, can act so towards him?” “Well,” she said, “I hope I shall win his soul yet, but if not”—and then the tears came in her eyes— “all the happiness he will have will be in this life and so I will let him have all I can possibly give him, since he will have no happiness in the life to come.” Do that with the ungodly! Lay yourself out to oblige and serve them! Let it be known of you that the best way to get a good turnout of you is to give you a bad turn! “Oh,” says one, “it is too hard. Tread on a worm and it will turn.” And is a worm to be an example to a Christian? Christ Jesus, are You not better for an Exemplar than a poor worm that creeps into the earth? What did our Savior do but pray for His murderers? The blood they shed redeemed them who shed it! We have heard the old story of the sandalwood tree that perfumes the axe that cuts it. Do you so, O Christian! Perfume with your love the axe that wounds you! Be like the anvil that never strikes the hammer, but yet the anvil wears out many hammers by its indomitable patience. Be patient, be courteous, be kind—in a word, Christ-like! And how do you know that these very persons who hate you most, today, will not love you well, tomorrow, and come together with you to the Communion Table, and together rejoice in our blessed Savior?  
Now if I have seemed to preach too harshly tonight, it is not so in my heart. Oh, how I wish you all, everyone without exception, knew what a blessed life the Christian life is! I would not lie for God, Himself, but I speak the truth to you. I never knew what perfect peace was until I looked to Christ upon the Cross and rested my soul on Him. I have had trials, and have suffered bitter pains, but I have always found consolation when I have turned my eyes to my bleeding Savior and have given myself up again to the great Father’s hands! He is a blessed Lord. I serve a good Master. Trust Him! Give your hearts up to Him and if you have spoken against His people, or rebelled against His love, He is willing to receive you! He has no hard words to say to returning ones. Come to Him! Come and welcome! Come just now and may the Lord receive you for His mercy’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**LUKE 23:18-25; 32-34.**

Our Lord’s last days gave tragic proof of the hate and cruel mockery of His foes—yet how marvelously He endured!  
18, 19. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas! (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison). Do you not see how they refuted their own accusation? If Christ was really the leader of sedition, would they have asked that He should be put to death? Would they have preferred a murderer to Him? There can be no danger of a man leading people astray when those very people were crying, “Let Him be put to death!” It must have been a transparent fraud. Pilate must have loathed them. Mean as he was, he must have seen through their meanness.  
20-22. Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spoke again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil has He done? I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go. He thinks a great deal of his own inconsistent conclusion, and many men do. When they came to a conclusion, bad as it is, contradictory, they will stick to it. Adhesive to nothing but to wrong, like a pendulum swinging between right and wrong, was this Pilate! Yet he will stay on the swing. He is only steady in that—“I will, therefore, chastise Him and release Him.” Oh, dear Friends, it would be better for you to come to a thorough decision one way or the other—Christ, or no Christ, true religion, or no religion— but to halt between the two is a lame business that will be ruinous to you!

23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. These men were bribed. The popular feeling was with our Lord to a very large extent, but, under the influence of threats and bribes, they found a mob to cry, “Crucify Him!” You know the old saying, Vox populi vox Dei.” There is no truth in it. The voice of the people is not the voice of God, for they said, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. Again attempting to evade the responsibility by saying that they should be both accusers and judges.

25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. Sad scene. May our hearts be broken and made tender, and sanctified by meditation upon it. Let us turn now to the later events.

32, 33. And there were also two other malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary. The margin reads, “or the place of a Skull,” when they were come to the place which is called a Skull.

33. There they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Come here, Soul! You who read this Chapter, come to this place of a Skull! It is the first resting place of every weary soul. There is no rest for the soles of your feet till first you come to Calvary, and see your Savior die.

34. Then said Jesus. As they crucified Him.  
34. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
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CHRIST’S PRAYER AND PLEA  
NO. 3280

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1866.

**“Preserve Me, O God: for in You do I put My trust.” Psalm 16:1.**

I BELIEVE that we have in this verse a prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some portions of this Psalm cannot apply to anyone but the Savior. And we have the examples of Peter and Paul to warrant us in saying that in this Psalm, David spoke of Jesus Christ. There is no apparent division in the Psalm, so that as one part of it refers most distinctly to Christ, we are justified in concluding that the whole of it refers to Him and belongs to Him! But we know that whatever belongs to Christ belongs, also, to all His people because of their vital union with Him, so we shall treat the text, first, as our Savior’s own prayer. And then, secondly, we shall regard it also as the prayer of the followers of the Lamb.

I. So, first, we will take these words as OUR SAVIOR’S OWN PRAYER. “Preserve Me, O God: for in You do I put My trust.” And we will divide the text at once into two parts—the prayer itself—“Preserve Me, O God.” And the argument or plea—“for in You do I put My trust.”

In considering these words as Christ’s prayer, does it not immediately strike you as a very singular thing that Christ should pray at all? It is most certain that He was “very God of very God,” that, “Word,” who was in the beginning with God, and who was Himself, God, the great Creator “without whom was not anything made that was made.” But, without in any degree taking away His Glory and dignity as God, we must never forget that He was just as truly Man, one of the great family of mankind and, “as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, Himself, likewise took part of the same.” Though He remained sinless, He “was in all points tempted like as we are.” Being, therefore, Man, and intending to make Himself not only the atoning Sacrifice for His people, but also a perfect example that they might imitate, it became necessary that He should pray. What would a Christian be without prayer, and how could a Christ who never prayed be an example to a Christian? Yet notwithstanding the fact that it was necessary, it was marvelously condescending on our Savior’s part! The Son of God, with strong crying and tears making known His requests unto His Father, is one of the greatest marvels in all the ages! What a wondrous stoop it was that Jesus, the unsinning Son of God, the thrice-holy One, the Anointed, the Christ for whom prayer is to be made continually, should Himself have prayed to His Father!

Yet, while there is much condescension in this fact, there is also much comfort in it. When I kneel in prayer, it is a great consolation to me to know that where I bow before the Lord, there is the print of my Savior’s knees. When my cry goes up to Heaven, it goes along the road which Chris’s cry once traveled. He cleared away all impediments so that now my prayer may follow in the track of His. Be comforted, Christian, if you have to pray in dark and stormy nights, with the thought that your Master did the same—

*“Cold mountains and the midnight air  
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer!  
The decent His temptation knew,  
His conflict and His victory too.”*

If you have to pray in sore agony of spirit fearing that God has forsaken you, remember that Christ has gone further even than that into the depths of anguish in prayer, for He cried in Gethsemane, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

In addition to being condescending and comforting, this fact of our Savior praying shows the intimate communion there is between Christ and all the members of His mystical body. It is not only we who have to pray, but He who is our Head bowed in august Majesty before the Throne of Grace. Throughout the narratives of the four Evangelists, one is struck with the many times that mention is made of Christ’s prayers. At His Baptism, it was while He was praying that “the Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon Him, and a Voice came from Heaven which said, You are My Beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” On another occasion, we read that, “as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” On the Mount of Transfiguration, “as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering.” Jesus was emphatically “a Man of prayer.” After a long day of teaching the people and healing the sick, instead of seeking repose, He would spend the whole night in prayer to God or, at another time, rising up a great while before day, He would depart into a solitary place and there pray for the needed strength for the new day’s duties.

Having thus noticed the fact of Christ’s praying, I want now to call your attention to the particular prayer in our text. I ask you first to observe that it is addressed to God in a peculiar aspect. You do not see this in our translation, but in the Hebrew it is, “Preserve me, O El.” That is one of the names of God and the same name that the Savior used when He cried, “Eloi, Eloi, lame Sabachthani?” “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Many Christians seem to have only one name for God, but the Hebrew saints had many titles for the one living and true God! Worldlings generally talk of, “The Almighty,” as though His only characteristic was the Omnipotent might which is displayed in great storms on the sea or terrible calamities on the land. But our Savior, whose knowledge of God was perfect, here selects a name of God peculiarly suitable to the condition in which He was when He offered this prayer, for according to most commentators, the word, “El,” means, “The strong One.” So it is weakness crying to the Strong for strength—“Preserve Me, O You who are so strong, so mighty, that You uphold all things by the word of Your power!” Others say that “El” means “The Ever-Present One.” This is a delightful name for God, and one that is most appropriate for a Believer to use when he is in peril on land or sea, in the den of lions or in the burning fiery furnace—“O You ever-present One, preserve me!” Jehovah is indeed “a very present help in trouble.” I wish we could acquire a more intimate knowledge of the Divine Character so that in calling upon Him in prayer, we could seek the aid of that special attribute which we need to have exercised on our behalf. What a blessed title is that of Shaddai which Bunyan uses in His

 Holy War—El Shaddai, God All-Sufficient or, as some render it, “The Many-Breasted God,” the God with a great abundance of heart, full of mercy and Grace, and supplying the needs of all His children out of His own fullness! Then take the other names or titles of God—Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah-Shammah, Jehovah-Shalom, JehovahTsidkenu—and any others that you can find, and think how much better we could pray if, instead of always saying, “O Lord!” or, “O God!” we appealed to Him under some title which indicates the attribute which we desired to be exerted on our behalf!

Next notice that this is a prayer produced by an evident sense of weakness. The Suppliant feels that He cannot preserve Himself. We believe that the Human Nature of Christ was altogether free from any tendency to sin and that it never did sin in any sense whatever. But still, the Savior here appears not to rely upon the natural purity of His Nature but He turns away from that which might seem to us to be a good subject for reliance in order to show that He would have nothing to do with selfrighteousness, just as He wishes us to have nothing to do with it. The perfect Savior prays, “Preserve Me, O God.” So, Beloved, let us also pray this prayer for ourselves. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was without any tendency to sin, put Himself under the shadow of the almighty wings—then shall I wickedly and presumptuously dare to go into danger trusting to my own integrity and relying upon my own strength of will? God forbid that you or I should ever act thus. Jesus was only weak because He had assumed our Nature, yet in His weakness there was no tendency to sin! But our weakness is linked with a continual liability to evil—so, if Jesus prayed, “Preserve me, O God,” with what earnestness should each one of us cry unto the Lord, “Hold You me up, and I shall be safe”!

I remark, next, that this prayer on the lips of Christ, appeals for a promised blessing. “What?” Someone says, “is there anywhere in God’s Word a promise that Christ shall be preserved?” Oh, yes! Turn to the prophecy of Isaiah, the 49th Chapter, and the seventh and following verses, and there read, “Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nations abhor, to a Servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose You. Thus says the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard You, and in a day of salvation have I helped You: and I will preserve You, and give You for a Covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.” When the Savior prayed this prayer, He could remind His Father of the promise given through Isaiah, and say to Him, “You have said, ‘I will preserve You.’ Do as You have said, O My Father!”

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us learn from our Savior’s example to plead the promises of God when we go to Him in prayer! Praying without a promise is like going to war without a weapon! God is so gracious that He may yield to our entreaties even when He has not given a definite promise concerning what we are asking at His hands. But going to Him with one of His own promises is like going to a bank with a check—He must honor His own promise! We speak reverently, yet very confidently upon this point. To be consistent with His own Character, He must fulfill His own Word which He has spoken! So, when you approach the Throne of Grace, search out the promise that applies to your case and plead it with your heavenly Father, and then expect that He will do as He has said.

Observe, next, that this prayer of Christ obtained an abundant answer. You recollect the many preservations which He experienced—how He was preserved while yet a Child, from the envy and malice of Herod and how, again and again He was delivered from those who sought His life. He was also preserved many times from falling into the snares set for Him by scribes and Pharisees and others who sought to entrap Him in His talk. How wisely He answered the lawyer who came to Him tempting Him, and those who sought to catch Him over the matter of paying tribute to Caesar! He was never taken as a bird ensnared by the fowler—He was always preserved in every emergency. He was like a physician in a hospital full of lepers, yet He was always preserved from the disease!

Then, to close this part of the subject, notice that this prayer most deeply concerns the whole company of Believers in Christ, for it strikes me that when our Savior prayed to His Father, “Preserve Me,” He was thinking of the whole of His mystical body and pleading for all who were vitally united to Him! You remember how, in His great intercessory supplication, He pleaded for His disciples, “Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are.” This is the same prayer as, “Preserve Me,” if we understand the “Me” to include all who are one with Christ. We also are included in that supplication, for He further said, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.” Yes, dear Friend, though you may seem to yourself to be the meanest of the Lord’s people, even though you are in your own apprehension but as His feet that glow in the furnace of affliction—even you are among those whom Christ entreated His Father to keep—and you may rest assured that He will certainly do so! Christ will never lose one of the members of His mystical body! If He could do so, His body would be imperfect and incomplete, but that it never can be! Paul tells us that Christ’s Church “is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all-in-all” so that if He were left without His fullness, He would have suffered an irreparable loss. That can never be the case, so this prayer will be answered concerning the whole body of Believers in Jesus, who shall be presented “faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy.” Blessed be His holy name!

Let us now turn to the plea which Christ urged in support of His prayer: “Preserve Me, O God: for in You do I put My trust.” Did Christ put His trust in His Father? We surely need to ask the question and we know at once what the answer must be. In the matter of faith, as in everything else, He is a perfect example to His people—and we cannot imagine a Christian without faith! Faith is the very life of a true Believer in Jesus! Indeed, without faith he is not a Believer, so Christ was his model in this respect as well as in every other.

The words, “in You do I put My trust,” may be translated, “in You do I shelter.” There is in them an allusion to running under something for shelter. In fact, the best figure I can use to give you the meaning of this sentence is that of the chicks running under the wings of the hen for shelter. Just so do we hide ourselves under the overshadowing wings of the Eternal. As a Man, Christ used this plea with God, that He was sheltering from all evil under the Divine Wings of power, and wisdom, and goodness, and truth. This is an accurate interpretation of the passage, and there are many instances recorded in Scripture in which Christ really did this. Take, for instance that remarkable declaration in Psalm 22:9—“You did make Me hope when I was upon My mother’s breasts,” as though very early in life, probably far earlier than any of us were brought to know the Lord, Jesus Christ was exercising hope in the Most High. Then again, in the 50th Chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, we have these words, which must refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked out the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” That verse is immediately followed by this one, “For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” These words were peculiarly appropriate from the lips of Christ, yet each one of His followers may also say, “The Lord God will help me.”

Even in His last agonies Christ uttered words which plainly prove that He had put His trust in God, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” There is more faith in that final commendation of His soul to His Father than some of you might imagine, for it takes great faith to be able to speak thus in the circumstance in which Christ was then placed. Not only was He suffering the terrible pangs that were inseparable from death by crucifixion, but He had to bear the still greater grief that was His portion when His Father’s face was withdrawn from Him because He was in the place of sinners and, therefore, had to endure the separation from God which was their due. Job said, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him”—and this was what Jesus actually did! What wondrous faith it was that trusted in God even when He said, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts!” Yet even then Jesus turned to His Father and said, “Father into Your hands I commend My spirit. I commit Myself into the hand that wields the sword of Infallible Justice. Into the hand that has crushed Me and broken Me in pieces.” Talk of faith! Did you ever hear of such sublime confidence as that having been displayed by anyone, else? When a martyr has to lay down his life for the Truth of God, his faith is sustained by the comforting Presence of God—he believes in the God who is smiling upon him even while he is in the midst of the fire. But Christ on the Cross trusted in the God who had forsaken Him! O Beloved, imitate this faith as far as it is possible in your case! What a glorious height of confidence Jesus reached! Oh, that we may have Grace to follow where He has so blessedly led the way!

I want you carefully to notice the argument that is contained in Christ’s plea—“Preserve Me, O God: for in You do I put My trust.” Christ, as God, had felt the power of that plea, so He knew that His Father would also feel the power of it. You remember that Jesus said to the woman of Canaan, “O woman, great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will.” Her faith prevailed with Him and He felt that His faith would prevail with His Father so that when He said, “In You do I put My trust,” He knew that He would obtain the preservation for which He pleaded. Jesus never forgot that the rule of the Kingdom is, “According to your faith be it done unto you.” He knew that we must “ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” So Jesus came to His Father with this plea, “I do trust in You, I have absolute confidence in You, therefore I pray You to preserve Me.” My dear Brother or Sister in Christ, can you say the same? Can you look up to God and say, “In You do I put my trust”? If so, you may use it as Christ used it in pleading with His Father. Perhaps you have gazed upon a weapon that has been wielded by some great warrior. If you had that weapon in your hand and were going forth to fight, you would feel, “I must not be a coward while I am grasping a brave man’s sword, but I must play the man with it as he did.” Well, you have in your grasp the very weapon which Christ used when He gained the victory! You can go before God with the very same argument that Christ used with His Father and He will hear your plea even as He heard Christ’s! “Preserve Me, O God: for in You do I put my trust.”

II. I had intended, in the second place, to speak of my text as THE PRAYER OF CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS. But, instead of preaching upon it as I would have done had time permitted, I will merely give you a few notes upon it, and then you can preach the second sermon yourselves by practicing it as you go your several ways to your homes.

First, what does this prayer mean to a Believer? It means that you put yourself and all belonging to you under Divine protection. Before you close your eyes, pray this prayer—“‘Preserve me, O God!’ Preserve my body, my family, my house from fire, from famine, from hurt or harm of every kind.” Specially present the prayer in a spiritual sense. Preserve me from the world. Let me not be carried away with its excitements. Do not allow me to bow before its blandishments, nor to fear its frowns. Preserve me from the devil. Let him not tempt me above what I am able to bear. Preserve me from myself—keep me from growing envious, selfish, highminded, proud, slothful. Preserve me from those evils into which I see others run and preserve me from those evils into which I am myself most apt to run! Keep me from evils known and from evils unknown. ‘Cleanse You me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins—let them not have dominion over me.’”

This is a prayer which is more comprehensive in the original than it is in our version. It may be translated, “Save me,” and this is a prayer that is suitable for many here. Those of you who have never prayed before can begin with this prayer, “Save me, O Strong One! It will indeed need a strong One to save me, for I am so far gone that nothing but Omnipotence can save me.” It may also be rendered, “Keep me,” or, “Guard me.” It is the word which we would use in speaking of the bodyguard of a king or of shepherds protecting their flocks. It is a prayer which you may keep on using from the time you begin to know the Lord until you get to Heaven—and then you will only need to alter Jude’s Doxology very slightly, and say, “Unto Him who has kept us from falling, and presented us faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be Glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Next, when is this prayer suitable? Well, it is suitable at this moment! You do not know what dangers you will meet with before you go to your bed tonight. Take special care when you come to what you consider the safe parts of the road, for you will probably be most in danger when you think you are in no danger at all! It is often a greater peril not to be tempted than to be tempted. This prayer is suitable to some of you who are going into new situation where you will have new responsibilities, new duties and probably new trials and difficulties. In the old days of superstition, people were foolish enough to wear charms of various kinds to guard them from evil—but such a prayer as this is better than all their charms! If your pathway should lie through the Enchanted Fields or even through the Valley of Death-Shade, you need not be afraid, but may march boldly on with this prayer on your lips, “Preserve me, O God: for in You do I put my trust.”

Then, in what spirit ought this prayer to be offered? It should be offered in a spirit of deep humility. Do not pray, “Preserve me, O God,” as though you felt that you were a very precious person. It is true that God regards you as one of His jewels if you are a Believer in Jesus, but you are not to regard yourself as a jewel. Think of yourself as a brand plucked from the burning and then you will pray with due humility. Pray as a poor feeble creature who must be destroyed unless God shall preserve you! Pray as if you were a sheep that had been shorn and that needed to have the wind tempered to it. Pray as a drowning man might pray, “Preserve me, O God.” Pray as sinking Peter prayed, “Lord, save me,” for so you shall be preserved even as he was!

With what motive ought you to pray this prayer? Pray it especially out of hatred to sin. Whenever you think of sin, the best thing you can do is to pray, “Preserve me, O God.” Whenever you hear or read of others doing wrong, do not begin to plume yourself upon your own excellence, but cry at once, “Preserve me, O God, or it may be that I shall sin even as those others have done.” If this night you are a Christian, the praise for this is not to be given to yourself, but to the Lord who has made you to differ from others! You are only what His Grace has made you, so show how highly you value that Grace by asking for more and more of it!

This must suffice concerning the prayer of the text, for I must, in closing, remind you of the plea and ask if each one here is able to use it— “Preserve me, O God: for in You do I put My trust.” Can you, my Friend, urge this plea with God tonight? Perhaps you say that you could do so years ago. Then why not put your trust in the Lord now? It is present faith that you need in your present perils and you cannot pray acceptably without faith, “for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” You know what it is to trust a friend and, perhaps, to be deceived—but do you know what it is to trust in God and not be deceived? Are you trusting for salvation only to Christ? Do you sing—

*“You, O Christ, are all I need,*

*More than all in You I find”?*  
Is this your plea continually? Are you always trusting in God—in the dark as well as in the light? Many a man thinks he is strong until he begins to put forth his strength—and then he finds that it is utter weakness. There are many who fancy they are full of faith until they try to exercise it, and then they realize how little they have. They are fine soldiers when there is no fighting, and splendid sailors as long as they are on dry land—but such faith as that is of little service when some great emergency arises. The faith we need is that firm confidence which sings—

*“His love in time past forbids me to think He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink!  
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.”*

If that is the kind of faith you have, you need not fear to pray, “Preserve me, O God,” for He will be as a wall of fire round about you to guard you from all evil! And though you are now in the midst of those who would drag you down to their level if they could, or turn you aside from the paths of righteousness—the Lord, in whom you have put your trust, will never leave you, nor forsake you, but will bring you in His own good time to that blessed place of which He has told you in His Word! And there—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,*

*With God eternally shut in”* —  
you shall be preserved from all evil forever, and faith shall be blessedly exchanged for sight! God grant that everyone of us may be able to pray the prayer of our text, and to use the plea, “Preserve me, O God: for in You have I put my trust,” for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 17.**

Can there be found in all the records of mankind, in all the documents that have ever been preserved, anything that can match this record of our Savior’s great intercessory prayer? He seems to pray here as if He already stood within the veil—not pleading in agony as He did in the Garden of Gethsemane, but speaking with that authority with which He is clothed now that His work on earth is done! There is as much of the Divine as of the Human in this prayer, and it is remarkable that in it our Lord does not make any confession of sin on account of His people. He does not come before God, as it were, in forma pauperis, with many pleas, but the burden of His prayer is that He may be glorified, and that His Father may be glorified in Him. The words of the prayer are among the most simple that could have been selected, but oh, the depths that lie hidden beneath them! I do not think that this side of Heaven any of us can know to the fullest the meaning of this wondrous Chapter. May the Holy Spirit graciously grant us a glimpse of the glorious Truths of God that are revealed here!

Verse 1. These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to Heaven— Not His hands, as we do who are poor suppliants, but His eyes, indicating where His thoughts went. He “lifted up His eyes to Heaven”—

1. And said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. No mere man would have dared to pray such a prayer as this! Jesus asks that He may be glorified by His Father that He also may glorify His Father. He put the two things together—“Father, glorify Your Son that Your Son may also glorify You.” This is not a plea that is fit for merely human lips. It is Jesus, the Son of God, who, in receiving Glory from His Father, is also able to return it to His Father!

2, 3. As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You

have sent. [See Sermon #2396, Volume 41—ETERNAL LIFE!—Read/download the entire sermon,

free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See how He puts Himself side by side with God as no mere man might dare to do? Only He who was equal with the Father could venture to plead thus, claiming power over all flesh— that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. Here we learn that it is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent!

4. I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. “My teaching is all done, My ministry is finished and though there are still some arrears of suffering, yet those shall be fully discharged in due time. ‘I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.’”

5. And now, O Father, glorify You, Me, with Your own Self with the Glory which I had with You before the world was. You must try and think of who it is that is thus pleading, for so you will get at least some faint idea of the intercession of our great High Priest in Heaven, for after this fashion He still prays to His Father before the eternal Throne of God.

6. I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave Me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them to Me; and they have kept Your word. “They were Yours, my Father, under Your direct government, but You have transferred them to My mediatorial sovereignty, and You have given them up to be Mine in a very special sense, beyond all the rest of mankind and this is one of their distinguishing characteristics, that they have kept Your word.’”

7, 8. Now they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. For I have given unto them the words which You gave Me; and they have received them—Is it so with You, dear Friend? Have You received Christ’s words—the very words which the Father gave to Him, and which He has in His turn given to you? O Soul, You are indeed happy if this is the case with you! “I have given unto them the words which You gave Me; and they have received them”—

8, 9. And have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world”—  
[See Sermon #2331, Volume 39—CHRIST’S PASTORAL PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That is, not in the same

special sense as He prays for His people, not with that personal pleading which He offers on behalf of His own chosen ones—“I pray not for the world”—

9. But for them which You have given Me; for they are Yours. In the 6th verse, Jesus had said to His Father, “Yours they were.” And here, in this 9th verse, He says, “They are Yours.” They still belonged to the Father, the transference of them mediatorially to the Son having made no change in the Father’s relation to them!

10. And all Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. I can understand a man saying to God, “All mine are Yours.” But no man, unless he is something more than man, dares to say to God, “Yours are mine.” But Jesus Christ, who is both God and Man, gives all that He has to God, and all that God has belongs to Him, so that He can truly say, “All Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them.”

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are. It has been well said that this expression, “My Father,” is a binding up of the Old and New Testaments in one. The Old Testament reveals the holiness of God, but it is the New Testament that is peculiarly the Revelation of God as the Father. We put the two together, as Jesus does, and thus He speaks, “Holy Father, make My people one, and keep them one.” Let us close up our ranks, Brothers and Sisters. Let us love each other more and as Christ has prayed that we may be one, let us constantly seek to manifest our oneness among the sons of men!

12-17 . While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name: those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to You; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your Truth. [See Sermon #1890, Volume 32—OUR

LORD’S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE’S SANCTIFICATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] How wondrously our Savior’s prayer advances! He asks for His people’s unity. He asks for their joy. He asks for their preservation. And now He asks for their purification, their sanctification—“Sanctify them through Your Truth.”

17-20 . Your word is Truth. As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the Truth. Neither pray I for these alone. “For these who are already converted—I pray also for those who are not yet called by Grace.”

20-22 . But for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me. And the Glory which You gave Me I have given them—Who among us knows the full meaning of that wondrous declaration? “The Glory which You gave Me I have given them”—

22, 23. That they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them, and You have loved Me. [See

Sermon #1472, Volume 25—THE GLORY, UNITY AND TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a glorious assur  
ance that is! It amazes us to know that the Father has loved us even as He loved His Son!

24-26 . Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O Righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. And I have declared unto them Your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith You have loved Me may be in

them and I in them. [See Sermons #1378, Volume 23—THE RIGHTEOUS FATHER KNOWN AND LOVED and #1667, Volume 28—“LOVE AND I”—A MYSTERY—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

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LIFE, AND THE PATH TO IT  
NO. 2813

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JANUARY 11, 1903,

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 7, 1877.

**“You will show me the path of life: in Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11.**

I THINK YOU must have noticed, while I was reading the Psalm from which my text is taken, that I expounded it partly concerning David and partly concerning David’s Lord, Jesus, the Messiah. It often happens, in the Psalms, that you can scarcely tell whether it is David, or Jesus, or both of them to whom the writer is referring. Oftentimes you lose sight of David, altogether, and are quite certain that he is not there, while, at other times, the words seem equally suitable either to David, the type, or to Jesus the antitype. I think that this fact is very instructive to us. It looks as if the Holy Spirit intended, even in those ancient times, to let God’s saints know that there is a mysterious union between Christ and His people, so that almost all things which may be said concerning Him may be said, also, concerning those who are in Him. They are so completely one, they are so intimately united in bonds of mystic, vital, eternal union, that it would not be possible to always keep the sayings concerning them apart. As two bank-divided streams flow side by side for a while and, at last, melt into one river—and you can scarcely say which river it is when they are joined in one—so Christ and His Church are united in one mighty stream and, therefore, what is said of the one may, at least in some sense, be said of the other. O Christian, treasure up this precious thought! You are one with Jesus and, consequently, much that is said concerning Him may also be said concerning you!

In this 16th Psalm we are sure that there is a clear reference to the Savior because to no one but to Him could these words be absolutely applied, “You will not leave my soul in the abode of the dead; neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” All other bodies see corruption, but His holy body did not. His birth was not according to carnal generation. His Human Nature was perfect, untainted by evil. Such a body belongs to no one else, so these words are, in the fullest sense, only applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we feel no hesitation, as Believers, in taking them to ourselves, at least to a very large extent, remembering that our Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Because I live, you shall live also.” And that He prayed, “Father, I will that they also, whom you have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.” This proves that we, also, shall tread the path of life which He has trod—that the Presence of His Father, in which He is glorified, is that same Presence which will make our Heaven! That the right hand of God, at which He sits, is the place to which He will also exalt

 us and that the pleasures forevermore, in which He Himself rejoices, are the very pleasures with which He will indulge our souls, for it is His purpose that His joy shall abide in us that our joy may be full.

This brings us to our text, in which there are two things of which I am going to speak to you. First, an assurance as to the untrodden path. And, secondly, an assurance as to the life to which that path leads.

I. First, then, we have here AN ASSURANCE AS TO THE UNTRODDEN PATH—“You will show me the path of life.”  
If you take these words as referring to Christ, they must apply to Him as Man. As a Man, He was to die. His soul was to be, for a little while, separated from His body, yet, even as a Man, He spoke with perfect confidence to His Father. You remember that His dying words were, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” “And having said this, He gave up the ghost.” He spoke with the full assurance that His Father would show Him “the path of life.” Where did the spirit of Christ go when it left His body? In what mysterious way it entered at once into Paradise, it is not for us even to guess. There have been a great many questions raised in the Christian Church, in all ages, concerning this matter. Some, taking the words literally, have said that Christ descended into Hell and they have even ventured to affirm that He preached to the dead and delivered the spirits that were in that awful prison. All that kind of talk seems to me very like that which come from dreamland! We know, from our Savior’s own declaration, that He was in Paradise the very day that He died, for He said to the penitent thief, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” But whatever pathway the human soul of Jesus took, it was not unguided—His Father showed to Him, “the path of life.”  
His sacred body had to lie three days in the tomb, but it was not corrupted in the least degree. Dr. Watts very sweetly sings—  
*“There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,  
And left a long perfume.”*  
That body, lying in Joseph’s sepulcher, wrapped in linen and sweet spices through the love and kindness of Christ’s disciples, must rise again— and once more the Father showed to His Son, “the path of life.” How it came to pass that the Spirit of God worked upon that precious body and raised Jesus from the dead, we cannot tell, for the work of the Spirit is secret and mysterious. But those blessed eyes of Jesus opened again and the pulses of His human heart began to beat once more—and He stood upon those dear feet that had been pierced by the nails and He unwound the napkin from His head with those very hands that had been fastened to the Cross, but which would never again suffer pain, for He had risen from the dead no more to die! As the first-born from the dead, His Father had showed to Him, “the path of life.”  
Then, after tarrying here a little longer—that His re-united soul and body might dwell, for 40 days or so, in the midst of His disciples, that they might be quite sure that it was His own body that had risen from the dead and His own soul that communed with them—He led them out to Olivet and once again His Father showed Him “the path of life.”— *“Then He arose ascending high,  
And showed our feet the way.”*  
His disciples beheld Him ascend while He was blessing them. And they gazed upon Him as He ascended, until a cloud hid Him from their astonished gaze. And we are expressly told that at the appointed time He shall come again in like manner as they saw Him go up into Heaven. Truly, in Him was fulfilled the Psalmist’s confident declaration, “You will show me the path of life.” We can easily imagine that as He passed through that cloud, the angels came to meet Him—squadrons of bright beings from the courts of Heaven hurried down to do Him homage and to escort Him back to the Glory which He had with the Father before He came to sojourn here below! It seems to me to be not merely poetry, but a matter of fact that they did then sing, “Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.” And He did enter the gates and went straight to the Throne of God which His Father had appointed as the grand reward of His victory— and there He sits—and will continue to sit until His foes are made His footstool!  
Thus you see that our text is true concerning our Lord Jesus Christ— and it is also true concerning all who are in Christ—and each of us who is trusting in Him may, with the hand of faith, grasp this Divine assurance, “You will show me the path of life.” I feel quite enamored of this portion of my text and would be perfectly content if I had only to preach from it. You, O my God, You who know everything, You will show me the path of life! There is no other guide like You, my God. I trust no priest, no man like myself, nor even an angel. You, who did lead Your people through the wilderness by the cloudy, fiery pillar, You will show me the path of life!  
And You will show it to me—unworthy as I am—just as if I were the only traveler upon life’s rough way. You will devote Your wisdom and Your strength to me, taking me by the hand and leading me, as a father leads his child. You will be gentle and patient with me and when I am so blind that I cannot see my way, You will go before me and say to me, “This is the way; walk you in it.”  
And, my Lord, as there is only one “path of life,” you will show me the path. It is but a narrow track and it runs clean contrary to the broad way that leads to destruction. You will show me the path, O Lord, and guide my feet into it! When I know not which way to turn, to the right or to the left, You will show me the path—I know that You will!  
And it will be the path of life that You will show me. I shall not live in a kind of living death, as others do, but I shall be really quickened by Your Holy Spirit. In that path, I shall find life and, by that path, I shall receive yet more of life and, at last, I shall attain to the perfection of life and see You in the Glory-Life above, far more fully than I can ever see You in the Grace-Life below.  
Thus you see that every word is precious and full of meaning, but just for a moment think of the complete sentence, “You will show me the path of life.” That is true, my Brothers and Sisters, about the whole of your life while you are here. You will not be misled if you trust in God! Your own supposed wisdom will surely lead you astray if you follow its guidance, but trust in the Lord and you shall be rightly guided in all times of trouble and difficulty. And when you come to die. When you are, indeed, entering upon a new and untrodden path, the Lord will still show you the path of life. He will teach you the way to be confident even when the dewdrops of death lie cold and clammy upon your brow. He will show you the way to meet your last great adversary without a fear and without even a tremor—and He will teach you how to find life in death and how to triumph in the last dread conflict! Think of what will happen when the parting moment comes and the spirit is launched upon a sea it never traversed before. It leaves the familiar precincts of the house of clay and finds itself stripped and unclothed, and it cries, “Oh, where shall I go? In that unknown land without a track, where shall I go?”  
You need not ask that question, Brother, Sister, or, if you do, you can give the answer, “You will show me the path of life.” Up to the realms where angels dwell, borne up on eagle wings, you shall ascend to Heaven! God Himself will stoop from Heaven to be your Guide and He will take you to dwell, as a pure spirit, at His right hand. The ages will speed on and, in due time, there will ring out the mighty blast of the Resurrection trumpet! Where will my body be then? These limbs, all moldered back to dust. These eyes vanished from human kin. The whole mortal fabric dissolved and returned to mother earth. Ah, my Lord! But I shall not have to raise myself from the grave, I could not work that miracle of resurrection—my bones have not to come together to their fellow bones by their own power. God will teach each atom to come to its fellow and each individual life will be identified the same as before, yet wondrously changed! I know not how it will be, but God knows, and He will show us, “the path of life,” the way to be conformed to the image of Christ, the way to attain to the perfection of life everlasting! This is the path that no eagle’s eyes have ever seen and no lion’s whelp has ever trod, yet, in blissful confidence I may die and rise again, for the Lord will show me, “the path of life.”  
Is not this a blessed Truth of God? Then drink it in and if you have any fears of death, let them all fly away as you meditate upon this comforting assurance which your Lord, Himself, has so graciously revealed to you!  
II. Now, secondly, we have, in our text, AN ASSURANCE AS TO THE LIFE TO WHICH THAT UNTRODDEN PATH LEADS—“In Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”  
Concerning that life, we are told, first, the place where it is to be spent. Many people ask, “Where is Heaven?” Others enquire, “Is there such a place at all?” Assuredly, there is such a place, but where it is, I cannot tell. Some have imagined that, possibly, it is in the central star of our solar system, Alcyone in the constellation of the Pleiades. We may dismiss the conjecture as soon as we have heard it and not be any the better for having heard it! What we do know, however, about Heaven, is that it is in the Presence of God. Do you know, Beloved, what the “Presence of God” means? Yes, in a feeble sense, you have realized it when, in His House and, especially at His Table, He has unveiled His face. When the King has been with us—when we have consciously felt that we were in the royal Presence, we have sung—  
*“No beams of cedar, or of fir,  
Can with His earthly courts compare.”*  
But what must it be to be in His Presence when relieved from the burden of this flesh for a while, or when it is refined and purified—when the dimness that is now in our eyes shall all be gone and the unclouded Glory of God shall shine upon us? A poor prisoner who has seen a little gleam of light down in his dismal dungeon, knows something about the sun, but what a difference there must be between his knowledge of the great orb of day and that which is possessed by the angel whom Milton represents as living in the sun! A contrast as great as this is going to happen to you, dear Friends, in passing from this world—with now and then a glint of Heaven’s sunlight—to dwelling with God forever in the Glory that excels anything that we have ever imagined here! I cannot tell you what it will be—and neither will you know it until you get there and learn what it is by actually dwelling in His Presence!

We are also told that Heaven is to be enjoyed at the right hand of God. The right hand, even on earth, is the place of favor, the place of honor and the place of security. The right-hand place is always regarded as the post of dignity and nobility in all courts. God is not going to give His people any left-handed Heaven—they are to dwell at His right hand forevermore! It is the place that Jesus Himself has and that He has promised to His victorious followers—“To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne.” The very choicest place in Heaven shall be yours, Beloved! God will not put you away somewhere behind the doors of His royal palace, but He will guide you to the place of honor at His own right hand where “there are pleasures forevermore.”  
Those last words that I quoted tell us something about the enjoyment of Heaven—the kind of life which the glorified spend at the right hand of God above. The life of Heaven is a life of joy and the crowning joy is that the pleasures, there, are “pleasures forevermore.” In this world a few drops of joy fall here and there and there are, sometimes, showers of blessing. But up there it is joy, joy, joy forever—“pleasures forevermore.” Let these blessed joy bells ring in your ears and in your heart just now— and if you know even a little of what they mean, you may anticipate that they will mean a thousand times as much on the other side of the Jordan of death—in the heavenly land of Canaan!  
Our text tells us of the quantity, as well as the quality of the joy of Heaven. It is to be “fullness of joy.” That is what we never reach here, for, when we are most joyous, there is always room for more joy, or there is something lacking to the completeness of our joy. But, in God’s Presence, is “fullness of joy.” It may well be described as the fullness of joy because it is infinite. He who drinks from a cup can soon drain it dry, but he who lies down on the brink of a great river may drink as long as he likes and he will never empty it, for he has come to its fullness.  
“Fullness of joy” means that you shall not only have as much joy as you can hold, but that it shall keep on running and your capacity shall be enlarged, but you shall still be filled with joy—and so it shall continue forever! If you are the least among the saints in Heaven, you shall have fullness of joy. And if you are the greatest, you shall still be full of joy. You shall be so full of joy that you could not be more happy! You shall have reached the very summit of eternal happiness! Yes, even there it shall not enter into your heart to conceive anything that shall be above the joy which God has revealed to them that love Him! What indescribable bliss must this fullness of joy be! You know that when you are full of anything, you cannot put anything else in—so, where there is fullness of joy at God’s right hand, no sorrow will ever be able to enter. There are— *“No groans to mingle with the songs  
Which warble from immortal tongues.”*  
There will not be room for a single doubt there, or for a fear—no, not even for one sad memory! There will not be room for a wish—we shall be so full of joy that we shall have all that we could desire! Every faculty of our body glorified and every power of our soul perfected, the life everlasting shall rush through us and we shall be filled with it, sunk in it, as in an ocean of infinite satisfaction and eternal content! I find that words are but poor things to describe such a theme as this—I wish that I could more worthily speak of this “fullness of joy” in God’s Presence.  
Notice next, the variety of this joy, for I take it that while the term,, “fullness of joy,” is given to show that it is one, yet the expression, “pleasures forevermore,” may teach us that the bliss is varied. I cannot give to you, Beloved, a complete list of the joys of Heaven, but I will briefly mention a few of them.  
The glorified before the Throne of God are forever singing about salvation, praising Him who washed them from their sins in His own blood. A sense of perfected salvation is a part of the bliss of Heaven. They are washed whiter than snow and they know it. They are delivered from all sin and are “without fault before the Throne of God”—and they know it. Now have they been brought right away from all danger of perishing, for they are “saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.”  
There will be a sense of security, too, for all who are at the right hand of God in Glory. They are all perfectly safe there. “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up there, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there.” “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” And they know that it shall be so and, therefore, a sense of their security is one of the sweetnesses of the beatific state.  
Coupled with that will be their assurance of victory. They will know that they have overcome all their enemies through the blood of the Lamb. Even the last enemy, Death, himself, will then have been destroyed. When the Resurrection shall be complete, what a vast sweep will the mind’s eye of the glorified Believer take! All human history will open up before him and as he gazes upon it, he will see that God has triumphed, by His Grace, in everything! And the adoring song of victory will go up forever and ever unto Him who has conquered sin, death and Hell, and led captivity captive. The palms will forever be waving and the harps forever ringing out, “Glory, glory, glory to the mighty Grace which has triumphed from the first day even until now!” Victory blending with security will indeed make glad the spirits of the saints at God’s right hand!  
There, too, their joy will consist in freedom from every form of evil. No temptation can ever enter there, no carking care, no spiritual weakness. They are eternally clear of all that made them sad in the days of their sinfulness and imperfection. One great part of the joy of the glorified will be the perfection of their characters, for he that is holy must be happy. Perfection of holiness must mean perfection of happiness—the two things must go together. Sin and sorrow cannot be divorced—and holiness and happiness cannot be separated. O Brothers and Sisters, what must it be to feel that you have no tendency to err, no understanding out of balance—that even memory does not bring to you a sinful reflection that would stain your purity—that, altogether, your whole mind is godlike, made holy through the operation of the blessed Spirit and the cleansing blood of Jesus? Oh, to completely get rid of sin! One would not mind keeping a frail body with all its weakness and pains if he could once get rid of sin. One might be willing to be as poor as Lazarus if he could but get rid of sin. To shake off this viper into the fire—to be altogether clear of even the taint of sin would be Heaven! And we shall have that bliss at God’s right hand.  
Part of the joy of Heaven will also lie in clear knowledge. Here, we only know in part, but there we shall know even as we are known. Here, “we see through a glass, darkly; but there, face to face.” Some of you do not understand the Doctrines of Grace, here, but you will understand them there. You meet with a great many questions that are too difficult for you to answer, now, and you are often puzzled with problems which you cannot solve. You must believe, now, much that you cannot comprehend— but things will look very different in the clear light of Heaven from what they do, now, in the dim twilight of earth! Wait a while and do not worry. Tarry just a little season and the eternal day shall break, and the shadows shall forever flee away and you shall know all that you will desire to know when you are at God’s right hand in Glory!  
But perhaps it is still sweeter to remember that Heaven’s bliss will very much consist in fellowship, first, with the Father. How near we shall be to Him when we are in His Presence! Here, we cannot see His face and live. But there we shall live by seeing His face! It will be the ecstasy of our glorified life to gaze upon Him who is invisible to mortal eyes! There, too, we shall see Jesus. Do not your sacred passions burn at the very thought of such bliss as this?—  
*“For there the Man that loved and died,  
Sits glorious at His Father’s side”*  
and these eyes shall behold Him, the God that died for me! Oh, that wondrous sight! Do we not feel as though, like John, we must fall at His feet as dead when we see Him as He is? O blessed Christ, we scarcely need any more of Heaven than to be where You are! Then, too, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, will yet more gloriously manifest His Divine power to us there—  
*“O blissful hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God.”*  
We shall have such fellowship there with the Father, the Son and the Spirit as is not possible before and, then—this is coming down a long way from the sublime height of fellowship with God, yet it is a fact that is worth remembering—we shall have fellowship with the innumerable holy angels and with all the glorified saints!  
All who have been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus, even as we are, will be there as our happy companions forever and ever. Are you not anxious to see the Apostles and Prophets who have gone to Heaven before you? Well, Beloved, you shall see them—and the communion that you will have with them will be of the most intimate kind! And your beloved ones who have been called Home before you, you shall meet them, by-and-by, when the Master shall say to you, also, “Come up here.” Oh, yes, there will be “the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven . . .the spirits of just men made perfect,” and it will be a part of the delights of Heaven to have fellowship with them! I have heard some people say that they will have such sweet and satisfying fellowship with Christ that they will not want to have any with His people, but that is both absurd and impossible because you cannot have fellowship with the Head without having fellowship with the members at the same time! Christ will never wish you to look upon Him in Heaven as divided from His people—they shall be so completely one with Him that in fellowship with His people, you shall in no degree be diminishing your fellowship with Christ, but rather be enjoying it in the form in which He, Himself, rejoices, for His delights will still be with the sons of men and if, on earth, they were the excellent in whom was all your delight, He would have you take the same delight in them when you meet them before His Throne in Glory.

There is one more pleasure of Heaven that I must mention, and that is rest—not that state of idleness of which some lazy people foolishly think—but that kind of rest which will be perfectly compatible with holy service. We are to serve God day and night in His temple—we shall always have something to do for our God throughout eternity, but that service will be rest to us. Just as, here on earth, we take Christ’s yoke upon us and learn of Him, and so find rest unto our souls—in Heaven itself we shall continue in the service of our God and we shall find therein the very sweetest rest. One part of that service will be everlasting praise. I am longing for the time when I shall have a heart that will never wander from my Lord—what hallelujahs will I sing to His holy name! And will not you, who love Him, do the same? Oh, what shouts we will make together when, as one complete family before the Throne of God, we shall praise the almighty Grace which has brought us safely Home and enabled us to join in the heavenly anthem, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever”!  
The last thing to be mentioned is the duration of all this bliss— “pleasures forevermore.” It would be robbing Heaven of all that makes it to be Heaven if you could deprive it of its everlasting duration. Our Lord will at the last say, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Your life in Heaven will be everlasting and your joy will be everlasting because you have an everlasting Christ, an everlasting God—and an Everlasting Covenant has been made with you, ordered in all things and sure! A million millions, what must that be? The human mind cannot grasp the meaning of such vast numbers, yet, when millions of millions of millions of millions of years have passed over the heads of Christ’s saints in Glory, this text will not be exhausted! No, more—not one jot or tittle of it will be exhausted—and throughout eternity it will still be, “pleasures forevermore.” Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, this prize is worth winning! Eternal life is worth having! And it shall be the portion of everyone who truly trusts in our Lord Jesus Christ.  
The last thing I am going to say is this. I greatly fear and tremble for some of you lest you should never enter upon this, “fullness of joy,” and these, “pleasures forevermore.” You know that dreadful word, “damned,” which Jesus used—“He that believes not shall be damned.” I will not try to explain to you what the sufferings of the lost must be, for they cannot be described. But a great part of the condemnation of the lost will consist in the fact that they will lose the “fullness of joy” in the Presence of God and the “pleasures forevermore” at His right hand. How dreadful this punishment of loss must be, in addition to all the suffering that must be forever endured in Hell! There stand the pearly gates, but what if you should never enter them? Yonder are the streets of gold, but what if you should never stand upon that radiant pavement? There is the face of Jesus, but what if He should say to you, “I never knew you”? There is the Throne of God, but what if it should burn like a devouring fire for you, so that you should be unable to come near it and to say, “Father,” to Him who sits on it? Shut out of Heaven! Shut out forever! In the outer darkness forever! Away from the marriage feast forever! When once the Master of the house is risen and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, Lord, open unto us and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not who you are...depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.” Surely there is not a man, or woman, or child, who could look forward, without alarm, to the prospect of being shut out of Heaven forever!  
And you will be, as surely as God lives, you will be unless you repent of sin and trust His Son! I am no Prophet of evil, neither do I like to harp upon this string, yet I must remind you that God has declared, concerning Heaven, that “there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles.” You must, therefore, be washed in the blood of the Lamb if you are ever to be admitted within the pearly gates! Remember the Apostolic message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” for it is as true, now, as when it was first uttered. May the Holy Spirit graciously constrain you to believe in Jesus, now, and at once to yield up your whole being to His supreme sway! Ask Him to show you “the path of life” and to lead you in it, for then you shall enter into His Presence, where there is “fullness of joy,” and you shall stand at His right hand, where “there are pleasures forevermore!”  
Somebody recommended all persons, before they go to sea, to wear a lifebelt. I do not believe that people in general are ever likely to follow that advice, but if somebody could invent a belt that made the wearer of it more ready for his work on land—that made him stronger, healthier and more handsome—then everybody would be ready enough to have it! Well, now, salvation is a life belt for the hour of death, but it is also a strengthening belt, a help, a beauty, a joy and delight for this present life. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” It is as good to live with as to die with and nobody is fit to live who is not fit to die—and nobody is fit to die till he is fit to live! Fitness for work on earth is fitness for rest in Heaven! Depend upon it, these two things go together. Do you all know the Lord? With that question I will conclude.  
Do you all know the Lord? If not, you do not know your best Friend. You do not know Him who is the Father of all Believers. Do you know the Lord? If not, I pray you to seek His face this very hour and especially I urge you to obey that word of His Apostle which I quoted to you just now, but cannot quote too often, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” When you trust Christ, you shall see God in Christ and shall come to the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit shall reveal Him unto you. The Lord grant that this may be the case, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 16.**

Verse 1. Preserve me, O God: for in You do I put my trust. Notice how the Psalmist urges the prevailing plea of faith. A trusted God will be a preserving God. If you, Believer, can truly say that you are trusting God in any time of trouble or danger, you will be safe enough in His keeping.

2, 3. O my soul, you have said unto the LORD, You are my Lord: my goodness is nothing apart from You; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. “I cannot do You any good, my God; You are too great to need anything from me; but I may be the means of blessing to Your people, Your saints may reap some little benefit from what I do. They are the company I keep, they are the choicest friends I know, and if You will but help me to do something for You which shall bring blessing to them, I shall indeed rejoice.”

4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. We must be faithful to God—to the God revealed to us in the Book of God, the God of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! We must keep to Him, not make another god after our own imagination. It is practical idolatry even to conceive of God otherwise than He is revealed in Holy Scripture. This we must not do, but say, concerning the God of the Bible, “This God is our God forever and ever.”

5. The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: You maintain my lot. One of the great houses of nobility has for its motto the words, “I will maintain it.” But David’s is a better one—“You maintain my lot.” God is the best Defender that His people can ever have!

6. The lines are fallen into me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage. Many of us have proved this to be true in our experience. May we continue gratefully contented and more than contented—delighted with whatever God appoints for us!

7, 8. I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me. “In my acts by day, and my thoughts by night.”

8. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Now across the sacred page there comes the wondrous revelation of a glorious One who speaks in the very words that are recorded here. Though, possibly, we have not recognized Him, these words that follow apply especially to Jesus Christ our Lord.

9. Therefore My heart is glad. Because in the night watches He had sought His Father and found help in Him, He could say, “Therefore My heart is glad,”

9, 10. And My glory rejoices: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For You will not leave My soul in Hell. Or, rather, Hades, the abode of the dead.  
10. Neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption. Now David was gathered to his fathers and his body saw corruption, as the Apostle Peter rightly observed, so it is clear that he is not speaking of himself, here, not in the first place, at any rate, but of “great David’s greater Son,” our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! “Neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.”  
11. You will show me the path of life: in Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

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THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE  
NO. 1305

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 16, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I have set the Lord always before Me: because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved.”  
Psalm 16:8.**

IN the preceding verses we read, “The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage.” The speaker, therefore, is a very contented and happy man. It is not the most usual thing in the world to find persons extolling their lot and manifesting a conspicuous emphasis of satisfaction. Far more common is it to hear men surrounded with favors lamenting the hardness of their case! Contented minds are almost as scarce as snowflakes in harvest. The man who rejoices in his goodly heritage deserves attention and we shall do well to learn his secret. How is it that he is able to feel so happy? Let us seek out the way by which he arrived at this peace and discover the silken clue which led him into such a bower of delight. Perhaps his road may fit our feet and, by following it, we may become as perfectly content as he was. O Lord and Giver of peace, help us in the search!

But, first, who is this person who is thus singularly content? To our astonishment we find that the Spirit speaks here by prophecy in the name and Person of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is He, who, by the Spirit, here said, “The lines have fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage!” He was the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He was “despised and rejected of men.” He had not where to lay His head. He was often subject to hunger and thirst. He had few friends and those proved faithless in the time of His extremity. So how could He speak thus? All this is so much the more encouraging for us, because if this most sorrowful of men, was, nevertheless, able to feel an inward calm, a sweet contentment, then it must be possible for us to do so whose lot is not so bitter!

We are not sent to make atonement for sin and, therefore, our sorrows are few compared with our Lord’s. There was a special reason for His being distressed, for He took our griefs and carried our sorrows. But no atoning griefs are demanded of us, nor have we afflictions to bear from the hand of God as punishments for sin, for the Lord has laid all these upon Him and we are clear. If the Lord Jesus, the Man of grief, a mourner all His days, yet said the lines had fallen unto Him in pleasant places and He had a goodly heritage, it must be the more possible for us to rise to the same contentment if we follow His rules and live according to His example.

What, then, is the secret of perfect peace and happiness here below? The price is above rubies—where shall this be learned? The magic lamps and wonderful rings of which children read in fairy stories are as nothing in value compared with this true philosopher’s stone, this mystic secret of

the Lord which is with them that fear Him—by which His saints are enabled to enjoy the peace of God which passes all understanding—which keeps their hearts and minds by Jesus Christ. O Prince of Peace, grant us this rest!

Our text clearly imparts to us the secret of the greatest happiness to be found below the skies and, indeed, it reveals the hidden source of those pleasures above which are at God’s right hand forevermore. The first part of the excellent method lies in always living in the Lord’s Presence—“I have set the Lord always before Me.” The second is found in always trusting in the Lord’s Presence—“Because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved.”

I. The secret, then, of peace, is, first, ALWAYS LIVING IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE—“I have set the Lord always before Me.” We shall try, in order to understand what this means, to keep our eyes upon the life of Jesus and, at the same time, apply the text to the saints. Though this passage is pre-eminently fulfilled in Jesus, yet since the members partake of the nature of the Head, each one, in his own degree, who does that which Jesus did and thereby obtains a holy joy and rest, may enter into the joy of our Lord.

Does not our Lord Jesus bid us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, that we may find rest unto our souls? I take it that our text means first, that we should make the Lord’s Presence the greatest of all facts to us. Of all things that are, God chiefly IS, and we should regard Him in that light. It was so with our Lord Jesus Christ. He, as a Man, was cognizant of the existence of all the things that are seen, but even more did He recognize the existence of God, who cannot be seen—that great Spirit who is alike invisible and incomprehensible. How vividly the Presence of God must have been realized by Christ at all times, for He was in the Father and the Father in Him!

You and I have never seen and understood the Father in the same degree as He did, though the Son has revealed Him to us. He entered into a fuller and more constant recognition of God’s Presence in all places and things, than we, as yet, have done. Yet truly we have seen the Father, for we have seen Jesus by faith. We have mounted up on wings as eagles and with the eagle’s eyes have looked the sun in the face and have not been blinded! Is it not written, “The pure in heart shall see God”? We have been taught to see God around us in all things that exist and in all events that happen. And we bless the Lord that we live not as those who are “without God in the world,” that we are taught by the Spirit to recognize our Father’s loving, all-pervading Presence!

Yet I know we do not discern it so constantly, clearly and impressively as our Lord Jesus did. He looked upon the mountains and the sunlight on their brows was the smile of His Father. He saw the plains and their harvests were His Father’s bounty. To Him the waves of the sea were tossed in tempest by His Father’s breath, or calmed by His Father’s whisper. He fed the multitude, but it was with His Father’s bread. He healed the sick, but His Father did the works. In all things about Him, He continually and distinctly recognized the active Presence of the Most High. Other men remarked that the ravens were fed, but He said, “Your heavenly Father feeds them.” Other men noticed that the lilies were fair to look upon, but He discerned that, “God so clothes the grass of the field.” The heavenly Father was in every place and in every thing to Jesus.

Now, I pray our Lord to grant that by the blessed Spirit we may always be sensitive of the Presence of God wherever we are. Is it not a sad proof of the alienation of our nature that though God is everywhere, we have to school ourselves to perceive Him anywhere? His are the beauties of Nature. His the sunshine which is bringing on the harvest. His the waving grain which cheers the farmer. His the perfume which loads the air from multitudes of flowers. His the insects which glitter around us like living gems! And yet the Creator and Sustainer of all these is far too little perceived! Everything in the temple of Nature speaks of His Glory, but our ears are dull of hearing. Everything, from the dewdrop to the ocean, reflects the Deity, and yet we largely fail to see the eternal brightness. I beseech you, my Brothers and Sisters, to pray that you may have this text worked into your very souls—“I have set the Lord always before Me.”

Refuse to see anything without seeing God in it. Regard the creatures as the mirror of the great Creator. Do not imagine that you have understood His works till you have felt the Presence of the great Worker, Himself. Do not reckon that you know anything till you know that of God which lies within it, for that is the kernel which it contains. Wake in the morning and recognize God in your chamber, for His goodness has drawn back the curtain of the night and taken from your eyelids the seal of sleep. Put on your garments and perceive the Divine care which provides you with raiment from the herbs of the field and the sheep of the fold.

Go to the breakfast room and bless the God whose bounty has, again, provided for you a table in the wilderness. Go out to business and feel God with you in all the engagements of the day. Always remember that you are dwelling in His house when you are toiling for your bread or engaged in merchandise. At length, after a well-spent day, go back to your family and see the Lord in each one of the members of it! Acknowledge His goodness in preserving life and health. Look for His Presence at the family altar, making the house to be a palace wherein king’s children dwell. At last, fall asleep at night as in the embraces of your God or on your Savior’s breast. This is happy living!

The worldling forgets God, the sinner dishonors Him, the atheist denies Him, but the Christian lives in Him! “In Him we live and move and have our being; we are also His offspring.” Visible things we look upon as shadows. The things which we touch and taste and handle, perish in the using. The elements of this solid earth shall dissolve with fervent heat, but the ever-present God, whom we cannot see, is the same, and of His years there is no end, and His existence is the only real and true and eternal one to us. He has been our dwelling place in all generations and it were evil, indeed, not to know our own eternal home. This is a main ingredient in the oil of joy—to always realize that the Lord is round about us “as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, from now on even for evermore.”

Secondly, the words of the text signify the making of God’s Glory the one object of our lives. As a prize is set before the runners in a race, so the Believer’s heart sets God’s Glory before it as the prize for which the race of

life is run. It was even so with our dear Redeemer—from the first to the last He set the Lord always before Him as the object of His life on earth. Do you ever find in Him a selfish motive? Is He ever moved by any groveling ambition? Is He not always seeking the good of men and, by that means, the Glory of God? While yet a youth He goes up to the temple, not to display His precocity, nor, like other children, to gratify Himself with the admiration heaped upon Him for His early wisdom, but He says, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?”

In later days, when He has been anointed to His work, He sits by a well and takes His rest. A woman comes and converses with Him, but He speaks upon no idle theme—He talks to her of the Living Water, seeks her soul to save it and then tells His disciples that He has meat to eat that they know not of—for it was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. He presses forward with changeless intensity of purpose towards the completion of the work which the Father had committed to Him.

You see Him present at a wedding, or meeting a funeral procession, but He is found, in both cases, aiming at God’s Glory. If you find Him battling with the crowd, or in the chamber, shut in with two or three raising the dead. If you read of His prayers upon the lone mountainside, or listen to His groans in the Garden of Gethsemane, still, evermore—this one thing He does—He glorifies His Father on the earth. Despising shame and trampling under foot the world’s honor, He lives to God and to God, alone. Not sometimes and now and then, or as the general aggregate of His life is He found setting God before Himself, but always and without exception! In every thought, in every word, in every deed, God was before Him and He lived for God.

Oh, that we could reach to this—whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we would do all to the Glory of God! Oh, that we never dared to do what would dishonor the name of God! Oh, that we walked in all things so as to please Him who loved us and gave Himself for us! I am sure, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have aimed at this, though you may have fallen far short of your desire, yet in such a path you have found peace unto your souls. This is the king’s highway, the way of holiness where no lion shall be found! To know that God is present and to live, by His Grace, wholly to please Him—this is the way of great pleasantness—take care that you keep therein! Never do anything which would dishonor the holy name with which you are called! Leave nothing undone, however hard to the flesh, which would serve the cause of God and so you shall be like your Lord and become partakers of His peace. This is the mode of life by which a man shall have foretastes of the feasts of Heaven while yet in this wilderness world—may the Holy Spirit lead us into it!

A further meaning of setting the Lord always before us is to live so that the Presence of God shall be the rule and support of our obedience. So Jesus did. You know right well that to many servants the master’s eye is most important in order to make them careful and industrious. How many are eye-servers and men pleasers? Take away the master’s eye and how slowly the labor drags along—how often is it slurred over in a slovenly manner—or left undone altogether? The old proverb declares that the master’s eyes do more than both his hands and it is too sadly true! Yet it is not wrong to say that our Master’s eyes ought to have a great influence over the servants of God. “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.”

Beloved, how would you live if God were seen looking on? He is looking on! So live. Suppose that in some action of tomorrow you were specially warned—“The Lord will carefully observe you. The Omniscient will fix all His thoughts upon you and detect your motives and scan your spirit, as well as weigh the deed, itself.” If you had such a revelation, how would you act? So should you act at all times, for it is always true. “You, God, see me” is an exclamation for every moment of day and night! Can you put your finger upon any part of Christ’s life and say, “He forgot that the Father beheld Him in this act”? Is not the whole of Christ’s life such a picture that God Himself looked at every line and tint of it with infinite admiration? Have you not, yourself, traversed the gallery of the Savior’s life, and pausing at each picture and scene, been filled with amazement and led to exclaim, “He has done all things well!”?

When your mind has been most devout and most holy, have you not more than ever admired every little trait in your Savior’s Character, every separate feature of every action of His life, whether public or private? The Father was always with Him and He always did those things which pleased Him. Oh, Beloved, would to God that your obedience were in like manner measured out under the profound consciousness that the great God is watching you in all that you do! He has beset you behind and before, and laid His hands upon you. If you take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, He is there! Even darkness hides not from Him. Everything that you have done has been enacted in the Presence of your heavenly Father!

Have you felt this? Ah, when you dishonored the Lord Jesus He was, Himself, looking on. He to whom belong those pierced hands heard your cowardly words and saw your traitorous acts. He gazed in wondering sorrow at you, His Friend, betraying Him. When you mingled with the ungodly world and was as one of them, He, too, was there, and now He shows you His wounds and sorrowfully exclaims, “These are the wounds which I received in Your place, the place of My Friend.” The blows of friends smite in a tender place! Their wounds are the cruelest that can be received, for enemies pierce sharply, but friends stab with poisoned daggers! When we bring dishonor upon Him whom we profess to love, it is dishonor, indeed! Oh, how much would be left undone and, on the other hand, how much more of another kind would be diligently executed, if in very deed we set the Lord always before us!

Not yet, however, have we completely expounded our text. The words must also mean that we are to set the Lord before us as the Source from which we are to derive solace and comfort under every trial. Jesus could say, “I have set the Lord always before Me,” for this, it was, that made Him suffer poverty and never complain. This, it was, that made Him encounter shame and spitting and yet remain dumb with wondrous patience, like a sheep before her shearers. You never hear our Lord cry out until His Father’s face is hidden from Him. Then, indeed, He cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” When, because of His standing as our Surety, God Himself withdrew the manifestation of His favor, then His pangs were bitter and His grief was overflowing—but you and I will never have to bear the same.

God forsook Him that He might never forsake us. You shall always find the Lord near in the day of trouble and, therefore, if ever you have a Gethsemane, and the bitter cup cannot be passed from you except you drink it, you shall set the Lord before you and in that cheering Presence you shall be able to say, “Not as I will, but as You will,” and patiently drink your appointed cup even to the dregs. Are you saying today, “How much I wish that I had more of the comforts of life, but my means are sadly scant and I am very sick and very heavy in spirit”? Your Savior was tempted in all points just as you are, but He set the Lord always before Him and, therefore, He was content and said, “The Lord is My portion, said My soul, therefore will I hope in Him. The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage.”

Let all else go, my Brothers and Sisters, for if God is with you, you will still be upheld. Let friends die, one after another, and let earthly comforts fade like autumn leaves, but if you set the Lord always before you—there is such a fullness of joy in every attribute of God, there is such a Heaven in every glimpse of Jesus’ face, there is such overwhelming bliss in every drop of Jehovah’s everlasting love—you shall not fail nor be discouraged, but you shall sing His praises even in the fiercest fire! To you He will say, “Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed, I am your God. When you pass through the rivers I will be with you, the floods shall not overflow you. When you go through the fires you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” The Presence of God makes even death delightful! “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me.” Thus you see that setting the Lord always before us ensures us never ceasing consolation.

Yet, further, these words mean that we are to hold perpetual communion with God. When Jesus said, “I have set the Lord always before Me,” He meant that He was always in fellowship with the Father. Very frequently the fellowship was exercised in prayer, for our Lord, though He is described as praying very much, no doubt prayed infinitely more than any Evangelist has recorded, for He was praying when no one knew it but Himself and His God, when even His lips did not move. His public prayer, or the prayer which could be observed by others, was made manifest for our sakes and their sakes who stood with Him, but it was only a cropping up upon the surface of the great rock of prayer which laid the foundation of His holy living. Right well did He say, when at the grave of Lazarus, “And I know that You hear Me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it.”

He was always talking with the Father, who was, indeed, the only One upon whom He could cast Himself. What consolation could He gather from Peter and James and John? He was like a father with a number of little children around Him who could not so much as understand their father’s troubles, much less support Him under them! As our Lord was always in sacred fellowship with God, He had great sorrow from beholding the sin of mankind, knowing, as He did, how grievous it was to God! He would mourn before His Father, the people’s sin, but continue, still, to intercede, praying all His life as He prayed at last, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Thus was He at all times in deepest sympathy with the God of Love.

I doubt not that our Lord often spoke with the Father in the form of praise, for while, on one occasion, it is only recorded that He rejoiced, yet doubtless He rejoiced evermore in God. How could His pure Nature do otherwise than joy in the Lord? His whole heart and soul and mind ran in one line with the mind of God! I am, of course, now speaking of Him as Man and as Man His heart was in perfect harmony with the heart of God—there was nothing in Him contrary to the will and design of the Father—His whole human nature was carried along in a parallel course with the mind of the Most High and, therefore, that is why He was always at peace.

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, may God grant us Grace to commune constantly with Himself! Prayer should not be a matter of mornings and evenings, alone, but all day our spirit should commune with God! Father, You are so near us and yet how slow we are to speak to You! Teach us, Your children, to be always talking with You so that while we walk on earth our conversation may be in Heaven! The Lord grant us to hold holy commerce with Heaven, hearing what God, the Lord, will speak, and speaking to Him in return. Be it ours to hear the Words of the inspired Book and to regard the advice of the gracious Spirit! And then may our spirit, in its turn, speak with God and make known its requests unto Him. I hope you will be reaching out towards this by the Divine anointing of the Holy Spirit. For this is the grand secret, the sure foundation of a happy life. Perpetual communion with God is the highest state of joy which can be known on earth! Learn to say truthfully,” I have set the Lord always before me,” and you have the Lord’s secret!

Once again upon this point, dear Friends. If we are to be happy, we must follow this life of nearness to God because of our delight in it and from the joy which we feel in it. Indeed, such a life cannot be lived in any other manner. Mere duty and law cannot operate here. If any man shall say, “What a dreary affair this communion with God must be! How dull must be this walking continually with God!” then I reply, your speech betrays you—you have not the first essentials of such a life—neither can you so much as guess what it means. Indeed, I am not talking to you at all, it would be useless to press such a theme upon you! Excuse me, you know nothing of the spiritual life, nothing of what it is to be a child of God, or else communion would not be despised by you! You must be born again and, till you are born again, such exhortations as these which I am now giving will not apply to you at all.

Does some mere professor sneeringly enquire, “What? Are we always to live to God’s Glory and are we to do nothing but what would glorify Him? This is laying down very straight rules and making the road to Heaven very narrow, indeed.” Do you think so, Friend? Then I will tell you plainly my solemn suspicion about you—I am persuaded that you do not know

the Lord, for if you did, the way of holiness would be your delight and you would not ask for license to sin. I can understand your sinning, but I cannot understand your finding pleasure in it if you are a real Christian! The pleasures of the world are, to a true Believer, as the husks which the swine eat. And if you find them to be good bread for your soul, then assuredly you are none of His!

The hogs may be satisfied with hogs’ food, for Providence meant it for them, but the child of God, even when he is a prodigal, cannot be satisfied so! He would gladly fill his belly with the husks, but it is impossible that he should thus be satisfied. I am sure if you are the Lord’s, you will look upon living near to God and delighting in Him, not as being a severe task, or a weariness, but as a luxury and a delightful privilege after which your soul hungers and thirsts. You will say with David, “My soul pants for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” To you the choicest place is that which is nearest to your Lord, though it may be in the dust of contempt, or in the furnace of affliction. It is your ambition to be subdued by the Lord Jesus unto Himself, most completely, and then to be, from now on, the place of His abode, the instrument for His use and, best of all, the object of His love! I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever, as a child at home, considering the present world to be a lower room of that house and Heaven above as the upper story of the same abode. The Presence of God is our bliss!

Now, is there anything about our Lord’s life which looks like being under restraint, or being compelled to act otherwise than He would have wished? Can you suspect in His whole career that He was, at any time, acting against His inclination? Was His life constrained and unnatural? Did He walk like a man in irons? Did He live as one pressed into the army of the righteous, denied pleasures which would have been His choice and forced to forms of piety which were distasteful to Him? Not at all! Christ is a free man, living out His inmost, following His heart’s best desires. You can see that wherever He is, He acts according to His Nature and is as free in what He does as the fish are free in the sea, or the birds in the air!

Now, such is the Christian in this matter of setting the Lord always before him. He acts not of constraint but willingly, for the Lord has given him a nature which delights in that which God delights in. He does not say, “Woe is me, I am caged like a bird! My life is so precise and Puritanical that I am weary of it.” No, he says, “if I had these worldly joys, and might indulge in them, there is nothing in them to please me. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Others are saying, ‘Who will show us any good?’ But my one petition is, ‘Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon me.’” He says, “Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” The Christian is never so free as when he is most under Law to Christ! He is never so much himself as when he denies himself, and never so delighted as when he delights himself in the Lord and lives only for the Glory of God!

Now, if such is the case with you, dear Brothers and Sisters, you have learned the secret of joy. The text may be read in the Hebrew, “I have set the Lord equally before Me,” that is equally at all times. He speaks of the solitary night watches and then His reins instructed Him, for He was with God. In the morning He exclaims, “When I awake I am still with You.” We are to have the Lord equally before us under all circumstances—in our business pursuits as well as in Prayer Meetings and hearings of sermons—in seasons of recreation as well as in hours of devotion—in the day of health as well as in the hour of death. If you break the chain of communion by going where you cannot expect to have the Lord’s Presence, or doing what the Lord cannot sanction, the broken link can be restored, but it will always show the rivets.

You may lose your roll like Christian in the arbor and you may go back and find it, again, but it is very hard going back over the same ground. And after going back, it is difficult to take to the onward path again. The hardest part of the road to Heaven is that which has to be traversed three times—once when you go over it at first, a second time when you have to return with weeping to find your lost evidences—and then again when you have to make up for lost time. Backsliding causes unhappiness, but abiding with God creates peace like a river, flowing on and on in one longcontinued stream. Dear Friends, here is the method of a blissful life! Try it, and the result is certain!

II. I will speak very briefly upon the second head. The second part of the secret follows upon the first—that is TRUSTING ALWAYS IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE. Here is confidence in God—“Because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved.” Here is confidence that God is near us. Confidence that God loves us, for He is not only near us, but in the place of friendly fellowship. And here is confidence that God will practically help us, for the right hand is the dexterous hand, the hand which does the work, and thus God is near unto His people with practical assistance to sustain and to deliver them. How blessed it must be to feel that we have nothing to be afraid of in all the world, for God stands at our right hand to take care of us whatever may happen.

David says, and Christ says through David, “I shall not be moved,” that is, first, I shall not be moved with any regret or remorse as to the past. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if we have set the Lord always before us, we can sit down and meditate upon our course of action and it will bear reflection! The man who knows that he has lived as in the sight of God will not have to wish that he had never been born. On the contrary, he will bless the Lord at all times for all that happens to him. Christ had many sorrows, but no regrets. What a life was His! He never had to look back upon a single act and repent of it. All was done with the Lord before Him and He was not moved.

A lady once told a minister that she was attending the theater, and she remarked, “There are so many pleasures connected with seeing a play. There is the pleasure of anticipation before you go. There is the pleasure of enjoying it when you are there. And there is the third pleasure of reflecting upon it afterwards.” The good man replied, “Ah, Madam, there is another pleasure which you have not mentioned and that is the comfort it will afford you upon a dying bed.” The irony was well deserved. I may mention this as being the greatest recommendation of setting the Lord always before you—that it will bear reflection and yield comfort amid sickness and death!

If, by Divine Grace, you are able to live a life of unbroken communion with God, constantly having an eye to His Presence, you will not have to mourn over a misspent life. Your retrospect will be full of pleasure. As for sin, that is already covered by the blood of Christ and, besides that, you will have been kept from a thousand snares by having the fear of God always before your eyes. And so, in reviewing the past, you shall not be moved with bitter remorse. Many things which we now do, we may have to lament in the future, though now we think we are acting very wisely and well. But if the Lord is always before us, our steps will be established because they are ordered by the Lord. Even if you make a mistake as to policy, you will be comforted by the knowledge that it was a fault of your judgment and not of your heart, if, indeed, you desired to serve the Lord.

Beloved, it is well for us to live near God that we may not

 be moved from our consistency in the way of true religion. There are many professors whose lives are jerky—they are walking with God, after a fashion, today, but soon they wander into crooked paths. Then they begin again, but before long they start aside as a deceitful bow. Like Reuben, they are unstable as water and do not excel. In our Lord’s life there is no break, it is one continuous harmony. The unities are observed in His grand career, it is like His garment—without seam and woven from the top throughout. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you set the Lord always before you, you will not be moved, but your path will be like that of the sun in the heavens, rising from dawn till noon!

Setting the Lord before us prevents our being moved with terror. It is said of the Believer, “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” The Believer is not moved with staggering fear. A great trouble is coming upon him, but he has set the Lord before him, and he is not cast down. If like Jesus, Himself, he is for the moment swayed with exceedingly great sorrow, yet does he say, “What time I am afraid I will trust in You,” and when he prays he is heard in that he feared. Such a man is not moved by temptation so as to be swept into surprising sin. If I set the Lord always before me, I shall not be carried away by a sudden temptation. It is when you are off your guard that sin comes and you fall.

You speak unadvisedly, you get into a hot temper, you make sad havoc of your Christian life—and all because your eyes were off your Lord. If you could but have known that the trial was coming, you would have been protected against it. And if you had set the Lord always before you, you would have been prepared for the world, the flesh and the devil—and shielded from every fiery dart of the Evil One. Let us dwell in God and He will be a wall of fire round about us. He will keep us every moment, lest any hurt us. He will keep us night and day. Thus you will not be moved so as to fall into failure at the last. You must all have felt the dread lest, after all, at the end of life it should turn out that you are not saved. Have you not feared that you have deceived yourselves and were not converted when you thought you were?

What if it should turn out to be so? What will you do when the bubble of false hope shall burst? Ah, but if you set the Lord always before you, you shall not be moved by that fear, for you will know that your Redeemer lives! You will have such a consciousness of the Divine Presence that you will commit your departing spirit unto God as to a faithful Creator! You will not be afraid to die, for as Jesus said, “My flesh, also, shall rest in hope. For You will not leave My soul in Hell; neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” So will you say, “My flesh, also, shall rest in hope, for You will not leave my soul in Hell, and though I see corruption as to my body, yet shall I be raised in incorruption in the likeness of my Lord, for I know that my next of kin lives and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall behold for myself, and not another.” Oh, the joy of thus abiding in God and trusting in His present power—having the Lord at your right hand—and then abiding in calm assurance that you cannot be moved!

Just four things and I have done. First, to any of you who are unhappy. Some of you are not Christian people, but altogether of the world. You are not happy and yet I dare say you have a great many things to make you so. You are placed in easy circumstances where you can enjoy yourselves as much as you like. The sorriest thing in the world to enjoy is yourself! I can enjoy other people better than I can myself. To enjoy yourself needs a very depraved appetite, for selfishness is sordid and, like the serpent, has dust appointed to be its meat. If you think that you will find pleasure in worldliness, I should like you to remember one who tried that method very thoroughly.

I mean Solomon of old, who had all the wealth a heart could wish and all the wisdom a brain could hold—and yet was both poor and foolish! He ransacked the world for joy, but found it not. At one time he gave all his thoughts to architecture and built splendid palaces. And after he had built them all, he said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” He took to his books and studied very hard, but after he had poured over them a long time, he said, “Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”

He tried singing men and singing women, and the peculiar delights of kings, but when he had enjoyed himself in this manner to the utmost possibilities of human nature, he said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” He planted gardens and laid out water courses and practiced engineering. He inclined, at one time, to the pleasures of a fool, and soon he was eager in the nobler pursuits of a wise man! Sometimes he was sober with science and at other seasons he was excited with laughter—he tried everything and found all earthly joy to be as deceitful as the apples of Sodom which are fair to look upon but turn to ashes in the hand.

Nothing beneath the skies and nothing above the skies can make any man happy apart from God, search as you will! Apart from God you may make a Hell, but you cannot make a Heaven, do what you please! Oh, I beseech you, unhappy man, if you have grown weary of the world and are sick of everything—if you are in the sere and yellow leaf though not 40 years of age—remember that there is a place where your leaf can be made green! If you will set the Lord always before you, you shall find peace in

Him.

And, next, I may be addressing some who think themselves perfectly happy in the world. I confess I do not envy you, but still, I like to hear you sing your song and tell the tale of what bliss the world affords. Yet note on what frail pillars this fairy palace of yours is erected! You are healthy, that is at the bottom of it—your bodily frame is in good order and you are merry. But suppose you should fall sick? Or suppose those few gray hairs should, before long, be multiplied, where only lie your mirth? Or if your wealth should take to itself wings and fly away—what then? Or if you come before the Lord in judgement, what then? Oh, Sir, let this frail foundation go! It is not meet to rest your eternal hopes upon! You are like a little child building his little sand house by the seaside! The tide is coming up, O child, leave your sand and flee from the waves! There is a Rock on which you may build a house eternal with massive stones, a palace of happiness that never shall be dissolved! Go there!

Now, you Christian people, if any of you are unhappy, I wish I could preach you out of it by reminding you of this test, but, as I cannot, I leave you in the hands of the Holy Spirit. If you draw near to God, you will be as happy as the days are long in midsummer! Your doubts and fears will flee and you will be as merry as birds of the air! And you happy Christians, you of the bright eyes and the elastic footsteps, you can be happier, still, by coming yet nearer to God and abide in fuller communion with Him. And though you are already singing—

*“How happy is the pilgrim’s lot,”*  
you shall be yet more blessed if you become more obedient, more submissive to the Divine will, more in sympathy with Jesus and more abidingly in communion with the Father. This is Heaven below! God grant it to you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 16.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—16, 708.  
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THE HOPE OF FUTURE BLISS  
NO. 25

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 20, 1855 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” Psalm 17:15.**

IT would be difficult to say to which the Gospel owes most—to its friends or to its enemies! It is true that by the help of God, its friends have done much for it. They have preached it in foreign lands, they have dared death, they have laughed to scorn the terrors of the grave, they have ventured all things for Christ and so have glorified the Doctrine they believed. But the enemies of Christ, unwittingly, have done a great deal, too! For when they have persecuted Christ’s servants, they have scattered them abroad so that they have gone everywhere preaching the Word. Yes, when they have trampled upon the Gospel, like a certain herb we read of in medicine, it has grown all the faster—and if we refer to the pages of Sacred Writ, how very many precious portions of it do we owe, under God, to the enemies of the Cross of Christ! Jesus Christ would never have preached many of His discourses had not His foes compelled Him to answer them. Had they not brought objections, we would not have heard the sweet sentences in which He replied. So, with the Book of Psalms—had not David been sorely tried by enemies, had not the foemen shot their arrows at him, had they not attempted to malign and blast his character, had they not deeply distressed him and made him cry out in misery, we would have missed many of those precious experimental utterances we here find! Much of that holy song which he penned after his deliverance and very much of that glorious statement of his trust in the Infallible God we would have lost! We would have lost all this had it not been wrung from him by the iron hand of anguish. Had it not been for David’s enemies, he would not have penned his Psalms. But when hunted like a partridge on the mountains, when driven like the timid roe before the hunter’s dogs, he waited for a while, bathed his sides in the brooks of Siloa and panting on the hilltop a little, he breathed the air of Heaven and stood and rested his weary limbs. Then was it that he gave honor to God. Then it was he shouted aloud to that mighty Jehovah, who for him had gotten the victory. This sentence follows a description of the great troubles which the wicked bring upon the righteous, wherein he consoles himself with the hope of future bliss. “As for me,” says the Patriarch, casting his eyes aloft—“As for me,” said the hunted chieftain of the caves of Engedi—“As for me,” says the once shepherd boy, who was soon to wear a royal diadem—“As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.”

In looking at this passage tonight, we shall notice first of all, the spirit of it. Secondly, the matter of it. And then, thirdly, we shall close by speaking of the contrast which is implied in it.

I. First, then, the SPIRIT OF THIS UTTERANCE, for I always love to look at the spirit in which a man writes, or the spirit in which he preaches. In fact, there is vastly more in that than in the words he uses!

Now, what should you think is the spirit of these words—“As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness”?

First, they breathe the spirit of a man entirely free from envy. Notice that the Psalmist has been speaking of the wicked. “They are enclosed in their own fat—with their mouth they speak proudly.” “They are full of children and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.” But David envies them not. “Go,” he says, “rich man, in all your riches—go, proud man, in all your pride—go, you happy man, with your abundance of children. I envy you not. As for me, my lot is different—I can look on you without desiring to have your possessions. I can well keep that commandment, ‘you shall not covet,’ for in your possessions there is nothing worth my love. “I set no value upon your earthly treasures. I envy you not your heaps of glittering dust. For my Redeemer is mine.” The man is above envy because he thinks that the joy would be no joy to him—that the portion would not suit his disposition. Therefore he turns his eyes Heavenward and says, “As for me I will behold Your face in righteousness.” Oh, Beloved, it is a happy thing to be free from envy! Envy is a curse which blights creation. And even Eden’s Garden, itself, would have become defaced and no longer fair if the wind of envy could have blown on it! Envy tarnishes the gold. Envy dims the silver. Should envy breathe on the hot sun, it would quench it! Should she cast her evil eye on the moon, it would be turned into blood and the stars would fly astonished at her. Envy is accursed of Heaven. Yes, it is Satan’s first-born—the vilest of vices. Give a man riches, but let him have envy and there is the worm at the root of the fair tree. Give him happiness and if he envies another’s lot, what would have been happiness becomes his misery because it is not so great as that of someone else’s. Give me freedom from envy! Let me be content with what God has given me. Let me say, “you may have yours, I will not envy you—I am satisfied with mine.” Yes, give me such a love to my fellow creatures that I can rejoice in their joy and the more they have, the more glad I am of it! My candle will burn no less brightly because theirs outshines it. I can rejoice in their prosperity. Then am I happy, for all around tends to make me blissful when I can rejoice in the joys of others and make their gladness my own. Envy? Oh, may God deliver us from it! How, in truth, can we get rid of it? By believing that you have something that is not on earth, but in Heaven! If we can look upon all the things in the world and say, “As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, by-and-by!” Then we cannot envy other men, because their lot would not be adapted to our peculiar taste. Does the ox envy the lion? No, for it cannot feed upon the carcass. Does the dove grieve because the raven can gloat itself on carrion? No, for it lives on other food. Will the eagle envy the wren his tiny nest? Oh, no! So the Christian will mount aloft as the eagle, spreading his broad wings he will fly up to his nest among the stars where God has made him his nest, saying, “As for me, I will dwell here. I look upon the low places of this earth with contempt. I envy not your greatness, you mighty emperors. I desire not your fame, you mighty warriors. I ask not for wealth, O Croesus. I beg not for your power, O Caesar. As for me, I have something else—my portion is the Lord.” The text breathes the spirit of a man free from envy. May God give that to us!

Then, secondly, you can see that there is about it the air of a man who is looking into the future. Read the passage thoroughly and you will see that it all has relation to the future because it says, “As for me, I will.” It has nothing to do with the present—it does not say, “As for me I do, or I am, so-and-so,” but, “As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake.” The Psalmist looks beyond the grave into another world. He overlooks the narrow deathbed where he has to sleep and he says, “When I awake.” How happy is that man who has an eye to the future. Even in worldly things we esteem that man who looks beyond the present day—he who spends all his money as it comes in will soon bring himself to rags. He who lives on the present is a fool! But wise men are content to look after future things. When Milton penned his book he might know, perhaps, that he would have little fame in his lifetime. But he said, “I shall be honored when my head shall sleep in the grave.” Thus have other worthies been content to tarry until time has broken the earthen pitcher and allowed the lamp to blaze. As for honor, they said, “We will leave that to the future, for that fame which comes late is often most enduring.” They lived upon the “shall” and fed upon the future. “I shall be satisfied” by-and-by. So says the Christian. I ask no royal pomp or fame, now. I am prepared to wait. I have an interest in reversion. I need not a pitiful estate here—I will tarry till I get my domains in Heaven—those broad and beautiful domains that God has provided for them that love Him. Well content will I be to fold my arms and sit down in the cottage, for I shall have a mansion of God, “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Do any of you know what it is to live on the future? To live on expectation? To live on what you are to have in the next world? To feast yourselves with some of the droppings of the Tree of Life that fall from Heaven? To live upon the manna of expectation which falls in the wilderness and to drink that stream of nectar which gushes from the Throne of God? Have you ever gone to the great Niagara of hope and drank the spray with ravishing delight? For the very spray of Heaven is glory to one’s soul! Have you ever lived on the future and said, “As for me I shall have somewhat, by-and-by?” Why, this is the highest motive that can actuate a man. I suppose this was what made Luther so bold when he stood before his great audience of kings and lords and said, “I stand by the Truth that I have written and will so stand by it till I die, so help me God!” I think he must have said, “I shall be satisfied, by-and-by. I am not satisfied now, but I shall be soon.”

For this the missionary ventures the stormy sea. For this he treads the barbarous shore. For this he goes into inhospitable climes and risks his life—because he knows there is a payment to come by-and-by. I sometimes laughingly tell my friends when I receive a favor from them that I cannot return it, but set it up to my Master in Heaven, for they shall be satisfied when they awake in His likeness. There are many things that we may never hope to be rewarded for here, but shall be remembered before the Throne hereafter, not of debt, but of Grace! Like a poor minister I heard of, who, walking to a rustic Chapel to preach, was met by a clergyman who had a far richer berth. He asked the poor man what he expected to have for his preaching. “Well,” he said, “I expect to have a crown.” “Ah,” said the clergyman, “I have not been in the habit of preaching for less than a guinea.” “Oh,” said the other, “I am obliged to be content with a crown and what is more, I do not have my crown now, but I have to wait for that in the future.” The clergyman little thought that he meant the “crown of life that fades not away”! Christian! Live on the future. Seek nothing here, but expect that you shall shine when you shall come in the likeness of Jesus, with Him to be admired and to kneel before His face adoringly. The Psalmist had an eye to the future.

And again, upon this point, you can see that David, at the time he wrote this, was full of faith. The text is fragrant with confidence. “As for me,” says David, no perhaps about it. “I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake up in Your likeness.” If some men should say so now, they would be called fanatics and it would be considered presumption for any man to say, “I will behold Your face, I shall be satisfied.” And I think there are many now in this world who think it is quite impossible for a man to say to a certainty, “I know. I am sure. I am certain.” But, Beloved, there are not one or two, but there are thousands and thousands of God’s people alive in this world who can say with an assured confidence—no more doubting of it than of their very existence—“I will behold Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” It is possible, though perhaps not very easy, to attain to that high and eminent position wherein we can say no longer do I hope, but I know. No longer do I trust, but I am persuaded. I have a happy confidence—I am sure of it. I am certain. For God has so manifested Himself to me that now it is no longer, “if,” and, “perhaps,” but it is the positive, eternal, “shall.” “I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” How many are there here of that sort? Oh, if you are talking like that, you must expect to have trouble, for God never gives strong faith without fiery trial! He will never give a man the power to say that, “shall,” without trying him. He will not build a strong ship without subjecting it to very mighty storms. He will not make you a mighty warrior if He does not intend to try your skill in battle. God’s swords must be used! The old Toledo blades of Heaven must be smitten against the armor of the Evil One and yet they shall not break, for they are of true Jerusalem metal which shall never snap! Oh, what a happy thing to have that faith to say “I shall.” Some of you think it quite impossible, I know. But it “is the gift of God,” and whoever asks for it shall obtain it—and the very chief of sinners now present in this place may yet be able to say long before he comes to die, “I shall behold Your face in righteousness.” I think I see the aged Christian. He has been very poor. He is in an attic where the stars look between the tiles. There is his bed. His clothes ragged and torn. There are a few sticks on the hearth—they are the last he has. He is sitting up in his chair. His paralytic hand quivers and shakes and he is evidently near his end. His last meal was eaten yesterday at noon. And as you stand and look at him—poor, weak and feeble, who would desire his lot? But ask him, “Old man, would you change your attic for Caesar’s palace? Aged Christian, would you give up these rags for wealth and cease to love your God?” See how indignation burns in his eyes at once! He replies, “As for me, I

 shall, within a few more days, behold His face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied soon. Here I never shall be. Trouble has been my lot and trial has been my portion, but I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Bid high. Bid him fair—offer him your hands full of gold—lay all down for him to give up his Christ. “Give up Christ?” He will say, “no, never!”—

*“While my faith can keep her hold,*

*I envy not the miser’s gold.”*  
Oh, what a glorious thing to be full of faith and to have the confidence of assurance, so as to say, “I will behold Your face; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.”

Thus much concerning the spirit of David. It is one very much to be copied and eminently to be desired.  
II. But now, secondly, THE MATTER OF THIS PASSAGE. And here we will dive into the very depths of it, God helping us. For without the Spirit of God I feel I am utterly unable to speak to you. I have not those gifts and talents which qualify men to speak. I need Inspiration from on High, otherwise I stand like other men and have nothing to say. May that be given me. For without it I am dumb. As for the matter of this verse, I think it contains a double blessing. The first is a beholding—“I will behold Your face in righteousness,” and the next is a satisfaction—“I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.”  
Let us begin with the first, then. David expected that he would behold God’s face. What a vision will that be, my Brothers and Sisters! Have you ever seen God’s hand? I have seen it, when sometimes He places it across the sky and darkens it with clouds. I have seen God’s hand, sometimes, when the cars of night drag along the shades of darkness. I have seen His hand when, launching the thunderbolt, His lightning splits the clouds and rends the heavens. Perhaps you have seen it in a gentler fashion, when it pours out the water and sends it rippling along in rills and then rolls into rivers. You have seen it in the stormy ocean—in the sky decked with stars—in the earth gemmed with flowers. But there is not a man living who can know all the wonders of God’s hand! His Creation is so wondrous that it would take more than a lifetime to understand it. Go into the depths of it, let its minute parts engage your attention. Next take the telescope and try to see remote worlds and can I see all God’s handiwork—behold all His hand? No, not so much as one millionth part of the fabric. That mighty hand wherein the callow comets are brooded by the sun, in which the planets roll in majestic orbits—that mighty hand which holds all space and grasps all beings—that mighty hand, who can behold it? But if such is His hand, what must His face be? You have heard God’s voice sometimes and you have trembled. I, myself, have listened awe-struck and yet with a marvelous joy, when I have heard God’s voice, like the noise of many waters in the great thunderings. Have you ever stood and listened while the earth shook and trembled and the very spheres stopped their music while God spoke with His wondrous deep bass voice? Yes, you have heard that voice and there is a joy marvelously instinct with love which enters into my soul, whenever I hear the thunder. It is my Father speaking and my heart leaps to hear Him. But you never heard God’s loudest voice. It was but the whisper when the thunder rolled. And if such is the voice, what must it be to behold His face? David said, “I will behold Your face.” It is said of the temple of Diana that it was so splendidly decorated with gold and so bright and shining that a porter at the door always said to everyone that entered, “Take heed to your eyes, take heed to your eyes. You will be struck with blindness unless you take heed to your eyes.” But oh, that view of Glory! That great appearance—the vision of God! To see Him face to face, to enter into Heaven and to see the righteous shining bright as stars in the firmament. But best of all, to catch a glimpse of the eternal Throne! Ah, there He sits! ‘Twere almost blasphemy for me to attempt to describe Him. How infinitely far my poor words fall below the mighty subject! But to behold God’s face? I will not speak of the luster of those eyes, or the majesty of those lips that shall speak words of love and affection. But to behold His face, you who have dived into the Godhead’s deepest sea and have been lost in its immensity—you can tell a little of it! You haughty ones who have lived in Heaven these thousands of years, perhaps you know, but you cannot tell, what it is to see His face. We must, each of us, go there. We must be clad with immortality. We must go above the blue sky and bathe in the river of life—we must outsoar the lightning and rise above the stars to know what it is to see God’s face. Words cannot set it forth. So there I leave it. The assurance the Psalmist had was that he would see God’s face.  
But there was a peculiar sweetness mixed with this joy, because he knew that he would behold God’s face in righteousness. “I shall behold Your face in righteousness.” Have I not seen my Father’s face here below? Yes, I have, “through a glass darkly.” But has not the Christian sometimes beheld Him, when in his heavenly moments earth is gone and the mind is stripped of matter? There are some seasons when the gross materialism dies away and when the ethereal fire within blazes up so high that it almost touches the fire of Heaven! There are seasons, when in some retired spot, calm and free from all earthly thought, we have taken our shoes off our feet because the place whereon we stood was holy ground. And we have talked with God! Even as Enoch talked with Him, so has the Christian held intimate communion with his Father. He has heard His love whispers. He has told out his heart, poured out his sorrows and his groans before Him. But after all he has felt—he has not beheld His face in righteousness. There was so much sin to darken the eyes, so much folly, so much frailty, that we could not get a clear prospect of our Jesus. But here the Psalmist says, “I will behold Your face in righteousness.” When that illustrious day shall arise and I shall see my Savior face to face, I shall see Him “in righteousness.” The Christian in Heaven will not have so much as a speck upon his garment. He will be pure and white. Yes, on the earth He is—  
*“Pure through Jesus’ blood and white as angels are.”*But in Heaven that whiteness shall be more apparent. Now, it is sometimes smoked by earth and covered with the dust of this poor carnal world. But in Heaven he will have brushed himself and washed his wings and made them clean. And then will he see God’s face in righteousness.  
My God, I believe I shall stand before Your face as pure as You are Yourself, for I shall have the righteousness of Jesus Christ! There shall be upon me the righteousness of a God. “I shall behold Your face in righteousness.” O Christian, can you enjoy this? Though I cannot speak about it, does your heart meditate upon it? To behold His face forever! To bask in that vision! True, you cannot understand it. But you may guess the meaning. To behold His face in righteousness!  
The second blessing, upon which I will be brief, is satisfaction. He will be satisfied, the Psalmist says, when he wakes up in God’s likeness. Satisfaction! This is another joy for the Christian when he shall enter Heaven. Here we are never thoroughly satisfied. True, the Christian is satisfied from himself. He has that within which is a spring of comfort and he can enjoy solid satisfaction. But Heaven is the home of true and real satisfaction. When the Believer enters Heaven, I believe His imagination will be thoroughly satisfied. All he has ever thought of, he will see there— every holy idea will be solidified—every mighty conception will become a reality, every glorious imagination will become a tangible thing that he can see. His imagination will not be able to think of anything better than Heaven—and should he sit down through eternity, he would not be able to conceive of anything that should outshine the luster of that glorious city! His imagination will be satisfied. Then His intellect will be satisfied— *“Then shall I see and hear and know,  
All I desired, or wished, below.”*  
Who is satisfied with his knowledge here? Are there not secrets we want to know—depths in the mysteries of Nature that we have not entered? But in that glorious state we shall know as much as we want to know! The memory will be satisfied. We shall look back upon the vista of past years and we shall be content with whatever we endured, or did, or suffered on earth—  
*“There, on a green and flowery mound,  
My wearied soul shall sit,  
And with transporting joys recount  
The labors of my feet.”*  
Hope will be satisfied, if there is such a thing in Heaven. We shall hope for a future eternity and believe in it. But we shall be satisfied as to our hopes continually—and the whole man will be so content that there will not remain a single thing in all God’s dealings that he would wish to have altered. Yes, perhaps I say a thing to which some of you will object—but the righteous in Heaven will be quite satisfied with the damnation of the lost. I used to think that if I could see the lost in Hell, surely I must weep for them. Could I hear their horrid wailings and see the dreadful contortions of their anguish, surely I must pity them. But there is no such sentiment as that known in Heaven. The Believer shall be there so satisfied with all God’s will, that he will quite forget the lost in the idea that God has done it for the best—that even their loss has been their own fault— and that He is infinitely just in it. If my parents could see me in Hell they would not have a tear to shed for me, though they were in Heaven. They would say, “It is justice, great God. And Your justice must be magnified, as well as Your mercy.” And moreover, they would feel that God was so much above His creatures that they would be satisfied to see those creatures crushed if it might increase God’s Glory. Oh, in Heaven I believe we shall think rightly of men. Here men seem great things to us. But in Heaven they will seem no more than a few creeping insects that are swept away in plowing a field for harvest! They will appear no more than a tiny handful of dust, or like some nest of wasps that ought to be exterminated for the injury they have done. They will appear such little things when we sit on high with God and look down on the nations of the earth as grasshoppers and “count the isles as very little things.” We shall be satisfied with everything. There will not be a single thing to complain of. “I

 shall be satisfied.”  
But when? “I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” But not till then. No, not till then. Now here a difficulty occurs. You know there are some in Heaven who have not yet waked up in God’s likeness. In fact, none of those in Heaven have done so. They never did sleep as respects their souls. The waking refers to their bodies and they are not awake yet—but are still slumbering. O earth! You are the bedchamber of the mighty dead! What a vast sleeping house this world is! It is one vast cemetery. The righteous still sleep. And they are to be satisfied on the Resurrection morn, when they awake. “But,” you say, “are they not satisfied now? They are in Heaven—is it possible that they can be distressed?” No, they are not. There is only one dissatisfaction that can enter Heaven—the dissatisfaction of the blest that their bodies are not there. Allow me to use a simile which will somewhat explain what I mean. When a Roman conqueror had been at war and won great victories, he would very likely come back with his soldiers, enter into his house and enjoy himself till the next day, when he would go out of the city and then come in again in triumph. Now, the saints, as it were, if I might use such a phrase, steal into Heaven without their bodies. But on the last day, when their bodies wake up, they will enter in their triumphal chariots. And I think I see that grand procession, when Jesus Christ, first of all—crowns on His head—with His bright, glorious body, shall lead the way. I see my Savior entering first. Behind Him come the saints, all of them clapping their hands—all of them touching their golden harps and entering in triumph. And when they come to Heaven’s gates and the doors are opened wide to let the King of Glory in, now will the angels crowd at the windows and on the housetops, like the inhabitants in the Roman triumphs, to watch them as they pass through the streets and scatter Heaven’s roses and lilies upon them, crying, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” “I shall be satisfied” in that glorious day, when all His angels shall come to see the triumph and when His people shall be victorious with Him!  
One thought here ought not to be forgotten. And that is, the Psalmist says we are to wake up in the likeness of God. This may refer to the soul. For the spirit of the righteous will be in the likeness of God as to its happiness, holiness, purity, infallibility, eternity and freedom from pain. But specially, I think, it relates to the body because it speaks of the awaking. The body is to be in the likeness of Christ. What a thought! It is—and alas, I have had too many such tonight—a thought too heavy for words. I am to wake up in Christ’s likeness. I do not know what Christ is like and can scarcely imagine. I love, sometimes, to sit and look at Him in His crucifixion. I care not what men say—I know that sometimes I have derived benefit from a picture of my dying crucified Savior. And I look at Him with His crown of thorns, His pierced side, His bleeding hands and feet and all those drops of gore hanging from Him. But I cannot picture Him in Heaven—He is so bright, so glorious. The God so shines through the Man. His eyes are like lamps of fire. His tongue like a two-edged sword. His head covered with hair as white as snow, for He is the Ancient of Days. He binds the clouds round about Him for a belt. And when He speaks, it is like the sound of many waters! I read the accounts given in the book of Revelation, but I cannot tell what He is. They are Scripture phrases and I cannot understand their meaning. But whatever they mean, I know that I shall wake up in Christ’s likeness. Oh, what a change it will be, when some of us get to Heaven! There is a man who fell in battle with the Word of salvation on his lips. His legs had been shot away and his body had been scarred by saber thrusts. He wakes in Heaven and finds that he has not a broken body, maimed and cut about and hacked and injured—but that he is in Christ’s likeness! There is an old matron, who has tottered on her staff for years along her weary way. Time has plowed furrows on her brow. Haggard and lame, her body is laid in the grave. But oh, aged woman, you shall arise in youth and beauty! Another has been deformed in his lifetime, but when he wakes, he wakes in the likeness of Christ! Whatever may have been the form of our countenance, whatever the contour, the beautiful shall be no more beautiful in Heaven than those who were deformed. Those who shone on earth, peerless, among the fairest, who ravished men with looks from their eyes—they shall be no brighter in Heaven than those who are now passed by and neglected—for they shall all be like Christ!  
III. But now to close up, HERE IS A VERY SAD CONTRAST IMPLIED. We shall all slumber a few more years and where will this company be? Xerxes wept because in a little while his whole army would be gone. How might I stand here and weep because within a few more years others shall stand in this place and shall say, “The fathers, where are they?” Good God! And is it true? Is it not a reality? Is it all to be swept away? Is it one great dissolving view? Ah, it is. This sight shall soon vanish and you and I shall vanish with it! We are but a show. This life is but “a stage where men act.” And then we pass behind the curtain and we there unmask ourselves and talk with God. The moment we begin to live we begin to die. The tree has long been growing that shall be sawn to make you a coffin. The sod is ready for you all. But this scene is to appear again soon. One short dream, one hurried nap and all this sight shall come over again. We shall all awake and as we stand here now, we shall stand together, perhaps, even more thickly pressed. But we shall stand all the same, then—the rich and poor, the preacher and hearer. There will be but one distinction—righteous and wicked. At first we shall stand together. I think I see the scene. The sea is boiling. The heavens are rent in two, the clouds are fashioned into a chariot and Jesus riding on it, with wings of fire, comes riding through the sky. His Throne is set. He seats Himself upon it. With a nod He hushes all the world. He lifts His fingers, opens the great books of destiny and the book of our probation, wherein are written the acts of time. With His fingers He beckons to the hosts above. “Divide,” He says, “divide the universe.” Swifter than thought all the earth shall part in sunder. Where shall I be found when the dividing comes? I think I see them all divided and the righteous are on the right. Turning to them, with a voice sweeter than music, He says, “Come! You have been coming—keep on your progress! Come! It has been the work of your life to come, so continue. Come and take the last step. ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.’” And now the wicked are left alone. And turning to them, He says, “Depart! You have been departing all your life long. It was your business to depart from Me. You said, ‘Depart from me, I love not your ways.’ You have been departing, keep on, take the last step!’” They dare not move. They stand still. The Savior becomes the avenger. The hands that once held out mercy now grasp the sword of justice. The lips that spoke loving kindness now utter thunder—and with a deadly aim He lifts up the sword and sweeps among them. They fly like deer before the lion and enter the jaws of the bottomless pit of Hell.  
But never, I hope, shall I cease preaching without telling you what to do to be saved! This morning I preached to the ungodly, to the worst of sinners and many wept—I hope many hearts melted—while I spoke of the great mercy of God. I have not spoken of that tonight. We must take a different line sometimes, led, I trust, by God’s Spirit. But oh, you who are thirsty, heavy laden, lost and ruined, Mercy speaks yet once again to you! Here is the way of salvation! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “And what is it to believe?” asks one. “Is it to say I know Christ died for me?” No, that is not to believe, it is part of it, but it is not all. Every Arminian believes that. And every man in the world believes it who holds that Doctrine, since he conceives that Christ died for every man. Consequently that is not faith. But faith is this—to cast yourself on Christ. As the American slave said, most curiously, when asked what he did to be saved—“Massa,” said he, “I fling myself down on Jesus and dere I lay. I fling myself flat on de promise and dere I lay.” And to every penitent sinner Jesus says, “I am able to save to the uttermost.” Throw yourself flat on the promise and say, “Then, Lord, You are able to save me.” God says, “Come now, let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be white as snow and though they are red like crimson they shall be as wool.”  
Cast yourself on Him and you shall be saved! “Ah,” says one, “I am afraid I am not one of God’s people. I cannot read my name in the Book of Life.” A very good thing you can’t, for if the Bible had everybody’s name in it, it would be a pretty large book. And if your name is John Smith and you saw that name in the Bible, if you do not believe God’s promise, now, you would be sure to believe that it was some other John Smith! Suppose the Emperor of Russia should issue a decree to all the Polish refugees to return to their own country. You see a Polish refugee looking at the great placards hanging on the wall. He looks with pleasure and says, “Well, I shall go back to my country.” But someone says to him, “It does not say Walewski.” “Yes,” he would reply, “but it says Polish refugees—Polish is my Christian name, refugee my surname and that is me.” And so, though it does not say your name in the Scriptures, it says lost sinner. Sinner is your Christian name and lost is your surname—therefore, why not come? It says, “lost sinner”—is not that enough? “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.” “Yes, but,” another one says, “I am afraid I am not elect.” Oh, dear Souls, do not trouble yourselves about that. If you believe in Christ you

 are elect. Whoever puts himself on the mercy of Jesus is elect. For he would never do it if he had not been elect. Whoever comes to Christ and looks for mercy through His blood is elect and he shall see that he is elect afterwards. But do not expect to read election till you have read repentance. Election is a college to which you little ones will not go till you have been to the school of repentance. Do not begin to read your book backwards and say, “Amen,” before you have said your pater noster! Begin with “Our Father,” and then you will go on to, “Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.” But begin with “the kingdom,” and you will have hard work to go back to “Our Father.” We must begin with faith. We must begin with—  
*“Nothing in my hands I bring.”*  
As God made the world out of nothing, He always makes His Christians out of nothing. And he who has nothing at all tonight shall find Grace and mercy, if he will come for it.  
Let me close up by telling you that I have heard of some poor woman, who was converted and brought to life just by passing down a street and hearing a child, sitting at a door, singing—  
*“I am nothing at all  
But Jesus Christ is All-in-All.”*  
That is a blessed song. Go home and sing it. And he who can rightly apprehend those little words—who can feel himself vanity without Jesus— but that he has all things in Christ—is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven! And he is there in faith and shall be there in fruition, when he shall wake up in God’s likeness!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2702 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“MARVELOUS LOVING KINDNESS”  
NO. 2702

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 20, 1881.

**“Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
Psalm 17:7.**

THE Lord’s people, in the time of their trouble, know where to go for comfort and relief. Being taught of God, they do not hew out for themselves broken cisterns which can hold no water, but they turn to the ever-flowing Fountain, they go to the Wellhead—even to God Himself—and there they cast themselves down and drink to the full. David, when he wrote this Psalm, was evidently in very great distress and, therefore, he says, “I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God: incline Your ear unto me, and hear my speech.” What he needed was his God, as Dr. Watts expresses it—

*“In darkest shades if He appears,  
My dawning is begun.  
He is my soul’s sweet morning star,  
And He my rising sun.”*  
Believers draw comfort both from God’s ordinary and extraordinary dealings with them, for they regard God’s loving kindness as being both an ordinary and an extraordinary thing. I have heard of a good Sister who, when a friend narrated to her some very gracious dealing of God, was asked the question, “Is it not very wonderful?” and she replied, “No, it is not wonderful, for it is just like Him.” Begging her pardon and admitting the great Truth of God that she meant to convey, I think it is still more wonderful that it should be “just like Him.” The wonder of extraordinary love is that God should make it such an ordinary thing, that He should give to us “marvelous loving kindness,” and yet should give it so often that it becomes a daily blessing, and still remains marvelous! The marvels of men, after you have seen them a few times, cease to excite any wonder. I suppose there is scarcely a building, however costly its materials, and however rare its architecture, as to which, sooner or later, you will not feel that you have seen enough of it. But God’s wonderful works never pall upon you. You could gaze upon Mont Blanc, or you could stand and watch Niagara Falls, yet never feel that you had exhausted all its marvels. And everyone knows how the ocean is never twice alike. They who live close to it and look upon it every hour of the day, still see God’s wonders in the deep!  
That God should bless us every day is a theme for our comfort. God’s ordinary ways charm us. The verse before our text says, “‘I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God.’ I know You will, for the blessing that I am about to ask from You is a thing that I have been accustomed to receive from You. I know You will hear me, for You have heard me in the past; it is a habit of Yours to listen to my supplications, and to grant my requests.” I hope we can argue in a similar fashion, yet, at the same time, God’s people draw equal comfort from the extraordinary character of the mercies He bestows upon them. They appeal to Him to show them His “marvelous loving kindness,” to let them see the wonderful side of it as well as the common side of it. To let them behold His miracles of mercy, His extravagances of love, His superfluities of kindness—I scarcely know what words to use when talking of what the Apostle Paul calls “the riches of His Grace, wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence,” “the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”  
I want, on this occasion, to dwell upon the extraordinary side of God’s loving kindness and, using our text as a prayer, to say to the Lord in the language of David, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Sometimes a man is brought into such a condition that he feels that if God does not do something quite out of the common order of things, he will assuredly perish. He has now come to such a pass, that if some extraordinary Grace is not displayed towards him, all is over with him. Well, now, such a Brother may think that God will not give this extraordinary Grace to him. He may be troubled at the idea that some marvelous thing is needed. It is to meet that suggestion of unbelief that I am going to address you now.  
I. And my first remark is that ALL THE LOVING KINDNESS OF GOD IS MARVELOUS.  
The least mercy from God is a miracle. That God does not crush our sinful race is a surprising mercy. That you and I should have been spared to live—even though it were only to exist in direst poverty, or in sorest sickness—that we should have been spared at all, after what we have been and after what we have done, is a very marvelous thing. The explanation of the marvel is given in the Book of Malachi—“I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” If God had possessed such a short temper as men often have, He would have made short work with us all. But He is gracious and long-suffering and, therefore, he is very patient with us. The very least mercy that we ever receive from God is a very wonderful thing, but when we think of all that is meant by this blessed word, “loving kindness”—which is a compound of all sorts of sweetness, a mixture of fragrances to make up one absolutely perfect perfume—when we take that word, “loving kindness,” and think over its meaning, we shall see that it is a marvelous thing, indeed, that it describes!  
For, first, it is marvelous for its antiquity. To think that God should have had loving kindness towards men before the earth was, that there should have been a Covenant of Election—a plan of Redemption—a scheme of Atonement—that there should have been eternal thoughts of love in the mind of God towards such a strange being as man, is, indeed, marvelous! “What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him?” Read these words with tears in your eyes—“I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” And when you know that this passage refers to you, tell me if it is not “marvelous loving kindness.” God’s mind is occupied with thoughts concerning things that are infinitely greater than the destiny of anyone of us, or of all of us put together! Yet He was pleased to think of us in love from all eternity and to write our names upon His hands and upon His heart, and to keep the remembrance of us perpetually before Him, for His “delights were with the sons of men.” This antiquity makes it to be, indeed, “marvelous loving kindness.” Next, think of its discriminating character, that God’s loving kindness should have come to the poorest, to the most illiterate, the most obscure and often to the most guilty of our race. Remember what Paul wrote about this matter—“not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not manly noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence.” Dr. Watts expresses the same thought in his verses—  
*“When the Eternal bows the skies  
To visit earthly things,  
With scorn Divine He turns His eyes  
From towers of haughty kings.  
He bids His awful chariot roll  
Far downward from the skies,  
To visit every humble soul,  
With pleasure in His eyes.”*  
God’s choice is marvelous! I know of no better word to apply to His loving kindness to His chosen than that which is applied in the text—“Your marvelous loving kindness”—  
*“What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
“Twas even so, Father,’ you ever must sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Your sight.’”*  
There is no other explanation of this wondrous mercy, this “marvelous loving kindness,” than the poet gives—  
*“His love, from eternity fixed upon you,  
Broke forth and discovered its flame,  
When each with the cords of His kindness He drew, And brought you to love His great name.”*So, Beloved, think over the antiquity of God’s loving kindness and then  
of the discriminating character of it—and surely you will be full of adoring wonder!  
After that, think also of the self-sacrificing nature of His loving kindness—that, when God had set His heart on man, and had chosen His people before the foundation of the world, then He should give—what? Himself. Yes, nothing short of that—that He should not only give us this world, His Providence, all its blessings, the world to come and all its glories, but that, in order to our possession of these things, He should give His own Son to die for us! Well might the Apostle John write, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” It was not that Christ died for us when we were righteous, “for scarcely for a righteous man will one die,” “but God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Isaiah had long before explained the mystery—“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He has put Him to grief.” You who love your children, to lose one of whom would be worse than to die—you can realize a little of what must have been the Father’s love to you in giving up His only-begotten Son that you might live through Him. Dwell on this great Truth of God, dear Friends. Meditate on it and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into its heights, depths, length, and breadths, for these lips cannot fully speak of its wonders! As you think over the Lord’s ancient loving kindnesses which has always been, His distinguishing love towards His redeemed and His self-sacrificing love in giving up His OnlyBegotten, you will be obliged to say, “It is marvelous loving kindness! It is marvelous loving kindness, indeed!”

Then go on to think of the marvelous constancy of it. That one should begin to love another is not so very wonderful—but that love, after it has been despised and ill-requited, should still continue—that the sweet love of Christ should not long ago have curdled into jealousy, and from jealousy have soured into indignation, is an extraordinary thing! He loved us, Brothers and Sisters, when we did not even know Him and yet hated the Unknown—when we did not even dimly understand His love to us and, perhaps, even ridiculed it, or at least neglected it! Yet He kept on loving us until He loved us into loving Him! But even since then, what has been our character? Are you satisfied with what you have been towards the Well-Beloved? Are you content with your conduct towards the Bridegroom of your souls? I know that you are not, and yet, notwithstanding your lukewarmness, your backsliding, your dishonoring of His name, your unbelief, your pride, your love of others, He still loves you, and even now, if you are not enjoying fellowship with Him, He has not gone away from you, for His Word still is, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.”  
He loves, He loves on and He still loves. Many waters cannot quench His love, neither can the floods drown it. It is, indeed, “marvelous loving kindness.” Can you think of a better adjective than that? I cannot, yet I am conscious that even it does not fully express the miraculous character of this all-enduring love which will not take our, “No,” for an answer, but still says, “Yes—‘yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.’” Oh, this wonderful, this matchless, this unparalleled, this inconceivable, this infinite love! No human language can adequately describe it, so let us sit still and marvel at that which we cannot even understand.  
There is much in God’s loving kindness to be marveled at in its strange ingenuity. I might keep on with this topic forever, applying one word and another to it, yet I should never have shown you even a tenth of its wonders, for it is an altogether inexhaustible theme! But it is wonderful how God deals with us with such a sacred ingenuity of tenderness. He seems to be always thinking of something for our good, while we, on our part, appear to be always testing His love in one way or another. Some fresh need is discovered only to receive a new supply of Grace. Some fresh sin breaks out only to be blotted out with the ever-pardoning blood of Jesus. We get into fresh difficulties only to receive fresh aid. The further I go on my way to Heaven, the more I admire the road as well as wonder at the goal to which that road shall bring me. “O world of wonders!” said John Bunyan, “I can say no less.”  
They tell us, nowadays, that the world is worn-out and that there is no joy in life, and nothing fresh to afford delight. Ah, me, they talk of the attractions of fiction and of the playwright’s art, and I know not what besides. They must travel all round the world to get a new sensation and many a man, today, is like the Emperor Tiberius who offered large sums of money to anyone who could invent a new pleasure, meaning, alas, too often, a new vice, or a new way of practicing it. But staying at home with Christ has more wonders in it than gadding abroad with all the wisest of the world! There is more to marvel at in half an inch of the way to Heaven than there is in a thousand leagues of the ordinary pathway of unbelieving men. They call their joys by the name of, “life,” and say that they must “see life.” But the Apostle John tells us that “he that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.” That is to say, he is dead. Death has its varieties of worms and rottenness. There are charnel-houses and charnel-houses, various processes and methods of corruption and, no doubt, there is a science that men may learn in the cemetery and call it life, if they like. But, oh, if they did but once see Christ upon the Cross, they would learn that they had been blind till then! If they did but know His loving kindness, they would rejoice in it in the sick-chamber, in the long weary night watches when every bone prevented sleep. They would even recognize it in the arrows of death that smote wife, and child, and brother. They would see it, not only in the table loaded for the supply of hunger, and in the garments furnished against the cold, and in every common blessing of Providence, but they would also see it in every despondency, in every deficiency, in every cross and every loss—and, seeing it, they would keep on saying, “It is all for the best. It is far better than the best could have been if it had been left to me. It is marvelous! It is marvelous loving kindness.”  
I believe that when we get to Heaven, one of the wonders of the Gloryland will be to look back upon the road over which we have traveled. It will be marvelous to note the way in which God has led us and we shall,

as our hymn puts it— *“Sing with rapture and surprise,  
His loving kindness in the skies!”*

I must now leave this part of my subject with you, only again urging you to think over the Truth of which I have been speaking, that all God’s loving kindness to His people is marvelous.

II. Now, secondly, WE SHOULD DESIRE TO SEE THIS LOVING KINDNESS. The Psalmist says, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” And we ought to ask God to let us see it—and that, I think, in four ways.

First, let me see it with my intellect, that I may adore. Help me, O blessed Spirit, to see and understand what is the loving kindness of God to my soul! I know that it is written of some that “they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.” Let me be among the number of those truly wise ones. O Lord, make me wise to see the end and design of Your Providence as well as the Providence itself! Make me wise to perceive how You have prepared Your Grace to meet my depravity, how You adapt Your holding me up to the slipperiness of the way and to the feebleness of my feet. Often shed a ray of light upon some passage in my life which otherwise I could not comprehend—and let the light stay there till I begin to see and to know why You did this and why You did that. “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”

I am sure, dear Friends, that the lessons of a man’s own life are too often neglected, but there is in the life of any ordinary child of God—let me pick you out wherever you may be—John, Mary, Thomas—enough to fill you with wonder and admiration of the loving kindness of the Lord if your mind is but sufficiently illuminated to perceive the hand of God in it, and to see what God purposed by it. He sometimes uses strange means for producing blessed results. With His sharp axe, He will cut down all our choice trees. As by a whirlwind or a tornado, He will devastate our gardens and make our fields a desolation. And He will do it all in order that He may drive us away from the City of Destruction and make us go on pilgrimage to the Celestial City, where the axe can never come, and the leaves will never fade. In His mysterious dealings with us, the Lord often seems to push us backward that we may go forward, and to deluge us with sorrow that He may immerse us in blessings! That is His way of wondrously working and if we did but understand it, according to the prayer of the text, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness,” we would be full of adoring wonder.

The next meaning I would give to this prayer would be, Lord, show Your loving kindness to my heart, that I may give You thanks. Lord, I know that You have been very good to me, but I pray You to show my heart how good You have been, by letting me see how unworthy I have been of this, Your kindness. It is very profitable, sometimes, to sit down and rehearse the loving kindness of God, mingling with it penitential reflections upon your own shortcoming. If you do this, you will at last break out with some such cry as this, “Why is all this mercy shown to me?” I know a dear Brother in Christ, a clergyman, whose name is Curme—he divides it into two syllables, “Cur me,” so as to make it mean, “Why me? Why is all this goodness given to me, Lord?” And that is a question which I, too, would ask, “Why me, Lord?”—

*“Why was I made to hear Your voice,  
And enter while there’s room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?”*

Is this kindness, and this, and this, all meant for me? Can it really be intended for me? Such reflections as these will make me realize more than ever, how “marvelous” is God’s “loving kindness” to me, and will fill my soul with adoring gratitude and thanksgiving.

Then, next, we ought to pray the Lord to show His “marvelous loving kindness” to our faith, that we may again confide in Him. If He will cause the eyes of our faith to see that He has this “marvelous loving kindness” toward us, we shall be the more ready to rely upon Him in all the straits into which we may yet be brought. Do you believe it, my dear Friend? Brother in Christ, do you believe that God loves you? You know how sweet it is to be sure that your child loves you. Though it may well do so, because of its many obligations to you, yet is it sweet for its warm cheek to touch yours and to hear it say, “Father, I love you.” But, oh, it is far sweeter for God to say, “I love you.” Read the Song of Solomon through and be not afraid to appropriate the message of that sweet and matchless Canticle! Hear in it the voice of Jesus saying to you, “You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you.” “You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse; you have ravished My heart with one of your eyes, with one chain of your neck.” Such words as those may be sensuous to those who are sensuous, but they are deeply spiritual to those who are spiritual and, oh, the bliss of having such words as those to come from the Christ of God to us! Why, sometimes, when our Lord thus speaks to us, we hardly know how to bear our excess of joy! I would not ask for a better holiday than to have one hour alone with Jesus—to be undisturbed by any earthly care and to think of nothing else but the love of God—the love of God to me! Oh, that it were now shed abroad, in all its fullness, in this poor heart of mine! O Divine Love, what is there that can ever match Your inexpressible sweetness? Truly it is “marvelous loving kindness.” Again I ask you—Do you believe this? Are you sure you do? Pray God to show it to your faith, distinctly and clearly, so that you shall be absolutely sure of it and practically depend upon it whenever you need it.

One other meaning of the text may be show Your “marvelous loving kindness” to me, now, in my experience, that I may rest in You. Let me, now, at this present moment, O my God, experience something of that loving kindness in my soul, in whatever condition I may happen to be, that I may be so flooded with the consciousness of it that I may do nothing else but sit in solemn silence before You and adore You while beholding the blazing splendor of Your love! I cannot say anymore about this part of my theme, but must leave you to fill up the gaps in the sermon. This is not a topic upon which one should venture to speak if he wants to say all that should or could be said upon it.

III. So, thirdly, dear Friends, I remark that IT SHOULD BE OUR DESIRE—and there are times when it should especially be our desire—TO SEE THIS “MARVELOUS LOVING KINDNESS” OF GOD DISPLAYED TO US IN ITS MARVELOUSNESS.

I will make plain to you what I mean directly and, first, we would see it as pardoning great sin. I expect we have here, in this assembly, at least one whose sin lies very heavy on his conscience. We do not find many such people come out to week-evening services, but yet I thank God that they do come. Your sin is very great, dear Friend. I cannot exaggerate it because your own sense of its greatness far surpasses any descriptions I could give. You feel that if God were to pardon you, it would be a marvelous thing. If He were, in one moment, to take all your guilt away and to send you home completely forgiven, it would be a marvelous thing! Yes, it would. And I beg you to pray this prayer, “Lord, show forth Your marvelous loving kindness in me.” God is constantly doing wonders. Then, glorify His name by believing that He can work this miracle of mercy for you. Do not be afraid to sing—

*“Great God of wonders! All Your ways  
Are matchless, God-like, and Divine.  
But the fair glories of Your Grace  
More God-like and unrivalled shine!  
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?  
Or who has Grace so rich and free?”*

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and saved immediately! Trust Him, now, and marvelous though it will be to you—I have shown you that God’s loving kindness is all marvelous, that the extraordinary is ordinary with Him, and that the marvelous is but an everyday thing with Him—pray for this “marvelous loving kindness” to be manifested to you and you shall have it! One said, “If God ever saves me, He shall never hear the end of it.” You may say the same and resolve that, henceforth, having had much forgiven, you will love much—having been saved from great sin, you will tell it on earth, and tell it in Heaven and, if you could, you would even wish to make Hell itself resound with the wondrous story—

*“‘Tell it unto sinners tell,*

*I am, I am out of Hell’—*  
“and what is more, I am on the road to Heaven, for God’s ‘marvelous loving kindness’ has been shown to me!”

So God’s loving kindness may be seen as pardoning great sin. And next, it may be seen as delivering from deep trouble. I may be addressing some poor child of God who is sorely perplexed. These are very trying times and we constantly meet with godly people who have a sincere desire to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but who do not find it easy to do. Some very gracious people have got into serious straits and how they will get out, they cannot imagine. If this is your case, dear Friend, I expect you feel very much as John Fawcett’s hymn puts it—

*“My soul, with various tempests tested,  
Her hopes overturned, her projects crossed, Sees every day new straits attend,  
And wonders where the scene will end.”*

Well, now, if you are ever brought through all your troubles, it will be “marvelous loving kindness” to you, will it not? Then go to God with the prayer, “Show me Your marvelous loving kindness,” and He will do it. He will bring you up, and out, and through—not, perhaps, in the way you would like to come—but He will bring you out in the best way. “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your ways unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.” Always expect the unexpected when you are dealing with God! Look to see, in God, and from God, what you never saw before, for the very things which will seem to unbelief—to be utterly impossible—will be those which are most likely to happen when you are dealing with Him whose arm is Omnipotent, and whose heart is faithful and true. God grant you Grace, dear Friend, thus to use the prayer of our text as the means of delivering you from deep trouble!

Here is another way to use it. I think you may pray it thus—at any event, I mean to do so, whether you will or not—“Lord, reveal Your marvelous loving kindness to me, so as to give me high joys and ecstasies of delight.” I sometimes envy those good people who never go up and never go down, always keeping at one level—theirs must be a very pleasant experience, indeed. Still, if ever I do get on the high horse, then I go up far beyond anything I can describe. If ever I do ride upon the clouds, then I do not envy the people who stay along the smooth road. Oh, what deep depressions some of us have had! We have gone down to the very bottoms of the mountains and the earth, and her bars have seemed to be about us forever. But, after just one glimpse of God’s everlasting love, we have been up there where the young lightning flashes, resting and trusting among the tempests, near to God’s right hand! I think, no, I am sure we may pray for this experience! Should not the preacher of the Word wish to know the fullness of Divine Love? Should not the teacher of the young long to learn all that he can concerning God’s Infinite Love? Though this is the love that passes knowledge, should not every Christian wish to know all that is knowable of this great love of God? Then let us pray, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”

It was truly said, “You cannot see God’s face and live.” But I have been inclined to say, “Then let me see God’s face, and die.” John Welsh said, when God was flooding his soul with a sense of His wondrous love, “Stop, Lord, stop! I am but an earthen vessel and You will break me.” If I had been there and I could have borne no more, I would have said, “Do not stop, Lord! Break the poor earthen vessel—smash it to pieces—but let Your love be revealed in me!” Oh, that I might even die of this pleasurable pain of knowing too much of God, too much of the ineffable delight of fellowship with Him! Let us be very venturesome, Beloved, and pray, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”

And, when we have done that, I think we may put up this prayer for ourselves, as to our own usefulness. You want to do good, dear Brother— dear sister. Well, then, pray to God, “Show me Your marvelous loving kindness, O Lord! Use even such a feeble creature as I am. Let Heaven, and earth, and Hell, itself, see that You can save souls by poor ignorant men as well as by inspired Apostles and learned doctors! Lord, in my Chapel, show Your marvelous loving kindness. Crowd it with people and bring many of them to Christ. In my class, Lord, show Your marvelous loving kindness. If there never was a Sunday school class in which all were saved, Lord, let it be done in mine. Make it a marvelous thing.” A dear Brother, who prayed at the Prayer Meeting before this service, kept on pleading that God would bless me again as He had done before. I liked that prayer—it was as if my friend meant to say to the Lord,” Whatever You did in years gone by, do the same over again. If ever it was a marvelous thing to see how the people thronged to hear the Word, Lord, make it still more marvelous.”

I remember when some people called our early success “a nine days’ wonder.” Well, well, well—it has been a good long nine days! But, oh, that we might have another nine days like it—just such another nine days! May God be pleased to send us as many conversions as we had at the first—yes, and I shall add, and ten times as many! And if ever there have been revivals in the Church of God that have been really marvelous, Brothers and Sisters, let us take up the cry, “Lord, show Your marvelous loving kindness again! Send us another Whitefield, and another Wesley, if such will be the kind of men that will bless the world. Send us another Luther, another Calvin, another Zwingli, if such are the men that will bless the world. Lord, send us another Augustine, or another Jerome, if such are the men by whom You will bless the world. But, in some way or other, Lord, show us Your marvelous loving kindness.”

“Oh, but,” some would say, “we do not need any excitement. That is an awful thing, you know—anything like excitement.” And, then, perhaps, they add, “We have heard so much of what has been done in previous revivals. It has all ended in smoke and, therefore, we really dread the repetition of such an experience.” Well, then, Brother, you go home and pray, “Lord, show me Your moderate loving kindness.” When you are on your knees, tonight, pray, “Lord, save half-a-dozen souls here, and there—

*“‘We are a garden walled around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground.  
A little spot, enclosed by Grace,  
Out of the world’s wide wilderness.’—*

“Lord, make it yet smaller, screw us up still tighter, to the glory of Your blessed name!”

I don’t think any of you can pray that prayer! You shall, if you like, but for my part, I mean to pray, and I hope many of you will join me in it, and may God hear us—“Show us Your marvelous loving kindness!” Oh, for some new miracle of mercy to be worked in the earth! Oh, for some great thing to be done, such as was done of old! Shall it be so, or not? On this promise it shall depend—“Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” But if our mouths are not open, we cannot expect to get the blessing. “According to your faith be it unto you.” The Lord grant that our faith may expect to see His “marvelous loving kindness” displayed yet more and more! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 17.**

Verse 1. Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goes not out of deceitful lips. Good men are often slandered and misunderstood and, at such times, the first verse of this Psalm will well fit their lips. “Hear the right, O Lord.” And, at all times, it is a great blessing when a supplicant can say to God, “Give ear unto my prayer, that goes not out of deceitful lips.” It must be a dreadful thing to pray with lips that do not speak the truth! When men’s thoughts are far away from their prayers, and they are muttering pious words but their heart is absent, what a mockery it must be in the sight of God! A dead prayer— who will claim it? Beware of dead prayers. You may dress them up as finely as you like, but, if there is no life in them, what good are they?

2. Let my sentence come forth from Your Presence; let Your eyes behold the things that are equal. It is the appeal of a slandered man to the highest court. He takes his case into the Court of King’s Bench, and asks God, Himself, to give the verdict concerning what he had done. It is a good case that will bear to be so investigated.

3. You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me, and shall find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Happy is the man who is not afraid for God to come to him suddenly in the night, or to pounce upon him, as it were, at any hour of the day, for, whenever He comes, He will find His servant so acting that he will not mind who examines his conduct. He is keeping his lips, purposing that they shall not transgress God’s Law, and he is ruling his whole body in like manner. Only the Grace of God can enable us to do this.

4. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the destroyer. Notice that verse, young man! There is much-needed teaching there for you. There are many “paths of the destroyer” in this wicked city of London, and all over the world—and it is only by taking heed to our ways, according to God’s Word, that we can hope to escape from them. How pleasant those “paths of the destroyer” often appear to be! How smooth and how alluring they are! All sorts of supposed delicacies and beauties will tempt you to go that way, and the foolish heart readily inclines to these indulgences, but happy is the man whose judgment is enlightened by God’s Word so that he avoids it, and passes by “the paths of the destroyer.”

5. Hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not. “I know that I am in Your way, but, O Lord, hold me up! I am like a horse that needs a careful driver, else I shall trip and fall, in rough places or in smooth, ‘Hold up my goings in Your paths,’ for I may fall even there. There are the sins of my holy things, so ‘hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not.’”

6-12. I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God: incline Your ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show Your marvelous loving kindness, O You that saves by Your right hand them who put their trust in You from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of Your eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies who compass me about. They are enclosed in their own fat—with their mouth they speak proudly. They have now compassed us in our steps—they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places. Many godly men have such cruel enemies as David had, so they will do well to pray as he did!

13-15. Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Your sword: from men which are Your hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me— “What do I possess? What is my portion? Am I full of substance, like the men of the world, or have I little of this world’s wealth? It is of small consequence, for, ‘as for me’”—  
15. I will behold Your face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness. That is our portion! God grant that we may prize it more and more! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—196, 18 (VERSION 2), 719.  
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AN EARNEST ENTREATY  
NO. 3470

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 1915. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
Psalm 17:7.

IF one were about to have an audience with the Queen, or with some other royal personage, he might be apt to say, “How shall I behave myself? What am I expected to do? What is the proper form of address?” Now, in entering into the Presence of the great King of Kings, the Eternal God, we may suppose the trembling penitent saying, “What shall I do? How shall I come before the Most High God? What words shall I use and into what fashion shall I cast my desires?” Well, Holy Scripture has been very rich in answers to this question, for you have hundreds of most appropriate prayers made ready to your hand! We might readily enough compose a Biblical Liturgy, if one believed in Liturgies at all! Nor would it be difficult to find Scriptural words for every desire that could possibly strike the human heart. The Bible, besides all its other excellences, is a great and universal Prayer Book, and has in it petitions suited to all classes and conditions of men at all times, whatever their desires and necessities may be. Now I take out of this Prayer Book this one short supplication. I know the children of God will join with me in praying it, and I trust that before we have done, some who never prayed before may make this their firm prayer, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Now, in the first place, we may offer up this prayer—

I. DESIRING THAT GOD WOULD SHOW MARVELOUS LOVING KINDNESS IN OUR MEDITATIONS.  
What marvelous loving kindness there is for us to look at! Old as the everlasting hills—but old as it is, and majestic as it must be—there are some eyes that never saw it! Others, too, who, though they have read their Bibles and heard Gospel sermons from their infancy, have never yet seen God’s marvelous loving kindness! Let us spend, then, a few minutes in meditation, in order that the Lord may hear this prayer and show us His loving kindness while we muse upon it.  
You see the root-word, the core-word of the text is “love.” The rest is a description of that love. Well now, in meditating upon God’s love, let us remember how extraordinary it has been. It was in love that, before the world was formed, God chose His people and enrolled them in His Covenant. When, with prescient eyes, the Almighty beheld all men immersed in ruin by their sin, His finger pointed to one man and another, “There will I dwell forever. There shall be My rest,” said the Lord of Hosts, “for I have chosen him.” What love was that which made him choose you and me? Or what motive could prompt Him but that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion? Electing love having dug the fountain, consider, Beloved, how vast that love which entered into the Covenant of Grace to effect the purpose of our redemption—when there was a striking of hands between the Persons of the Trinity, that by that Covenant transaction, promises might be made sure to all the seed by the Covenanting God in Christ. Ponder, I pray you, upon the love that did not cool when the Covenant required sacrifice—which did not refrain when the well-beloved Son of the Father must be the Victim! Surely Solomon must have had this in his mind when he said, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” Did not Jesus leave His Father and His mother that He might cleave unto His Spouse, and that they two might be made one flesh? Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be our Redeemer!  
Need I tell the story of the sufferings of Calvary again? We have painted that picture a thousand times in crimson colors. Dipping our brush into the bloody sweat, we have tried to set forth the agonies of the saints’ Great Substitute. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God! You know the results of that love. ‘Twas love that called you when you were afar off, quickened you when you were dead in sin and raised you out of the grave of your corruption! It was love that turned your face Zionward, and is it not love that has kept it there? Shall we not say that love laid the foundation stone, and love has gone on piling up the walls, stone by stone, and love shall bring in the top stone with shouts of, “Grace, Grace unto it”? Oh, as I read the matchless story of love without beginning, which can never, never cease, I marvel that our hearts are not all on fire, that our passions do not boil over and that our lips do not become like the red lips of Vesuvius when the burning lava sweeps down her sides! Surely our souls ought to feel a fervor and a heavenly flame for love like this! Lord, while we turn these matters over, “show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
But you perceive that this love issues in “kindness.” There may be a sort of kindness that is not loving and, on the other hand, there may be a sort of love that is not kindness. We have known man to be very kind to the poor but he never thought of loving them. What thousands of people we meet with every day who would be kind to Negroes, but they would not think of loving them. And we know, too, that there is a sort of love that is not kind—or if there is kindness at the bottom, it is not very gentle and tender in its manifestation. Love can sometimes be cruel, or at least it can give hard cuts and cause acute pain, forgetful of that debt of mercy and compassion which is due to the infirmities of man’s nature. Now we ought, while we look over the Lord’s dealings with us, to remember the minute traits of His kindness as well as the majestic tokens of His love. Beloved, when the Lord made provision for us in the Covenant, He did not merely provide bread and water for us—just enough to keep His people alive—but He provided for you the generous wine of Jesus’ blood! He provided for you the scarlet and fine linen of Jesus’ righteousness, the downy pillow of the Divine Promise and the soft bed of gracious, sweet, everlasting peace. He did not provide for you a place where you might take refuge from the storm and solace your soul with humble contentment, but He provided for you a Heaven of delights—a Heaven which eyes have not seen, of which ears have not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive! There are streams of kindness gushing up and flowing out from the Fountain of Love! When He called you by His Grace, how kindly He did it! You were not whipped to Christ, or if you were, how soon the stripes disappeared from off your back! How kindly He met you! Oh, that day when you tremblingly came to the foot of His Cross! How He fell upon your neck and kissed you! How He cried, “Take off his rags and put on the best robe!” How He healed the blisters of your weary feet, put silver sandals upon them and taught you how to dance! How generously He attired you in the sumptuous robe of a prince’s son, put a crown of pure gold upon your head and gave you such thoughts of mercy and such gentle words of loving kindness that your heart, which was earlier ready to burst with grief, was well near bursting with joy! Lord, while we think how kind You have been to us from the day when we first knew You, even until now, we may truly wonder that we do not love You better, and pray that while we turn over Your acts of mercy, You will show Your marvelous loving kindness.

Oh, yes, it is indeed “marvelous !” We must say a word upon that. What is so fit to excite wonder and keep up a sense of continual surprise as the love of God? Do men tell us there are no such things as miracles? Why, every Christian is a living reply to their allegation! No such thing as a miracle? The existence of a Believer from day to day is a string of miracles which the laws of Nature will not account for. Every Christian will tell you that his experience is miraculous from the beginning of his faith to this day, and so will it continue to be to the end. What a marvel it was, Brothers and Sisters, that God should ever have bestowed His loving kindness upon such as we have been! We were not among those good people who never did anything wrong. There was nothing in our disposition or character to recommend us. We were sinners, and in our own esteem, sinners of the most crimsoned dye whose iniquities were like scarlet double-dyed! Yet He had mercy on us! We were poor and unlettered, feeble and unbefriended, yet He was moved with compassion toward us! Passing by many of the great and deserving of esteem, He called the base things of our order and the things that men despise, that these might be nurslings of His care and precious in His sight. From what did He call us? From the silliness of the foolish. Some of us from the fellowship of drunkards, from the harlot’s haunts, or it may be others of you from the thief’s den, from the seat of the scorner, or from the chair of the blasphemer. And if not steeped in crime, you were, perhaps, puffed up with self-righteousness and so fast held in Satan’s stronghold. When we think of what we were and what we came from, we see that the loving kindness must be marvelous, indeed!  
And then, if you recollect what you would have been if He had not called you, here again is a marvel! Why, we might have been in Hell! Certainly we should have been ripening for it, going on with rapid footsteps down to the place where hope could never reach us! And think yet further of what He has called us to. Oh, how marvelous is this! The criminal has become a child, the rebel has become a prince, the traitor wears a crown—we who were like firebrands fitted for the flame, are waving the palm, wearing the crown and singing the song! I know not what you think of it, Brothers and Sisters, but in every view I take of the great acts of God’s Grace towards Believers, it is to me, marvelous loving kindness! Meditation upon these great acts of Divine Grace might tend very much to promote gratitude, and it were well if we sometimes set apart a time to go over in our thought and recollection all the mighty acts of the gracious God of Israel. But I have said enough upon the first point—so let me proceed briefly to speak upon a second. Surely David meant to say—  
II. “SHOW YOUR MARVELOUS LOVING KINDNESS IN OUR EXPERIENCE.”  
It may be there is a man over yonder who did not think of coming in here tonight at all, till, as he was passing by the building, he saw so large a crowd that he decided he would step in, though he fully meant to go out again. But, somehow or other, here he is. Man, you know what you have been. It is not for me to recount your sins before this assembly, but be assured the darkness of night has not covered them—neither has the silence of your confederates concealed them! The Lord that searches all hearts and tries the reins knows your iniquity. No feature of it is hidden from His eyes. Still, thus says the Lord of Hosts unto you this night, “Turn you, turn you! Why will you die?” And thus say I unto you—Pray this prayer this evening and who can tell but God may have mercy upon you, that you perish not? Pray it now. Let me offer it aloud for you, “Show Your loving kindness.” I know you say, “If God should have mercy on me, it will be a great wonder! If He should change my heart and make me a saint, it would be a marvel, indeed!” Just so, Sinner, but that is just why I put this prayer into your mouth, for it suits you—“Show me Your marvelous loving kindness.” Do you not see that you have been a marvelous sinner? Marvelously ungrateful have you been! Marvelously have you aggravated your sins! Marvelously did you kick against a mother’s tears! Marvelously did you defy a father’s counsel! Marvelously have you laughed at death! Marvelously have you made a covenant with death and a league with Hell! But your covenant with death is broken, and your league with Hell is disannulled—and He who does great wonders meets you tonight and says, “Come, now, let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” Believe on Him that died upon the tree, who Himself bore our sins in His own body! There is life in Jesus Christ for those who turn their eyes on Him! Look to Him! Look to Him, now, and live! I wish this prayer might be taken up in many parts of this congregation by some who have been outcasts in Israel, that they might pray, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
Yes, I know that young man yonder, and his history. He has been for months anxious about his soul. Sermon after sermon has stirred him up. He gets no sleep. He goes to his little chamber and cries to his God. He is almost despairing and the devil almost tempts him to make away with himself, or to give up all hope. “Oh,” he says, “God will never have mercy on me! It is too great a thing to hope, too great a wonder to expect!” Young man, here is a new prayer for you, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” I have heard of a poor old woman who had long been bowed down with a sense of guilt, who said, when she found the Savior, that if Jesus Christ would but save her, He would never hear the last of it, for she would praise Him as long as she had any being! I remember that I thought, myself, if Jesus Christ would but save me, that I would do anything for His sake—and if anybody had told me that I should ever be such a sorry coldhearted dolt as I have been, I would not have believed him nor would any Christian believe it if he were told it about himself! We thought we could do anything for Christ, burn like martyrs, or live like servants! We have not done it, but yet it is a marvelous thing that God should save us! Young man, take that prayer. I was going to say, take it home, but I do not like to put even half an hour between you and this prayer! Now put your hands to your eyes, or, if you do not care to do that, yet say in your soul, “Oh, God, You that do great wonders, You who are the Miracle Worker, show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Why, this prayer will just suit my Christian Brother, there, who has come in here tonight. He is a Christian, but he has long been a backslider. Poor man! His Brothers and Sisters have looked very coolly on him—and well they may—for he certainly did disgrace the cause. But he is a child of God for all that, and the Lord still loves him! Brother, you have been much depressed—you have thought the Lord had forsaken you and now you almost think it is impossible that you should be one of His. Well now, here is a prayer that will suit you, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Surely it will be a marvel if He should again make your bones which have been broken to rejoice, and restore unto you the joy of His salvation! And He will do it, if you can but plead this prayer!  
And I know my Friend over yonder, too, who has had so many losses in business, and such a succession of trials, wave upon wave— *“You see each day new straits attend,  
And wonder where the scene will end.”*  
Brother, God can deliver you! Oh, what a blessing it is to have such a God to deal with! Come to Him with your great load and say, “Lord, here is wondrous work needed—show Your marvelous loving kindness.” But, you say, you are placed in very peculiar circumstances. Just so. Now take the words of my text, you that are growing old in Grace, and are growing feeble in body at the same time—can you not say, “Now, Lord, now, before Your servant goes hence. Before these gray hairs shall lie with the clods of the valley, show me once more Your marvelous loving kindness.” And, I think, this is a prayer I would like to die with, when the cold stream begins to rise above the ankles, even up to the knees—when the floods overflow till they come even unto the chin—how sweet it will be to say in death, “Show Your loving kindness.” This will help you to die! It will enable you to meet the adversary with the shout of victory! Yes, as you stand on Jordan’s shore, you will raise one more sacred pillar, and then mount with joy and sing in Heaven, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
So this prayer will do for beginners, and it is alike suitable for those who are ending their course. I may call it the Alpha-prayer and the Omega-prayer—fit for babes, and fit for strong men! Take it up, each one of you, and say, “Show me Your marvelous loving kindness.” Having thus taken this prayer first as to meditation, and then as to experience, we will now take it as—  
III. A REQUEST PREFERRED FOR SOME SIGNAL GIFT.  
“Show Your marvelous loving kindness by some special revelation to me at this time.” I think one of the best translators of the Hebrew gives it, “Distinguish Your loving kindness.” I do not know which to quote, but several of them seem to treat the passage in this way, “Lord, You have a great many loving kindnesses. I am just now in great trouble. Pick out one of Your loving kindnesses—distinguish—give me in my time of extraordinary need some extraordinary loving kindness. Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” If you lay the stress on the word, “marvelous,” you will then get the pith of it. I think it is Trapp who said that “God is good at a dead-lift”—and he has put a deal of meaning into that homely phrase. When you and I can do nothing, and it has come to a dead-lift, then we need our God and then we may say to Him, “Now, Lord, show me more than Your known goodness—show Your marvelous loving kindness. Oh, let us see what Omnipotence can do! Human wisdom fails—let Omniscience come to our aid! Lord, we are at our wits’ end—may this, our extremity, prove to be Your opportunity. Show Your

 marvelous loving kindness.” Do you not think we shall be warranted in using this prayer as we gather round the Table, tonight, to partake of the Lord’s Supper? (My sermon seems to have more praying than preaching in it). Lord, here are the emblems that set forth Your body and Your blood—now “show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Oh, do give us some choice token for good, some special mercy such as we received not when last we met for this communion! Lord, we are very weary. We have been harassed in the world. We need rest—give us some marvelous peace, some sacred calm, some sweet repose which we have not known before! Gathered as we are here, can we not, as Believers, cry, “Have You not a blessing, O my Father? Give it to me, even to me, O my Father”?  
I am always afraid lest, as a Church, your graces should droop, lest your zeal should cool, lest your prayers should grow feeble, lest the green, vigorous life of the Church should begin to wither and lose its force. I put up this prayer for you all—Lord, give us a revival season tonight! “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Let us now feel the quickening touch of Your Divine Presence. Let us now be illuminated by the Presence of Your Spirit, and comforted with the whispers of Your Son! If any of you here are despondent, I pray that you have “marvelous loving kindness shown you tonight, that the Lord may dip your morsel in His cup, that you may lean on His bosom and feed from His Table! You feeble saints, I pray that the Lord, your Strength, may manifest Himself to you—that He would be pleased to cheer and refresh you by choice Revelations, by the outgoings of His Grace towards you, and by the drawings of your heart towards Himself. Thus you may get the full meaning of this prayer unfolded and verified to you tonight, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.”  
I do not know, dear Brothers and Sisters, how it is with you, but there are times with me when I do get visions of “marvelous loving kindness.” No doubts cast their shadows across my soul, then! No fears alarm, no cares distract me, then. Even my anxieties for you are hushed. I have no remembrance of anybody’s faults, no recollection of my own troubles, no thought about the pressure of work, or the perils of adversity—all is loving kindness from beginning to end! My soul revels in it. Like a strong swimmer, we bathe and swim in the river of His pleasure! We dive to the bottom and rise up again. The spirit is filled with ecstasy and flooded with delight! These seasons, when they do come, give us strength to perform fresh labor and to endure future trial. They are, indeed, the wells of Elim and the palm trees thereof under which we sit and drink! May this night be to us some such season as that!  
But you are going away, many of you. I beg you not to pass from under yonder columns until you have paused a minute and said, “Show Your marvelous loving kindness.” Let us all pray that prayer, “O Lord, show Your marvelous loving kindness. Show it to me.”—  
*“I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.*  
‘Show Your marvelous loving kindness.’ Oh, forgive me. I do accept Your Son. I do believe in Jesus, that He is able to save my soul, and my soul does rest on Him alone. Lord, for Jesus’ sake ‘show Your marvelous loving kindness.’” Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 51; PSALM 119:145-168.**

*PSALM 51.*  
There are seven penitential Psalms, but this seems to be the chief one of the seven. The language of David is as suitable to us today as it was to him. And though much was lost to the cause of righteousness by David’s sin, yet the Church is enriched for all ages by the possession of such a Psalm as this. It is a marvelous recompense. Surely here the Lord reigns, bringing good out of evil, blessing generation after generation through that which in itself was a great evil!

VERSE 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness: according to the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Observe he appeals to mercy, and mercy only—to mercy, abounding mercy in its most tender and kindest aspect. “According to Your tender mercies.” Note here David does not use his name. He does not say, “Lord remember David”—he is ashamed of his name. And he does not seem to want God to remember that, but to remember mercy—and to have pity upon this nameless sinner. He does not say, “Save the son of Your handmaid,” or “Deliver Your servant,” as he was known to do. He just appeals to mercy, and that is all. And observe it is not, “Have mercy upon me, oh my God.” He is far off now. He has lost the comfortable assurance of the Covenant of Grace and so it is rather more like the cry of the prodigal when he returned and said, “I am not worthy to be called your son.” Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness—according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out—(or as more correctly it might be rendered, “wash out”—“wipe out”)—my transgressions. The allusion is rather to a dish—wipe it out, turn it upside down and turn out all that is in it, sweep it away—wipe out all my transgressions. Or it may be as a withdrawal of a record in court when the indictment is withdrawn, “Lord be pleased to quash the indictment against me. Blot out all my transgressions.”

2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Nothing about the punishment—he does not mention that. The true penitent, though he dreads punishment, much more dreads sin. It is sinfulness—sin that he would be delivered from! “Wash me.” You must do it, no other washing will suffice. Wash me thoroughly, till I am perfectly cleansed. Cleanse me from my sin—my sin. I do not lay it on anyone else. Cleanse me from it.

3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is always before me. Unless sin is before us, we shall not be likely to spread it before God. But when we have knowledge of it, then we shall make acknowledgment of it to God. “My sin is always before me.” He was in such a state of heart that the remembrance of sin seemed painted on his eyeballs. Even in his dreams he remembered it—he was never free from the dread remembrance of it.

4. Against You only have I sinned. Yet he had sinned against many more! But just now the thought of his sin against God swallowed up all else. All his offenses against his fellow men were trivial compared with the high treason which he had committed against his God. This is the virus of sin—that it is sin against God.

4. And done this evil in Your sight. While You were looking on. For a thief to steal in the Presence of the Judge is impudence, indeed, but yet in Your Presence, O my God, I have done this evil.

4. That You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge. As much as to say, “I make this confession of sin, which is so black that if You should judge me, however severely, or sentence me to however exemplary a punishment, You will be quite clear and quite just. I could put in no plea against whatever You should command. I richly deserve all Your wrath can bring upon me.”

5. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. The black stream leads him to look at the black fountain. How can we expect from parents who have sinned, that there should be born unto them pure and spotless children? No, the tendencies in us all towards evil are there at the very first. He does not at all venture to excuse himself, but rather to aggravate his sin, that he had been a sinner from his very birth!

6, 7. Behold You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. He had seen the leper pronounced clean when the hyssop was dipped in blood and sprinkled on him—but then the leper had to be clean beforehand before this could make him ceremonially clean. He is leaping through the first process and coming to the closing one—his soul anxious to be accepted with God at once!

7. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Yet what can be whiter than snow? Snow is not like a white wall that is but white on the surface—it is white all through. And yet when God washes the Believer, He makes him whiter than snow, for the snow soon becomes tainted, soon loses its purity—but we never shall if God shall wash us! There was no provision made for the cleansing of an adulterer under the Law of God. David, therefore, had to look beyond all the sacrifices of the Law to the cleansing power of the great coming Sacrifice, and he so believed in it that with a brave faith—(I know no more brave expression in all Scripture than this)—he says, “Wash me, filthy as I am, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. The original expression is “bones cracked,” or, as one puts it, smashed. His sense of sin had been so great that he felt as one might feel whose very bones had been smashed by some terrible blow. So he seems to say, that as there may be a delightful pleasure in having every one of these broken bones restored, such would be his pleasure if God would pardon his sins.

9. Hide Your face from my sins. If we hide our sins before our faces, then God will turn His face away from our sins. If we hide our sins from our faces, God will set them before His face. But when they are always before us they shall never be before Him.

9, 10. And blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God. It is a creation—the very word is used which is employed concerning the Creation in the first Chapter of Genesis. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

11. Cast me not away from Your Presence: and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. I have put You away from my Presence by forgetting You, but put me not away from Your Presence. I have been filled with an unholy spirit, but oh, take not your Holy Spirit from me!

12. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me. He feels how much he needs it. The burnt child dreads the fire. “Uphold me with Your free Spirit.”

13. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways: and sinners shall be converted unto You. And David has been doing that ever since, for this Psalm has been a continual sermon to sinners, teaching them God’s ways in pardoning sin! And many, I doubt not, have been converted unto God by His Spirit through the language of this Psalm. When you and I find Christ, let us tell of our blessed discovery! Have you honey? Eat it not all yourself—go, tell your fellow men. Are you saved? Tarry not, but go and spread the news that others may be saved, too!

14. Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood, O God, You God of my salvation. His faith is growing. He has humbled himself. It is the way to rise. Weaken yourself before God and you shall grow strong. Empty yourself and you shall be filled! Bow low and He will lift you up. “You God of my salvation.”

14. And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. Those tongues that confess sins are the best tongues to sing with! That tongue which has been salted with the brine of penitence is fitted to be sweet with the honey of praise!

15. O Lord, open You my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. You know the leper when he was unclean—what did he do? He covered his lips, as much as to confess that he was not fit to speak. So here the unclean David, with the covering of his lips, will not venture to speak until the Lord has taken away his sin and opened his mouth for him. It was this that Isaiah meant when he said, “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips”—but when it was said concerning the live coal, “Lo, this has touched your lips,” then he spoke right eloquently. “Lord, open You my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.”

16. For You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offerings. Here we have what God does desire, and what He does not. If you turn to the sixth verse, you will see what He does desire. “You desire truth in the inward parts.” Now here He does not desire the mere outward and external worship rendered by sacrifice. It was not the type alone that satisfied Him.

17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. There are some spices that are never perfect in fragrance till they are pounded with the pestle in the mortar, and so is a broken heart. If it is made to suffer and to smart, yet there is sweet pleasure to the Lord when He perceives in His people the smart concerning sin—when they hate and loathe it.

18, 19. Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: build You the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offerings: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar. Gratitude ascends when sin is forgiven, and when God appears to bless His Church, then she blesses her God.

**PSALM 119:145-168.**  
Verse 145. I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep Your statutes. It is sweet to look back upon our prayers, if those prayers were uttered with our whole heart, for it is no small work of Divine Grace to enable us to throw the whole heart into prayer! And when we get that, we may be quite sure that our prayer will succeed. The God who gives us Grace to pray with the whole heart will be sure to reply to the prayer! After prayer David uttered a resolution, “I will keep Your statutes.” He was resolved upon this with his whole heart, and though a resolution is not enough, for many make resolves and break them, yet no man is likely to keep God’s Word who does not resolve to do so. Therefore it is necessary, first, to cry in prayer, and then to resolve with the whole heart to walk according to God’s will.

146. I cried unto You; save me, and I shall keep Your testimonies. He has got on this string, you see, and he touches it again. First he said, “I cried with my whole heart.” Now again he says, “I cried unto You.” When you are in trouble, if you can remember that you were much in prayer before you entered into the experience which led into the trouble, you can plead with God that you did not rush into it carelessly and prayerlessly—and you have a good argument to urge with Him why He should help you in your time of need.

147, 148. I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help. I hoped in Your Word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I might meditate in Your Word. It was not now and then that David was in a devotional frame of mind! He continued so. He began early, but he continued late. The prayer of the dawn was followed by the watch of the midnight!

149. Hear my voice according unto Your loving kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to Your judgment. He is accustomed to put these two things together, all through this judgment—as much as if he felt that he could—as if he felt that he could appeal both to the tenderness and to the justice of God for help in his time of need. For with a God who has entered into the bonds of the Covenant with us, and pledged Himself by promise and by oath, we may plead both His loving kindness and His judgment.

150, 151. They draw near that follow after mischief: they are far from Your Law. You are near, O LORD: And all Your commandments are truth. How beautiful is this! The enemies are coming near, but You are nearer. They approach me, but I abide with You, and You abide with me. I am safe!

152. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever. Oh, Believer, what comfort there is in this for you! If you have known it all your years, it has been a blessed thing to know that God changes not—that as He spoke before the earth was, so will that Word abide when this world shall cease to be!

153. Consider my affliction and deliver me: for I do not forgot Your Law. Lord, Your Grace has helped me to remember You. I pray You, therefore, remember my affliction. Look at it with Your eyes of wisdom and deliver me.

154-155. Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to Your Word. Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not Your statutes. Salvation is near to any man who seeks it, but the ungodly, as they will not have God’s Word, so shall they not have God’s saving Grace They are far from it.

156. Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to Your judgments. Here again, you see, he puts judgment and mercy together—the justice and the tenderness of God—and he leans on both. It is a mark of an instructed Christian when he is able to derive comfort, not merely from the love of God, but also from the holiness and the justice of God, seeing that these are on his side through Jesus Christ’s atoning blood.

157-158. Many are my persecutors and my enemies; yet do I not decline from Your testimonies. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not Your Word. O child of God, whenever you look upon the transgressors, your heart should bleed that they should transgress so good a Law—that they should grieve so gracious a God—that they should bring upon themselves so terrible a penalty. “I beheld the transgressors and was grieved.”

159, 160. Consider how I love Your precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to Your loving kindness Your Word is true from the beginning: and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. And here is the very sweetness of the Gospel—that it is not a thing of today, which will lose its efficiency tomorrow! “It endures forever.” You that have got it have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from you! All the blessings of the Covenant are everlasting blessings. They are “the sure mercies of David.” And he that gets them gets an inheritance which he shall not lose.

161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause; but my heart stands in awe of Your Word. Not in awe of their word, but in awe of Your Word. The fear of God is the best cure for the fear of men! No man who is devout is cowardly. If you fear God with all your heart, you will defy all the devils in Hell, and fear none.

162-165. I rejoice at Your Word, as one that finds great spoil. I hate and abhor lying; but Your Law do I love. Seven times a day do I praise You because of Your righteous judgments. Great peace have they which love Your Law: and nothing shall offend them. Whatever happens, they shall suffer no ill from it. “There shall no evil befall such, neither shall any plague come near their dwelling,” for they “dwell under the shadow of the Almighty.”

166. LORD, I have hoped for Your salvation, and done Your commandments. Now, cannot some of you feeble people say that? You that cannot talk of full assurance and are half afraid that you are none of the Lord’s people at all, yet you can say, “Lord, I have hoped for Your salvation, and done Your commandments.” And, if so, you have done that which proves you to be His!

167, 168. My soul has kept Your testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies: for all my ways are before You. And no man will ever take comfort in that if he is not a renewed man, for to know that all our ways are before God is ground for great distress if we are ungodly—if we are walking contrary to His mind. But if we are, indeed, His children, we love to feel that we are always living under His eye—that there is nothing about us unknown to Him—no secret sorrow which He does not read—no invisible burden which He does not see.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #904 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE EYE—A SIMILITUDE  
NO. 904

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Keep me as the apple of the eye.”  
Psalm 17:8.

THIS prayer is full of meaning and is the outflow of a well-instructed mind. It is no parrot cry, but the leaping up of a living desire from a Grace-taught and thoughtful heart. The man knows something of himself who sincerely offers this plaintive petition to his God, “Keep

 me.” Is there not a deep and sorrowful confession implied in this brief utterance of the suppliant? As though he should say, “Preserve me from my own heart, for it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: guard me from the rising up of my natural corruptions, for the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be. Defend me from the turbulence of my own passions, those household foes which are the worst enemies to the peace and purity of my mind. Keep me from that evil man, Myself.”

Has not the man who utters this request a clear perception of the evils surrounding him in his circumstances and his relations and his position in life? Conscious of danger, he desires to be held back from pride. If he is in prosperity he asks to be withheld from pining and unbelief. If he is in adversity he would be restrained from sinning in public or transgressing in private. He desires that he may not be imperiled, even, by the objects of his joy and affection, lest they should become idols and so provoke the Lord to jealousy and cause Him to withdraw His dear Presence and sweet communings from the soul.

The prayer has a singular sensitiveness—it seems to shiver like the leaves of the aspen—to shrink like the sensitive plant. Knowing that there are snares all around him, the pleading soul is desirous that God should at all times encompass his path—“Keep me.” The man has some idea of the craft and malice of Satan, therefore he appeals to God that he may be preserved from that fowler who first decoys and afterwards destroys unguarded souls. He sees his danger. He feels his weakness and seeks to the Strong for help—

*“Love and keep us, blessed Jesus,  
Keep us from denying You.  
Keep our wayward feet from straying  
Into paths of vanity.  
Love and keep us, blessed Jesus,  
Keep us from denying You.”*

An eye that has looked on the weakness and the wickedness of the little world within our bosom bedews with briny tears the supplication, “Keep me.”

But the man who prays thus intelligently must have some knowledge of the God he prays to. He has learned the vanity of all other reliances and has left forever the arm of flesh. The invocation is addressed to the Most High, for he is well aware that no other can respond to his call, or interpose for his aid. He who uses this prayer intelligently perceives the Omniscience of Jehovah. “You see all my dangers, You foresee all the attacks of my enemies. You are acquainted with all my ways. To You, therefore, I look for safeguard. Better than a hundred eyes are You to me, You who can see all my foes, from whichever quarter they may come. Ever watchful Guardian, keep me.”

He believes, also, in God’s Omnipotence—that there is no assailant so strong as He who is His Israel’s refuge and fortress. Nor is there any danger so imminent that He cannot anticipate and avert it. He relies, moreover, upon the love of God that He is willing of His own heart to espouse his interests. He relies upon the faithfulness of God that He will perform the mercy promised to the fathers, and upon the immutability of God that He will never turn back, but finally achieve the salvation of His servant through keeping him to the end.

Thus, as I have said, the man who could first offer and the man who can constantly appreciate this devout prayer must know something of himself and something of his God. He who has learned these two things has mastered the elements of wisdom. “Man, know yourself,” said the heathen sage and he uttered a goodly maxim. “Man, know your God,” says the Christian, and he points to wisdom far more sublime. Put the two together! To know ourselves in our weakness and dangers and to know our God in His glorious strength and willingness to protect us, is to have the seed of Divine knowledge implanted in our breasts!

Knowing these two things we can not only pray this prayer with a fervent spirit, but there are many things which we shall be enabled to do by virtue of the good hand of the Lord our God upon us. Such, then, is the importunate request of the Psalmist, to which I am persuaded everyone that is godly among you will say, “Amen.” “Keep me as the apple of the eye.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters , I intend only to touch upon one point and that is the metaphor here used—not, perhaps, limiting myself entirely to the precise and definite meaning which it in this place presents, but uttering with more freedom and latitude some of the thoughts which it suggests.

1. The keeping desired by the earnest Christian is of that kind which men accord to the apple of the eye. What sort of keeping is this?—First, the Psalmist as good as prays, Lord, keep me with many guards and protections. In the Providence of God, the apple of the eye is defended with peculiar care and transcendent skill. Those who have studied the formation of the pupil, itself, will tell you with how many coats the retina is preserved. Then the most common observer knows how the eyebrows, the eyelashes, and the eyelids are formed as outworks, fences and barricades, to protect the pupil of the eye, which is thus made to dwell securely like a citizen within the entrenchments of a fortified town.

God has bestowed extraordinary pains upon all that concerns your eyes. Being one of the most tender organs of the physical frame, He has used many devices that it should be well preserved, notwithstanding its exceeding sensitiveness. Nor is it merely sheltered in its own fastness, but sentries keep ward lest it should be exposed to peril. Whenever it is threatened with even the appearance of danger, no time is lost in consultation with yourself, but with agility so brisk that it seems almost involuntary, the arm is lifted up and the hand is raised to screen it from harm or to resist attack. If you are about to stumble, you naturally put out your hands to save your eyes.

Instinct seems to teach you at once the value of eyesight and your whole strength is put forth to preserve it. In fact, all the members of the body may be regarded as a patrol for the wardship of the eyes—and all the incorporated powers of manhood are in constant vigilance to guard and protect that precious orb. Admiring, then, this beautiful arrangement to conserve the delicate organ of vision, we may pray, “Lord, keep me as the apple of the eye, with many protections. You have been pleased with the strong bastions of Your Providence, to surround Your people. I ask for such protection. Lead me not into temptation. Do not suffer the events of my career or the incidents of my daily life to entangle me so that I shall be unable to escape out of the perplexing snares.

“Let the powers of Heaven fight for me as of old the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. Let me be in league with the stones of the field and command the beasts of the forest to be at peace with me. Let my tabernacle be in peace, and let no plague come near my dwelling. Do You, O God, visit my habitation, and so abide with me beneath that lowly roof that I may not by any means through outward circumstances or inward thoughts be led into sin. Guard me, O my God, by all the power of those mysterious wheels whose motions I cannot understand, but of whose results You have said, ‘All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.’ And, Lord, be pleased to shield me by Your Grace as well as by Your Providence. Keep me as the apple of the eye with tutelage of Your restraining mercy. Teach me to sing—

*‘Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,  
Daily I’m constrained to be.’”*

Brothers and Sisters, how wonderfully does Divine Grace preserve the heirs of Heaven with operations marvelously diverse, but all fulfilling one loving purpose! Sometimes Grace lowers me into the dust. At other times it lifts me up to the Truth of God! It is Divine Grace that empties and Divine Grace that fills my earthen vessel! It is Grace that shows me my ignorance and Grace that makes me wise unto salvation. Let the manifold operations of Your Grace, O God of all Grace, be brought into full play to guard me as the apple of the eye! Whenever I hear a sermon preached, may it keep me from stumbling, lest otherwise my feet should trip. Whenever I bow my knees in prayer, may it be a safeguard against some temptation or besetting sin which otherwise might have been too strong to resist. When I read Your Book, make its words to be as wholesome counsel and faithful warning to deliver my soul from the paths of the Destroyer.

Grant unto us, Lord, that the ordinances of Your House—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—yes, and whatever else You have enjoined to us by precept, or handed down to us with the example of Your holy Apostles— things commanded and things set in order—let all these be used as auxiliaries to repel assault and preserve our peace. From wandering into any false way, from staining the purity of a good conscience, from bringing dishonor upon the name of Christ, “good Lord, deliver us.” “Keep me as the apple of the eye” with the guardianship of Your Holy Spirit. O that the Divine Comforter might always dwell within me, so that when Satan comes to invade my heart, it may be like the house in which abides the strong man armed who is stronger than the spoiler, and therefore keeps his goods in peace! Thus shall He drive away the thief who would break in to steal my possessions and make me his prey—

*“Keep us, Lord, O keep us ever,  
Vain our hope if left by You!  
We are Yours, O leave us never,  
Till Your face in Heaven we see.  
There to praise you  
Through a bright eternity.”*

Holy Spirit, I invoke You, whether reproving or comforting, whether quickening or enlightening, whether chastening or sanctifying, whether humbling or perfecting me—be pleased to abide with me and hold You watch over me in all Your sevenfold power, in all Your diversified operations. And, O God, let Your angels have charge concerning me, to keep me in all my ways, for I need many guards, even as the eye has many bulwarks. Bid, then, those ministering spirits, who minister to the heirs of salvation, that they bear me up in their hands lest I dash my foot against a stone! Brethren, do such appeals seem to you like a rhapsody? Do you forget the existence of angels, who excel in strength? Do you give no heed to the capacities with which they are endowed by Him who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire?

I am afraid we are apt to think too lightly of those blessed spirits. Is it necessary to remind you that the being of such an order of God’s creatures is not an allegory of the poets—no, not even of sacred inspired poets! Facts abound in both the Old and New Testaments to attest the reality of their services. Have you never heard how that in the Creation, when God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? And have you not heard that when the Law was given to Moses, it was received by the disposition of angels? You cannot be unaware of the comfort which Daniel found from the mission of Gabriel, when, while speaking in prayer, the angel appeared as a man flying swiftly, touched the Prophet, talked with him, brought a message to him from Heaven and came forth to give him skill and understanding?

Think, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, of the company of angels caroling that sweet hymn of the Nativity on the plains of Bethlehem on that night when our Savior was born! And never overlook their visit to the wilderness, where, after Jesus had been tempted 40 days and 40 nights, “behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.” Yet again in the dark night of His betrayal, when our Lord was enduring the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, don’t you remember that, “there appeared to Him an angel from Heaven strengthening Him”? After such things it may seem needless to tell how angels repaired to the tomb from which Jesus had risen and there, at the sepulcher, cheered the hearts of the sorrowing women. Or to recount to you the story of Peter, released by an angel of the Lord from the prison into which Herod, willing to please the Jews and vex the Church, had cast him!

But I must mention this one thing more. Angels were the bearers, not with black wands, but with flying colors, who carried Lazarus into Abraham’s bosom. Such guard I crave in life and death! I crave it of You, O my God! My soul is enraptured at the multitude of Your loving kindnesses and tender mercies! Keep me with every provision for my safety! Keep me with all Your hosts and holy troops, with cherubim and seraphim, with Providence and Grace and love. “Keep me as the apple of the eye.” In such sense, I think, the metaphor is not strained.

2. Secondly, the prayer may be interpreted with a view to the constancy, the unintermitting continuance of that keeping which we require of the Lord. Is not the eye always guarded? You are not always thinking of it, it is true, for that would distract you from the duties of life. If you had to reckon the dangers and provide against the mishaps to which the eyes are exposed, your mind would never rest. But to save you such care, the protections God has provided are always ready. If a grain of dust, perhaps, should enter the eye, immediately, by some wonderful arrangement, a watery fluid is exuded in which, if you cannot extract the impediment, byand-by it becomes dissolved and is carried away.

Though an intruding substance may pain you, the pain is a mercy, for it makes you restless till you get relief for the priceless eye. When you fall asleep and are no longer able to protect the eyeballs, the curtains fall, the blinds of it drop down and the windows are shut up securely with lash and lid. How graciously does God preserve the health of the eye and renew its brightness! It needs many secretions and they are all supplied. The fineness of its organization and the variety of its curious arrangements require adequate provisions to keep it in proper condition and these are all furnished. Yes, and continue to be supplied when the eyes’ functions are suspended in your times of slumber. Without care or thought on your part, at all times, asleep or awake, the eyes are guarded like the bed of Solomon, about which were three-score valiant men.

Right well does the parable of the eye suggest the prayer of the text— Lord, keep me thus, as the apple of an eye is kept. Evermore, O Lord, watch over me. Brethren, permit me to remark here that I believe at no season is a Christian more in danger than when he has just been in communion with God. Thus I have proved it myself. It is not very often I lose my temper, at least I think not, but it has happened sometimes. And I have noticed that when this sinful frailty has overtaken me, it has been just after I have been near to God in prayer. At such a time somebody has come right across my path and ruffled my spirit. Something has been said or done so cold, so cruel, so unChrist-like, so irritating and on the part of myself so unexpected, that I have in horror spoken unadvisedly with my lips.

Ah, I should not wonder if many of you have found the same surprising sin assails you. When you felt happy and blessed, beyond the reach of fear, the baneful action of the world has so grated upon your too susceptible feelings that you have felt as if it were well for you to be angry. Always beware when you are rich with Divine Grace in present possession. The highwaymen, in olden times, did not meddle with the farmers as they went to the market—it was when they were coming home, having sold their crops and bringing back their full moneybags, that they planned their attacks! When our ships of war went after the Spanish galleons, they did not attack them as they were going to America, but when they came back enriched with bars of gold—when they knew them to be loaded to the water’s edge—it was then they stormed the Spaniard to win his bullion!

The devil may not make a dead set upon you when you are poor in Grace and indolent, not trading with the merchandise of wisdom, or seriously engaged in the King’s business. But if you have had much spiritual commerce with Heaven whereby your soul has been enriched and your heart has been cheered and your face has shone, then beware of temptation! In watchfulness and prayer, however, put it thus—“Keep me, Lord, alike in my high estate and in my low estate. Keep me when I am engaged in business that I fall not into the tricks of trade, or the excitements of desperate speculation. Keep me when I am at the table, that I sin not against You in the midst of social communion with my family or my friends.

“Lord, where shall I go from the presence of sin, or where shall I fly from the reach of temptation? If I seek the desert and become a lonely hermit, sin is there. If I plunge into the thick of the city and find solitude among the crowds of men, behold, sin reigns there. If I take me to my chamber, sin can haunt me there. Or if I go abroad into the fields, to listen to the voice of Nature, I can be seduced to rebel against You there in full view of all your marvelous works. If I should take the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth—if, like the shipwrecked, I lived on a desolate island and saw not the face of man, even there the face of sin would disquiet me, and rebellious thoughts would rise to taint my daily life.”

You need keeping, then, always and at every moment. Seek protection, Brothers and Sisters, seek it constantly! Begin not the day without saying, “Keep me.” Finish it not without crying again, “Keep me.” All day long be not far away from the horns of the altar, to which you may run with the brief ejaculation, “Keep me, keep me, as the apple of the eye.” It means constant care, a perpetuity of Divine guardianship. You need that. Seek it—

*“Lord, we are blind and halt and lame,  
We have no stronghold but Your name.  
Great is our fear to bring it shame.  
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.”*

3. “Keep me as the apple of the eye.” Does it not mean, “Keep me from little evils, the dust and grit of this evil world”? Your eyes need not to be guarded so much from beams as from motes. You would not say, “It is only a tiny grain of dust, therefore let it enter into my eyes.” By no means! The smallest grain that floats in the summer’s breeze will vex and irritate and cause the scalding tears to flow, and you know, by painful experience, how much suffering you may endure from a grain of sand which you could scarcely see. Be this your prayer, then—“Lord, keep me from what the world calls little sins. Lord, keep me from what my callous conscience may make me think to be little sin. Save me, Lord, from thoughts or imaginations, for these are the eggs of which greater mischiefs are hatched. Keep me, Lord, from words which, to carnal minds, might seem but air, but which, in Your sight are weighty matters, especially as coming from Your children who have been brought up to understand the Law of Your mouth.”

I like to see the Christian show the rigidity of that Puritan who said that he could not, even in a word, swerve from the Truths of God he believed, though there were a living or an opportunity of preferment to be has by complying. “Oh, but,” said another, “others have made long gashes in their consciences—could not you make a little nick in yours?” Ah, you know what those “little nicks in the conscience” always come to! When once you begin the nick, how swiftly it runs from the top to the bottom of your conscience! Beware of nicks of the conscience!

Let your prayer be, “Lord keep me! Keep away from me those sins, the wrong of which I hardly know, but whose wickedness and woefulness are open before You. Let me never trifle with a sin because it does not look so black or cause such shame as some other iniquities.” Christians will too often indulge wrong habits and tolerate doubtful customs till transgressions seem to them as if they were unavoidable and gladly would they persuade themselves that they are harmless. There was an officer who kept in his house a leopard, a tame leopard, which had been born in captivity and had never known what liberty was. It had grown up as tame as a domestic cat, till one day, when the master was asleep, it gently licked his hand.

Now, it so happened that he had cut the skin during the day and a little blood oozed out as the creature’s tongue was drawn repeatedly over the wound. The taste of the blood roused the wild demon spirit of the beast at once, and had it not been promptly shot, its once loved master would have been its victim! In like manner those little household sins which look not like the destroyers they are, will, one of these days, reveal their true nature and you will have to chase them from your soul and drive them to their native haunts. It is not safe that they should lodge under your roof! Chase them away before they put you into greater danger. They must be doomed or you will have no peace. They must be destroyed, for your life is in jeopardy.

When the thief cannot break in at the door, himself, he finds a child and puts him through the little window and then the great door is speedily opened. Thus do little sins open the door for a great sin. Men who have appeared to be immune to open temptations to commit a crime have often been enticed by specious allurements. The temptations have come in the garb of virtue and their disguise has not been cast aside until the way of escape has been cut off. “Keep me, then, as the apple of the eye,” means, “keep me from little things that defile and little flaws that disfigure or utterly deface godliness of character.”

4. Do you not think, Brethren, that the sensitiveness of the organ of vision may suggest another lesson to be drawn from this prayer, “Keep me as the apple of the eye”? That is to say, make my heart tender and my conscience quick and impressionable? There is nothing more sensitive than the eye. If anything were moved near your hand or arm in the dark, you might not feel its motion, but the eye is keenly perceptive, even of a current of air. It is affected by anything passing near it, as you may readily notice for yourselves. God has made the apple of the eye thus sensitive for its own protection—that it may shrink from rash exposure. So, if we are kept as the apple of the eye, we shall be endowed with this peculiar faculty—a tender sensitiveness that shrinks with nervous trepidation from the presence of evil.

If the eyes grew dull and callous instead of being impressionable, they would be in immediate danger and probably would be soon destroyed. The sensibility of the eye is its own protection—it forecasts the peril and avoids it. Our hearts, my Brethren, must in like manner, to some extent, carry within themselves, by God’s Grace, their own instincts of selfprotection. Wesley seized on this thought and paraphrased it aptly when he wrote the verse—

*“Quick as the apple of an eye,  
O God, my conscience make.  
Awake my soul when sin is near,  
And keep it still awake.”*

Are there not some men whose senses are never exercised to discern good and evil? They walk in such darkness that they stumble on a sin before they detect it in their path, or a ponderous temptation will roll on them and overturn them without their once perceiving the headway it was making, or the necessity of making their escape. There are some nostrils that would not be disgusted at the foulest smells, nor would they be regaled though the daintiest perfumes were loading the air with their fragrance.

But there are other nostrils quick and delicate which soon perceive the noxious odor. It frets their sense while it pollutes the air. The insensitive are exposed to all kinds of disease and pestilence because they perceive not the danger, while those to whom the fume is repulsive would shun it at once and never rest till the noxious matter that might have bred disease is removed. We want a spiritual sensibility that shall be quick and apprehensive of the faintest smell of sin. Only feel that it is loathsome and you will easily convince yourselves that it is dangerous. You will not require the minister to come down and admonish you of his suspicions, or exhort you to forbear the first indications of a wrong practice. You will not need a mother or father to say, “My dear Child, that is a treacherous step you are about to take.”

The conscience should be a ready indicator—if in good keeping it would be a wonderful tell-tale. It will startle you from your lethargy. It will arouse you as with an alarm, for it will cry aloud, “You are going astray! You are falling into error! You are wandering after evil! You are setting yourself to do iniquity.” God give us this sensitiveness! I delight to see it in young converts. Ah, some of us in the early stages of conviction were half afraid to put one foot before another for fear of doing wrong. O that you could keep up that tenderness of heart! It ought to increase.

Be diligent to keep the heart holy, for out of it are the issues of life. With some of you I fear there is a degree of dullness that does not betoken the refinement of your taste in spiritual things. We ought, as we get nearer to Heaven, to become more and more jealous of approximation or contact with anything that defiles, abhorring the very trail of the serpent— shuddering at even the appearance of sin—loathing the atmosphere that is corrupted by evil conversation. Keep me, then, like as You keep the eye through its own sensitiveness.

5. Should we not make it our prayer, too, that God will keep us as the eye ought to be kept? It should be single. “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is single, your whole body is full of light. But when your eye is evil, your whole body is full of darkness.” Keep me single-minded, Lord, consecrated wholly and devoted alone to You. The eye should be clear. Any speck on its retina would obscure our view of the landscape. With “an inlet, so small,” as one of the poets writes, “that a grain might close it,” the eye needs to be cleansed. God has provided arrangements for this without disturbing the beautiful mechanism of the little orb.

Take heed, Beloved, that the eye of faith is kept clear. We need to be sprinkled with the precious blood and washed with clean water often, that we may be always pure, consciously sanctified. The clean water, you know, is the cleansing water which came with the blood from the heart of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. Thereby the conscience is purged and the heart made clean, actively and passively sanctified unto God. The eyes need to be far-seeing. It is a great pity when the eyes can only see a short distance. We strain our natural eyes to see some ship far out at sea that looks, perhaps, like a speck on the horizon. Or we want to stretch our vision far over mountain and valley, river and lake, from some lofty Alp, compassing the entire prospect at a glance.

And oh, it is well when our soul can take a wide view and embrace the grand perspective which Revelation unfolds, free from cloud and vapor, not pestered with the cares of the day so as to obscure the immortal joys that await our arrival at the city of the blessed! It is grand when our view is not earth-bound and absorbed by incidents that transpire within the tick of this clock, but prospecting the fields of light beyond, where moments, hours, days, years, and centuries of years are unknown! Raise your eyes, Christians! Maybe you shall catch a glimpse of the better land—

*“Where everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers.  
Death, like a narrow stream, divides  
That heavenly land from ours.”*

May the Lord keep us as the apple of the eye—sensitive, clean, clear, single-eyed, and far-seeing.

My Brethren, the eye is kept and preserved as an ornament. Certainly the most expressive feature of the human body is the eye, and it is the most capable of making the countenance beautiful. Take away the eyes from that fair face—those eyes of hazel or of blue, or those dark eyes that look you through and through and burn your heart as with coals of fire— how dull, unimpassioned and senseless it would be! “A beautiful eye,” it has been somewhere said, “makes silence eloquent. A kind eye makes contradiction assent. And an enraged eye makes beauty itself to be deformed, for it is this little member which gives life to every part about us.”

Take the sparkling eyes away from the sweetest face and how sadly you have marred it. Your marble statues—some of them almost speak—fail to convey the impression of life because there are no eyes. That lack of eyes is lack of all that is lifelike. Let every Christian pray to God that, as the eye is the ornament of the body, he may be kept as an ornament to the Christian Church. What are the ornaments of the Church of God? Are they the wealthy and respectable members? Or are they the learned and intellectual members? These, my dear Friends, are ornaments from man’s too carnal point of view! They will often secure the most notice among their fellows, but they are not ornaments from God’s point of view unless there is something higher to commend them than the accidents of rank or education.

The greatest ornaments of the Christian Church are those that labor most diligently, those that pray the most fervently, those that are most filled with love, those that are most Christ-like in temper and disposition, the most humble, the most teachable, the most patient in suffering, the most persevering in service—those who commend the Gospel of the Grace of God by their entire life and conversation—such are the ornaments of the Church of God! And the eyes of faith shed luster on all other features of character. I tell you that when spirits more pure than ours go round about the Church and count the towers there and mark well her bulwarks, it never enters into their thoughts that one part of the building was smeared with the yellow hue of wealth—or that another part of the building was decorated after the classic manner of Corinth and Athens! They only think of the jasper light and of the sapphire glow of spirituality and holiness as it flashes bright in the sunlight of God over hearts that have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit! Pray that you may be made an ornament of the Church—your light shining before men—being kept as the apple of the eye to shed luster on the saints around and in your degree to irradiate this dark world!

The eye is not only an ornament, but its function in the body is of the greatest usefulness. How sad a privation is the loss of sight, or to lose even a portion of its power how grievous the detriment! The eye is in some respects the most useful part of the mechanism of our bodies. It benefits all our limbs. So, Brethren, ought we to be profitable and conducive to the good of others. When we pray, “Keep me as the apple of the eye,” it behooves us to remember the real interest that attaches to our preservation. Are we worth keeping? Not certainly if we are of no use! Who cares to spare and keep a tree that brings forth no fruit? Or who is zealous to keep an eye that does not see? I suppose those who wear glass eyes would rather not lose them, but I would be bound to say they do not prize them as if they were as tributary to their pleasure and profit as ours are whose eyes are of God’s making and answer His ends.

A genuine Christian will pray to be useful— not to be like a glass eye, a mere counterfeit for appearance’ sake—but being of God’s workmanship in Christ Jesus—that he may be preserved with all his faculties in full vigor, lest his strength should be impaired and spoiled and his capacity to show forth the praises of God, and minister to the welfare of the Church dimmed or utterly extinguished.

My next remark you will, perhaps, think strange and quaint, but as I have not restricted myself to the immediate sense of the metaphor, as limited by the context, I may be allowed to speak of that which relates to the eyes. It occurs to me that Solomon has made this shrewd remark, “The wise man’s eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness.” And I would venture to give this a spiritual turn and, in beseeching the Lord to keep me as the apple of the eye, would entreat Him to keep me in the Head, that is, to preserve me in Christ Jesus. Of what use were the eye of a man if it were not in the head? It would have no vitality if it were taken away from the glorious position of honor which is given to it in the countenance of the living man.

So if we could be divided from our living Head—if we, as members of Christ, could be separated from Him, it were all over with us. When we are united to Him, as the branch is to the vine, we flourish. We bring forth fruit. But if we are separated from Him we are like the dead withered branches that are gathered up and cast behind the wall where all the rubbish is ignobly burned. The best Believer in the world would be only fit for the burning if he were divided from Christ, his living Head. “Because I live you shall live also.” So it stands—Christ’s life is our life. The life of the brain is the life of the optic nerve. The eye lives because the brain lives and because of its place in the head. The life of Christ is the Christian’s life. You live because of your connection with Christ—because of your vital indissoluble gracious and eternal union with Jesus Christ your Covenant Head!

Be this, then, your prayer, “Lord, let me abide in Christ and may His Words abide in me. Let my thoughts abide in Him. May I meditate much on Him—may my meditation of Him be sweet. Let my purposes and resolves abide in Him. May I be determined to follow Him where ever He goes, to be and to do always in His strength. May my desires always be towards Him, desiring to know Him and to be found in Him—He Himself being the summit of all my hopes and the crown of all my delight. O let my whole soul be in Him! Then shall I be useful. Then shall I be an ornament of the body. Then shall I be preserved and kept.” I commend this prayer to every Believer here. You will often need it—you may need it tonight before you get home.

Pray it in the pew now, that you may have protection from sin—even as you pass along the streets—that you may be preserved to your own door. I have met with persons who have broken their leg on their own stairs. Mind you, do not fall into sin in your own house, where you think you are safest and at times when you could least suppose that you would be in danger. The Lord succor you, and keep you as the apple of the eye. Alas, there are some here to whom this prayer is nothing. They are not Christ’s, they have not believed in Him. Here is another prayer for you. It is this: “Lord, save me, or I perish!”

The fitness of the prayer is obvious, for the reflection appended to it is true. You are near perishing. If you died tonight you must perish forever. “Lord, save me.” He can do it! He will if you pray to Him. His precious blood is shed for the remission of sins. He is always willing to bless sinners. “Lord, save me, or I perish.” Once saved, you may pray to be kept— and He will keep you.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 17.*  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1432 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DIVINE INTERPOSITIONS  
NO. 1432

Suggested by the loss of the passenger ship, the “Princess Alice.”

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 8, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters.” Psalm 18:16.**

I DO not know how you feel, my Brothers and Sisters, at this time, but as for myself, a heavy cloud seems to hang over me all the day. The overwhelming calamity of last Tuesday, so crushing and so far reaching, of which we must have spoken to each other, I suppose, every hour during the past week, cannot be removed from the thoughts of our minds or from the affections of our hearts. The whole of London may well be likened to that ancient city of which we read—“The city Shushan was perplexed.” Every man has been asking his fellow, “Have you lost a friend?” and no man wonders when the answer is, “Alas, I have been sorely bereaved.” In our own immediate circle we have borne a special share of the grief, for five, at least, of those who are in Church membership with us have been removed from our midst and we can scarcely speak with any of our Brethren without discovering that they have lost some connection or friend.

Alas, that unhappy vessel has sunk with a more precious freight than ever loaded Spanish galleon and her wreck has brought a greater loss to our city than if she had carried untold gold! We cannot help thinking of this dire affliction and, therefore, we had better think of it with some practical purpose. I believe that this sudden grief comes, like every other event, from God, and comes as a voice from God to this, our city—a voice which, we trust, will be heard and regarded. “The Lord’s voice cries unto the city and the man of wisdom shall see Your name: hear you the rod, and who has appointed it.” (Micha 6:9). We are of the mind of that old Prophet who said, “Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord has not done it?” (Amos 3:6).

Comes there anything in the form of calamity upon the sons of men without the permission, control and overruling of the Lord? Assuredly not! “The Lord kills and makes alive: He brings down to the grave, and brings up.” I know that many minds are so stunned by this tremendous blow that they can hardly think of God in connection with it and half wish to believe that the Omnipresent was not there! The problem staggers their reason and they are unable to leave it among the mysteries of faith. As yet they have not gained the confidence of Job who denied that affliction comes out of the dust, but attributed it to the Lord, saying, “He takes away: who can hinder Him?”

Even some who love the Lord and trust Him are somewhat of the mind of Mary and Martha when they said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died,” while others who should know better would timidly

conceal their belief in an overruling Providence, lest the ribald world should scoff at them. Let them scoff, I say! Our God is none the less glorious because His ways are far above and out of our sight! It is an atheistical thought which would put God out of any place—if He is not everywhere, He is nowhere—Omnipresence is an essential of the Godhead! If His hand rules not over evil, it is not Omnipotent and thus it lacks another essential attribute of Deity. It would be dreadful to suppose Him to have a limited dominion! “His kingdom rules over all.”

We are not as those who believe in two co-existent forces, each supreme, one of whom shall create disasters and the other shall distribute blessings. The Prince of Evil is, according to our faith, subordinate to the great Lord of All! Thus says Jehovah, by the mouth of His servant, Isaiah, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and I create evil: I the Lord do all these things.” He reigns in the calm summer’s day and gives us the precious fruits of harvest, but He is equally present and sovereign in the hurricane which destroys, or the blight which desolates. His Providence speeds the ship to its desired haven, but it is equally His Providence which sinks the ship and its mariners to the bottom of the sea! It is His power which looses the bands of Orion and binds the sweet influence of the Pleiades—His are the lightning as well as the sunbeams, the thunderbolts as well as the raindrops.

He is able to make the Heaven as iron and the earth as brass so that our land shall not yield her increase. He can call for a famine and break the whole staff of bread, for famine, pestilence and war are as rods in His hands. God is everywhere and in all things His hand is present—in the things which seem to us to be evil as well as in the events which appear to us to be good, God is at work! He does no wrong, for God is not tempted by evil, neither tempts He any man! But we speak of physical evil which causes sorrow, pain and death among men and we say that certainly God is there. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, we are sure that no great calamity can befall us apart from Him.

He is not far from us in our deepest sorrow and however we may trace a calamity to the carelessness or the mistake of men, these are but the second causes, and we see behind all mere detail the permission of the Lord. If it were not so, mourners would be deprived of the greatest reason for submission and the surest source of consolation. Even where a terrible event is the result of crime, God is not excluded! He shares not the guilt, but He overrules the act. Think of the crucifixion of our Lord and remember that though the sin of it lay heavy upon those who perpetrated it, yet the grand design of it was God’s! Read Peter’s words in Acts—“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Who shall deny that God was at Calvary, though sin there reached its culminating point? We freely admit that we do not understand this and, therefore, we do not attempt to explain it—but we believe and adore! Happily, we need not attempt to justify the ways of God to man, for He asks no defense at our hands and deigns not to give any account of His matters! This is our only resolve, “Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.” Now, the question which has very naturally suggested itself to many is this—If there is a Providence, why does it permit these terrible evils? It is dreadful that human life should be lost on such a scale! God is Omnipotent, nobody doubts that, why, then, does He not interfere to save?

That shall suggest to us the first point of our discourse this morning— that miraculous interpositions in the affairs of this life are not to be expected and we may not hope, literally, to use the words of our text and say, “He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters.” Still, secondly, we shall note that, according to our text, Providential interpositions of another kind are vouchsafed. And thirdly, and best of all, gracious interpositions are given for the salvation of men. Though the Lord does not, nowadays, send from above and take His servants and draw them by miracle out of the waters of the river, yet does He lift us up from the depths of trouble! And especially does He bear us up from the deeps of sin to our eternal salvation, for thus says the Lord, “I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people from the depths of the sea.”

I. First, then, MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITIONS IN THE CALAMITIES OF THIS LIFE ARE NOT TO BE EXPECTED. I am not standing here as an advocate for God to defend His Character because He does not thus interpose, for to objectors His only answer is, “No, but O man, who are you that reply against God?” If you will accuse your Maker, He will not care to answer you. You who have forged the accusation may fashion an answer, if it seems good to you. Yet there is a difficulty which none can deny and that difficulty lies in a fact. Why is there any evil at all, seeing that the good God is almighty and sits upon His Throne? This is the old puzzle which none can answer.

The Negro put it in a very natural form when he asked the missionary, “If God is so much stronger than the devil, why does He not kill the devil and make an end of his mischief?” Just so—that is the top and bottom of the matter. There is the question, but who can answer it? A fool may raise in an hour more objections than the wisest man could remove in a century! Now, the cleverest theory will not alter facts. What you and I may think is a very small matter, may not be, compared with what really is— and it is quite certain that there is moral evil in the world and that there is also a God! It is also evident that there is physical evil in the world and yet love is supreme and that the Almighty permits fire and water to destroy His creatures and does not interpose to rescue them—and yet He is full of tenderness and pity.

There are some, of course, who will dare to condemn their Maker and call Him by I know not what horrible names. I have even heard such a word as, “monster,” hissed from between proud lips! Again I say it is not worth our while to answer such objectors because such persons are not pervious to explanation nor willing to receive it. And then, again, it is a small matter to the Most High what such persons may think of Him. He does as He pleases and asks no leave from His creatures! But now, for just a minute, let us consider the question which we trust is modestly proposed. Suppose that every time a great danger threatened, we might expect a miraculous interposition from Heaven, what then? The supposition is not absurd, for there might be such an interposition—we must admit the possibility since God is almighty.

The train is thundering along the iron way. It will dash into another and many lives will be destroyed. But if the Lord willed it, He could put His hand upon the engine and stop it in its full speed! The vessel freighted with 800 lives is about to sink—but if the Lord willed it, He could buoy it up in the hollow of His hand! Yet He does not move! The iron road is strewn with the dead, the river is gorged with corpses! We do not know all the reasons for this non-interference, but yet we think we can see a little, which little we will think upon.

First, such interpositions would change the whole arrangement of the world—it would not be the same place at all. The Lord has made this world and He governs it by certain fixed laws. If those laws were variable and were continually being altered, it would be another form of creation altogether and man had need to be another creature! His physical, moral and even spiritual condition would be changed from top to bottom! It was the Lord’s arrangement that He should put forth His power in certain ways which we call the Laws of Nature and, by that arrangement He abides. There is no such independent force as “Nature,” as some are always dreaming! Nor is there any energy in mere Laws of Nature apart from God’s own power!

You may write all the laws you like, but there is no power in laws— there must be power in the king to carry out the laws! All power emanates from God, be it what it may. He is the source and fountain of all the forces which operate throughout creation, but He has been pleased from the beginning to determine that His power shall usually go forth in certain ways and under fixed laws and regulations. He can suspend those laws when He pleases. He can quench the violence of fire, stop the mouths of lions and make water to stand upright as a heap—but He has not often done so—and in these days He never does so. I think we can, in a measure, see why, for if such were the case continually, the whole plan and purpose with which He made the present world would have been abandoned and another mode of power would have taken its place.

Remember, too, that whatever the plan of God is, it is now being carried out under the shadow of the Fall. There had been, I suppose, neither pain, nor sickness, nor sighing, nor death had there been no sin. If it had been possible for a race to have multiplied from the glades of Eden and to have gone forth into a wider Paradise as pure and holy as Adam first came from his Maker’s hands, I can believe that there would have been no famine, no war, no catastrophe of shipwreck by sea, nor of accident by land. However multitudinous the human race might have become, its records would have been all unstained with agonizing details such as those which blacken the broad-sheets of today.

But, alas, man has fallen and to a race in such a condition it would not be consistent that everything should be of sunlight and summer—there must now be heard the roar of the storm and the cry of death as the fruit of sin. Render calamity impossible and what mark would there be of the Divine displeasure for man’s revolt? Wherein, indeed, would sin differ as to its consequences from obedience and holiness? Think for a little and you will see reason for God’s staying His hand from rescue. Furthermore, if interpositions were given to save the lives of only godly men, as some would have it, then this world would became the place of judgment which it is not intended to be.

It still remains among many persons as a superstition that if there is an accident and people suffer, there must have been some special sin in the victims of the disaster! And yet our Lord has told us that the men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above others—and the Galileans who were slain by Pilate were not sinners above other Galileans. I pray you dismiss from your minds the idea that a sudden death is necessarily a judgment! Never draw any inference from the destruction of a building, or the wreck of a ship, or an explosion, or anything of that nature as to the character of the persons who perish, for if you do, you will be guilty of cruel injustice!

What if some gracious man is spared? Ascribe the deliverance to Providence, but do not suppose that those who perished were less gracious than he is! You shall find that men of bad character sometimes escape where saints are left to die. Because I said the other day that Providence had saved a certain godly woman, foolish persons drew the inference that I condemned those who perished! No sentiment could have been further from my mind! I ascribe to Providence death as well as life and draw no inference as to the character of the person! What if a man has found a watery grave in the Princess Alice? Do not therefore imagine that God was angry with him, for he may now be in Heaven and, at any rate, the same wreck carried down with it many of the Lord’s beloved!

Now, if God were to interpose and save His own people whenever they were in danger, this world would become the place of judicial separation which it is not and is not meant to be! Judgment is reserved for the world to come. When Christ shall descend from Heaven with a shout and sit upon His Great White Throne—then will He separate the tares from the wheat—but now they are to grow together. Then will He put the goats on the left and the sheep on the right, but for the time being they feed in the same pastures. One event happens to them all—as it happens to the fool, so it happens to the wise! This is not the land of judgment, but of longsuffering! This is not the place where God gives sentence, but where He waits patiently. There is a judgment of nations in this world. But that of individuals, with rare exceptions, is reserved for the final account.

Beloved, note once again that if God were to interpose in the case of all calamities, it would involve many evils. For, observe, if next year the majority of farmers should refuse to sow the fields—if over whole nations the land should be left to produce only weeds—there would be great scarcity of corn. Suppose that in such cases God should interpose and cause harvests suddenly to grow by miracle so that our teeming millions might escape starvation? What would be the consequence? Why, it would encourage idleness everywhere! Men would say, “The Lord is too good to let us starve and, therefore, we may allow the plow to rust and dance away the

hours.” Would that be well?

Suppose, again, that when a contagious disease comes into a district, the Lord miraculously prevented it from being fatal, although the carelessness of men may have left fever lairs in rotting, overcrowded houses enough to pollute the very air! Suppose, I say, that we all neglected sanitary laws and then knew that a merciful God would not let the poor people die of fever, or of cholera? Then the filthiness of our cities would increase till they became huge dunghills and man, who is great enough, now, at polluting rivers and defiling God’s earth in every imaginable way, would go on to turn the whole earth into one monstrous globe of rottenness! But now even pests and plagues and fevers have their good side—they are watchmen to sound an alarm, prophets to give us warning! They arouse man to discover the laws of his being and thus they benefit the race.

Suppose, again, that whenever there is a likelihood of there being an accident, God were to send an angel at once to interpose and avert the collision or the wreck! What would happen? Why then, of course, every railway and steamboat company might go in for accidents in any quantity, seeing they would be harmless, and might even become attractive! There would be no reason for keeping a watch at the ship’s bow and no necessity for brakes or signals. There would be no longer any need to be careful about human life, but we might, each one, be as reckless as he pleased and gratify himself with experiments which could not end fatally! Such a state of things would destroy many of the virtues and render many vices harmless.

I cannot suppose a world regulated upon such a system! I can imagine God divinely interposing and suspending His own Laws, now and then, as pleases Him, for some great purpose of instruction—but it appears wise and good for all concerned that, having made man what he is, the Creator should rather leave him to take the consequence of violating the fixed laws of matter than make those laws variable and uncertain. Again, dear Friends, Divine interpositions of a miraculous sort would not be attended with the advantage to the ungodly which we might suppose. If there were miracles of mercy on the behalf of God’s people to snatch them from a watery grave, or from the devouring element of fire, or from the deadly consequences of a collision, then we might expect to have and, naturally should have, miracles of judgment, too!

If you get into the wilderness and manna falls from Heaven and water leaps from the rock, remember you have also entered a land where the earth opens to swallow up Korah, Dathan and Abiram—and where the very sand breeds fiery serpents to sting to death the rebels against God! You cannot have the mercy-wonder interposing without having the judgment-wonder side by side with it! And on the whole it is a more lenient mode of dealing on God’s part to let sinners alone and to let one event happen to all men for a while because the long-suffering of God leads the sinner to repentance and the sorrow that falls upon the child of God is blessed to him. If all accidental deaths were punishments, it would be a far more terrible state of things than that which is now before us—and therefore the matter is best as it is.

If we had wonders of miraculous deliverance often before us, they would not impress mankind as we imagine. If God were always suffering the wicked to drown or burn and always snatching the righteous from the midst of every danger, men would not think much of it before long—they might be slightly impressed at first but, by-and-by, they would harden their hearts. In Egypt there was light in the houses of the Israelites when all was dark with the Egyptians and God smote Egypt heavily while He was blessing Israel. But this fact did not affect Pharaoh, for he only hardened his heart the more. When in the wilderness the Israelites, murmuring against God, saw some of their companions swallowed up and destroyed, it very little affected them, for soon after, they began murmuring against Moses and charged him with destroying the people of God!

All things considered, the arrangement is best as it is and the Lord knows it is so and, therefore, continues the method of letting His physical Laws take their course although occasionally it may destroy hundreds of lives. Neither would it be so great a gain to the godly, as some imagine, always to have their lives spared in times of danger. We have to die some day, Brothers and Sisters, and we have nothing here below which might make us anxious to postpone the hour of our departure. It is as well to die one way as another—at least there is small choice in the modes of death. If one were asked by what death he should glorify God, he might be long in the choosing and would probably choose that which would be most painful.

Some are afraid to go to sea lest they should be drowned and yet there is little reason for the fear. When a captain was asked whether he was not afraid to go to sea he said, “Not at all.” “But your father was drowned, wasn’t he, Captain?” “Yes.” “Your grandfather was drowned?” “Yes.” “Your brothers have been drowned?” “Yes.” “Are you not afraid to go to sea?” “No,” he said, “not at all, for I may ask you the same question. Your father is dead?” “Yes.” “Where did he die?” “In his bed.” “And his father, where did he die?” “In his bed.” “And his father?” “In his bed.” “And your brothers, where have they died?” “In their beds.” “Are you not, then, afraid to go to bed?” Certainly we must die somewhere or other and we shall not die one single minute before the ordained period!

I am a sufficient believer in predestination to feel sure that every bullet has its billet and that no death can befall the man whom God ordains to live. God has appointed all things and His people are safe everywhere, whether they live or die. “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel.” The powers of darkness cannot harm us though they put forth all their craft and power! The Lord has declared that he who has made God his refuge shall abide beneath His shadow and, therefore, we may go where duty calls us without trembling and we may die when God bids our spirit return without the slightest fear!

We ask no immunity from death! Why should we be absolved from it? It is better to die than to live full often, inasmuch as it is better to be in Heaven than to remain in banishment below. So there I leave that matter of the non-interposition of God to think very briefly of interpositions

which do occur.  
II. PROVIDENTIAL INTERPOSITIONS ARE FREQUENT AMONG GOD’S  
PEOPLE—they can often say, “He sent from above, He took me, He drew  
me out of many waters.” Divine interpositions come in the way of deliverance from floods of trouble. Have you experienced them? How strikingly  
has God delivered some of us! What remarkable preservations of life have  
we enjoyed—not miraculous, certainly—but full of wonder for all that! We  
have as much reason to praise God for our deliverances as if the Laws of  
Nature had been suspended, for we have been quite as completely preserved. What helps we have had in the hour of sorrow when, one after another, our beloved have been taken from us, or when they have gone to  
the very edge of the grave and yet have been spared to us!  
How often have we been helped in business troubles and saved from  
impending failure or serious loss! In times of slander, when our character  
has been belied, how graciously has God brought to light our innocence! I  
say again, not by miracle, but yet very marvelously has our God delivered  
us! In answer to prayer, God works in His own way for the good of His  
people without stopping one single wheel of Providence. Without violating  
one single Law of Nature, God is able to work the same end as we sometimes wish He would work by a miracle! He will not quench the violence of  
the flame, but yet a precious life shall be snatched from a burning house! He will not prevent the water from drowning and yet in how many cases  
in answer to prayer have vessels been saved and the lives of men preserved by unexpected incidents! He will not stop the ordinary run of business, nor alter the way in which the world goes on and yet He knows how  
to help the poor, to bless the struggling tradesman and to bring up the  
righteous from deep distress. A miracle is a rough procedure, after all, if I  
may dare say so, compared with the Lord’s present methods! The grandest  
achievement of all is for the Lord God to work miraculous results without  
miracles—to produce by common means, in answer to the cry of His servants, that which appears to be impossible without a suspension of natural laws!  
See how the Lord allows all the forces of Nature to drive on in their ordinary course and yet the outcome of it all is that His servant is delivered  
and His prayers answered! God does this by varied ways. We have known  
some who have been brought out of deep waters by having health suddenly restored to them, or by having the health of those upon whom their  
maintenance depended renewed. This is God’s mercy and let Him be  
praised for it! Sometimes circumstances have greatly changed—a man has  
been going downhill for years as to his business, but something quite unexpected has happened and he has just as gradually risen to a position of  
comfort. My Friends, believe in the unexpected! I was about to utter a  
paradox and say expect the unexpected! Believe that God will do for you  
something which you know nothing about!  
The Lord always has a plan in reserve. You think He has reached His  
last and you will be left to perish, but it is not so. At the right moment He  
will bring forth some new and surprising stroke of wisdom which He did but postpone to the particular moment so that when He performs it and draws His servant out of deep waters, the praise and the glory will the more fully redound to His name! We have known the Lord save His servants in the hour of trouble by touching the hearts of their enemies— those that were most unkind and cruel have suddenly become the most generous and thoughtful! At other times enemies have died or have been put to confusion like the wicked Haman when he plotted the destruction of the Jews. The Lord has hanged up Haman that His chosen might be delivered! Mordecai has gone from the king’s gate to the king’s house and  
Haman has ascended from the king’s table to the king’s gallows! I cannot instance all the ways in which the Lord makes clear the pathway of His people, but this I know, that often in our lives some of us have  
had to pause and sing, “He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out  
of many waters.” Some will not see the hand of God, but I guarantee you,  
Brethren, those who have been delivered out of the deep waters will see it!  
Their experience teaches them that God is yet among us. Others may talk  
about “Laws of Nature,” as if God were gone to sleep and had left the

world wound up like a watch to go without Him—but those who have been  
in sore affliction and tribulation and have been brought out of it will forever bless and extol Him who is a very present help in trouble! Yes, my Brothers and Sisters, the way by which we have come is as full  
of God as this city is full of men! There are deserts which the foot of man  
has never trod, but there is no wilderness where the foot of God has not  
been. What do you say, my beloved Friends? You are not fanatics, neither  
has the enthusiasm of devotion carried you out of your minds, but are  
you not conscious of distinct Providential deliverances? “Conscious of  
them,” you say, “indeed, if we did not speak of them with joy and thankfulness, the very stones of the street would cry out against us for our  
wicked silence! Many and many a time has He sent from above and rescued us! We are, like Moses, drawn out of the waters and like he, we  
would be servants of the Lord.”  
III. Now, thirdly, INTERPOSITIONS IN MATTERS OF GRACE ARE THE  
CHIEF OF ALL. As best I can, I should like to conclude with a few words  
upon this subject. God does not, even to save the souls of His chosen, violate any of His Laws. “The soul that sins, it shall die.” “Every transgression shall have its just punishment and reward.” Yet the Lord would save  
His people. How should He make these two things agree—how should He  
be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly? It is in the Person of our  
blessed Lord Jesus Christ that we see how one Law has been made to  
counteract and yet to honor another—to remove its direful consequence—  
and yet to make it honorable!  
You remember that the law of the Medes and Persians could not be altered—and there was a law made by Ahasuerus that on a certain day the  
people of all countries might gather themselves together and kill the Jews.  
Haman had promulgated this royal edict far and wide and the king could  
not alter it. Mark the wise method by which the cruel law was met—they  
made another law which was that the Jews might defend themselves— might slay those who tried to kill them! And the Jews could take all their  
property for a spoil. This met the case, though no edict was revoked. Now God does not and never will alter His Law that sin must be punished! But forth comes another Law that, inasmuch as the first sin was  
committed by a representative man, a representative man should be permitted to come in and bear the penalty which was a consequence of the  
sin! This has been done! No Law of God has been broken and yet God’s  
mercy has had free course! Now let us think a minute or two upon this  
great salvation and how it is described in the text. “He sent from above.”  
Oh, blessed Lord, the whole race of man was sinking in the old vessel of  
the Covenant of Works which had been cut in pieces by the first sin! They  
were all going down, en masse, to destruction!  
Then You did send from above! But who was He that was sent? Not the  
brightest of the cherubim nor the chief of the angelic band, but HE  
came—the Messenger of the Covenant, whom we delight in—the Son of  
God, the Only-Begotten of the Most High, the brightness of His Father’s  
Glory! He was the Messiah, the Sent One, and He descended from above  
that He might work out our redemption! Brethren, let your hearts leap for  
joy as you behold the Messenger of the Covenant of Grace, even Jesus  
Christ, the adorable and ever-blessed Son of the Highest!  
Now, note the next word, “He took me.” When we had lost all hold on  
God, then did this blessed Messenger take hold on us. He accepted us as  
the Father’s gift to Him and accepted a charge as the great Shepherd of  
the sheep that He would keep and preserve those whom His Father gave  
Him though they were ready to perish! Then what a hold He took on us!  
He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham by becoming  
a Man! Baby in Bethlehem, Laborer at Nazareth, suffering Man at Gethsemane, You have taken, indeed, a hold on us, such as You would not relax in life or death! “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” and  
so being sent from above He took hold upon us.  
Then what a wondrous drawing took place after that grip had once  
been given! He drew us out of many waters, entering into them, Himself,  
plunging into the rivers of grief and infirmity and then into the waters of  
the curse, being “made a curse for us.” Descending deep, as it were, into  
the very depths of Hell to bring up the Lord’s jewels, that they might be  
delivered from the Pit! Oh, the matchless lifting up which He gave to us  
when He drew us out of many waters by His own suffering life and agonizing death!  
Fix your eyes, Brethren, upon the work of Jesus! See the human race  
all sinking! Behold how hopeless and helpless it is and see Him descending, walking the waters, snatching with His own right hand sinking men  
and women from the billows of destruction and landing them on the Rock  
of Ages, putting a new song into their mouths! As you feel that you are  
partakers of this deliverance, let each one of you say, “He sent from above,  
He took me, He drew me out of many waters.” This was the great deed, itself, but, just a minute, I ask you to remember the application of it to your  
own experience. Do you remember when you felt everything sinking beneath you?  
My own self-wreck will help me to describe your experience. I had  
sailed on gallantly in the good vessel of my own works, hearing music and  
full of delight, never dreaming of danger! But suddenly the Law of God  
came along, moving unswervingly in its terrible course and it cut into the  
vessel of my works, as though it had been vanity itself! Down it began to  
sink and I with it! I looked around for something I could lay hold upon,  
but nothing availed. The priest was there and offered me his inventions,  
but I knew him of old and knew that he would sink as well as I. What,  
then, could he do for me? Ceremonies were there, but I knew that they  
prove bubbles to a man who trusts in them. Hopes of salvation by selfmortification were there and the like, but they clearly could not bear the  
weight of such a sinner as I was.  
I sank, I sank, nor had I will or wish to be saved, nor did I struggle for  
life! Yet Jesus came, whose will of Grace precedes our will, whose purpose  
of love outruns our desire for salvation. “He took me.” Well do I remember  
His grasp! He took me and made me more conscious of my danger than I  
had been before. He took me, by His Holy Spirit, and I knew that He had  
taken me, for I began to feel His grip tightening upon me! He drew me  
gradually to look at Him, to trust Him and to leave myself and all my  
hopes entirely in His hands. Then He drew me right out of the many waters and made my heart sing for joy!  
Do you not remember the time with yourself? As you look with wonder  
upon some friend who has been rescued from the great calamity of this  
week, I want you to feel that you may look with equal wonder upon yourself, for you have experienced a greater rescue! You have been delivered  
from sinking into the Pit that has no bottom—a sinking down in sin and  
into the lower depths of corruption! Jesus came from Heaven. He took  
you, He drew you out of many waters, therefore praise and bless His  
name! You were too anxious to hope and yet He taught you to hope in His  
mercy! You were too despairing to struggle, but He made you exercise holy  
violence to enter the kingdom! You were too weary and despondent to  
trust, but He led you to faith! His Divine Spirit worked all your works in  
you and here you are, sitting in this House of Prayer, this morning, to say,  
“He has delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet  
from falling.”  
Now, I should not wonder if since then you have been pretty nearly  
shipwrecked as to your spiritual hopes and have a second and a third  
time been rescued! You have begun to grow somewhat cold and you have  
wandered from the Lord and you have, therefore, dreaded the total destruction of all true religion within your spirit. Then you have cried out in  
fear, “I have been a hypocrite, or a mere formalist and shall perish, after  
all.” But when you were ready to give all up under the temptation of the  
powers of darkness, the Lord has again restored you! Has He not sent  
from above and taken you out of the deep, yet again? Yes, blessed be His  
name, He has sought you and led you back to His ways! If I address a  
backslider who feels as if he were sinking deeper and deeper, I would pray  
for him that he may yet know how Christ can save a sinking Peter and  
bring a runaway Jonah to the shore again.  
Last of all, we shall soon come into the many waters of death. Sooner, perhaps, than we think. To some, the stream of death is very shallow. We have known certain of the saints go over dry-shod, singing all the way. They can hardly have been conscious of death, nor have known when they were last on earth and when they were first in Heaven. But there are others who have to cross Jordan at a time when it overflows its banks and, like Christian in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” they are up to their necks in the stream and need words of comfort. You remember how one said, “Fear not, Brother, I feel the bottom and it is good”? There is a rocky bottom all the way across! No slippery sand nor sucking mud, but sound rock from shore to shore—and however deep it is, it is never so deep as to drown a  
Believer’s hope nor destroy his soul!  
Yet I can imagine the best of saints to be flooded with many troubles in  
their last hours—physical weakness, depression of spirit, temptations of  
Satan, family difficulties—all increase the swellings of Jordan. Do you  
know what will happen? He will send from above! He will take you and He  
will draw you out of many waters—and you shall rise to Glory! What a  
Heaven of heavens above others will you feel when you go right up from  
the depths to the heights! To leap right away from “de profundis,” to, “in  
excelsis”—from the death-sweat and the expiring faintness to the ecstasy  
and the ineffable Glory—how transcendent the bliss!  
What an exchange it will be, Brothers and Sisters, for those who have

grown old and decrepit, or for those who could scarcely say even a word to  
testify their dying faith, to find themselves, all of a sudden, rid of every  
ache and pain and all their withering flesh—and to be disembodied in perfect liberty, charmed with the Beatific Vision of their Lord from whom they  
are never to part again! Why, I think we might almost choose the deathroad of the two! Some are very fond of expecting that their Lord will surely  
come in time to prevent their dying. Ah, well, you may be very thankful if  
it happens, but I do not think it is the way I shall go, nor can I say that I  
envy you the prospect in which you delight.  
In Heaven you will come to us who die and ask us—“What was it to fall  
asleep in Jesus? What was the feeling of putting off the body? What was  
the joy of being made like our Covenant Head in death?” I do not say that  
you will regret that you did not descend into the tomb, but of this I am  
sure—none of us who shall sleep will think that you had any preference  
over us!—  
*“Where should the dying members rest,  
But with their dying Head?”*  
If the Master went that way, descending into the sepulcher, and so up by  
the hill of Resurrection to the golden gate, we will not even envy Enoch  
and Elijah, though they were permitted to take the reserved route and enter the City by the rear gate! It shall be all well with us if we are resting in  
Jesus, for at the last He will send from above and take us and draw us  
out of many waters. To His name be praises! Amen.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “He delivered me, because He delighted in me.”  
Psalm 18:19.

THE experience of Believers has much in common. The language in which they are known to express it bears a close resemblance. You may often take the language out of one good man’s mouth and put it into the mouth of another without committing any violence. The words of David will doubtless suit hundreds and thousands of you who fear the Lord. You will be able to lay hold of this sentence, full many of you, I hope, with the hands of appropriation and be enabled, by God the Holy Spirit, to say, as he said, “He delivered me because He delighted in me.”

These words may suggest to us a pleasant fact to sing about—“He delivered me”—a precious Truth of God to think about, “because He delighted in me.” And a proper course to set about—since His delight in me has issued in my deliverance, let my delight in Him produce a response of gratitude! “He delivered me.” Here is—

I. A FACT IN THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE SAINT which may well provoke the gratitude and inspire the song of him who has witnessed such amazing Grace! We need not disentomb the tale of David’s rescue from peril—let us take our own narrative. And how can I invoke the memory of this better than by referring to some points in John Bunyan’s wonderful allegory? As pilgrims to the Celestial City, we have often had to sing, “He delivered me.” You remember well, when you resided in the City of Destruction, you breathed the same atmosphere, followed the same fashions and indulged the same lusts of the flesh that others did. Prone to sin, and prompt to participate in other men’s sins, you mingled with them in their unhallowed pursuits. You were enemies to God and yet you were on good terms with yourselves! You were at a distance from the great Sun of Righteousness and, instead of sighing for the Light of God, you sought satisfaction in darkness. What you once were—an alien from God and a stranger to His House—you would now be, had He not delivered you! It was Divine Grace which made you restless and put it into your heart to be uneasy. You saw that the wrath of God must rest upon the ungodly. You heard a voice in your ears, “Escape; escape for your life! Look not behind you! Flee to the mountains lest you be consumed.” If you have forsaken the drunkard’s haunts, if you have broken off the swearer’s profane tongue, if the pleasures of sin have ceased their fascination, you must ascribe it to your Redeemer and say, “He delivered me,” for it is Grace that has rescued you from the destroyers!

Do you remember the time when you first set out as a pilgrim for the better country? You ran as best you could. Bright hopes and cheery prospects enlivened you as you thought of entering into the Celestial City. But all of a sudden you were bewildered with doubts and fears. You had fallen into the Slough of Despond! In that miserable plight some of you remained for months. It was my misfortune to be there for nearly five years—and I found it a terrible place! Fears of dying haunted us, and equal fears of living. A dread of Hell came over us and a dreary apprehension that we would soon be swallowed up as those that went down alive into the Pit! With what cold shudders, or with what hot tears some of you must recall that unhappy season when you cried with Job, “O, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even unto His seat!” You had become the companion of dragons and of owls, and your soul chose strangling rather than life. It is not so with you now. Your face shines—the oil of joy is upon it! Your throat is no longer hoarse with groaning. You can sing a song to your Well-Beloved touching your Beloved. Who made the change? Why, dear Heart, I am sure you can say, “He delivered me! It was His kind hand that snatched me from the mire, lifted me up out of the horrible Pit, and set my feet upon a rock.”

You have not forgotten, dear Friends—in fact, the felicities of Heaven can never be erased from your memory! O, the weight of that burden which pressed you down when your sins laid heavy on your soul. You walked despondingly enough along the road. Christian worship had no charms to enliven you. Did you come where God’s people were singing? You said, “I would, but cannot sing.” Or if they prayed, you likewise excused yourself, “I would, but cannot pray.” Your sins were so harassing that they haunted your mind, vexed your brain and terrified your imagination. What schemes to get rid of them, or to ease your heart of conscious guilt, you resorted to! And yet you got worse, rather than better. You tried to condone your past bad works by doing some fresh good works, but their defects were so palpable that they only aggravated your sore. You resorted to ordinances and ceremonies and you discovered that they were mere quackery, a vile empiricism void of healing virtue, but full of deadly opiates! You seemed as if you would be bent double with your sins! You cried, “O God, my sins, my sins, my sins! How can I be delivered from them?”

And now let me wake up your tender recollections. Do you remember how Christ was evidently set forth crucified before your eyes—how you saw One hanging upon a tree in agonies and blood—and how, as you looked to Him, you felt the cords that bound you begin to crack, and the burden that oppressed you presently roll away? Do you remember how you turned round to seek for it, but it was gone? You sought for it, but it could not be found! You saw, as it were, an open sepulcher, the very sepulcher where once the Savior lay—into that your sins had rolled—there had they been buried forever! Oh, you can sing as you think of this, “He delivered me! He delivered me!” ‘Twas the mighty hand of the Savior that lifted that intolerable load from off you and set you free, so that you could exultingly say, “I am forgiven! Through the Savior’s precious blood I am forgiven! His death my ransom price has paid!”

Since that time your song has swollen and become more sweet and loud. You have added many fresh stanzas to it, but the refrain is still the same, “He delivered me! He delivered me!” A grievous distress befell you when, after you lost your burden, you met with one called, “Adam the First,” or, “Old Adam.” Do you recollect his inviting you to his house? With pleasant, winsome speech, he told you that the road you were going was very rough—that heavy toil and hard fare must be looked for through the whole course of the pilgrimage—and that he would recommend you to indulge yourself with the bounties of nature, rather than deny yourselves with the austerities of faith. He invited you to go home with him and he would let you marry one of his three daughters and then he would make you his heir! Did you not accept his invitation and go home with him and see his three daughters? The wonder is that you did not marry one of them. Their names you know. The Lust of the Flesh—she was the eldest, and very agreeable in her manners. The Lust of the Eyes—she was the second, and the more you gazed at her, the more she fascinated you! The youngest born, but by far the most imposing in stature and deportment, was The Pride of Life. You went home to the old man’s house and when you saw those three daughters, your heart began to beat, and your thoughts were fixed on their dowries. Then he said, in his patronizing manner, “All these things will I give you, and you can still be a pilgrim. You can be a Christian without observing any strict vows of sanctity! Little blemishes and trivial inconsistencies will pass unnoticed if you clothe yourself with the mantle of a comely profession. Scruples of conscience may be easily quieted. If you are as good as your neighbors, they cannot upbraid you.” But you were given Divine Grace to run away! You shut your ears against the enticing words—you escaped! How was it, then, that you did not fall a victim to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, or to the pride of life? What reason can you assign but this—“He delivered me!” How marvelous your deliverance! Your steps had well-near gone—your feet had almost slipped—but in the moment when you would have perished, he interposed! Therefore, let His name be praised!

Since that, do you recollect going through the Valley of Humiliation, and fighting with Apollyon? We have not merely to contend with a trinity of sensual lusts, but we have to wage war with Satan, himself! Some of the younger disciples here do not know what this means, but the veterans in the army understand Bunyan’s description. Well do some of us remember when we stood foot to foot with the great adversary, hour after hour, and how at last we fell—and his foot was upon us and he said, “Now will I destroy your soul.” At that very moment, when the dragon’s foot seemed to crush all life out of you, you were enabled to say, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again.” How was it that you escaped out of such a terrible conflict? Must you not sing very sweetly and very loudly, “He delivered me! He delivered me! Blessed be His name!”

Amidst all your travels, have you never passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Have you not experienced the gloom of darkness where your spirit was so desponding that you did not know what to do? Though you had been a Christian for many years, you could not discern the hope of your calling! Though you had come to the full assurance of understanding, you could not take hold of one Covenant Promise with the slightest confidence! Though you had been known aforetime to sing, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His,” He hid His face from you! You sought Him, but you found Him not. In sermons you found no refreshment. In prayer no communion. You were reduced to such a low state of mind that you seemed as though you were counted with them that go down into the Pit. You were so haunted with gloomy doubts and fears, that you cried out, “Your wrath lies hard upon me and You have afflicted me with all Your waves.” Through that perilous and gloomy valley you walked! Out of that valley, at last, you came into the bright clear sunshine! And when you sat down and looked back upon the place of dragons and the land of terrors, you could sing, “He delivered me.” Yes, Lord, You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from falling! Unto Your name be all the praise!

Since then, my dear fellow traveler on the road to Canaan, you have had many remarkable deliverances. Cover up your face and be ashamed! I feel that I may well blush, as I confess to wandering in Bye-Path Meadow. Do you remember going over the stile because the road was rough? You thought if you went just on the other side of the hedge, it would be so much more pleasant. Do you remember being lost at night? Do you remember, above all, the Giant Despair, who locked you up in his dungeon? Do you remember with sorrow, how wandering from the right way soon brought on sickness of heart and despair? You, Mr. MuchAfraid, have good reason to sing, “He delivered me,” when you remember how you were fetched out of the dungeon! And you, Mr. Ready-to-Halt, you, too, lay shut up there, but He delivered you! He who slays despair and puts doubts to flight, He came to your rescue, even though your own sins had brought you into that sad plight. Laud His name as you recollect what wonders He has done for you—and what loving kindness He has shown towards you!

And now, it may be, some of us are going through the Enchanted Ground. I sometimes think that such is the condition of a great majority of pilgrims, now-a-days. The Enchanted Ground was a place where men felt drowsy and had a tendency to slumber and sink into a long and eternal sleep. Is that your temptation, Friend? I know it is mine. I have a sluggish, drowsy soul. I wish I could keep awake and vigorous in my Master’s service, but the tendency of my drowsy spirit is to get cold and inert. And I suppose it is the same with most of you. How is it, then, that you have not gone to sleep, that you have not given up all diligence and lost all heart for God’s ways? Surely you must say, “He delivered me!”

I would not detain you longer, however, on this retrospect, except that I have two more scenes to bring before you. Did you ever stand and look at that hole in the hill, of which Bunyan speaks, and which he says was the backdoor to Hell? He says that, although Ignorance appeared to have gone almost all the way to Heaven, he was bound and taken back. Some of us have seen, in fact, that which he so touchingly describes in metaphor. We have known members of Christian Churches who have held an honorable position in the eyes of their fellow men, for 10 or 20 years, prove themselves to be detestable hypocrites, prone to manifold vices and to reprobate every good work! They have not taken, like drunkards and swearers, the broad road down to the Pit, but they have committed their transgressions in secret—worn the masks of profession, kept company with saints—and gone by the back door to meet the doom of sinners! I shudder as the procession passes before my mind’s eye, of ministers, deacons, Elders and influential professors, who have gone through that backdoor. What to say, I know not. My soul is bowed down. “O God, I had gone there myself, had You not delivered me!” I think you must all feel the same if you know anything of the corruptions of your own heart. Even you, my venerable Brothers and Sisters, who have been preserved so many years in the wilderness, if it were not for the Grace of God, you, too, concerning faith, had made shipwreck—and so have perished, even in the harbor’s mouth!

We shall soon reach the last struggle. Jordan is only a narrow stream which parts us from the land of spirits and we shall soon pass through it. But its floods are cold and it is not easy for flesh and blood to anticipate dying with complacency. “But be of good courage, Beloved,” we have said up to this time, “He has delivered me.” He who has been our Helper will not forsake us. Be assured we shall sing that at the last, and should the angels who meet us on the other side ask how we endured the struggle of the death pang, we will, each of us, bear the same testimony—“He delivered me!”

I said this was a hope to cultivate, that you might sing for joy in the article of death when heart and flesh fail. I hope that you will. Let me encourage you, Christian people, to sing a great deal more than you do. Of old London, in the Puritan time, it was said that you might have heard songs and prayers in well-near every house as you walked at the breakfast hour from St. Paul’s to Eastcheap. Family worship was then the prevailing custom! It would not be so now in any town in England—the more the pity. I hear the waggoner in the country, and the costermonger in the city, humming a tune or singing a song. Why should not you, my Friends, enliven your listless intervals with a hymn? The world has its popular music—why should not we stir up some soul-inspiring melodies? Soldiers go to battle with martial airs—let us go to our battle with the songs of Zion! When the sailors are tugging and pulling at the rope and weighing the anchor, they send up a cheery shout and they work better for it, too. Christian Friends, while you work, lighten the toil with sacred song! Serve God with gladness! I have often been charmed at eventide on the canals at Venice to hear the gondoliers sing in chorus some glorious old chant. So, Christians, as you steer your vessels to Heaven, and tug at the oar, sing as you row, sing as you work! Sing, for you have much to sing about! Be glad, and praise the Lord who has delivered you! And now we have—

II. A PRECIOUS TRUTH TO THINK ABOUT.  
“He delighted in me.” “He delivered me because He delighted in me.” Deliverance from sin, deliverance from evil propensities, deliverance from spiritual enemies—all such deliverances bear evidence of God’s love to us. Temporal mercies betoken the freeness of the Divine bounty, but they are never bestowed as the earnest of God’s special love. Such inferior gifts He often lavishes in abundance upon those who are not His people. Spiritual blessings He reserves for His own redeemed, regenerate family! Their value is enhanced by their significance, because they are proofs of His eternal love towards us. While they grant us safe conduct through the wilderness, they guarantee to us eternal life when these pilgrimage days are over and done. If you have experienced the kinds of deliverance I have been describing, you have many tokens of His good will and the tenderness with which He delights in you.  
I shall not talk much about this, but I hope you will think much about it. How much He delights in you it is not possible to say. The Father delights in you and looks upon you with doting love—like as a father takes pleasure in his child, so does He rejoice over you. And Jesus delights in you. He saw in you the recompense of His agonies, the purchase of His blood, the partakers of His Glory. And the Holy Spirit delights in you. He has formed your heart anew and made you a temple for Him to dwell in and, therefore, He watches you with jealous care. Does it not seem wellnear incredible that God should ever take delight in His creatures? He is so eternally happy in Himself, so infinitely blessed, so supremely glorious. Surely His delights cannot be enhanced or diminished by the welfare or the adversity of such worms as we are! Yet He certainly delighted in David and He most surely does delight in every one of those who put their trust in Him! Nor does He merely say that He delights in us, now, but He assures us that He did delight in His people long before the world was made! He wrote their names in His book. He ordained them. In His decrees He had them before His mind’s eye. He delighted in them before ever He laid the foundation of the earth, or stretched the canopy of the skies! Why was this? Some suppose that it was because He foresaw they would be good and deserving of His esteem. I cannot see anything that is attractive in rebellious men, in sinful mortals! I dare say you can all join with me in echoing the sentiment of our hymn—  
*“What was there in me that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas even so, Father, I always must sing, Because it seemed good in Your sight.”*  
The reason for God’s delight we cannot tell. It is hid in God’s eternal breast. This only we know, that He delights in us because we are the objects of His choice. From among the dense masses of mankind He chose us. In Infinite Sovereignty He said, “They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels.” He ordained us to be vessels of honor fitted for the Master’s use and He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. Moreover, He delights in us because, in addition to having chosen us, He has bought us. Christ has paid too dearly for His people not to love them. When He looks into the face of the penitent sinner, He sees the reflection of His own tears and languish, yes, and of His bloody sweat! He sees His own wounds and recollects the price they cost—and the purchase He paid.

They are precious to Him because of the power He has exerted upon them in making them His workmanship. We prize a thing sometimes that has not any intrinsic value, for the sake of the skill and workmanship bestowed upon it. The Holy Spirit has put out the force of His Omnipotence to construct a Christian. It takes as much Divine Energy to make a saint as to create a world and, therefore, God rejoices in every one of His elect as being the work of His hands—the very choice design of His heart.  
Yet more, He delights in us because there is a relationship established whereby we are made partakers of a Divine Nature. This is a Truth of God to be spoken of very reverently. The angels are not related to God— they are His creatures—but MAN is next-of-kin to the Deity! He whom the heavens adore as God Over All, blessed forever, has taken our nature and is a Man like ourselves! The Lord Jesus Christ, who counted it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and identified Himself with our circumstances! The Son of Man is the Son of the Highest! In Christ there is a relationship, a kindred, an affinity between man and God—the Creator and the creature whom He created in His own image! Hence the delight He takes in us.  
But to go farther, there is an alliance yet closer predicted in Scripture, wherein Christ, being married to His Church, shall develop the great mystery, whereby, as husband and wife are one flesh, so there shall be an eternal indissoluble union between Christ and His Church. Oh, mysterious union! Blessed cause of delight! Like the head delights in the members, after such manner the Lord Jesus delights in every saved sinner who is vitally united to Himself!  
The day, Beloved, comes on apace when Christ will prove His delight in all His people, by calling their bodies from the grave and reuniting their souls with their risen frames! They shall be clothed upon with His glorious majesty and made to sit upon His throne with Himself. Then the world will know that, though they were “despised and rejected of men,” as He was, they were the delight of God—and He will forever delight in them! “Because He delighted in me, therefore He delivered me.”  
I cannot convey to you the full sense of these manifold and marvelous blessings. I can only talk about them. But I pray God the Holy Spirit to make the reflections as sweet to you as they have been to me. My heart seems to leap at the thought that the Most High should take any delight in me. I know He has delivered me, all honor to His name! I know I am no longer what I once was, glory be to His dear love! He has saved me from my sins and I draw an inference, the correctness of which I cannot doubt, that He would not have delivered me if He had not delighted in me! Do draw that inference, each one of you, for yourselves. If God has delivered you, He delights in you! But there are some of you who never were delivered. You are still in bondage, still the slaves of sin. Yet, remember, the Gospel is still preached to you. “Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” Trust Christ, poor Soul, and you shall be delivered, and that deliverance shall be to you the evidence that you were the objects of God’s electing love, and that you shall be written on His heart forever! A word to the wise. One word to the wise is enough, though twenty words to the foolish would be of no use. Here is—  
III. A RESOLUTION TO BE ACTED UPON.  
You sang it just now. I want you to act it out in your lives— *“Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn!  
Chosen of Him ere time began,  
I choose Him in return.”*  
It is the least you can do if He delight in you, to delight in Him. Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid there are many of us who do not take a delight in our religion. Then I should advise you to challenge the quality of your profession, for though genuine religion does not always yield delight, that is only because of the infirmity of the creature. True Grace in the heart, a conscience void of offense—in a word, the life of a consecrated man should be a perennial fountain of joy! Some people go to their place of worship because they think they ought. Their legality holds them in constant bondage. “You shall not. You shall not,” is the burden of their creed. They never rejoice. Their eyes never sparkle—they never think of going up to the House of God with the festive joy of those that welcome the holiday. Ah, my dear Friend, I advise you to see whether you have a sound conversion, for those who truly love God exalt in His name. What if they have their troubles, still their faith and their fellowship are the blessings, not the bane, of their mortal existence. What if they have their cares and anxieties, still the cheer and palliatives are never wanting while they can cast their care upon Him who cares for them! His service is their solace. Their sorrow is that they cannot serve Him more! Christian, delight yourself in the Lord, and you shall have the desire of your heart!  
But then your resolution will not only be to delight in God, but to show it. He delighted in you and, therefore, He delivered you. You delight in Him and, therefore, you serve Him. What can you do to express your gratitude? You are saved—how can you extol His great salvation? Perhaps you are doing a little, but can you not do more? Is there not some fresh thing that you can do for Jesus? Can you not get new crowns for His head, Beloved? Let us give Him fresh praise and if there is any fresh branch of usefulness, any new mode of serving Him which we have not yet tried, let us ask for Grace to try it now! And as for the good old works in which we have been engaged, oh, for fresh fire that we may do them better! I would that we served God with more vigor. It is not more preaching we need, but more fiery preaching! It is not merely to multiply the number of our prayers, but the need of more earnest pleadings, more fervent intercessions. The service that we render is too languid and heartless—we need to summon our whole heart, and soul, and strength in untiring efforts to do His will and speed the triumph of His glorious Gospel! By the vision of the thorn-crowned head. By the five wounds of Him who died in agony. By the mangled, murdered body of your blessed Lord suffering unto death for you, I do implore you, the servants of God, to lay yourselves as living sacrifices upon the altar of Jesus Christ! You do, some of you, profess to love Him, but you never speak of Him! You say you serve Him, but what do you do? You profess to “love your God with zeal so great that you could give Him all,” and what, after all, do you give Him? Oh, how much outward religion is nothing but inward hypocrisy! How much of our talk about religion is mere gossip! God save us from vain talk and impart to us a living energy, so that our deeds may proclaim our faith! Oh, may we spend and be spent in the Master’s service till we shall—  
*“Our body with our charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live.”*  
As for those who know not God, they have no capacity to serve Him. My prayer to God for you is that He may bring you to see Christ Crucified. When you put your trust in Him, you shall be delivered. Then you shall sing, “He delivered me because He delighted in me.” And after that it shall be your welcome mission to go and tell what great things He has done for you. May this be the joyous occupation of all of us! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **EPHESIANS 2.**

Verse 1. And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. These were your grave clothes. You were wrapped up in them. No, this was your tomb! You were shut up in it, as in a great stone coffin— “Dead in trespasses and sins.”

2. Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. You were once no better than the workshop of the devil. He is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, as the blacksmith works in his forge. When you hear foul language, when you see bad actions, these are the sparks coming out of the chimney that let you know who is at work within, down below. What a dreadful thing it is—a man dead to all that is good, but alive through the indwelling of the devil that is within him! “The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.”

3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Not children of God, even as some profanely assert when they talk about the universal fatherhood of God. You were children of wrath, even as others. And the best of men were no better than others by nature. They were as dead, as much under the influence of Satan, as much under the influence of the lusts of the flesh as others are who are left where they are. It is only Sovereign Grace that makes us to differ. “Were by nature,” not by error—by nature! Not by a mistake, not by a few actions, but by nature, the children of wrath, even as others! See what you used to be? Let this make you humble. See what you would have been? Let this make you grateful. “You has He quickened.” He has put life into you. He has made you quit your graves. He has made you come from under the dominion of Satan and the devices of your own heart. Will you not bless His name tonight?

4, 5. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ. Wonder! The life that quickens. Christ quickens all the members of His mystical body, and this has come to us through the riches of God’s mercy. Whatever God has, He has in abundance, but of His mercy we read that He has riches of it—and truly all those riches of mercy He has shown in our case. We cannot but have riches of gratitude for such riches of mercy!

5. By Grace you are saved. See, Paul puts that in a parenthesis. It was not necessary to the sense, but he knew that there would come a time when men would not like this Doctrine, so he puts it in, “By Grace are you saved.” They cannot bear it and, therefore, they shall have it. They shall have it when the sense does not seem to demand it. To make it quite clear, he will insert it. “By Grace you are saved.”

6. And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are not only raised from the dead with Christ, but we are spiritually raised into the heavenly places with Him. It is a great thing when a man learns to look up from earth to Heaven. It is a greater thing when he learns to look down from Heaven upon earth—to have you sitting at the right hand of God, and then to look down on all the things of this present life as far below you!

7. That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Brothers and Sisters, we are to be a show, an exhibition, in which God will exhibit the riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Angels will count it a high joy to study the life of a regenerate man, to see him rise from death in sin to the Glory of God in Christ Jesus! What is so precious in God’s esteem ought to continually excite our praise.

8. For by Grace are you saved. There it is again! Paul rings that silver bell in the deaf ears of men. “By Grace are you saved.”  
8, 9. Through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. We would be sure to boast if we could. We are a boasting people! Man is a poor mass of flesh, and he is largely given to the corruption of pride. He will boast if he can.  
10. For we are His workmanship. If there is any good thing in us, He put it there. It is not for us to boast. It is for Him to boast if He pleases. 10, 11. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Therefore remember—Oh, that is a good word for us, “Remember.” We are so apt to forget. “Remember”—  
11, 12. That you, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by those who are called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time you were without Christ. Had you to do with Christ? The Jews call you uncircumcised dogs! What had you to do with the Messiah? Was not the Messiah for God’s Israel? You did not belong to Israel.  
12. Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of promise. The Covenant was in Isaac. You are not the children of Isaac. You are not descended from Abraham. You were strangers from the Covenants of promise.  
12. Having no hope. Either here or hereafter.  
12, 13. And without God in the world. But now— Oh, what a contrast—  
13. In Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off, are made near by the blood of Christ. You are brought near to Israel! You are brought still nearer to Israel’s God! Now you are not aliens. Yon are not strangers from the Covenant You have a hope, you have a God!  
14, 15. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace. There is no Circumcision and Uncircumcision now, for that is done away with. There is now no Israel according to the flesh, and Gentiles who are not of God, for there is a spiritual Israel, to which we belong, as well as those of Abraham’s race. He has swept out of the way all the ordinances which divided us, and we are now one in Him!  
16, 17. And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near. To the Gentile and to the Jew, to the atrociously wicked, and to those who were religious after a fashion—He has brought them both in by the Cross.  
18. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Here you have the Trinity in a single line of Scripture, and it needs the Trinity to make an acceptable prayer! Through Him, (that is, Christ), we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and now, today, the Church of God is one in prayer, whether Jew or Gentile. We come to God by the same Mediator, helped by the same Spirit. We have answers of peace from the same Father!  
19. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God—There are many here whom we do not know. We have not seen their faces before, but if they are in Christ and we are in Christ, we are very near of kin! There is an old saying that blood is thicker than water, and depend upon it that when there is the blood of Christ sprinkled upon us, it makes very near kinship! When we are bought with the same price, quickened by the same life, and are on the way to the same Heaven, we are very near of kin! We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and all the household of God! They make a great fuss when they give a man the key of the City of London. There is a fine gold box to put it in. You have got the key of the New Jerusalem and your faith, like a golden box, holds the deeds of your citizenship. Take care of them and rejoice in them!  
20, 21. And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ, Himself, being the chief cornerstone: In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. The Church is a framed house. It has an Architect. Some seem to think that it is a load of bricks. They have no church officers. There are none set apart to this work, and none to the other. It seems to be just a heap of stones thrown down any way. But a true Church is, by the Spirit of God, a building fitly framed together. One is a door, another is a window. One lies low and hidden in the foundation. Another may have a more prominent position in the wall. And it should be so with us—that we should each have a place that God has appointed him, and keep to that place. Lord, build up Your Church upon earth at this time!  
22. In whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. We are not built to stand like a carcass. It is a ghastly sight to see houses in London nearly finished, but never occupied—but it is the glory of the Church of God that it is inhabited! It is a habitation of God through the Spirit. Holy Spirit, dwell more evidently in Your Church! Keep open house for all poor sinners who come to Christ and glorify God!

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2432 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

KEPT FROM INIQUITY  
NO. 2432

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1895.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1887.

**“I kept myself from my iniquity.”  
Psalm 18:23.**

In our reading we had a very wonderful description of God’s delivering mercy towards His servant David. He was very peculiarly tried in the court of Saul. He deserved so much of the king that it was doubly difficult for David to be treated so badly. He had been the deliverer of his country when he slew Goliath, yet he was hunted as if he had been the grossest of malefactors. He had to flee for his life like a partridge upon the mountains—and all the while, no doubt—Saul and his partisans accused him of all manner of evil. There was scarcely any bad thing which they did not attribute to David! But he was upright before God and he dared to challenge the investigation of the Most High, for he was sincere and true to the core. He proved by his conduct that he was so, for when Saul was in his hands, on two memorable occasions when he might readily have taken his life, he refused to do so. He would not put forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and, in great Grace, in his own good time, God was pleased to deliver His servant.

If men blow out the candle of a Christian’s reputation, God will light it again! If He does not do so in this life, remember that at the Resurrection there will be a resurrection of reputations as well as of bodies—“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.” It is, after all, of very small account what is said by men whose breath is in their nostrils. “They say. What do they say? Let them say.” Let them say till they have done saying—it little matters what they say! Yet, to a sensitive spirit, like that of David, the tongue is a very sharp instrument—it cuts like a razor and pierces, even, to the bones. He felt, therefore, the slander of many, and was sometimes greatly troubled by it. However, God was pleased to work a very marvelous deliverance for him. It seemed as if the Lord would sooner shake the earth to atoms and crush the arches of Heaven than fail to deliver His servant! He will still do so, depend upon it! “He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

David attributes his Providential deliverance to the mercy of God by which he had been kept clear in his conduct. “I kept myself from my iniquity.” Whatever you do, if you do right, God will see you through, but, whoever you may be, if you turn aside to crooked ways, you will soon fall into a bog. If you try to carve for yourself, you will probably cut your fingers. He who thinks that he can do better by suppressing truth, or by speaking lies, or by acting contrary to the dictates of his conscience will find that he has made a great mistake. Trust so in God as to hold to your integrity. “Let your eyes look right on and let your eyelids look straight before you.” Ponder the path of your feet and God will bring you through as surely as He is alive, which is saying much more than if I said as surely as you are alive, for, as the Lord lives, before whom we stand, He will not forsake the righteous, nor cast off them that serve Him faithfully!

This is the passage we have to consider, “I kept myself from my iniquity.” Here is, first, a personal danger—“my iniquity.” And, secondly, here is a special guard—“I kept myself.” And then, thirdly, here is

 a happy result. David could say, as he looked back upon his life, “I kept myself from my iniquity.” There was no boasting in this declaration, but as his enemies accused him falsely, like an honest man, he defended himself, for he was truthfully able to say, “I kept myself from my iniquity.”

I. Well now, here is, first, A PERSONAL DANGER—“my iniquity.” This is a dreadful possession to have in the house! A man had better have a cage of cobras than have an iniquity, yet we have, each of us, to deal at home with some special form of sin. It is said that there is a skeleton in every closet. I do not know whether that is true, but I do know that there is something very much allied to a skeleton, that is, the body of this death with which we all have to deal—and it takes a special shape in each good man. There is some particular sin which he may call “my iniquity.” Not only is there the general iniquity which affects the whole race, but each man has his own particular form of it—“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way.” There is a general sin, but there is a particularity in it, too—each man has his own way of sinning, so that he can speak of “my iniquity.”  
Let us think of the particular form of iniquity with which some of us have to do. It takes its specialty, perhaps, from our natural constitution. He who judges all men alike does them an injustice. There are some who have but little tendency to a particular form of evil, but they have a very great inclination towards some other sin. Some are sanguine—they are expecting great things and they fall into the sin of expecting to drink sweet waters from the cisterns of this world. There are some of quite another temperament who are inclined to despondency, perhaps to suspicion—they may fall into mistrust, or various forms of unbelief and even into despair which will be very grievous to the God who is always gracious. There are some men who, from their very parentage, are inclined to drunkenness or to unchastity. There are others, favored by God with a godly ancestry, who, if they were left to themselves, would not probably fall into either of these forms of sin, yet they might be proud of their own integrity and proud of their own uprightness—and is not pride as great a sin as those more open transgressions? Depend on it, my dear Friend, you have some tendency, peculiar to yourself, and there is a special point where you lie open to the attacks of temptation! Happy will that man be who so knows himself that he sets a double watch against that postern gate through which the adversary is apt to creep in the dark. Peculiar constitutions may lead to special forms of sin and it behooves the godly man to keep himself from his own iniquity!  
Our tendency is to decry the particular form of sin that we find in others. We hold up our hands as if we were quite shocked. Better look in the mirror than look out the window! Looking out of the window you see one for whom you are not responsible, but looking in the mirror, you see one of whom you must give account to God—and you will do well to ask God to keep that one! You will, likely enough, within a day’s march, not see a much worse man than he is, if you know him well. I remember Mr. Berridge’s quaint joke. He had, hanging round his room, the portraits of many ministers and he would say to his friend, “Here is Whitefield, here is Wesley, here is So-and-So.” And then, leading his visitor to a mirror, he would say, “Here is the devil.” Yes, he is somewhere about there where you are looking. If you look long enough, you may detect some of his handiwork, at any rate, for there is something of his work about us all! Sin, therefore, may be something peculiar to constitution.  
But any man may also know that “my iniquity” may be engendered by education. How impressible we are in childhood! We bear the print of our mother’s fingers when we are 50 years of age and it is not gone from us even when we are old and gray-headed. Things that were done at our father’s home are likely to be done in our own home. Things that we saw, things that we heard when we were very young may abide with us and help to shape our whole life. May God help us so to look back upon our early training as to discover the defects of it and, not laying the sin upon others, which would be a wicked perversion of the truth, yet let us remember that as we lived in a sinful generation, we have acquired some taint from it and we have need to watch against the sins which were taught us when we were young, especially any of you who have been rescued by Grace out of homes of drunkenness and debauchery!  
I bless the Lord that there are many here who have been brought by Sovereign Grace out of very dens of iniquity! There are some here who are, so far as they are aware, the only ones of all their household who know the Lord—and when they go home tonight, it will be a great pain to them as they cross the threshold, to think how very different the atmosphere will be from that in the House of Prayer where they have worshipped. Well, my dear Brother or Sister, we sympathize with you in your trial and pray the Lord that you may carefully watch and that you may be kept from your iniquity.  
No doubt there are certain forms of iniquity which grow out of our particular condition. The young man has his iniquity—it is not the iniquity of the aged. The young man is tempted to sinful pleasure, the old man to covetousness. Each period of life has its own special snare. Pray, I beseech you, young people, middle-aged people, old people—pray the Lord that you may be kept from the peculiar iniquity of that part of life through which you are going! He who leaves the shores of England for Australia may ask the guardian care of God while yet the white cliffs of Albion have scarcely melted from his view! Let him ask God’s blessing as he passes through the middle passage of the Suez Canal. And let him not forget to pray when the captain tells him that within a few days he will come in sight of the southern shore. No, all along, we need God’s Grace!  
It is so with our condition of life as to our outward circumstances. The rich man has his temptations. Few know how great they are, or they would not be so eager after riches. It is as hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle! It is a natural impossibility, for so many difficulties surround the possession of riches. But with God all things are possible! Yet the poor man will not find that he has a much larger hole to go through—his straitened circumstances will not materially help him. Agur did well to pray, “Give me neither poverty nor riches.” There are peculiar trials in each condition and even the middle way between the two is not without its own special temptations so that, whether you have much or little, pray God that you may keep yourself from your iniquity.  
There are iniquities which come through prosperity. I have never yet prayed to God to preserve me in going up in a balloon, for I have never had any idea of entering one, but whenever you prosper very greatly, and especially when you prosper very quickly, you are much like a man going up in a balloon. If people knew the danger, they would send in prayers to the Monday night Prayer Meeting, asking that the Lord would have mercy upon the man who is greatly prospering, for there are very peculiar trials surrounding that condition! Oh, that men might be kept from that cleaving to the world and letting the Savior go which so often follows upon great success in life!  
But equally must he pray who is in adversity. Oh, the ills of adversity! The worst ill of all is the tendency to doubt God and to put forth your hand unto iniquity in order to remove the heavy load. Pray the Lord, you who are losing everything, that He will keep you from your iniquity! You need not pray, like Pharaoh, “Take away the frogs,” but pray like David, “Take away my iniquity.” That is the prayer of the true child of God!  
I may be speaking to some who have great talents. Well, you have need to pray, “Lord, keep me from my iniquity,” for great talent is a very dangerous thing for a man to possess, a charge which needs great Grace. And, if you have but one talent, your iniquity may be to wrap it in a napkin and hide it in the earth. There is a temptation in the one talent as well as in the five! Therefore, pray the Lord to keep you from that iniquity which is often the accompaniment of the particular condition in which you are found.  
Brothers, there are some of you who have need to pray this prayer in reference to your calling. I do not think that any calling is free from temptation, but there are some positions in which the temptation is very terrible. I need not go into those which surround many of you in trade, when everybody seems to, “cut the thing fine,” as they say, and to cut the truth much finer than anything else—and say a great deal that is not true under the notion that, somehow or other, it will help business. If there are customs in your trade which all others follow and which you know to be wrong, do not adopt them! Say, “Lord, keep me from my iniquity.” You need not begin to say, “Those grocers, those milk-dealers, those publicans all have their iniquities.” Think about your own—quite enough iniquities may crowd into your shop without your thinking about the shops of other people. Pray the Lord that you may be kept from your iniquity.  
And, O Beloved, what iniquities there are which surround us all in daily life! Into what company can you go without being tempted? In this city, at the present time, the position of a Christian is very much like that of Lot in Sodom. I speak what I know! I do not exaggerate the conditions which surround the lives of some Christian working men and women who are not able to let their children go into our streets by reason of the filthiness of the language that they would hear. Even round about this House of Prayer is a very cauldron of iniquity, so that many say, “We cannot live there and we do not know where to live to keep our children out of the temptations which now surround them.” I say not that one age is worse than another, but I do say that the peculiar trials of today should make Christians walk very near to God and, instead of loosening and relaxing the lines of our religious profession, let us tighten them as much as we can and seek to be thoroughly Nonconformist, not conforming to the world, to be out and out Dissenters, dissenting from the ways of this ungodly generation!

Still, to help you to find out your iniquity, I will make one or two more remarks. It is likely to be that iniquity which you have most often fallen into in your previous life. What has been your toughest struggle? Against quickness of temper? Then, that is your iniquity. Doubt and mistrust? That is your iniquity. Has it been covetousness? Has it been slowness to forgive any who have offended you? Has it been gossiping and mixing untruth with your talk? That is your iniquity. Whatever it is which, up to now, has stained your life, that is probably the thing which will stain it again unless you watch and call in the power of the Holy Spirit for your protection! That sin which you find yourself readily committing, which you drift into without any effort, yes, which you drift into when you are making a great many efforts not to do it—that is your iniquity! That which you have returned to after having smarted for it. That which you have vowed you would never be guilty of again and which yet has, in a moment, like the bursting forth of some hidden spring of water, carried you away with a rush—that is your iniquity! Oh, how can you keep yourself from it unless God shall keep you? Cry unto the Most High to enable you to keep yourself from your iniquity! That is your iniquity which has overtaken you even after you have prayed against it and labored against it—that you have concluded that surely you will never do it again—and yet you have done it.  
Let me tell you one thing more—that which you do not like to hear condemned, that which you do not like the preacher to mention, that which makes you wriggle in your seat and feel, “I wish he would not say that, he is coming too closely home”—that is your iniquity! And if you can not bear that you wife should speak to you about it, or that your brother or your sister should give you a friendly word of advice concerning it—that which you are most loath to hear, probably has to do with your iniquity! We may often judge ourselves by this test. It is that which you are most loath to hear that you have most need to hear. Instead of being angry with him who points it out to you, you should be willing to pay him for doing it! When you go to your doctor and ask him to examine you—if he says, “There is something a little amiss with the heart, or with the lungs,” do you knock him down? Do you get angry with him for telling you the truth? No, you give him his guinea and even thank him for imparting bad news! And should we not thank those who rebuke us and tell us of our faults? When God does not send you a faithful friend, I pray Him to send you an honest enemy who will deal straightly with you—and let you know where you weakness is, that you may then cry to God—“Lord, keep me from my iniquity.”  
II. Now, secondly, in our text there is A SPECIAL GUARD—“I kept myself from my iniquity.”  
Someone may perhaps say, “I have a special temptation, but I am going to set a guard against it.” Let me ask you, first, who you are—are you a child of God? Have you passed from death unto life? If you say, “No,” I am not referring to you in this part of my subject. You must be born again, you must go by faith to Jesus Christ and ask for cleansing in His precious blood and renewal by the Holy Spirit. I am now talking to the child of God—the man or woman who has spiritual life. I speak to you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, because you can, by God’s Grace, keep yourself from your iniquity. How are you to do it?  
Well, first, you must find out what it is. You must get a clear idea of your own iniquity. Ask the Lord to search you and try you, and know your ways. When you have found out what that iniquity is, then endeavor to get a due sense of its foulness and guilt in the sight of God. Ask the Lord to make you hate, most, that sin to which you are most inclined. Remember that you are a child of God—it ill becomes you to be friendly with any of the King’s enemies! Remember that Christ has bought you—you belong to Him—you should not be the slave of any sin. You must not be such if the life of God is in you. The life of God in the soul hates sin! You cannot take pleasure in any sin if you are, indeed, a regenerate man or woman. Therefore, I say to you, seek to get a sight of the heinousness of your particular sin and the danger which attends it, that, as you have an extraordinary horror of it, you may set that over against your tendency to it.  
Then, be resolved in the power of the Holy Spirit that this particular sin shall be overcome. There is nothing like hanging it up by the neck, that very sin, I mean. Do not fire at sin indiscriminately, but, if you have one sin that is more to you than another, drag it out from the crowd and say, “You must die if no other does. I will hang you up in the face of the sun.” Strive against your anger. Strive against your covetousness. Strive against your envy. Strive against your evil temper, your malice, if that is your fault, for there are some who are very slow to forgive. Strive against it till you get your foot upon its neck. “I cannot do it,” says one. Why? The Lord has said that He will bruise Satan under our feet shortly! Surely if you are to have the devil under your feet, you can get all sin under your feet by God’s help—and you must do it. It is a part of that work that must be worked in us to bring every thought into captivity to Divine Grace. You are not able to subdue the least sin apart from Christ, but, by the help of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing that can master you!  
I tell you that if you let any sin master you, you will be lost! If any sin should remain unconquered, you are ruined, for this is the way of salvation—the absolute conquest of every sin through the Grace of the Holy Spirit. It must be so with you before you can enter Heaven—and you are able to overcome it in the power of Jesus Christ! If you have an iniquity that more than another haunts you, then keep away from all that tempts you to it. Is there a house where your company is much liked, but where you are never able to come away without having fallen into sin? Keep away from that house! It is often one of the most essential things in young converts that they should quit the company in which they once sported. You may go into some company to do good, but mind that you are strong enough to resist the evil, for it does not always do for those who have but little strength to attempt to pull others out of the fire—they may be pulled into it themselves! No, come out from among them! Be you separate! Touch not the unclean thing! You have no business to be in that place where it becomes almost necessary that you should sin—that necessity should warn you not to go there!  
The true path of safety is to pray and believe against all sin. We conquer sin by faith in Christ! This is the axe that will cut down the upas tree—and there is no other that will do it. Believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior, who died for you, and then believe in Him as living again and willing to help you in every conflict against sin. Go, having Christ Crucified with you, and ask Him to crucify your sin and nail it up to His Cross. So you shall be helped to overcome, but there must be care, prayer, watchfulness, trust and continual looking up to the Lord for Grace. Only so can you say, “I kept myself from my iniquity.”  
III. Thirdly, I conclude with A HAPPY RESULT.  
David says, “I kept myself from my iniquity.” He does not say that he could not sin, but that he would not, and he did not. When a wicked man gets old, he may say, “I do not sin like those young people.” No, because you cannot—it has been well said that there is many an old man who, if you could put young eyes in him, would look the same way as he used to do! That is not what we want—it is not the failure to commit a sin because your passions have grown colder, or your strength has left you—it is a change of heart that is needed. “I kept myself from my iniquity.” That is, “Though it would try to tempt me, and did so, and I might have yielded to it, yet by the Grace of God I would not yield.”  
I pray, my Brothers and Sisters, that if we live 10, 20, 30, or even 50 more years, we may be able to say, without any boasting, but in deep humility before God, “By His great Grace, by trust in Jesus, I kept myself from my iniquity,” because, if we do so, see what a blessing it will be to us, for it will be to us a reason for our being brought out of the trouble! If when you are in need, if when you are under temptation, God helps you to keep straight, you will come out all right at the last. What a number of stories I might tell here of young men who were great losers, at first, by being godly, but they kept themselves right—and they always had to thank God for it afterwards.  
I know, at this present moment, a personal friend who was a banker’s clerk. On a certain day he was told to do something which he judged to be, speaking plainly, dishonest. He told the manager that he could not do it, whereupon he received a month’s notice. It was a country bank and he was not sent about his business at once—and he had time to turn the matter over. He had a wife and children and when he went home, it was not easy to tell the wife that the excellent position that he held would be vacated within a short time. But he stood fast in his integrity. He said that he was sure God would bring him safely through and he never had even the slightest thought of doing other than he had said he would do.  
It was within twelve months that he obtained the position of manager for that very bank—and it belongs to him at this moment! He very speedily became a man in a much better position than he could have expected to have obtained simply from the fact that it had been proven that he could be trusted. It is not always so—some people have to be a long time under a cloud—but, in the long run, if you, as a child of God, will but stand fast, God will not let you be a loser. If He does, it shall be your glory to lose everything sooner than tarnish you character! You shall find it a greater joy to lose all things for Christ than it would be to gain the whole world by doing anything that was wrong! If you are able to say, “I kept myself from my iniquity,” then you shall

 also be able to say with David, “I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised.”  
Next, if you act thus, it will be a triumph of Divine Grace. Brethren, we want to show the world what Grace can do, and every member of the Church ought to feel that he is put upon his behavior to prove what the Grace of God has done in him! What credit is brought to Christ by professed Christians who are so like worldlings that if you put them under a microscope, you could not tell the difference between them? If you can do what worldlings do, you shall go, at last, where worldlings go! If Grace does not make you to differ from them, it is not the Grace of God, it is all a sham. We ought to feel that Christ’s honor is in danger by our ill behavior and so live that we can glorify our Father who is in Heaven by our good works, keeping ourselves from our iniquity.  
For again, this will be our best testimony to others. It is well to preach as I do, with my lips. But you can all preach with your feet and by your lives—and that is the most effective preaching! The preaching of holy lives is living preaching! The most effective ministry from a pulpit is that which is supported by godliness from the pew! God help you to do this!  
And, lastly, what a sweet peace this will give to your conscience! Though we know we are saved by Grace, hear this, you ungodly! There is no way of salvation for you, or for us, but by the Grace of God through Jesus Christ—yet when we are saved, the evidence to our own soul of that work of Grace upon our nature is very sweet when we can say, “I have kept myself from my iniquity.” A well-spent life, a life that is pure, a life that has been consecrated to usefulness, a life in which there has not been a turning aside to the right hand or to the left, helps us to lie down with comfort upon our dying bed and bid farewell to all our dear ones and feel that we are leaving behind us the legacy of a gracious example in which we do not glory, but for which we give God the glory and thank and praise His holy name! Begin at the Cross—there is the source of your salvation! Then go and live like the living Savior. God help you to do so, for Christ’s sake!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2823 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ONE TROPHY FOR TWO EXPLOITS  
NO. 2823

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 22, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, IN THE SUMMER OF 1861.

**“For by You I have run through a troop; and by  
My God have I leaped over a wall.”  
Psalm 18:29.**

IT sometimes puzzles the unenlightened Believer to find that the Psalms often relate both to David and to David’s Lord. Many a young Believer has found himself quite bewildered when reading a Psalm—he has scarcely been able to make out how a passage could be true of both David and of the Lord Jesus Christ, “our superior King.” This he cannot understand. But he who has grown far enough in Grace to understand the meaning of conformity to Christ sees that it is not without a high and heavenly design that the Holy Spirit has presented to us the experience of Jesus in that model of experience through which David passed.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we all know as a matter of doctrine, but we have not all proved as a matter of sweet experience that we are to be like our Head. We must be like He upon earth, like He despised and rejected by man in our generation. We must be like He, bearers of the Cross. Yes, we must not shrink, in any way from what is meant by being crucified with Him and buried with Him in order that we may know, in later days, how to rise with Him, how to ascend with Him and how to sit with Him upon His Throne. No, I will go further—even in this life the Believer is to have a conformity to Christ in His present glories, for we are even now raised up together with Christ and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! In Him, also, we have obtained the inheritance, for we are complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power. There is such a conformity between Christ and His people that everything that is said of Christ may, in some measure, be said of His people. Whatever Christ has been, they should be or have been. Whatever He has done, He has done for them and they shall do the like, after some fashion or other. Whatever He has attained unto, they shall also enjoy. If He reigns, they shall reign, and if He is Heir of a universal monarchy, they shall also be kings and priests unto God and shall reign with Him forever and ever!

Thus the riddle becomes solved, the parable is expounded, the dark saying of David’s day shines clearly in Gospel light! You can see not only how it is possible that the same Psalm can relate to David and to David’s Lord, but that there is a Divine mystery and a most rich and precious lesson couching beneath the fact that the Holy Spirit has chosen to set forth the doings, the sufferings and the triumphs of Christ under the figure or model of the doings, sufferings and victories of the son of Jesus! You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear me remark that this text has relation to Christ and the Believer, too. The doings and triumphs of Jesus must, accordingly, first engage our attention and, in the second place, observe that we have here a picture of the wondrous doings of faith when the Believer is enabled to triumph over every earthly ill and over every human opposition—“By you I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”

I. Let us take the first sentence WITH REGARD TO CHRIST. “By You I have run through a troop.” How accurately Christ’s enemies are here described! By their number they were a troop. The Captain of our salvation, although single-handed in the combat, had to fight with a legion of foes. It was not a mere duel. It is true there was but one on the Victor’s side, but there was an innumerable host in antagonism to Him. Not only the Prince of Darkness, but all the powers and the principalities thereof came against Him. Not merely sin in the mass, but sin in daily temptations of every kind and sin of every shade and form—not only from earth a host of human despisers and human opponents, but a yet greater host from the lowest depths of Hell! These, from their number, are well compared to a troop.  
Nor does this expression merely describe their number, but also their discipline. They were “a troop.” A crowd of men is a great number, but it is not a troop. A crowd may be far sooner put to route than a troop. A troop is a trained company that knows how to march and marshal itself—and to stand firm under attack. It was even so with Christ’s enemies. They were a crowd and a mob, but they were also a troop, marshaled by that skillful and crafty leader, the Prince of Darkness. They stood firm and were well disciplined in a close-knit body—they were not broken. As though they were but one man, they sustained the shock of Christ’s attack and marched against Him, hoping for victory. In such a character, His opponents still appear. However well you might discipline a crowd of men, yet they would not become a troop unless they also had been trained for warfare. A troop means a body of well-disciplined men, all of them prepared to fight and understanding how to make war. Thus, all Christ’s enemies were well trained. There was the archfiend of Hell, who, in hundreds of battles against the Lord’s elect in the olden time, had gained a thorough knowledge of all the weak points of manhood and understood how to temper his attack—and wherein lay the greatest chances of victory. After him, came all the fiends of the Pit—and these were all well exercised, each of them mighty, of giant stature like Goliath—all of them strong to do great exploits with any man less than God, however mighty that man might be!  
And as for sin, was it not a mighty thing? Were not our sins, all of them, mighty to destroy? The least one among the sins that attacked Christ would have been sufficient to destroy the human race and yet there were tens of thousands of these—well disciplined, ranged in order— and all thoroughly prepared for battle. All these came on in dread array against our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was a troop! I have not exaggerated this description, for Calvin translates this term, “a wedge,” for, in his day it was customary, in battle, for the soldiers to form themselves into a wedge-shape, so that when they attacked the enemy, the first man made an opening, though he fell. The next two advanced and then after them the three, and as the wedge widened, it broke the ranks of the enemy. So it seems as though the Holy Spirit would here describe the regular and well-directed attack which the enemy of man’s soul made upon Christ. He came against him in settled order. It was no rush of some wild Tartar host against the Savior—it was a well arranged and well-regulated attack—and yet, glory be to His name, He broke through the troop and ran through them more than a conqueror!  
Another old and eminent commentator translates the term, “troop,” by the old Greek term, “a phalanx,” to show again how strong, how mighty, how great and powerful were the enemies of Christ. It will often be of excellent use to us, for the stimulation of our faith and for the excitement of our gratitude, if we remember the might of the enemies of Christ. When we undervalue the strength of His enemies, we are apt to underestimate His Omnipotence. We must go through the ranks of His foes and look His ghastly opponents in the face. We must march through the long lines of our sins and look at the hideous monsters—and see how mighty they are and how powerless all human strength would have been to resist them. And then we shall learn, in an ample measure, to estimate the might and the majesty of the glorious Son of God when all unarmed and unassisted, He ran through the troop and put them all to the rout!

Several different eminent expositors of God’s Word give other interpretations of this sentence, each suggesting a fresh meaning and helping to bring out that which is certainly true, if not the precise meaning. One good translator says this verse might be rendered, “By you I have run to a troop,” and takes this to be the sense. Our Savior is represented to us as not waiting till His enemies came to Him, but running to them— willingly and voluntarily resigning Himself to their attack. He did not wait till Judas came to the upper room and salute Him in the chamber as He sat at supper. Neither did He tarry on His knees in that terrible agony of His in the olive grove, but He went forth to meet Judas. Judas had come forth with swords and with staves to take Him as a thief, but He sought not to make His escape. “Jesus went forth and said unto them, Whom do you seek?” Thus did He manifest both His willingness to undertake our redemption and also His courage in facing the foe. There was, at one time, a human fear which seemed as if it would hold Him back from the battle, when He said, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” But this once expressed, the Holy One of Israel anointed Him with fresh courage and to the battle He went with quick but majestic steps! He would not wait till they rushed on Him, but He would take the initiative and begin the fight. See the conquering Hero rush to the fight and dash through the troop! And look what Divine mercy, what holy courage is here found in the Lord Jesus Christ—that He ran to our enemies!  
But our version has it, “I have run through a troop,” and this is also exceedingly accurate, if you couple with it the idea which you will find in the margin of your Bibles—“By You have I broken through a troop.” Christ made a dash at His foes. They stood firm, as if they would not flinch before Him, but His terrible right hand soon found for Him a way. They imagined, when His hands were nailed to the Cross, that He was now powerless, but in weakness was He strong! The bowing of His head, which they perhaps thought to be the symbol of His defeat, was but the symbol of His victory and, in dying, He conquered! In suffering He overcame. Every wound that He received was a deathblow to His enemies and every pang that tore His heart was as when a lion tears the prey and Christ, Himself, was tearing them when they thought that they were tearing Him! He ran through a troop.  
It will do your souls good if you have imagination enough to picture Christ running through this troop. How comparatively short were His sufferings! Compare them with the eternal weight of punishment and misery which we ought to have endured. What a stride was that which Jesus took when He marched right through His enemies and laid them right and left, and gained to Himself a glorious victory! Samson, when he grasped the jawbone of an ass, slew his thousand men and said, “With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.” He did it all in haste and then threw away the jawbone, as if it were but little he had done. And even so, our mightier Samson, meeting with the hosts of sin, death and Hell, laid them all in heaps and then, crying out, “It is finished,” He seemed as strong and mighty as if He had not endured the fatigues of the fight, or suffered the horrors of death and was ready, if they required it, to meet them all again and give them another defeat!  
There is yet another version—“By You I have run after a troop.” After our Savior had met and fought with His antagonists and conquered them, they fled. But He pursued them. He must not simply defeat them but take them prisoners. There was Old Captivity. You know his name. He had been the oppressor of the human race for many and many a day—and when Christ routed him, he fled. But Jesus pursued him and, binding him in adamantine chains, “He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” He pursued the troop and brought back old Satan in chains, bound him in fetters, slew grim Death and ground his iron limbs to powder—and left his enemies no more at large to wander where they would, but subject to His Divine power and to His Omnipotent sway. He ran after a troop and took them prisoners.  
Perhaps, however, the most striking thing in our text is the combination of those two little words, “by You.” What? Did not Christ fight and obtain the victory by His own innate strength? Did not the Son of God, the Redeemer, find strength enough within Himself to do all that was necessary for us? It would not be heterodoxy if I were to assert that it was so. Indeed, it is clearly pointed out to us in the fact that, as the Servant of God and as our Redeemer, He is continually spoken of as being strengthened, assisted and animated by His Father and the Holy Spirit. Especially will you notice this in the Gospel according to Mark. The Evangelist Mark speaks of Christ, through the whole of his Book, as a Servant. Each of the Evangelists has a distinct view of Christ. Matthew speaks of Him as a King, Mark as a Servant, Luke as a Man and John as God. Now, in reading through Mark, you will observe, if you take the trouble to read it carefully, the recurrence of such phrases as this, “And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.” This follows close on His Baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a dove. And then, when He came up to Nazareth, we read that, as a Servant, Christ needed anointing as well as any other. So, when He begins to preach, His text is, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted.” Now, I take it that this is a very eminent instance of the condescension of our Divine Master, that He in all things was made like unto His brethren and, as they are utterly powerless without the Holy Spirit, and without the Father’s drawing, can do nothing, so Jesus Christ did, as it were, divest Himself of His own Divine Power and, as our Brother, He fraternized even with our infirmities. Thus He was strengthened, helped and assisted by His Father and by the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is strictly accurate to remark that even Christ, Himself, could subscribe to this sentence, “By You I have run through a troop.”  
Does this seem to you, Beloved, to lower your view of the Person of Christ? At first sight it may seem so. But think again—there is much rich consolation here. O my Soul, learn that you have not only God the Son to be your Helper, but that you have God the Father and God the Spirit also! Oh, it is sweet to see that in Redemption, itself, where we are too apt, with our poor blind eyes, to see but one Person of the Trinity—in Redemption, itself, the Triune Jehovah was engaged! If this is not the view of the work of Redemption which is commonly taken, I am sure it is Scriptural. It is true that the Son paid the penalty and endured the agony. But, still, it was His Father who, while smiting Him with one hand, sustained Him with the other. And it was the Spirit who, wrapping Him about with zeal as with a cloak and inflaming His soul with Divine ardor, enabled Him to dash through His enemies and become more than a conqueror! This sweetens Redemption to me. The Father and the Holy Spirit are also engaged and interested on my behalf. Our Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel—the Lord of Hosts is His name! We may say of the three Persons of the Divine Trinity that each of these is our Redeemer because they have all brought to its full completion the grand work of our redemption from the power of sin, death and Hell. “By You have I run through a troop.” My Soul, lift up your eyes before you turn from this passage and see all your sins forgiven in the Person of Christ. Look here and behold the old dragon’s head broken! See Death pierced through with one of his own shafts. See how the old serpent drags along his mangled length, writhing in his agony, for the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song. He also has become our salvation and in Him, and through Him and by Him, we have broken through a troop and are more than conquerors!  
Let us now turn to the second sentence, “By My God have I leaped over a wall.” How is this to be understood? I think that David, if we take this as alluding to David, is here described as having stormed and taken some strongly-armed and well-walled city. He had, by the power of God, taken the strong place from the inhabitants of Jebus and so he had leaped over a wall. But we are not now speaking of David, but of Christ. In what sense can we say that Jesus Christ has leaped over a wall? I must be allowed to be figurative for a few minutes. The people of the Lord had become the slaves of Satan and, in order that they might never more escape from his power, he had put them into his stronghold and had walled them round about that they might be his perpetual captives.  
There was, first of all, the tremendous bulwark of sin gathering strength from the Law of God, with its ten massive towers mounted with ten hundred pieces of ordnance, in the shape of threats of destruction! This wall was so high that no human being has ever been able to scale it—and so terrible that even the Omnipotence of God had to be exercised before it could be removed. Next to this there was a second rampart—it was the rampart of diabolical insinuation and Satanic suggestion. Satan had not only allowed the Law to stand so as to keep the soul in despair, but had added to this his own determination that he would not leave a stone unturned might he but keep the human race in his own power. Thus Hell made the second rampart, while it seemed as if Heaven had built the first. Outside thereof was a deep ditch and then another mound, called human depravity. This, as we must observe, was as difficult to be stormed as either of the others. Man was desperately set on mischief. He would be a sinner, let what might be said to him or done for him. He would seek greedily with both hands to work out his own destruction and that love of destruction, which was in his heart, constituted one of the great barriers to his salvation.

Christ Jesus came and He leaped over all these walls! He came and in your Redemption He broke through the Law. No, He did not break through it—He mounted it, He scaled it! The Law of God stands, to this day, as fast and firm as ever—not a stone has been taken down, not one of its castles has been dismantled—there it stands in all its awful majesty, but Christ leaped over this. He paid the penalty, endured the wrath and so He took His people out of the first ward of the Law. Whereas, after this came a second—the wall of Satan’s determination to keep them prisoners. Christ, our Lord and Master, dashed this into a thousand pieces, springing the tremendous mine of His Covenant purposes and throwing the whole mass into the air—and there it was destroyed, once and for all—no more to hold the people of God in captivity and bondage! The last wall which He had to leap in order to get His people thoroughly free and bring them out of the stronghold of sin and Satan, was the wall of their own depravity. This, indeed, was hard work to storm. Many of His ministers went up to the stronghold and tried to storm it, but they came away defeated. They found that it was too strong for all human battering-rams. They hammered at it with all their might, but there it stood, resisting the shock and seeming to gather strength from every blow that was meant to shake it. But, at last, Jesus came, and using nothing but His Cross as the most powerful battering-ram, He shook the wall of our depravity, made a breach, entered it and let His people out into that liberty wherewith He had made them free! Oh, how sweet it is to think of Christ thus leaping over the walls! He would have His people. He came down to earth and was with them in all their misery and took upon Him all their sin. He determined to enter in and save them from the dungeon. He made His own escape and brought them with Him. He not only came, Himself, through sin, and death, and Hell, triumphant, but brought all His children on His shoulders, as AEneas did his old father Anchises. The whole generation of the elect was redeemed in that hour when Christ leaped over every wall!  
Thus have I tried to expound to you the text as relating to the Person of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would only repeat once more the remark that in this verse, it is said, “By My God have I done it.” As Mediator, in His official capacity, and in His service for our redemption, He received the strengthening aid of His Divine Father and He could truly say, “By My God have I leaped over a wall.” It will do you good, O Believer, if you will often stay and look at your Savior accomplishing all His triumphs! O my Soul, what would you have done if He had not broken through a troop, if He had not routed your foes? Where would you have been? You would at this hour have been the captive of sin death and Hell. All your sins would now be besetting you, howling in your ear for vengeance. Satan, with all the hosts of Hell, would be now guarding you, determining that you should never escape. Oh, how joyous is this fact, that Christ has once and for all routed them and now we are secure! Then, my Soul, what do you think, what would you have done if He had not leaped over a wall? You would have been dead this day, shut in within the rampart of your own hard heart, or within the stronghold of Satan and with the mighty fiends of Hell you would have been trebly guarded and trebly enslaved. Now your fetters are all broken, as “a monument of Grace, a sinner saved by blood,” lift up your heart, and your hands, and your voice, and shout for joy and gladness, “He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.” He has leaped over a wall and brought you out of your prison-house!  
II. This brings me now to the second part of my discourse and I must ask your patience and pray again for the assistance of the Holy Spirit that in this, especially, Christ’s people may find a word of edification. We are now to regard our text as being THE LANGUAGE OF THE BELIEVER. He can say, “By You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”  
I shall divide my text after another fashion on this second point. I shall note, first, with regard to the Believer, how varied are his trials! Sometimes it is a troop of enemies. At another time, a wall of difficulties. When a man has one labor to accomplish, he soon begins to be skillful in it. If he is to be a soldier and fight a troop, at length he learns how to get the victory. But, suppose that his labors are varied—after fighting a troop, he has to go clambering over a wall—then you will see the critical situations by which he is embarrassed. Now, this aptly pictures the position of God’s people—the Spirit is continually varying our trials. There are no one day’s trials that are exactly like the trials of another day. We are not called to one undeviating temptation, or else it would cease to have its force, but the temptations are erratic—the darts are shot from different directions and the stones come from quite opposite quarters.  
This is well set out in one of the Lord’s parables. He speaks thus of the trials of the righteous—There was a certain wise man who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended—trials from above. And the floods came—trials from beneath. The winds blew—mysterious trials from every quarter—and they all beat upon that house and it fell not. Trials of every shape attend the followers of the Lamb. The archers come against us and we repel their fiery darts. The company of swordsmen come and we rebuke them. And then the slingers sling their stones against us and then the company of spearmen, so that we must be armed at all points and ready for every kind of attack. Our Savior in this was like to us. He says to us in one place, “Dogs have compassed Me”— that was bad enough. “Strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round.” That was not all, “they gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.” Only fancy that! A man has to fight with dogs and then with bulls—and then with lions—and yet, this is just the Christian’s state!  
We cannot guess, from the trials of the past, what will be the trials of the future. We think it is to be all fighting, but we are mistaken. Some part of it is to be climbing over this or that wall. I have known God’s people, sometimes, try to break through a wall and to climb over a troop. This is very absurd. If they had a troop of spiritual enemies, they have tried to climb over them and endeavor to escape them. At another time, they have had a difficult trial, like a wall, and they have been so headstrong that they must try to go through it. Ah, we have much to learn. Some things we must fight through, others we must climb over. It is not always right for the child of God to let his courage get the better of his discretion. Let him have courage for the troop, to run through them, and discretion for the wall, and not try to run through that, or he will break himself in pieces. There are exercises and trials in various ways. The Believer’s trials, how varied they are!  
And, next to this, how unflinching is his faith! There is the troop, he runs through them. There is the wall, he leaps over it. He finds that his faith is sufficient for every emergency. When his God is with him, there is no difficulty too great for him. He does not stop to deliberate. As for the troop, he runs through that and then there is the wall at the other end— he takes a leap and is over that! So, when God strengthens our faith, when the Holy One of Israel is with us and the might of Omnipotence girds our loins, difficulties are only the healthy exercises of our faith! God will exercise faith. There is not a single grain of faith in the breast of any living Believer that is not exercised. God will not allow it to sleep—a sleeping faith, a dormant faith—I do not believe such a thing exists! If you have faith, my Brother, expect labor, for, as surely as God gives faith, He will put it into the gymnasium and make it exercise itself— sometimes dashing at a troop and then trying its limbs another way, no more to exercise its arm in fighting, but its legs in climbing over a wall. We have all sorts of exercises to keep our faith in order that we may be ready for any emergency, whatever it may be. Some men seem as if they only had to meet one form of trial. They remind me of the Indian fakir— he holds his arm straight up—that is the triumph of his strength! Now God does not exercise a Believer’s limbs till they grow stiff, but He exercises them in every way, that they may become supple, so that, come what may, he is ready to achieve any exploit.  
With faith, how easy all exploits become! When we have no faith, then to fight with enemies and overcome difficulties is hard work, indeed, but when we have faith, oh, how easy our victories! What does the Believer do? There is a troop—well, he runs faith, then, to fight with enemies and overcome difficulties. There is a hard wall, what about that? He leaps over it! It is amazing how easy life becomes when a man has faith. Does faith diminish difficulties? Oh, no, it increases them, but it also increases our strength to overcome them. If you have faith, you shall have trials, but you shall do great exploits, endure great privations and get triumphant victories! Have you ever seen a man made mighty through God? Have you ever seen him in an hour of desertion? He goes out, like Samson, to meet the Philistines. “Oh,” he says, “I will shake myself as at other times.” But his locks have been shorn and when the cry is raised, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson,” he shakes his limbs with vast surprise, makes a feeble fight and loses his eyes. They are put out, and he returns in blindness.  
But, when God is with him, see what the Believer can do! They have woven the seven locks of his head with a web, and he just carries the loom away. Soon they bind him with seven green ropes that have never been dried, but he breaks them as easily as fire burns twigs. All things are possible, to him that believes—no, not only possible—but easy when God is with him! He laughs at impossibilities and says it shall be done, for faith can do all things. “By You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”

And yet, though the victories of faith are thus easy, we must call to mind that these victories always are to be traced to a Divine source. That man who takes the credit of his victories to himself has no faith, for faith is one of the self-denying Graces. Faith called a parliament of all the Graces and passed a self-denying ordinance. It decreed that whatever any of the graces did, it should give all the glory of it to God. Christ once upon a time took the crown off His head and put it on the head of Faith. “When was that?” you ask. Why, Christ healed the poor woman and, therefore, it was He who deserved the crown, but, He said, “Your faith has saved you, go and sin no more.” He thus put the crown upon Faith. What was the reason? Why, because Faith always puts its crown on the head of Christ! True faith never wears its own crown. It says, “Not unto me, Lord, but unto Your name be all the glory.” This is the reason why God has selected Faith to achieve such mighty victories, because Faith will not allow the glory or honor to cleave to its own wings, but shakes off all self-praise, just as Paul shook off the viper into the fire. Faith says, “No, no, give me not thanks, or praise, or honor. I have done nothing.” Faith will have it not only that it does nothing, but that Christ, who dwells in it, has done it all.  
And now, my dear Friends, there is one consolation with which I will close this sermon. The Psalmist says, “By You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.” I think, if he were here at this time, he would permit me to add, “and by my God shall I leap over a wall, and by You shall I break through many a troop.” What faith has done once, by its God, it can do again. We have met Satan once in the battlefield and when he chooses to attack us once more, that old Jerusalem blade that once gave him a bitter blow, is ready to give him another! That shield, which once caught his fiery darts, is still unbroken and still prepared to receive another shower of them when he chooses to hurl them! Martin Luther, you know, often used to defy Satan to battle. I care not to do that, but he used to say, in his strange, quaint way, “I often laugh at Satan and there is nothing makes him as angry as when I attack him to his face and tell him that, through God, I am more than a match for him. I tell him to do his worst and yet I will beat him. And I tell him to put forth his fury and yet I will overcome him.” This would be presumption if done in our own strength. It is only faith in the Grace of God that can enable us to say so. He that has made God his refuge need fear no storm, but, just as sometimes in Christmas weather, the wind and snow and storm outside make the family fire seem warmer, and the family circle seem happier, so the trials and temptations of Satan do sometimes seem to add to the very peace and happiness of the true Believer while he sits wrapped up in the mantle of godly confidence— *“Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall.  
May I but safely reach my home,  
My God, my Heaven, my All.”*  
And when we know that we shall reach our Home, even the storms or the tempests matter but little. Come, poor Believer, pluck up your courage! I have tried to give you some strong meat—feed upon it. As the Lord Jesus Christ had a troop to face and broke through them, so shall you! Even as He overcame, so shall you overcome. Did He enter Heaven and is there a long cloud of witnesses streaming in behind Him—everyone a warrior? So, if you are His warrior, you shall be one of that long stream! You, also, shall wear a crown and wave the palm, and sing a song of victory, and talk of triumph purchased through the blood of and achieved through faith in the Lamb!  
And, dear Friends, what may we expect if we do this? What may the fainting ones expect if the power of God rests upon them? They may expect that when “the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall,” their power—the power that they have received from God—shall become the more conspicuous. The promise is, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.” That is the first thing we shall do. We who were faint and feeble and lying among the pots shall be, “as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,” and we shall mount above the clouds in an ecstasy of holy joy! Power will be given us to look the sun in the face even as the mighty eagle does.  
But we shall do more than that—“They shall run, and not be weary.” “But,” you say, “running is not so noble an action as flying.” That is what you think—that is what young people naturally think, for they are anxious to fly high—but, as you grow in Grace, you do not care so much for flying. You are content to move more soberly here below. You run at a quick pace and if God’s power is really resting upon you, you are not weary.  
But you shall advance yet another stage, for the promise ends thus— “They shall walk, and not faint.” “But,” asks someone, “is that advancing—going from running to walking?” Yes, it is. You do not read much in the Bible about running with God, but you do read a good deal about walking with God. That expression means that you go at a good steady pace in which a man may continue all his life. It is the lad who runs in his play, but older people, who are attending to the business of life, are not runners, but walkers—and they get over the ground at a good solid pace. Now, if the power of God rests upon us, we shall sometimes take the eagle’s flight—away we shall go, far beyond the experience of ordinary Christians and get up there among the sublimities. But, if God’s power is upon us, we shall also be eager to be employed in His service and shall rush forward with holy impetuosity and flaming zeal. But, better still, if the power of God is on us, we shall learn how to plod on in our daily life in obedience to the will of God, whether it is in the domestic circle, in the common round of business, or in the service of the Lord. We shall, in fact, make our whole life a continual progress towards Heaven through the Grace and power of God. So may it be to each one of you and in your experience may the Lord fulfill His ancient word, “He gives power to the faint,” for His dear Son’s sake!  
I must pause one moment while I address myself to those who know nothing of God and nothing of Christ. Well, my Hearers, you have a troop, too, and you have your walls of difficulty. But you have no God to help you! Whatever trials the Believer has, he has a God to fly to. “Look,” said a poor woman to a lady who called to see her, “look, ma’am, I’ll show you all I’m worth. Do you see that cupboard, ma’am? Look in.” “Yes,” said the lady, who looked, and saw but little, “but there is nothing in it but a dry crust.” “Well,” continued the woman, “do you see this chest?” “Yes, I see it, but it is empty,” was the reply. “Well,” she said, “that is all I am worth, ma’am, but I have not a doubt or fear with regard to my temporal affairs. My God is so good that I can still live without doubts and fears.” She knew what it was to break through a troop and leap over a wall!  
Now, perhaps there are some of you with cupboards just as empty as that poor woman’s—but you cannot add, “I have a God to go to.” O miserable creature—miserable if you are rich, thrice miserable if you are poor—to be like a packhorse in this life, carrying a heavy burden and then not to be unloaded at the grave, but to have a double burden laid upon you! O poor men and women without Christ—with the few comforts which you have in this life, with its many privations, with its hunger, thirst and nakedness, oh, that you should not have a better world to go to! Above all, it seems a miserable thing that you should go through poverty here to a place where a drop of water shall be denied you to cool your burning tongue! If Christ is precious to the rich on earth, you must think that there is a peculiar sort of relish with which the poor man feeds on the Bread of Heaven!  
“But,” you ask, “may I not have a hope of Heaven?” Assuredly, my Friend. Do you long for Christ at this moment? Then He longs for you! Do you desire to have Him? Then He gives you that desire! Come to Him, for the message of the Gospel is, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—  
*“None are excluded hence but those  
Who do themselves exclude.”*  
The invitation is free. May many accept it! Oh, that some of you may be led to go to your houses, now, and on your knees ask for forgiveness of sin and seek that you may become the children of God through faith in the precious blood once shed for many for the remission of sins! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #683 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DIVINE GENTLENESS ACKNOWLEDGED

NO. 683

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Your gentleness has made me great.”  
Psalm 18:35.**

THERE are several interpretations of this text. A moment will suffice to give them to you. The word is capable of being translated, “Your goodness has made me great.” David saw much of benevolence in God’s action towards him and he gratefully ascribed all his greatness not to his own goodness, but to the goodness of God. “Your Providence” is another reading, which is, indeed, nothing more than goodness in action. Goodness is Providence in embryo—Providence is goodness fully developed. Goodness is the bud of which Providence is the flower—or goodness is the seed of which Providence is the harvest.

Some render it, “Your help,” which is but another word for Providence. Providence is the firm ally of the saints, aiding them in the service of their Lord. Some learned annotators tell us that the text means, “Your humility has made me great.” “Your condescension” may, perhaps, serve as a comprehensive reading, combining the ideas which we have already mentioned, as well as that of humility. It is God’s making Himself little, which is the cause of our being made great.

We are so little that if God should manifest His greatness without condescension, we should be trampled under His feet. But God, who must stoop to view the skies and bow to see what angels do, bends His eyes yet lower and looks to the lowly and contrite, and makes them great. While these are the translations which have been given to the adopted text of the original, we find that there are other readings. For instance, the Septuagint, which reads, “Your discipline”—Your fatherly correction—“has made me great.” The Chaldee paraphrase reads, “Your word has increased me.” Still the idea is the same.

David ascribes all his own greatness to the condescending goodness and graciousness of his Father in Heaven. I trust we all feel that this sentiment is echoed in our hearts and we also confess that whatever of goodness or greatness God may have put upon us, we must cast our crowns at His feet, and cry, “Your gentleness has made me great.” We intend, this morning, to keep to the authorized version: “Your gentleness has made me great.” And in handling the text we shall have three points.

First the text suggests historical illustrations from the life of David. Secondly it awakens personal gratitude. And thirdly it declares gracious privilege—we are made great.

I. The life of David is exceedingly full of illustrations of the truth which he here uttered—“Your gentleness has made me great.” We will briefly review it up to the time of his becoming king. David, as the youngest of the family, contrary to the general rule, appears to have been despised by his parents so that when Samuel came to keep the feast they sent for all their sons except David who was left in the fields keeping the sheep. I should suppose, judging from the conduct of his brothers to him in the valley of Elah, that they held him in very small esteem.

Probably their habits were very different from his. They could not enter into the holier ways of the shepherd songster, nor could he enjoy their ruder and less seemly exercises. He was the despised one of the family, a reproach unto his mother’s children. Nevertheless the Lord had chosen him in preference to all the rest, for the gentleness of God delighted in David the shepherd boy.

What a balm must that Divine love have been to his wounded spirit! How often, sitting alone with his flocks, must he have sang to his harp, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up”! The gracious gentleness of his God to him must have encouraged his broken spirit when he felt the roughness of his father and the scorn of his brothers. His early life was peculiarly a season of hallowed rest and consecrated enjoyment of the gentleness of the Lord.

His first entrance upon public life was greatly marked by the sternness of those who should have discerned his worth and treated him with love. His father sent him to the army, not as a soldier, though never was there a more valiant man than this youngest son of Jesse. But he was employed as a mere burden-bearer. “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers. And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand.”

He was a mere porter and messenger to his more honored brothers. When he began to enquire concerning the giant—“Who is this that defies the armies of the living God?” His brothers asked in a most snarling and contemptuous way, “With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? Because of the pride and naughtiness of your heart to see the battle are you come.” Very different was the gentle communing of his heavenly Father!

When in the inner chamber of his spirit his heart talked with God, he received no contemptuous epithets from the Most High. It is true he had all the outward marks of youth and consequent unfitness for the fight— but the Lord sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart, and that bold heart was chosen to meet the Philistine. David was a man after God’s own heart, and God’s gentle communing with him strengthened him and made him so great that he dared to say, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.”  
The harshness of his brothers might have cowed him, but the gentleness of God encouraged him. He might have quailed before their irony and sarcasm, but the tender promise of God was the still water of which he drank and the green pasture in which he rested. Now David comes to court, but he is no sooner among the courtiers than Saul hates him. “Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands” was a song most unmusical to Saul’s jealous ears. “Saul eyed David,” and in later days, when David played upon the harp, the evil spirit came upon Saul and he hurled his javelin at the young harpist, hoping to pin him to the wall.

But mark the gentleness of God—while Saul hated him the people loved him—all Judah and all Israel loved David because he went in and out before them, and better still, the God who tried him with Saul comforted him with Jonathan. I like to think of those generous consolations which Jonathan rendered to the man whom his father so grievously maltreated. Those quiet evening walks, those tender interchanges of affection when the love of Jonathan, which surpassed the love of woman, made glad the tender heart of David, must have helped to make David greatly glad.

He must have felt at times as if he would leave Saul’s court and fly from the service of his country. But then Jonathan was the tie to keep him in his proper place—the gentle silken bond which bound him to the horns of God’s altar. It was God’s gentleness in raising up Jonathan as his companion which kept David in the place where greatness was possible to him, and enabled him still to live in those courts of which he was soon himself to be the master.

There was gentleness even about the character of his wife Michal. The father would destroy, but the daughter saves her husband’s life. When David at last fled from Saul he fled to Nob, to the priests. I think that was great gentleness on the part of God which permitted David to take the show bread and the consecrated sword. I never hear David rebuked for that bold deed! Our Savior mentions it without a single word of censure. According to the strict letter of the Law it appears to be perfectly unjustifiable—but the gentleness of God saw the need of His servant and inclined the heart of all the priests towards David—so that they gave him bread, and gave him what was equally necessary under his difficulty—the sword of Goliath.

When David fled into the wilderness, we cannot read the story of him among the caves of Adullam and the goat tracks of Engedi with any feelings of pity, for his joys ran high in his banishment! I can understand him sighing for the House of God, and declaring that he “dwelt in a dry and thirsty land where no water was,” but, on the other hand, one might almost envy David there in his solitary fastnesses, for his God was his Companion, and the blessings of the Most High were showered upon him. There was gentleness towards him even in those wild places, so that the gypsy life of David was rendered very happy. And the wanderer banished from his native land was not banished from his God but felt the Presence of the Most High in the midst of his solitude. “Your gentleness has made me great.”

There are two points in David’s history where I think the gentleness of God eminently worked with him. One particularly is connected with Nabal. That churl sent a very insulting message to David—“There are many servants, nowadays, that break away from their masters.” I must not say that David was a Welshman, but he possessed much of the hot blood of our Brethren, and was warm in temperament. David had a hot heart within him, quick for love and quick for anger, too—and in an instant his soul was on fire with resentment—“God do so to me, and more also,” said he, “if I leave anything of him before the morning light.”

Away he goes with his band to slay Nabal! Now, what is to prevent him? Nabal cannot resist him. But here comes a wise and amiable woman—no one more susceptible to kindly female influence than David—here comes the wise Abigail with her laden asses, bearing presents. How wisely she puts it! How her lovely face, and streaming eyes, and bended knees, all aid her while she adds—“This shall be no grief unto you, nor offense of heart unto my lord, either that you have shed blood causeless, or that my lord has avenged himself.” It was a blessed interposition of Divine Grace which sent Abigail just then! David would certainly have taken terrible vengeance and have stained his character with vindictive blood-shedding if it had not been for the gentleness of God which found so good a wife in so bad a house and prompted her to interpose!

Take another case. It must have been gentle influence from on high which kept David back, when, as he walked at night over the field where Saul and his host all slept, he penetrated within the trenches and through the armed men and came to the place where the king lay with his men at arms all round him, every man asleep. There was the water at the king’s head, and his spear stuck in the ground. And Abishai, one of those fierceminded sons of Zeruiah who are always ready for a blow, said to David, “Let me smite him. I will smite him but this once.” But David holds up his hand and declares that he will not be guilty of the blood of the Lord’s Anointed.

There must have been a marvelously gentle influence over David just then to have kept back his hand! I will not say that nine out of ten warriors would have done it, and have been justified in so doing, according to martial law, but I will say that there is scarcely a case to be found in history where a man would have spared his cruel, inveterate, and malicious foe. Remember that Saul was engaged in open and relentless warfare with him when such an opportunity had been put into his hands. David had never been so great if Divine gentleness had not restrained the blow!

Running on in the history of David we find that he was not always wise. How like a fool he looked when he scrabbled on the wall and spat upon his beard, and played the madman before the king of the Philistines! Ah, David, what a miserable spectacle! Though fit to be a companion of angels, he acted as if he had been only fit to herd with lunatics! But God delivered him! And after he had been delivered, you remember he wrote that beautiful Psalm in which he says, “Come, you children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord,” and so on—a most beautiful expression of gratitude to God, and an earnest desire to teach others in God’s way.

Even when His people play the fool, God does not cast them away. When we are such that God Himself might be ashamed of us and say, “Take him away! Have I need of a madman to play the fool before Me?” yet even then our God, who knows that we are but dust, has pity upon us and delivers us out of the mischief into which our folly has thrust us. Possibly in David’s life there is not one moment in which his anguish was more acute than when he returned to Ziklag. He had been marching with Achish to invade his own native land. He was in a very awkward position—he could not fight against his own countrymen—and yet having taken refuge with the Philistines he was bound to go with them to war.

In that dilemma the Lord interposed for him. The Philistines’ chieftains became jealous and distrustful of him and through their influence the king of the Philistines dismissed him. However, when he went hack to Ziklag, the place where he and his men had dwelt, he found it burned to the ground. The wives of his comrades and all their goods had been carried away. Not a vestige left of their happy home—children and family all gone! It is said that the men of war “lifted up their voice and wept.” It takes a great deal to make a soldier sit down and weep. But in their anguish they went further and spoke of stoning David. What did David do? He “encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” He turned himself to the kindness and gentleness of the Most High, and took comfort in his God!

Surely the gentleness of God must then have shone out in contrast with the bitterness and ferocity of the men with whom he was associated. What could David do? It was not his fault that Ziklag had been burned. How could he prevent the robbers from plundering? He turned to his God when he was thus falsely accused and comfort flowed in like a mighty stream! And not many hours afterwards he overtook the spoilers and came back joyfully victorious. I think I have proven my point and need not delay you longer, that wherever any roughness from man had to he borne by David, there was always some gentleness on the part of God shown at the same time to sustain his spirit.

When it seemed as if he must be quite crushed and overcome, and all hands were against him and none to help him, then it was that a consolation gently given by the right hand of the Most High made David to play the man again so that he triumphed over all his adversaries. Thus much for historical illustration.

II. Now, we will turn to your own history, for the text EXCITES PERSONAL GRATITUDE. Have you that little book with you? I suppose you do not all keep one, but still your memory will serve you as a diary—do not print it, we have too many autobiographies already! But if you do not print it for other people, keep it for yourselves. May I ask you to turn to an early page in it? Do you remember when your heart was broken with a sense of sin? A truly broken heart is anguish, indeed!

Do you remember when you realized your righteousness was as filthy rags, and your hope changed into despair? Do you recollect the felling that the anger of God pursued you? When death seemed to be before you, and you could see no way of escape? I shall not go over the dark details, but you remember well when you were in that condition! Do you also recollect the gentleness of the Savior? That was a very tender promise which first came to you like oil poured into your wounds. That was a very tender hand, a very cheering influence of the Holy Spirit which lulled the tempest into a calm, and hushed the thunder into the whisper of love.

Do you remember the place, the spot of ground where Jesus first met with you? Some of us never can forget the rapture all Divine when He showed us His hands and His feet, and said to us, “I have suffered all this for you. Weep no more, your sins were laid on Me.” There was peculiar gentleness about that first action of God the Holy Spirit. He has never, perhaps, seemed quite so gentle with us since, for we have never been so weak as we were then. We were shorn lambs and He tempered the wind to us. Our wounds were very raw and bleeding and He touched us very softly, knowing that He who would heal a sick soul must have downy fingers with which to touch it. Gentleness, indeed, was on His part which said to us, “Live!” when He saw us wallowing in our blood.

Since then, dear Friends, what tokens of gentleness you and I have had! How many times He has checked our imprudence! When we first began our spiritual life we meant to drive the Church before us, and to drag the world behind us—our own idea was that there never would be such an earnest Christian as we would be! We looked with pity upon the coldness of many professors and we resolved in our own souls that we would far outdo them all! And what excitements we got into, and what things we said, and what strange things we did! There was much to be envied about our first spiritual life—but there was much to be pitied in it, too.

Oh, what fools we were, and we thought ourselves so wise! What blockheads we made of ourselves every now and then and all the while wondered that everybody else did not do the same. But by what gentle means the Lord curbed us! He did not do as some of our friends did, who put wet blankets on us enough to extinguish our zeal. He let the zeal burn but He gently checked the imprudence of it. We did not know how weak we were—He let us fall and cut our knees and learn by experience our utter inability to go it alone.

When a schoolmaster has a very dull boy, he would gladly teach him some useful knowledge—but after twenty times teaching he does not know it—and the master says, “What shall I do with this child? How shall I ever make anything but a dunce of him?” Yet he tries again! And so our God might well have said of us! Yet, how seldom has He used the rod after all. He has been obliged to take to it sometimes, but oh, how seldom comparatively. He has dealt so gently with us, teaching us with much pain and care.

When a man has taken to gardening who does not understand it, if he takes his knife in the pruning season—at what a rate he goes to work! His cutting here and there will do ten times more harm than good! The gardener who is well skilled is gentle with the knife—and truly, dear Friends, our great Husbandman has been very gentle with the knife with all His trees.

Some of you have lost a husband or a child, and you have come from wealth to poverty. Yes, He has used the knife, or else He were not wise— but He has still spared you some comforts, or else He were not kind. At any rate He has spared you Himself, and He is more than all to your languishing spirit. Thus in the way in which He has dealt with your excrescences, and imprudence, and sins, the Lord has had a world of gentleness with you.

In looking over our diary we may say that God has dealt very gently with us in accepting our first endeavors. When you began to preach, my dear Friend, the first time, if the Lord had really let you know what a bad preach you made of it, you would never have tried again! And the first time you were asked to pray in public, if you could have heard the opinion of some of those who heard you, you would not have felt very happy! But very happily for you, you never did hear those opinions and you have been able to keep on till now you pray with much acceptance and profit to your Christian Brethren.

Our beginnings are very much like our children’s beginning. Many a young apprentice spoils a great deal more than he earns and yet his master knows that he cannot learn without spoiling something, and so he bears with him. And our God has let us spoil a great deal of work that we may one day be skilled workers. Through Jesus He accepts our prayers and our efforts. And though we are very blundering servants He has not discharged us, but He still keeps us in His service and blesses us in it. In His mercy He gives us to see the work of His hands prospering. That same gentleness also displays itself in caring for us in our sorrowful circumstances and particularly in our inward fears.

There are distresses to which God’s people are subject with which their fellow Christians can have but little sympathy. There are some Christians whom I have tried at times to comfort, but their fears have been so silly that I have felt more inclined to laugh at them than to console them. There are many of God’s saints who are the victims of foolish fears, but the fears are none the less painful and vexatious because of their folly.

Now our God is so tender and gentle that He even condescends to deal with our silly fears. Take such a one as this—“I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.” Now it really is foolish of us to think that God will leave us or forsake us, and yet He condescends to meet that foolish and even wicked unbelief of ours, and gives a promise to meet it! To suppose that He can forget is the height of absurdity, and yet He is pleased to meet that absurd fear of ours by saying, “Can a woman forget her sucking child?”

Even the absurdity of our sorrow does not move the anger of God—in His great gentleness He enters into the childish troubles of His children. He lets them tell out their troubles and sorrows, and, “as a father pities,” not a man of his own size, but “his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” You have seen a father bring himself down to his child. Two or three children have been at play—some of them have been cross and unkind to the little one, a child of three or four years of age—and father talks as if he were a child of three years of age himself! And though the trouble, when it is stated is so very little—such a very insignificant trouble that a man would be ashamed to mention it—yet father enters into it altogether.

That is what the Psalmist means—“Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”  
His gentleness shows itself in His being afflicted in our afflictions and entering into our sorrows, and putting Himself side by side with us in the battle of spiritual life. I trust I may not weary you while I remind you of all this. I shall not, if all the while you continue blessing and praising God for what you have tasted and handled of these good things. How much patience and gentleness God has had with us in suiting truth to our understandings and experiences! “I have many things to say unto you,” says Jesus, “but you cannot bear them now.” It is so with us.  
I suppose we did not learn the doctrine of election during the first week of our spiritual life. Higher and more sublime truths are left for later experience and belong, rather, to advanced saints than to the babes in grace. If the babe in Christ knew so much about the filthiness of his own heart as the advanced man of God, he might not be able to bear up under the grief occasioned by such knowledge! Inward discoveries come by degrees, and as we see the light of the Cross we see the darkness of sin. As we are assured of our salvation in Christ, we discover our utter and entire ruin by the Fall of Adam.  
It is gentleness which makes the all-wise One stoop down to our ignorance and teach us by slow degrees. What gentleness our God has shown to us in the timing and the tuning of our trials! We are such poor weaklings at times that if we were tempted much we should not be able to bear it. The timing of heavy trial is of very great importance. If I had lost my friend a year ago what should I have done? But just now it is a great sorrow, yet it has its alleviation. Had I been tempted as I now am but last week, I must have yielded. But now I have received strength from on high, and I can pass with safety through the fire.  
Have you not often felt that either when you have had an opportunity to sin you have not felt the temptation, or else when you have been tempted you have not found the opportunity? When you have been weak you have not experienced the trial, or when you have borne the trial you have not been weak. I will not say more, except I beg your hearts to praise God. I pray you wake up your souls to bless Him. How much we lose by not blessing God more! Oh that I could praise Him! If I might choose my vocation on earth, I think I would choose above all things to write hymns and psalms, such as the Lord’s people might sing when they praise Him!  
My highest wish would be to be one of Heaven’s poets—to write psalms for the spirits before the Throne and compose celestial sonnets for the blood-bought ones who praise him day and night. Oh to praise the Lord! Oh to bless Him and to magnify Him—to spend and to be spent in the praise and glory of my God! Wake up, you slumbering ones! Arouse yourselves, you that are dull and dead of heart! Wake up, my glory, awake psaltery and harp! I myself will awake right early while I remember that His loving kindness has made me great.  
III. Our third duty is to DECLARE OUR GRACIOUS PRIVILEGE. “Great,” says one, “why, the text applies to David, it does not apply to us.” Ah, but we have a body of great people here this morning. I do not suppose you will see their names in the Times tomorrow, but for all that we are honored with great company this morning. I will be bold enough to say that I question whether the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, and Windsor Castle thrown in together, hold more great folks than this Tabernacle does this morning.  
Great people! Yes, really great people! The true aristocracy! Let us describe them. There is a greatness of birth which God gives to His children. “It is no mean thing,” said David, “to be a king’s son-in-law.” But to be a king’s son—to have the blue blood in your veins! You do not think much of it because you have not got it, but you suppose those who have it think it the most wonderful of all privileges. To be descended from that thievish crew who came over to England at the Norman Conquest is thought to be a high honor!  
But how much more is it to be descended from the King of kings! The blood imperial of Heaven is in the veins of every regenerated man and woman! No matter though your garb is fustian, and your home is the abode of poverty—you are a prince of the blood royal the moment that you are born-again and made a child of God, and adopted into the family of the Most High! These are the princes of the living God! These are they who shall be crowned with immortal honor in the day of the Lord’s appearing!  
Though here they may live unknown and despised, yet angelic eyes detect them and the whole world shall see them. “When He shall appear they shall appear with Him in glory.” Men court much the greatness which comes by election. There are presidents of republics who become great by the national vote—it is no mean greatness to be dignified with imperial rank, not by the accident of birth but by the well-earned respect of honest men. This is something that men may covet. Well, we have this very greatness put upon us by the election of God! Everyone who believes in Christ Jesus was chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. What are the votes of men? What the applause of the many after all? The choice of God is to be desired most! Because He has set His love upon me my soul shall sing and rejoice. Election makes all the objects of it great! Now, as you think of your birth and your election in Christ Jesus, you can say, “Your gentleness has made me great.”  
There is a kind of greatness in the world to which most people pay quite enough respect, namely, the greatness of wealth. A man is very much thought of in proportion to the contents of his iron safe. After all, people do not respect men so much nowadays as they do iron safes. The iron safe is the god of thousands. However, saints can stand on an equality with any men—city men, or whatever they may be. Every Believer in Jesus Christ can sing*—*

*“This world is mine and worlds to come,  
Earth is my lodge and Heaven my home;  
All things are ours, the gifts of God,  
The purchase of a Savior’s blood.”*

Poor rich men have to take care of these things for us, but they belong to us. The sons of the alien are our plowmen and our vinedressers. They are serfs of God’s Providence, slaves in the kingdom in which we are sons. He who on bended knee can lift his streaming eye to Heaven and say, “My Father!” is rich to all the intents of bliss—rich enough for earth. And when all the treasures of earth shall be melted—when the rust shall have corrupted and the thief shall have broken through and the moth shall have eaten up all the world’s treasures—then shall the wealth of the truly great shine forth forever more.

Some men are great on account of their victories. How they crowd the streets when a Caesar or a Napoleon returns in triumph from the slaughter of his fellow creatures! Lo, I triumphed! Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums! Hang out the garlands! Gather, you crowds! Here comes the redhanded man, crimson with the blood of his fellows! What glory is this? Bah! It smells of the butcher’s shambles. The glory of a child of God is the glory which Christ has given him of having slain his sins, of having trampled under foot his corruptions. The glory of having fought with devils and overcome them, having wrestled with principalities and powers and laid them in the dust. This is true glory! And what glory shall that be which awaits every true Believer when up the everlasting hills he shall ascend to be welcomed where his Master sits, welcomed with the same words of congratulation, “Well done!”

There are great men, too, about the world, who are great in influence. All the world is governed by the backstairs. There are persons who sit behind the throne and pull the strings. People always touch their hats to men of influence. They may want a situation in the Customs for their first son. They may require to get an introduction into the Admiralty for the third boy. But what shall I say of every Believer? Beloved, his influence is unbounded! I wish you would use your influence for me. When you are speaking with the King of kings, since He has promised you that whatever you shall ask He will give it to you, speak for me!

I think I have some claim on some of you. When it is well with you, think of me. When you are in the King’s courts, you that are the King’s and have an audience with Him—that sit at His table and lean your heads upon His bosom—pray for His poor servant who has many cares, and many labors, and longs to see the King’s face always. Beloved, the influence which the saints have with the King of kings is marvelous! They can touch the sinews of the Omnipotent arm, and it will do for them whatever their hearts desire. If you did but know it, the poorest saint, though bedridden, is more to be honored for the influence which she may have with the King of kings, than the greatest peers of the realm for the influence which they may have in the courts of royalty.

But I must not tarry, else I was about to say that we have a greatness of history. There are some men who have a peculiar greatness on account of their history. Everyone wants to see them. If they go into a crowd everyone whispers, “That is he.” What do you say of a child of God? There is more to be seen in him than in any other person! Shall I tell you his history? What would you think of a man who has been dead and buried and is alive again, and is the same man and yet not the same! Himself, but yet a new man in Christ Jesus! A man who has been born twice?

Such is every Believer. He has been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He is dead with Christ and is risen with Him! And even now he does not live upon earth but is made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Why, he is the greatest curiosity in the world! A Christian man is a wonder to angels, a wonder to devils, a wonder to himself! And if men were wise he would be a wonder to them! Great men, again, there are because of their great discoveries. We admire the men who penetrated into the center of Africa and found out the source of the ancient river.

Believers, also, have made discoveries in the vast desert of their own nature and have found out the source of the eternal love of God. They can sing with Kent*—*

*“A monument of Grace,  
A sinner saved by blood.  
The streams of love I trace,  
Up to their fountain, God.  
And in His mighty breast I see,  
Eternal thoughts of love to me.”*

It is better than finding out the source of fifty Niles, to find out my name inscribed upon the heart of God and to find myself chosen and dear to God! Truly then, though we are little and despised, we can say without any exaggeration, “your gentleness has made me great.”

Two things and I have done. The first is to Christian people. As you go your way, you who have believed, do not go out of this place with your heads hanging down and do not behave like dispirited people. You are great! I want you to live like great folks. Live up to your spiritual incomes—you will spend a great deal if you do. Live happily, live joyfully, live holily, live triumphantly! Live as those who are to live in Heaven. Do not live like the pauper sons of earth who with their gold and their silver are yet naked, and poor, and miserable. But live like the sons of God who are clothed in the scarlet and fine linen of the righteousness of Christ, and fare sumptuously every day!

The next time you are met by some would-be great man who wants to domineer over your faith, look him respectfully but firmly in the face and tell him that consciences and hearts were made for God alone. The next time the world attempts to win you by its bribes, tell the world it does not know what you are worth or else it would not attempt to bribe you. Every man has his price, but your price is too great for the world to give! Tell the world that you can look it in the face and are not afraid to dare it to do its worst or its best, for you are one of the blood royal of Heaven.

I hate, above all things, Christians getting into the way of being honest with themselves. Mind you, the Puritans were not proud—they were humble men—but at the same time they knew that a man of God has something in him and they would not lay their necks beneath the feet of tyrants. When kings began to devour the saints, they quoted the old Psalm about “binding kings in chains, and nobles in fetters of iron,” and soon the Ironsides were to the front in the day of war for the Lord, and for the faith, and for the Covenant.

We want no carnal weapons now! We have learned better than they. We care little about politics. Let the potsherds of the earth strive with themselves about that. But when it comes to truth and righteousness for God and for His cause, shall we put our finger on our lips and speak with bated breath? Never, as the Lord our God is our helper! Brethren, get a little touch of the old Lutheran spirit—it is needed nowadays. This England of ours is going to the Pope as fast as it can. All sorts of heresies are springing up and the most of men are soft animals without the appearance of a backbone in them.

I pray that you Christian people may get a thoroughly sound backbone of high spiritual principle and may feel that you cannot give up the smallest atom of truth, but must stand fast for it and by it come what may. These are the men the edge of whose sword the fiend has felt of old and he trembles at the thought of them still.

This advice of mine would be very dangerous if I did not couple it with the whole of the text. Remember where all true moral greatness must come from—it must come from God alone, and from His gentleness. Who are you to use these big words? Nothing! A swollen mass of emptiness, except as God’s love dwells with you. But oh, Brothers and Sisters, the tenderness of God, while it makes us lie in the very dust before Him, yet lifts us up in the presence of our fellows!

The love and gentleness of God makes us feel that we are less than nothing, less than the least of all His mercies—but oh, it makes us feel that we cannot sin! That we cannot yield to our fellow men in matters of conscience. That we must stand up for Him who has done so much for us. May you realize in your lives and in your hearts the meaning of my text, “Your gentleness has made me great!”

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PROMPT OBEDIENCE  
NO. 3310

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 11H, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 17, 1866.

**“As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.”  
Psalm 18:44.**

THERE is no doubt that we have David speaking to us in this Psalm, but it is equally certain that we must not limit it to David. Paul quoted verses 2 and 49 as applying to David’s Lord, and we shall not be wrong in following his example with regard to our text.

I. I am going to make several observations upon the text, and the first is that IT TELLS US THE SAVIOR’S CLAIMS UPON THE HEARTS OF MEN. He claims that they should obey Him and submit themselves unto Him. The great practical end of the Gospel is to bring the human heart into obedience to Christ and to make the stubborn will acknowledge allegiance to His sway.

Now, in this matter many great mistakes are made by men. Some think it is sufficient to go to a place of worship and to hear or repeat solemn words. This is a good thing to do, of course, but if all ends there, the purpose of the Gospel is not served. Such people will find, to their cost, that it is not the mere hearers of the Word, but the doers of it who are blessed. We still need the message that the Apostle James wrote long ago, “If any is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholds himself and goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was.” It is the wayside hearers who simply hear the Word, but neither understanding nor receiving it, they derive no benefit from it. Let none of us be numbered among them, nor among those who merely repeat certain forms of words without feeling the force and power of them in their hearts.

Others think it is enough if they carefully attend to the Gospel . If they do that, they seem to imagine that this is all that can be expected of them. This also is good as far as it goes—we have not a word to say against it, but much to say in its favor. But, my dear Hearer, if you pay ever so much outward attention to the Word of God, unless you submit your soul and spirit to its dominion, you cannot possibly expect to receive benefit from it. You are in the position of one who pays much attention to his physician’s prescription who spells out the Latin words, notes the quantities of the various drugs that are to be compounded, but who never gets a chemist to make up the prescription, or if he does go as far as that—never tastes the medicine! Such a man will never be cured of his malady in that way, nor will you be cured of your soul-sickness unless you actually take the remedy which the Great Physician has so graciously prescribed. You may carefully note all the bakers’ shops that you pass on your way home tonight. You may correctly calculate the quantity of bread that would be required for your family—and you may accurately estimate what it would cost—yet your household will not be fed unless you actually purchase the bread and give to each one a portion in due season. And your soul will not be fed unless you really partake of the Bread of Life.

What Christ requires of you who hear His Word is that you should obey Him and submit yourselves unto Him. How are you to do this? The Apostle John writes, “This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment.” This is Christ’s claim upon us, that we should trust Him—trust Him as our Savior, trust Him as our Lord and Master—trust Him so as to obey Him in all that He has commanded us. If we do this, we shall find that His commandments are not grievous and that obedience to them will yield to us the peaceable fruits of righteousness. He says to you, Sinner, “Give up all other confidences and come and trust in Me. If you would be saved, do not merely hear Me say to you, ‘Look unto Me,’ but really look unto Me, believe in Me, trust Me, forsake all your false refuges, leave those Babel buildings of your own devices and come to the sure Rock whereon a soul may safely build for time and for eternity.” When you hear this command of Christ, give heed to it—obey Him and submit yourself to Him!

Then, if obedience to that command is truly rendered, there will follow obedience to all the Savior’s commands. No man is really saved unless he is, in his heart, obedient to Christ. I do not say that you will be perfect, but you will desire to be so. I do not say that you will not be tempted to sin until you die, but there will be no sin that you will love, there will be no sin from which you will not long to be delivered. Your spirit will cheerfully bend down its neck to wear the collar of sacred service and as far as your inner and spiritual man is concerned, you will cry mightily unto God against the very thought of sin—and pray that you may walk in holiness and in the fear of the Lord all the days of your life.

If any of you have thought that trusting Christ does not involve obeying Him, you have made a great mistake. They do very wrong who cry up believing in Christ and yet depreciate obedience to Him, for obeying is believing in another form and springs out of believing. Neither may anyone say, “I will obey one command of Christ, but I will not obey another.” The very principle of trustful obedience lies in your not making any choice as to which commands you will obey. A soldier asks no question and makes no objection when he receives his orders—his captain bids him go and he goes—or he bids him come and he comes. He never says, “I will go thus far in obedience, but no further.” So must it be with you if you enlist under the banner of the Captain of our salvation—your obedience must be wholehearted and complete. If tonight you are the Lord’s, you must say to Him out of the very depths of your soul, “Show me, my Master, what You would have me do. You have bidden me trust You, and I do trust You. And out of that trust springs a reverent desire to submit absolutely to Your holy will. Help me, by Your gracious Spirit, to obey You in everything. And from this time forth, O blessed Savior, reign as the undisputed Lord of my whole life!”

We see, then, what the claim on Christ upon the hearts of men really is. And we who preach the Gospel must never rest satisfied until our hearers really submit themselves unto Him. It brings tears to our eyes as we recall how earnestly they often listen to our message—and how they even compliment us upon our faithfulness in delivering it—yet how they will be obedient to a part of it and yet be disobedient to the rest, for they will not obey Christ and submit themselves unto Him. Oh, that they had more submissive hearts, but neither you nor I can give them such hearts. We can proclaim the Truth of God in their hearing and we can weep before the Lord if they do not receive it—but the power to save them lies not in human hands—we must look up to the Almighty Savior and trust that He will bless the message which we have delivered in His name!

II. The second inference which we draw from the text is that IN ORDER TO RENDER OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST, THERE IS NO NEED OF A LONG PROBATION—“As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.”

It seems that some, as soon as they heard of Christ, yielded themselves up to Him. It used to be a very common notion, and the idea still prevails in some churches, that in order to have faith in Christ there must be long preparatory exercises. Many of the Puritans, excellent as they were, made a mistake in this matter. They felt afraid to say to a sinner, when they found him just as a sinner, “Believe on Christ”—they thought it was necessary that he should first undergo a certain amount of Law-working and conviction-plowing—and then they might come in with the preaching of the Gospel. I owe much to Doddridge’s Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, and I used to recommend it to others, but I do not do so now. That book does show the way of salvation, but it is done in a roundabout fashion—very different from the simple Gospel plan, “Believe and live,” “Look and be saved.” It is true that many do have the experiences which Doddridge describes, but that is no proof that they need have them! It is probable that most Christians do go through that Slough of Despond which Bunyan so graphically describes, but it is not absolutely necessary that any one of them should go through it! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life,” whether he has been in the Slough of Despond or not!

If it were necessary, I could pick out scores of members of this Church whose conversion is beyond question, and who have been faithful followers of Christ for years, yet their faith in Christ came all of a sudden. The Gospel just knocked at the door of their hearts and entered at once—no, in many cases, it seemed to enter without knocking! Think of Saul of Tarsus, “breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” yet suddenly arrested near Damascus, and crying out to that very Jesus whom he was persecuting, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” Think of the jailer at Philippi—a rough heathen who was about to commit suicide, almost immediately crying out, “What must I do to be saved?” And very soon afterwards baptized, “believing in God with all his house.” Think of the thief on the cross, joining with his fellow malefactor in reviling at Christ, yet presently praying, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom,” and receiving the cheering answer from Christ, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise”! These were sudden conversions which were worked without that long and painful preparation which has been so cried up in some of our churches that it has become a great hindrance to many! We must put nothing before the Cross of Christ—His great atoning Sacrifice is the one object to which we must direct the sinner’s gaze! Genuine evangelical repentance runs in double harness with faith and they should never be separated. To suppose that we are to go through a sort of quarantine before we can be admitted into the harbor of salvation is a very serious mistake. Our text flatly contradicts this idea, for it says, “As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me.”—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One.”*

There is life for a look—even though the heart should be as hard as the nether millstone! There is life for a look—even though as yet the character has undergone no change! There is life for a look—even though you cannot see any signs of Grace—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One.”*

Jesus Christ does not look for anything in you except sin and need, but finds in Himself both the source of mercy and the means by which that mercy may come to the very chief of sinners. May the Holy Spirit make it very clear to you that there is no necessity for you to wait a long while before the blessing of salvation may be given to you, but that you may have it this very moment! The pool at Bethesda was only efficacious for the healing of the first one who stepped into the water after it had been troubled by the angel, so that the afflicted might wait there for years and still remain unhealed. But the pool which Christ filled with His precious blood always has efficacy in it, so that whoever steps in, though he may not have been waiting by the pool for even a minute, though it may be the first time he ever heard of the precious blood of Christ—if he trusts in the finished work of God’s dear Son, he shall be immediately saved!

III. A third remark which I think may be fairly based upon the text is this—IN SOME CASES, THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION WINS A VERY SPEEDY VICTORY.

It was very remarkable that three thousand persons should have believed on Christ after Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost. We scarcely seem to expect, nowadays, to see three thousand souls converted, baptized and added to the Church in a single day, but when the Gospel was first proclaimed, converts were gathered very rapidly. It seemed as though a great pile of dry wood had been accumulated and it only needed a torch to set it aflame at once! In the time of the Reformation, so rapidly was the Gospel spread that men said that the writings of Luther were borne on the wings of angels—and so many of all classes believed the Truth of God that hallelujahs arose from the plowman in the field and the servants in the kitchen as well as from the lords and ladies of the land! “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it,” and still greater the multitude of those that received it! When Whitefield preached to great crowds of people who had never heard the Gospel before, it was like plowing virgin soil—the Truth appealed to them with all the force of novelty—and also with the conviction that it was exactly suited to their case so that they received it with sudden joy and thousands were converted!

Many persons come to this Tabernacle who have never previously listened to the Gospel—and it often happens that the very first sermon they hear is blessed to them! Last Tuesday, when I saw some 33 candidates for Baptism, one or two of them said that they had never been to any place of worship until they came here. Curiosity had prompted them to come and they were surprised to find that the preacher seemed to know all about them, for his message exactly suited their case. They received the Word suddenly, but so mightily did it affect them that they would not give it up, for it had come to them “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” There is no place where I feel so happy or so much at home in preaching as on this familiar spot—with your eyes fixed upon me and your heart drinking in the Truth of God—but for the winning of souls in great numbers, give me a congregation that has never heard the Gospel! If I were a fisherman and were asked where I would prefer to fish, I would answer, “Where nobody else has ever fished.” So, if a preacher of the Gospel might pick his place, he might well say, “Let me preach where the people have never yet heard the Gospel.” If we can get among certain classes of society, high or low, to whom the Gospel is a novelty, I feel persuaded that the grand prophecy of the text shall be gloriously fulfilled in their midst—“As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.” Let us expect this blessed result of our labors and be constantly in earnest breaking up fresh soil and casting the Gospel net into waters that have never yet been fished. Oh, that some who are here for the first time tonight may obey Christ as soon as they hear of Him! He came into the world to save sinners! He took upon Himself our flesh and took upon Himself our sins—and suffered in our place for our sins—“the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” If we trust in Him who bore our sins in His own body on the Cross, that trust brings us salvation! And it works in us peace and joy, gratitude and love—and helps us to serve the Lord with reverence and holy fear!

IV. Now we advance to a fourth point which is that STRANGERS WILL ALSO YIELD THEMSELVES TO CHRIST.  
The point to which I want now to call your very special attention is not so much the suddenness of the conversion as the condition of the people who, according to our text, shall submit themselves to Christ. There are some who, in the fullest sense of the term, are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of praise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Some of you who regularly attend a place of worship, are “aliens” in the sense in which Paul used the word— you are like the mixed multitude that came up with the children of Israel out of Egypt. Though you are not part of “the commonwealth of Israel” spiritually, you are at present eternally mingled with the true Israelites, the believing children of Abraham. But there are many others who are in a very definite way, “strangers.” The Sabbath bell brings no Sabbath music to them. They may rest on Sunday, but their rest consists in simply lolling about in their shirtsleeves and reading the Sunday newspaper. They never think of going into a place of worship unless it is for a wedding, or a funeral, or what they call “a christening.” There are thousands in this so-called Christian land who have never looked inside a Bible and know absolutely nothing of its contents! I have no doubt that there are to be found in London thousands of persons who, if they were asked what is meant by the Atonement, would reply that they had never heard of such a thing! And as to the simple Doctrine of trusting for salvation to the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, there could not be a greater piece of news to many of our fellow citizens than this!

Well now, these people whom I have been describing are, indeed, strangers to Christ, yet He says in our text, “the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.” They do not know Him. But “the Lord knows them that are His” and I trust that among the strangers there are many whom the Lord has foreknown from all eternity who shall, in due time, hear His voice and follow Him, rejoicing in that eternal life which is the portion of His sheep! In the very heart of the apostate Church of Rome, God may have some of His elect—and I have no doubt that He has! I pray that His Spirit may soon bring them forth into the light. Among those who are besotted with superstition and among those who have given themselves up to work with both hands in the way of carnal confidence, God may have His chosen ones. And if He has, He will surely fetch them out. Never despair concerning the Church of God! The greatest blasphemer may yet become the boldest preacher of the Gospel! He who hates Christ most today may love Him most tomorrow—and he will do so if the Spirit of God takes possession of him! It is not merely in the House of Prayer that God has His elect—they may be tonight in the alehouse, or in the theatre, or in still worse places—but the Spirit of God can find them wherever they are! Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, not only takes care of the 99 that are safely sheltered in the fold, but He goes out to seek and to find the one sheep that is lost! Even though all Hell’s hosts may have surrounded the poor wanderer, the prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall to delivered.  
Are you a stranger, dear Friend? Are you a stranger to the Gospel, a stranger to Grace, a stranger to your God? Are you a stranger to the bended knee and the Throne of Grace? Are you a stranger to this blessed Bible and to the hope of Heaven which it clearly reveals? “Oh, yes!” you say, “I am indeed a stranger and there is no hope for me!” But listen to the text, Friend—“the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.” Give good heed to other gracious messages in this most precious Book. “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” The heart of Everlasting Love is moved with pity towards you and God, Himself, speaks through a man’s voice as He cries to you from Heaven, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked should turn from his way and live: turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die?” Surely, if there are any of these strangers here tonight, they ought to be compelled to yield to Christ by the prophecy of the text, “the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.”  
V. Now I come to my fifth remark which is that OUR TEXT BEING TRUE, IT SHOULD GREATLY ENCOURAGE THOSE OF US WHO ARE WORKING FOR CHRIST.  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am devoutly thankful to God that so many of you are watching for souls, and not only so, but that you are winners of souls! It was but little that you could do, dear Friend, but you saw a stranger here and you spoke kindly to him. Perhaps you gave him a tract, certainly you prayed for him! And God blessed your efforts and the stranger yielded himself to Christ. You have sometimes visited a neighbor in time of sickness and have dropped a word in season for Christ, and you did well, for that kindly action was the means of winning a soul for the Savior! So let the past cheer you and let the text encourage you to persevere in such holy service. Possibly you know some persons who never go to a place of worship and who are quite ignorant of the Gospel. Do not think of them as unlikely to be blessed! On the contrary, believe that they are the very persons who are the most likely to be influenced for good when once they are brought under the sound of the Gospel! There are, alas, many who have so long heard the Word preached that they have become Gospel-hardened—the Truth of God has become to them a savor of death unto death instead of a savor of life unto life. But it is not so with these people of whom I am speaking—they are not Gospel-hardened, so be hopeful about them—go and seek them out, bring them to hear the Gospel and then pray that they may be among the strangers who shall submit themselves to Christ!  
If I had bread to give away, I should not be in a hurry to take it to those who had refused it again and again. But if I knew where there was a colony of hungry folk who had not tasted food for days, I think it would be among them that I should be made welcome! The place to take the Gospel is not where the Light of God has long been shining and men have closed their eyes to it—but down the dark court and alley where they have not before had the Light and, consequently, have not had the opportunity of rejecting it. Take the Gospel there and it may be that the very first time you do so, souls will be converted! If not, go again and again! Keep on sowing the Good Seed of the Kingdom, believing that ancient promise, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”  
If one should spend one’s whole life for God and win only one soul by the most earnest and devoted effort, it would be a rich reward to see that one star shining forever in the firmament of Heaven, to see that one gem glistening forever in the diadem of Christ, to see that one sheep feeding forever in the pastures of Eternal Life! It strikes me that it will help to make Heaven even more heavenly to us when God has blessed us to the bringing of other souls to share our bliss in Glory. Some of us will not be among strangers when we have passed through the gates of pearl! We have spiritual children already there for whom we have travailed in birth until Christ was formed in them! And whatever may be the fate of all earthly relationships, our spiritual relationships will abide forever. How blessed it will be to be welcomed there by those whom we have begotten through the Gospel and with what joy we shall present them to our God as we humbly yet gratefully say, “Here am I, Father, and the children whom You have given me”!  
VI. My last remark is a sad one. It has been uppermost in my mind all the while I have been speaking upon the other points. It is this, that albeit there are some who obey as soon as they hear the Gospel and others who once were strangers who willingly yield themselves unto Christ, yet it is painfully evident that THERE ARE SOME WHO DO JUST THE OPPOSITE.  
As for hearing the Word, there are some of you who are always hearing it! You scarcely ever miss an opportunity of hearing it! Thickly as the leaves in autumn fall from the trees will the remembrances of Gospel ministrations come back to you, but they are all as faded and as worthless to you, now, as are those dead leaves themselves! Some of you will never be lost for lack of hearing the Gospel—what would others give if they could only hear what you have heard? Some of you have heard the story of the Cross from your early childhood. The softest and sweetest of all lips, your mother’s, told it to you as long ago as you can remember. Then you heard it again and again from the lips of the earnest Sunday school teacher in whose class you sat so long. Some of you heard it from a loving wife or from a fond husband. You heard the Gospel preached by a godly minister now in Glory. And last of all, you have heard it from me, also, and I can add that you have heard it preached very plainly, for whatever my faults may be, clouding the Gospel or hiding its meaning is not one of them. Yes, you have heard the Gospel all these years—and while others have believed it and have been saved— you appear to be no nearer doing so than when first you heard it! And I tremble lest those solemn words of the Lord Jesus Christ should be true concerning you, “Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.” Remember how the Savior upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done because “they repented not”—and beware lest their doom should also be yours!  
Our text says, “The strangers shall submit themselves unto Me,” but you have not submitted yourselves to Christ. The great sinners, the very chief of sinners, have yielded themselves up to the sway of Christ, but you have not done so. This is not because you do not understand the way of salvation, for you know clearly what the Gospel is and what it requires. With some of you it is not because of lack of feeling, for you have felt a great deal—you have been the subjects of all sorts of impressions. Your thoughts have often been like a case of knives cutting into your inmost spirit, or like a nest of adders stinging your soul. Friend, it has come to this pass with you—mere hearing of the Word is of no service to you, even the bare remembrance of it is of no use—you must either yield to Christ or you must perish! There must be no more tarrying, delaying, dilly-dallying. You are lingering on the very brink of the precipice and you must either fall over or be saved by clutching at the garments of the Savior who stands close beside you. O Soul, is it not a mercy that you are pushed to this extremity? Is it not a blessing that you are brought to this emergency—that you must either yield yourself to Christ or die as His enemy? Oh, submit yourself to Him! Your hand trembles, but stretch it out and touch the hem of His garment. You cannot save yourself, but He can save you! Look unto Him, for again I remind you that— **“There is life for a look at the Crucified One.”**When the bronze serpent was lifted up in the wilderness there was no need for the serpent-bitten Israelites to come up close to the pole on which it was suspended—all they had to do was to look—and as many as looked, lived! That is what you have to do! Look to Jesus! Look and live! Give the faith-look at Him who died upon the Cross as the sinner’s Substitute and Surety—and as soon as you look, you shall live—and live forever! There is no need for you to uncover your wounds to show where the serpent has bitten you. There is no need for you to wait until the venom of the serpent reveals its deadly character more than it has already done. But look at once, lest you should tarry until you are unable to look!

Let me ask you a most solemn question—Does the Son of God, Himself, bleed and die for sinners and is not that all that is required to put away your guilt? Is Jehovah, Himself, satisfied with the sufferings of His well-beloved Son? And are you not satisfied? Has Christ woven the spotless and perfect robe of righteousness in which sinners may stand forgiven before the Great White Throne, and are you seeking to add to it some of the filthy rags of your own righteousness? O Soul, think not that you can share the work and the Glory of salvation with the almighty Savior! Yoke a gnat with an archangel if you will, but never think of linking yourself with Christ in order to complete the great work of salvation. Oh, no! In that matter it must be none but Jesus, for—  
**“None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”**  
I wish I could put the Truth of God so plainly that you could not help seeing it, yet I know that the Holy Spirit must open your eyes or you will never see it, however clearly it is set before you. I pray Him to do it and to do it now—and so to fulfill those two glorious “shalls” in my text—“As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.” This is my comfort—He who gave this promise and prophecy in its fullest and deepest meaning will certainly fulfill it! Blessed Master, make these potent “shalls” true in our midst tonight! Many have heard of You—give them the Grace to obey You! There are strangers here—may they submit themselves unto You and so be no longer strangers, “but fellow citizens with the saints; and of the household of God”! So may it be, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 9:1-17.**

Verses 1, 2. And He entered into a boat, and passed over, and came into His own city. And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you. [See Sermons #2337, Vo

lume 39—THE PHYSICIAN PARDONS HIS PALSIED PATIENT and #3016, Volume 52—GOOD CHEER FROM FORGIVEN SIN—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Our Lord dealt first with the greater evil, for sin is worse than even such a dreadful disease as the palsy. Forgiveness of sin is an even greater mercy than the healing of sickness.

3-7. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This Man blasphemes. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said, why think you evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven you; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house. And he arose, and departed to his house. Jesus first proved His Divinity by reading the secret thoughts of the caviling scribes—and then gave a further evidence of it by working this very notable miracle!

8-9. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. And as Jesus passed forth from there, He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of customs: and He said to him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him. [See Sermon

#2493, Volume 42—“A MAN NAMED MATTHEW”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge,  
at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This was another notable miracle, and equally set forth the power of Divine Grace.

10-11. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eats your Master with publicans and sinners? He was more at home with publicans and sinners than with scribes and Pharisees! And they were more likely to welcome Him as their Lord and Savior.

2-13. But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go you and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If He had come to call the righteous, where would He have found them? His call was not likely to be heeded by the self-righteous, but sinners heard it with joy—and so were made righteous by Him.

14. Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples fast not? We must not suppose that because a thing is proper for ourselves, it must, therefore, be binding upon everybody else. It might be fit and right that the disciples of John should often fast—their circumstances might require it—but it might be quite wrong for the disciples of Christ to fast, as they might be in very different circumstances.

15. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, so long as the bridegroom is with them? Could Christ’s disciples fast while Christ fed them with heavenly foods? While His Presence was to them like Heaven begun below, it would have been inconsistent for them to be mourning and fasting.

15. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them and then shall they fast. And nobody would say that they were turncoats if, when their circumstances had so greatly altered, they acted in harmony with their changed circumstances. The disciples could not mourn while Christ was with them! Can you, Believer, fast while Christ is with you? It cannot be. But when He has gone from you, then you will sorrow fast enough. So we must neither judge others by ourselves, nor judge ourselves at one time by what we were at some other time.

16. No man puts a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up takes from the garment—When it shrinks—  
16. And the tear is made worse. There must be a fitness about things. Do not impose fasting upon a joyful heart, or the singing of joyful hymns upon a sad spirit.  
17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runs out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. Do not expect from a young beginner that which would be unsuitable to him, even though it should be most comely and seemly in an aged Christian. And do not expect to see in an aged Christian all the vigor and alertness of spirit that you look for in ardent souls in all the fervor of their first love to Christ. Let us mind the relations of things.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE WARNINGS AND THE REWARDS OF THE WORD OF GOD  
NO. 2135

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Moreover by them is Your servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”  
Psalm 19:11.**

THIS is the declaration of one of God’s servants—“by them is Your servant warned.” Only for men made obedient by Divine Grace is this passage written. My Hearer, are you God’s servant? Let us begin with that question. Remember that if you are not God’s servant you are the bondslave of sin and the wages of sin is death. The Psalmist, in this Psalm, has compared the Word of God to the sun. The sun in the heavens is everything to the natural world—and the Word of God in the heart is everything in the spiritual world. The world would be dark, dead and fruitless without the sun—and what would the mind of the Christian be without the illuminating influence of the Word of God?

If you despise Holy Scripture, you are like one that despises the sun! It would seem that you are blind and worse than blind, for even those without sight enjoy the warmth of the sun. How depraved are you if you can perceive no heavenly luster about the Book of God! The Word of the Lord makes our day! It makes our spring! It makes our summer! It prepares and ripens all our fruit! Without the Word of God we should be in the outer darkness of spiritual death. I have not time, this morning, to sum up the blessings which are showered upon us through the sun’s light, heat and other influences.

So is it with the perfect Law of the Lord—when it comes in the power of the Spirit of God upon the soul, it brings unnumbered blessings— blessings more than we, ourselves, are able to discern. David, for a moment, dwelt upon the delights of God’s Word. He said, “More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” The Revelation of God enriches the mind with knowledge, the heart with comfort, the life with holiness, the whole man with Divine strength. He that studies, understands and appropriates the statutes of the Lord is rich in the truest sense—rich in holiness for this life and rich in preparedness for the life to come. You have mines of treasure if you have the Word of God dwelling richly in your heart.

But in the sacred Book we find not only an enrichment of gold laid up, but a present abundance of sweetness to be now enjoyed. He that lives upon God’s Word tastes the honey of life—a sweetness far superior to honey—for honey satiates, though it never satisfies. The more you have of Divine teaching, the more you will wish to have and the more will you be capable of enjoying. He that loves the Inspired Book shall have wealth for

his mind and sweetness for his heart.

But David is mainly aiming at the practical. So, having introduced the sun as the symbol of God’s Word because of its pleasurable influence, he adds, “Moreover by them is Your servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” On these two things we will meditate under the following heads—First, their keeping us—“By them is Your servant warned.” Secondly, our keeping them—“And in keeping of them there is great reward.”

I. First, THEIR KEEPING US—“By them is Your servant warned.” We are in an enemy’s country. We are always in danger—we are most in peril when we think ourselves most secure. You will find in the histories of the Bible that the most crushing defeats have fallen upon armies

 suddenly— when they were off their guard. The army of Christ has need always to set its pickets and appoint its sentinels lest the adversary take us unawares. We can never tell when we are likely to be assailed—we shall be wise to assume that we are always surrounded by enemies.

God’s Word is our keeper, the watcher of our souls—and when a danger is approaching it rings the alarm and gives us warning. The different parts of Scripture—the statutes, the doctrines, the ordinances, the promises, the precepts—all of these act like pickets to the army and arouse the Lord’s soldiers to resist sudden assaults. “By them is Your servant warned.”

In what way does God’s Word warn us? In many forms it thus operates. I would say, first of all, by pointing out sin and describing its nature and danger. We have here the mind of the Lord as to moral conduct and so we are not left to guesswork—we know by unerring teaching what it is that the Lord abhors. Those Ten Commandments are the lanterns set around an opening in the street that no traveler may drive into danger. God only forbids that which would injure us and He only commands that which will be for our lasting good. Spread out before you the Law of God and you may say of it as you read it, “By these commandments is Your servant warned.”

In my walks I see notices bearing the words, “TRESPASSERS BEWARE!” And I am kept from wandering. It is well to be acquainted, not only with the letter of the Law of the Lord, but with the spirit of it. Numberless sins are condemned by the Ten Commandments—truly we may say of the Law of God, “Your commandment is exceedingly broad.” All of these are foghorns warning us of dangers which may cause shipwreck to our souls. Studying the Word of God, we are made to see that sin is exceedingly sinful since it dishonors God, makes us enemies to our best Friend—yes—and drives us madly to destroy our own souls.

Sin, according to God’s Word, is murderous—it slew the Savior of men. Wherever sin comes, death follows it. Sin may bear pleasure in its face but it has ruin at its heels. Eternal destruction is the finishing of the work of sin. God’s Word is very plain and explicit about these grave facts. It forbids our trifling even with the appearance of evil—it warns us against sins of thought and temper as well as against transgressions of speech and act. He that is graciously familiar with his Bible will be preserved from those pitfalls into which so many have rushed in their careless contempt of God’s Word and holy commandments.

A precept of Scripture is like a lighthouse upon a quicksand or a rock. It quietly bids the wise helmsman steer his vessel another way. The whole coast of life is guarded by these protecting lights and he that will take note of them may make safe navigation. But remember, it is one thing for the Scripture to give warning and another for us to take it! And if we do not take warning, we cannot say, “By them is Your servant warned.” Oh, that our hearts may be in such a state that a hint from the Word may set us on our watch against evil!

Next, the Word of God warns us by reminding us of our duties. We are not only taught negatively what we should not do, but positively what we ought to do—and thus we are warned against sins of omission. I wish that professors who are neglectful of many points in the Savior’s example would study His Character more, marking down the points where they come short of it. If we were to read the lives of holy men recorded in Scripture and notice where we fail to be like they, it might do us much service. Truly, Lord, Your servants would be profitably warned if we more often enquired, “Lord, what would You have me do?”

Turning over these sacred pages we remark a choice blessing coming upon a man of God in connection with a certain virtue. Then we are warned to cultivate that virtue if we would have that blessing. The Lord does not pay us for our work as though we were hirelings and our labor meritorious. But still, according to His Grace, He rewards His faithful servants and so diligently encourages them to obey. Every Bible precept should be an arrow aimed at the heart of our carelessness and forgetfulness. Then should we often say with David, “By them is Your servant warned.” Like our Lord in His youth, we must be about our Father’s business and we must continue there till, like He, we can say, “I have finished the work which You gave me to do.”

The Word of God also warns us of our weakness in those duties which it commands and of our tendency to fall into those sins which it forbids. It sets before us a noble example, but it bids us remember that only by Divine power can we follow it. It spreads before us a program of perfect holiness, but it does not flatter us with the notion that by our own strength we can carry it out! It humbles us by showing that we cannot even pray as we ought without the Spirit’s teaching, nor so much as think a good thought without His aid. Scripture is continually warning us of the deceitfulness of our hearts and of the tendency of sin to advance from one stage of evil to another.

Holy Scripture shows us our spiritual inability, apart from the Divine Spirit—and greatly do we need warnings in this way, for we are given to be self-sufficient. Pride will shoot forth with the very least encouragement. We buckle on our harness and begin at once to shout as if the battle were won. How soon we think ourselves near perfection when, indeed, we are near a fall! We are apt to sit down and imagine that we have won the race when we have not yet traversed one half the way.  
The Word of God continually checks our carnal confidence and disturbs our self-satisfaction. It bears constant protest against our imagining that we have already attained when we are as yet only babes in Divine Grace. How plainly it tells us, “He that trusts in his own heart is a fool!” It shows us where our great strength lies, but it calls us off from all trust in our own past experience, or firmness of character, or strength of determination, or depth of sanctification to lean solely and alone upon heavenly Grace which we must receive hour by hour. If we give way to pride, it is against the admonitions of the Divine statutes, for in this matter, “By them is Your servant warned.”

So does the Word continually warn us against the temptations which are in the world in which we live. Read its story from the first day of Adam’s Fall to the last chapter of its record and you shall find it continually representing the world as a place of trial for the heir of Heaven. It is, indeed, as a sieve in which the true corn has no rest, but much tossing to and fro. Christ seems praying over us every day as we read the Scripture, “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.”

If you fancy that your position in life puts you beyond temptation, you are sadly deluded. Poverty has its evil side and riches are full of snares. Even in a Christian family we may be seduced into great sin as well as among the ungodly. There is no place under Heaven where the arrows of temptation cannot reach us. With this also comes persecution, for because we are not of the world, the world hates us. “In the world you shall have tribulation,” is a sure prophecy. If you meet with no persecution you should remember that the smiles of the world are even more dangerous than its frowns. Beware of prosperity! Thank God if you have the world’s wealth, but hold it tenderly and watch over your heart carefully lest you bow before the golden calf.

Adversity has less power to harm than prosperity. Of the evils peculiar to various positions, the Holy Spirit tells us in these sacred pages: “By them is Your servant warned.” We are continually warned to put on the whole armor of God and not to lay aside the shield of faith for a moment. We are urged to watch at all times and to pray without ceasing—for in the most quiet life, in the most pious company and in the regular work of the day—dangers are lurking. Where we think we may be very much at ease, lying down as on a bank of flowers, we are most likely to be stung by the deadly serpent. We are like the first settlers in America—the cunning Red Indians of temptation may be upon us with the deadly tomahawk of lust while we are dreaming of peace and safety.

Here, let me add, we are warned over and over again against the temptations of Satan. Certain theologians, nowadays, do not believe in the existence of Satan. It is singular when children do not believe in the existence of their own father! But it is so that those who are most deluded by him are the loudest in repudiating all faith in his existence. Any man who has had experience of his temptations knows that there is a certain mysterious personage—invisible, but almost invincible—who goes about seeking whom he may devour. He has a power far beyond that which is human— and a cunning that is equal to that of a thousand of the most clever of men.

Satan will endeavor to influence our minds in a way which is contrary to their true intent—to turn our thoughts in directions which we abhor— to suggest questions about Truths of God of which we are certain and even blasphemies against Him who, in our heart of hearts, we worship lovingly. But, Beloved, the power of Satan in a Christian’s life is a force with which he must reckon, or he may fail through ignorance. Some especially have had sore conflicts with this Evil One and certain tried ones are scarcely a day without being tormented either by the howling of this dog or else by his snapping at their heels.

He cannot possess us as he possesses many of the ungodly, but he worries whom he can’t devour with a malicious joy. Whatever “modern thought” ministers may have to say about Satan, the Inspired Scripture does not leave us ignorant of his devices, but sets us on our guard against his terrible power, bidding us pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” The temptations of the world and of the flesh are more upon our level than the assaults of Satan—he is the Prince of the evil forces and his attacks are so mysterious, so cunningly adapted to our infirmities and so ingeniously adjusted to our circumstances that unless the Lord, the Holy Spirit, shall daily cover us with His broad shield of Divine Grace, we shall be in the utmost jeopardy. O Lord, by these words of Yours is Your servant warned to resist the enemy and escape his wiles! Glory be to Your loving care!

The teachings of the Lord also warn us to expect trial. The Bible never promises the true Believer an easy life. Rather it assures him that he is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. There is no soaring to Heaven on the wings of luxurious ease—we must painfully plod along the pilgrim way. We see on the pages of Inspiration that we cannot be crowned without warfare, nor honored without suffering. Jesus went to Heaven by a rough road and we must follow Him. Every Believer in the Cross must bear a cross. If things go easily with you for a long time, do not, therefore, say, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved,” for God has only to hide His face and you will be troubled. Those happiest of men, of whom it could be said that God had set a hedge about them and all that they had—these, in due course—had to take their turn at the whipping post and smart under the scourge. Even Job, that perfect and upright man, was not without his troubles.

Beloved, expect to be tried! And when the trial comes, count it not a strange thing. Your sea will be rough like that which tossed your Lord. Your way will be hot and weary like that which your Master trod. The world is a wilderness to you as it was to Him. “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you.” Seek not to build your mansion here, for a voice cries to you out of the Word, “This is not your rest, for it is polluted.” Think of that verse of our favorite hymn—

*“Why should I complain of want or distress, Temptation, or pain?  
He told me no less.  
The heirs of salvation, I know from His Word.*

***Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”***Therefore, Beloved, you are forewarned that you may be forearmed.

God’s Word also warns us by prophesying to us of things to come . I cannot enter, just now, into what is a very interesting point of experience, namely, the singular fact that the Bible is used of God to warn individuals of events about to occur to them. The Book is full of prophecies for nations, but at times it becomes prophetic to individual Believers. Have you never had impressed upon your mind a passage of Scripture which has followed you for hours and even days, and you could not tell why, till an event has happened which has so exactly tallied with that Scripture that you could not but remark it as having prepared you for the circumstance?

Will not your morning reading sometimes forestall the sorrow or the duty of the day? Have you not often found that if you read the Bible consecutively, somehow or other, the passage which comes in due course will prove to be as truly a lesson for the day as if it had been written on purpose to meet your case? I am far from being superstitious, or wishful to encourage faith in mere impressions—but I cannot shut my eyes to facts which have happened to myself. I know that I have received, through this Book of God, messages to my heart which have come with peculiar power and suitability so that I have been compelled to say, with emphasis, “Moreover by them is Your servant warned.”

But the Bible warns us all of certain great events , especially of the Second Advent of the Lord and the coming judgment. It does not clearly tell us when our Lord will appear, but it warns us that to the unprepared He will come as a thief in the night. It warns us of the General Judgment and of the day when all men shall live again and stand before the Great White Throne. It warns us of the day when every secret shall be revealed and when every man shall receive for the things that he has done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it is good or evil. “By them is Your servant warned.”

If I live like one of yonder cattle, in the immediate present, or if I have no eye for the future that is hurrying on—if my soul never places herself in vision before the Judgment Seat of Christ, or if I never foresee the day when Heaven and earth, before the Presence of the great Judge, shall flee away—why then I cannot be a diligent reader of the Word of God! If I search the Scriptures I shall be called to walk in the light of the Last Day and shall be made to gird up my loins to face the dread account. Oh, that we might all be warned to be ready, that we may give our account with joy! Oh, that we may so take the warnings of Holy Writ as to be ready for death, ready for judgment and ready for that final sentence which can never be reversed! If we were truly wise these warnings would put salt into our lives and preserve them from the corruption which is in the world through lust.

Beloved, I trust that every one of us who knows the Lord will use His Holy Book as the constant guard of his life. Let it be like a fog signal to you, going off in warning when the road is hidden by a cloud. Let it be like the red lamp on the railway suggesting to you to come to a stop for the road is dangerous. Let it be like a dog at night, waking you from sleep because a robber is breaking in, or as the watch on board a ship who shouts aloud, “Breakers ahead!” Let the Word of God be like one who, during the great flood in America, rode on a white horse down the valley, crying out, as he rode along, “To the hills! To the hills! To the hills!” The waters were following fast behind him and he would have the people escape to the mountains lest they should be destroyed.

O precious Book, thus bid me seek the hills! Ring the alarm bell in my ears and compel me to flee from the wrath to come! Day and night, wherever I may be, may a Word from the oracle of God sound in my ears and keep me from sleeping on the brink of the abyss! May no enemy be able to steal upon us when sleeping in false security, for it is high time that we awake out of sleep! And this Book tells us so. So far have we spoken upon the Word as keeping us.

II. And now, secondly, I have to speak to you upon OUR KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD. “In keeping of them there is great reward.” What is meant by keeping the testimonies of God’s Word? You know right well that it will not suffice to have the Holy Book in your houses to lie upon a table so that visitors may see that you have a family Bible! Nor is it enough to place it on the bookshelf where the dust may thickly cover it because it is never used. That is not keeping the Bible, but burying it!

It does not warn you, for you smother it—you do not keep it, for you dishonor it by neglect. You must have a reverent esteem for it and a growing familiarity with it if you would keep it. “Let the Word of God dwell in you richly.” To keep the Word of God is, first of all, earnestly to study it so as to become acquainted with its contents. Know your Bible from beginning to end. I am afraid there is but little Bible searching nowadays. If the Word of God had been diligently studied there would not have been so general a departure from its teachings. Bible-reading people seldom go off to modern theology. Those who feed upon the Word of God enjoy it too much to give it up. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual, they learn to prize all the revealed Truths of God and they hold fast the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

Dear young people, if you never read a single book of romance you will lose nothing—but if you do not read your Bibles you will lose everything! This is the age of fiction and therefore the age of speculation and error— leave fiction and give yourself wholly to the Truth of God! Eat that which is good and spend not your money on that which is not bread. The Bible is the Thesaurus of heavenly knowledge, the encyclopedia of Divine science—read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the same—and then you will be keeping the sayings of God!

But we cannot keep them without going further than this— we must be zealous in their defense. May it be said of each one of us, “You have kept My Word.” When you find others denying God’s Truth, hold the faster to it! When they argue against it, be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. It is not an easy task to stand fast in the faith, today, for the current which runs towards unbelief is strong as a torrent and many have been taken off their feet by it and are being carried down to the cataracts of error. May God help you to say with the

pilgrims in Vanity Fair, “We buy the Truth”!

Buy it at any price and sell it at no price! It ought to be dearer than life, for it was so to the martyrs of our own country and to the Covenanters of Scotland in whose steps we would tread. They cared little whether their heads were struck off or not, but they cared everything for King Jesus and the statutes of His Word. Beloved, happy in the end will that man be who for a while has suffered contempt and misrepresentation and separation from his Brethren because of fidelity to the Truth of God! Come what may, he that sides with Truth will be no loser in the end. Oh, for more Luthers nowadays—we need them! Those who buckle to error are everywhere— even those in whom we trusted have betrayed their Lord.

But this is not all, we must go much further— there must be a careful observance of the Law of the Lord. We cannot be said to keep God’s Word if we never carry it out in our own lives. If we know the Commandments but do not obey them, we increase our sin. If we understand the Truth of God and talk about it but are slow to live according to it, what will become of us? This is not to keep God’s Word, but to hold the Truth of God in unrighteousness! This may, in some cases, be a presumptuous sin. When your knowledge far exceeds your practice, take heed lest you are guilty of sinning willfully. We must keep the Word of God in the sense in which our Lord used the word when He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Once more, even this is not enough—we are to keep the Truth of God not only by reverent study of it, by zealous propagation of it, by careful observance of it, but also by an inward cleaving to it in love and a cherishing of it in our heart of hearts. What you believe you must also love if you are to keep it. If it comes to you in the power of God, it may humble you, it may chasten you, it may refine you as with fire—but you will love it as your life. It will be as music to your ears, as honey to your palate, as gold to your purse, as Heaven to your soul! Let your very self be knit to the faithful Word. As new-born babes desire the unadulterated milk, so desire the teachings of the Spirit that you may grow thereby. Every Word of God must be bread to us after which we hunger and with which we are satisfied. We must love it even more than our necessary food. For that which God has spoken we must have an ever-burning, fervent love which no floods of destructive criticism can quench or even damp.

But now the text says, “In keeping of them there is great reward”—and here you must have patience with me while I set out the great reward which comes to obedient Believers. There are many rewards and the first is, great peace of mind. “Great peace have they which love Your Law: and nothing shall offend them.” When a man has done what God bids him do, his conscience is at peace and this is a choice gift. I can bear anybody to be my foe rather than my conscience. We read of David, “David’s heart smote him.” That was an awkward knock! When a man’s own conscience is his foe, where can he run for shelter? Conscience smites home and the wound is deep.

But when a man can conscientiously say, “I did the right thing. I held the Truth. I honored my God,” then the censures of other men go for little. In such a case you have no trouble about the consequences of your action for if any bad consequence should follow, the responsibility would not lie with you—you did what you were told. Having done what God Himself commanded you, the consequences are with your Lord and not with you. If the heavens were likely to fall, it would not be our duty to shore them up with a lie. If the whole Church of God threatened to go to pieces, it would be no business of ours to bind it up by an unhallowed compromise! If you should fail to achieve success in life—what men call success—that is no fault of yours if you cannot succeed without being dishonest. It will be a greater success to be honest and to be poor, than to grow rich through trickery.

If, through Divine Grace, you have done the will of God, your peace shall be like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Can you think of a greater reward than this? I cannot. A quiet conscience is a little Heaven. A martyr was fastened to the stake and the sheriff who was to execute him expressed his sorrow that he should persevere in his opinions and compel him to set fire to the pile. The martyr answered, “Do not trouble yourself, for I am not troubling myself. Come and lay your hand upon my heart and see if it does not beat quietly.” His request was complied with and he was found to be quite calm.

“Now,” he said, “lay your hand on your own heart and see if you are not more troubled than I am! And then go your way and, instead of pitying me, pity yourself.” When we have done right we need no man’s pity, however painful the immediate consequence. To do right is better than to prosper. A heart sound in the Truth of God is greater riches than a houseful of silver and gold. There is more honor in being defeated in truth than in a thousand victories gained by trickery and falsehood. Though Fame should give you the monopoly of her bronze trumpet for the next 10 centuries, she could not honor you so much as you will be honored by following right and the Truths of God, even though your integrity is unknown to men. In keeping the Word of the Lord there is great reward, even if it bring no reward. The approbation of God is more than the admiration of nations. Verily this is great reward!

The next great reward is increase of Divine knowledge. If any man will know the will of Christ, let him do that will. When a young man is put to learn a trade, he does so by working at it—and we learn the Truth which our Lord teaches by obeying His commands. To reach the shores of heavenly wisdom every man must work his passage. Holiness is the royal road to Scriptural knowledge. We know as much as we do. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” It may be you sit down and consider the doctrine but you cannot understand it. You turn it over and consult a learned divine—but still you cannot understand it. Be obedient, pray for a willing heart to do the will of God and you have already received enlarged capacity—and with it a new light for your eyes—you will learn more by holy practice than by wearisome study.

The Lord help us to follow on to know the Lord, for then shall we know! Practice makes perfect. Obedience is the best of schools and Love is the ablest of teachers. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge is the gift of Grace to the faithful—is not this a great reward?

Moreover, in keeping the commandments we increase in conformity to Christ and, consequently, in communion with God. He that does as Christ did is like Christ, for our likeness is moral and spiritual. In measure we receive His image as we work His deeds and then, as Christ lived in constant fellowship with God because He always did the things that pleased God, so do we walk in the light as God is in the light—when we yield obedience to the Divine will. If you walk in sin, you cannot walk with God. If you will be obedient, then shall all clouds be chased away and your light shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Sinning will make you leave off communion with God, or else communion with God will make you leave off sinning—one of the two things must occur. If you are kept from sin and made to be obedient you shall bear the image of the heavenly and with the heavenly you shall have daily communion.

This will be followed by the fourth great reward, namely power in prayer. Jesus says, “If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” If you will read in the Gospel of John, you will frequently see how success in prayer is, in the case of the Believer, made to depend upon his complete obedience. If you will not listen to God’s Word, neither will He listen to your word! Some people complain that they have no power with God—but has God any power with them? Look to the faultiness of your lives and cease to wonder at the failure of your prayers! An inconsistent life downstairs means unprofitable prayer upstairs—if, indeed, there is any prayer at all!

You cannot have God’s ear in the closet if He never has your ear in the shop. If you live as worldlings live, the Lord will treat you as He did Cain, to whose offering He had no respect. Wonder not at your leanness in private devotions if there is license in your public life! O Lord God the Holy Spirit, sanctify us in our daily lives and so shall we obtain access to God through Jesus Christ and our pleading shall be accepted in Him!

One great reward is habitual holiness. The man who has, by Divine Grace, long kept the way of the Lord, finds it more easy to do so because he has acquired the habit of obedience. All things are difficult at the beginning, but all things grow easy as we proceed. I do not say that holiness is ever easy to us—it must always be a labor and we must always be helped by the Holy Spirit—but at the same time it is far easier for a man to obey who has obeyed than for one to obey who has lived in constant rebellion. If you have faith you will have more faith almost as a necessary consequence. If you pray much you will pray more—it is all but inevitable that you should do so.

There are Believers whom the Lord has put on the rails of life—they do not run on the road like common vehicles—they are placed on tram lines of habit and so they keep the ways of the Lord. Sometimes a stone gets on the track and there is an unhappy jolt, but still they do no iniquity but keep on in one straight line even to their journey’s end. This is a great reward of Divine Grace. If you are obedient, you shall be rewarded by being made more obedient. As the diligent workman becomes expert in his art so shall you grow skillful in holiness. What a joy it is when holiness becomes our second nature—when prayer becomes habitual as breathing and praise is as continual as our heart-beats! May hatred to sin be spontaneous and may desire for the best things be the habit of our soul! I scarcely know of a greater reward than this habitual holiness which the Lord in His Grace bestows on us.

This will generally be followed by another great reward, namely, usefulness to others. He that keeps the Commandments of the Lord will become an example that others may copy and he will wield an influence which shall constrain them to copy him. Don’t you think that many Christians are spiritually childless because they are disobedient? How can God allow me to bring others to Himself if I myself backslide from Him? The power to bless others must first be a power within ourselves. It is useless to pump yourself up into a pretended earnestness at a meeting and then to think that this sort of thing will work a real work of Grace in others—the seed of pretence will yield a harvest of pretenders—and nothing more.

Nothing can come out of a man unless it is first in him and if it is in him it will be seen in his life as well as in his teaching. If I do not live as I preach, my preaching is not living preaching. I could mention men of great talent who see no conversions—and one does not wonder—for even in their lives there is no holiness, no spirituality, no communion with God! I could mention Christian people with very considerable gifts who have no corresponding measure of Divine Grace and therefore their labor comes to nothing. Oh, for more holiness! Where that is manifest there will be more usefulness.

Lastly, we shall have the great reward of bringing glory to the Grace of God. If we are made holy, men seeing our good works will glorify our Father who is in Heaven—and is not this the very end of our existence? Is not this the flower and fruit of life? I pray you, therefore, walk humbly and carefully with God that He may be honored in you. There are two things I want to say before I sit down. The first is, let us hold fast, tenaciously, doggedly—with a death grip—the Truth of the Inspiration of God’s Word. If it is not Inspired and Infallible, it cannot be of use in warning us. I see little use in being warned when the warning may be like the idle cry of, “Wolf!” when there is no wolf.

Everything in the railway service depends upon the accuracy of the signals—when these are wrong lives will be sacrificed. On the road to Heaven we need unerring signals or the catastrophes will be far more terrible. It is difficult enough to set myself right and carefully drive the train of conduct, but if, in addition to this, I am to set the Bible right and thus manage the signals along the permanent way, I am in an evil plight, indeed! If the red light or the green light may deceive me, I am as well without signals as to trust to such faulty guides. We must have something fixed and certain, or where is the foundation? Where is the fulcrum for our lever if nothing is certain? If I may not implicitly trust my Bible, you may burn it, for it is of no more use to me. If it is not Inspired, it ceases to be a power

either to warn or to command obedience.

Beloved, others may say what they will, but here I stand bearing this witness—“The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” While you hold fast its Inspiration, pray God to prove its Inspiration to you. Its gentle but effectual warning will prove its Inspiration to you. This precious Book has pulled me up many times and put me to a pause, when otherwise I had gone on to sin. At another time I should have sat still had it not made me leap to my feet to flee from evil or seek good. To me it is a monitor whose voice I prize! There is a power about this Book which is not in any other. I do not care whether it is the highest poetry or the freshest science—each must yield to the power of the Word of God!

Nothing ever plays on the cords of a man’s soul like the finger of God’s Spirit. This Book can touch the deep springs of my being and make the life floods flow forth. The Word of God is the great power of God and it is well that you should know it to be so by its power over you. One said, “I cannot believe the Bible.” Another answered, “I cannot disbelieve it.” When the question was raised—“Why do you believe?” the Believer answered, “I know the Author and I am sure of His truthfulness.” There is the point—if we know the Author, we know that His witness is true—and knowing it to be true, we take His warnings and follow His commands.

May the Lord work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure— then shall the Book be more and more precious in our eyes—and this sense of its preciousness will be one of the rewards which come to us in keeping the statutes of the Lord. So be it unto you through Christ Jesus! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 19.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—908, 479, 19.  
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DAVID WARNED AND REWARDED  
NO. 2775

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, APRIL 20, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 29, 1881.

**“Moreover by them Your servant is warned: and in keeping them there is great reward.”  
Psalm 19:11.**

DAVID was constantly singing the praises of God’s Word, although, as I have often reminded you, he had only a small portion of the Scriptures compared with the complete Bible which we possess. If, then, it had pleased God that the Canon of Revelation should have been closed in David’s day, it would, by the aid of His Spirit, have been even then a sufficient Light of God to lead the saints of God into the way of holiness. You would be very sorry if the Pentateuch and the earliest Historical Books should be all that you had of the Scriptures, yet they are, evidently, so rich, so full, so instructive, that they were all that David needed for the practical purposes of a holy life! Never allow anybody to make you depreciate the Old Testament. No part of the Bible is to be set up above the rest, or to be treated as of secondary importance. “All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

So I gather, from what David says, that if we had no more Books of the Bible than he had, we should still possess all inestimable treasure for which we ought daily to bless and praise the name of the Lord. But now that we have the complete Revelation of the will of God, as contained in the Old and the New Testaments, we ought to rejoice with exceedingly great joy. We have a Bible which is large enough to be a perfect library and which is also so compact that we can carry it about with us wherever we go! It is exactly the right size and it is just right in all other respects. It is just adapted to every individual in the world and it is also the most fit Book for any nation to use as an everyday guide as to its morals, its laws and its conduct in relation to both God and men.

There are two things mentioned in the text which made the Scriptures very dear to David. The first is that they had warned him against evil— “by them Your servant is warned.” And the second is that obedience to the Scriptures had brought him a great reward—“and in keeping them there is great reward.”

I. First, then, THE SCRIPTURES HAD WARNED DAVID AGAINST EVIL.

We are so dull and so foolish that unless we are taught of God the Holy Spirit, we really know nothing as we ought to know it. Yet we are so headstrong and so obstinate that if we are not Divinely checked, we run with heedless impetuosity into all manner of evil. We need to be goaded on to everything that is good, but we need to be held in with a tight rein, or we shall plunge into many things that are evil. Even when we do not willfully choose the wrong, we seem to run into it by a sort of natural tendency—and we find ourselves bogged down before we know where we are. If, however, the Scripture is made to be our constant companion and guide, we shall be saved from many mistakes into which, otherwise, we are sure to fall. Where we should have rushed on madly to our destruction, we shall find ourselves suddenly stopped and we shall hear a Voice behind us saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” And, through giving heed to that warning Voice, we shall turn back from the broad road of our own choosing to the narrow way of God’s choice.

God’s Word warned us, first, concerning our soul’s disease and its remedy. To some of us, our first warning concerning the evil of our nature came from the Scriptures. There are some persons who must, very early in life, have been made aware of the evil of their nature. I mean persons with a hot, impetuous, passionate temperament, or those with a strong animal tendency and others who were brought up in the midst of vice, and who themselves eagerly plunged into it. One would think that such people ought to be able to see that they are not what they should be. But there have been others with a gentle nature who have been trained up in the midst of piety. Even without the Grace of God, they would not be likely to become vicious like those to whom I have referred. They have also, through helpful training, become honest, upright and amiable. There is everything about them that is pleasing and beautiful. They go to church, or to the meeting house, and they join with others in making confession of sin, yet, somehow, they do not seem to realize that the confession applies to themselves exactly as it stands, for they are not openly as sinful as others are. There are some people in such a condition of natural excellence that if it had not been for the Word of God, they would not have known what evil was sleeping within their hearts!

A leopard may have been kept under restraint from the time it was a cub and it may appear to be perfectly harmless. But if it should taste blood, its real fierceness will soon be seen. You may walk over a grassy hill and think yourself perfectly secure, yet, underneath, there may be a slumbering volcano, liable to break out at any moment. Everywhere about us there is that which flatters us and makes us think that we are better than we are, but, by the Word of God, we are faithfully warned that there is a sink of iniquity within our soul—a black and fetid spring— a foul generator of everything that is evil in the very fountain of our nature! What a blessing it is for us to be warned of that evil, lest we should go on dreaming that all was right and never find out the truth till we were past conversion—past the possibility of being renewed because we would have entered that other world where hope and mercy can never come! What a blessing it is that God’s Word warns us concerning the disease and tells us of the remedy for it—warns us that we are lost and reveals to us the glorious Truth of God concerning the Savior who has come to seek and to save that which was lost!

Then, next, God’s Word warned us concerning our danger and the way of escape from it. Did you ever find yourself, dear Friend, forming associations with ungodly persons and gradually becoming more and more pleased with them and, then, did the Word of God come to you with power, saying, “Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”? Did you also hear this command applied to you, “Come out from among them, and be you separate, says, the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing”? If so, I am sure that as you tore yourself away from the fatal embrace of the ungodly, and escaped for your life out of the Sodom of which you had almost become a citizen, you could not help prizing and praising the Book by which you had been warned to flee from the peril which threatened to destroy you!

Did you ever find yourself thinking that all was well within—that you were really getting to be somebody of importance—that you might hang out your streamers? And did the Word of the Lord then come home to you, saying, “You say, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”? Did you haul down your flags? Did you hide your face for shame? Did you get away alone and confess to God the proud mistake that you had made, and not feel safe again until you were lying at the foot of the Cross, looking up to your Savior for mercy and forgiveness? If so, I feel sure that you took your Bible in your hand and you said, “By this blessed Book Your servant is warned to escape from self-delusion and from being puffed up with the conceit that he was something when he was nothing.”

How many, many dangers there are in this life against which the Word of God warns us! I recollect being on board a steamboat going up the Thames, early in the morning, when the fog had not cleared away and when a man in the bow of the vessel shouted out as loudly as he could for us to go astern, for we were out of our track and should soon have been ashore. As I heard that shrill cry of warning, I could not but be grateful for it and you and I, dear Friends, would long ago have gone aground if the Word of the Lord had not called out to us, sometimes in sharp, stern tones, “Stop! There is danger just ahead!” And we have been compelled to alter our course and go where our natural inclination would never have induced us to go. Blessed be God that we were not only warned, at the first, concerning our spiritual disease, and directed to Him who could cure it, but, many a time since then we have been warned of unseen dangers in our holy pilgrimage! So let us prize and bless the Book that has been our Mentor and our Monitor, always seeking to keep us in the right path, or to draw us off from the wrong.

God’s Word has also been a warning to us, oftentimes, concerning our duty and our obligation. Many a professing Christian is not living as he or she should live. But if they would diligently read their Bible and obey its injunctions, there would soon be a great alteration in them. Hundreds of Believers, while searching the Scriptures, have been powerfully affected by some text and have been led not only to see their shortcomings, but also to perceive the way to a nobler and better life. “I must do something,” says one, “to prove my love to Him who has done so much for me. I have fallen short even of the standard that I set for myself, and that standard is far below what I find in the Word of God.”And, it may be, under the influence of a single verse, the man has become generous, selfsacrificing, earnest, fervent and has glowed with a zeal for God which he never knew before! Many of us can testify how often the Word of the Lord has quickened us—so let us be wise enough to go to it whenever we become lethargic and dull, so that, under the Inspiration of its sacred pages, we may be again awakened and revived. O Spirit of God, we bless Your holy name that when duties lay neglected and precepts had been entirely forgotten, You did bring them up again before our minds in this precious Book—and then, by Your Grace we made haste and delayed not to keep Your commandments because Your Word has warned us concerning our duty and our obligation!

Brothers and Sisters, God’s Word warns us concerning the whole of our life and even concerning some things to come which, otherwise, we could never have known. If any Brother is impressed with the thought that Jesus Christ may come at any moment, and call him to account, that is an admirable reason why he should, every day, watch unto prayer, and get himself ready for his Lord’s coming. But, sometimes, when I read the Word of God, and when I travel through this great city, I am led to contemplations of another sort. I think that whether the Lord comes soon, or not, does not affect my responsibility and yours concerning the people now living, and the generations that may yet come. If this great London is to go on increasing. If the population shall still keep multiplying, what will be said of us if we allow street after street to be built, houses by the thousands to be erected, and hardly any new houses for the worship of God, while public bars may be measured by the mile? It seems to me a dreadful thing to live at this particular time in which, if the Gospel seed is not plentifully sown, the waste ground of centuries—if the world lasts so long, will cry out because of our indolence! But if the seed were scattered broadcast, then the harvests that shall be reaped in the centuries that may yet come shall redound to the Glory of God and also to the credit of those who faithfully served their Lord.

I believe that if ever men stood in a place where they could have power over a vast tremulous mass of humanity—if ever men were in contact with wondrous wires that may influence ages that are yet to be, and nations still unborn—we are the men who stand in just such a position! That which is done, or left undone, today, will have certain effects throughout eternity, but it will, perhaps, be sufficient for us to limit the consideration and to remember that our service or our neglect may affect generations of our fellow creatures for good or evil. May God help us to remember that solemn verse which warns us that “none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself.” May the Holy Spirit also bring to our memories our Savior’s words, “You are the salt of the earth.” And “You are the light of the world.” If we salt not the earth, what can come to it but corruption? And if we enlighten not our generation, what can come to it but the blackness of darkness? By the consideration of these things are God’s servants warned to be up and doing while it is called today. May God grant that we may not neglect the warning, but may we prize it, and thank God that in the Sacred Scriptures there is provision made to wake us up when we sleep, and to keep us active in His holy service! “By them Your servant is warned.”

I would like to pass the question round to all who are here—Dear Friends, are you being warned by God’s Word? Does it ever stop you, like an angel in the way when you are going forward contrary to the will of the Lord, and make you suddenly start and stand still? Does God’s Word ever, as it were, put its finger up to silence you just as you are going to speak? Does it ever seem to lay its hand upon your arm just as you are going to stretch out your hand unto iniquity? Does it ever warn you? Does it operate upon you as a drag, a check, a restraint? If it does not, then you have yet to learn the first elementary lesson of true piety! You are not as David was—you are not yet taught of the Spirit of God—for, if you were, you would frequently be warned by God’s Word and you would love to have it so. May God, in His mercy, grant that we may all learn, experimentally, the meaning of this first sentence of our text—“By them Your servant is warned”

II. Now let us turn to the second part of the subject, in which I take much delight. It tells us that OBEDIENCE TO THE SCRIPTURES BROUGHT TO DAVID A GREAT REWARD.

Holy Writ was very precious to David and he says, concerning God’s commandments, “in keeping them there is great reward.” He does not say, “for keeping them.” That is the old legal system—so much pay for so much obedience. It is a poor system even if it could be worked out, but it is not God’s plan at all. “You are not under Law, but under Grace.” We are to do nothing for payment, but everything for love. Observe the difference between the two sentences. “For keeping them there is great reward.” That is beggarly! It is a hireling’s utterance. “In keeping them there is great reward.” That is the language of one who loves obedience. It is a child’s sentence—the sentence of one who is perfectly free in his obedience and who does not render it because he must, but because he delights to do so. That is the difference between the legal spirit of bondage and the evangelical spirit of holy freedom before the living God.

So, then, there is a great reward to gracious men in the keeping of God’s commandments and that reward consists, first, in the pleasure of obedience. To those of us who love the Lord, it is a great delight to do what God bids us do. For instance, He bids us draw near to Him in worship and I can confidently appeal to many of you who are here, and I am sure that you will sympathize with me when I say that the happiest moments of my life are those that are spent on this spot where I am now standing. Or down in the Prayer Meetings or at the Communion Table, for, when I begin to worship and adore the Lord, my heart finds wings and I soon rise above all cares, troubles and carnal considerations into a high, holy, happy, spiritual condition! I am certain that I have experienced more true happiness on this platform than can have been enjoyed in any other place on the face of the earth! Whether you have been happy while I have been praying, I cannot tell, but I know that I have seemed to be in the immediate Presence of God while I have been leading you in supplication and, therefore, I judge that it has been much the same with you. And when you have a happy time alone in prayer, or in singing God’s praises, or reading His Word, is it not the very vestibule of Heaven to your soul? Well, that is an illustration of the Truth of God that in keeping God’s commandments there is a great reward!

That refers to one part of the commands of God—the drawing near unto Him in worship. Now turn to the Second Table, where you are bid to love your fellow men, and see how far you have obeyed its commands. Have you done all you could to help the poor? Have you distributed alms among them? Have you been a nurse to the sick? Have you taught the little children? Have you tried to instruct grown-up people whom you have found under soul-concern and sought to lead them to Christ? What have been the happiest evenings that you have ever spent when you have reviewed the engagements of the day? Have they been those in which you have had a season of gaiety with your friends—I do not mean anything objectionable or wrong, but ordinary amusement—a day, for instance, when you have been in the country and you have been full of mirth and merriment? Has that been your happiest day?

I do not think so. I believe that the happiest days you have ever lived have been those in which you have been downright weary in the cause of God! You have put your head on your pillow and you have slept, oh, so sweetly! Or, if you have been too tired to sleep, you have had joy-bells ringing in your heart because you have been doing somebody good. It is a great delight to give away money for Christ’s sake—to help the poor and to succor such as are unable to help themselves! Just try to relieve a poor widow of part of her burden of care, or seek to supply the needs of an orphan child and see whether it will not bring you joy and gladness! It is a whole day’s holiday to be permitted to spend a day in doing well. In saying this, I am not dreaming—I am merely telling you what I know to be a matter of fact. Those who love the Lord find that in keeping His commandments there is great reward! There is a pleasure in the obedience, itself.

Then, dear Friends, there is a reward in the healthiness of this exercise. Either in worship and serving the Lord, or in loving and doing well to your fellow men, there is most healthful exercise to your spirit. There are some forms of physical labor that quickly wear out the human frame—and there are some processes of thought that bring on brain weariness and mental exhaustion. But, in the service of God there is a refreshment which makes the labor light. If we could have a machine that would manufacture its own oil, provide its own coal and repair its own waste, it would be a wonderful triumph of mechanism—and the spiritual mind is, by God’s Grace, made something like that. It bears within itself a well of living water springing up into everlasting life! It is an engine that creates its own fuel, oil and water as it runs along its way. God, by His Infinite Power, gives to the Believer such spiritual strength within him that even “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” There is nothing that does a man so much good as to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. A little heavenly excitement is a blessed refreshment and revival for the entire manhood and—turning again to the other side of the subject—to walk uprightly towards our fellow men, to forgive those who injure us and to bless with our beneficence all those who need anything at our hands is a kind of exercise that is eminently suitable to our renewed manhood! And, the more we have of it, the more are we refreshed. If you want to grow to be what you ought to be, keep God’s commandments, for in keeping them there is this blessed healthiness of spirit that comes to the obedient. He who would be whole, must be holy. Holiness is, indeed, a kind of wholeness or spiritual health.

Let me give you a few specimens of the way in which some of us have found the keeping of God’s commandments to be truly profitable to us— *“I heard the voice of Jesus say,*

*‘I am this dark world’s light.  
Look unto Me, your morn shall rise,  
And all your day be bright.’”*

I obeyed that command and I can bear testimony that a great reward was at once given to me. Oh, how quickly the heavy burden rolled from my shoulder! How my soul did leap like a roe or a young hart the very moment that I obeyed that command of the Lord, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Then there is that command, “Trust in the Lord,” which is the perpetual precept for a Believer’s whole life— have not many of you found a great reward in keeping that command? Why, that trust in God has enabled you to cast your burden of daily care and every other burden that has been upon you, upon Him! And when you have trusted Him, you have been placid, and calm, and joyful and strong, and fully equipped for all your labor and service. What a great reward faith brings to all who exercise it! It is a most soul-enriching Grace and, where it is in active operation, untold spiritual wealth comes pouring into the coffers of the saint!

Now take another command. For instance, “Pray without ceasing.” In keeping that command, have you not had a great reward? True prayer is true power. Prayer brings every blessing from on high. There is no need to do more than just mention it, for many of you know that when you have kept that command, there has been given to you a great reward.

Let me remind you of a command which is often forgotten—the command to forgive them that trespass against you. If you have done that, have you not found a great reward in the fact of having done it? Someone well said, “If my fellow men do not praise me for what I have done, I do not mind. I am quite satisfied to have done that which deserved their praise.” So should it be with you and those whose wrong-doing you have forgiven. If you have borne long with their ill manners and your kindness has only increased their enmity so that they have reviled you more than ever, feel that it is quite sufficient reward for you to have done the right thing in forgiving them.

Or suppose it is not the duty of forgiveness that is in question, but some other, such as that of holy self-sacrifice? How do you stand with regard to it? Have you made sacrifices for Christ? Have you given of your substance to His cause until you have pinched yourself in doing so? That is one of the sweetest things a Christian can ever do—and there is a great reward in doing that. Have you denied yourself some pleasure in order to spend your time in doing good to others? If so, I am sure it has proved to be one of the best things you have ever done. It does not breed boastfulness or self-conceit, but there is a kind of moral sense within the spirit that makes our heart feel happy whenever we are doing a right and noble thing. We do not ask that we may be praised for it, or rewarded for it—it is quite sufficient delight for us to have had the privilege of doing such a thing as that.

One of the greatest rewards that we ever receive for serving God is the permission to do still more for Him. The reward for a man who has faithfully served God as the leader of 50 people is to be permitted to serve Him as the leader of a hundred. And, in the case of a man who has lost a great deal of money through being faithful to his conscience, perhaps the greatest reward that God can give him is to let him lose twice as much by being still more faithful if that is possible! He who has been honest and upright—and who has been slandered—it may be that he shall be rewarded by being slandered still more! The highest reward that God ever gives His servants on earth is when He permits them to make such a sacrifice as actually to die in His service as martyrs. That is the highest reward of which I can conceive—the acceptance that God gives to the very body, blood and bones of His servants, as a whole burnt-offering unto Him.

Do you remember what reward the Spartans had when they fought most valiantly? A Spartan was once asked, “Suppose you fight like a lion today, what reward will you have?” He answered, “I shall have the honor of always being in the front rank where there is the most danger.” A coward would have preferred to be in the back rank where there was the least danger, but the brave Spartan said, “If I have proved my courage, I shall have the permission to suffer more, and to venture more for my country.” And this is the kind of reward that God will give to us. If we keep His commandments, we shall be permitted to have more to do for His dear sake.

I have not time to speak of the peace that comes from the keeping of God’s commandments, or of the ennobling character which it produces, but I must just mention the great reward which this obedience brings to us in the power and capacity which it is gradually breeding in us for the perfect service of Heaven. God can make a man fit for Heaven in a minute if He pleases to do so. That I am sure of, for Christ took the dying thief there, but, as a general rule, the education of God’s children is a matter of time. We have to be prepared for the enjoyments and the employments of Heaven by processes of discipline here on earth. Now, Brothers and Sisters, when you get to this state of spiritual experience—that it is your one joy and delight to glorify God—when you can bless God for suffering, when you can praise Him for heaviness of spirit if He chooses to send it— when your will is entirely subject to the will of God and your whole life is entirely absorbed in seeking the Glory of God, then you are fit for Heaven, for Heaven principally consists of perfected natures with the capacity to do the will of God without question or hindrance forever!

Now I must conclude with two observations. The first is, dear Friends, that you may know the profitableness there is in keeping God’s commandments by considering the opposite thing. Do not try it, but just think of it! Suppose that you Christian people do not keep God’s precepts—suppose that, in certain ways, you violate them? What will happen? I am not now referring to your eternal safety, but I am quite sure that you will never derive any benefit from disobedience to God. You may get more money, perhaps, by a certain course in business, but that will not be true profit—it will be bad money which will canker all the rest that you have. Whatever you get in that way will be infinitely worse than losing. Look at David when he broke God’s commandments. It was an evil day for him when he looked with lustful eyes upon Bathsheba. And, from that first moment in which he turned aside, there was a cloud over his entire life. Although God had made with him, “an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure,” yet that last part of his life was full of grief and sorrow—and you can trace it all to that turning aside from keeping the precepts of his God. O Brothers and Sisters, do you want to curdle your whole life? Then, let a drop of uncleanness fall into it! You may do, in half an hour, what will embitter the next 20 years of your life—yes, and will make your dying pillow to be full of thorns. There can be no possible profit to a child of God in disobeying his Lord’s commands.

This is my last remark. There must be a great reward in keeping God’s commandments, for I never yet heard anybody say that he was sorry that he had kept them. I have met with many persons who have, for a time, suffered because of their faithfulness to conscience, but they have taken that as a matter of course and they have found such a great reward in obeying Christ, and following their conscientious convictions that if it had cost them a hundred times as much, they would have cheerfully submitted to the loss! Never has there been a man who, on his deathbed, has regretted that he has followed the Lord fully. Is there one here who has kept God’s commandments and who regrets that he has done so? Is there one such person on earth? Was there ever one who could truthfully say, “I served God with all my heart and He has cast me out—and I am sorry that I ever had such a Master”? No, there has not been such a person, nor shall there ever be one who can say that as long as the world stands, for in keeping God’s commandments there is great reward!

God bless you, dear Brothers and Sisters, and give you that reward, according to the riches of His Grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 19.**

This Psalm has the same subject as Psalm 119. Both of them are full of praise of God’s Word. God has written two books for us to read—the volume of the Creation and the volume of the Sacred Scriptures—and these two are in complete harmony. Happy are they who can read both these books and see the same vein of teaching running through every page.

Verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. The heavens are always declaring God’s Glory. If we gaze up to them by day or by night, we always read in them the power, the wisdom, the goodness, the greatness, the Immutability of God.

2. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. If we have but ears to hear and hearts to understand, how much of God may we see in that vast volume of Nature which is spread out above us both by day and by night!

3, 4. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. All men must hear God’s voice in Nature if they are only willing to do so. Paul wrote to the Romans, “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.” So that those who will not see “are without excuse.”

4-6. In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. Its going forth is from the end of the Heaven, and its circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The sun has its place, and keeps it, so let us keep ours. The sun is glorious in its goings forth—“as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber”—glad himself, and making all things glad in his gladness—the whole world rejoices at the sight of the face of the sun. The sun is strong to go through its appointed orbit and fulfill its ordained course. So may it be with us—may we not only have the gladness of our conversion when we are “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber”—but may we have strength and Grace to run the race set before us from the start to the finish. The sun makes its influence felt wherever it goes—“there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” So also may it be with us—may our influence be felt wherever we go! The sun is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, but it is also a type of what every Christian should be, for “the path of the just is as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” And there should be nothing hid from the fervent heat of our Christian character. We ought to serve God so that our influence should be felt everywhere. May God give us more of His Light and His heat that we may shine and burn to His Glory!

7-9. The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. Six sentences, according to the parallels of Hebrew poetry, all in praise of God’s Word! Let us always regard this holy Book as the Word of Jehovah! Let us never look upon the Bible as being on a level with other books. The Word of the Lord is our ultimate Court of Appeal—we accept its teaching as Infallible, we obey its commands, we desire to reflect its purity. “The Law of the Lord is perfect.” Nothing may be taken from it and nothing added to it, for it is perfect as it is. It is without admixture of error and without adulteration of falsehood. And it proves its supernatural power by converting men from the error of their ways. What other book can convert the soul of man except so far as it contains Biblical truth?

“The commandment of the Lord is pure.” There is no other code of morals so pure as that revealed in the Bible. The Gospel reflects glory on all the perfections of God and, therefore, it makes wise the simple. Poor simple-hearted folk, conscious of their own ignorance, come to this Book and not only find wisdom in it, but are themselves made wise by it. It is also, “sure,” as well as, “pure.” There is no question about its teaching— it is certainly true. If we learn only what is sure, we may be sure that we shall not have to unlearn it. “The statutes of the Lord are right,” and they will set us right if we obey them. They will also rejoice our heart, for unrighteousness brings sorrow, sooner or later—but rightness in the end brings joy.

“The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” There is a close connection between the eyes and the heart. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Sin in the heart puts dust in the eyes—we cannot see right unless we feel right. “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.” When you come to know God and the power of true religion in the form of holy, child-like fear, you never lose it—it is yours forever! Time cannot destroy it, eternity will but develop it. “The judgments of the Lord are true.” There is no alloy of falsehood here. Whatever destructive criticism may be brought to bear upon it, no part of sacred Scripture will ever be destroyed—“The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

10. More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold. Or, the very best gold. No riches can so enrich the mind and heart as the Word of God does. A man may have tons of gold and yet be utterly miserable, but he who is pure in heart, he who has God’s Word and the love of it in his heart, is truly rich, however poor he may be in temporal things.

10. Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. As I read those six poetic lines in praise of the Word of God, I could not help thinking how the bees build their honeycombs in hexagons of six-sided combs, all full of honey. Such is this portion of the Word of God with its hexagons of commendation, every part of which is full of sweetness to the true Believer.

11, 12. Moreover by them Your servant is warned: and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors. While David is speaking of the Book that has no errors in it, he is reminded of his own errors—and they strike him as being so many that he cannot understand them. Every sin is really an error, a mistake, a blunder, as well as something a great deal worse. It is never a wise thing to do wrong. At the end of a book, we sometimes find that the printers insert a list of, “errata”— errors made in the printing of the volume. Ah, me, we shall need to have a long list of “errata” at the end of the volume of our lives! How many mistakes we have made! Augustine, in his “Confessions,” amended what he had written amiss in his previous books. The best of men need to continually confess their errors, but God’s Book has no error in it from beginning to end!

12. Cleanse me from secret faults. “Cleanse me from the faults which I cannot see and which no mortal man has ever seen. You, Lord, see them. Be pleased, therefore, to cleanse me from them.” This view of the Omniscience of God is very comforting to the Believer because he perceives that even if he cannot see his sin, so as to acknowledge it and confess it, yet God can see it so as to forgive it and cleanse it!

13. Keep back Your servant, also, from presumptuous sins. If we indulge in secret sins, we may gradually slide down an inclined plane until we come to presumptuous sins—sins committed willfully, sins known to be sins, daring, God-defying sins! Lord, keep me back from such sins as these! If others urge me to advance in this wrong direction, O Lord, keep me back! “Keep back Your servant, also, from presumptuous sins.”

13. Let them not have dominion over me. For, when a man once sins presumptuously, the tendency is for him to become a slave to that sin. It gets dominion over him. The worst slave owner in the world is sin and presumptuous sin is a tyrant with many a cruel whip in its hand.

13. Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. “That greatest transgression of all, that sin against the Holy Spirit which shall never be forgiven. If I am kept from presumptuous sin, I shall never fall into that fatal pit.”

14. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer. David does not hope to be accepted till he has, first of all, been pardoned. But when the Lord has forgiven him and sanctified him, then he comes with both mouth and heart to serve his God and his prayer is that he may be acceptable in the sight of God, to whom he owes the strength to worship and through whom he hopes to be accepted because he has a Redeemer. “O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.” May each one of us be thus acceptable in the sight of God, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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SECRET SINS  
NO. 116

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 8, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“Cleanse You me from secret faults.”  
Psalm 19:12.**

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS arises partly from pride but mainly from ignorance of God’s Law. It is because men know little or nothing concerning the terrible character of the Divine Law that they foolishly imagine themselves to be righteous. They are not aware of the deep spirituality and the stern severity of the Law or they would have other and wiser notions. Once let them know how strictly the Law deals with the thoughts, how it brings itself to bear upon every emotion of the inner man—and there is not one creature beneath God’s Heaven who would dare to think himself self-righteous in God’s sight in virtue of his own deeds and thoughts! Only let the Law of God be truly revealed to a man, let him know how strict the Law is and how infinitely just—and his selfrighteousness will shrivel into nothing! It will become a filthy rag in his sight—whereas before he thought it to be a goodly garment!

Now, David, having seen God’s Law and having praised it in this Psalm, which I have read in your hearing, is brought by reflecting on its excellency, to utter this thought, “Who can understand his errors?” and then to offer this prayer, “Cleanse You me from secret faults.”

In the Lateran Council of the Church of Rome, a decree was passed that every true Believer must confess his sins, all of them, once each year to a priest, and they affixed to it this declaration—that there is no hope of pardon but in complying with that decree. What can equal the absurdity of such a decree as that? Do they suppose that they can tell their sins as easily as they can count their fingers? Why, if we could receive pardon for all our sins by telling every sin we have committed in one hour, there is not one of us who would be able to enter Heaven! Besides the sins that are known to us and that we may be able to confess, there are a vast mass of sins which are as truly sins as those which we observe but which are secret and come not beneath our eyes! Oh if we had eyes like those of God, we would think very differently of ourselves. The sins that we see and confess are but like the farmer’s small samples which he brings to market when he has left his granary full at home. We have but a very few sins which we can observe and detect, compared with those which are hidden to ourselves and unseen by our fellow creatures! I doubt not it is true of all of us who are here that in every hour of our existence in which we are active, we commit tens of thousands of sins for which conscience has never reproved us because we have never seen them to be wrong, seeing we have not studied God’s Laws as we ought to have done! Now, be it known to us all that sin is sin, whether we see it or not—that a sin secret to us is a sin as truly as if we knew it to be a sin, though not as great a sin in the sight of God as if it had been committed presumptuously, seeing that it lacks the aggravation of willfulness. Let all of us who know our sins offer this prayer after all our confessions—“Lord, I have confessed as many as I know, but I must add an etcetera after them and say, ‘Cleanse You me from secret faults.’”

That, however, will not be the essence of my sermon this morning. I am going after a certain class of men who have sins not unknown to themselves but secret to their fellow creatures. Every now and then we turn up a fair stone which lies upon the green sward of the professing Church, surrounded with the verdure of apparent goodness and, to our astonishment, we find beneath it all kinds of filthy insects and loathsome reptiles! And in our disgust at such hypocrisy, we are driven to exclaim, “All men are liars! There are none in whom we can put any trust at all!” It is not fair to say so of all, but really, the discoveries which are made of the insincerity of our fellow creatures are enough to make us despise our kind because they can go so far in appearances and yet have so little soundness of heart. To you, Sirs, who sin secretly and yet make a profession—you who break God’s Covenants in the dark and wear a mask of goodness in the light—to you, Sirs, who shut the doors and commit wickedness in secret—to you I shall speak this morning! O may God also be pleased to speak to you and make you pray this prayer—“Cleanse You me from secret faults.”

I shall endeavor to urge upon all pretenders present to give up, to renounce, to detest, to hate, to abhor all their secret sins! And, first, I shall endeavor to show the folly of secret sins. Secondly, the misery of secret sins. Thirdly, the guilt of secret sins. Fourthly, the danger of secret sins. And then I shall try to apply some words by way of remedy—that we may, all of us, be enabled to avoid secret sins.

I. First, then, THE FOLLY OF SECRET SINS.  
Pretender, you are fair to look upon. Your conduct is outwardly upright, amiable, liberal, generous and Christian. But you indulge in some sin which the eyes of man have not yet detected. Perhaps it is private drunkenness. You revile the drunk when he staggers through the street. But you can, yourself, indulge in the same habit in private. It may be some other lust or vice. It is not for me, just now, to mention what it is. But, Pretender, we say unto you, you are a fool to think of harboring a secret sin and you are a fool for this one reason—that your sin is not a secret sin—it is known and shall one day be revealed. Perhaps very soon! Your sin is not a secret. The eyes of God have seen it. You have sinned before His face. You have shut the door and drawn the curtains and kept out the eye of the sun, but God’s eyes pierce through the darkness. The brick walls which surrounded you were as transparent as glass to the eyes of the Almighty! The darkness which did gird you was as bright as the summer’s noon to the eyes of Him who beholds all things. Know you not, O man, that “all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do?” As the priest ran his knife into the entrails of his victim, discovered the heart and liver and what else did lie within, so are you, O man, seen by God! Cut open by the Almighty, you have no secret chamber where you can hide yourself. You have no dark cellar where you can conceal your soul. Dig deep, yes, deep as Hell, but you cannot find earth enough upon the globe to cover your sin! If you should heap the mountains on its grave, those mountains would tell the tale of what was buried in their bowels. If you could cast your sin into the sea, a thousand babbling waves would tell the secret! There is no hiding it from God! Your sin is photographed in high Heaven. The deed, when it was done, was photographed upon the sky and there it shall remain and you shall see yourself, one day, revealed to the gazing eyes of all men, a hypocrite, a pretender, who did sin in fancied secret, observed in all your acts by the all-seeing Jehovah!  
O what fools men are, to think they can do anything in secret! This world is like the glass hives wherein bees sometimes work—we look down upon them and we see all the operations of the little creatures. So God looks down and sees all our eyes are weak. We cannot look through the darkness but His eyes, like orbs of fire, penetrate the blackness and reads the thought of man and sees his acts when he thinks himself most concealed! Oh, it were a thought enough to curb us from all sin, if it were truly applied to us—“You, God, see me!” Stop thief! Drop that which you have taken! God sees you! No eyes of detection on earth have discovered you, but God’s eyes are now looking through the clouds upon you! Swearer! Though none at whom you swore heard your oath, God heard it! It entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabbath. And those who lead a filthy life and yet are respectable among men—your vices are all known—they are written in God’s book. He keeps a diary of all your acts. And what will you think on that Day when a crowd shall be assembled, compared with which this immense multitude is but a drop in a bucket, and God shall read out the story of your secret life and men and angels shall hear it? Certain I am there are none of us who would like to have all our secrets read, especially our secret thoughts. If I should select out of this congregation the most holy man. If I should bring him forward and say, “Now, Sir, I know all your thoughts and am about to tell them,” I am sure he would offer me the largest bribe that he could gather if I would be pleased to conceal at least some of them! “Tell,” he would say, “of my acts—of them I am not ashamed. But do not tell my thoughts and imaginations—of them I must ever stand ashamed before God.” What, then, Sinner, will be your shame when your private lusts, your closet transgressions, your secret crimes shall be heralded from God’s Throne, proclaimed by His own mouth and with a voice louder than a thousand thunders preached in the ears of an assembled world? What will be your terror and confusion, then, when all the deeds you have done shall be proclaimed in the face of the sun, in the ears of all mankind? O renounce the foolish hope of heresy, for your sin is this day recorded and shall one day be advertised upon the walls of Heaven!  
II. In the next place, let us notice THE MISERY OF SECRET SINS.  
Of all sinners, the man who makes a profession of religion and yet lives in iniquity is the most miserable. A downright wicked man who takes a glass in his hand and says, “I am a drunkard, I am not ashamed of it”—shall be unutterably miserable in worlds to come. But brief though it is, he has his hour of pleasure. A man who curses and swears and says, “That is my habit, I am a profane man,” and makes a profession of it, he has, at least, some peace in his soul. But the man who walks with God’s minister, who is united with God’s Church, who comes out before God’s people and unites with them and then lives in sin—what a miserable existence he must have! Why, he has a worse existence than the mouse that is in the parlor, running out, now and then, to pick up the crumbs and then back again to his hole! Such men must run out, now and then, to sin! And, oh, how fearful they are to be discovered! One day, perhaps, their character turns up. With wonderful cunning they manage to conceal and gloss it over, but the next day something else comes and they live in constant fear, telling lie after lie to make the last lie appear truthful—adding deception to deception—in order that they may not be discovered—  
*“Oh, ‘tis a tangled web we weave,  
When once we venture to deceive!”*  
If I must be a wicked man, give me the life of a boisterous sinner who sins before the face of day! If I must sin, let me not act as a hypocrite and a coward! Let me not profess to be God’s and spend my life for the devil! That way of cheating the devil is a thing which every honest sinner will be ashamed of. He will say, “If I serve my master, I will serve him out and out, I will have no sham about it. If I make a profession, I will carry it out but if I do not, if I live in sin, I am not going to gloss it over by cant and hypocrisy.” One thing which has hamstringed the Church and cut her very sinews in two has been this most damnable hypocrisy!  
Oh, in how many places have we seen men whom you might praise to the very skies if you could believe their words—but whom you might cast into the nethermost pit of Hell if you could see their secret actions? God forgive any of you who are so acting! I had almost said I can scarcely forgive you. I can forgive the man who riots openly and makes no profession of being better. But the man who fawns and cants and pretends and prays and then lives in sin—that man I hate—I cannot stand him! I abhor him from my very soul! If he will turn from his ways, I will love him, but in his hypocrisy he is to me the most loathsome of all creatures! ‘Tis said the toad wears a jewel in her head, but the hypocrite has none but bears filthiness about him—while he pretends to be in love with righteousness! A mere profession, my Hearers, is but painted pageantry to go to Hell in! It is like the plumes upon the hearse and the trappings upon the black horses which drag men to their graves—the funeral array of dead souls! Take heed above everything of a waxen profession that will not stand the sun! Take care of all that needs to have two faces to carry it out. Be one thing, or else the other. If you make up your mind to serve Satan, do not pretend to serve God. And if you serve God, serve Him with all your heart! “No man can serve two masters.” Do not try it, do not endeavor to do it, for no life will be more miserable than that. Above all, beware of committing acts which it will be necessary to conceal. There is a singular poem by Hood, called “The Dream of Eugene Aram”—a most remarkable piece it is, indeed, illustrating the point on which I am now dwelling. Aram has murdered a man and cast his body into the river—“a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme.” The next morning he visited the scene of his guilt—  
*“And sought the black accursed pool,  
With a wild misgiving eye—  
And he saw the dead in the river bed,  
For the faithless stream was dry!”*  
Next he covered the corpse with heaps of leaves, but a mighty wind swept through the forest and left the secret bare before the sun—  
*“Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep!  
On land or sea though it should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.”*  
In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a cave and trod him down with stones but when years had run their weary round, the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death!  
Guilt is a “grim chamberlain,” even when fingers are not bloody red. Secret sins bring fevered eyes and sleepless nights until men burn out their consciences and become in very deed ripe for the pit of Hell! Hypocrisy is a hard game to play, for it is one deceiver against many observers. And for certain it is a miserable trade which will earn, at last, as its certain climax, a tremendous bankruptcy! Ah, you who have sinned without discovery, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” And remember, it may find you out before long. Sin, like murder, will come out—men will even tell tales about themselves in their dreams. God has sometimes made men so pricked in their consciences that they have been obliged to come forward and confess the crime. Secret sinner! If you want the foretaste of damnation upon earth, continue in your secret sin, for no man is more miserable than he who sins secretly and yet tries to preserve a character! Yonder stag, followed by the hungry hounds with open mouths, is far more happy than the man who is followed by his sins. Yonder bird, taken in the fowler’s net and laboring to escape, is far more happy than he who has weaved around himself a web of deception and labors to escape from it day by day by making the toils more thick and the web more strong! Oh, the misery of secret sins! Truly, one may pray, “Cleanse You me from secret faults.”

III. But now, next, the guilt—THE SOLEMN GUILT OF SECRET SIN.  
Now, John, you do not think there is any evil in a thing unless somebody sees it, do you? You feel that it is a very great sin if your master finds you out in robbing the till—but there is no sin if he should not discover it—none at all. And you, Sir, you fancy it to be very great sin to play a trick in trade—in the event you should be discovered and brought before the court! But to play a trick and never be discovered, that is all fair—do not say a word about it, Mr. Spurgeon, it is all business! You must not touch business—tricks that are not discovered, of course you are not to find fault with them. The common measure of sin is the notoriety of it. But I do not believe that! A sin is a sin, whether done in private or before the whole world. It is singular how men will measure guilt. A railway servant puts up a wrong signal—there is an accident. The man is tried and severely reprimanded. The day before, he also put up the wrong signal, but there was no accident and, therefore, no one cursed him for his neglect! But it was just the same, accident or no accident— the accident did not make the guilt—it was the deed which made the guilt, not the notoriety nor even the consequence of it! It was his business to have taken care and he was as guilty the first time as he was the second, for he negligently exposed the lives of men! Do not measure sin by what other people say of it, but measure sin by what God says of it and what your own conscience says of it!  
Now I hold that secret sin, if anything, is the worst sin because secret sin implies that the man who commits it has Atheism in his heart. You will ask how that can be? I reply, he may be a professing Christian, but I shall tell him to his face that he is a practical Atheist if he labors to keep up a respectable profession before man and then secretly transgresses. Why, is he not an Atheist who will say there is a God, yet at the same time thinks more of man than he does of God? Is it not the very essence of Atheism—is it not a denial of the Divinity of the Most High when men lightly esteem Him and think more of the eyes of a creature than of the observation of their Creator? There are some who would not for the life of them say a wicked word in the presence of their minister, but they can do it even knowing God is looking at them. They are Atheists! There are some who would not trick in trade for all the world if they thought they would be discovered. But they can do it while God is with them, that is, they think more of the eyes of man than of the eyes of God. And they think it worse to be condemned by man than to be condemned by God! Call it by what name you will—the proper name of that is practical Atheism. It is dishonoring God. It is dethroning Him—putting Him down below His own creatures! And what is that but to take away His Divinity? Brothers and Sisters, do not, I beseech you, incur the fearful guilt of secret sins! No man can sin a little in secret—it will certainly engender more sin. No man can be a hypocrite and yet be moderate in guilt—he will go from bad to worse and still proceed—until when his guilt shall be published—he shall be found to be the very worst and the most hardened of men! Take heed of the guilt of secret sin!  
Ah, if I could preach as Rowland Hill did, I would make some people look to themselves and tremble! It is said that when he preached, there was not a man in the window, or standing in the crowd, or perched up anywhere but said, “There, he is preaching at me! He is telling me about my secret sins.” And when he proclaimed God’s omniscience, it is said men would almost think they saw God bodily present in the midst of them looking at them! And when he had finished his sermon, they would hear a voice in their ears, “Can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill Heaven and earth? says the Lord.” I would I could do that—hat I could make every man look to himself and find out his secret sin. Come my Hearer, what is it? Bring it forth to the daylight. Perhaps it will die in the light of the sun. These things love to not be discovered. Tell your own conscience, now, what it is. Look it in the face. Confess it before God and may He give you Divine Grace to remove that sin and every other and turn to Him with full purpose of heart! But know this—your guilt is guilt discovered or undiscovered—and if there is any difference it is worse, because it has been secret. God save us from the guilt of secret sin! “Cleanse You me from secret faults.”  
IV. And note, next, THE DANGER OF SECRET SIN. One danger is that a man cannot commit a little sin in secret without being, by-and-by, betrayed into a public sin. You cannot, Sir, though you may think you can, preserve a moderation in sin! If you commit one sin, it is like the melting of the lower glacier upon the Alps. The others must follow in time. As certainly as you heap one stone upon the mound, today, the next day you will cast another, until the heap, reared stone by stone, shall become a very pyramid! See the coral insect at work—you cannot decree where it will stop its work. It will not build its rock just as high as you please. It will not stop until it shall be covered with weeds and until the weeds shall decay. And then there shall be soil upon it and an island shall be created by tiny creatures. Sin cannot be held in with bit and bridle! “But I am going to have a little drink now and then, I am only going to be intoxicated once a week or so. Nobody will see it. I shall be in bed directly.” You will soon be drunk in the streets! “I am only just going to read one lascivious book, I will put it under the sofa when anyone comes in.” You will keep it in your library yet, Sir! “I am only going into that company now and then.” You will go there every day, such is the bewitching character of it. You cannot help it. You may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth! You cannot regulate his jaws—neither can you regulate sin! Once go into it, you cannot tell when you will be destroyed! You may be such a fortunate individual that like Van Amburgh—you may put your head in and out a great many times—but rest assured that one of these days it will be a costly venture!  
Again—you may labor to conceal your vicious habit but it will come out—you cannot help it. You keep your little pet sin at home. But mark this, when the door is ajar, the dog will be out in the street! Wrap him up in your bosom, put over him fold after fold of hypocrisy to keep him secret—the wretch will be singing some day when you are in company! You cannot keep the evil bird still. Your sin will gad abroad. And what is more, you will not mind it some of these days. A man who indulges in sin, privately, by degrees gets his forehead as hard as brass. The first time he sinned, the drops of sweat stood on his brow at the recollection of what he had done. The second time, no hot sweat was on his brow— only an agitation of the muscle. The third time there was the sly, sneaky look but no agitation. The next time he sinned a little further. And by degrees he became the bold blasphemer of his God and exclaims, “Who am I that I should fear Jehovah and who is He that I should serve Him?” Men go from bad to worse! Launch your boat in the current—it must go where the current takes it. Put yourself in the whirlwind—you are but a straw in the wind—you must go which way the wind carries you—you cannot control yourself! The balloon can mount, but it cannot direct its course. It must go whichever way the wind blows. If you once mount into sin there is no stopping! Take heed if you would not become the worst of characters. Take heed of the little sins. They, mounting one upon another, may at last heave you from the summit and destroy your soul forever! There is a great danger in secret sins!  
But I have here some true Christians who indulge in secret sins. They say it is but a little one and, therefore, do they spare it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, I speak to you and I speak to myself, when I say this—let us destroy all our little secret sins! They are called little and if they are, let us remember that it is the foxes, even the little foxes, that spoil our vines, for our vines have tender shoots. Let us take heed of our little sins! A little sin, like a little pebble in the shoe, will make a traveler to Heaven walk very wearily. Little sins, like little thieves, may open the door to greater ones outside. Christians, remember that little sins will spoil your communion with Christ. Little sins, like little stains in silk, may damage the fine texture of Fellowship. Little sins, like little irregularities in the machinery, may spoil the whole fabric of your religion! The one dead fly spoils the whole pot of ointment. That one thistle may seed a continent with noxious weeds. Let us, Brothers and Sisters, kill our sins as often as we can find them! One said—“The heart is full of unclean birds. It is a cage of them.” “Ah but,” said another divine, “you must not make that an apology, for a Christian’s business is to wring their necks.” And so it is! If there are evil things, it is our business to kill them! Christians must not tolerate secret sins. We must not harbor traitors. It is high treason against the King of Heaven! Let us drag them out to light and offer them upon the altar, giving up the dearest of our secret sins at the will and bidding of God. There is a great danger in a little secret sin. Therefore avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and shun it—and God give you Grace to overcome it!  
V. And now I come, in finishing up, to plead with all my might with some of you whom God has pricked in your consciences. I have come to entreat you, if it is possible, even to tears, that you will give up your secret sins. I have one here for whom I bless God. I love him, though I know him not. He is almost persuaded to be a Christian. He halts between two opinions. He intends to serve God—he strives to give up sin, but he finds it a hard struggle and as yet he knows not what shall become of him. I speak to him with all love—my Friend, will you have your sin and go to Hell, or leave your sin and go to Heaven? This is the solemn alternative—to an awakened sinner I put it—may God choose for you, otherwise I tremble as to which you may choose! The pleasures of this life are so intoxicating, the joys of it so ensnaring that did I not believe that God works in us to will and to do, I should despair of you! But I have confidence that God will decide the matter. Let me lay the alternative before you—on the one hand there is an hour’s merriment—a short life of bliss and that a poor, poor bliss. On the other hand there is everlasting life and eternal glory! On the one hand, there is a transient happiness and afterwards overwhelming woe. In this case there is a solid peace and everlasting joy and after it overflowing bliss! I shall not fear to be called an Arminian, when I say, as Elijah did, “Choose this day whom you will serve. If God is God, serve Him. If Baal is God serve him.” But, now, make your choice deliberately. And may God help you to do it! Do not say you will take up with religion, without first counting the cost of it. Remember, there is your lust to be given up and your pleasure to be renounced—can you do it for Christ’s sake? Can you? I know you cannot unless God’s Grace shall assist you in making such a choice! But can you say, “Yes, by the help of God, earth’s gaudy toys, its pomps, pageantries, gewgaws, all these I renounce”?—

*“These can never satisfy,  
Give me Christ or else I die!”*  
Sinner, you will never regret that choice, if God helps you to make it! You will find yourself a happy man here and thrice happy throughout eternity!  
“But,” says one, “Sir, I intend to be religious, but I do not hold with your strictness.” I do not ask you to do so. I hope, however, you will hold with God’s strictness and God’s strictness is ten thousand times greater than mine! You may say that I am Puritanical in my preaching—God will be Puritanical in judging in that Great Day. I may appear severe, but I can never be as severe as God will be! I may draw the harrow with sharp teeth across your conscience, but God shall drag harrows of eternal fire across you one day! I may speak thundering things—God will not speak them but hurl them from His hands! Remember, men may laugh at Hell and say there is none, but they must reject their Bibles before they can believe that lie! Men’s consciences tell them that—  
*“There is a dreadful Hell,  
And everlasting pains!  
Where sinners must with devils dwell,  
In darkness, fire and chains!”*  
Sirs, will you keep your secret sins and have eternal fire for them? Remember it is of no use—they must all be given up—or else you cannot be God’s child. You cannot by any means have both! It cannot be God and the World. It cannot be Christ and the devil. It must be one or the other! Oh, that God would give you Grace to resign all, for what are they worth? They are your deceivers, now, and will be your tormentors forever! Oh, that your eyes were open to see the rottenness, the emptiness and trickery of iniquity! Oh, that God would turn you to Himself! Oh, may God give you Divine Grace to cross the Rubicon of repentance at this very hour! May He give you Grace to say, “Henceforth it is war to the knife with my sins. Not one of them will I willingly keep but down with them, down with them—Canaanite, Hittite, Jebusite, they shall all be driven out!”—  
*“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol be—  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only Thee!”*  
“But oh, Sir, I cannot do it, it would be like pulling my eyes out!” Yes but hear what Christ says—“It were better for you to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire.” “But it would be like cutting my arm off.” Yes and it would be better for you to enter into life crippled or maimed, than to be cast into Hell fire forever. Oh, when the sinner comes before God at last, do you think he will speak as he does now? God will reveal his secret sins—the sinner will not then say, “Lord, I thought my secret sins so sweet, I could not give them up.” I think I see how changed it will be then. “Sir,” you say now, “you are too strict.” Will you say that when the eyes of the Almighty are glowering on you? You say now, “Sir you are too precise.” Will you say that to God Almighty’s face? “Sir, I mean to keep such-and-such a sin.” Can you say it at God’s bar at last? You will not dare to do it then! Ah, when Christ comes a second time there will be a marvelous change in the way men talk. I think I see Him. There He sits upon His Throne. Now, Caiaphas, come and condemn Him now! Judas! Come and kiss Him now! What do you stick at, man? Are you afraid of Him? Now, Barabbas! Go see whether they will prefer you to Christ now! Swearer, now is your time. You have been a bold man—curse Him to His face now! Now, drunkard—stagger up to Him now! Now, infidel—tell Him there is no Christ now—now that the world is lit with lightning and the earth is shaking with thunder till the solid pillars thereof do bow themselves—tell God there is no God now! Now laugh at the Bible! Now scoff at the minister. Why Men, what is the matter with you? Why, can’t you do it? Ah, there you are, you have fled to the hills and to the rocks—“Rocks hide us! Mountains fall on us! Hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne.” Ah, where are your boasts now? Alas! Alas for you in that dread day of wonders! Secret Sinner—what will become of you? Go out of this place unmasked. Go out of here to examine yourself. Go out and bend your knees. Go out to weep and to pray, but God give you Grace to believe! And oh, how sweet and pleasant the thought—that this day sinners have fled to Christ and men have been born-again to Jesus!  
Brothers and Sisters, before I finish, I repeat the words at which so many have quibbled—it is now or never, it is turn or burn! Solemnly in God’s sight I say it. If it is not God’s Truth, I must answer for it in the Great Day of Account. Your consciences tell you it is true. Take it home and mock me if you will. This morning I am clear of your blood—if any seek not God but live in sin, I shall be clear of your blood in that day when the Watchman shall have your souls demanded of Him. Oh, may God grant that you may be cleared in a blessed manner! When I went down these pulpit stairs a Sabbath or two ago, a friend said to me words which have been in my mind ever since—“Sir, there are 9,000 people this day without excuse in the Day of Judgment.” It is true of you this morning. If you are damned, it will be not for want of preaching to you and it shall not be for want of praying for you! God knows that if my heart could break of itself, it would, for your souls! God is my witness how earnestly I long for you in the heart of Christ Jesus. Oh, that He might touch your hearts and bring you to Him! Brothers and Sisters death is a solemn thing. Damnation is a horrible thing. To be out of Christ is a dreadful thing. To be dead in sin is a terrible thing. May God lead you to view these things as they are and save you, for His mercy’s sake! “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”—  
*“Lord, search my soul, try every thought!  
Though my own heart accuse me not  
Of walking in a false disguise,  
I beg the trial of Your eyes,  
Does secret mischief lurk within?  
Do I indulge some unknown sin?  
O turn my feet whenever I stray,  
And lead me in Your perfect way!”*

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #299 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

SIN IMMEASURABLE  
NO. 299

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 12, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“Who can understand his errors?”  
Psalm 19:12.**

WHAT we know is as nothing when compared with what we know not. The sea of wisdom has cast up a shell or two upon our shore, but its vast depths have never known the footstep of the searcher. Even in natural things we know but the surface of matters. He that has traveled the wide world over and has descended into its deepest mines, must yet be aware that he has viewed but a part of the mere crust of this world. That as for its vast center, its mysterious fires and molten secrets, the mind of man has not as yet conceived them. If you will turn your eyes above, the astronomer will tell you that the undiscovered stars, that the vast mass of worlds which form the milky way and the abundant masses of nebulae— that those vast clusters of unknown worlds, as infinitely exceed the little that we can explore, as a mountain exceeds a grain of sand.

All the knowledge which the wisest men can possibly attain in a whole lifetime is no more than what the child may take up from the sea with his tiny cup, compared with the boundless waters which fill their channels to the brim. Why, when we are at the wisest, we have but come to the threshold of knowledge—we have taken but one step in that race of discovery which we may have to pursue throughout all eternity. This is equally the case with regard to things of the heart and the spiritual things which concerns this little world called man. We know nothing but the surface of things.

Whether I talk to you of God, of His attributes, of Christ, of His atonement, or of ourselves and our sin, I must confess that as yet we know nothing but the exterior. That we cannot comprehend the length, the breadth, the height of any one of these matters.

The subject of this morning—our own sin and the error of our own hearts, is one which we sometimes think we know, but of which we may always be quite sure that we have only began to learn. And that when we have learned the most we shall ever know on earth, the question will still be pertinent, “Who can understand his errors?” Now, this morning I propose first of all, very briefly indeed, to explain the question. Then at greater length to impress it upon our hearts. And lastly we will learn the

lessons which it would teach us.

I. First, then, let me EXPLAIN THE QUESTION.—“Who can understand his errors?”  
We all acknowledge that we have errors. Surely we are not so proud as to imagine ourselves to be perfect. If we pretend to perfection we are utterly ignorant, for every profession of human perfection arises from perfect ignorance. Any notion that we are free from sin should at once teach us that we abound in it. To vindicate my boast of perfection, I must deny the Word of God, forget the Law and exalt myself above the testimony of truth. Therefore, I say, we are willing to confess that we have many errors, yet who among us can understand them? Who knows precisely how far a thing may be an error which we imagine to be a virtue? Who among us can define how much of iniquity is mingled with our uprightness—how much of unrighteousness with our righteousness? Who is able to detect the component parts of every action, so as to see the proportion of motive which would constitute it right or wrong?  
He were indeed a crafty man who should be able to unmask an action and divide it into essential motives which are its component parts. Where we think we are right, who knows but what we may be wrong? Where even with the strictest scrutiny we have arrived at the conclusion that we have done a good thing, who among us is quite sure that he has not been mistaken? May not the apparent good be so marred with internal motive as to become a real evil?

Who again can understand his errors, so as always to detect a fault when it has been committed? The shades of evil are perceptible to God, but not always perceptible to us. Our eye has been so blinded and its vision so ruined by the Fall, the absolute black of sin we can detect, but the shades of its darkness we are unable to discern. And yet the slightest shadow of sin is perceptible to God and that very shade divides us from the Perfect One and causes us to be guilty of sin. Who among us has that keen method of judging himself, so that he shall be able to discover the first trace of evil? “Who can understand his errors?”  
Surely no man will claim a wisdom so profound as this. But to come to more common matters by which perhaps we may the more understand our text. Who can understand the number of his errors? The mightiest mind could not count the sins of a single day. As the multitude of sparks from a furnace, so innumerable are the iniquities of one day. We might sooner count the grains of sand on the seashore, than the iniquities of one man’s life. A life most purged and pure is still as full of sin as the sea is full of salt. And who is he that can weigh the salt of the sea, or can detect it as it mingles with every fluid particle? But if he could do this, he could not tell how vast an amount of evil saturates our entire life and how innumerable are those deeds and thoughts and words of disobedience which have cast us out from the presence of God and caused Him to abhor the creatures which His own hands have made.  
Again—even if we could tell the number of human sins, who, in the next place, could estimate their guilt? Before God’s mind the guilt of one sin and such an one as we foolishly call a little one—the guilt of one sin merits His eternal displeasure. Until that one iniquity is washed out with blood, God cannot accept the soul and take it to His heart as His own offspring. Though He has made man and is infinitely benevolent, yet His sense of justice is so strong, stern and inflexible, that from His presence He must drive out His dearest child if one single sin should remain unforgiven. Who, then, among us can tell the guilt of guilt, the heinousness of that ungrateful rebellion which man has commenced and carried on against his wise and gracious Creator?  
Sin, like Hell, is a bottomless pit! Oh, Brethren, there never lived a man yet who really knew how guilty he was. If such a being could be fully conscious of all his own guilt, he would carry Hell in his heart. No, I often think that scarcely can the damned in perdition know all the guilt of their iniquity, or else even their furnace might be heated seven times hotter and Tophet’s streams must be enlarged to an immeasurable depth. The Hell which is contained in a single evil thought is unutterable and unimaginable. God only knows the blackness, the horror of darkness, which is condensed into the thought of evil.  
And then again, I think our text would convey to us this idea. Who can understand the peculiar aggravation of his own transgression? Now, answering the question for myself, I feel that as a minister of Christ I cannot understand my errors. Placed where multitudes listen to the Word from my lips, my responsibilities are so tremendous that the moment I think of them, a mountain presses upon my soul. There have been times when I have wished to imitate Jonah and take ship and flee away from the work which God has thrust upon me. For I am conscious that I have not served Him as I ought. When I have preached most earnestly, I go to my chamber and repent that I have preached in so heartless a manner.  
When I have wept over your souls and when I have agonized in prayer, I have yet been conscious that I have not wrestled with God as I ought to have wrestled and that I have not felt for your souls as I ought to feel. The errors which a man may commit in the ministry are incalculable. There is no Hell methinks that shall be hot enough for the man who is unfaithful here. There can be no curse too horrible to be hurled upon the head of that man who leads others astray when he ought to guide them in the path of peace, or who deals with sacred things as if they were matters of no weight and but of slight importance.  
I bring here any minister of Christ that lives and if he is a man really filled with the Holy Spirit, he will tell you that when he is bowed down with the solemnity of his office, he would give up the work if he dare. That if it were not for something beyond, mysterious impulses that drive him forward, he would take his hand from the plow and leave the field of battle. Lord have mercy upon Your ministers, for, beyond all other men, we need mercy.  
And now I single out any other member of my congregation and whatever is your position in life, whatever your education, or the peculiar Providences through which you have passed, I will insist upon it that there is something special about your case which makes your sin such sin that you cannot understand how vile it is. Perhaps you have had a pious mother who wept over you in your childhood and dedicated you to God when you were in your cradle. Your sin is doubly sin. There is about it a scarlet hue which is not to be discovered in an ordinary criminal.  
You have been directed from your youth up in the way of righteousness and if you have gone astray, every step you have taken has been not a step to Hell but a stride there. You do not sin so cheaply as others. Other men’s scores run up fast. But where there are pence put down for other sinners there are pounds put down for you—because you know your duty but you do it not. He that breaks through a mother’s bosom to Hell goes to its lowest depths. There is in Hell a degree of torture and the deepest should surely be reserved for the man who leaps over a mother’s prayers into perdition.  
Or you may never have this to account for. But you may have an equal aggravation. You have been at sea, Sir. Many times you have been in danger of being shipwrecked. You have had miraculous escapes. Now everyone of these shipwrecks has been a warning to you. God has brought you to the gates of death and you have promised that if He would but save your wretched soul that you would lead a fresh life—that you would begin to serve your Maker. You have lied to your God. Your sins before you uttered that vow were evil enough. But now you break not only the Law but your own covenant which you voluntarily made with God in the home of sickness.  
You have, some of you perhaps, been thrown from a horse, or have been attacked by fever, or in other ways have been brought to the very gates of the grave. What solemnity is attached to your life now! He that rode in the charge of Balaclava and yet came back alive—saved alive where hundreds die—should from that time consider himself to be a God’s man, saved by a singular Providence for singular ends. But you, too, have had your escapes, if not quite so wonderful, yet certainly quite as special instances of God’s goodness. And now, every error you commit becomes unutterably wicked and of you I may say, “Who can understand his errors?”  
But I might exhaust the congregation by bringing up one by one. Here comes the father. Sir, your sins will be imitated by your children. You cannot, therefore, understand your errors, because they are sins against your own offspring—sins against the children that have sprung from your own loins. Here is the magistrate. Sir, your sins are of a peculiar dye, because, standing in your position, your character is watched and looked up to and whatever you do becomes the excuse of other men.  
I bring up another man who holds no office in the State whatever and who perhaps is little known among men. But, Sir, you have received special grace from God, you have had rich enjoyment of the light of your Savior’s countenance. You have been poor, but He has made you rich—rich in faith. Now when you rebel against Him, the sins of God’s favorites are sins, indeed. Iniquities committed by the people of God become as huge as high Olympus and reach the very stars. Who among us, then, can understand his errors—their special aggravations, their number and their guilt? Lord, search us and know our ways!  
II. I have thus tried briefly to explain my text. Now I come to THE IMPRESSING OF IT ON THE HEART, as God the Holy Spirit shall help me. Before a man could understand his errors there are several mysteries which he must know. But each one of these mysteries, methinks, is beyond his knowledge and consequently the understanding of the whole depth of the guilt of his sin must be quite beyond human power.  
Now the first mystery that man must understand is the Fall. Until I know how much all my powers are debased and depraved—how thoroughly my will is perverted and my judgment turned from its right channel—How really and essentially vicious my nature has become—it cannot be possible for me to know the whole extent of my guilt. Here is a piece of iron laid upon the anvil. The hammers are plied upon it lustily. A thousand sparks are scattered on every side. Suppose it possible to count each spark as it falls from the anvil. Yet who could guess the number of the unborn sparks that still lie latent and hidden in the mass of iron?  
Now, Brethren, your sinful nature may be compared to that heated bar of iron. Temptations are the hammers. Your sins the sparks. If you could count them (which you cannot do) yet who could tell the multitude of unborn iniquities—eggs of sin that lie slumbering in your souls? Yet must you know this before you know the whole sinfulness of your nature. Our open sins are like the farmer’s little sample which he brings to market. There are granaries full at home. The iniquities that we see are like the weeds upon the surface soil. But I have been told, and indeed have seen the truth of it, that if you dig six feet into the earth and turn up fresh soil, there will be found in that soil six feet deep, the seeds of the weeds indigenous to the land.

And so we are not to think merely of the sins that grow on the surface, but if we could turn our heart up to its core and center, we should find it as fully permeated with sin as every piece of putridity is with worms and rottenness. The fact is that man is a reeking mass of corruption. His whole soul is by nature so debased and so depraved, that no description which can be given of him even by inspired tongues can fully tell how base and vile a thing he is. An ancient writer said once of the iniquity within that it was like the stores of water which are hidden in the depths of the earth—God once broke up the fountains of the great deep and then they covered the mountains twenty cubits upward.  
If God should even withdraw His restraining grace and break up in our hearts the whole fountains of the great depths of our iniquity, it would be a flood so wondrous that it would cover the highest tops of our hopes and the whole worm within us would be drowned in dread despair. Not a living thing could be found in this sea of evil. It would cover all and swallow up the whole of our manhood. Ah, says an old Proverb, “If man could wear his sins on his forehead, he would pull his hat over his eyes.” That old Roman who said he would like to have a window into his heart that every man could see within it, did not know himself, for if he had had such a window he would soon have begged to have a pair of shutters and he would have kept them shut up, I am sure. For could he ever have seen his own heart, he would have been driven raving mad.  
God, therefore, spares all eyes but His own that desperate sight—a naked human heart. Great God, here would we pause and cry, “Behold, I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. You desire truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”  
A second thing which it will be needful for us to understand before we can comprehend our errors is God’s Law. If I just describe the law for a moment, you will very readily see that you can never hope by any means fully to understand it. The Law of God, as we read it in the Ten great Commandments, seems very simple, very easy. When we come, however, to put even its naked precepts into practice, we find that it is quite impossible for us to keep them fully.  
Our amazement, however, increases, when we find that the Law does not mean merely what it says, but that it has a spiritual meaning, a hidden depth of matter which at first sight we do not discover. For instance, the commandment, “You shall not commit adultery,” means more than the mere act—refers to fornication and uncleanness of any shape, both in act and word and thought. No, to use our Savior’s own exposition of it, “He that looks upon a woman to lust after her, commits adultery already with her in his heart.” So with every commandment. The bare letter is nothing compared with the whole stupendous meaning and severe strictness of the rule.  
The commandments, if I may so speak, are like the stars. When seen with the naked eye, they appear to be brilliant points. If we could draw near to them, we should see them to be infinite worlds, greater than even our sun, stupendous though it is. So is it with the Law of God. It seems to be but a luminous point, because we see it at a distance—but when we come nearer where Christ stood and estimate the lair as He saw it-then we find it is vast, immeasurable. “The commandment is exceeding broad.” Think then for a moment of the spirituality of the Law, its extent and strictness. The Law of Moses condemns for offense, without hope of pardon, and sin, like a millstone, is bound around the sinner’s neck and he is cast into the depths.  
But much more—the Law deals with sins of thought—the imagination of evil is sin. The transit of sin across the heart leaves the stain of impurity behind it. This Law, too, extends to every act—tracks us to our bedchamber, goes with us to our house of prayer and if it discovers so much as the least sign of wavering from the strict path of integrity, it condemns us. When we think of the Law of God we may well be overwhelmed with horror and sit down and say, “God be merciful to me, for to keep this Law is utterly beyond power. Even to know the fullness of its meaning is not within finite capacity. Therefore great God cleanse us from our secret faults—save us by Your Grace, for by the Law we never can be saved.”  
Nor yet, even if you should know these two things, should you be able to answer this question. For, to comprehend our own errors we must be able to understand the perfection of God. To get a full idea of how black sin is you must know how bright God is. We see things by contrast. You will at one time have pointed out to you a color which appears perfectly white. Yet it is possible for something to be whiter still. And when you think you have arrived at the very perfection of whiteness, you discover that there is still a shade and that something may be found that is blanched to a higher state of purity.  
When we put ourselves in comparison with the Apostles, we discover that we are not what we should be. But if we could bring ourselves side by side with the purity of God—O what spots! What defilements should we find on our surface! The Immaculate God stands before us as the bright background to set out the blackness of our iniquitous souls. Before you can know your own defilement your eyes must look into the unutterable glory of the Divine Character. Him before whom the heavens are not pure—who charges the angels with folly—you must know Him before you can know yourself. Hope not, then, that you shall ever attain to a perfect knowledge of the depths of yours own sin.  
Again—he that would understand his errors in all their heinousness must know the mystery of Hell. We must walk that burning marl, stand in the midst of the blazing flame—no, feel it. We must feel the venom of destruction as it makes the blood boil in each vein. We must find our nerves converted into fiery roads, along which the hot feet of pain shall travel, hurrying with lightning pace. We must know the extent of eternity and then the unutterable agony of that eternal wrath of God which abides on the souls of the lost, before we can know the awful character of sin.  
You may best measure the sin by the punishment. Depend upon it, God will not put His creatures to one pain more than justice absolutely demands. There is no such thing as sovereign torture or sovereign Hell. God does not stretch His creature on the rack like a tyrant. He will give him but what he deserves and, perhaps, even when God’s wrath is fiercest against sin, He does not punish the sinner so much as his sin might warrant, but only as much as it demands. At any rate, there will not be a grain more of wormwood in the cup of the lost than naked justice absolutely requires.  
Then, O my God! If Your creatures are to be cast into a lake that burns with fire and brimstone—if into a pit that is bottomless, lost souls must be driven—then what a hideous thing sin must be! I cannot understand that torture, therefore I cannot understand the guilt that deserves it. Yet am I conscious that my guilt deserves it, or else God would not have threatened me with it, for He is just and I am unjust. He is holy and righteous and good and He would not punish me more for my sins than my sins absolutely required.  
Yet once more—a last endeavor to impress this question of my text upon our hearts. George Herbert says very sweetly—“He that would know sin let him repair to Olivet and he shall see a man so wrung with pain that all His head, His hair, His garments were bloody. Sin was that press and vice which forced pain to hunt its cruel food through every vein.” You must see Christ, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood. You must have a vision of Him with the spittle running down His cheeks, with His back torn by the accursed whip. You must see Him going on His dolorous journey through Jerusalem. You must behold Him fainting under the weight of the Cross. You must see Him as the nails are driven through His hands and through His feet.  
Your tearful eye must watch the throes of the grim agonies of death. You must drink of the bitterness of wormwood mingled with the gall. You must stand in the thick darkness with your own soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death. You must cry yourself that awful earth-startling cry of “Lama Sabachthani.” You, too, must, as He did, feel all that weighs of God’s almighty wrath. You must be ground between the upper and nether millstones of wrath and vengeance. You must drink of the cup to its last dregs and like Jesus cry—“It is finished.” Or else you can never know all your errors and understand the guilt of your sin.  
But this is clearly impossible and undesirable. Who wishes to suffer as the Savior suffered, all the horrors which He endured? He, blessed be His name, has suffered for us. The cup is emptied now. The Cross stands up no longer for us to die thereon. Quenched is the flame of Hell forever for the true Believer. No more is God angry with His people, for He has put away sin through the sacrifice of Himself. Yet I say it again, before we could know sin we must know the whole of that awful wrath of God which Jesus Christ endured. Who, then, can understand his errors?  
III. I hope to have your patient attention but a few moments longer while I make THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION, by touching upon the lessons which are drawn from such a subject as this.  
The first lesson. Behold the folly of all hope of salvation by our own righteousness. Come here, you that trust in yourselves. Look to Sinai, altogether in a smoke and tremble and despair. You say that you have good works. Alas, your good works are evil, but have you no evil ones? Do you deny that you have ever sinned? Ah, my Hearer, are you so besotted as to declare that your thoughts have all been chaste, your desires all heavenly and yours actions all pure?

Oh, Man, if all this were true, if you had no sins of commission, yet, what about your sins of omission? Have you done all that God and that your brother could require of you? Oh these sins of omission! The hungry that you have not fed, the naked that you have not clothed, the sick ones and those that are in prison that you have not visited—remember it was for sins like these that the goats were found at the left hand at last. Not for what they did do, but for what they did not do—the things they left undone, these men were put into the Lake of Fire.  
Oh, my Hearer, have done with your boasting. Pull out those plumes from your helmet you rebellious one and come with your glory dragging in the mire. And with your bright garment stained, confess that you have no righteousness of your own—that you are all unclean and full of sin.  
If but this one practical lesson were learned, it were sufficient to repay this morning’s gathering and a blessing would be conveyed to every spirit that had learned it. But now we come to another—how vain are all hopes of salvation by our feelings. We have a new legalism to fight with in our Christian Churches. There are men and women who think they must not believe on Christ till they feel their sins up to a most agonizing point. They think they must feel a certain degree of sorrow, a high degree of sense of need before they may come to Christ at all. Ah, Soul, if you are never saved till you know all your guilt—you will never be saved—for you can never know it. I have shown you the utter impossibility of your ever being able to discover the whole heights and depths of yours own lost state.  
Man, don’t try to be saved by your feelings. Come and take Christ just as He is and come to Him just as you are. “But, Sir, may I come? I am not invited to come.” Yes you are, “Whosoever will, let him come.” Don’t believe that the invitations of the Gospel are given only to characters. They are, some of them, unlimited invitations. It is the duty of every man to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is every man’s solemn duty to trust Christ—not because of anything that man is—or is not, but because he is commanded to do it. “This is the command of God, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.”—  
*“O, believe the promise true,  
God to you His Son has given.”*  
Trust now in His precious blood, and you are saved and you shall see His face in Heaven. Despair of being saved by feeling, since perfect feelings are impossible and a perfect knowledge of our own guilt is quite beyond our reach. Come, then to Christ, hard-hearted as you are and take Him to be the Savior of your hard heart. Come, poor stony conscience, poor icy soul, come as you are. He will warm you, He will melt you—  
*“True belief and true repentance,  
Every grace that brings us near;  
Without money,  
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”*  
But again—another sweet inference—and surely this might well be the last—what Grace is this which pardons sin—sin so great that the most enlarged capacity cannot comprehend its heinousness? Oh, I know my sins reach from the east even to the west—that aiming at the eternal skies they rise like pointed mountains towards Heaven. But then, blessed be the name of God, the blood of Christ is wider than my sin. That shoreless flood of Jesus’ merit is deeper than the heights of my iniquities. My sin may be great, but his merit is greater still. I cannot conceive my own guilt, much less express it—but the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.  
Infinite guilt, but infinite pardon. Boundless iniquities, but boundless merits to cover all. What if your sins were greater than Heaven’s breadth? Christ is greater than Heaven. The Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. If your sins were deeper than the bottomless Hell, yet Christ’s atonement is deeper still, for He descended deeper than ever man himself as yet has dived—even damned men in all the horror of their agony, for Christ went to the end of punishment and deeper your sins can never plunge. Oh, boundless love, that covers all my faults!  
My poor Hearer, believe on Christ now. God help you to believe. May the Spirit now enable you to trust in Jesus. You can not save yourself. All hopes of self-salvation are delusive. Now give up, have done with self and take Christ. Just as you are, drop into His arms. He will take you. He will save you. He died to do it and He lives to accomplish it. He will not lose the spirit that casts itself into His hands and makes Him his All in All.  
I think I must not detain you longer. The subject is one which commands a far larger mind than mine and better words than I can gather now. But if it has struck home I am thankful to God. Let me echo again and again the one sentiment I wish for you all to receive, which is just this—we are so vile that our vileness is beyond our own comprehension— but nevertheless, the blood of Christ has infinite efficacy. And he that believes in the Lord Jesus is saved, be his sins ever so many. But he that believes not must be lost, be his sins ever so few.  
God bless you all for Christ’s sake.

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PRESUMPTUOUS SINS  
NO. 135

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 7, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.” Psalm 19:13.**

ALL sins are great sins but yet some sins are greater than others. Every sin has in it the very venom of rebellion and is full of the essential marrow of traitorous rejection of God. But there are some sins which have in them a greater development of the essential mischief of rebellion and which wear upon their faces more of the brazen pride which defies the Most High. It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. The fact is, that while all transgression is a greatly grievous sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness and a more double scarlet dyed hue of criminality than others. Now the presumptuous sins of our text are the chief of all sins—they rank head and foremost in the list of iniquities. It is remarkable that though an atonement was provided under the Jewish Law for every kind of sin, there was this one exception—“But the soul that sins presumptuously shall have no atonement, it shall be cut off from the midst of My people.” Under the Christian dispensation in the Sacrifice of our blessed Lord, there is a great and precious Atonement for presumptuous sins whereby sinners who have sinned in this manner are made clean. Yet without a doubt, presumptuous sinners dying without pardon must expect to receive a double portion of the wrath of God and a more dreadful manifestation of the unutterable anguish of the torment of eternal punishment in the Pit that is dug for the wicked.

I shall this morning, first of all, endeavor to describe presumptuous sins. Secondly, I shall try, if I can, to show by some illustrations why the presumptuous sin is more heinous than any other. And then thirdly, I shall try to press this prayer upon your notice—the prayer, mark you, of the holy man—the prayer of David—“Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.”

I. First, then, WHAT IS A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN? Now I think there must be one of four things in a sin in order to make it presumptuous. It must either be a sin against light and knowledge, or a sin committed with deliberation, or a sin committed with a design of sinning merely for sinning’s sake, or else it must be a sin committed through hardihood, from a man’s rash confidence in his own strength. We will mark these points one by one.

1. A sin that is committed willfully against manifest light and knowledge, is a presumptuous sin. A sin of ignorance is not presumptuous unless that ignorance is also willful, in which case the ignorance is, itself, a presumptuous sin. But when a man sins for lack of knowing better—for lack of knowing the Law, for lack of instruction, reproof, advice and admonition, we say that his sin, so committed, does not partake to any great extent of the nature of a presumptuous sin. But when a man knows better and sins in the very teeth and face of his increased light and knowledge, then his sin deserves to be branded with this ignominious title of a presumptuous sin. Let me just dwell on this thought a moment. Conscience is often an inner light to men whereby they are warned of forbidden acts as being sinful. Then if I sin against conscience, though I have no greater light than conscience affords me, still my sin is presumptuous—because I have presumed to go against that voice of God in my heart—an enlightened conscience. You, young men, were once tempted, (and perhaps it was but yesterday), to commit a certain act. The very moment you were tempted, conscience said, “It is wrong, it is wrong”—it shouted murder in your heart and told you the deed you were about to commit was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Your fellow apprentice committed the same sin without the warning of conscience. In him it was guilt—guilt which needs to be washed away with the Savior’s blood. But it was not such guilt in him as it was in you—because your conscience warned you! Your conscience told you of the danger, warned you of the punishment and yet you dared to go astray against God—and therefore you sinned presumptuously! You have sinned very grievously in having done so. When a man shall trespass on my ground, he shall be a trespasser though he has no warning. But if straight before his face there stands a warning and if he knowingly and willingly trespasses—then he is guilty of a presumptuous trespass and is to be so far punished accordingly. So you, if you had not known better. If your conscience had been less enlightened, you might have committed the deed with far less of the criminality which now attaches to you because you sinned against conscience and, consequently, sinned presumptuously.

But, oh how much greater is the sin when man not only has the light of conscience, but has also the admonition of friends, the advice of those who are wise and esteemed by him! If I have but one check—the check of my enlightened conscience—and I transgress against it, I am presumptuous! But if a mother with tearful eyes warns me of the consequence of my guilt and if a father with steady looks and with affectionate determined earnestness, tells me what will be the fate of my transgression—if friends who are dear to me—counsel me to avoid the way of the wicked and warn me what must be the inevitable result of continuing in it, then I am presumptuous and my act in that very proportion becomes more guilty! I would have been presumptuous for having sinned against the light of Nature, but I am more presumptuous, when added to that, I have the light of affectionate counsel and of kind advice! Therein I bring upon my head a double amount of Divine wrath. And how much more is this the case when the transgressor has been gifted with what is usually called a religious education? In childhood he has been lighted to his bed by the lamps of the sanctuary, the name of Jesus was mingled with the hush of lullaby. The music of the sanctuary woke him like a hymn at morning. He has been rocked on the knees of piety and has sucked the breasts of godliness. He has been tutored and trained in the way he should go—how much more fearful, I say—is the guilt of such a man than that of those who have never had such training but have been left to follow their own wayward lusts and pleasures without the restraint of a holy education and the restraints of an enlightened conscience!

But, my Friends, even this may become worse. A man sins yet more presumptuously when he has had a most special warning from the voice of God against the sin. What do you mean? you ask. Why, I mean this— you saw but yesterday a strong man in your neighborhood brought to the grave by sudden death. It is but a month ago that you heard the bell toll for one whom you once knew and loved, who procrastinated and procrastinated until he perished in procrastination! You have had strange things happen in your very street and the voice of God has been spoken loudly through the lips of Death to you. Yes, and you have had warnings, too, in your own body. You have been sick with fever—you have been brought to the jaws of the grave and you have looked down into the bottomless vault of destruction! It is not long ago since you were given up. All said they might prepare a coffin for you, for your breath could not long be in your body. Then you turned your face to the wall and prayed—you vowed that if God would spare you, you would live a goodly life, that you would repent of your sins—but to your own confusion you are now just what you were! Ah, let me tell you, your guilt is more grievous than that of any other man! You have sinned presumptuously in the very highest sense in which you could have done so! You have sinned against reproofs, but what is still worse, you have sinned against your own solemn oaths and covenants and against the promises that you made to God! He who plays with fire must be condemned as careless, but he who has been burned once and afterwards plays with the destroying element is worse than careless! And he who has been scorched in the flame and has had his locks all hot and crisp with the burning—if he again should rush headlong into fire—I say he is worse than careless, he is worse than presumptuous, he is mad! But I have some such here. They have had warnings so terrible that they should have known better. They have gone into lusts which have brought their bodies into darkness and, perhaps, they have crept up this day to this house and they dare not tell their neighbor who stands by their side what is the loathsomeness that even now breeds upon their frame! And yet they will go back to the same lusts! The fool will go again to the stocks, the sheep will lick the knife that is to slay him. You will go on in your lust and in your sins, despite warnings, despite advice, until you perish in your guilt. How worse than children are grown-up men! The child who goes for a merry slide upon a pond, if he is told that the ice will not hold him, starts back frightened. Or if he daringly creeps upon it, how soon he leaves it if he hears but a crack upon the slender covering of the water! But you men have a conscience which tells you that your sins are vile and that they will be your ruin! You hear the crack of sin, as its thin sheet of pleasure gives way beneath your feet— yes, and some of you have seen your comrades sink in the flood and lost—and yet you go sliding on, worse than children, worse than mad are you, thus presumptuously to play with your own everlasting state! O my God, how terrible is the presumption of some! How fearful is presumption in any! Oh, that we might be enabled to cry, “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.”

2. I said, again, that another characteristic of a presumptuous sin was deliberation. A man, perhaps, may have a passionate spirit and in a moment of hot haste he may utter an angry word of which in a few short minutes he will sincerely repent. A man may have a temper so hot that the least provocation causes him at once to be full of wrath. But he may also have a temperament which has this benefit to balance it—that he very soon learns to forgive and cools in a moment. Now, such a man does not sin presumptuously—when suddenly overcome by anger—though without doubt there is presumption in his sin unless he strives to correct that passion and keep it down! A man, again, who is suddenly tempted and surprised into a sin which is not his habit, but which he commits through the force of some strong temptation, is guilty—but not guilty of presumption—because he was taken unaware in the net and caught in the snare. But there are other men who sin deliberately. There are some who can think of a lust for weeks beforehand and dote upon their darling crime with pleasure. They do, as it were, water the young seedling of lust until it grows to the maturity of desire and then they go and commit the crime! There are some to whom lust is not a passerby but a lodger at home. They receive it, they house it, they feast on it and when they sin, they sin deliberately—walk coolly to their lusts and in cold blood commit the act which another might haply do in hot and furious haste. Now, such a sin has in it a great extent of sinfulness—it is a sin of high presumption! To be carried away as by a whirlwind of passion in a moment is wrong, but to sit down and deliberately resolve upon revenge is cursed and diabolical. To sit down and deliberately fashion schemes of wickedness is heinous and I can find no other word to fitly express it. To deliberate carefully how the crime is to be done and Haman-like to build the gallows and set to work to destroy one’s neighbor—to get the pit dug that the friend may fall into it and be destroyed, to lay snares in secret, to plot wickedness upon one’s bed—this is a high pitch of presumptuous sin. May God forgive any of us, if we have been so far guilty!

Again, when a man continues long in sin and has time to deliberate about it, that is also a proof that it is a presumptuous sin. He that sins once, being overtaken in a fault and then abhors the sin, has not sinned presumptuously. But he who transgresses today, tomorrow and the next day, week after week and year after year until he has piled up a heap of sins that are high as a mountain—such a man, I say, sins presumptuously. In a continued habit of sin there must be a deliberation to sin. There must be at least such a force and strength of mind as could not have come upon any man if his sin were but the hasty effect of sudden passion. Ah, take heed, you that are sod in sin, you that drink it down as the greedy ox drinks down water—you who run to your lust as the rivers run to the sea and you who go to your passions as the sow to her wallowing in the mire—take heed, your crimes are grievous and the hand of God shall soon fall terribly on your heads unless, by Divine Grace, it is granted to you to repent and turn to Him! Fearful must be your doom if God should condemn you for presumptuous sin. Oh, Lord, “keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.”

3. Again—I said that a presumptuous sin must be a matter of design and have been committed with the intention of sin. If at your leisure at home you will turn to that passage in the Book of Numbers where it says there is no pardon for a presumptuous sin under the Jewish dispensation, you will find immediately afterward, a case recorded. A man went out on the Sabbath to gather sticks. He was taken in the act of Sabbathbreaking, and the Law being very stringent under the Jewish dispensation, he was ordered at once to be put to death. Now the reason why he was put to death was not merely because he gathered sticks on the Sabbath, but because the Law had just then been proclaimed, “In it you shall do no manner of work.” This man willfully, in order, as it were, to show that he despised God—to show that he did not care for God— without any necessity, without any hope of advantage—went straight out in the very teeth of the Law to perform not an act which he kept in his own house, which might, perhaps, have been overlooked—but an act which brought shame upon the whole congregation because infidel-like, he dared to brazen it out before God! As much as to say, “I care not for God.” Has God just commanded, “You shall do no manner of work?” Here I am! I do not need sticks today. I do not need to work. Not for the sake of sticks, but with the design of showing that I despise God, I go out this day and gather sticks. “Now,” says one, “surely there are no people in the world who have ever done such a thing as this.” Yes there are and there are such in the Surrey Music Hall this day! They have sinned against God, not merely for the pleasure of it, but because they would show their lack of reverence to God. That young man burned his Bible in the midst of his wicked companions—not because he hated his Bible, for he quivered and looked as pale as the ashes on the hearth when he was doing it. But he did it out of pure bravado, in order to show them, as he thought, that he really was far gone from anything like a profession of religion! That other man is accustomed, sometimes, to stand by the wayside when the people are going to the House of God and he swears at them. Not because he delights in swearing, but because he will show that he is irreligious, that he is ungodly! How many an infidel has done the same—not because he had any pleasure in the thing, itself, but because out of the wickedness of his heart he would spite God! He desired, if it were possible, to let men know that though the sin, itself, was cheap enough, he was determined to do something which would be like spitting in the face of his Maker and despising God who created him! Now, such a sin is a masterpiece of iniquity! There is a pardon for such an one—there is a full pardon to those who are brought to repentance, but few of such men ever receive it. For when they are so far gone as to sin presumptuously just because they will do it—sin merely for the sake of showing their disregard of God and of God’s Law—we say of such, there is pardon for them, but it is wondrous Divine Grace which brings them into such a condition that they are willing to accept it. Oh that God would keep back His servants here from presumptuous sins! And if any of us here have committed them, may He bring us back to the praise of the Glory of His Grace!

4. But one more point and I think I shall have explained these presumptuous sins. A presumptuous sin is also one that is committed through a hardihood of fancied strength of mind. Says one, “Tomorrow I intend to go into such-and-such a society because I believe, though it hurts other people, it does not hurt me.” You turn round and say to some young man, “I could not advise you to frequent the Casino—it would be your ruin.” But you go yourself, Sir? “Yes.” But how do you justify yourself? “Because I have such strength of principle that I know just how far to go and no farther.” You lie, Sir. Against yourself you lie. You lie presumptuously in so doing! You are playing with bombshells that shall burst and destroy you! You are sitting over the mouth of Hell with a fancy that you shall not be burned. You have gone to haunts of vice and come back tainted, very much tainted—but because you are so blind as not to see the taint, you think yourself secure! You are not so. Your sin, in daring to think that you are immune to sin, is a sin of presumption. “No, no,” one says, “I know that I can go just so far in such-and-such a sin and there I can stop.” Presumption, Sir. Nothing but presumption! It would be presumption for any man to climb to the top of the spire of a church and stand upon his head. “Well, but he might come down safely, if he were skilled in it.” Yes, but it is presumptuous! I would no more think of subscribing a farthing to a man’s ascent in a balloon than I would to a poor wretch cutting his own throat! I would no more think of standing and gazing at any man who puts his life in a position of peril than I would of paying a man to blow his brains out! I think such things, if not murders, are murderous. There is suicide in men risking themselves in that way. And if there is suicide in the risk of the body, how much more in the case of a man who puts his own soul in jeopardy just because he thinks he has strength of mind enough to prevent its being ruined and destroyed? Sir, your sin is a sin of presumption! It is a great and grievous one. It is one of the masterpieces of iniquity!

Oh, how many people there are who are sinning presumptuously today! You are sinning presumptuously in being today what you are. You are saying in a little time I will solemnly and seriously think of religion. In a few years, when I am a little more settled in life, I intend to turn over a new leaf and think about the matters of Godliness. Sir, you are presumptuous! You are presuming that you shall live—you are speculating upon a thing which is as frail as the bubble on the breaker! You are staking your everlasting soul on the deadly odds that you shall live for a few years—whereas, the probabilities are that you may be cut down before the sun shall set—and it is possible that before another year shall have passed over your head you may be in the land where repentance is impossible and useless were it possible! Oh, dear Friends, procrastination is a presumptuous sin! The putting off of a thing which should be done today because you hope to live tomorrow, is a presumption! You have no right to do it—you are, in so doing, sinning against God and bringing on your heads the guilt of presumptuous sin. I remember that striking passage in Jonathan Edward’s wonderful sermon which was the means of a great revival, where he says, “Sinner, you are this moment standing over the mouth of Hell upon a single plank and that plank is rotten! You are hanging over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope and the strands of that rope are now creaking.” It is a terrible thing to be in such a position as that and yet to say, “tomorrow,” and to procrastinate. You remind me, some of you, of that story of Dionysus the tyrant, who, wishing to punish one who had displeased him, invited him to a noble feast. Rich were the viands that were spread upon the table and rare the wines of which he was invited to drink. A chair was placed at the head of the table and the guest was seated within it. Horror of horrors! The feast might be rich, but the guest was miserable, dreadful beyond thought! However splendid might be the array of the servants and however rich the dainties, yet he who had been invited sat there in agony. For what reason? Because over his head, immediately over it, there hung a sword, a furbished sword, suspended by a single hair! He had to sit all the time with this sword above him, with nothing but a hair between him and death! You may conceive the poor man’s misery. He could not escape, he must sit where he was. How could he feast? How could he rejoice?

But, oh my unconverted Hearer, you are there this morning—with all your riches and your wealth before you, with the comforts of a home and the joys of a household (or with none of these if you are poor)—you are there this day, in a place from which you cannot escape! The sword of death is above you, prepared to descend. And woe unto you when it shall cleave your soul from your body! Can you yet make mirth and yet procrastinate? If you can, then verily your sin is presumptuous in a high degree. “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.”

II. And now I come to the second part of the subject, with which I shall deal very briefly. I am to try and show you THERE IS GREAT ENORMITY IN A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN.

Let me take any one of the sins—for instance, the sin against light and knowledge. There is greater enormity in such a presumptuous sin than in any other. In this, our happy land, it is barely possible for a man to commit treason. I think it would be rather difficult for him to do it, for we are allowed to say words, here, which would bring our necks beneath the guillotine if they were spoken on the other side of the channel! And we are allowed to do deeds here which would bring us long years of imprisonment if the deed were done in any other land. We, despite all that our American friends may say, are the freest people to speak and think in all the world! Though we have not the freedom of beating our slaves to death or of shooting them if they choose to disobey. Though we have not the freedom of hunting men, or the freedom of sucking another man’s blood out of him to make us rich. Though we have not the freedom of being worse than devils, which slave-catchers and many slave-holders most certainly are—we have liberty greater than that—liberty against the tyrant mob, as well as against the tyrant king! But I suppose it is possible to commit treason here. If two men should commit treason—if one of them should tomorrow wantonly and wickedly raise the standard of revolt—if he should denounce the rightful sovereign of this land in the strongest and most abominable language; if he should seek to entice the loyal subjects of this country from their allegiance and should draw some of them astray to the hurt and injury of the commonwealth—even so, he might have in his rebellious ranks one who joined incautiously. That one, not knowing whereunto the matter might tend, might have come into the midst of the rebels not understanding the intention of their unlawful assembling. He might not even had known of the law which prohibited them from being banded together. I can suppose these two men brought up upon a charge of high treason—they have both, legally, been guilty of it. But I can suppose that the one man who had sinned ignorantly would be acquitted, because there was no malignant intent and I can suppose that the other men, who had willfully, knowingly, maliciously and wickedly raised the standard of revolt, would receive the highest punishment which the Law could demand. And why? Because in the one case it was a sin of presumption and in the other case it was not so. In the one case the man dared to defy the sovereign and defy the law of the land willfully—out of mere presumption! In the other case not so. Now, every man sees that it would be just to make a distinction in the punishment because there is—conscience, itself, tells us—a distinction in the guilt!

Again—some men, I have said, sin deliberately and others do not do so. Now, in order to show that there is a distinction here, let me take a case. Tomorrow the bench of magistrates are sitting. Two men are brought up. They are, each of them, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. It is clearly proved in the one case that the man was hungry and that he snatched the loaf of bread to satisfy his necessities. He is sorry for his deed. he grieves that he has done the act. But most manifestly he had a strong temptation to it. In the other case, the man was rich and he willfully went into the shop merely because he would break the law and show that he was a law-breaker. He said to the policeman outside, “Now, I care neither for you nor the law. I intend to go in there just to see what you can do with me.” I can suppose the magistrate would say to one man, “You are discharged. Take care not to do the same again. Here is something for your present necessities—seek to earn an honest living.” But to the other I can conceive him saying, “You are an infamous wretch! You have committed the same deed as the other, but from very different motives. I give you the longest term of imprisonment which the law allows me and I can only regret that I cannot treat you worse than I have done.” The presumption of the sin made the difference. So when you sin deliberately and knowingly, your sin against Almighty God is a higher and a blacker sin than it would have been if you had sinned ignorantly, or sinned in haste.

Now let us suppose one more case. In the heat of some little dispute someone shall insult you. You shall be insulted by a man of angry temper. You have not provoked him, you gave him no just cause for it. But at the same time he was of a hot and angry disposition. He was somewhat foiled in the debate and he insulted you, calling you by some name which has left a stain upon your character, so far as epithets can do it. I can suppose that you would ask no reparation of him, if by tomorrow you saw that it was just a rash word spoken in haste, of which he repented. But suppose another person should waylay you in the street. Should week after week seek to meet you in the marketplace and should, after a great deal of toil and trouble, at last meet you. And there—in the middle of a number of people—unprovoked, just out of sheer, deliberate malice, come before you and call you a liar! I can suppose that Christian as you are, you might find it necessary to chastise such insolence, not with your hand but with the arm of that equitable law which protects us all from insulting violence. In the other case I can suppose it would be no trouble for you to forgive. You would say, “My dear Fellow, I know we are all hasty, sometimes—there, now, I don’t care at all for it, you did not mean it.” But in this case, where a man has dared and defied you without any provocation whatever, you would say to him, “Sir, you have endeavored to injure me in respectable society. I can forgive you as a Christian, but as a man and a citizen, I shall demand that I am protected against your insolence.”

You see, therefore, in the cases that occur between man and man, how there is an excess of guilt added to a sin by presumption! Oh, you that have sinned presumptuously—and who among us has not done so?—bow your heads in silence, confess your guilt and then open your mouths and cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a presumptuous sinner.”

III. And now I am nearly done—not to weary you by too long a discourse we shall notice THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THIS PRAYER— “Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.”

Will you note that this prayer was the prayer of a saint, the prayer of a holy man of God? Did David need to pray thus? Did the “man after God’s own heart” need to cry, “Keep back Your servant”? Yes, he did. And note the beauty of the prayer. If I might translate it into more metaphorical style, it is like this, “Curb Your servant from presumptuous sin. Keep him back, or he will wander to the edge of the precipice of sin. Hold him in, Lord, he is apt to run away. Curb him. Put the bridle on him. Do not let him do it. Let Your overpowering Grace keep him holy. When he would do evil, then draw him to good, and when his evil propensities would lead him astray, then check him. Check your servant from presumptuous sins!”

What, then? Is it true that the best of men may sin presumptuously? Ah, it is true. It is a solemn thing to find the Apostle Paul warning saints against the most loathsome of sins. He says, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, inordinate affection,” and such like. What? Do saints need warning against such sins as these? Yes, they do. The highest saints may sin the lowest sins unless kept by Divine Grace. You old experienced Christians, even in your experience, may yet trip unless you cry, “Hold me up, Lord, and I shall be safe.” You whose love is fervent, whose faith is constant, whose hopes are bright, say not, “I shall never sin,” but rather cry out, “Lord, lead me not into temptation but when there, leave me not there, for unless You hold me fast, I feel I must, I shall, decline and prove an apostate after all.” There is enough tinder in the heart of the best men in the world to light a fire that shall burn to the lowest Hell unless God should quench the sparks as they fall! There is enough corruption, depravity and wickedness in the heart of the most holy man that is now alive to damn his soul to all eternity—if Free and Sovereign grace does not prevent. O Christian, you have need to pray this prayer! But I think I hear you crying, “Is your servant a dog that I should do this thing?” So said Hazael, when the Prophet told him that he would slay his master. But he went home and took a wet cloth and spread it over his master’s face and killed him—and he did, the next day, the sin which he abhorred the day before! Think it not enough to abhor sin—you may yet fall into it. Say not, “I never can be drunk, for I have such an abhorrence of drunkenness.” You may fall where you are most secure. Say not, “I can never blaspheme God, for I have never done so in my life.” Take care. You may yet swear most profanely. Job might have said, “I will never curse the day of my birth.” But he lived to do it! He was a patient man, he might have said, “I will never murmur, though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.” And yet he lived to wish that the day were darkness wherein he was brought forth. Boast not, then, O Christian, that you stand by faith. “Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.”

But if this needs to be the prayer of the best, how ought it to be the prayer of you and me? If the highest saint must pray it, O mere moralist, you have good need to utter it! And you who have begun to sin, who make no pretensions to piety—how much need is there for you to pray that you may be kept from presumptuously rebelling against God?

Instead, however, of enlarging upon that point, I shall close my few remarks this morning by just addressing myself most affectionately to such of you as are now under a sense of guilt by reason of presumptuous sins. God’s Spirit has found some of you out this morning. I thought when I was describing presumptuous sin that I saw, here and there, an eye that was suffused with tears. I thought I saw here and there a head that was bowed down, as much as to say, “I am guilty there.” I thought there were some hearts that palpitated with confession when I described the guilt of presumption. I hope it was so. If it were, I am glad of it. If I hit your consciences, it was what I meant to do. Not to your ears do I speak but to your hearts! I would not give the snap of my finger to gratify you with mere words of oratory, with a mere flow of language. No, God is my witness, I never sought effect yet, except the effect of hitting your consciences! I would use the words that would be most rough and vulgar in all our language if I could get at your heart better with them than with any other. If any of you feel, then, that you have presumed against God in sinning, let me just bid you look at your sin and weep over the blackness of it. Let me exhort you to go home and bow your heads with sorrow and confess your guilt and weep over it with many tears and sighs. You have greatly sinned and if God should blast you into Perdition right now, He would be just! If now His fiery thunderbolt of vengeance should pierce you through—if the arrow that is now upon the string of the Almighty should find a target in your heart—He would be just. Go home and confess that—confess it with cries and sighs. And then what will you do next? Why, I bid you remember that there was a Man who was God. That Man suffered for presumptuous sin! I would bid you this day, Sinner, if you know your need of a Savior, go up to your chamber, cast yourself upon your face and weep for sin. And when you have done that, turn to the Scriptures and read the story of that Man who suffered and died for sin. See Him in all His unutterable agonies and griefs and woes and say—

*“My soul looks back to see  
The burdens You did bear  
When hanging on the accursed tree, And hopes her guilt was there.”*

Lift up your hand and put it on His head who bled and say— *“My faith would lay its hand  
On that dear head of Yours,  
While like a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin.”*

Sit down at the foot of His Cross and watch Him till your heart is moved, till the tears begin to flow again, until your heart breaks within you. And then you will rise and say—

*“Dissolved by His mercy, I fall to the ground,*

*And weep to the praise of the mercy I’ve found.”*O Sinner, you can never perish if you will cast yourself at the foot of the Cross! If you seek to save yourself, you shall die. If you will come, just as you are—all black, all filthy, all Hell-deserving, all ill-deserving—I am my Master’s hostage—I will be answerable at the Day of Judgment for this matter if He does not save you!

I can preach on this subject now, for I trust I have tried my Master myself. As a youth I sinned, as a child I rebelled, as a young man I wandered into lusts and vanities—my Master made me feel how great a sinner I was and I sought to reform, to mend the matter, but I grew worse. At last I heard it said, “Look unto Me and be you saved all the ends of the earth.” And I looked to Jesus. And oh, my Savior, You have eased my aching conscience, You have given me peace, You have enabled me to say—

*“Now freed from sin I walk at large  
My Savior’s blood’s a full discharge.  
At His dear feet my soul I lay,  
A sinner saved and homage pay.”*

And oh, my heart pants for You! Oh that you who never knew Him could taste His love! Oh that you who have never repented might now receive the Holy Spirit who is able to melt the heart! And oh that you who are penitents would look to Him now! And I repeat that solemn assertion—I am God’s hostage this morning. You may feed me bread and water to my life’s end—yes, and I will bear the blame forever—if any of you seek Christ and Christ rejects you! It must not, it cannot be. “Whoever comes,” He says, “I will in nowise cast out.” “He is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by Him.” May God Almighty bless you and may we meet again in yonder Paradise! And there will we sing more sweetly of redeeming love and dying blood and of Jesus’ power to save—

*“When this poor lisping, stammering tongue, Lies silent in the grave.”*  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1020 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”  
NO. 1020

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 12, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the Heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is**

**nothing hid from the heat thereof.”  
Psalm 19:4, 5, 6.  
“The Sun of Righteousness.”  
Malachi 4:2.**

WE should feel quite justified in applying the language of the 19th Psalm to our Lord Jesus Christ from the simple fact that He is so frequently compared to the sun. And especially in the passage which we have given you as our second text, wherein He is called “the Sun of Righteousness.” But we have a higher justification for such a reading of the passage, for it will be in your memories that in the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul, slightly altering the words of this Psalm, applies them to the Gospel and the preachers thereof. “Have they not heard?” said he, “Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” So that what was here spoken of the sun by David, is referred by Paul to the Gospel, which is the light streaming from Jesus Christ, “the Sun of Righteousness.”

We can never err if we allow the New Testament to interpret the Old— comparing spiritual things with spiritual is a good mental and spiritual exercise for us. And I feel, therefore, that we shall not be guilty of straining the text at all when we take the language of David in relation to the sun and use it in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not your hearts often say, “What shall we do, or what shall we say to render honor unto our Redeemer?” Have you not often felt confounded as to what offering you shall bring to Him? If you had been possessor of all the worlds, you would have laid them at His feet. If the universe had been your heritage, you would cheerfully have resigned it to Him, and felt happy in stripping yourself of everything, that He might be rendered the more glorious by your sacrifice.

Since you have not all this wealth, have you not again and again asked of your soul—  
*“Oh what shall I do,  
My Savior to praise?”*

I would write the best of poems if so I could extol Him, but the faculty is not in me. I would sing the sweetest of songs, and compose the most melting music, if I could, and count art, and wit, and music exalted by being handmaidens to Him. But how shall I adore Him, before whom the best music on earth must be but discord? And how shall I set Him forth, the

very skirts of whose garments are bright with insufferable light? At such times you have looked the whole world through to find metaphors to heap upon Him. You have culled all the fair flowers of Nature, and made them into garlands to cast at His feet. And you have gathered all earth’s gems and precious things to crown His head, but you have been disappointed with the result, and have cried out with our poet—

*“The whole creation can afford  
But some faint shadows of my Lord.  
Nature, to make His beauties known,  
Must mingle colors not her own.”*

At such times, while ransacking land, and sea, and sky for metaphors, you have probably looked upon the sun, and have said—“This great orb, the lord of light and lamp of day, is like my Savior. It is the faint image of His excellent Glory whose countenance shines as the sun in its strength.” You have done well to seize on such a figure. What Milton calls the golden-tressed sun is the most glorious object in creation, and in Jesus the fullness of Glory dwells. The sun is at the same time the most influential of existences, acting upon the whole world, and truly our Lord is, in the deepest sense, “of this great world both eye and soul.” He, “with benignant ray sheds beauty, life, and joyance from above.”

The sun is, moreover, the most abiding of creatures. And therein it is also a type of Him who remains from generation to generation, and is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The king of day is so vast and so bright that the human eye cannot bear to gaze upon him. We delight in his beams, but we should be blinded should we continue to peer into his face. Even yet more brilliant is our Lord, for as God, He is a consuming fire—but He deigns to smile upon us with milder beams as our Brother and Redeemer.

Jesus, like the sun, is the center and soul of all things, the fullness of all good, the lamp that lights us, the fire that warms us, the magnet that guides and controls us. He is the source and fountain of all life, beauty, fruitfulness, and strength. He is the Fosterer of tender herbs of penitence, the Quickener of the vital sap of Grace, the Ripener of fruits of holiness, and the Life of everything that grows within the garden of the Lord. Whereas to adore the sun would be idolatry—it were treason not to worship ardently the Divine Sun of Righteousness. Jesus Christ is the great, the glorious, the infinitely blessed. Even the sun fails to set Him forth— but, as it is one of the best figures we can find, it is ours to use this day. We will think of Jesus as the Sun this morning—first as in the text. Secondly, as He is to us. And then, thirdly, for a few minutes, we will bask in His beams.

I. First, then, we will contemplate Jesus AS THE SUN IN THE TEXT. Note how the passage begins—“In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun.” Kings were accustomed in their pompous progresses through their dominions to have canopies of splendor borne aloft over them so that marching in the midst of their glittering soldiery they were, themselves, the main attraction of the gorgeous pageant. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Church is, as it were, traversing the heavens in a majestic tabernacle, and, like the sun, scattering His beams among men. The Redeemer is canopied by the adoration of His saints, for He “inhabits the praises of Israel.”

He is, from day to day, advancing in His glorious march through the universe, conquering and to conquer, and He will journey onward till the dispensation shall terminate and the Gospel age shall be closed by His second advent. When the text says that there is a tabernacle set for the sun in the firmament, we are reminded of Christ as dwelling in the highest heavens. He is not alone the Christ of ancient history, but He is the Christ of today. Think not always of Him as the lowly Man despised and rejected, as nailed to the Cross, or buried in the tomb. He is not here, for He is risen, but He still exists, not as a dream or phantom, but as the real Christ.

Doubt it not, for up yonder, in the seventh Heaven, the Lord has set a tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness. There Jesus abides in splendor inconceivable, the Joy and Glory of all those blessed spirits who, having believed in Him on the earth, have come to behold Him in the heavens—

*“Bright, like a sun, the Savior sits,  
And spreads eternal noon.  
No evenings there, nor gloomy nights,  
To want the feeble moon.”*

That Jesus lives is a deep well of consolation to the saints, and did we always remember it our hearts would not be troubled. If we always remembered that Jesus both lives and reigns, our joys would never wither. We worship Him, it is true, as one who was slain and has redeemed us unto God by His blood. But we also extol Him as one who is “alive forever more, and has the keys of death and of Hell.”

Let your faith today behold Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, even the Father. He sits there because His atoning work is done, and He is receiving the infinite reward which His Father promised Him. He is exalted as a King upon His Throne until His enemies are made His footstool. He dwells within His tabernacle of praise, adored and admired by angels and glorified spirits. He sits there, not as a weary one, feeble and exhausted, but with the keys of universal monarchy at His girdle, for “the government is upon His shoulder, and His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God.”

I want you fully to grasp the thought of the living Savior—of the Sun in His tabernacle in the highest heavens, for this must be the fulcrum upon which we shall work this morning. We shall get our leverage here—the living Savior, the mighty Savior, the reigning Savior. He is the Church’s Joy and Hope in the present and for all years to come. The text proceeds to speak of Jesus as the Sun, and describes Him, first, as a Bridegroom coming out of His chamber. A beautiful description, indeed, of the sun when he rises in the early morning. He comes forth from the vast obscure, as from within a secret chamber. He withdraws the veil of night, and floods the earth with fluid gold. From curtains of purple and vermillion, he looks forth, and scatters orient pearl around him. Clad with a blaze of glory, he begins the race of day.

Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, when He rose from the dead, was as the sun unveiling itself. He came forth from the sepulcher as a bridegroom from his chamber. Observe that dear name of bridegroom. The Lord of Heaven and earth, between whom and us there was an infinite distance, has deigned to take our humanity into union with Himself of the most intimate kind. Among men there is no surer mode of making peace between two contending parties than for a marriage to be established between them. It has often been done so, and thus wars have been ended, and alliances have been established.

The Prince of Peace on Heaven’s side condescends to be married to our nature, that from now on Heaven and earth may be as one. Our Lord came as the Bridegroom of His Church out of His chamber when He was born of the virgin and was revealed to the shepherds and the wise men of the east. Yet, in a certain sense, He still continued in His chamber as a Bridegroom all His life, for He was hidden and veiled. The Jewish world knew not their King—though He spoke openly in their streets and sought not mystery—yet He was unknown, they did not discern Him. And in some respects He did not, then, desire to be discerned, for He often bade His disciples to tell no man what was done. That was the time when the Bridegroom was in His chamber, being made perfect through suffering and perfectly conformed unto His Church, hearing her sicknesses and her sorrows, suffering her wants, enduring her shame, and thus completing the marriage union between the two.

To this end He actually descended by dark steps of anguish into the silent inner room of the grave, and there He slept in His chamber, perfectly wedded to His Church. Come and look at Him, you who admire the Lover of your souls—He stooped to death and the sepulcher because manhood had fallen under their yoke. His Church was subject to death, and He must die. She deserved to suffer the penalty due to God’s insulted Law, and, therefore, Jesus bowed His head to the stroke—

*“Yes, said the Son, with her I’ll go  
Through all the depths of sin and woe.  
And on the Cross will even dare  
The bitter pains of death to bear.”*

And He did bear them, and in the darksome chamber of the tomb He proved how true a Bridegroom He was to His Church. Before His great race began, of which we are soon to speak, it behooved our mighty Champion to descend into the lowest parts of the earth and sleep among the dead. Before every day there is a night where darkness seems to triumph. It behooved Christ to suffer, and then to rise again. His descent was necessary to His ascent—His sojourn in the chamber to His race and victory.

Thus I have introduced to you the prelude of the race—the Bridegroom in His chamber. Now observe the coming out of it. The sun comes forth, at the appointed hour, from the gates of day, and begins to gladden the earth. Even so on the third day, early in the morning, Jesus, our Lord, arose from His sleep and there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher. Then did the Sun of Righteousness arise. Then did the great Bridegroom come forth from His chamber and begin His joyful race.

It must have been a ravishing sight to have beheld the risen Savior— well might the disciples hold Him by the feet and worship Him. I think if ever angels sung more sweetly at one time than another, it must have been on that first Easter morning when they saw the Divine Champion break His bonds of death asunder and rise into the glorious resurrection life. Then was He revealed to the sons of men. And, no longer hidden, He began to tell His disciples the meaning of those enigmas which had been dark to them—things which they had not understood—which seemed inexplicable, were all opened up by Him, for now was His time to come out of His chamber.

His words, though plain enough, had aforetime hidden Him even from those who loved Him. But now He speaks no more in proverbs, but shows them openly concerning Himself and the Father. He has laid aside the incognito in which He traversed the earth as a stranger, and He is now Divinely familiar with His friends, bidding them even touch His hands and His side. In His death the veil was rent, and in His resurrection the High Priest came forth in His robes of Glory and beauty. In a little while He was gone away, but He returned from the secret chambers of the ivory palaces, and showed Himself unto His disciples.

Blessed were the eyes that saw Him in that day. Though during the forty days in which our Lord lingered among His followers upon earth we may truly say that He had come out of His chamber, we perceive that He more fully did so when, after the forty days had been accomplished, He took His disciples to the top of Olivet and there ascended into Heaven, out of their sight. Then had the Sun, indeed, ascended above the horizon to make His glories stream along the heavens! See you not the angelic bands poising themselves upon the wing in mid-air, waiting until He shall return all glowing with the victory after the long and deadly fight? Mark you well that matchless spectacle as He is “seen of angels.”—

*“The helmed cherubim  
And sworded seraphim  
Are seen in glittering ranks,  
With wings displayed.”*

They have hastened to meet the Prince of Glory, and attend Him to His ancient patrimony. Right glad are all the heavenly band to welcome back the Captain of the Lord’s Host, and, therefore, they harp in loud and solemn choir to Heaven’s triumphant Heir. As for the glorified of mortal race, redeemed of old by His blood which in the fullness of time was shed, they hail Him with most glad hymn, and lift up their sweetest symphonies to extol Him who finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness! Then the Bridegroom came out of His chamber with fit marriage music—His beauties hidden awhile in the chamber, where He was regarded as without form or comeliness—He blazed forth with renewed splendor, such as confounded both sun and moon.

In another respect, Christ came out of His chamber at His ascension, because, when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, He received and gave gifts for men. The gifts were intended for the manifestation of Himself. His Church, which is His body, was by His own command sitting, still, in the chamber, tarrying till power was given. But, on a sudden the Bridegroom’s power was felt, for there was heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind which filled all the place, and then descending upon each favored head came the cloven tongue, and straightway you could see that the Bridegroom had come out of His chamber, for the multitude in the street began to hear His voice.

It was Peter that spoke, we say, but far rather was it Christ, the Bridegroom, who spoke by Peter. It was the Sun, from the chambers of the east, bursting through the clouds, and beginning to shine on Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Rome, and Egypt, and making the multitudes in far-off lands to see the day which Prophets and kings had waited for, but which had never visited their eyes. Do you hear the joyful motion among the people—the joy mingled with the sorrows of repentance? This is the singing of birds, and these the dewdrops which hail the rising Sun.

The people cry, “What must we do to be saved?” The shadows are fleeing. They believe in Jesus, and are baptized into His name—the true light is shining. Three thousand souls are added in one day to the Church, for truly the Bridegroom is awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouts by reason of wine (Psa. 78:65)! Then was the Gospel race commenced with a glorious burst of strength, such as only our champion could have displayed. Meditate at your leisure upon this first general manifestation of our Lord to the general multitude. He had not gone out of Israel before. “I am not sent,” said He, “save to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Palestine was His chamber—He went to the windows of it, and looked forth on Tyre and Sidon wistfully.

But He had not come forth of His chamber till that day when the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, also. And in fulfillment of the gift of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh, the Apostles went everywhere preaching the Word of God. When even we, the dwellers in the far off northern isles, received the Gospel, then, indeed, had the Bridegroom come forth out of His chamber!

But enough of this, or time will fail me. After the coming forth, we have to consider in the text His course. The course of Jesus has been as that of the sun, or like that of a mighty champion girded for running. Notice, under this head, His continuance. Our Lord’s Gospel has been no meteor that flashed for a while and then passed away, but it has remained as the sun in the heavens. What systems of philosophy have come and gone since on Calvary the Christ of God was lifted up? What speculations, what lo-heres and lo-theres have shone forth, have dazzled fools, and have been quenched in the night since He left the chamber of His marriage? Yet He continues still the same.

Nor, Brothers and Sisters, are there any marks of decrepitude either in Him or in His Gospel. They tell us that the idolatry of Hindustan is evidently crumbling—it falls not yet, but it is worm-eaten through and through. Equally sure is it that the false prophet holds but a feeble swath among his followers, and we can all see that though popery makes desperate efforts, and its extremities are vigorous, yet it is paralyzed at its heart, and the Vatican is made to feel than its time of power is short. As for the Gospel, it wears the dew of its youth after eighteen centuries of struggles. And it predominates most in those young nations which have evidently a history before them.

The old systems are now most favored by those nations which are left behind in the race of civilization, but the peoples whom God has made quick by nature are those to whom He has given to be receptive of His Grace. There are grand days coming for the Church of God! Voltaire said that he lived in the twilight of Christianity—and so he did, but it was the twilight of the morning—not the twilight of the evening. Glory be unto God, the little cloud the size of a man’s hand is spreading! It begins to cover the heavens, and the day is not far distant when the sound of abundance of rain shall be heard.

Christ was not a strong man who bounded forth at a leap, and then put forth no more strength. He rejoiced to continue His work, and to run His race. He was not a shooting star that sparkles for a moment, but a sun that shall shine throughout the livelong day. Note next in this metaphor the unity of our Lord’s course, for it is clear in the text—“Rejoicing as a strong man to run the race.” A race is one thing—there is the one goal— and the man gathers up his strength to reach it. He has nothing else to think of. They may throw the golden apples in his road, but he does not observe them. They may sound harp and sackbut to the right, and breathe the lute or sweeter instruments of music to the left, but he is deaf to all.

He has a race to run, and he throws his whole strength into it. This is a fit image of our Lord. He has never turned aside, He has never been compelled to retrace His steps, to revise His doctrine, to amend His system, or change His tactics. On, on, on has the course of Jesus been, shining more and more unto the perfect day. A certain people, nowadays, who yet dare to call themselves Christians are always hankering after something new, pining for novelties, and boasting of their fresh discoveries. Though, indeed, their fresh things are only fragments of broken images of heresies, which our fathers dashed to shivers centuries ago. The great thinkers of the present day are nothing more than mere translators—you know the London meaning of that word—buyers of old shoes who patch them up, and send them forth again as if they were something new.

Old shoes and clothes are common enough among those Gibeonites who would deceive Israel, and whose boast is that they have come from far and bring us treasures of wisdom from remote regions. Sirs, we want not your new things, for our Lord’s race is the same as of old, and as He continues in one course so also will we. To spread righteousness and, in so doing, to save sinners and to glorify God—this is the one purpose of Christ—from it He will never cease, and nothing shall ever tempt Him from the pursuit of it. Look, I pray you, with pleasure and see how our Lord, from His first coming out of His chamber until now has continued still in the Gospel to shine forth with rays of glory, without variableness or shadow of a turning.

Though we believe not, He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself. He changes not in work or way. For Zion’s sake He works up to now, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand. But now, observe next, the no

table idea of strength which the text conveys to us. “Rejoicing as a strong man to run his race.” It is no drudgery for the ascended Lord to carry on His cause—

*“The baffled prince of Hell  
In vain new efforts tries,  
Truth’s empire to repel  
By cruelty and lies.  
The infernal gates shall rage in vain  
Conquest awaits the Lamb once slain.”*

There is a race to be run but Jesus is strong enough for it. He does not come panting up to the starting place and from there go creeping on. But like a strong man He surveys the course. He knows that He is equal to it, and, therefore He delights in it. When He began His race He was opposed, but the opposition only made Him triumph the more readily, for “they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.”

When our Lord arose like the sun, the clouds were thick and heavy, but He painted their fleecy skirts with gold. Persecution hung over the eastern horizon, but He turned it into the imperial purple of His Sovereignty. As He pursued His course the ice of centuries melted, the dense gloom of ages disappeared. No chains could bind Him, and no bonds could hold Him. He dashed on with undiminished energy, and the gates of Hell could not prevail. As no cloud has ever stayed the sun as he has “whirled his car along the ethereal plain,” so no difficulties impeded the onward course of the Gospel in the days of its dawning. To the first days of the Church, Thomson’s lines to the sun are fully applicable—

*“Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds, And morning fogs, that hovered round the hills, In party-colored bands, till wide, unveiled, The face of Nature shines, from where earth seems Far stretched around, to meet the bending sphere.”*

The Gospel soon shed its light in every land, and all nations felt its benign power. Men ceased to persecute and bowed before the Cross. Soon fresh clouds arose, and the Church passed through them. Errors and heresies multiplied. Filthy dreamers led away a huge apostasy. Rome became the mother of harlots and abominations, but the true Church, and the true Christ within her, went right on. The Church was not less triumphant in her second trial than in her first.

Papal Rome was overcome as surely as pagan Rome. Popes were no more her conquerors than bloody emperors had been of yore. To the thoughtful eye the Sun of Christ is not less bright over the valleys of Piedmont than over the waves of the sea which bore Paul and his fellow Apostles. The Champion’s race was as eager and as triumphant as before. Since then, dense banks of spiritual deadness and false teaching have barred the visible heavens and have appeared to mortal sight an ebony wall impenetrable as steel, but the Lord reigns.

He that sits in the heavens does laugh—the Lord does have them in derision. Strong is His right hand, and His enemies shall be broken. On goes the Sun of Righteousness—nothing impedes Him—His tabernacle is above them all. He rides on the heavens, yes, He rides on the wings of the wind. Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength. Christ has failed in nothing. The decrees have been executed. The eternal purposes have been fulfilled. The elect have been saved—His kingdom is established—and shall continue as long as the sun. Who shall stay His hand? Who shall resist His will?

Observe, therefore, how the force is coupled with joy. Weakness brings sorrow, but strength begets joy. Christ is always glad and He would have His people rejoice, for His cause goes right on and He shall not fail nor be discouraged. He rejoices as He divides the spoil with the strong. When a man has a task to do which is easy to him, and which he can readily perform, he sings at his work. And so this day does Christ rejoice over His Church with joy, and triumph over her with singing. His cause goes on in spite of foes, and His strength is so great that even the battle fills Him with delight.

I remember to have heard a Welsh preacher make use of the following simile. He was speaking of the joy of Christ in Heaven, and he said, “You tell me that the Church is sorrowful on earth and I tell you that Christ is joyous in Heaven. And then you ask me how this can be? You see yonder mother with her babe, and she is washing the child. Its face is foul and she desires to see it shine with brightness. She would see it white as the marble mingled with the redness of the rose. Therefore she washes it—but the child cries. It is fretful and knows not what is good for it—so it whines and struggles. The mother does not cry, or share its sorrow, she keeps on singing because she knows that all is right and that her darling will smile like a cherub when all is over. She sees the good results coming, while the babe only feels the present discomfort, so she sings her song and never stops, let the child cry as it may.”

And so the Lord Jesus has pleasure in His work. He is purifying His Church, and making her fit to be presented to Himself, and though she winces and laments, it is the flesh that makes her to do so. The Lord sings still joyously because He sees the end from the beginning! Earth may be swathed in mist, but the Sun is never so, He shines gloriously evermore. The text mentions one other fact connected with Jesus as the Sun—“There is nothing hid from the heat thereof,” by which is meant nothing is able to escape the powerful influence of Christ Jesus. His own chosen people must, in due season, feel His power to save.

They may wander as they do, and sin as they may—but when the time appointed comes they shall be redeemed out of the land of the enemy. The sun’s power is felt in the dark and deepest mines. That there is a sun still shining might be discoverable even in the heart of the earth! And so, in the dark haunts of sin, God’s elect shall be made to feel the Sovereign power and Omnipotent Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you and I shall die, and when we shall be buried in the grave, we shall not there be hid from the heat of this Sun of Righteousness. By-and-by He shall kindle life within our bones again. He shall create a soul within the ribs of death, and we shall spring upward as the grass, and as the willows by the watercourses when the sun renews the year.  
Our dry bones shall live, and in our flesh we shall we see God. Meanwhile, while the gracious operations of Christ thus fall on all His elect, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, other operations are at work on all the sons of men. He rules in Providence over all people, whether they believe in Him or not, and if men do not accept the Gospel, yet they are affected by it in some way or other. Even the dark parts of the world feel something of the Presence of the Christ of God. Responsibility is heaped on those that hear of Him and reject Him. He becomes a savor of death unto death where He is not a savor of life unto life. There is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Oh, how this ought to encourage you Christian people to work! The Lord has gone before you—there is nothing hid from the heat of His Presence. Jesus is King of the dark settlements of the heathen, and He reigns in the lowest haunts of London’s vice. Go there, for you are not intruders. You have a right to go anywhere in your Master’s dominions. And the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof. Be not afraid to face the vilest blasphemer, or the most foul-mouthed infidel, for Christ is Master—and if you bring the Gospel before His enemy—he will be made to feel its power, either so as to yield to it a willing submission, or else to be condemned by it.

In either case, you shall have done your part, and uttered your testimony, and freed your head of his blood. In these thoughts combined, we see Christ Jesus, the risen Savior, pursuing His ever glorious course till He shall descend again the second time to take His people to Himself to reign with Him.

II. Very briefly, indeed, in the second place. Let us think for a moment of JESUS AS A SUN TO US. Worship and bless our Savior! It is ever meet and right to do so. Let Him be extolled and be very high. Some would give Him a secondary place, let it never be so with us. As the sun is the center, so is Christ. As the sun is the great motor, the first source of motive power, so is Christ to His people. As the sun is the fountain from which light, life, and heat perpetually flow, so is the Savior. As the sun is the fructifier by which fruits multiply and ripen, so is Christ—and as the sun is the regulator and rules the day, and marks the seasons—even so is Jesus owned as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Think these thoughts over in the following respects. When you take the Bible remember that Christ is the center of the Scriptures. Do not put election in the center. Some do, and they make a one-sided system. Do not put man in the center—some do, and they fall into grievous errors. Christ is the center of the entire system of the Gospel, and all will be seen to move with regularity when you perceive that He is the chief fixed point. You cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of Him. He is the center and King of all Truth. He is the center of the Church, too. Not the pastor, not the Church itself, not any rule or government, no bishop, no priest, and no Pope can be our center—Christ alone is our central sun.

We follow as planets where He leads the way—around Him we revolve, but we own no other Lord. Let it be so in the world that even there Christ governs and is the center of all history. You will understand history better when you know this—for this is the key of the world’s story—the reason for the rise and fall of empires. You shall understand all things when you know Immanuel, God with us. And let Him have this place in your hearts. There enthrone Him! Establish Him as the central sun, and let Him rule your entire being, enlightening your understanding, warming your hearts, filling all your powers, passions, and faculties with the fullness of His Presence. To have Christ in us, the hope of Glory—oh, what blessedness! But let us take care that it is so, for we know not Christ aright unless we give Him such a place in our hearts as the sun occupies in God’s world.

III. But time fails me, and we must now pass on to the last point, and let us for a minute or two BASK IN HIS BEAMS. How shall we do it? First, we must realize that He Is. Sinner, saint, Christ lives—He who trod the wave of Galilee lives on! He who was marked with the nails rules on! Oh, Sinner, does not that comfort you? The Savior lives! The Redeemer lives! He who forgives sins still lives. Saint, does not this comfort you? The Man of the tender heart still lives—with a bosom still to be leaned upon—and with lips still ready to speak endearing words. There is a tabernacle for the Sun—He is not extinct. He shines still, He blesses still. Bask in His beams, then, by realizing that He Is.

Then come and lay your souls beneath His Divine influence. O my Soul, if you are guilty, come and rest in His Atonement. If you are unrighteous come and take His righteousness. If you are feeble lay hold upon His strength. If you can not pray, accept Him as your Intercessor. If you are in yourself nothing, take Him to be your All in All. Some creatures delight to warm themselves in the sun, but oh, what a pleasure it is to sun oneself in the Presence of Christ. Never mind how little I am, how nothing I am, how vile I am, how foul I am. All I am He has taken to Himself, and all He has belongs to me. I sin, but He has taken all my sin—He is righteous and all His righteousness is mine. I am feeble, He is mighty—His mightiness is mine, I wrap myself in His Omnipotence.

Christ is All and Christ is mine. Why, I utterly fail when trying to talk about such things as these—talking is but stuttering on such a theme! Faith must enjoy, rather than express, her delight. Come, plunge, all of you, into this sea of sweetness—dive deep into this abyss of happiness— Christ Jesus is yours forever and forever! The sun is very great but it is all for me, and Christ is very bright and glorious, and He is all my own.

Then next, if you would sun yourself in His beams, imbibe the joy of His strength. He is like a bridegroom rejoicing to run his race. Now, Brothers and Sisters, I am often afraid, lest in serving God, we should grow dispirited and downcast, and think that things are not going on as they should. Remember, the joy of the Lord is your strength. If you begin to say, “Our cause is very feeble, the Gospel will not prevail among us,” you will slacken your efforts. Do not so, but remember that Jesus Christ does not fret or sadden Himself about His kingdom. He runs with full strength and rejoices as He runs. And I bid you, in the power of the Holy Spirit, do the same. Cast away your doubts and fears, the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He will deliver His adversaries into your hands.  
I fret and worry myself, sometimes, about these inventors of new doctrines, and those Ritualists who bring up the old rates and stale tallow of the past ages. Let us fret no more, but think that these are only like the clouds to the great sun. The Gospel will still proceed in its career. Let us laugh the enemies of God to scorn and defy them to their faces. They defy the Lord God of Israel as did the Philistine of old, but God Himself is mightier than they, and the victory is sure to the true Church and to the Gospel of His Son. Be very courageous! Be not alarmed with sudden fear! Trust in Jehovah, for the Lord will surely give unto His own servants the victory in the day of battle.

And Brethren, if you would sun yourselves in Christ’s beams, let me bid you reflect His light whenever you receive it. He is the Sun and you are the planet, but every planet shines, shines with borrowed light. It conceals no light, but sends back to other worlds what the sun has given to it. Cast back on men the light which Jesus gives you. Triumph in Christ’s circuit—that it is so broad as to comprehend the world, and compass all time. Enlarge your own hearts, and let your light shine far and wide, believing that the power of God which gives you light will go with the light which you reflect.

Comfort your hearts! “Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Who shall stop the Christ of God in His race? Let him first go pluck the sun from his sphere. Who shall stay the champion of God who has girt Himself for His race? Whoever comes in His way, woe unto him, for if Samson smote a thousand men hip and thigh, what shall our Immortal Samson do? Let all the armies of Pope and devil come against Him, He will utterly defy them, and drive them like chaff before the wind.

Sing you unto His name, for He has triumphed gloriously! Begin the everlasting song, for He is the Lord and God, and to the uttermost ages shall He reign! Yes, forever and ever is He priest and King. God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 19.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2870 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REVELATION AND CONVERSION  
NO. 2870

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 23, 1876.

**“The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7.**

WHEN he spoke of “the Law of the Lord, David did not merely mean the Law as it was given in the Ten Commandments, although that also is perfect and is used, to some extent, in the conversion of souls. The term includes the entire Doctrine of God—the whole Divine Revelation and though, in David’s day, there was not so full and clear a Revelation as we have—for the New Testament was not then given, nor much of the Old Testament, yet the text has lost none of its former force, but has rather gained more. So I shall use it as applicable to the entire Scriptures—to the Law and to the Gospel—and to all that God has revealed. And speaking of it in that sense, I may truly say that it is perfect and that it converts the soul.

A tree is known by its fruit and a book must be tested by its effects. There are some books which bear their fruit for the hangman and the jail—and such books are very widely read nowadays. They are frequently embellished with engravings and put into the hands of boys and girls— and a crop of criminals is constantly the result of their publication and circulation! There have been books written which have spread moral contagion throughout centuries. I need not mention them, but if it were possible to gather them all together in one heap and burn them as the Ephesians burnt their books of magic, it would be one of the greatest blessings conceivable! Yet, if that were done, I fear that other wicked brains would be set to work to think out similar blasphemies and that other hands would be found to scatter their vile productions.

The Word of God must be tested, like other books, by the effect which it produces, and I am going to speak upon one of its effects to which many of us here present can bear personal witness. The old proverb says, “Speak as you find,” and I am going to speak of the Bible as I have found it—to praise the bridge that has carried me over every difficulty until now—and that has carried a great many of you over, also. We know that the Law of the Lord is good because it converts the soul and, to our mind, the best proof of its purity and power is that it has converted our soul.

My first objective will be to show how the Word of God converts the soul. Then to show the excellence of the work of conversion. And, therefore, thirdly, the excellence of that Book which produces conversion.

I. First, then, I am to show HOW THE WORD OF GOD CONVERTS THE SOUL.  
Man’s face is turned away from his Maker. Ever since the fatal day when our first parents broke the Law of God, we have been, all of us, guilty of the same great crime. We stand as men who have their backs to the light and we are going the downward road, the road which leads to destruction. What we need is to be turned around, for that is the meaning of the word, “converted”—turned right about. We need to hear the command, “Right about face,” and to march in the opposite direction from any in which we have ever marched before. Our text truly says that the Word of God turns us around. It does not mean that the Word alone does that apart from the Spirit of God, because a man may read the Bible through 50 times and, for 50 years hear sermons that have all come out of the Bible, and yet they will never turn him unless the Spirit of God makes use of the Word of God or the preacher’s sermons. But when the Spirit of God goes with the Word, then the Word becomes the instrument of the conversion of the souls of men.  
This is how the work of conversion is worked. First, it is by the Scriptures of Truth that men are made to see that they are in error. There are millions upon millions of men in the world who are going the wrong way, yet they do not know it. And there are tens of thousands who believe that they are even doing God service when they are utterly opposing Him. Some who, as far as it is in their power, are even slaying Christ, know not what they are doing. One of the pleas that our Savior used upon the Cross was, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” To take my own case, I know that for years I was not conscious of having committed any great sin. I had been, by God’s restraining Grace, kept from outward immoralities and from gross transgressions and, therefore, I thought I was all right. Did I not pray? Did I not attend a place of worship? Did I not do what was right towards my fellow men? Did I not, even as a child, have a tender conscience? It seemed to me, for a time, that all was well and, perhaps, I am addressing someone else who says, “Well, if I am not right, I wonder who is? And if I have gone wrong, where must my neighbors be going?”  
Ah, that is often the way we talk! As long as we are blind, we can see no faults in ourselves. But when the Spirit of God comes to us and reveals to us the Law of God, then we perceive that we have broken the whole of the Ten Commandments in the spirit, if not in the letter of them. Even the most chaste of men may well tremble when they remember that searching word of Christ—“Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” When you understand that the Commandments of God not only forbid wrong actions, but also the desires, imaginations and thoughts of the heart—and that, consequently, a man may commit murder while he lies in his bed—may rob his neighbor without touching a penny of his money or any of his goods—may blaspheme God though he never uttered an oath—and may break all the commands of the Law of God, from the first to the last, before he has put on his garments in the morning—when you come to examine your life in that light, you will see that you are in a very different condition than you thought you were!  
Think, for instance, of that solemn declaration of our Lord, “I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.” It is by bringing home to the heart such Truths of God as these that the Spirit of God, through the Word, makes a man see that he is in error and in danger! And this is the beginning of his conversion! You cannot turn a man around as long as he believes he is going in the right way. While he has that idea in his head, he goes straight on, marching, as he supposes, safely. So the very first thing to be done to him is to let him see that there is a terrible precipice right before him—over which he will fall if he goes on as he is going. When he realizes that, he stops and considers his position.

Then the Word of God comes in, in the next place, to take the man off from all attempts to get around by wrong ways. When a man knows that he is going wrong, his instinct should lead him to seek to get right, but, unhappily, many people try to get right by getting wrong in another direction! A good man sent me a volume of his poems the other day. As soon as I looked into it, I saw that there was one line of the verse that was too short. The good Brother evidently felt that it was, so he tried to set the matter right by making the next line too long, which, as you see at once, made two faults instead of one! In like manner, you will find that men who are wrong in one direction with regard to their fellow men, often become very superstitious and go a great deal further in another directions than God asks them to go and so, practically, make a long line towards God in order to make up for the short line towards men! And thus they commit two errors instead of one.  
Here is a sheep that has gone astray. It has wandered so far to the East that, in order to get right, it tries to go just as far to the West—and if convinced that it is on the wrong road, all it does is to stray just as far to the North and, by-and-by, to the South! It is wandering all the while in a different way with the intent to get back to the fold and, in this respect, sinners are just as silly as the sheep! Now, the Word of God tells a man that by the works of the Law he cannot be justified. It tells him that his heart is defiled, that he, himself, is already condemned, that he is shut up under condemnation for having broken God’s Law. And it indicates to him that whatever he may do, or however much he may struggle, if he does not seek salvation in God’s way, he will only make the bad, worse, and be like a drowning man who sinks the faster the more he struggles! When the Word of God shows a man that—and makes him feel as though he were hopeless, helpless, shut up in the condemned cell—it has done a great deal towards turning him around!  
The next thing the Word of God does is to show the man how he might get right. And, oh, how perfectly it shows him this! It comes to the man and says to him, “Your sin deserves punishment. God has laid that punishment upon His only-begotten Son and, therefore, He is ready to forgive you freely for Christ’s sake—not because of anything good in you, or anything you ever can do—but entirely of His free mercy! He bids you trust yourself in the hands of Jesus that He may save you.” Come, then, and rely upon what Christ has done and is still doing for you, and believe in the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, to all who trust Him! Oh, how clearly the Word of God sets Christ before us! It is a sort of mirror in which He is revealed. Christ Himself is up in Heaven and a poor sinner, down here on earth, cannot see Him however long he looks. But this Word of the Lord is like a huge mirror, better, even, than Solomon’s molten sea—and Jesus Christ looks down into this mirror and then, if you and I come and look into it, we can see the reflection of His face! Blessed be His holy name, it is true, as Dr. Watts Sings—

*“Here I behold my Savior’s face*

*Almost in every page.”*  
There is scarcely one chapter in which Christ is not, more or less clearly, set forth as the Savior of sinners. So the Word of God, you see, shows the man that he is in the wrong, takes him away from wrong ways of trying to get right, and then puts him in the way to get right, namely, by believing in Jesus!

But the Word of the Lord does more than that. In the power of the Holy Spirit, it helps the man to believe, for, at the first, he is quite staggered at the idea of free salvation—instantaneous pardon—the blotting out of sin—all for nothing—pardon for the worst and vilest freely given and given now! The man says, “Surely, it is too good to be true.” He is filled with amazement, for God’s thoughts are as high above him and as far out of his reach as the heavens are above the earth! Then the Word comes to him and says, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” The Word also says to him, “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” The Word says, “The mercy of the Lord endures forever.” “He delights in mercy.” “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins.” I need not go on repeating the texts with which I hope many of you have long been familiar. There is a great number of them—precious promises, gracious invitations and comforting Doctrines—and, as the sinner reads them, with trembling gaze, the Spirit of God applies them to his soul and he says, “I can and I do believe in Jesus! Lord, I do gladly accept Your pardoning mercy. I look unto Him who was nailed to the Cross and I find in Him the cure for the serpent bites of sin. I do and I will believe in Jesus and venture my soul upon Him.” It is thus that the Word of God converts the soul—by helping the man to believe in Jesus.

And when it has done that, the man is converted, for when a man looks to Christ, alone, he has turned his face towards God. Now he has confidence in God and out of this grows love to God. And now he desires to please God because God has been so very gracious in providing such a Savior for him. The man is turned right around—from rebelling against God he has come to feel intense gratitude to his Redeemer—and he seeks to live to God’s Glory as he would never have thought of doing before!

I ask you who are the people of God, whether you have not felt, since your conversion, the power of the Word of God in sustaining you in your converted condition. Do you not often feel, as you hear the Gospel preached, your heart grow warm within you? Some time ago, when I went away for a week’s holiday, I was more than a little troubled about many things. I had been, for a long while, preaching to others and I thought I should like to feel the power of the Word in hearing it myself. I went to a little chapel in the country and there I heard a lay brother—I think he must have been an engineer—preach a sermon. There was nothing very grand in it except that it was full of Christ. And as I listened to it, my tears began to flow. I wish that, sometimes, some of you, my Brothers, would preach and let me take my turn at listening. Well, on that occasion, my soul was melted as I heard the Gospel proclaimed very simply, and I thought, “After all, I do feel its power! I do enjoy its sweetness!” And while I listened to it, my heart overflowed with joy and delight—and I could only sit still and weep as I heard the simple story of the Cross.

And have not you, Beloved, often found it so, in your experience, as you have been reading the Word of the Lord? If you ever get dull in the things of God, it is not the Bible that has made you so! If ever your heart grows cold, it is not the promises of God that have made you cold! If ever you cannot sing, and cannot pray, it is not the searching of the Scriptures that has brought you into that condition. And if you ever have the misery of hearing a sermon that deadens your spiritual life, I am quite certain that that sermon is not in harmony with the mind of God and not according to the teaching of the Word of God. But when you hear the Gospel fully and faithfully preached, if your heart is at all capable of feeling its power, it stirs your spirit, it wakes you up, it produces holy emotions—love to God, love to your fellow men, heart-searching, deep humiliation, ardent zeal and all the Christian Graces in full exercise! The Word of the Lord is perfect and its effect is continually to restore and revive the soul of the Christian.

This has been to me one of the great evidences of the Truth of Inspiration. Standing alone at night and looking up to the starry vault of Heaven, I have asked myself, “Is this Gospel which I have believed, which I have preached to others for so many years, really true?” Being absolutely certain that there is a God—for none but a fool can doubt that—I have said, “Well, this Gospel has made me love God. I know I love Him with all my heart and soul. And whenever it exerts its rightful power over me, it makes me try to please Him. Whenever I am under its influence, it makes me hate all wrong, all meanness and all falseness. Now, it would be a very strange thing if a lie could lead a man to act like that, so it must be true.” The moral effect of the Word of God upon one’s own nature, from day to day, becomes, in the absence of all other proof—even if we had no other—the surest and best evidence to a man that “the Law of the Lord is perfect,” for it converts his soul!

I once heard a charming story about Robert Hall—that mightiest of our Baptist orators—perhaps one of the greatest and most eloquent ministers who ever lived. He was subject to fits of terrible depression of spirits and, one night, he had been snowed up, on his way to a certain place where he was going to preach. There was such a great depth of snow that he was obliged to stay for the night at the farmhouse where he had stopped. But he must preach, he said. He had his discourse ready and he must deliver it—so they fetched in the servants and the farm people, and he preached the sermon he had prepared—a very wonderful one to be delivered in a farmhouse parlor. And after the others had all gone, he sat down by the fireside with the good man of the house and he said to him—a plain, country farmer, “Now tell me, Mr. So-and-So, what do you think is the sure evidence of a man being a child of God, for I sometimes am afraid I am not one?”

“Oh,” said the farmer, “my dear Mr. Hall, how can you talk like that?” “Well, what do you think is the best evidence that a man is really a child of God?” “Oh,” replied the farmer, “I feel sure that if a man loves God, it must be all right with him.” “Then,” said the farmer, as he told the story, “you should have heard him speak. He said, ‘Love God, Sir? Love God? If I were damned, I would still love Him! He is such a blessed Being—so holy, so true, so gracious, so kind, so just!’ He went on for an hour praising God, the tears running down his cheeks as he kept on saying, ‘Love Him? I cannot help loving Him! I must love Him! Whatever He does to me, I must love Him!’”

Well, now, I have felt just like that, sometimes, and then I have said to myself, “What made me love the Lord thus? Why, this that I have read about Him in this blessed Book! And this that I believe that He has done for me, in the Person of His dear Son. And that which brings me into such a state that I love Him with all my nature must be a right and a true thing.”

The Word of God is perfect, converting the soul. You will find it to be so the longer you live and the more you test and try it. Whenever you go astray, it is because you get away from the Word of God. And as long as you are kept right, it is because you are drinking in the precious Truths of God concerning Jesus as they are revealed in the Bible. That is the one perfect Book in the whole world and it will also make you perfect if you will yield to its gracious influence. Only submit yourself to it and you will, one day, become perfect and be taken up to dwell where the perfect God, who wrote the perfect Book, will reveal to you the perfection of bliss forever and forevermore! God grant to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, to know the power of this converting Book!

If any of you have backslidden, I pray that this same blessed Book may bring you back. I had a letter, the other day, from the backwoods of America that did my heart good. It was from a man who was one of my first converts at New Park Street Chapel. He had been for years a member of the Church, but he grew cold and ceased to attend the means of Grace and, at last, he had to be excommunicated from the Church. He went out to America and there, far away, he began to examine himself— and the Spirit of God brought home to his heart the old texts which he used to hear. He writes that he was brought to his knees and now he is actively engaged in the service of God, endeavoring to bring other backsliders and sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ! It is the Word of God that will restore you, Backslider! I hope it will do so this very hour and that, soon, you will come to us, and say, “Take me into the Church again, for the Lord has restored me to fellowship with Him through His blessed Word.”

II. I must be very brief upon the second part of my subject, which is, THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS WORK OF CONVERSION. That is a boundless theme, but I must be content just to touch upon a few points of this excellence.

When the Word of God converts a man, it takes away from him his despair, but it does not take from him his repentance. He does not now think that his sin will cast him into Hell, but he does not, therefore, think that his sin is a trifle. He hates the sin as much as if he feared that it would destroy him forever. That is a grand kind of conversion—that the man, who had been in despair because of his sin, is made to know that his sin is forgiven and yet he is not led to trifle or tamper with sin. By faith he sees the wounds of Jesus and he knows how Christ bled to set him free from the bondage of sin—and that makes him forever hate sin. Is not that an excellent conversion?

True conversion also gives a man pardon, but does not make him presumptuous. His past transgression is all forgiven him, but he does not, therefore, say, “I will go and transgress in the same fashion again. If pardon is so easily obtained, why should I not sin?” If a truly converted man ever talked like that, or, if such a thought ever occurred to him, he must have said at once, “Get you behind me, Satan, for you savor not the things that are of God.” Such talks as that would be diabolical! “Shall we sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid!” Though the man is pardoned, he hates sin as the burnt child dreads the fire. He is afraid lest, by any inadvertent step, he should grieve his Lord who has blotted out the past.

Further, true conversion gives a man perfect rest, but does not stop his progress. He knows that the work that has saved him is the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and that he has not to add even one thread to the robe of righteousness which has been given to him! Yet he desires to grow in Grace, to become holier and holier, more like his Lord and Master. While he perfectly rests in Christ, he spreads the wings of his soul that he may fly higher and higher towards his Lord and Master.

Again, true conversion gives a man security, but it does not allow him to leave off being watchful. He knows that he is safe and that he shall never perish, neither shall any pluck him out of Christ’s hands—but he is always on the watch against every enemy—against the world, the flesh, and the devil. One of our hymn-writers puts this double Truth of God

very sweetly— *“We have no fear that You should lose  
One whom eternal love could choose  
But we would ne’er this Grace abuse,  
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.”*

True conversion also gives a man strength and holiness, but it never lets him boast. He glories, but he glories only in the Lord. He knows that a great change has been worked in him, but he still sees so much of his own imperfections that he mourns over them before the Lord. He has no time for boasting because all his time is taken up with repenting for his sins, believing in his Savior and seeking to live to the praise and glory of God!

True conversion, likewise, gives a harmony to all the duties of Christian life. It makes a man love his God better and love his fellow men better. I have no opinion of that religion which consists in a so-called profession of religion which makes a young woman leave her father and mother and all her family—and go and shut herself up in a convent, or become a sister of misery of some sort or other! If my child, when he says that he is converted, leaves off loving his father, I have very grave doubts about his conversion! I think it must be a conversion worked by the devil, not by God. But wherever there is true love to God, there is sure to be love to our fellow men also. The same God who wrote on one tablet certain commands in reference to Himself, wrote on the other tablet the commands with regard to our fellow men. “You shall love the Lord your God,” is certainly a Divine Command—and so is the other, “and your neighbor as yourself.” True conversion balances all duties, emotions, hopes and enjoyments.

True conversion brings a man to live for God. He does everything for the Glory of God—whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does. True conversion makes a man live before God. He used to try to fancy that God did not see him. But now he desires to live as in God’s sight at all times and he is glad to be there—glad even that God should see his sin—that He may blot it out as soon as ever He beholds it. And such a man now comes to live with God. He has blessed communion with Him, He talks with Him as a man talks with his friend and, by-and-by, he shall dwell with God throughout eternity in the palace above! This ought to convince you what an excellent thing true and real conversion is.

III. I have no need to say much, in the third place, concerning THE CONSEQUENT EXCELLENCE OF THE WORD OF GOD. The Law of the Lord which accomplishes such an excellent work, must itself be excellent. I will, therefore, only make one or two brief remarks and then close.

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,” right away from the beginning of conversion to the end. Whenever we want to have converts—and I hope that is always—the best thing for us to do is to “preach the Word.” There is nothing better! There can be nothing more—there must be nothing less! I do not wonder that in some churches and chapels, there are no conversions—because the sermons that are preached there are not adapted to that end. They are like a book I reviewed, the other day, of which I said that there was, possibly, one person in the world who understood it, and that was the writer of the book. And that if he did not read it through every morning, he certainly would not know, the next day, what he meant by it. In some such fashion as that, there are sermons that are so involved—perplexing, metaphysical and I know not what besides—that I do not see how any souls can ever be converted by them! The people need to have a dictionary in the pew, instead of a Bible! They need never turn to any Biblical references, but they need someone to explain to them the meaning of the hard words which the preacher is so fond of using. Have I not also read sermons which were very highly polished, and which, I daresay, were preceded by a prayer that God would convert souls by them? But it was morally impossible that the Lord should do anything of the sort unless He reversed all His usual methods of procedure, for there was nothing in the sermon that could have been made the means of the conversion of a soul.

But, my dear Brother, if you preach the Word of God. If you lift up the crucified Christ on the pole of the Gospel you need not be very particular about the style of your speech! You need not say, “I must be a first-class speaker. I must be a brained rhetorician.” I believe that a great deal of that first-class speaking is simply the means of veiling the Cross of Christ—and that fine talk about Jesus Christ is about the last thing that poor sinners need! I sat at a hotel table, in Mentone, one evening at dinner, and I wanted to speak to a friend who was sitting opposite to me, but someone had put a most magnificent bouquet of flowers in a very splendid vase between us. I was grateful that those flowers bloomed in the middle of winter, and I was pleased to see and to smell them, but, byand-by, I moved them on one side because they stood in the way of my view of my friend’s face. So I admire fine language—nobody enjoys it more than I do in its proper place—I even think that I could manage a little of it myself if I were to try. But whenever it stands between a poor soul and Christ, I would like to say, “Break that vase into a thousand pieces! Fling those flowers into the fire! We do not want them there, for we want the poor sinner to see Christ!”

It is the Word of God that converts the soul—not our pretty figures about the Word, not our fine talk about it—but the Word itself. So, dear teachers, and dear Brother-ministers, let us give them the Word! Yes, that is a very handsome scabbard, but, if you are going to fight, you must pull it off! There is nothing like the naked blade, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to cut and hew, and hack and kill, in a spiritual sense! That same Word will, by God’s almighty Grace, make men alive again, so we must “preach the Word” if we want to have conversions!

There is another thing that I feel I must say to you. We must not think that in order to have conversions, it is necessary to leave out any part of the Gospel. I am afraid that some people think that if you stand and shout, “Believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, you will convert any number of people—but it is not so. You must tell your hearers what they have to believe. You must give them the Word of God, the Doctrines of the Gospel, for the people who are said to be converted without being taught from the Scriptures will very soon need to be “converted” again. There must be shot and shell in our guns if any real execution is to be done! Blowing off a lot of powder and making a great noise may sound very well for a time, but it comes to nothing in the end. Just the same Gospel adapted as to its tone and method, but the same Gospel—that I preach in this place, I would preach in a thieves’ kitchen, or to the poorest of the poor—and the most illiterate of mankind! It is the Gospel and only the Gospel that will convert the soul.

Now, dear Friends, you who are not converted, my closing word is to you. If you really wish for strength, life, salvation—you will get it through hearing the Word of God, or through reading this precious Book. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Eye-Gate is not usually the way by which Immanuel rides into the city of Mansoul. The lifting up of the host, the pretty decorations on the priest’s robe, the crucifix, the stations of the cross, and all that Roman Catholic mummery will save nobody! That is not God’s way of salvation!

Christ comes into Mansoul through Ear-Gate. “Incline your ear, and came unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live.” Whenever the Gospel is preached, dear Hearer, do really hear it. Remember how our Lord Jesus Christ said, “He that has ears to hear, let him hear”? Some people do not hear. I have often been thankful, when I have heard some people talk, that I have two ears, because, though their conversation goes in one ear, I thank God I can let it go out the other, and so it does me no harm! But if you are hearing the Gospel, mind that you do not act like that. Then let your two ears be two entrances for the Word. Do not have one for entrance and the other for exit, but, “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Let it go in both ears and remain in your memory until it reaches your heart. I do not believe that anybody is an earnest and attentive hearer, longing to hear to his soul’s profit, without his so hearing if the Gospel is preached to him. As I have already told you, the promise is, “Hear, and your soul shall live.” And if you come with a willing mind—willing to judge, weigh and then to believe the Word—the moment you do believe it, you are saved! That Word of God which leads you to believe has already converted you, so, come out and confess what God has done for you, and then go on your way rejoicing! May God bless everyone of you without a single exception, for His name’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—551, 658, 561. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 19.**

This Psalm teaches us the excellence of the two Revelations which God has made to man. The first is the Revelation which He has made in Nature, and the second is that which He has made in His Inspired Word. The Psalmist first sings of God as He displays Himself in His works in Creation.

Verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. So much is this the case that it has been well said that “an undevout astronomer is mad.” There are such traces of the Infinite and the Omnipotent in the stars, that the more thoroughly they are studied, and the science of mathematics is brought to bear upon them, in order, in some degree, to guess at the incalculable distances and mighty weights of the starry orbs, that a man must perceive in them traces of the Divine handiwork if he is only willing to do so! “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”

2. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. Every day speaks to the following one, even as the day that went before it spoke to it, and each day has its own message. Its history is an echo of the Voice of God and if man had but ears to hear, he would perceive that the things which happen from day to day proclaim the Presence and power of God. And even night, with her impressive silence, reveals the Most High in the solemn hush and stillness. In the great primeval forests, the winds seem with songs without words to declare the Presence of the Most High. There is a something there, in the stillness of the night, as weird-like and so solemn, which has made Unbelief retreat and caused Faith to lift up her eyes and see more in the heavens at night than she had seen by day—“Night unto night shows knowledge.”

3, 4. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Though Nature does not speak, yet its words go to the ends of the earth and, silently, they sing the praises of God. To the inner ears of an enlightened man, there is a measure of spiritual teaching always going on.

4-6. In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. Its rising from one end of Heaven, and its circuit to the other end: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. All this is emblematical of the spread of the Gospel—so Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Romans, “Their souls went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Our Lord Jesus, springing up from the couch where He slept awhile, has sent His Light even to the ends of the earth—

*“Nor shall His spreading Gospel rest  
Till through the world His Truth has run— Till Christ has all the nations blest,  
That see the light, or feel the sun.”*

There are brighter days yet to come to us! The strength of Christ, as He daily runs the Gospel race, has not diminished. Indeed, He puts it out yet more and more, and the day shall come when, as the full sunlight makes the perfect day, so shall the full Revelation of the Gospel to the eyes of all men fill the whole earth with the praises of God! Now let us read concerning the Book of God. We have read about His works, now let us read about His words.

7. The law of the LORD is perfect. “The Doctrine of the Lord (as it may be read) is perfect.”  
7. Converting [or, restoring] the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure. Oh, what a mercy that is! What could our souls do with ifs and buts and perhapses? But the teachings of God’s Word are certain, positive, Infallible!  
7. Making wise the simple. No matter how foolish, how childlike we may be to begin with, so long as our minds are free from cunning and craftiness, and so are simple and sincere, this Book will make us truly wise.  
8. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart. You know they do. Oftentimes has your heart leaped for joy when the statutes of the Lord have been made known to you.  
8-11. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Your servant warned. Do you not find it so—that oftentimes a text of Scripture comes to your mind just at the moment when you were about to suffer spiritual shipwreck? When you would have done something that would have caused you lifelong grief and vast damage, the Word of God has stepped before you with the flaming danger signal and you have been stopped in time!  
11. And in keeping of them there is great reward. Not for keeping of them, for it is not of debt, but, “in keeping of them.” It is always best to do as God bids you. You never forget a duty, or refuse to do it without suffering loss, and every mistake you make, with regard to your Lord’s will, is a damage to yourselves. The keeping of His commands is most soul-enriching. The most profitable business that a child of God can carry on is the business of obedience to his Lord’s commands. “In keeping of them there is great reward.”  
12. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. The man who searches his heart most will yet leave some sin undiscovered and he who says, “I have no sin. I am living without sin,” has surely never seen into his own heart at all! He must be an utter stranger to the condition it is in. Let this be the prayer of each one of us—“Cleanse me from secret faults.”  
13. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins. “Let me never dare to do what I know to be wrong. Let me not say, ‘I will go just so far and then stop.’ Let me not tempt the Holy Spirit of God. Oh, let me never tempt the devil to tempt me and put myself into a dangerous position under the notion that God will keep me if I am His child! ‘Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins.’”  
13. Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. You will never go into apostasy if you are watchful against presumption. Those men who, like Judas, commit the great transgression and utterly perish, are men who knew nothing about watching their own hearts, but who presumed, and were sinfully bold and self-confident—and so came to an ill end. You know where John Bunyan says Heedless and Too-Bold went—and there are many like them.  
14. Let the word of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Your sight; O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer.

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GOD IN NATURE AND IN REVELATION

NO. 3314

**A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 1912.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 11, 1866.

*“The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.” Psalm 19:7-9.*

[Another Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon upon the first clause of verse 7 is #2870, Volume 50—REVELATION AND CONVERSION—  
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

WHAT I have to say this evening will really be an exposition of the whole Psalm. I have only selected these three verses for the convenience of having a short text. The Psalm begins upon a high note—“The heavens declare the Glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” Only let the film of unbelief be taken from our eyes and we shall see that everything in the great temple of Nature proclaims the greatness and the Glory of God. Only let the naturally deaf ear be unstopped and there will be heard voices—mysterious yet clearly intelligible—revealing that God is still here working in Providence, as of old He worked in Creation. It seems to me that those persons who think that Christians are not to be delighted with the wonders and beauties of the natural world, differ very widely from the Psalmist whose words we are considering. One truly excellent man, whom we all very highly esteem, declared that when travelling up the Rhine, he did not look at the landscape because he desired to have his thoughts completely taken up with spiritual things. I cannot condemn the good man, yet I think that as I am dwelling in my Father’s House, I ought to take delight in my Father’s works—and I must be a strange sort of child if I think it is a token of my affection for my Father not to care to look at the garden which He has laid out or the House which He has built! While earnestly exhorting you to be spirituallyminded, I would remind you that it is just as easy to be spirituallyminded with your eyes open as with your eyes shut to all the beauties of Nature by which you are surrounded!

There are two things in the Psalm about which I am going to speak. The first is a parallel intended. And the second, praise expressed.

I. First, there is A PARALLEL INTENDED.  
This parallel was suggested to my mind while reading Bishop Horne’s Commentary upon this Psalm. He confesses his acknowledgment to some older author for the idea. The parallel is this—David first extols the Revelation of God in Nature, and then extols the Revelation of God in His Word. And he seems to imply that there is a likeness between the two Revelations—that they are, in fact, two books of the same Revelation or two parts of one great poem!  
In reading David’s remarks concerning the heavens, we may truthfully apply them to the Scriptures. Like the heavens, the Scriptures declare the Glory of God, and like the firmament, they show His handiwork. Only that while the firmament shows God’s handiwork in Creation, the Word of God shows that same handiwork in Redemption, in that new creation by Him who says, “Behold, I make all things new.” Consider first the vast expanse of the heavens. Who can measure the great curtain which God has stretched out as a tent to dwell in? Who knows the height thereof or the breadth thereof? Where are the compasses that can describe this wondrous circle? And the Scriptures are just as expansive as are the heavens—no man has yet compassed all the Truth of Divine Revelation. As we look up to the great doctrines that tower above us like the high mountains, we may well say, “They are high, we cannot attain unto them.” The length and breadth and depth and height of Scripture all surpass the comprehension of mortal men! And though we do unfeignedly believe and devoutly rejoice in them, it is not within the range of our powers to fully comprehend them. There are some persons who talk as if they know the whole circle of Divine Truth. They think they have put the great ocean of Revelation into the small measure of their mortal capacity, but you know, dear Friends, that it is not so. No man will ever be able to hold the heavens in his hand or to compass the firmament with a span. But even if he could do this, he would still find that the Word of God in all its wondrous immensity was too vast for him to grasp! We must hold firmly whatever we have learned of the Truth of God, but we must always be prepared to learn more. To say of my Bible that I have attained to every height that it reveals, is as foolish as to say that I have reached the highest degree of spiritual life that is possible. Paul said, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” And when I have strived my utmost to know the Word of God, I still feel that I have need to pray, “Teach me Your statutes, O Lord, and enlarge my understanding that I may know more and more of Your Truth!” For expanse, for loftiness, for brightness, for glory, the Scriptures are comparable to the heavens which declare the Glory of God—and to the firmament which shows His handiwork.  
Then the Psalmist goes on to say, “Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge,” and so, the Revelation of God in the

Scriptures is always speaking to men . Let them turn to it whenever they may—it has a message for them at all seasons. When we are happy and rejoicing, it has a voice for our brightest day! And when we are mourning and sorrowing, it is the comfort of our darkest night. During this long night of the Church’s history—the long night of her Lord’s absence—His true ministers are enabled to shine as stars in His right hand and many a sorrowful spirit is cheered, and many a mariner upon the sea of life is guided by their light. By-and-by, the blessed Sun of Righteousness shall again arise with healing in His wings—and then throughout the long and bright millennia day, and afterwards throughout that everlasting day to which there shall be no night—we shall continue to learn more and more of the wonders of that Revelation which He has given us in His Word.

One great glory of the heavens is that they have a voice to all lands— “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” In a language understood by all the sons of men—not in the language of only the Jew or of the Gentile, not in the language of the barbarian or the Greek, alone, but in the language of all alike—ancient and modern, bond and free—the voice of the heavens has gone forth the wide world over declaring the Glory of God! So is it with the Gospel! No matter where you introduce it, its message is adapted to all the sons of men. Paul proved the power of the Gospel among the idolaters of Lycaonia and among the sages of Greece. It has a voice for men of all temperaments. It speaks with equal authority to the sturdy Anglo-Saxon and to the more volatile Frenchman. It has a peculiar facility for adapting itself to all nationalities—it is neither the Gospel of the Englishman, alone, nor of the American, nor of the African, but it speaks to—

*“All people that on earth do dwell!”*  
Wherever the Bible goes, it appears not as an exotic, but as a homegrown flower! And whenever the Gospel is preached, it comes, not as a Revelation from the East, or the West, or the North, or the South, but as God’s message to all mankind in the whole world!

The glory of the Scriptures is like the glory of the heavens—“in them has He set a tabernacle for the sun”—and in the Word of God there is a tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness. It is within the Truths of Divine Revelation that Jesus Christ abides as the sun does in its proper sphere. What would the heavens be without the sun? And what would the Scriptures be without the Sun of Righteousness? I may truly say of the Bible—

*“Here I behold my Savior’s face*

*Almost on every page.”*  
The glory of the Gospel is that in it, God is revealed as manifest in human flesh—all the Divine attributes are displayed in the Person of Emmanuel, God With Us. Take Jesus Christ away from the Gospel and its power is gone—and take Jesus Christ away from the Christian ministry and it becomes utterly powerless. I am grieved to have to say it, but I believe that it is because there has been so little preaching of Christ in many of our pulpits that the hearers have been driven off to Romanism and to all sorts of errors. The human heart needs some supreme object of affection—and it can never be satisfied with philosophical essays, or discussions about morality, or similar themes which have wasted hundreds of Sundays and made the services of the sanctuary a weariness to God’s people. Oh, that there were more preaching of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! If He is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him—and He must be lifted up, or else the preaching is a mere sham, a joy to devils, but to no one else!

David next very expressively says of the sun, “which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,” and is not this a true picture of Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures? He compared Himself to a bridegroom during His earthly ministry and this is His relationship to His Church, which is “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” He is here said to be “coming out of His chamber,” as He came out of the council chamber of the Divine decree, saying, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart”—coming out of the chamber of the Divine and invisible, and dressing Himself in the humble robes of our humanity! Coming to a life of sorrow and suffering, yet coming to it with joyous steps because He delighted to do the will of God and was charmed to redeem His spouse from death and Hell! Then later, coming out of the chamber in which He had concealed the glories of His Deity during the 33 years of His sojourn among men. And now, coming out of His chamber continually as His Gospel is faithfully proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit! Verily, this is a true picture of Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures, “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.”

It is also a picture of Him as a Champion—“and rejoices as a strong man to rule a race”—“as a strong man”—not as a weakling, panting and struggling to stay on the track, but as a strong man rejoicing because he knows that he shall victoriously reach the goal! Coming forth in the Gospel, Sunday by Sunday, and week by week, our Lord Jesus Christ does not come forth to be defeated! He does not come forth, as some of my Brothers seen to imagine, needing their proofs of His existence and Deity! Or their apologies for His Gospel, but He comes forth to achieve His everlasting purposes, that He may be able to say to His Father at the last even as He said when here upon the earth, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.” “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” Like a strong man rejoicing to run a race, He is confident that He shall reach the goal and win the prize. It is a long race, a toilsome race, a race in which there are many competitors—but as Jesus looks at them, He knows that He will beat them all—and that the crown of victory shall surely be His!

I hope some poor troubled soul will be comforted by the next verse of the Psalm—“His goings forth is from the end of the Heaven, and His circuit unto the end of it.” The light of the sun reaches even the ice-caves of the frozen North and it pours down it shining rays most lavishly upon—

*“India’s coral strand”—*  
and—  
*“Where Africa’s sunny fountains  
Roll down their golden sand.”*  
So is it in the going forth of Christ in His Gospel—“His going forth is from the end of Heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it.” The light of His Gospel shines upon all ranks, all classes and all characters—the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate! And the time shall come when it will shine over the whole world, for—  
**“Jesus shall reign wherever the sun  
Does his successive journeys run—  
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall grow and wane no more.”**Then the Psalmist adds, “and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” The heat of the sun finds out the little flower in the darkest glade of the forest and no doubt it exerts a mysterious influence even in the depths of the sea and at the bottom of the deepest mines! “There is nothing hid from the heat thereof,” even though much is hid from the light thereof. So is it with the Gospel and with the love of Christ. Where some of you are tonight, you may imagine that you are hidden from the heat of the Savior’s love, but is it so? You hear the Gospel, do you not? That is something, but you say that you want to find the Christ who has His tabernacle in the Gospel. But that very desire of yours proves that you are not hidden from the heat of the Savior’s love, for that desire is one of the gifts of His Grace! If you have any brokenness of heart, any consciousness of guilt, any inclination towards repentance, this is the work of Christ! Trust His EverBlessed Spirit! The flower does not know that it could not bloom without the sun, but it is true. Perhaps it thinks that the sun has too much to do in watching over the wide expanse of sea and land, and in seeing its beams reflected from the glittering palace roof to notice one poor little poppy in a glen or one primrose hidden away in a mossy bank! But it is not so. The sun sheds its beams upon all and is none the poorer for doing so! And so is it with the love of Christ. If you feel even a longing after Him, that is a proof that you are not hidden from the heat of His love! Breathe this prayer again and again, “Jesus, You glorious Sun of Righteousness, shine on me and fill me with Your Divine Grace!” As the sunflower is said to turn its face to the sun, so turn your face to Christ! I have noticed that flowers which grow in that part of the garden which is much in the shade always try to twist themselves into the sunlight if they can—and you have probably noticed that when you have flowers at your windows at home, they always try to grow towards the glass. Do seek, especially if you are a Believer, to grow towards the light, and most of all to grow towards Christ who is the Light, the Light of the World, the Sun of Righteousness! Try to catch as many of His heavenly beams as you can. Remember that the sun is none the less glorious because he gives so many of his beams to the flowers—and Jesus Christ will be no loser by the gift of His Grace to you! The Sun of Righteousness will be just as bright and just as glorious as before! No, He will be all the more glorious as His Glory is displayed in you!  
I want you, then, to look upon the Word of God with great reverence and affection because therein is set a tabernacle for Jesus Christ. If you would learn all that you can concerning Jesus Christ, you must diligently study the Word which reveals Him to us.  
II. Having spoken upon the parallel intended, I now turn to our second subject which is PRAISE EXPRESSED. I remind you again that I am giving an exposition rather than preaching a sermon—and I very much question whether it would not be better if we more often expounded Scripture rather than gave utterance to so many of our own words and thoughts.  
In speaking in this Psalm concerning the Word of God, David uses six different expression to describe it. And to each one he attaches a special tribute to commend it to us. As a rule, the ungodly know the Bible only by one name or, perhaps, two. They call it the Bible or the Scriptures— and that is about all that most of those know concerning it. But a man who is well acquainted with its contents has many names for it. The most notable instance of this is the 119th Psalm, which contains 176 verses, almost everyone of which has a mention of the Word of the Lord. It would be a profitable exercise to read that long Psalm through carefully—and to note all the variations of expression that the Psalmist uses concerning the Scriptures as far as they were known to him. But for our present purpose it will suffice if we confine our thoughts to the six descriptions and tributes that we find in this 19th Psalm.  
First, David says, “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” In the margin, we have the word, “Doctrine,” as another rendering of the word, Law, and we know that the term, “the Law of the Lord” is not restricted to the Decalogue, so we shall not do wrong if we apply this expression to the Gospel which is God’s special means of converting souls—and to the whole Revelation of God’s plan and method of salvation which we find in the Scriptures. If I want to know how I am to be saved, I come to this blessed Book and I read here, “the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” which Paul said had made him free from the Law of sin and death. I read here Christ’s own words, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” I read here the matchless story of Him on who I am to believe. I read about His Person, His Character, His Doctrine, His mission—and this “Law of the Lord” begins to operate upon my heart as I read it! It not only changes my outward actions, but it renews my mind, it alters the whole bent and purpose of my life—in David’s phrase—it converts my soul! The springs of my being, which once were poisoned by sin, become purified by Grace. I know that you have found this to be true, Beloved, and that, therefore, you love this “Law of the Lord.” McCheyne says that it is God’s Word, and not our comments upon it, that saves souls. And I have frequently noticed, in conversions, that it has not been so much the word of the preacher that has been blessed as the Word of God, itself—though this, of course, is a rule to which there are exceptions, for our Lord Jesus, Himself, said in His great intercessory prayer, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them, also, which shall believe on Me through their word”—not only through Christ’s own word, but through the truthful and faithful testimony off His servants—and still is the word of earnest, believing preachers and teachers blessed to their hearers and scholars! Yet the great converting agency is the Word of God, for this “Law of the Lord is perfect”—there is nothing in it in excess and there is nothing omitted from it. It is perfect in all its operations upon my nature, perfect to inspire my whole life and to kindle enthusiasm in my soul, perfect to enlighten my understanding and to subdue my will, perfect for everything which is needed for the conversion of my soul!  
David next says, “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” I take this word, “testimony,” to mean the Revelation of Himself which God has given us in His Word. He gives testimony to His own Fatherhood and to His adoption into His family of all who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. He gives testimony to all His attributes as they are revealed in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gives testimony to His own everlasting love and to His faithfulness to every promise which He has made to His elect. He gives testimony to many things which we could never have discovered from Nature and all His testimony makes the simple wise. Over the porch of one of the academies in Athens was written, “He that is ignorant of arithmetic may not enter here.” But over the porch of God’s Word is inscribed, “He that is ignorant is welcome here.” “The testimony of the Lord” is full of Divine Wisdom, yet it is put into such plain language that even children can understand it—so the simple come to it that they may be made wise and, often that which is hidden from the wise and prudent is revealed unto babes—for so it seems good in God’s sight!  
I take the Word of God, then, as first of all teaching me how my soul may be converted. And then, being converted, I come to this blessed Book with quite another objective—not to find out how I am to be saved, but that I may learn more concerning the God who has saved me! And as I read His testimony with regard to Himself, it makes my simple soul wise.

When I have got as far as that, I need something more, and David next says, “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.” By this word, “statutes,” I understand the Lord’s ordinances of decree, the King’s royal edicts and mandates—and also His promises which are a transcript of His decrees. David says that these “statutes of the Lord are right.” Of course they are, because they are His statutes—and that they cause the heart to rejoice—a statement we can confirm from our own experience! I have often confessed that when my spirit gets depressed, nothing will sustain it but the good, old-fashioned, Calvinistic Doctrine. You may be content with the fare set before you by the modern school of preachers when you are not hungry. You may enjoy it when there is fine weather. But when storms of tribulation are howling around you, when you are conscious of a great need of soul-satisfying food, then I believe that the old Augustinian Doctrine—which is the Doctrine of the Apostle Paul and of His Lord and Master, Jesus Christ—is the only fare upon which your heart can feast with rejoicing! How sweet it is, at such a time, to fall back upon the eternal purposes of God in Christ Jesus! To know one’s calling and election sure, to know that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”—this is, indeed, “a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.” King Lemuel’s mother said, “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that are of heavy hearts.” And in a Spiritual sense, it is the strong drink and the nourishing wine of the Doctrines of Grace that can alone sustain those who are spiritually ready to perish and heavy of heart! There are some who would agree with David as far as we have gone, but they are not so eager to listen to his next sentence—“The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” Being converted, a man learns all he can of the testimony of the Lord, then his heart rejoices in the statutes of the Lord and he goes on to get further enlightenment from the commandment of the Lord. Some persons never seem to have their eyes enlightened because they neglect to obey the Lord’s precepts. Disobedience is sure to bring its own punishment and there are some who cannot clearly read their own interest in Christ because their neglect to keep His commandments has closed their eyes just as a cloud of dust might have done. There is a great reward for those who obey His precepts and although we are saved by Grace, and not by our works, yet in the economy of Grace there are certain rewards which are only given to them who diligently keep the King’s commandments! Happy are they who, like Caleb, follow the Lord fully. Surely they shall be among the virgin souls that, in the heavenly Mount Zion, “follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” David next mentions a very practical matter—“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.” Some kinds of fear are anything but clean! “The fear of man” has been a foul snare in which many have been captured for the devil. Compromise is very popular, today, but the Bible is a most uncompromising Book—and “the fear of the Lord” is a most uncompromising principle! Once let this gracious fear thoroughly permeate our soul and we shall never lose it, for David truly says that it endures forever. If ever a man is really dead, buried and risen with Christ, there is no fear of his ever undergoing such a backward process as being dead with Christ and then alive again to the world! There are some principles which are only powerful for a time, but the principle of Grace, which produces the fear of the Lord, exerts a permanent influence upon everyone in whom the Holy Spirit works it—and there is no possibility of the love of the world or the fear of man casting it out! May that gracious Spirit work this holy fear in each one of us!  
Then, lastly, David says, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Whenever I think of the judgments of the Lord in the olden times, I always regard them as righteous judgments. Just were You, O Lord, when You did pour down the fiery hail upon Sodom and Gomorrah! When You did smite Pharaoh and overthrow his hosts in the Red Sea, and when Your angel slew the army of Sennacherib! Just have You been, O God, in overturning ancient monarchs which had become hoary in iniquity! And these are “the judgments of the Lord” which are yet to be executed, concerning which we have the repeated declarations of Revelation that they will all be “true and righteous.” These are the very words that are used concerning the Lord’s judgments upon that great harlot which has corrupted the earth with her fornications! With this blessed Book in our hands—and especially if its Truths are enshrined in our hearts—we may confidently face the future and not be alarmed by any of the errors and heresies that may spring up around us! The teachers of falsehood are only imitating the folly of the builders of Babel—and all their inventions will but end in their own confusion.  
The sun has gone down and in an hour or two the world will appear in a more somber dress than it now wears. If you come out at midnight, you will see nothing but the twinkling stars and a few glimmering lamps. Yet the sun is not put out—his light is not quenched. Wait till the appointed time and the great light of day shall again be “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.” Darkness may be covering your mind tonight. Darkness may cover your circumstances. Darkness may, for a while, cover even the Church of God on earth—but that old promise is still true—“Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteous arise with healing in His wings.” Only be sure that you are on the Lord’s side! Put your trust in the precious blood of Jesus and wait for Him more than they that watch for the morning. And then, when He comes, it will be to you a day of light and not of darkness, and the days of your mourning will have ended forever! So may the Lord comfort your hearts, sustain you under every trial, keep you in His love and enable you patiently to wait for His coming, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 119:9-32.**

Verse 9. How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Your Word. “How shall a young man cleanse his way?” A vital and solemn question. His way is full of temptations and he, himself, has strong passions. How shall he make his way clean and keep it so? “By taking heed thereto according to Your Word.” Without heed he will soon be in the mire, but carefully walking with God’s Word as his rule, by the blessing of God’s Grace it will keep him out of sin.

10. With my whole heart have I sought You: O let me not wander from Your commandments. There might be thought in this confession to be some commendation of himself and, therefore, he salts it with this prayer—“I have sought You, Lord, sincerely, but still, notwithstanding that, I am very apt to stray away. And I shall sadly wander unless You keep me. O let me not wander from Your commandments.”

11. Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You. The best thing put into the best place for the best of all purposes! There is no antidote against sin like the possession of the Word of God in the soul.

12. Blessed are You, O LORD: teach me Your statutes. You are blessed, make me blessed. You are the happy God, instruct me in the way of happiness.

13. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I am a learner, but I have tried to be a teacher, too. I have not kept the Word of God to myself as though it were only a personal treasure for me, but what I have heard in the secret chamber of fellowship, that have I spoken on the housetops. Have you published abroad what you know? Then you are the person to learn more. When men drop their money into a money box, they have to break it to get it out again, and if they have not need of it they will not do so. God does not care to drop His treasure into a heart that never uses it and imparts it. Let your lips speak what your heart learns!

14. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. If all sorts of riches were put together, I have found them all, and more than them all in Your testimonies! I am rich in all respects when I have You.

15. I will meditate on Your precepts, and have respect unto Your way. Meditation treads the wine press and gets the juice out of the grapes. A man may read too much if he reads without meditation. “I will meditate.” It is the harvesting by reaping of what we have sown by reading.

16. I will delight myself in Your statutes: I will not forget Your Word. I will take a deep pleasure in them and I will find an intense joy in every pondering of them. “I will not forget Your Word.” I will never let it go out of the precincts of my memory. I will recall again and again. I will always have a text of Your precious Book ready to my tongue.

17. Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live, and keep Your Word. Give me much of Your comfort, royally of Yourself! Deal bountifully with me. I have great necessities. I am a mass of needs, therefore, “Deal bountifully with me that I may live.” And I have great tendencies to wander. Great risks and perils. Give me abundance of Grace that I may keep Your Word.

18. Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law. The wonders are there—cause me to behold them! A man may have a fair landscape before him, rich in all beauties of form and color, but if his eyes are closed, is he better for it?

19. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Your commandments from me. “I am a stranger in the earth.” I do not now belong to it. I am born and bound for Heaven. I am a pilgrim here—men do not understand me, neither have I any settled business here. “I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Your commandments from me.” Oh, remember that I am Your alien, Your banished one! Send me love messages from the old home and loved country.

20. My soul breaks for the longing that it has unto Your judgments at all times. Broken souls are many. But not on this account! Oh, how few are in danger of breaking through such a longing as this! Would God there were many more that did sigh and cry after the Word of God—for longings such as these are sure to lead to an earnest search—and the earnest search will increase knowledge and increase Grace.

21. You have rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from Your commandments. A proud man is surely a sinful man. He may think himself a righteous man, but he cannot be so. He has gone far astray from the very essence of God’s Law, which is that he should walk humbly with his God.

22. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Your testimonies. A man that does that is pretty sure to be reproached and to be condemned by man, for they think that one who follows God faithfully “is very old-fashioned, he has not much spirit, he has not drunk in the philosophy of the age, he is a fossilized Christian,” and so on. Well, we can bear all such reproach—still we are truly glad when we escape it.

23. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but Your servant did meditate on Your statutes. And a great man’s word goes a long way with some people. They think a prince a great authority. “But Your servant did meditate on Your statutes.” He did not burst out in angry reply. He did not give fierce railing for railing, but he sat himself down as quietly as he could—the more abundantly to meditate on God’s statutes. What calmness there is here and what wisdom! For if princes should speak against us, and the great ones of the earth should rail, what does it matter? If they drive us away from our faith, it would matter—but if they drive us to our Bibles, it is a benefit!

24, 25. Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors. My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken You me according to Your Word. Here He prays for quickening. He felt the spiritual death that was so natural to him, the heaviness of his heart, the tendency to sink, the attractions of the world.

26. I have declared my ways, and You heard me: teach me Your statutes. Open confession is good for the soul and I have made this confession. You have heard me. Now “teach me Your statutes.”

27. Make me to understand the way of Your precepts, so shall I talk of Your wondrous works. Lord ground me and found me in Your knowledge. Give me to know fully, firmly, what I do know. I would not be as a man that eats, but thinks not from where the bread came, but I would wish to understand the way of Your precepts. “So shall I talk of Your wondrous works.”

28. My soul melts for heaviness. Strengthen You me according unto Your Word. Will not this prayer suit some that are in this house this evening who are very dull and depressed? Oh, if your soul sinks, still pray and say, “Strengthen You me.” You need strength, dear Friends. If you had more strength, your troubles would not crush you. Your soul would not melt if you had more strength and confidence.

29, 30. Remove from me the way of lying: and graciously grant me Your Law. I have chosen the way of truth: Your judgments have I laid before me. As a captain lays out his chart so as to keep his course correctly and safely, so I try to sail by it. I have chosen Your Law and precepts and commands as my course, and I would gladly keep to them.

31. I have stuck unto Your testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. I am glued to them—there is no separating me, no tearing me apart from them! “O Lord, put me not to shame.”

32. I will run the way of Your commandments when You shall enlarge my heart. I will go quicker and faster, I will have more energy, more flaming zeal in Your service—“When You shall enlarge my heart.” O Lord, it is very narrow and very contracted. I cannot think great thoughts, nor do great things, nor believe great promises unless You shall enlarge my heart! Lord, give me a larger heart, stronger to obey, more tender to love for Your name’s sake!

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GOODNESS GOING BEFORE  
NO. 3329

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1912.

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**“You prevent Him with the blessings of goodness.” Psalm 21:3.**

OUR text is one of many instances of the way in which words change their meanings. The word, “prevent,” as we now use it, has a very different meaning from that which it had when our translators used it. It now signifies to get before one, to stop up his path, to prevent his going a certain way, just as the angel “prevented” Balaam, standing with his sword drawn in his hand that he might not pass that way. This is only the modern use of the word, but the real and ancient use of it was simply, “to go before.” “You go before Him with the blessings of goodness.” That is the real meaning of the word—and when we speak of, “preventing Grace,” we do not intend to describe the Grace that keeps us from sin, but the Grace which goes before our actually believing in Christ— “prevenient Grace,” as we are accustomed to call it theologically—Grace which comes to us while as yet we are not conscious of its power, or have no desire towards it.

The meaning of the text, then, is not that Christ was prevented, or hindered from doing anything that He wished to do, by God’s goodness, but that God’s goodness went before, preceded, heralded Him. That word, “preceded,” has taken in our language in the present age the force and meaning which the word, “prevent,” had at the time of the translation of our authorized version of the Bible, so that now we should say, instead, “You precede Him, got before Him with the blessings of Your goodness.”

I shall take the text on this occasion, then, in two ways. First, noticing its application to our Lord Jesus Christ, personally, and then its application to Him mystically—that is to say, to every believing soul that is truly in Him.

First, then—  
I. ITS APPLICATION TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST PERSONALLY. It is quite certain that God did precede Him with the blessings of goodness. That is to say, before our Lord Jesus Christ actually came into the world and bowed His head in death, multitudes of spirits were given to Him as His reward—that tens of thousands entered into God’s Redemption by virtue of an Atonement that was not as yet offered—and washed away their sins in a fountain filled with blood which had not been literally opened, but which was opened in the purpose of God and in its Divine Operation from before the foundation of the world, for is He not called, “the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world”? Brothers and Sisters, see the wondrous power of the death of our Savior! His blood not only cries from the ground when it is spilt, but it cried all down the ages which preceded the actual blood-shedding! It opened the gates of Heaven to sinners, it was sprinkled on the consciences of Believers and made sinful men to be “accepted in the Beloved” even before it had dropped in bloody sweat in Gethsemane, or had been made to flow in streams under the lash in Gabbatha, or had been poured forth from the five sacred wounds upon the Cross of Calvary! “You precede Him with the blessings of goodness.”  
Just as some mighty conquerors, when they entered in triumph into Rome not only had behind them the trophies of their victory, but before them the streets were strewn with flowers and made sweet with the perfumes rained upon them before they came, so was it with the Savior. Before He came, the world was blessed by His coming! Before He, Himself, appeared, I may say that death and Hell were defeated in anticipation. Just as in our own land there is a brightness that covers the sky before the sun has actually risen above the horizon, so was it with the world— there was the Light of God in it before Christ came. It was Light, however, which came from Him, for He is the Light of the World, the Light that lights every man that comes into the world—but it came before He, Himself, appeared! In this verse, then, it must be said of King Jesus, “You precede Him with the blessings of goodness.”  
And to ponder another phase of this same thought, our Lord Jesus Christ was honored among the sons of men before He had performed His great work.  
We honor our Lord because He has redeemed us, and it is this that makes them sing before the eternal Throne of God, “He has loved us, and redeemed us unto God by His blood.” But long before the Redemption price had been paid, I doubt not that Christ was honored by the saints in Heaven, for they knew that their coming there was on the same ground and footing as the saints do now! I believe, therefore, that long before He lived and died on earth, they cast their crowns at His feet and said, “You are worthy.” I have frequently heard it said that there was no faith in Heaven, but I have never been able to receive that idea. At any rate, there must have been faith in Heaven before Christ died! The celestial spirits must have had a firm conviction that Christ would come upon the earth and must have felt that their security depended upon the Infallible oath and promise that in the fullness of time He would offer Himself as a Sacrifice. Indeed, it seems to me that there is still faith in Heaven as to that matter, for they have to believe as we do in the Second Advent, in the resurrection of the dead and in many wondrous promises which as yet have not been fulfilled. Certainly, Beloved, we may say of the Master that His head was crowned with the Glory of the crown of thorns before it was crowned with the shame! And in this sense He was preceded with the blessings of goodness. Abraham saw His day. He saw it and was glad— and in that gladness of Abraham, Jesus Christ rejoiced! David sang of Him and rested upon Him with such faith that in that faith the Savior found a solace. All those who were able to look through that smoke of the types and ceremonies—and to see the substance of the true Redemption—all gave honor and Glory to Him, and this I say was before He had actually won that Glory by His death—“You precede Him with the blessings of goodness.”

It seems to me, however, that the text need not be read literally, or interpreted exactly according to its words, but the spirit of it is more to be observed. That spirit appears to be this—that Christ does not tardily obtain from His father the blessings of goodness, but they come from God with freeness and Divine liberality, so that it may truly be said, “You precede Him with the blessings of goodness.” Take an instance. Our Savior says, “I will not pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you, for you have loved Me.” It was as if He put it in these words and had said, “I should not have to wait pleading at the Throne, for the Father, Himself, is so willing to give, that He will precede me with the blessings of goodness.” Ah, my dear Friends, if it is a promise which belongs to us poor pleaders that before we call, He will answer, and while we are speaking He will hear, do you not think that this blessing emphatically belongs to the Great Intercessor—the Lord Jesus—so that the Father precedes Him with “the blessings of goodness”? We are accustomed to sing to Him as pleading before the Eternal Throne, but we must forever banish from our minds all idea of His needing to plead because God is unwilling to hear! No, what the Son desires, the Father desires—that which He seeks at the Divine Throne is flowing from that Throne—but His intercession it not the cause of it, but the channel through which it comes to us! We know that God’s goodness was not caused by the death of Christ—  
*“‘Twas not to make the Father’s love  
Towards His people known  
That Jesus, from the realms above,  
On His kind errand came!  
‘Twas not the pangs that He endured,  
Nor all the woes He bore  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was Love before!”*  
God loved His people with a love that surpassed all thought before the Savior came. And now that that Savior pleads for us, His plea is not the cause of the blessing, but the channel through which the blessing comes down to us “You precede Him with the blessings of goodness.”  
But then, Beloved, what a sweet thought this is, that wherever the Savior comes, God’s blessings come with Him, come behind Him, no, even come before Him! Sometimes when a man walks, his shadow goes before him. The shadow of Peter healed the sick, and so the shadow of the Savior, when He is coming to a soul, begins to heal it. Why, I have known some who have been blessed by the very shadow of Christ—I mean that before they were actually converted, before the new heart and the right spirit were given to them, the very shadow of Christ, at least more or less, made them desire to change their ways. The very shadow of Christ, I say, falling before them had somewhat of a healing effect upon their souls even before they had put their fingers into the print of the nails or thrust their hands into His side! You, Brothers and Sisters, who have had communion with Christ, will know that before you are actually conscious of the love of Christ being shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will often have some notion of it, for a calm suddenly comes upon you before He, Himself, comes.  
He makes all things ready just as He did at the Passover, when He sent His disciples to prepare the upper room. His Holy Spirit often comes to make ready your heart to receive Him so that when He comes you may be ready to open the door because He has been preceded by the “blessings of goodness.” Even before He comes, comes a blessing from Him! Beloved, what must be the treasures that are in Him? What the troops of angelic mercies that surround Him? What the heavenly blessings, what the waves upon waves of celestial benedictions that must be in Himself, in His own Person! If His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, where did they get the sweet odor from but from Himself? They smell of the cassia, but He is the cassia! “A bundle of myrrh is my Well-Beloved unto me.” As a cluster of camphor in the vineyards of Engedi, is He to those who know His fragrance and delight in His sweetness! We may say of Him, “You precede Him with the blessings of goodness,” but as for Himself, He is goodness itself! Do you not think that Bernard of Clairvaux had the right idea when he penned that ancient hymn which has been so sweetly translated—  
*“Jesus, the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills my breast!  
But sweeter far Your face to see,  
And in Your Presence rest.”*  
Then he goes on—  
So, then, we leave this point as it refers to our Lord, personally, reminding ourselves that all the blessings of God’s goodness are, “Yes, and Amen, in Christ Jesus to the Glory of God,” to us, and they all come to us through Him. We now turn to our second point—  
II. ITS APPLICATION TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST MYSTICALLY, that is, TO EVERY BELIEVING SOUL IN HIM. We too, can say to God, “You have preceded us with the blessings of goodness.”  
I want you to go back a little in your own histories. Just take out your diaries and turn back to the book of His mercies. I want you to think of prevenient Providences. You may open your children’s hymnbook if you like, and you may sing—  
*“I thank the goodness and the Grace,  
Which on my birth have smiled  
That in this land I passed my days,  
A happy English child.  
I was not born a little slave,  
To labor in the sun,  
Wishing I were put in my grave,  
And all my labor done.  
I was not born as thousands are,  
Where God was never known  
And taught to pray a senseless prayer  
To blocks of wood and stone.  
My God, I thank You who have planned,  
A better lot for me!  
And placed me in this happy land,  
Where I can hear of Thee.”*  
I remember hearing it once said that this was a hymn for little Pharisees, but the man who said that did not know any better and was, therefore, to be pitied. It is a hymn which a child may very gratefully sing and which we may all join in when we thank God for the Providence which caused us to be born where the Gospel is preached!  
Let us be thankful, too, many of us, that we were born in households where the name of Jesus was among the earliest sounds that caught our ears! We were rocked in our cradles to the hymns of Zion and the name of the Savior mingled with the very hush of the lullaby. With some here, alas, it was oaths and curses and the first sounds they heard were drunken brawls and profanity and blasphemy! If, dear Friends—as many of you have been—you were born into Christian families, I want you to think of it and then say, “You precede me with the blessings of goodness.” Then after your birth, but long before your conversion, what wonderful Providences fell to our lot! Our conversion may even have been brought about by the most trifling circumstances. When you were a bound apprentice, young man, perhaps you were from an ungodly family and it was a remarkable Providence which put you under a Christian master! And you, my young Friend, when you first went out to service, or as nursery-governess, it was a great mercy that you had a Christian fellow servant, or met with someone to speak with you concerning the things of God! How many chances, as we say, there were that you would not go to such a place and make them into strong helpers to your highest good! And since then, just think over the preserving Providences that you had even before you were converted. If you had died before conversion, where would you have been? Think, too, of the Providences which tended to bring you to the place where you live and where you first heard the Word of God, and the Providences which prepared your soul to be saved.  
I have no doubt that sometimes a man who has been afflicted is more likely to be blessed by a sermon than he would be if he had not been so afflicted. And so, the loss of a child, or having a sick wife, or a serious injury to property are all plows which God uses in Providence to make a man ready to receive the Gospel. “I would never have seen,” said one man, “if I had not lost my eyes.” “Ah,” said another, “I would never have been able to run if I had not broken my legs.” Our so-called misfortunes are sometimes our greatest benedictions and are often overruled by the Lord to be the means by which we are brought into the way of being blessed—and where He may afterwards meet with us with the blessings of goodness! You have been praying for prosperity, my Friend, but God has not heard you. And you now say that God does not hear prayer. You have asked for a certain position and He has not given it to you, for it is a position, perhaps, in which you would be ruined. Perhaps you are of such a spirit that if you were not afflicted in Providence you would be running into all manner of mischief, but God loves you well and, therefore, He will not let you rush blindly down to destruction, but puts a clog upon you to keep you back! Let us think, then, Brothers and Sisters, of the Providence which came to us before our quickening.  
But a wider field opens up to us when we come to think not merely of preventing Providence, but of preventing Grace, the Grace that came to us before we knew Christ at all. First, Brothers and Sisters, there was the Grace of restraint which kept some of us back from committing sins which might have placed us out of the world, out of society, or out of the reach of the ordinary means of Grace. It is something to have been kept from drunkenness—it will be a theme for perpetual gratitude if we have been kept from the grosser vices by which the body, as well as the soul, may become defiled and polluted! It is no small blessing to have preserved in social life an untarnished reputation among men. Had such a woman fallen, she might never have dared to go where the Gospel was preached and was blessed to her. Had such a young man really put his hand into the till when he was severely tempted to do it, he might have lost his standing and never have been at Sunday school or in the Bible class where God met with him. Perhaps you have been strongly tempted to do a certain thing, but something came upon you—you did not know what it was—which told you, you must not do it. Preventing Grace has come and prevented you from knowing the depths of your carnal nature, because Providence has put you into a position where you cannot do as you would!

I do not doubt, Brothers and Sisters, that there is a Grace which precedes quickening, a Grace for which theology has no name, which prepares the soul for the reception of the Divine Word, which makes the soul ready before the Living Seed comes. It is a kind of Grace, at any rate, which educates the man, which makes him candid, casts out his prejudice, makes him live honestly and keeps him from falling into conceit. We know some who are unconverted whom we are very thankful to know, for we have great hopes for them. If they have not received the Truth of God in the love of it, yet they have a great love for the Truth and do not, by their outward actions, lead others into sin. I trust, in some cases at least, that these are not mere Pharisees, but that of many of them we may truly say, “You precede him with the blessings of goodness.”  
Now I shall leave this point and go on to remark that the text is true of us who are Believers in the following senses—God has preceded us in the order of merit. If He had stopped until we deserved His Grace, He would never have come! We had never known salvation if He had waited until we were worthy to receive it, for we are not worthy now! For years some of us have been serving Him, either by preaching the Gospel or in some other way, but we have no merit even now! Our poor merits have broken their legs and cannot travel. No, our merit has been waterlogged. It has gone down and foundered at sea. We have done with all thought of our own merit! And yet let us recollect that when we come to God, if we are never so guilty, He precedes us with the blessings of goodness! Though our vileness would seem to be upon our forehead, like the leprosy of old, yet we have access with boldness unto this Grace whereby we stand and rejoice in hope of the Glory to be revealed. Truly, “His ways are not as our ways, neither are His thoughts as our thoughts, for so high as the heavens are above the earth even so are His ways above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts.” I have not run an inch in the road of merit! But He has run ten thousand leagues, for in the road of merit, He precedes us with the blessings of His goodness!  
And it is not only true in the sense of merit, but it is equally true in the sense of desire. God did not wait to save us until we desired to be saved. Let me not be misunderstood, however, in the assertion. Did not Christ die to save us before we were born? Was not the Gospel sent to us before we desired to hear it? Although we sat in the House of God indifferent and did not care about it, yet it was ringing in our ears all the while! And even if we had desires, yet where did those desires come from? Were they our own desires, or were they given to us by Christ?  
Those of my Brothers who choose to take the alternative, may do so, but as far as I am concerned, I must say—  
*“‘Twas not that I did choose You,  
For, Lord, that could not be!  
This heart would still refuse You,  
But You have chosen me!”*  
I cannot take any credit to myself for coming to Christ! I did come, but I am persuaded it was a secret whisper of His love that attracted my soul. And because of that text which Jeremiah gives us so blessedly, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Or as the poet sings—  
*“He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to obey the voice Divine.”*  
God, in this, preceded us with the blessings of goodness! He taught us to desire when we neither willed nor ran, and so fulfilled the text, “it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.”  
Then, besides this, God also precedes us in endeavor. Brothers and Sisters, you and I have been endeavoring to grow in Grace and, notwithstanding the little progress we have made, yet, on the whole, God has given us a great deal more than our exertions might have led us to expect. When I look on the little zeal which some of us exhibit in private prayer and upon the little diligence which some of us have in studying the Word of God, it is amazing that we should have been enabled to have so much joy and to have so much knowledge of Divine things as we have! We have sown but little and reaped but little compared with what we might have done, but our harvest has been of infinitely greater value than the sowing might have led us to expect. Christian, you are now more advanced in the Divine Life than you might have been, or would have been on the mere ground of your own exertions! You have not advanced far because you have strived with but little earnestness, but you have had a far greater result than you might have expected. Sometimes I have found in my own soul that I have longed to have communion with Christ. I have thought that if I could but get a whisper from Him, I would be content—and before I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib! I heard no whisper fall on my outward ears, but His voice to my soul was clear and sweet! I had no vision of Christ granted to my bodily eyes, but before my faith, there stood my Beloved near to me and my heart was charmed by His Presence long before I thought I could ever reach such a state! Christ came and seconded my endeavors, no, carried me far beyond all my endeavors! When, on the other hand, I lay like a dull, dead log, and my spirit seemed unable to move, suddenly the wheels of my soul began to whirl until the axles grew hot with speed!  
Certainly, too, the Lord has preceded us in the order of our experience as to time. Mark tells us that when Christ fed the multitudes, they sat down on the green grass and that there was much grass in that place. God knew that Christ would need a banqueting hall and, therefore, He made a carpet for Him long before He came there! The pasture must come before the sheep, or else while the grass grows the flock will starve. Always notice the forestalling of God’s Providence and the forestalling of God’s Grace! He prepares before our actual necessity comes. Have you not observed this in your trials? You had a great trouble a little while ago. You had a death in the house—but a month or two before the death came, you had an unusual season of joy and you did not know why. Now you know it was sent to prepare you for your unexpected trouble! Or perhaps it was another way—this last trouble of yours did not oppress you as you thought it would because you had had another trouble before, and another before that—so that you had, as it were, grown used to troubles. You had been in the fire till you had become like a sword blade that gets annealed in the heat! I am told that before army horses are taken into battle, they are trained to bear the noise of guns firing. Certainly God trains His own chargers and makes them bear all the din and tumult of battle. He prepares us by small trials to bear larger ones! He goes before us and leaves, thus, the blessings of goodness to our souls. He is our great sympathetic Pioneer, going before us through the thick forest and jungle of trial and trouble, clearing a way for us through the brambles and thorns, and making straight in the wilderness a highway for His people, being to us as He was to Israel a cloudy fiery pillar and so, preceding us with the blessings of goodness!  
Yet again He sometimes precedes us in our labors. Before our missionaries went to the South Seas, there was a peculiar preparation of the minds of the people. They had a tradition or legend that white men would come in ships and tell them of the true God. Their minds were ready! They were looking for the vessels, and when they arrived, the people were not only waiting, but willing to receive them! You, too, will perhaps find— some of you who may be going to sail to Australia, or change your position in life—that the people among whom you are going are prepared for you and you are especially prepared as God’s witness for them! Believe that wherever you are going, that God who knows all about you and who orders your footsteps, will prepare your way before you! He will not let you go an unknown path, but one that should be trodden by the foot of His love before it shall be trodden by you. He will precede you with the blessings of goodness.  
And, lastly, my text has a very sweet meaning when we think that God will precede even our expectations. Some of us never expected the Christian life to be as happy as it has been. We have had—oh, how often!— some expectations about Heaven. I do not care to read many books about Heaven. If most of the books that have ever been written about Heaven were destroyed, I think we should know nearly as much as we do now, with them! We know more about Heaven, I believe, from our hymns than we do from our books. The hymn—

*“To those who fall how kind You are! How good to those that seek!  
But what to those who find? Ah, this,  
Nor tongue, nor pen can show!  
The love of Jesus*—*what it is,  
None but His loved ones know.”*

*“Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me!  
When shall my labors have an end  
In joy, and peace, and thee!”*

has more of Heaven in it than half the books that have been written upon the subject, or that other hymn—  
*“Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,  
Beneath your contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed!  
We know not, oh we know not, what joys await us  
there*—  
*What radiance of Glory, what bliss beyond compare.”*Now these hymns take us up even into the pearly-gated city itself, and sometimes when we have been singing—  
*“On Jordan’s stormy bank I stand,  
And cast a wistful eye  
To Canaan’s fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie.”*  
We have almost seen the—  
*“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
Arrayed in living green,”*  
and we have been ready to ask to go to be with our Savior, with whom we shall dwell forever! We expect to meet a blessed company of the saints there. We expect to have wondrous nearness to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are expecting, everyone of us, to have a bright crown. We are expecting to have perfect freedom from every ill, from pain, from sin and from sorrow! And to have what the Apostle calls “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

We are expecting to see such a place as imagination never pictured! To hear such music as has never ravished mortal ear! We are expecting to drink from such pure streams as never flowed from Lebanon’s untrodden snows! We expect something beyond what eye, or ear, or heart can teach us! Well, Brothers and Sisters, when we get there we shall find, any of us who have had great thoughts about Heaven, that our minds were too narrow and our thoughts too contracted! We shall be like the Queen of Sheba when she said, “I heard a good report in my own land, but the half has not been told me.” We shall not be able to turn to the old Book and say, “Ah, God, You have not fulfilled Your promise! I do not find this state of Glory so wondrous as I had been led to think it was.” No, Beloved, but we shall have to say even there, “You precede my imagination, my expectancy with the blessings of goodness,” and we shall have to add—  
*“Imagination’s utmost stretch  
In wonder dies away!”*  
I like that verse which our Friends sometimes sing which says that we shall—  
for so I doubt not, for a long time, at any rate, in Heaven, surprise will be one of the most blessed of our emotions—surprise to think that Heaven should be such as it is, that Christ should be so glorious and that we should be permitted to partake of His Glory! We shall feel that God has exceeded His own word and outrun His own promise, and that it was not in human speech, even with God, Himself, using it, to convey to the human mind any adequate idea of this which surpasses all comprehension and imagination—the joys which God has for those who love Him! My only regret in thinking on such a text as this is that some of you have no part in it. Oh, Friends, may God give you Grace to look to Him! How can you live on the brink of a stream and never think of the fountain? How can you receive daily mercies and yet so cruelly treat your God who gives you everything? Worse than the ox treats its owner, for the ox knows his owner and the donkey its master’s crib, but you do not know, you do not consider!  
Ah, He has indeed preceded you with the blessings of His goodness in keeping you alive, in permitting you to hear the Gospel and, above all, in this one respect, that this very night He invites you to turn to Him! The Father’s heart beats towards you and He says to you, “My erring one, come to Me, come to Me! He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. Turn you, turn you, why will you die?”—  
*“Return, O wanderer, to your home!  
Your Father calls for you.  
No longer now an exile roam  
In guilt and misery.  
Return, return!”*  
If you come to Him, there shall be no rejection, but a warm reception, and you shall be blessed forever in Jesus Christ!

**“Sing with rapture and surprise His loving kindness in the skies,”**  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 138:1-6.**  
A Psalm of David.

Verse 1. I will praise You with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto You. Before the heathen gods, however highly exalted—I will sing Your praises as in their very teeth! And the magistrates and princes and kings who think themselves gods on earth—I will not fear them or be silenced by them!

2. I will worship toward Your Holy Temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness and for Your truth: for You have magnified Your Word above all Your name. For You were far more glorious in Revelation than in Creation—Your promise did greatly transcend every other display of Yourself above all we have ever known or conceived of You! You have magnified Yourself by Your Covenant of Grace and Your works of Grace toward Your people. For this worship and praise are forever due!

3. In the day when I cried, You answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul. That is a thing to make a man sing—when in the day of trouble God comes to him, hears his prayer and works his deliverance when none else can help! God’s rescues demand our grateful songs—His deliverances our new anthems of exultant praise!

4. All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, when they hear the words of Your mouth. When Your Gospel is preached and they know it, they shall count it their honor to honor You. It is ignorance of its Glory and Grace that makes silence possible, but to hear it as God’s Word of caring love is to be compelled to extol!

5. Yes, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the Glory of the LORD. David was a king and he danced before the Ark. And he anticipated the time when other kings should not be ashamed of exuberant rejoicing in the King of kings. Oh, that it were come! May the Lord hasten it in His own time, and the choral hosts of Heaven be swelled by the presence of the crowned monarchs of earth!

6. Though the LORD is high, yet has He respect unto the lowly. That is a sweet text! One who was a scoffer met a humble child of God one morning and he said to him, “Tell me, is Your God a great God or a little God,” and the poor man said, “Sir, He is both, for, though He is so great that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet He makes Himself so little that He condescends to dwell in my poor heart.” Ah, it was sweetly said. He who fills the heavens, no, fills all things, will be our abiding Guest and Friend if we will but welcome Him.

6. But the proud He knows afar off. He has enough of them. He does not want them to come near Him. When they are miles away He knows all about them. They make a fair show, but He sees that it is all a fable and pretence. He knows them—afar off!

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CHRIST’S CROWNING GLORY  
NO. 2876

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 5, 1876.

**“His glory is great in Your salvation: honor  
and majesty have You laid upon Him.”  
Psalm 21:5.**

I FEEL quite sure that David here sings first concerning himself and then concerning the far greater King, “great David’s greater Son,” the Lord Jesus Christ. But I shall apply the text entirely to our blessed Redeemer and, surely, the Psalmist’s language is most appropriate to Him.

Some of us are going to meet, presently, around the Table of our Lord to commemorate His death for us and, of course, there must be some sorrowful processes connected with that ordinance. How can we remember His death without sorrowing over the sin which made that death necessary? How can we remember “that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and broke it,” without feeling that there is a somberness of spirit which becomes us as we surround His Table? Yet we must not indulge the mournful strain too much, for we must never forget that it is a joyous feast, not a funeral repast, to which our Lord invites us! It is a feast which reminds us of His triumph as well as of His conflict and agony. “After supper,” we are told, in the record of its institution, “they sang a hymn” and our Lord Jesus Christ would have us come to His Table in the spirit of hymn-singing, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. No funeral dirge is appropriate, here, no muffled drums nor wailing pipes—but let the daughters of song sound the loud timbre, as Miriam and the women of Israel did at the Red Sea!

Let it not be forgotten, too, that the last time this supper will ever be celebrated on earth, it will not die out amid groans and lamentations, but it will cease to be observed any longer because He will have come, whose coming will have been welcomed by the acclamation of all His saints, both those that are alive and remain, and those who come with the King and all His holy angels! This ordinance is full of joy, for each time it closes with a hymn when it is properly celebrated and, at the last, like all external symbols, it shall pass away amidst the hallelujahs of eternity! Come, then, Beloved, let us not be in a dolorous mood as we come to the Table of our Lord, but let us take all our harps down from the willows and wake their glad strings to exultant music! He, whom we remember in this ordinance, is not here, for He is risen! He is not there, on yonder crucifix. His wounds bleed no longer. No thorns surround His brow, no nails pierce His feet and hands, no spear tears open His side, for He has gone back into the Glory which was His before the worlds were made, and it is thus that we are now to think of Him—“His glory is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon Him.”

In meditating upon this text, we shall notice, first, that it reminds us of a Divine Salvation. Secondly, it sets forth the glory of Jesus in that salvation. And, thirdly, it reveals to us the reward which Jesus has obtained for that salvation—“Honor and majesty have You laid upon Him.”

I. First, then, THE TEXT REMINDS US OF A DIVINE SALVATION. It speaks of “Your salvation,” that is to say, the salvation of God, by which is intended, according to the Hebrew idiom, not merely the grandest of all salvations, the chief of all deliverances, but, actually, that the salvation of which we speak is God’s! O Brothers and Sisters, though the Truth of God is very simple and the observations I shall make upon it may be very trite, yet is it a Truth never to be put in the background that “salvation is of the Lord”!

Remember that the salvation of man is God’s, in the conception of it. He first conceived the idea of redeeming the rebellious sons of Adam. It must be so, for the sons of Adam were not born when the Lord first planned the way of their salvation. From old eternity, before yet the sun had opened its eye of fire, God, in far-reaching foresight had beheld the sons of Adam ruined by the Fall—and He resolved that, out of them He would choose a people who should be redeemed and who, to all eternity, should show forth His praise! From the august mind of the Infinite God, the first thought of salvation sprang and it was He who sketched and mapped it all out, electing unto eternal life as many as it pleased Him, settling the way by which they would be redeemed, the method by which they would be called, arranging the place, the day, the hour, the means by which they would be converted—fixing it all, according to His eternal purpose, in Infinite wisdom and prudence—for in every part it was to be of Him and through Him and to Him! Even as in the old tabernacle in the wilderness, every board, curtain, hook, silver socket, every badger skin and every vessel of the sanctuary was ordained by God—and man was only left to carry out God’s plan—even so is it in the salvation of God! In its minutest details, as well as in its grand outline, the provisions of eternal love are of the Lord! And so it is in His salvation.

But you know, dear Brothers and Sisters, that it was not only His in the arranging but it was also carried out by God. Who is He that has redeemed us by His blood, but He who is over all God, blessed forever? Who trod the winepress side by side with Him? Did He not stand there alone and, singlehanded, win the victory? And from where comes every blessing of salvation? Who provided it? Has man any share in the provision of any of the mercies by which sinners are taken out of sin into righteousness and raised from the ruins of the Fall to all the glories of Heaven? No, from first to last, all the provisions of eternal love are of the Lord! And so it is in His salvation.

No, more than that, God has not only planned and provided everything relating to it, but it is He who applies the salvation which He has thus provided. No one believes that Jesus is the Christ but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me,” says Christ. Much is said by some people about free will, but free will has never done anything in this world yet—unless moved by Free Grace—except to ruin mankind! Leave men to themselves and they are sure to choose that which is evil. As naturally as the river runs downwards to the sea, so does the heart of man turn towards that which is unclean. If the heart ever ascends towards holiness, Christ and God, it is because it is drawn upward by Divine Grace—and the Lord is working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. From the first sigh of repentance to the last hymn of thanksgiving, everything in us that is good is His workmanship! And so, in that respect, our salvation is of the Lord.

And, Beloved, when it is all finished—when everyone who ever shall be called, has been called—when every one of the Lord’s elect has been regenerated, justified, sanctified and glorified—when the whole of the blood-washed family of God shall surround His Throne above, all the glory shall be given unto the Lord alone! There will be no jarring note in Heaven, no whisper of human merit, no claim of a reward for good intentions—but every crown shall be cast at Jesus’ feet and every voice shall join in the ascription, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the glory of the salvation which You have worked out for us from first to last.”

Let me pause, just a minute, to put this question to each one here— Do you, dear Friend, know anything about this salvation which is all of God? I fear that there are many who have no more religion than they have made themselves. Their religion is the result of their own efforts to improve themselves. Ah, Sirs, our Savior’s words are still true, “You must be born-again!” And, as it was in our first birth, so must it be in our second birth—not our own act. Depend upon it, if all the good you have, has been fetched out of yourself as the spider draws its web out of its own bowels, it will all have to be brushed away! All that Nature spins will have to be unraveled, and all that Nature builds will have to be pulled down. God must save you, or you will be lost forever! The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity in Unity, must come upon you and quicken you into newness of life, and renew you in the spirit of your mind, or else you will fall short of that which is requisite for admission into the Kingdom of God.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” The best flesh is only flesh and only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Consequently, the Spirit of God must operate upon us, or else we shall remain unspiritual— not able to understand spiritual things—and not possessing that spiritual life without which we cannot enter, at the last, into the enjoyment of those spiritual pleasures which are at God’s right hand forevermore. One thing I can say without any doubt. I, personally, know that it is God’s salvation that has saved me. And I think I speak the mind of many here when I say that they feel that if the Holy Spirit does not work in them from the first to the last, their salvation will never be accomplished. I do not know any Doctrine which my experience more fully confirms than that to which Jonah gave utterance when he was in the whale’s belly— “Salvation is of the Lord.” It is, as our text reminds us, a Divine Salvation!

II. Now, secondly, I come to the subject which I desire to impress most deeply upon your memory, that is, THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE SALVATION OF GOD—“His glory is great in Your salvation.”

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, the tongues of men and angels can never fully tell the glory of Christ in salvation! It is a subject to be thought over by the loftiest intellects! It is a theme for men who lie awake at nights to meditate upon! It is a topic worthy of the thoughts of those who linger on the verge of Heaven! Dr. John Owen’s pen was somewhat heavy in its style, but it never glowed and burned as much as when he wrote upon the Glory of Christ. This is a theme which the glorified spirits before the Throne of God perpetually contemplate. And the more fit we are to be among them, the more delightful will this subject be to us. As to that Glory, oh, if I had the allotting and the measuring of it, what glory I would give to my dear Lord and Master! I read, the other day—I cannot exactly quote the words, though I give the sense—a sentence by Samuel Rutherford in which he said that he would like to pile up ten thousand million heavens upon the top of the third Heaven to which Paul was caught up—and put Christ in that high place—and then He would not be as high as He deserved to be put and, truly, no honors seem sufficient for Him who stripped Himself of all He had that He might become the Savior of sinners!

And, first, it is His glory that He has redeemed His people from stupendous evils. When a statesman or a warrior rescues a country from a cruel despotism and brings to it the blessings of liberty, he deserves great praise. But, my Brothers and Sisters, the tyranny of sin, from which Christ has delivered His people, was a thousand times worse than the rule of the worst human despot! Consider, for a moment, the position in which His people were in the sight of God. They had sinned and they had, therefore, become exposed to the wrath of God. Unless some power greater than their own should intervene, they must be cast into Hell forever. God Himself could not lay aside His justice, for God would cease to be if He ceased to be just—and an unjust God is a contradiction in terms, an impossible combination! How, then, were these, who had sinned against God, to be delivered from the peril which hung over them? Moreover, they were held in bondage by sin, so that, even if the punishment of their past sin could be removed, they were still members of an enslaved race. Satan had cast his iron chains about them and they were led captive by him at his will.

Ah, Sirs, it is from this bondage that Christ has set us free, for He has taken away our guilt, bearing it in His own body up to the tree and then hurling it away from the tree into His grave to be remembered against us no more forever! By bearing the punishment that was due to us, Christ has delivered us from the yoke of Satan and of sin and, by the wondrous redemption which He has worked out, and brought in, He has made His people “free indeed.” No curse now hangs above their heads. No sin now has dominion over them, for they are not under the Law, but under Grace. Therefore, sound aloud your Deliverer’s praises, all you who have been thus delivered! Think of what stupendous evils these were from which Christ set us free. To overthrow an oppressive empire is a great achievement. To rout the vast hordes that are led into the battlefield by great tyrants is no slight victory. The conqueror’s statue is set up on high and his name is emblazoned upon the scroll of earthly fame. Then what honor shall be given to Christ who has set us free from mightier foes than ever trampled upon a nation’s liberties?

Recollect, too, that He has not only delivered us from stupendous evils, but, in the process, He has crushed the mightiest powers. It did seem, at one time, as if evil would got the mastery in God’s universe. God had permitted the strange experiment, as it seemed, of making creatures gifted with free agency—with whose free agency He would not interfere. These creatures broke His Law. How was the evil to be prevented from spreading? They would multiply and increase as, indeed, they have done. And, multiplying and increasing, there would be many millions of spirits in the universe, all rebellious against God and, consequently, all suffering! There would be countless myriads, born into God’s world, all bearing hearts of sin within their bosoms and all, therefore, subject to the wrath of God. How Satan exulted at the prospect of increasing evil!

But when Jesus came into this world, He put His foot upon the head of the old dragon and so effectually crushed him to the earth so that he has never been able to rise again. Satan saw Christ hanging upon the Cross and thought that was his opportunity for gaining a decisive victory, yet it proved to be the hour of his greatest defeat! Death drove his sting right through the heart of Christ, but it so fixed itself in His Cross that it could never be drawn out again and, now that sting of death, which is sin, is gone, as far as all Believers in Christ are concerned. He has vanquished all the powers of evil—sin, death and Hell—and shattered their forces forever! Listen to this great shout of victory! Oh, that I had a voice loud enough to make it ring round the globe—“You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

Perhaps the main point of Christ’s Glory in the salvation of His people is that He has achieved this by means which reflect unbounded honor upon His holy name. I have often read the story of Cromwell’s Ironsides and, sympathizing deeply with them in the objective of their fight, I have greatly admired their stern courage and consecrated ardor. But, still, I cannot think of battles and of fighting for the best of objectives without something of a shudder, so I cannot approve of the means which they employed. Doubtless, our country owes her present liberties to those brave men, yet, for all that, I grieve over the awful price of blood at which those liberties were purchased. Our blessed Lord and Master conquered all our foes, but what were the weapons He used to secure so glorious a victory? Do you look up to Him and enquire, “Where is Your battle-axe, O Lord Jesus? Where are Your spear, Your sword, Your quiver and Your arrows?” He bids you look at His hands, His feet, His side, His heart—these are the weapons with which He overcame all the powers of darkness! There was much suffering in that awful conflict, but the suffering was all His own. There was a terrible gory sweat, but it came from His own body. There were wounds and there was death, but the wounds were in His precious body, the death was all His own. This is how evil was conquered—by love which denied itself, even to the death, for the sake of others! This is how human stubbornness was vanquished—by an almighty patience that could suffer at the hands of rebellious sinners till it bled to death! This is your death, O Death—this is your Hell, O Hell—this is your destruction, O Destruction—that God Himself bore the consequences of His creatures’ sin!

No, start not back at that expression, I pray you. Do not think of Christ as being separated from God. God did not find somebody else to be the Substitute for sinners, but He gave His only-begotten and wellbeloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is the equal and in all respects One with the Father. It was God Himself, in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus who bore the penalty that was due to human sin. It was God, in the Person of His Son, suffering, agonizing, groaning, dying, to put our sin away forever! I cannot conceive, nor do I think that cherubim and seraphim could conceive of anything more noble and more glorious than this Selfsacrifice of the Son of God! He conquers, not by making others suffer, but by sufferings all His own!

A kindred thought to that is this. Christ’s Glory is great in the Divine Salvation, because it developed and revealed the most wonderful attributes. Suppose England were to win a great victory at sea. We would probably ascribe it to her superior men-of-war. Generally, battles are decided, as Napoleon said, by the big battalions, or by the excellence of the weapons that are used by the soldiers. If one man has an old Brown Bess and another a modern rifle, we can pretty well guess on which side the victory will be. We call it, “glory,” when one fellow, who is twice as big as another, knocks the little one down—at least, we call it, “glory,” when the nation which has the better ships and the bigger army wins the victory. I saw a huge Newfoundland dog pick up a poodle and shake him—there was about as much “glory” in that as when great nations war against little ones and overpower them! It is the same kind of “glory” as being a bigger bully and having a harder fist and stronger muscles than anybody else. That may be the sort of glory for a bull, or a lion, or an ass—but it is not the glory that is suited to men—and especially to Christians. But when Christ came and redeemed us, there was, on His part, no display of physical or mere brute power. There was a display of power, but it was the power of goodness, the power to suffer, the power to be patient, the power to love. As if God said to men, “Sinners and rebels as you are, I love you more than you hate Me. And great as your badness is, My goodness shall overwhelm your badness, My pardoning mercy shall overpower your power to transgress.”

As the result of His death upon the Cross, our Lord Jesus has saved a multitude whom no man can number. And a part of His Glory consists in the fact that there are so many whom He has saved. The salvation of God is not for just a little privileged company. I know that certain “sound” brethren imagine that the blessings of salvation are confined to just a few favored individuals in Little Zoar, or Rehoboth—they delight in the idea that there are only a few that will be saved. I trust that we have no sympathy with such narrow views—for my own part, I rejoice to know that, in Heaven, there will be “a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” who shall cry, “Salvation to our God which sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.” So our Lord Jesus Christ has great glory from the fact that He saves so many sinners.

There is this peculiarity about all whom He saves, that they are attached to Him forever. His Glory is great in their salvation because everyone of them is, from that day forth, Christ’s man, Christ’s woman forever and forevermore. In travelling through France, lately, I have been greatly amused at seeing in various public squares, pedestals that were evidently intended for equestrian statues, but there are no statues upon them. And there are shields upon town halls which look as if there should have been medallions upon them, but there are no portraits where the medallions should have been. On making enquiries, you will find that a statue of Napoleon the Third used to stand on that pedestal and a medallion of him used to be on that town hall. That must be a fine country for stonemasons, because they so frequently have fresh governments and need, also, to have fresh statues! I have heard of a man, living in Paris, who used to ask, every morning, whether he was under a republic, or a monarchy, or an empire. And when he was told which it was, he was not at all sure that it would last till the evening. No matter how good the ruler has been, nor how many times they have painted his likeness, or set up his image, the moment he has ill fortune, away go all the representations of him!

You would have thought that many rulers would have obtained a permanent place in the hearts of their people, yet we know from the history of various countries that very few have done so. Those who are idolized today are despised tomorrow. But our Lord Jesus has a Glory which is great in our salvation because His image is forever enshrined in our hearts! The great Napoleon hit the nail on the head when, at St. Helena, musing upon his own position, he said to one who walked with him, “Jesus Christ is the most wonderful of men. I founded an empire which has passed away, but His never will, and I see the reason for that. Mine was founded upon force, but Christ’s is founded upon love.” Ah, that is the reason for our devotion to Him! He has loved us so much that He has won us to Himself forever! These hands of mine are manacled with blessed, invisible, but unbreakable bands of love—never was I truly free until I felt those fetters binding me to my Lord! This heart of mine is fast riveted to Christ. It never was really my own till it became His, but now it is His forever and ever! “I bear in my body,” said Paul, “the marks of the Lord Jesus.” He felt it to be an unspeakable honor to be the branded slave of Jesus Christ, with the Cross burnt into his very flesh by the suffering which he had endured for the sake of his dear Lord and Master!

Truly, Brothers and Sisters, to rule over other men is a great thing. To have moral power over men is no mean matter. But to get men to so love you that they would willingly die for you—to get them to so love you that they would sooner cease to live than cease to love you—this is to occupy a glorious high throne! And such is the throne upon which Christ sits in the hearts of all His people! Such is the dominion which He wields over all the hosts that He has purchased with His precious blood! Well says the Prophet in our text—for the Psalmist was a true Prophet—“His glory is great in Your salvation.”

III. Now, thirdly, Our text REVEALS THE REWARD WHICH JESUS HAS OBTAINED FOR THIS GREAT SALVATION—“Honor and majesty have You laid upon Him.” I do not intend to preach upon this last point, but only to give you a few sentences by way of an outline of the honor and majesty which God the Father has laid upon Christ.

First, our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted, as Man, to reign over the angels. As God, He was always Ruler, Governor and Lord of all. But the Man Christ Jesus died, was buried and rose again—and then ascended into Glory—and now He is Head over all principalities and powers, and all the holy angels that have never fallen, delight to do His bidding. My Brother, in that very sweet prayer before the sermon, to which I assented with all my heart, pleaded that we might get a view of Jesus Christ within the veil in His Glory. That is how I want you to think of Him—that very Man who hung upon the tree. That very Man who was the butt of all the reproaches and scorn of His enemies, now sits upon the Throne of God and around Him all the cherubim and seraphim are gathered, all worshipping and adoring Him and praising and magnifying His holy name!

Then, my Brothers and Sisters, God has given to the Lord Jesus to be the Head of His Church. Over all the redeemed, on earth and in Heaven, Christ presides and rules. While He is the Lord of the angels, He is also the Lord of all elect men. His Father gave them to Him from eternity and made Him to be the Head and made them to be the members of His mystical body. Christ is the one and only Head and supreme Ruler of His Church. It is true that there are men who sat themselves up as governors of Christ’s Church. And there is an antichrist, at Rome, who calls himself the head of the church, but that is only a wicked fiction, a manifest lie! There is but one Head of the Church and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only supreme Ruler and before Him all His loyal subjects bow. “Honor and majesty have You laid upon Him.”

Being Head of His Church, He is also Head over all things outside of His Church in which His Church is concerned. Joseph ruled Egypt for the good of Israel and, in like manner does Christ rule the whole world for the good of His people. All the arrangements of Providence are under His control. Nothing is done in the entire universe without His command or His permission. Does that statement startle you? It is, nevertheless, true! He who was made Lord of the angels, has had all things put under His feet and He is, at this moment, Lord of all! And, Brothers and Sisters, we shall see this demonstrated soon, for He is coming. As surely as He went up to Heaven, literally and Personally, so surely will He comes again, literally and Personally—and when He does come, it will be as Ruler and Lord over all, for He will come to judge the quick and the dead according to His Gospel. Then will all created intelligences behold the honor and majesty which God has put upon Him!

There will have to appear, before the Judgment Seat of the Nazarene, the spirits that fell ages upon ages ago. Satan shall come and receive his final sentence and be banished forever to Hell. Then shall come the unbelieving world, to hear from Christ’s lips the terrible message, “Depart, you cursed!” The earth shall reel beneath His Presence—that earth which could scarcely lend Him a sepulcher. And Heaven and earth shall flee away from that Face which earth once seemed to scorn and Heaven to forget! Ah, it will be seen who the Christ is in that day! A trumpet blast more terrible than that which startled the echoes of Sinai shall ring over land and sea. A cloud shall come and on it shall stand the Great White Throne—and upon it shall be seated the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But, oh, how changed!—

*“With rainbow wreath and robes of storm,”*He shall come—with a face shining above the brightness of the sun and with eyes like flames of fire, He shall come in all the Glory of His Father, with all His holy angels to attend Him, and to swell the triumph of His appearing! O Brothers and Sisters, let us anticipate that glorious appearing and begin to clap our hands with exultation over our Lord’s triumphal advent!

But are we all His people? Do not desire that day if you are not His, for the Day of the Lord will be darkness, not light, to all who are His enemies! The more glorious Christ is to His own people, the more dreadful will His appearance be to you if you live as unbelievers and if you die without trusting in Him! O Christians, I bid you be glad in your Lord, and I also bid you pray for the unsaved, that they may trust, and love, and serve Jesus, too—and rejoice with you in recollecting that He is coming again to receive unto Himself all to whom He is both Lord and Savior! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **LUKE 7:18-50.**

Verse 18. And the disciples of John showed him of all these thing. John was in prison and, possibly, troubled in spirit.  
19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus saying, are you He that should come? Or look we for another? Did John doubt? Perhaps not. It may be that he saw that his disciples doubted and that he wished their fears to be removed. It is possible, however, that he did have doubts. It is no unusual thing for the bravest hearts to be subject to fits of doubt. Elijah, you remember, sat under a juniper tree in the wilderness, “and he requested for himself that he might die,” though he was the man who never was to die. And John—the Elijah of the Christian dispensation, though a man of iron, was but a man, so he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, “Are you He that should come, or look we for another?”  
20-22. When the men were come unto Him, they said, John the Baptist has sent us unto You, saying, Are You He that should come, or look we for another? And in that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard. Our old proverb says that actions speak louder than words, so an answer in His actions would be more eloquent with these enquirers than even an answer in our Lord’s own words. He bade them look at the evidences of His Messiahship which He gave them by His miraculous cures, and then He said to them, “Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard.” It would be well if our lives were such that if any enquired what we were, we should only have to say that they might judge us by what they had seen and heard in our common everyday life and conversation!  
22, 23. How that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whoever shall not be offended in Me. According to our Lord’s testimony, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor is as great a proof of His Messiahship as the raising of the dead! Then how highly it ought to be prized by them and how glad should they be who have the Gospel now preached freely in their hearing!  
24. And when the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John, What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? The wind on the banks of the Jordan, where there are plenty of reeds growing—did you see a man who would bow before every breath of popular favor or popular wrath? Was John the Baptist such a man as that? No, certainly not.  
25. But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts. They do not preach repentance. As is their clothing, so is their doctrine. They try to show a royal road to Heaven—a smooth and easy path. But was John the Baptist a preacher of that kind? No, that he was not.  
26-28. But what did you go out to see? A Prophet? Yes, I say unto you, and much more than a Prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, which shall prepare Your way before you. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater Prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he. Passing into the dispensation of clearer Light of God, he who is least among the Believers of the Gospel of Jesus is, in some respects, greater than this man who could only preach repentance and point to a coming Savior!  
29-32. And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the Baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. And the Lord said, To what, then, shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace. At play—the playing of children is often according to the manners and customs of grown up people.  
32. And calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced. “You would not play a merry game when we asked you to do so.”  
32. We have mourned to you, and you have not wept. “You would not play either at funerals or weddings.”  
33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and you say, he has a devil. “He came among you as an ascetic, denying himself, not only the luxuries of life, but even the common comforts that others enjoyed. And you say, ‘He has a devil.’”  
34. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking. “He does not pretend to be an ascetic. He comes, on the contrary, to show that neither meat nor drink can save a man. What do you say, then, of this Son of Man?”  
34, 35. And you say, Behold a gluttonous Man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children. Though the world contemns all wisdom’s children, whichever way they go, and is not pleased with their manners, whatever manners they possess, yet, in the long run, when the Wisdom of God shall be all unfolded, it will be seen that the roughness of John and the gentleness and loving kindness of Jesus were both right in their proper place. If fish are not caught in the Gospel fishery, it may sometimes be the fisherman’s fault, but more often it is the fault of the fish. Here we have two very different kinds of fishermen, yet neither of them attracts all, though each of them draws some.  
36, 37. And one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. And, behold. For it is a wonder of Divine Grace—“Behold.”  
37. A woman in the city, which was a sinner. A sinner by profession, a public and notorious sinner.  
37-44. When she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spoke within himself, saying, This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto you. And he said, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him more? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, You have rightly judged. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, See you this woman? I entered into your house, you gave Me no water for

My feet. “Though it was only a common act of courtesy, such as should always be shown to a guest, you did neglect that.”

44. But she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. “She has given My feet no common washing, for she has washed them with her tears. You would only have brought Me a linen napkin, but she has wiped them with the hairs of her head.’”

45. You gave Me no kiss. Which was usually given as a greeting to guests at that time. Simon had not given to Jesus the honor which was due to Him, which would have been to kiss His forehead.

45. But this woman since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss My feet. Every word is emphatic to show how far she had gone beyond Simon, who thought himself so much better than she was.

46. My head with oil you did not anoint. Another usual Eastern custom with guests whom the host intended to honor.  
46. But this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Anointed them, not with ordinary olive oil, but with precious costly ointment.  
47. Therefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much. “You know that her sins were many, and I tell you that they have been forgiven, and you can see, by her actions, that she loves much.”  
47, 48. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. And He said unto her, Your sins are forgiven. What music that sentence, “Your sins are forgiven,” must have been to her! “Ah,” says one, “I also should like to hear that sentence. Beyond everything else in the whole world would I desire to hear Jesus say to me, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’” Then put yourself in the place that this woman occupied. When Joab clung to the horns of the altar, he had to die there, but this woman had fled to the feet of Jesus—and she did not die there—nor shall you, but at those blessed feet, weeping for sin, and trusting the great Sin-Bearer, you shall receive assurance of pardon. “Your sins are forgiven.”  
49, 50. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgives sins also? And He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace. He did not want this young convert, this beginner in the Christian life to hear the bickering and controversies of these coarse spirits, so He said to her, “Go in peace.” And, dear Soul, if you have begun to find out that even in the Christian Church there are many opinions concerning many things, do not trouble yourself about those things. This is enough for you—“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” There may be some who are galled to contend for this or that point of the faith but, as for you, poor Child, if, with your broken heart you have found the Savior and if you love Him with an inward, warm and hearty love, do not spoil that love by getting into a controversial spirit—“Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1827 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EXCEEDING GLADNESS  
NO. 1827

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 8, 1885, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON DECEMBER 21, 1884.

**“For You have made Him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”  
Psalm 21:6.**

You have heard a great many sermons upon the Man of Sorrows. I am sure that you have not heard too many and if, from this time to the end of your life, you should, every Lord’s Day, hear of Him and of His sufferings, you will not be nauseated with that theme. You will still feel an intense pleasure in hearing the story of your Lord’s griefs and in having fellowship with Him in His sufferings, for by His agonies and death He has redeemed you unto Himself. Probably you have never listened to a discourse upon, “The Man of Joys!” I venture, thus, to name the Christ of God. We do not often enough meditate upon the happiness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember that it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and the expectation of joy is joy.  
The light of His coming reward shone on our Lord’s daily path and made it bright with a glorious hope. Sin is the mother of sorrow and Jesus knew no sin. Conscience never made Him a coward; remorse never pricked His heart; malice, envy and discontent never gnawed at His soul. He was the Prince of Peace even when He was despised and rejected of men. Deep as were His griefs, we may reckon Jesus of Nazareth among the happiest of men. There was nothing of that efflorescence, that effervescence, that froth of joy which carnal men value so highly—but there was a deep peace, a calm content which is beyond all price. Jesus did not enter into such mirth as might have befitted Herod’s palace, or Dives’ gilded saloons, or Caesar’s luxurious banquets. But He knew such joy as the Son of God must know when His Father always hears Him and as the Savior of men must know when His every word and act are blessing a fallen race!  
He felt a supreme delight in doing the will of the Father and in carrying out the purpose of His own gracious mind. He was filled with a mighty resolve so strong that it beat off every force which would have turned His mind aside from His chosen path. And He felt an infinite love which found intense satisfaction in yielding up everything for its objects. There was, in fact, even in the midst of the sorrows which were necessary to His service, a satisfaction in bearing those sorrows, a delight in passing through those depths of agony which were necessary for the accomplishment of His grand design!  
A man cannot be full of such benevolence as that which filled the heart of Christ and yet be utterly miserable. Unselfishness necessarily brings with it a measure of joy. A man could not open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, make lame men leap, heal lepers, raise the dead and yet remain comfortless! As well suppose that the sun, which scatters so much heat, may be, itself, a huge globe of ice! The fountain which yields such streams of blessing has its own flash and sparkle—we feel sure of it. As pearls may lie in plenty in caverns, over which there rolls a dread tempestuous sea, so there slept in the heart of Jesus, treasures of joy, even when the ocean of His holy Soul was lashed with hurricanes of woe. There is a joy in doing good which cannot be separated from the doing of the good—and the Savior possessed it beyond conception. There is a joy in living entirely out of one’s self for the good of others—and this Jesus drank to the fullest! There is a joy in achieving a great purpose, even when it is only by sorrow that our design is worked out—and that, also, our Redeemer knew. In Him was perfectly explained that enigma of Paul, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.”  
I am not going to say more of the joy of our Lord on earth. And only for a few moments shall I enlarge upon the exceeding gladness of the GodMan, Christ Jesus, at this present moment in Heaven, though it is to this that our text primarily refers. Jesus has gone up into Glory and the eyes of faith can see Him at the right hand of the Father, forever exalted as Head of the Church, and Head over all things for her sake. In that position our Lord is filled with superlative felicity. His death is rewarded by the Father with an endless life of bliss—“He asked life of You, and You gave it Him, even length of days forever and ever. His glory is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon Him. For You have made Him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”  
I need not enter into the joy of Christ as God, for this is inseparable from His Godhead, but I speak of Him, now, as Mediator, in His complex Person, standing between God and man. In that capacity, as risen from the dead and gone into Glory, He is supremely glad—glad because His work is finished. Such a work as His had so taken up His whole heart and engrossed His whole being, that it became a baptism to be baptized with— and He was straitened until it was accomplished. It is accomplished, now, and the straitening is ended. He has not another act to do by way of obedience to the Law. He has not another pang to bear by way of fulfillment of penalty due for our guilt. “It is finished,” is the finis of His God-like labor! There is not another drop of blood to be shed! No more chastisement of our peace is to be laid on Him! No more stripes are to be exacted for our healing—  
“Consummatum est” is written at the foot of His Throne. His work is so finished that all the results of it are sure—those for whom He died are safe—that which He purchased by His blood He has obtained. He has left nothing undone in any point so that a degree of failure may yet occur. He has left no stone of the wall to tumble from its place. His work is so completely done that, as He looks upon it all, He feels unmingled joy and content. The Father looks upon Him with such a perfect satisfaction in His glorious work, that our text is fulfilled beyond the letter. “You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”—  
*“A life eternal as Your years  
A glory infinite like Thine  
Repays Him for His groans and tears,  
And fills His soul with joy Divine.”*  
Nor is this all, for Jesus Christ our Lord rejoices to think that now, from this day forth, God has made Him to be the fountain of priceless, numberless, endless blessings to men. Observe the first clause of our text and remember that it may be read thus—“You have made Him blessings forever.” That is to say, God has now opened, in His Son Jesus Christ, a well of blessings which will never cease to flow as long as there are men to drink. He is no curse to men, but only blessing! He is not one blessing only, but all blessings! These blessings are the chief gifts that even God can give and they are in Christ Jesus to all eternity! The Lord Jesus, who was once the center of grief, has now become the source of love, favor, help, healing, benediction, delight, Heaven and whatever else may be called blessing—  
*“Immortal joys come streaming down,  
Joys, like His griefs, immense, unknown.”*  
No, blessings do not only come from Him, but He is blessings! He is, Himself, made or constituted blessings to all eternity. O blessed Lord, we pause to adore and bless You even now! This makes our Lord exceedingly glad, to think that He is, in His own proper Person, the very center of all blessing to His people. Fullness of blessing abides in Him. There is no blessing that you need, poor Sinner, but what Jesus has it, has it for you! “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” No blessing that you need, dear child of God, shall be denied you, for, “of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.” That fullness abides where it is—it has never diminished and it never will be diminished throughout eternity!—  
*“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more.”*  
Whenever God makes any one of you to be the channel of blessing to other people, are you not happy? Yes, certainly, in your measure. But what must be the superlative gladness of the Christ in being the Center of centers, the Fountain of fountains to all those who draw near to Him? God has made Him, beyond all others and inclusive of all others, to be blessings forevermore! Must He not be filled with gladness?  
Our Lord has joy beyond this. I want you to think much of His gladness that you may be able to obey Him, now, should He say to you, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” At this very hour may His joy be in you that your joy may be full. Jesus sympathizes with you in your sorrows—will you not sympathize with Him in His joys? Should we not rejoice with them that rejoice and especially with Him, the Bridegroom of our souls? This is a further part of His gladness—He joys in the conversion, the comfort, the justification, the salvation of every soul that comes to Him. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” Almost everybody who preaches from that text is content with the undoubted Truth of God that the angels rejoice over sinners that repent. No doubt they do so—but the text does not tell us so. It says, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God”—that is to say, they are present where there is joy—they look upon the face of Christ and see the joy which fills His heart as His redeemed ones are renewed by Grace!  
Angels behold the delight that fills the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as sinners turn from the error of their ways. If, at this moment, a sinner, conscious of his sin, is flying to the Cross for refuge, he is making Christ happy! If he is now bowing the knee and crying, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” that cry of his is music to the soul of his loving Savior! When that repenting sinner casts himself upon the great Atonement and rests in the Sacrifice of Jesus, the heart of Jesus receives a part of its infinite reward and the promise is, in a measure, fulfilled, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” You know the meaning of the suggestive figure couched in those words—the soul of Christ was in pangs, like a woman in travail, for these souls—and they are born to eternal life as the result of His soul’s labor. And then, as the mother sees the child, and remembers no more her sorrow for joy that a man is born into the world, so does the Savior see each one of His beloved ones born to Himself and feels a joy so great that He is more than recompensed for having died on the cruel tree!

Oh, the joy of Christ over a soul that turns to Him! O my Hearer, think of it! Consider! Is it really so? You are capable of making the heart of Christ to throb with unspeakable joy even now! My beloved Hearer, you have lived in sin and I fear you will die in it. Nobody thinks much of you and you feel the neglect. You are even now sighing, “No man cares for my soul.” But Jesus cares for you! And if you come to Him, you shall fill His loving heart with gladness! Your forgiveness, renewal and salvation will cause Him to rejoice in spirit. What do you say? If the Christ in Glory values you, I beseech you, do not trifle with yourself, or lie down in despair!  
Moreover, I believe that Jesus in Glory finds great joy in all the deeds of His saved people. Whenever He sees one of His believing people counting His reproach to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, our Lord is glad. When He sees a heart that has been washed in His blood, true to Him, refusing to believe false doctrine, or to do that which is unjust, then is Christ glad over His disciple! When He sees you plotting and planning how you can honor Him; when He marks your self-denials; when He sees you prayerful, earnest, active, spiritual, loving—His gladness is great! I tell you all the love you have for Him, He delights in! And your childlike confidence in Him and your little struggling light which seeks after more light—and your earnest longings for His coming and His Kingdom, and those broken words of yours by which you speak to others of His love—all these things He sees with exquisite pleasure! These are flowers that would not have grown in your garden if He had not sown them there. If there is anything that is honest, true, holy, heavenly and Christ-like, it is all His work—and He is right glad to see it! I know you will think that He sees in us much to grieve Him and I grant you that He does, but He knows our frame and He remembers that we are dust. But when He sees anything that His own Spirit has worked in us, He beholds it with intense complacency and deigns to take a continual pleasure therein.  
Moreover—and I speak gently and softly here—I believe that our Master derives a Divine satisfaction from the holy sufferings of His people when they bear pain with patience—when they praise His name on their beds and adore Him in the fires and, when coming to die—they bear themselves calmly in the last dread article, behaving themselves as men who know no fear. When they walk through the very jaws of death, fearing no evil, simply confiding in the eternal Christ—then is Jesus glad to see how well they have learned the lesson which He taught them! When they come up on the other side of Jordan, like sheep from the washing—when they appear before His Throne, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”—when the shining ones draw near before Him and cast their crowns at His dear feet. When they lift their united hallelujahs unto Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His precious blood—then is the King exceedingly glad!  
My tongue cannot possibly tell you of the joy of our Lord in His people’s joy. It is from Christ that Heaven’s gladness comes and it is into Christ that hearers’ gladness flows. He gives the redeemed all their bliss and He receives from them all that bliss as they lovingly ascribe their salvation to Him alone. He, at this moment, is Heaven’s center, the happiest of the happy, the blessed Leader of a blessed company, the triumphant Captain of a triumphant band who, having gone forth conquering and to conquer, have, at last, finished the fight, sheathed the sword and shared their Master’s victory! They cry unto Jehovah, “You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance” and they, themselves, partake of that gladness!  
All this is my preface at this time and I need not apologize for the length of it, since its theme might fitly have been that of the whole discourse. The sermon shall be somewhat short and I trust it will be sweet. This is the subject of it—I desire that the Lord’s people may enter into this joy of Christ and that, as each one of them is made a king, the text may be fulfilled in each one of them. I have not described to you the gladness of our Lord as it ought to be described, but I can do no better. If you will endeavor to share in it, you will make up for my deficiencies. May the Holy Spirit aid you!  
I. First, I would remark that GLADNESS IS THE PECULIAR PRIVILEGE OF SAINTS. “Happy are you, O Israel!” “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous.” Why should we not be glad? It is all right between us and God. If, having rebelled against Him, we had never repented and had never been reconciled, we ought to be miserable. He that is out of order with God may well be out of order with himself. But we have been brought near—we have been adopted into the family of God—we have obtained reconciliation through the precious blood and have enjoyed the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace! Ought we not to be glad?  
Dear Heart, there is no quarrel between you and God! Peace has been made through Jesus Christ. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps your heart and mind through Christ Jesus. If you have not a right to be happy, who has? In a well-ordered government, those that are friendly with their prince have a right to rejoice in his courts. And in the government of God, it seems but right and natural that those who are made to be at peace with God should be among the happiest of Heaven’s courtiers. It is meet that we should make merry and be glad! Let us take advantage of that right and may the Spirit of Joy make us glad at this good hour!  
In addition to the fact that they are right with God, Believers have their present solaces in many ways. Grace endows them with immediate joys. I like that part of our song which we sang just now—  
*“The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.”*  
If I were to try and tell all the things that make Christians glad, even here below, I should have to make an endless catalog! Where should I begin? Once beginning, where should I leave off? You can count your sorrows, dear Brothers and Sisters, I dare say. You are quite au fait at adding them all up, but I would have you to recapitulate your joys with equal readiness! Why not? Review the shining ranks of your mercies. Are they not new every morning? Is not the faithfulness of God exceedingly great? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, God has done so much for us that we are glad! He has surprised us with the greatness of His goodness!  
If I had been sure, 35 years ago, that I would have possessed, in the Covenant of Grace, such a portion as I have at this hour, I think I would have leaped out of my body for joy! When I was under a sense of sin, if I had been assured that I should yet be forgiven, I do not know that I could have contained myself for delight! When I was lying under the chastening hand of God on account of my transgressions, if I had known that He would turn His face upon me and smile upon me, and make me His child, and put me into the ministry and permit me the great privilege of telling of the wonders of His Grace, I verily believe that it would have been too great a weight of joy—it would have crushed me with too much delight!  
And yet, at this moment, I am not half as glad as I should be warranted in being because of the unspeakable mercy of God to me. Just apply that reflection to your own cases. Is there not about you, now, that which would have made your mouth water if you had known 20 years ago that you would be what you are now? Yes, 50 or 60 years ago, perhaps, if it could have been revealed to you that you would live to be a man verging upon 80, still rejoicing in God, you would have said, “No, not I. I shall fall a prey to the enemy long before that. I shall go back and prove to be a hypocrite long before that.” You would not have credited that the Lord would ever have done so much for you as He has actually done! Come, do not rob your God of His praises! Defraud not your King of His revenue of Glory!  
Do not get to fretting and stewing about nothing at all, but rejoice in the Lord always, and then rejoice again! This is an appointed feast; let us keep it. “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” I heard a Brother in a Prayer Meeting say, “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we desire to be glad” and I wanted to jump down that man’s throat and pull that passage back, again, and put it into its natural shape! What business had the Brother to change the Bible and talk such wretched stuff? “ Whereof we desire to be glad”? Why, if the Lord has done great things for us, we are glad, we cannot help it! And, blessed be His name, we do not wish to do so!  
In addition to that, we have a brilliant future before us. We are the heirs of great expectations. The children of God not only possess present mercies, like the leaves and flowers of summer, but things which God has prepared for them that love Him, laid by in store like the fruits of autumn! Come, think of Heaven for a moment or two and anticipate its Glory. Put on your crown for a little while and wear your white garments! Can you not take a palm branch in your hand in imagination, and sing the new song in your heart? You know that you will be thus arrayed and thus occupied within a short time—then go through your part, rehearsing it by a lively hope! The glorious hour will soon arrive when you shall be near and like your God and reign with Him forever!  
At this present moment there is a place in Heaven for me that nobody can ever fill but myself—and Jesus has gone before, not only to prepare it, but to prepare it for me. There is a crown that no head but mine can ever wear and a song that no tongue but mine can ever sing! And I shall soon cast my crown at Jesus’ feet and chant before Him my hallelujahs! That is true of every Believer here. Be glad! Yes, rejoice before the Lord with all your might! Brothers and Sisters, you have not much here, but you will have everything hereafter! You have but a little farther to journey through the great and terrible wilderness and you will be in Canaan and possess the land that flows with milk and honey! Be glad!

The children of God have further cause to be glad because they have all blessings secured to them, so that they shall never lose them. That which their God has promised them shall never be taken from them. They are in a position of indisputable security, for they are hidden in the wounds of Christ, as in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. They shall never die, for they are members of His body who is immortal. They are in that hand from which none can ever snatch them. “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish: neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Let us begin to be merry, as it is said in the parable of the prodigal son. “They began to be merry.” I have read that parable ever so many times and I have looked to see whether it is written that they ever left off being merry—and I cannot find that they did. “They began to be merry.” Very well, let us begin to be merry at this hour, dear Friends, and let us never leave off as long as we live! Let us rejoice forevermore. As long as we have a God to rejoice in, let us rejoice! As long as we have a Heaven to go to, let us rejoice! As long as we have an eternal Covenant ordered in all things and sure, let us rejoice! As long as we have any being, let us rejoice in the Lord!  
II. Secondly, let me remark that THE SAINTS’ GLADNESS IS OF A PECULIAR SORT.  
The gladness which is peculiar to the children of God is a gladness that God has worked in them. “You have made Him exceedingly glad.” Oh, yes, I heard him! He seemed very glad, but when he began to explain to me his gladness, I could tell by his hiccough where he got it—he owed it to the deadly cup. Shame on him! Oh, yes, he was exceedingly glad, but when I saw his merriment, I could tell that it was his youth and his good health that gave him his gladness! These will soon vanish away. But the child of God owes his gladness to a deeper source—God has made him glad! He that can touch the secret springs of the heart, apart from circumstances or conditions, has often made a man glad when he has been racked with pain, or when he has been in the depths of poverty, or when he has been suffering at the demoniacal hands of inquisitors.  
Saints drink from a spring which neither dries in summer nor freezes in winter, for that which is of God’s making remains. “Your joy no man takes from You.” If God has made you glad, then the devil cannot make you sad. If God has made you glad, then it is not the weather and it is not your property, and it is not your health, and it is not your friend, neither is it your foe that can make you unhappy. If it is written, “You have made him glad,” then the man is glad, indeed. Beloved, I wish that every one of you had that joy which only God can give you, that better part which, once obtained, none can take away. It comes from God and from God, alone, and when He bestows it, it is yours forever, for His gifts are without repentance—He never takes back that which He has once granted! This is the joy which is worth having, for it is full, deep, lasting, everlasting. They say that philosophers can be merry without music and certainly Christians can joy in God without outward comforts—and they can even take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. They are happy people, to whom even losses are gains and burdens are helps!  
Notice, next, in the text, that the gladness which God gives to His people is no ordinary gladness, but an exceeding joy. “You have made him exceedingly glad”—exceeding—exceeding hope, exceeding measure, exceeding the gladness of others, exceeding any delight that can come from any other source. “You have made him exceedingly glad.” One man has become wealthy and he is glad. But the child of God, if the Lord has smiled upon him, is exceedingly glad. Here is one that feels his blood leaping in his veins with health and he is merry as the birds in summer time because of it. When the Lord turns, again, the captivity of His people, and smiles upon them, they are exceedingly glad. I wish that I could tell you how our eyes sometimes dash and sparkle, how our whole spirit dances within us for excessive joy when a sense of Divine Love is poured into our souls!  
I cannot communicate by any description what it is, but, Brothers and Sisters, you can surely guess, for you, perhaps, have felt the same—and if you have, you would not change with Caesar for his empire, nor with an archangel for his starry throne! No, when God lifts up the light of His Countenance upon His people, it is a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of Glory which He lays upon them! Then do they sing, “Joy, joy, joy!” I speak of what I know and testify what I have felt. May you know it! May you feel it now! I know that worldlings imagine that we Christians are a miserable crew and I fear that too often we turn our worst side foremost when we are with them. I am told that many shop-keepers are so poor that they put the most of their goods in the shop window, but this is a method which few Christians follow—for the opposite is the fact—their window is badly set out and yet they have a costly stock upon their shelves.  
The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of Light in this as well as other things. I would recommend such Believers to dress their window a little and show some of their better things. Put your ashes into the back yard and pour out the oil of joy in the parlor. Let people see that, after all, there are great advantages in belonging to the Lord’s household! But whether we seem to be happy or not, I can speak as one who has not been without abundant affliction and trial—we who believe in Jesus are a happy people, an enviable people. “Happy are you, O Israel,” said Moses, and we can bear witness that he spoke the truth. I would change with no man. So long as I know whom I have believed, I would prefer my own lot to that of any I have ever seen or heard of. I leave that point, but you can be sure of this—God-given joy is no common treasure!  
But, according to the text, this joy comes to us in one way. “You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.” Have you not, sometimes, been made very glad with the look of a friend’s face? I believe that there is more heart-cheer in the sight of some countenances than in sun, moon and stars. Oh, the joy that I had, a little while ago, in looking upon one dear face that I shall not see again for many a day, for it must necessarily be seen on the other side of the globe! What joy I have had in looking upon some of you when you have come to tell me what the Lord has done for you and I have seen your joy in the Lord! “Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” Certain friends of ours carry with them countenances which are always a half-day’s holiday to me whenever I look on them!  
I do not say that this is true of all of you, for I know some Knights of the Rueful Countenance, whose faces are long and dismal, and I would urge these to look into the face of Jesus till His brightness illuminates them! There are those among us who are so brimming over with sacred joy that a glance at their faces refreshes our hearts! Now, catch my thought— What must the countenance of God be? The countenance of a friend to a friend, of a bridegroom to his bride, of a wife to her husband, of a father to his child—each of these spreads gladness—but what is the countenance of God to His elect? It is a countenance that seems to say, “I am reconciled! Your sin is put away.”  
Oh, the gladness of seeing that face! It is a face that seems to say, “I am watching you; I am caring for you; I am smiling upon you.” Is not this a gladdening look? Lord, You have made me glad with Your countenance. “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! Carefully and continually You think upon me and watch over me, to do me good.” Thus to see the observing countenance of God is a great delight to His people.  
What shall I say of His approving countenance? When God has looked upon you and seemed to say, “you are doing right. Men blame you, but I accept you. Dear child of Mine—you are doing My will. You are following Me in reproach and I will abundantly reward you”—this makes a man exceedingly glad and nerves him to bear reproach and misunderstanding, however cruelly they may assail him.  
Again, when you come before God in prayer and you are pleading with Him. And your faith discerns that glorious face—the face of Jesus—your heart cries, “I am accepted! God is hearing my prayer. I may ask what I will and it shall be done unto me. I am not praying like a stranger; I am pleading like a child. I have my Father’s ear and heart and His countenance is toward me.” Oh, then it is a glad time with you! You are being heard and answered—and your heart beats to music. When the Lord looks on His chosen follower and says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I love you inexpressibly; I love you without measure—I love you as I love My Only-Begotten—and I will love you when time shall be no more. I will never leave you, nor forsake you”—then, again, our heart is glad and our glory rejoices! We should not be afraid for our flesh to rest in hope, for at such a time we could either live or die without a question, so fully is our heart filled with God.  
Then does our face shine like that of Moses when he came down from the mountain. Out of Heaven there is no gladness that is worthy to be compared with the bliss of knowing that the Lord has set His love upon us! This is the fullness of the vintage and all beside is as the gleaning of the grapes when the summer is ended. I have not time, you see, to open up this grand subject, fully, but such is the joy of God’s people. It comes from a clear sense of the Divine approbation. We must walk with God and be heartily agreed with Him, or we shall not possess this happiness. Whenever the child of God feels, “I was wrong; God is grieved with me,” then he goes slinking off to bed like a child that cannot have a goodnight kiss—and there is no gladness for him. But when, on the contrary, the Lord turns to him in love and mercy and says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed you.” And when He smiles upon us in Christ Jesus, then we can say with the Psalmist, “You have made me exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”

I will not detain you many minutes more, except to say that this joy of the Believer comes to him through many channels. Heaven has many windows and out of each one of them the Lord pours out benedictions upon His chosen. Let me read a part of the Psalm. “The king shall joy in Your strength, O Lord.” Oh, it is a great thing, when you are weak, to be strong in God, for then you will be happy! Divine strength brings Divine gladness with it. “And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!” God’s salvation, the election that brings us into it, the redemption that makes us full possessors of its blessings, the effectual calling which leads us to accept it, the eternal love which holds us fast in it—why, in all these, how greatly we rejoice!  
Next, answers to prayer make us rejoice. “You have given him his heart’s desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips.” When a man comes from the Mercy Seat, like Luther, saying, “I have conquered! I have won my suit with God,” what gladness has the Lord given him! “For You prevent him with the blessings of Your goodness.” God is beforehand with us—He outruns us in love. Here is another source of joy—when God gives us mercies before we seek them—when He lays them in our road and there they are, ready for us before we come to the spot! When David was made a king, I am sure he said, “I never thought, nor sought, nor worked to be a king.” Many of us have received choice blessings of which we said, when we obtained them—“Why this to me? I never dreamed of this. This was not in my plan. I never proposed this to my soul in her hours of largest desire. You prevent me with the blessings of Your goodness.” Brothers and Sisters, such things as these tend to make God’s people glad in their hearts.  
This is my last word to you—be glad in the Lord. I do not ask you to simulate happiness—to pretend to be glad when you are not. I do not ask you to sing when your heart feels that it must sigh. But I do ask you to be glad when there is reason to be! Be true and real in all your expressions, but let that truth and that expression spring from an educated soul that has been in the school of Christ and has learned what the facts of the case really are! Let your feelings be according to truth and your condition of heart according to the eternal settlements of Immutable Love. What are the facts of the case? Here they are—“O Lord, I will praise You: though You were angry with me! Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.” If I do not praise You, the timber out of the wall must cry out against me. If I do not rejoice in You, I shall be a traitor to my own consciousness and false to my own convictions, for You have brought my soul up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—and You have set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings—and I must have a new song in my mouth, even praise forevermore!  
I would, if I could, stir you all up to a burst of holy joy, a blaze of sacred gladness! Put on your silver sandals and your bridal ornaments. Take off your weeds and gird yourselves in white raiment. Doff the sackcloth and ashes—and put on your beautiful array. Cast aside your chains! Leave them for those to wear who love them and walk at large, in liberty, bedecked with the jewels of infinite Grace, and crowned with the diadem of loving kindness! Sing unto the Lord a new song and end it not till you get to Heaven—and then it will never end. “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.”—

*“No more the bloody spear.  
The Cross and nails no more, For Hell itself shakes at His name, And all the heavens adore.”*

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Savior Jesus Christ Who has blessed us with such blessings, all uncounted and unpriced!  
Let our high and holy calling, and our strong salvation be Theme of never-ending praises, God of Sovereign Grace, to Thee!”*

Hallelujah! Amen.  
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalms 20, 21.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—333, 21, 720, 288.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:  
DEAR FRIENDS—As requested, I append a line or two to the sermon in which my personality must appear far more than I would choose if it were left to my option. This week I am considerably improved and believe that I have fairly turned the corner and may hope to come back in good order for future service. I cannot yet call myself free from fits of deep depression which are the result of brain-weariness, but I am having them less frequently and, therefore, I hope they will vanish altogether.

I have preached twice to the little gathering in this town. After the first sermon, I felt very much wearied and could not sleep. But on the second occasion, that experience will not, I trust, be repeated. I cannot be sure, for I am writing just as the service has ended, but at present I feel refreshed by having told out, once more, the Gospel of the Grace of God.

I regret that during the last two weeks the funds for the College and Orphanage have been coming in very scantily—and for the Colportage and Evangelists there is next to nothing. Colportage is always deserving and always needing more aid, but not getting it. The work of our Evangelists, by which, under God, many sinners have been converted and Churches revived, is just now very short of income. With one grand exception, namely Weston-super-Mare, the churches visited of late by our Evangelists, Messrs. Fullerton and Smith, have not been able to defray the cost and this is likely to be the case in several future instances.

At this moment I do not see how such needs will be met. This is God’s work and I think it meet to say to my Brothers and Sisters, that I should be glad of help in it before I am tempted to be anxious about it! I am not troubled about it at present, but as I am only my Lord’s steward and have no means of my own for carrying on this most blessed service, I can only mention it to Him and to His servants. For all these works, God will provide. Without our spending money in advertised appeals, He will use this simple hint and lead His stewards, who judge us to be faithful, to keep the army of the Lord supplied with ammunition.

To one and all I send hearty Christian love.  
Yours to serve, for Christ’s sake,  
*C. H. SPURGEON.*  
Mentone, March 1,1885.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2562 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CRIES FROM THE CROSS  
NO. 2562

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 27, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1856.

**“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping me, and from the words of My roaring?”  
Psalm 22:1.**

(This was the first evening Sermon preached by Mr. Spurgeon after the fatal calamity at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall two weeks previously. [Someone yelled “Fire!” and ensuing rush to leave building by some resulted in someone being trampled to death.—Editor.] On commenting on his discourse, Mr. Spurgeon said, “The observations I have to make will be very brief, seeing that afterwards we are to partake of the Lord’s Supper. I shall make no allusion to the recent catastrophe—that theme of my daily thoughts and nightly dreams, ever since it h as occurred. I hope, however, to speak about that event at some future period.” This Mr. Spurgeon did, in many memorable utterances which will be included in Vol. II of his Autobiography, now in course of compilation).

WE here behold the Savior in the depths of His agonies and sorrows. No other place so well shows the griefs of Christ as Calvary and no other moment at Calvary is so full of agony as that in which this cry rends the air, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” At this moment, physical weakness brought upon Him by fasting and scourging, was united with the acute mental torture which He endured from the shame and ignominy through which He had to pass—and, as the culmination of His grief, He suffered spiritual agony which surpasses all expression on account of the departure of His Father from Him. This was the blackness and darkness of His horror. Then it was that He penetrated the depths of the caverns of suffering.

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” There is something in these words of our Savior always calculated to benefit us. When we behold the sufferings of men, they afflict and appall us, but the sufferings of our Savior, while they move us to grief, have about them something sweet and full of consolation. Here, even here, in this black spot of grief, we find our Heaven while gazing upon the Cross. This, which might be thought a frightful sight, makes the Christian glad and joyous. If he laments the cause, yet he rejoices in the consequences.

I. First, in our text, there are THREE QUESTIONS to which I shall call your attention.  
The first is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” By these words we are to understand that our blessed Lord and Savior was, at that moment, forsaken by God in such a manner as He had never been before. He had battled with the enemy in the desert, but thrice He overcame him and cast him to the earth. He had striven with that foe all His life long and even in the garden He had wrestled with him till His soul was “exceedingly sorrowful.” It is not till now that He experiences a depth of sorrow which He never felt before. It was necessary that He should suffer, in the place of sinners, what sinners ought to have suffered. It would be difficult to conceive of punishment for sin apart from the frown of Deity. With crime we always associate anger, so that when Christ died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”—when our blessed Savior became our Substitute—He became, for the time, the victim of His Father’s righteous wrath, seeing that our sins had been imputed to Him in order that His righteousness might be imputed to us. It was necessary that He should feel the loss of His Father’s smile—for the condemned in Hell must have tasted of that bitterness—and therefore the Father closed the eyes of His love, put the hand of justice before the smile of His face and left His Son to cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

There is no man living who can tell the full meaning of these words— not one in Heaven or on earth. I had almost said, in Hell there is not a man who can spell these words out with all their depth of misery. Some of us think, at times, that we could cry, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” There are seasons when the brightness of our Father’s smile is eclipsed by clouds and darkness. But let us remember that God never really forsakes us. It is only a seeming forsaking with us, but in Christ’s case it was a real forsaking. God only knows how much we grieve, sometimes, at a little withdrawal of our Father’s love, but the real turning away of God’s face from His Son—who shall calculate how deep the agony which it caused Him when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”  
In our case, this is the cry of unbelief. In His case it was the utterance of a fact, for God had really turned away from Him for a time. O you poor, distressed Soul who once lived in the sunshine of God’s face, but are now in darkness—you who are walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Death—you hear noises and you are afraid! Your soul is startled within you, you are stricken with terror if you think that God has forsaken you! Remember that He has not really forsaken you, for—  
*“Mountains when in darkness shrouded,  
Are as real as in day.”*  
God in the clouds is as much our God as when He shines forth in all the luster of His benevolence! But since even the thought that He has forsaken us gives us agony, what must the agony of the Savior have been when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”  
The next question is,” Why are You so far from helping Me?” Up to now, God had helped His Son, but now He must tread the winepress alone— even His own Father cannot be with Him. Have you not felt, sometimes, that God has brought you to do some duty and yet has apparently not given you the strength to do it? Have you ever felt that sadness of heart which makes you cry, “Why are You so far from helping me?” But remember, if God means you to do anything, you can do it, for He will give you the power! Perhaps your brain reels, but God has ordained that you must do it and you shall do it! Have you not felt as if you must go on, even while every step you took, you were afraid to put your foot down for fear you should not get a firm foothold? If you have had any experience of Divine things, it must have been so with you. We can scarcely guess what it was that our Savior felt when He said, “Why are You so far from helping Me?” His work is one which none but a Divine Person could have accomplished, yet His Father’s eyes were turned away from Him! With more than Herculean labors before Him, but with none of His Father’s might given to Him, what must have been the strain upon Him? Truly, as Hart says, He—  
*“Bore all Incarnate God could bear,  
With strength enough, and none to spare.”*  
The third enquiry is, “Why are You so far from the words of My roaring?” The word here translated, “roaring,” means, in the original Hebrew, that deep, solemn groan which is caused by serious sickness and which suffering men utter. Christ compares His prayers to those roars and complains that God is so far from Him that He does not hear Him. Beloved, many of us can sympathize with Christ, here. How often have we, on our knees, asked some favor of God and we thought we asked in faith, yet it never came? Down we went upon our knees again. There is something which withholds the answer and, with tears in our eyes, we have wrestled with God some more—we have pleaded, for Jesus’ sake, but the heavens have seemed like brass! In the bitterness of our spirit we have cried, “Can there be a God?” And we have turned round and said, “‘My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from the words of my roaring?’ Is this like You? Do You ever spurn a sinner? Have You not said, ‘Knock, and it shall be opened unto you?’ Are You reluctant to be kind? Do You withhold Your promise?”  
And when we have been almost ready to give up, with everything apparently against us, have we not groaned and said, “Why are You so far from the words of my roaring?” Though we know something, it is not much that we can truly understand of those direful sorrows and agonies which our blessed Lord endured when He asked these three questions— “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?”  
II. Let as now, in the second place, ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS.  
The answer to the first question I have given before. I think I hear the Father say to Christ, “My Son, I forsake You because You stand in the sinner’s place. As You are holy, just and true, I never would forsake You. I would never turn away from You, for, even as a Man, You have been holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners—but on Your head rests the guilt of every penitent—transferred from him to You and You must expiate it by Your blood. Because You stand in the sinner’s place, I will not look at You till You have borne the full weight of My vengeance. Then, I will exalt You on high, far above all principalities and powers.”  
O Christian, pause here and reflect! Christ was punished in this way for you! Oh, look at that Countenance so wrung with horror—those horrors gather there for you! Perhaps in your own esteem you are the most worthless of the family—certainly the most insignificant—but the meanest lamb of Christ’s flock is as much the object of purchase as any other. Yes, when that black darkness gathered round His brow and when He cried out, “Eloi, Eloi,” in the words of our text, for the Lord Omnipotent to help Him. When He uttered that awfully solemn cry it was because He loved you, because He gave Himself for you that you might be sanctified here and dwell with Him hereafter! God forsook Him, therefore, first, because He was the sinner’s Substitute.  
The answer to the second question is, “Because I would have You get all the honor to Yourself—therefore I will not help You lest I should have to divide the spoil with You.” The Lord Jesus Christ lived to glorify His Father, but He died to glorify Himself in the redemption of His chosen people. God says, “No, My Son, You shall do it alone, for You must wear the crown alone. And upon Yourself shall all the regalia of Your Sovereignty be found. I will give You all the praise and. therefore. You shall perform all the labor.” He was to tread the winepress alone and to get the victory and glory alone to Himself.  
The answer to the third question is essentially the same as the answer to the first. To have heard Christ’s prayers at that time would have been inappropriate. This turning away of the Divine Father from hearing His Son’s prayer is just in keeping with His condition as the sinner’s Surety. His prayer must not be heard! As the sinner’s Surety, He could say, “Now that I am here, dying in the sinner’s place, You seal Your ears against My prayer.” God did not hear His Son because He knew His Son was dying to bring us near to God. And the Son, therefore, cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”  
III. In conclusion I shall offer you A WORD OF EARNEST EXPOSTULATION AND OF AFFECTIONATE WARNING.  
Is it nothing to some of you that Jesus should die? You hear the tale of Calvary but, alas, you have dry eyes! You never weep concerning it. Is the death of Jesus nothing to you? Alas! It seems to be so with many. Your hearts have never throbbed in sympathy with Him. O Friends, how many of you can look on Christ, thus agonizing and groaning, and say, “He is my Ransom, my Redeemer”? Could you say, with Christ, “My God”? Or is God another’s and not yours? Oh, if you are out of Christ, hear me speak one word—it is a word of warning! Remember, to be out of Christ is to be without hope! If you die unsprinkled with His blood, you are lost!  
And what is it to be lost? I shall not try to tell you the meaning of that dreadful word, “lost.” Some of you may know it before another sun has risen. God grant that you may not! Do you desire to know how you may be saved? Listen to me. “God so loved the world that He gave His onlybegotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To be baptized is to be buried in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Have you believed in Christ? Have you professed faith in Christ? Faith is the Divine Grace which rests alone on Christ. Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should feel himself to be lost—that he should know himself to be a ruined sinner and then he should believe this—“It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” even the very chief of sinners! You need no mediator between yourselves and Christ! You may come to Christ just as you are—guilty, wicked, poor—Christ will take you just as you are. There is no necessity for washing beforehand. You need no riches—in Him you have all you require—will you bring anything to, “all”? You need no garments, for in Christ you have a seamless robe which will amply suffice to cover even the biggest sinner on earth, as well as the least!  
Come, then, to Jesus at once. Do you say you do not know how to come? Come just as you are. Do not wait to do anything! What you need is to leave off doing and let Christ do all for you. What do you need to do when He has done all? All the labor of your hands can never fulfill what God commands. Christ died for sinners and you must say, “Sink or swim, I will have no other Savior but Christ.” Cast yourself wholly upon Him—  
“And **when your eye of faith is dim,  
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim!  
Still at His footstool humbly bow,  
O Sinner! Sinner!**Prostrate now!”  
He is able to pardon you at this moment. There are some of you who know you are guilty and groan concerning it. Sinner, why do you wait? “Come, and welcome!” is My Master’s message to you! If you feel you are lost and ruined, there is not a barrier between you and Heaven—Christ has broken it down. If you know your own lost estate, Christ has died for you! Believe, and come! Come, and welcome, Sinner, come! O Sinner, come! Come! Come! Jesus bids you come and as His ambassador to you, I bid you come as one who would

 die to save your souls if it were necessary—as one who knows how to groan over you and to weep over you— one who loves you even as you love yourself! I, as His minister, say to you, in God’s name and in Christ’s place, “Be you reconciled to God.” What do you say? Has God made you willing? Then rejoice! Rejoice, for He has not made you willing without giving you the power to do what He has made you willing to do! Come! Come! This moment you may be as sure of Heaven as if you were there, if you cast yourself upon Christ and have nothing but Jesus for your soul’s reliance!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3344 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNANSWERED PRAYER  
NO. 3344

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1866.

**“O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.”  
Psalm 22:2.**

It is very clear to everyone who reads this Psalm that these are not so much the words of David as they are the words of David’s Son and David’s Lord, our blessed Master. He prayed with strong crying and tears. He came before His Father’s Throne with supplications and for a long time it seemed as if He would have no answer. It did appear as if God had utterly forsaken Him and that His enemies might persecute and take Him.

Now, why was the Savior permitted to pass through so sad an experience? How was it that He whose lightest word is prevailing with Heaven, that He who pleads with Divine Authority this day in His continual intercession, was permitted, when here below, to cry, and cry, and cry again and yet to receive no comforting answer? Was it not mainly for this reason—that He was making an Atonement for us—and He was not heard because we, as sinners, did not deserve to be heard? He was not heard, that we might be heard! The ears of God were closed against Him for a season, that they might never be closed against us—that the mourner’s cry might forever find a way to the heart of God—because the cry of Jesus was shut for awhile out from Mercy’s gate. He stood the Surety for our sins and was numbered with the transgressors! Upon Him the Lord laid the iniquity of all His people and, therefore, being the sinner’s Representative, He could not, for awhile be heard.

There was also, no doubt, another reason, namely, that He might be a faithful High Priest having sympathy with His people in all their woes. As this not being heard in prayer, or being unanswered for awhile, is one of the greatest troubles which can fall upon the Christian, and fall it does, the Savior had to pass through that trouble, too, that so it might be said of Him—

*“In every pang that rends the heart,  
The Man of Sorrows bore His part.”*  
When I fear that I have not been heard in prayer, I can now look upon

my Savior and say—  
He can now have a tender, touching sympathy with us because He has been tempted in all points like as we are.

*“He takes me through no darker rooms Than He went through before.”*

Was it not, also, once more in our Savior’s case, with a view to display the wondrous faith, fidelity and trustfulness of the obedient Son of God? Having been found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to His Father’s will. Now, obedience is not perceived until it is tried, and faith is not known to be firm and strong until it is put to the test and exercised. Through what an ordeal did this pure gold pass! It was put into the crucible and thrust into the hottest coals—all glowing with a white heat, they were heaped upon Him and yet no dross was found in Him! His faith never staggered! His confidence in His God never degenerated into suspicion and never turned aside into unbelief. It is, “My God! My God!” even when He is forsaken. It is, “My God and My Strength” even when He is poured out like water and all His bones are out of joint! In this thing He not only sympathizes with us, you see, but He sets us an example. We must overcome, as He did, through faith. “This is the victory which overcomes the world, even your faith.” And if we can copy this great High Priest of our profession who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself—if we can copy Him so as to be neither faint in our minds, nor turn from our Master’s work—we shall triumph even as He overcame!

But my chief objective in considering this theme is not so much to speak of the Savior’s trial as to address myself to those of our number who may even now be passing through the same experience as our Lord. It will already comfort you to know that Christ has been where you are.

It will already comfort you to know that Christ has been where you are. It will already guide you to know that He has set you an example and that He bids you follow in His steps. Let us now draw near to His sorrow and think on it for awhile for our instruction and comfort.

In the first place, the text—without any inquiry into the cause of unanswered prayer, seems to give—  
I. A GENERAL GUIDE FOR OUR CONDUCT.  
Suppose that we have been seeking some blessing from God for many months and have not obtained it? Whether it is a personal blessing, or on behalf of others, what ought to be our conduct under such a trial as that, the trial of a long delay, or an apparent refusal?  
In the first place, Brothers and Sisters, it is clear the text teaches us that we must not cease to trust God. “O my God.” Oh, that appropriating word! It is not, perhaps, “My Father.” The spirit of adoption is not here so much as the spirit of reverent trustfulness, but still there is the hold-fast word—“O my God.” Christian, never be tempted to give up your hold upon your only strength, upon your solitary hope! Under no conceivable circumstances, ever give place for an instant to the dark thought that God is not true and faithful to His promises! Though you should have seven years of unanswered prayer, yet suggest any other reason to your mind than one which would dishonor Him. Say with the Savior in this Psalm, “But You are holy.” Settle that in your mind. Oh, never allow the faintest breath of suspicion to come upon the fair fame of the Most High, for He does not deserve it! He is true. He is faithful. In this apparently worst of all cases, He did deliver His Son and come to the rescue in due time. In all other cases He has done the same—and I pray you never to distrust your God until you have some good and valid occasion for it. Never cast a slur upon His integrity till He really does forsake you—till He absolutely gives you up to perish! Then, but not till then, shall you doubt Him. Oh, believe Him to be good and true! You may not know why it is that He deals so strangely with you, but oh, never think that He is unfaithful for an instant, or that He has broken His Word. Continue to trust Him! You shall be rewarded if you do—and the longer your faith is tried, it shall be with you as when the ship is longest out at sea—it goes to the richest climes and comes home with the heaviest and most precious freight. So shall your faith come back to you with joy!  
Your faith may lie among the pots for many a day, but the time of her deliverance shall come and, like a dove, shall she mount with wings covered with silver and her feathers tipped with yellow gold! “Trust in the Lord at all times you people, and pour out your hearts before Him.”  
Once again, as we are never to cease to trust, so we are never to cease to pray. The text is very expressive upon this point. “I cry in the daytime, but You hear not: and in the night seasons I am not silent.” Never cease your prayers! No time is a bad time for prayer. The glare of daylight should not tempt you to cease—and the gloom off midnight should not make you stop your cries. I know it is one of Satan’s chief objectives to make the Christian cease praying, for if he could but once make us put up the weapon of all-prayer, he would easily vanquish us and take us for his prey. But so long as we continue to cry to the Most High, Satan knows he cannot devour the very weakest lamb of the flock! Prayer, mighty prayer, will yet prevail if it has but time!  
Oh, if this is the dark suggestion of the Evil One, “Forsake the closet! Give up private devotion. Never draw near to God, for prayer is all a fancy”—I pray you, spurn the thought with all your might and still cry, both in the daytime and at night, for the Lord will still hear your prayer!  
And while you never cease from your trust, nor from your prayer, grow more earnest in both. Let your faith be still more resolved to give up all dependence anywhere but upon God, and let your cry grow more and more vehement. It is not every knock at Mercy’s gate that will open it—he who would prevail must handle the knocker well and dash it down again, and again, and again! As the old Puritan says, “Cold prayers ask for a denial, but it is red-hot prayers which prevail.” Bring your prayers as some ancient battering ram against the gate of Heaven and force it open with a sacred violence, “for the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by storm.” He that would prevail with God must take care that all his strength be thrust into his prayers! The Lord will not hear you if you only bring up a rank or line of the display of your desires. There must be no reserves—the whole army of your soul must come into the conflict and you must besiege the Mercy Seat, determined to win the day, and then shall you prevail! If there are delays, take them as good and sound advice to be more firm in your faith and more fervent in your cry!  
And yet again, cease not to hope. The New Zealander has a word for hope which means, “the swimming thought,” because when all other thoughts are drowned, hope still swims. She lifts her head out of the foamy waves with her tresses all trailing and sees the blue sky above her and hopes, as it is there. So if you have prayed ever so long, yet hope on! “Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the strength of my life and my portion forever.” As long as there is a place of prayer and a promise of an answer, no Believer ought to give way to despair. “Go again,” said Elijah to his servant seven times! It must have been weary work to the Prophet to have to wait so long. He did not stand up once and pray to God as on Carmel—and then instantly came down the fire to continue the sacrifice—but again and again and, getting more humble in posture, with his face between his knees, he beseeches the Lord, not for fire, which was an unusual thing, but for

 water, which is the common gift of the skies! And though he pleads for that which the Lord, Himself, had promised, yet it did not at once come! And when his servant came back, four, five, six times, the answer was still the same—there was no sign of rain, but the brazen heavens looked down on an earth which was parched as if in an oven! “Go again!” said the Prophet, and at the seventh time, lo, there appeared the cloud like unto a man’s hand—and this cloud was the sure forerunner of the deluge and storm! Christian, go again seven times! No, I will venture to say 70 times seven, for God must keep His promise! Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of Jehovah’s Word can fail. “The grass withers, the flower thereof fades away, but the Word of our God endures forever.” Do you plead that enduring Word of God? Let no dark thoughts drive you to despair. Continue to trust! Continue to pray! Increase in your fervency and in the hope that the blessing will yet come! It did come to the Savior. The morning broke upon His midnight after all. Never tide ebbed out so far as in the Savior’s case, when the great stretches of misery and sorrow were visible where once God’s love had rolled in mighty floods. But when the time came, it began to turn, and see how it has turned now in mighty floods of matchless joy! The love of God has come back to our once suffering Savior and there, upon the Eternal Throne He sits, the Man, the Crucified, who bowed His head under mountains of almighty wrath, which broke in huge billows and covered His soul. Be of good courage, Christian! Hope on, poor Soul, and hope on forever!  
Thus much by way of general direction. But we now go on to a second point and shall inquire into—  
II. THE CAUSES OF UNANSWERED PRAYER.  
We shall, perhaps, on this theme, get a few special directions which may be available in particular cases. Dear Friends, there are some of us who are not often troubled about unanswered prayer—on the contrary, our own experience is such that the existence of a God who hears His people’s cry is reduced to an absolute, mathematical certainty!  
I have no more doubt about this than about my own existence, not because I can see it clearly and understand it perfectly, nor because with a blind credulity I submit myself to the Bible as being the Infallible Revelation of God, but because I have had real dealings with God, have tried and proved His promises to be true and have found out that according to my faith, it has been done unto me in a thousand instances! This is truth that those who have learned to live in the spirit world and to talk with God understand and know as plainly as they understand and know that when a child speaks to its father, its father grants its request. It has become to many Believers not at all a matter to be argued or talked of by way of dispute—they know that they have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and their prayers are answered. But occasionally, to all Believers, I suppose, there will come staggering moments when they scarcely know how to reply to their doubts because certain of their prayers have not been answered.  
It may possibly happen that the cause of unanswered prayer may many times lie in something connected with sin. Do you not think that unanswered prayers are often a Fatherly chastisement for our offenses? The Savior, in that wonderful Chapter where He tells out His love to us, says, “If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love,” and then He notes, as a special favor, if a man abide in His love and keep His commandments, he, “shall ask what he wills and it shall be done unto him.” Now it seems to me to be only reasonable that if I will not do what God wills, God will refuse to do what I will—that if He asks of me a certain duty and I refuse it—when I ask Him for a certain privilege or favor, it is not unkind, but, on the other hand, most wise and kind that He should say, “No, My Child, no. If you will not listen to My tender command, it is kind to refuse you your desire until you repent and obey.”  
Perhaps this is the way in which, too, are visited upon God’s people some neglects of ordinances. “He that knows his Master’s will and does it not, the same shall be beaten with many stripes.” And one of these stripes may surely be our failure in prayer! It may also be temporal affliction, but probably this is one of the main ways in which the Master inflicts the stripes upon His children. They are negligent of His commands and He says, “Then you shall tarry awhile. I will not yet grant you what you seek. But when you come to a better mind and are more scrupulous and tender in the fulfilling of My commands, then your longings shall be satisfied.”  
It may occur, too, that this delay may be a sort of disclosure to us as to wherein our sin lies. Sin sometimes lies in a Christian unrepented of because he only dimly realizes that it is there. Hear what Job declares— “Are the consolations of God small with you? Is there any secret thing with you?” That is to say, if you love selfish ease and feeble comforting. If you do not prevail with God in prayer, is there some secret sin in you which keeps back the blessing? God does, as it were, say to us, “Search and look.” Unanswered prayer should be to every Christian a search warrant—he should begin to examine himself to see whether there is not something harbored within which is contrary to the will of God. Oh, Believer, this is not a hard work for you to do, surely, but it is a very necessary one! Search yourself and breathe the prayer, “Search me, O God, and try me, and know my ways, and see if there is any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” I think this is one great reason for unanswered prayer, namely, that it is a chastisement for sin committed or an admonition against sin harbored.  
Sometimes there may be great sin in the prayer, itself! Are not our greatest sins often connected with our holiest things? We must be aware of our prayers. There is such a thing as polluting the Mercy Seat. Remember what became of Nadah and Abihu, who offered strange fire before the Lord. Beware, Christian, beware—you may sin against God in the prayer chamber as well as you can in the market—and you may offend on your knees, as well as when you are in your business! Have a care, for how can you hope that a prayer thus stained with sin can ever succeed unless you bring it to the blood to have it purged and cleansed from all defiling before it mounts to the Throne of Grace?  
And I sometimes fear, too, that our prayers do not speed because the thing asked for, though as we think good for us, is asked for from a wrong motive.  
If, for instance, a Christian minister asks that he may win souls in order that he may gain reputation and fame as a useful and successful Evangelist for his Master, he will probably not be heard, for he asks from an unworthy motive. If I seek to be useful merely that I may be known to be a useful man or woman, I am really seeking my own honor—can I expect God to minister to and pamper that?  
I must take care, then, that even when I ask for a good thing, I ask it for the purest of reasons—for God’s Glory. Oh, what washing even our prayers need! What cleansing, what purging! Can we wonder that they do not succeed when we so often make mistakes, both in the substance of the prayers and the motives from which we offer them?  
Praying seems, to some persons, to be simply a child’s play or a formal habit. They will take a book, read a form of intercession, and perhaps offer a few extemporary words and that is all. But these are all nothing and naughty prayers unless God shall touch them and give them life!  
Sometimes, then, failure in prayer may be caused by sin. In such a case, heart-searching, deep repentance and especially a speedy going to the Cross to have renewed fellowship with the cleansing blood and to be brought once more in contact with the holy sufferings of the blessed Substitute will make us speed.  
But we go on to notice that failure in prayer may sometimes be the result of ignorance.  
I think persons often offer very ignorant prayers, indeed. I am sure I have good evidence that some do. There is scarcely ever a week passes in which I do not receive intelligence from different persons who are on the verge of bankruptcy, or deeply in debt, that they have prayed to God about it—and that they have been guided by God to write to me to get them out of their difficulties and to pay their debts! Now, I am always perfectly willing to do so as soon as ever I am directed expressly by God, Himself! But I shall not receive the direction at secondhand! As soon as I receive it myself—and I think it is only fair that I should receive it, as well as they—I shall be quite willing to be obedient to His direction, provided, too, the funds are in hand, which does not often happen! But folks must be very foolish to suppose that because they ask God that such-andsuch a debt may be paid by miraculous means, it will certainly be done! I have a right to ask for anything which God has promised me, but if I go beyond the range of the Divine Promises, I also go beyond the range of assured and confident expectation. The promises are very large and very wide, but when one gets a fancy in his head, he must not suppose that God is there in his fancy. I have known some fanatical persons who thought they could live by faith. They were going to preach the Gospel, having no gifts whatever for preaching. They were going to be missionaries in a district having no more gift to be missionaries than horses in a plow. But they thought they were destined to do it and, therefore, they tried to live by faith. And when they had been nearly half-starved, then they complained against the goodness and abandoned the labor. Had God really inspired and sent them, He would have sustained and kept them, but if they go about it willfully and stubbornly on their own account, they must be driven back to realize their own ignorance of the Divine Will. Now, we must not pray ignorantly—we must pray with the understanding and with the spirit, so that we may clearly know what we are praying about. Get the promise and then offer the prayer—and the prayer will be answered as sure as God is God! But get your own fancy into your head and you will only have to get it out again, for it will be of no service to you.

And then oftentimes we pray in a way in which our prayers could not be heard consistent with the dignity of the Most High. I love a holy familiarity with God and I believe it to be commendable, but still, man is but man, while God is God and, however familiar we may be with Him in our hearts, we must still remember the distance there is between the Most High and the most elevated and most beloved of His creatures—and we are not to speak as though it were in our power to do as we will and as we please. No, we are children, but we are to remember that children have a limit as to how they are to speak to their father. Their love may come as near as they please, but their impertinence may not—and we must mind that we do not mistake the familiarity of communion for the impudence of presumption! We must be careful to distinguish between the two, for he who is taught of God and waits upon Him according to His mind will find, as a general rule, that he will not be long without an answer to his prayer.  
Now, if it is ignorance that thus prevents the answering of your prayers, you should get better instructed and search especially into such texts as bear upon the matter of prayer, that you may know how to use your private key of Heaven and open the sacred portals, the gate of the Divine Mercy, for ignorance will often make you to fail.  
Again, does it not often happen that there may be reasons for delay lying in our own infirmity?  
Sometimes, if a mercy were to come to a Believer immediately when he asked for it, it would come too soon. But God times it until it appears only at the right and best moment. When a gracious godly soul has been much exercised in his mind concerning a special mercy—has studied it, weighed it, arrived at a proper apprehension of it and arranged his plans for its proper use and benefit—then, just at the time that the barn was swept and all the lumber taken out—then God’s harvest of bounty comes home and the man, being quite ready for the blessing, the blessing comes!  
Perhaps you are not yet ready for the blessing. You have asked for strong meat, but you are but as yet a babe and, therefore, you are to be content with milk for a little while longer. You have asked for a man’s trials, a man’s privileges and a man’s work, but you are as yet only a child growing up into manhood—and so your good Father will give you what you ask for, but He will give it to you in such a way as to make it not a burden to you, but a blessing. If it came now, it might involve responsibilities which you could not handle, but coming by-and-by, you shall be well prepared for it!  
There are reasons, too, I doubt not, which lie in our future, why our prayers are not answered. Delays in prayer may turn out to be a sort of training school for us. Take the Apostle’s instance. The “thorn in the flesh” was very painful, and though he was a chosen Apostle, yet he had no answer. Thrice he cried, but still the “thorn in the flesh” was not removed. It was well that it was not, for Paul needed to be taught tenderness in order that he might write those loving Epistles of his and, therefore, he received an answer of another sort, “My Grace is sufficient for you.” Oh Christian! If you could get rid of the trouble in which you now are, you would not be able to comfort poor mourners as you shall yet do! You would not be a full grown, strong man if you had not these stern trials to develop your manly vigor! Men do not learn to be intrepid sailors by staying on dry land. You are to put out to sea in the midst of the storm, so that you may learn how to manage and guide the vessel of your soul! You are going through a rough drill, that you may be a valiant and stalwart, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, for battles are yet to come and grim foes yet to face—for you have many fights between now and the blessed active ease of Heaven!  
You have not yet won the crown, but you will have to cut your way, inch by inch and foot by foot, and the Master is making you an athlete that wrestling with your enemies you may overcome. He is strengthening your muscles and tendons, sinews and power by the arduous exercise of unanswered prayer that you may be finely useful in the future!  
Still, yet again, perhaps the reason why prayer is not always quickly answered is this—a reason which no tongue can tell, but which is inscrutable lying in the Sovereign purposes and wisdom of God.  
Now, look! If I cannot tell why God does not hear me, what must I say? I had better say nothing but put my finger on my lips and wait. Who am I that I should question Him as to what He does? Who am I that I should arraign my Maker before my bar and say to Him, “What are You doing?”? Almighty Potter, You have a right to do as You will with Your own clay! We have learned to submit to Your will, not because we must, but because we love that will, feeling that Your will is the highest good of Your creatures and the most sublime wisdom! Why should we be so anxious to know the depth of the sea which cannot be fathomed by our line? Why must we be toiling to heave the lead so often? Leave these things with God and go on with your praying and your believing—and all shall yet be well with you!  
And now I conclude this point by saying that if the Christian, after looking into the matter, cannot find a reason why he should not be answered, let him still expect that he shall be, and still wait upon God, remembering, however, that he may never be answered after his own fashion, but that he shall be answered after God’s fashion.  
I like that verse of old Erskine’s, for though rough and quaint, it is true—  
*“I’m heard when answered soon or late.  
Yes, heard when I no answer get!  
Yes, kindly answered when refused,  
And treated well when hardly used.”*  
In Heaven every Believer will realize how great was this truth—and so here I leave it.  
And now, to conclude, I thought I would say a few words upon a very special case which may occur, and which may be here represented this evening. I have no doubt that it is in more than one instance. It was once my case. It is not the case of a Christian asking a blessing for himself, but it is the case of a sinner, conscious of his danger as a sinner, asking for mercy.  
Brothers and Sisters, it was a very unhappy lot to have to seek the Lord with such earnestness as I could command as a child for four or five years—with sighs, and cries, and entreaties—but to have no comfortable answer whatever, to be as one that chooses strangling rather than life because of a sense of God’s anger in my soul. To desire reconciliation, to live in the midst of Gospel Light and to hear the Truth of God preached every Sabbath day, indeed, every day in the week, after a fashion, and yet not to discover the way to Heaven was a great affliction. Now, sometimes it is not good advice to say to such a person, Go on praying. It is good advice! I must correct myself, there, but it is not the best advice in such a case. Soul, if you have been seeking mercy and you cannot find it, go on praying by all means—never relax that, but it is not by praying that you will ever get peace. The business of your soul is to listen to Christ’s command—and His command is contained in the Gospel, which Gospel is not, “Go you into all the world and tell every creature to pray,” but it is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”  
Now, your business is to pray, certainly, but your first business is to believe! Your prayers before you believe have but little weight in them. Unbelieving prayers! Shall I call them prayers? Prayers without faith? They are birds without wings, ships without sails and beasts without legs! Prayers that have no faith in Christ in them are prayers without the blood on them! They are deeds without the signature, without the seal, without the stamp—they are impotent, illegal documents! Oh, if you could but come as you are and look to Christ on the Cross! It is not your prayers that can save you—it is Christ’s prayers, Christ’s tears, Christ’s sufferings, Christ’s blood and Christ’s death! If you trust to your prayers, you have gone back to the old beggarly elements of the Law. You might as well trust to your good works as to your prayers, but to trust either will be to rest in “a refuge of lies.” Your hope, Sinner, lies in the altogether gratuitous mercy of God—and that mercy only comes to those who rest in Jesus Christ, alone, waiting patiently for Him! Oh, that you could but come just as you are and lay yourself at Mercy’s door with such a word as this on your lips—  
*“My hope is fixed on nothing else  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness!”*  
There are no doings of yours needed to complete the work. No! I venture to say, not even any praying of yours. Your praying and your doings shall each occupy their proper place, afterwards, and then they shall be essential in their way, but now, as a sinner, your business is with the sinner’s Savior! If you are now enabled to look completely out of self and see all that your flesh can do as dead and buried forever in the grave of Christ—and as being nothing and worse than nothing! And if you can see Jesus, the mighty Savior, distributing the gifts which He has received for men, even distributing them to the rebellious—if you can thus trust Him, you are saved! What do you say, Sinner? Are you enabled to do it now? Can you fall flat before His Cross? Oh, the happy day when I learned that I was no longer to look to self, but found that the Gospel was, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth.” Many of you have looked, Brothers and Sisters! Look again to that sacred head once wounded and filled with pain and grief, but which now is crowned with glory! Look and renew your vow of dedication and He will lift you up to be above the angels and only second to God, Himself!  
Oh look now!  
And as to you who have never looked before, I pray the Master to open your blind eyes and cause the scales to drop, so that you may look now and, while you look, may see everything you need laid up for you in Jesus! Everything a sinner needs can be richly supplied by Him—and then the sinner can go his way rejoicing and singing, “Christ is All, and happy am I that I have sought and found Him.” The Lord bless you all for His name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 32.**

This is a great Psalm of Grace, a Psalm in which a sinner, cleansed by Sovereign Grace, adores and blesses the mercy of God.  
Verse 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. This is not a blessing for the man who says he has no sin—this is not a benediction for the innocent who talk about their own good works—but blessed is the man who, having sinned, is pardoned, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! In a word, it is a Gospel blessing—it is the blessing of Free Grace.  
2. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. He had a thousand iniquities. He transgressed in all sorts of ways. The Lord does not impute these things to him. He has set them down to the account of Another who has ventured to stand in the sinner’s place and be made sin in the sinner’s place! But to this man, this blessed man, God does not impute iniquity—and in his spirit there is no guile—he confesses his sin with honesty, he is pardoned with certainty and in his spirit there is no cunning concealment.  
3, 4. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. Selah. This is the experience of those men whom God saves. Till they confess sin, that sin rankles in them like venom—it boils their blood, it eats into their bones, it makes life worse than death, it makes them dread the wrath to come—their days are nights, and their nights are Hells! They cannot stand themselves. This was David’s experience and it has been the way by which God has led thousands of His redeemed ones that He might bring them to Himself. As long as we cloak our sin and conceal it and pretend that we are innocent, the fire burns within us—but when we just confess the sin, then it is that we are dealing with God aright—and God deals with us in Grace!  
5. I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. All gone, gone forever, gone at a stroke! Oh, what a mercy this is, that when once we will take the place of sinners and plead guilty, then it is that we are absolved at once! We have but to acknowledge that we deserve the punishment and immediately that punishment is remitted! This is the way of Grace, the plan of Infinite condescending Love!  
6. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him. The man that has so prayed as to find complete forgiveness, he is the man that will never leave off praying as long as he lives! The one gain which covers everything, the gain of conscious forgiveness, inspires a man to pray about anything and about everything as long as he lives! “For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto You.” “You are my hiding place.” You see God was his hiding place when he was in a storm of sin, and now he takes God to be his hiding place in every time of trouble, from all the afflictions of his life, all the sorrows of the way. “You are my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble.” Shall He not, since He has blotted out our sins? Oh, if God has preserved us from the wrath to come, what is there to be afraid of? “You shall preserve me from trouble. You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance.” I shall live in a ring of music! I shall march onward to Heaven as in the center of song! Why, it may well be so, when once God has freely blotted out our sins—“You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance.” Yes, says God, that I will, and I will do more!  
8. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes. I have not blotted out your sins to leave you to wander back into them again—I will be your Teacher, your folly shall not be your ruin, your ignorance shall not be your destruction. I will guide you—look at Me!—“I will guide you with My eyes.” “A glance, a look, shall be enough for you! I will give you such a heart that you shall understand the least motion of My finger. No, I will guide you with My eyes.”  
9. Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto you. A pardoning God may well ask this of us, that we would be tender. Oh, let us be very willing to do the Lord’s will, plastic in His hands like clay in the hand of the potter! It is a great pity, Brothers and Sisters, when we won’t be guided by the gentle leadings of God and must be whipped and spurred, and tugged at. For God will govern us if we are His people. If one bit will not do it, He will get a tougher bit that shall cut us and hurt us, but He will rule us! And so He ought to do, blessed be His name!  
10, 11. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart.

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JESUS, THE EXAMPLE OF HOLY PRAISE  
NO. 799

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 8, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will declare Your name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise You. You that fear the Lord, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel.” Psalm 22:22, 23.**

WE greatly esteem the dying words of good men, but what must be the value of their departing thoughts! If we could pass beyond the gate of speech and see the secret things which are transacted in the silent chambers of their souls at the moment of departure, we might greatly value the revelation, for there are thoughts which the tongue could not and must not utter, and there are deep searchings of heart which are not to be expressed by syllables and sentences. If, by some means we could read the inmost death-thoughts of holy men, we might be privileged, indeed.

Now, in the Psalm before us, and in the words of our text, we have the last thoughts of our Lord and Master, and they beautifully illustrate the fact that He was governed by one ruling passion—that ruling passion most strong in death was the glory of God. When but a Child, He said, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” Throughout His work-life He could say, “The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up.” “It is My meat and My drink to do the will of Him that sent Me.” And now, at last, as He expires with His hands and His feet nailed, and His body and soul in extreme anguish, the one thought is that God may be glorified!

In that last happy interval, before He actually gave up His soul into His Father’s hands, His thoughts rushed forward and found a blessed place of rest in the prospect that, as the result of His death, all the kindreds of the nations would worship before the Lord, and that by a chosen Seed the Most High should be honored. O for the same concentration of all our powers upon one thing, and that one thing—the glory of God! Would God that we could say with one of old, “This one thing I do,” and that this one thing might be the chief end of our being—the glorifying of our Creator, our Redeemer, the liege Lord of our hearts!

My object, this morning, is to excite in you the spirit of adoring gratitude. I thought that as last Sabbath we spoke of Christ as the example of protracted prayer, it might seem seasonable at the end of a week of so much mercy to exhibit Him to you as the example of grateful praise and to ask you as a great congregation to follow Him as your Leader in the delightful exercise of magnifying the name of Jehovah—

“ *Far away are gloom and sadness;  
Spirits with seraphic fire,  
Tongues with hymns, and hearts with gladness, Higher sound the chords and higher.”*

I shall ask your attention, in considering these verses, first, to our Lord’s example: “I will declare Your name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise You.” And, secondly, I shall invite you to observe our Lord’s exhortation: “You that fear the Lord, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel.”

I. We begin with OUR LORD’S EXAMPLE. The praise which our Jesus as our Exemplar renders unto the Eternal Father is twofold. First, the praise of declaration, “I will declare Your name unto My brethren.” Secondly, the more direct and immediate thanksgiving, “In the midst of the congregation will I praise You.”

1. The first form of the praise which our blessed Mediator renders unto the eternal Father is that of declaring God’s name. This, my dear Friends, you know He did in His teaching. Something of God had been revealed to men before. God had spoken to Noah and Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob and especially to His servant Moses—He had been pleased to reveal Himself in different types and ceremonies and ordinances. He was known as Elohim, Shaddai and Jehovah, but never until Christ came did men begin to say, “Our Father which are in Heaven.” This was the loving word by which the Well-Beloved declared His Father’s name unto His brethren.

The sterner attributes of God had been revealed amidst the thunders of Sinai, the waves of the Red Sea, the smoke of Sodom and the fury of the deluge. The sublimities of the Most High had been seen, and wondered at by the Prophets who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. But the full radiance of a Father’s love was never seen until it was beheld beaming through the Savior’s face. “He that has seen Me,” said Christ, “has seen the Father.” But until they had seen Him they had not seen God as the Father. “No man can come unto the Father,” says Jesus, “Except by Me.” And as no man can come affectionately in the outgoings of his heart or fiducially in the motions of his faith, so neither can any man come to God in the enlightenment of

 understanding except by Christ, the Son.

He who understands Christianity has a far better idea of God than he who only comprehends Judaism. Read the Old Testament through and you shall value every sentence, and prize it above fine gold—but still you shall feel unrest and dissatisfaction—for the vision is veiled and the light is dim. Turn, then, to the New Testament and you discern that in Jesus of Nazareth dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! Then the noontide of knowledge is around you. Then the vision is open and distinct. Jesus is the express image of His Father, and seeing Him you have seen God manifest in the flesh! This sight of God you will assuredly obtain if you are one of the Brethren to whom, through the Spirit, Jesus Christ in His teaching declares the name of the Father.

Our Lord, however, declared the Father more, perhaps, by His acts than by His words, for the life of Christ is a discovery of all the attributes of God in action. If you want to know the gentleness of God, you perceive Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them. If you would know His condescension, behold the loving Redeemer taking little children into His arms and blessing them. If you would know whether God is just, hear the words of a Savior as He denounces sin—and observe His own life—for He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Would you know the mercy of God as well as His justice? Then see it manifested in the ten thousand miracles of the Savior’s hands, and in the constant sympathy of the Redeemer’s heart.

I cannot stay to bring out all the incidents in the Redeemer’s life, nor even to give you a brief sketch of it, but suffice it to say that the life of Christ is a perpetual unrolling of the great mystery of the Divine attributes, and you may rest assured that what Jesus is, that the Father is. You need not start back from the Father, as though He were something strange and unrevealed, for you have seen the Father if you have seen Christ. And if you have studied well and drunk deep into the spirit of the history of the Man of Sorrows, you understand, as well as you need to, the Character of God over all, blessed forever.

Our Lord made the grandest declaration of the Godhead in His death— *“Here His whole name appears complete,  
Nor wit can guess, nor reason trace,  
Which of the letters best is writ—  
The power, the wisdom, or the Grace.”*

There at Calvary, where He suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, we see the Godhead resplendent in noonday majesty, albeit that to the natural eye it seems to be eclipsed in midnight gloom. Would you see stern justice such as the Judge of all the earth perpetually exhibits (for shall not He do right)? Would you see the justice that will not spare the guilty, which smites at sin with determined enmity and will not endure it? Then behold the hands and feet, and side of the Redeemer welling up with crimson blood! Behold His heart broken as with an iron rod, dashed to shivers as though it were a potter’s vessel! Hearken to His cries. Mark the lines of grief that mar His face. Behold the turmoil, the confusion, the whirlwinds of anguish which seethe like a boiling caldron within the soul of the Redeemer! Here is the vengeance of God revealed to men so that they may see it and not die—may behold it and weep—but not with the tears of despair!

At the same time, if you would see the Grace of God, where shall you discover it as you will in the death of Jesus? God’s bounty gleams in the light, flashes in the rain and sparkles in the dew. It blossoms in the flowers that paint the meadows, and it ripens in the golden sheaves of autumn. All God’s works are full of goodness and truth! Even on the sea itself are the steps of the beneficent Creator—but all this does not meet the case of guilty, condemned man. Therefore, to the eye of him who has learned to weep for sin, Nature does not reveal the goodness of God in any such a light as that which gleams from the Cross. Best of all is God seen as He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” “For God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Your thoughtful minds will readily discover every one of the great qualities of Deity in our dying Lord. You have only to linger long enough amidst the wondrous scenes of Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha to observe how power and wisdom, Grace and vengeance, strangely join—

*“Piercing His Son with sharpest smart,*

*To make the purchased blessing mine.”*  
Beloved, in the midst of the Brethren a dying Savior declares the name of the Lord and thus magnifies the Lord as no other can. None of the harps of angels, nor the fiery, flaming sonnets of cherubs can glorify God as did the wounds and pangs of the great Substitute when He died to make His Father’s Grace and justice known.

Our Lord continued to declare God’s name among His Brethren when He rose from the dead. He did so literally. Among the very first words He said were, “Go to My Brethren,” and His message was, “I ascend unto My Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God.” His life on earth after His resurrection was brief, but it was very rich and instructive, and in itself a showing forth of Divine faithfulness. He further revealed the faithfulness and glory of God when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive. It must have been an august day when the Son of God actually passed the pearly gates to remain within the walls of Heaven enthroned until His second advent! How must the spirits of just men made perfect have risen from their seats of bliss to gaze on Him!

They had not seen a risen one before. Two had passed into Heaven without death, but none had entered into Glory as risen from the dead. He was the first instance of immortal resurrection, “the First Fruits of them that slept.” How angels adored Him! How holy beings wondered at Him while—

*“The God shone gracious through the Man,*

*And shed sweet glories on them all!”*  
Celestial spirits saw the Lord that day as they had never seen before! They had worshipped God, but the excessive splendor of absolute Deity had forbidden the sacred familiarity with which they hailed the Lord in flesh arrayed. They were never so near Jehovah before, for in Christ the Godhead veiled its thrilling splendors, and wore the aspect of a fatherhood and brotherhood most near and dear. Enough was seen of Glory, as much as finite beings could bear, but still the whole was so sweetly shrouded in humanity that God was declared in a new and more delightful manner— such as made Heaven ring with newborn joy!

What if I say that I think a part of the occupation of Christ in Heaven is to declare to perfect spirits what He suffered, how God sustained Him? To reveal to them the Covenant and all its solemn bonds—how the Lord ordained it, how He made it firm by Suretyship, and based it upon eternal settlements—so that everlasting mercy might flow from it? What if it is not true that there is no preaching in Heaven? What if Christ is the Preacher there, speaking as never man spoke and forever instructing His saints that they may make known unto principalities and powers yet more fully the manifold wisdom of God as revealed both in Him and in them—in them the members, and in Him the Head? I think, if it is so, it is a sweet fulfillment of this dying vow of our blessed Master, “I will declare Your name unto My brethren.”

But, Brothers and Sisters, it is certain that at this hour our Lord Jesus Christ continues to fulfill the vow by the spreading of His Gospel on earth. Do not tell me that the Gospel declares God, but that Jesus does not! I would remind you that the Gospel does not declare God apart from the Presence of Jesus Christ with the Gospel. “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,” is the Gospel’s true life and power. Take Christ’s Presence away and all the doctrines, and the precepts, and the invitations of the Gospel would not declare God to this blind-eyed generation—this hard-hearted multitude! But where Jesus is by His Spirit, there is the Word the Father declares.

And, my Brethren, this great process will go on. All through the present dispensation Christ will declare God to the sons of men—especially to the elect sons of men, to His own Brothers and Sisters. Then shall come the latter days of which we know so little, but of which we hope so much. Then, in that august period there will be a declaration, no doubt, of God in noonday light, for it shall be said, “The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell among them.” Of that age of light Jesus shall be the sun! The great Revealer of Deity shall still be the Son of Mary, the Man of Nazareth, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!

We shall, each one of us, tell abroad the savor of His name till He shall come. And then we shall have no need to say one to another, “Know the Lord,” for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest—and know the Lord for this reason, because they know Christ, and have seen Jehovah in the Person of Jesus Christ His Son. I cannot leave this passage without bidding you treasure up that precious word of our Master, “I will declare Your name unto My brethren”—

*“Our next of kin, our Brother now,  
Is He to whom the angels bow.  
They join with us to praise His name,  
But we the nearest interest claim.”*

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” “For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

The Savior’s Brethren are to know God in Christ. You who are one with Jesus—you who have been adopted into the same family—have been regenerated and quickened with His life. You who are joined together by an indissoluble union, you are to see the Lord. I said an indissoluble union, for a wife may be divorced, but there is no divorce of Brethren. I never heard of any law, human or Divine, that could ever “unbrother” a man! That cannot be done—if a man is my brother, he is and shall be my brother when Heaven and earth shall pass away. Am I Jesus’ brother? Then I am joint heir with Him. I share in all He has and all that God bestows upon Him. His Father is My Father. His God is My God. Feast, my Brethren, on this dainty meat, and go your way in the strength of it to bear the trials of earth with more than patience!

The example of our Lord, under this first head, I must hint at and leave. It is this—if the Lord Jesus Christ declares God, especially to His own Brethren, be it your business and mine, in order to praise Jehovah, to tell what we know of the excellence and surpassing glories of our God! And especially let us do it to our kinsfolk, our household, our neighbors, and, since all men are in a sense our brethren, let us speak of Jesus wherever our lot is cast. My Brothers and Sisters, I wish we talked more of our God—

*“But ah! how faint our praises rise!  
Sure ‘tis the wonder of the skies,  
That we, who share His richest love,  
So cold and unconcerned should prove.”*

How many times this week have you praised the dear Redeemer to your friends? Have you done it once? I do it often officially—but I wish I did it more often spontaneously and personally—to those with whom I may commune by the way.

You have doubtless murmured this week, or spoken against your neighbors, or spread abroad some small amount of scandal, or, it may be, you have talked frothily and with levity. It is even possible that impurity has been in your speech—even a Christian’s language is not always so pure as it should be. Oh, if we saved our breath to praise God with, how much wiser! If our mouths were filled with the Lord’s praise and with His honor all the day, how much holier! If we would but speak of what Jesus has done for us, what good we might accomplish! Why, every man speaks of what he loves! Men can hardly hold their tongues about their inventions and their delights. Speak well, O you faithful, of the Lord’s name! I pray you, be not dumb concerning One who deserves so well of you! Make this the resolve of this Sabbath morning, “I will declare Your name unto my Brethren.”

2. Our Master’s second form of praise in the text is of a more direct kind—“In the midst of the congregation will I praise You.” Is it a piece of imagination, or does the text really mean this, that the Lord Jesus Christ, as Man, adores and worships the eternal God in Heaven, and is, in fact, the great Leader of the devotions of the skies? Shall I err if I say that they all bow when He as Priest adores the Lord, and all lift up the voice at the lifting up of His sacred psalmody? Is He the chief Musician of the sky, the Master of the sacred choir? Does He beat time for all the hallelujahs of the universe? I think so. I think He means just that in these words: “In the midst of the congregation will I praise You.”

As God, He is praised forever—far above all worshipping—He is Himself forever worshipped! But as Man, the Head of redeemed humanity, the ever-living Priest of the Most High God, I believe that He praises Jehovah in Heaven. Surely it is the office of the Head to speak and to represent the holy joys and devout aspirations of the whole body which He represents. In the midst of the congregations of earth, too, is not Jesus Christ the sweetest of all singers? I like to think that when we pray on earth our prayers are not alone, but our great High Priest is there to offer our petitions with His own.

When we sing on earth it is the same. Is not Jesus Christ in the midst of the congregation—gathering up all the notes which come from sincere lips—to put them into the golden censer, and to make them rise as precious incense before the Throne of the infinite majesty? So then, He is the great singer rather than we! He is the chief player on our stringed instruments, the great master of true music! The worship of earth comes up to God through Him, and He, He is the accepted channel of all the praise of all the redeemed universe! I am anticipating the day—I hope we are all longing for it—when the dead shall rise and the sea and land shall give up the treasured bodies of the saints. Then glorified spirits shall descend to enliven their renovated frames, and we who are alive and remain shall be changed and made immortal, and the King Himself shall be revealed!

Then shall be trod under our feet all the ashes of our enemies! Satan, bound, shall be held beneath the foot of Michael, the great archangel, and victory shall be on the side of truth and righteousness. What a “Hallelujah” that will be which shall peal from land and sea and from islands of the far-off main—“Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” Who will lead that song? Who shall be the first to praise God in that day of triumph? Who first shall wave the palm of victory? Who but He who was first in the fight and first in the victory? Who but He who trod the winepress alone and stained His garments with the blood of His enemies? Who but He that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?

Surely He it is who in the midst of the exulting host, once militant and then triumphant, shall magnify and adore Jehovah’s name forever and forever! Has He not Himself said it, “My praise shall be of You in the great congregation”? What does that expression mean which is so hard to be understood, “Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father”? What does that dark saying mean, “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son of God also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in All”?

Whatever they may mean, they seem to teach us the mediatorial crown and government are temporary and intended only to last until all rule, authority and power are put down by Jesus—and the rule of God shall be universally acknowledged. Jesus cannot renounce His Godhead. But His mediatorial sovereignty will be yielded up to Him from whom it came—and that last solemn act in which He shall hand back to His Father the allsubduing scepter will be a praising of God to a most wonderful extent beyond human conception! We wait and watch for it, and we shall behold it in the time appointed.

Beloved Friends, we also have in this second part an example—let us endeavor to praise our God in a direct manner. We ought to spend at least a little time every day in adoring contemplation. Our private devotions are scarcely complete if they consist altogether of prayer. Should there not be praise? If possible, during each day, sing a hymn. Perhaps you are not in a position to sing it aloud—or very loud, at any rate—but I would hum it if I were you. Many of you working men find time enough to sing a silly song—why cannot you find space for the praise of God? Every day let us praise Him when the eyelids of the morning first are opened, and when the curtains of the night are drawn. Yes, and at midnight—if we wake at that solemn hour—let the heart put fire to the sacred incense and present it unto the Lord that lives forever and ever.

In the midst of the congregation, also, whenever we come up to God’s House, let us take care that our praise is not merely lip language, but that of the heart! Let us all sing, and so sing that God Himself shall hear. We want more than the sweet sounds which die upon mortal ears—we want the deep melodies which spring from the heart—and which enter into the ears of the immortal God. Imitate Jesus, then, in this twofold praise, the declaring of God, and the giving of direct praise to Him.

II. My time almost fails me, and I have need of much of it, for now I come to the second head, OUR LORD’S EXHORTATION. Follow me earnestly, my dear Brothers and Sisters, and then follow me practically, also. The exhortations of the second verse are given to those who fear God, who have respect to Him, who tremble to offend Him, who carry with them the consciousness of His Presence into their daily lives and who act towards Him as obedient children towards a father. The exhortation is further addressed to the seed of Jacob, to those in covenant with God, to those who have despised the pottage and chosen the birthright, to those who, if they have had to sleep with a stone for their pillow, have, nevertheless, seen Heaven opened and enjoyed a revelation of God. It is addressed to those who know what prevalence in prayer means, to those who, in all their trouble, have yet found that all these things are not against them, but work their everlasting good, for Jesus is yet alive and they shall see Him before they die.

It is, moreover, directed to the seed of Israel—to those who once were in Egypt in spiritual bondage, who have been brought out of slavery, who are being guided through the wilderness, fed with Heaven’s manna and made to drink of the living Rock. It is directed to those who worship the one God and Him only, and put away their idols and desire to be found always obedient to the Master’s will. Now, to them it is said, first, “Praise Him.” Praise Him vocally. I wish that in every congregation every child of God would take pains to praise God with his mouth as well as with his heart. Do you know, I have noticed one thing—I have jotted this down in the diary of my recollection—that you always sing best when you are most spiritual!

Last Monday night the singing was very much better than it was on Sabbath evening. You kept better time and better tune, not because the tune was any easier, but because you had come up to worship God with more solemnity than usual—and therefore there was no slovenly singing such as pains my ear and heart sometimes. Why, some of you care so little to give the Lord your best music, that you fall half a note behind the rest! Others of you are singing quite a false note, and a few make no sound of any kind! I hate to enter a place of worship where half-a-dozen sing to the praise and glory of themselves, and the rest stand and listen. I like that good old plan of everybody singing—singing their best—singing carefully and heartily.

If you cannot sing artistically, never mind, you will be right enough if you sing from the heart and pay attention to it—and do not drawl out like a musical machine that has been set and runs on mechanically. With a little care the heart brings the art, and the heart desiring to praise will, by-and-by, train the voice to time and tune. I would have our service of song to be of the best. I care not for the fineries of music and the prettiness of chants and anthems. As for

 instrumental music, I fear that it often destroys the singing of the congregation and detracts from the spirituality and simplicity of worship.

If I could crowd a house 20 times as big as this by the fine music which some Churches delight in, God forbid I should touch it! Let us have the best and most orderly harmony we can make—let Believers come with their hearts in the best humor and their voices in the best tune—and let them take care that there be no slovenliness and discord in the public worship of the Most High. Take care to praise God also mentally. The grandest praise that floats up to the Throne of God is that which rises from silent contemplation and reverent thought. Sit down and think of the greatness of God—His love, His power, His faithfulness, His sovereignty— and as your mind bows prostrate before His majesty you will have praised Him, though not a sound shall have come from you!

Praise God, also, by your actions. Your sacrifice to Him of your property—your offering to Him, week by week, of your substance. This is true praise and far less likely to be hypocritical than the mere thanksgiving of words. “You that fear the Lord, praise Him.” The text adds, “Glorify Him, you seed of Jacob”—another form of the same thing. Glorify God—that is, let others know of His glory. Let them know of it from what you say, but specially let them know of it from what you are. Glorify God in your business, in your recreations, in your shops and in your households. In whatever you eat and drink, glorify the Lord!

In the most common actions of life wear the vestments of your sacred calling and act as a royal priesthood serving the Most High. Glorify your Creator and Redeemer! Glorify Him by endeavoring to spread abroad the Gospel which glorifies Him. Magnify Christ by explaining to men how by believing they shall find peace in Him. Glorify God by yourself—boldly relying on His Word in the teeth of afflicting Providence and over the head of all suspicions and mistrust. Nothing can glorify God more than an Abrahamic faith which staggers not at the promise through unbelief. O you wrestling seed of Jacob, see to it that you fall not off in the matter of glorifying your God!

Lastly, the text says, “Fear Him,” as if this were one of the highest methods of praise. Walk in His sight. Constantly keep the Lord before you. Let Him be at your right hand. Sin not, for in so doing you dishonor Him. Suffer rather than sin. Choose the burning fiery furnace rather than bow down before the golden image. Be willing to be despised sooner than God should be despised. Be content to bear the cross, rather than Jesus should be crucified afresh. Be sooner put to shame, than Jesus should be put to shame. Thus you will truly praise and magnify the name of the Most High.

I must close by a few remarks which are meant to assist you to carry out the spirit and teaching of this sermon. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, this morning I felt, before I came to this place, very much in the spirit of adoring gratitude. I cannot communicate that to you, but the Spirit of God can. And the thoughts that helped me to praise God were something like these—let me give them to you as applied to yourselves—glorify and praise God for He has saved you—has saved you from Hell—saved you for Heaven. Oh, how much is comprehended in the fact that you are saved! Think of the election which ordained you to salvation! Think of the Covenant which secured salvation to you! Think of the Incarnation by which God came to you, and the precious blood by which you now have been made near to God!

Hurry not over those thoughts though I must shorten my words. Linger at each one of these sacred fountains and drink—and when you have seen what salvation involves in the past—think of what it means in the future. You shall be preserved to the end! You shall be educated in the school of Divine Grace! You shall be admitted into the home of the blessed in the land of the hereafter. You shall have a resurrection most glorious, and an immortality most illustrious! When days and years are passed, a crown shall adorn your brow, a harp of joy shall fill your hand. All this is yours, Believer—and will you not praise Him?

Make any one of them stand right out, as real to you personally, and I think you will say, “Should I refuse to sing, surely the very stones would speak.” Your God has done more than this for you. You are not barely saved, like a drowning man just dragged to the bank—you have had more given you than you ever lost! You have been a gainer by Adam’s fall! You might almost say, as one of the fathers did, O beata culpa, “O happy fault,” which put me into the position to be so richly endowed as now I am! Had you stood in Adam, you had never been able to call Jesus, “Brother,” for there had been no need for Him to become Incarnate! You had never been washed in the precious blood, for then it had no need to be shed!

Jesus has restored that to you which He took not away. He has not merely lifted you from the dunghill to set you among men, but to set you among princes, even the princes of His people. Think of the bright roll of promises, of the rich treasure of Covenant provision, of all that you have already had and all that Christ has guaranteed to you of honor, and glory, and immortality—and will you not in the midst of the congregation praise the Lord? Brothers and Sisters, some of us have had special cause for praising God in the fact that we have seen many saved during the last three weeks, and among them those dear to us. Mothers, can you hear the fact without joy? Your children saved! Brothers, your sisters saved! Fathers, your sons and daughters saved! How many has God brought in during the last few weeks?

And you Sunday school teachers who have been the instruments of this—you conductors of our classes who have been honored of God to be spiritual parents! You elders and deacons who have helped us so nobly, and who have now to share the joy of the pastor’s heart in these conversions—will you not bless God? “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be praise.” But oh, we cannot be silent! Not one tongue shall be silent! We will all magnify and bless the Most High! Brothers and Sisters, if these do not suffice to make us praise Him, I would say think of God’s own glorious Self! Think of Father, Son, and Spirit—and what the triune Jehovah is in His own Person and attributes—and if you do not praise Him, oh, how far must you have backslidden!

Remember the host who now adore Him! When we bless Him, we stand not alone—angels and archangels are at our right hand—cherubim and seraphim are in the same choir! The notes of redeemed men go not up alone—they are united to, and swollen by the unceasing flood of praise which flows from the hierarchy of angels! Think, Beloved, of how you will soon praise Him! How, before many days and weeks are passed, many of us will be with the glorious throng! This last week three of our number have been translated to the skies—more links to Heaven—fewer bonds to earth. They have gone before us. We had almost said, “Would God it were our lot instead of theirs!” They have seen, now, what eye has not seen, and heard what ear has never heard—and their spirits have drunk in what they could not otherwise have conceived!

We shall soon be there! Meanwhile, let each one of us sing— *“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise:  
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!  
There you that love my Savior sit,  
There I would gladly have a place  
Among your thrones, or at your feet,  
So I might see His face.”*

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GOOD NEWS FOR SEEKERS  
NO. 1312

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 3, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Psalm 22:26.**

THESE are the words of Jesus on the Cross, which the inspired Prophet wrote beforehand concerning Him. When the Savior uttered this sentence, He had just passed through the experience of a seeker as far as it was possible for Him to do so. He had been engaged in earnest, fervent, pleading prayer on account of His having been left without His Father’s Presence. He had cried, “Be not You far from Me, O Lord: O My Strength, hasten You to help Me.” With strong crying and tears He had implored salvation from the lion’s mouth. He had, at last, been heard and delivered, and He exclaimed with joy, “He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the Afflicted, neither has He hid His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him.”

Thus, you see, because He had known the agony of an anxious seeker, had been heard in His seeking and, therefore, felt praise rising in His own soul. He learned sympathy with all seeking souls of every age and foresaw that they, also, would magnify the name of the Lord. Jesus knows every experience, for He has passed through the same. Does not this thought already whisper comfort to your soul? My seeking Friend, is it not a good omen that Jesus was heard in that He feared? Does not the fact that Jesus can sympathize with you raise some hope in your heart? It is true He never lived without the Presence of God, as you have done, in consequence of personal sin, but for a grand reason, namely, because He stood in our place, He was forsaken of God and, therefore, was compelled to cry after Him, even as you are doing, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me?”

He, therefore, understands the grief which troubles your fainting heart and enters into all your distresses while you are bewailing yourself and lamenting that you cry in the daytime and the Lord hears not, and that in the night season you plead in vain. This reflection, at the outset of our discourse, should be as the note of a silver bell, soft and restful to your wearied ears! Jesus foretells your success in seeking as the result of His own experience! Our Lord’s great objective in laying down His life upon the Cross was the Father’s Glory. No other objective was worthy of Him. He sought the salvation of men in order to the Glory of God and, so, in His extreme agonies our Lord Jesus placed this joy before Him and consoled Himself by foreseeing that God would be praised by seeking souls in consequence of His death.

He solaces Himself with the reflection, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship You.” He dwells upon the Truth of God that, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him,” and He sees in this honoring of God the reward which His soul sought after! What He foresaw from His lookout upon the Cross is actually taking place everyday—for seekers are learning to be singers! The choirs of Heaven, how shall they be filled? As yet there are many vacant seats and the full chorus is not as yet heard. From where shall they come who shall complete that orchestra? They shall be called by Grace from among ungodly men and led to long for God—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

Fear not, for the number of the elect shall be accomplished, and no part of Heaven’s music shall flag for lack of minstrels. From the choirs of earth the saintly souls are being withdrawn, one by one, to unite in the harmonies of Heaven. Just when their voices become most mellow and most clear, they leave us for the ivory palaces and their ceaseless melodies. How shall the praises of God be maintained here below? If one by one the sweet voices grow dumb and the singers are laid in the sepulcher, from where shall we replenish our numbers and maintain the daily praise? Fear not, there are new voices on the way. “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” There are souls now weeping because of sin and longing for a Savior who will soon find Him—and then will become most hearty singers of the new song! They are coming, coming in their thousands even now!

The music of praise shall be continued as long as the sun and the Glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. From generation to generation shall the name of the Lord be praised! This brings great gladness to my spirit as a pastor, for I know that there are some present here this day who are seeking the Savior, and it rejoices me to know that they will soon be among the most earnest in praising the name of the Lord! They will not always wear sackcloth. They will put on the silken garments of praise before long. We do not know where they are, for seekers are usually very quiet and retired, but there are some present whom I suspect of secret searches after my Lord. The Lord has seen them as He did Nathanael under the fig tree and even His servant begins to spy them out.

There are young children seeking—boys and girls who dare not yet speak to their parents—are in private, praying for Grace. Blessed be the Savior of the young! These little ones shall grow up and praise God when their fathers have gone to their reward. Young men and maidens, too, are turning to Christ, though perhaps they would blush if personally charged with the holy search. Men, too, who are in their prime, are coming to Jesus to spend their strength in the service of the Redeemer. The Lord is gently touching many hearts and drawing them to Himself, and each one, when he finds the Lord, will make a sweet singer to swell the tune of Divine Grace. Perhaps in this place there may even be some aged people whose voices are becoming feeble with lapse of years who, nevertheless, will sing with their hearts most melodiously to the Glory of the God of all long-suffering. Be they who they may, when they have found the Lord Jesus Christ, they must and will glorify the God of their salvation!

So, you see, the great objective of our Lord Jesus was that God might be praised and He foreknew that this objective would be effected by the praises of those who, in seeking, should find His Grace. This assurance which Christ here gives, that they shall praise the Lord that seek Him, ought to be very encouraging to all seekers, for, my dear Friends, it were wise for you to seek the Lord even if you had no stronger hope than a mere, “perhaps He will save us.” It would be wise to do as the men of Nineveh did, to repent and turn to God, even if you had nothing better than, “who can tell?” to encourage you in so doing. But since our Lord Jesus Christ, in dying, felt confident that seekers would find peace and joy and so would come to praise God, we have double comfort. He could not have been mistaken, rest you sure of that and, therefore, seekers shall have reasons for praising the Lord!

It is from the fact that He died upon the Cross that it becomes certain that the seeker shall be a finder. This it was which made Him sustain the scorn of men, the faintness of fear, the darkness of death and the horror of desertion—because He knew that His prostration in agony and His yielding up the ghost would render it certain that no seeking soul should ever seek the Lord in vain! Had there been no suffering Savior, there had been no way to God. Had there been no dying Christ, there had been no living consolation! But now that His atoning work is accomplished and He has said, “It is finished,” they shall live that seek Him and their lives shall be spent in His praise.

The subject of this morning is the plain statement of the text in which I shall handle in all simplicity of speech. “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” And you have here three things—the persons, the promise, and the praise.

I. Observe first of all, THE PERSONS—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Notice how unrestricted the description of the persons is. It does not say certain persons who seek God, but any persons who seek Him shall ultimately praise Him. You, my Friend, among the rest! None are excluded from the sweep of this precious promise, provided they are really seekers. In other matters many seek and but few find, but the rule of the Gospel Kingdom is, “He that seeks finds,” and the rule has no exceptions!

But what is meant by “seeking” the Lord? Who are the seekers to whom this promise is made? They include, first, those who really desire to commune with God. Some, when they say a prayer, are satisfied with the mere form. But he who really prays, desires to converse with God in prayer—he longs that his desires should be heard by the Most High—and that he should obtain the needed blessings for which he asks. No devotion can ever satisfy a true heart but that which brings him into contact with the Most High. We do not seek fine words in prayer. We do not seek choice music in praise. We do not seek the Church—we seek God—and when any man is really awakened to seek after God, although he may know but

very little yet of the true faith, he has a desire within him to which the Lord always gives an answer of peace.

You may be a stranger and a foreigner and you may have stepped in here, dear Friend, quite ignorant of the doctrine and teaching of the Lord Jesus. But if in any nation any man shall really seek after the one only living and true God, he shall receive further light and shall ultimately come to praise the Lord! Those who seek after God Himself very soon discover that they are at a distance from Him, so that one mark of a true seeker is that he is humbly conscious of his having gone astray from the Lord, his God. What a man has, he does not seek after, and what is close at hand is not an object of search. But when a man longs after God, there suddenly springs up in his soul a consciousness that he has departed from the Most High. And he cries unto the Lord to remove the separating mountains and to fill up the dividing valleys—and he that does this, in very deed, is the man who shall yet live to praise God!

The soul that is, by the Holy Spirit made conscious of distance from God, if it is really seeking God, is anxious that everything should be taken away which created the distance and which keeps it apart from God. If it is unpardoned sin, the true seeker longs for such forgiveness as God may justly give. If it is the power of sin in his members, the earnest seeker cries for power to overcome every thought of evil. The awakened soul soon becomes conscious that nothing separates it from God like the love of sin and, therefore, it seeks to have sin slain, lust crucified and the enmity towards God forever destroyed. O how we long to be delivered from every false way, from every pollution and even from every appearance of evil which would tend to prevent our walking in happy fellowship with God!

We know that two cannot walk together except they are agreed and, therefore, seeking after the Lord leads the soul to grieve over sin and to strive, with all its might with holy violence, to break away from pernicious habits which bind it, and to tread under foot tendencies which would lead it astray. Are you conscious, dear Friend, of such a seeking of God as this? Do you desire Him as the weary watcher on the castle wall desires the morning light? Do you pray to have everything taken away from you which separates between you and your God? Do you long for someone to bridge the chasm and to bring you near to the Lord in spirit and in truth? If such is the case, the promise of the text is certainly yours! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

What the seeker longs for is that he may so approach the Lord as to feel himself a Friend of God and know that Divine love is most surely all his own. Oh, the sweetness of knowing that there is nothing between God and you but amity and Love—that all the sad past is forgiven and even blotted out of the Lord’s remembrance—and that now you may speak to Him without fear and trust in Him without dread! Atonement has removed His righteous wrath and settled fast His boundless love! Now you may come and lie in His bosom, for it is your Father’s bosom and hide, even, under the dark shadow of His wing, for it is your Father’s wing and it will cover you from all harm even as a hen covers her chickens. It is the prelude of Heaven to feel that—

*“The God that rules on high,  
And thunders when He pleases,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas,  
This amazing God is ours!”*

All His power is for our protection. All His wisdom for our direction. All His tenderness for our consolation. All His truth for our encouragement. All His grandeur for our ennobling. All the infinity of His Nature for our eternal glorification! He wills that we should be partakers of the Divine Nature and dwellers in the Divine blessedness.

This is very sweet and this is what the soul that seeks God is following after. It aspires to walk with God and to dwell with God. It longs to abide in Him, to be forever His beloved, to be accepted in Christ Jesus and to become daily more and more conformed to the Divine image. To be cleansed from everything which is alien to the design and the Nature of God and to be perfectly at one with God is our grand ambition! O Beloved, this is a blessed longing for a soul to have and he that has it, by the Grace of God, though he may mourn and languish now, shall, one day, praise and bless God!

It may help you to discern whether you have such longings if I say that the man who really has them is in earnest to seek after God now. He hates the idea of postponement. A moment’s delay to a seeking soul is a dreadful thought—he desires immediate salvation—he would be reconciled to God at once! As the hungry man does not wish the meal to be postponed, but would gladly be fed at once, so in the true seeker his heart and his flesh cry out after God, for the living God—even as the hart pants after the water brooks, so does his soul pant after God. This desire is abiding, and cannot be turned aside to another object.

Not always can a man perceive this desire with vividness because he is in the world and his thoughts must be somewhat diverted by his ordinary business and cares. But, still, the desire is always alive in his soul and whenever the stress of worldly care is taken from his mind, his heart flies back to its longings and begins, again, to sigh and cry after God. Such a man will break away from his fellows to plead with God alone. He will be praying without so much as the movement of his lips, even when he is in company. He will lie at night tossing on his bed and saying, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” He will wake in the morning with this desire strong upon him and will seek after the Lord as one that searches for hidden treasure. This desire hovers over the man who is subject to it. It overshadows his being and masters him completely! I have known it deprive food of its tastefulness and home of its comfort and make the seeker cry, “Woe is me until I find my God! I draw near unto the gates of death until He appears! Let others ask for the increase of their corn and wine, Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon me, for this, and only this, will content my soul.”

Now, Beloved, all this seeking of the soul which I have feebly described prepares a man for praising God when he finds mercy at the Cross, as you will readily see upon reflection. This is the Holy Spirit’s way of tuning the harp for future Psalmody. No man can praise God like the Believer who has sought the Savior, sorrowing as His mother and Joseph did in the days of His flesh, and at the last found Him. The seeker knows the bitterness of sin and, therefore, he can appreciate the sweetness of pardoning mercy. He has been made to know his own lost estate and, in consequence, he will be the more rejoiced when he is found by the Good Shepherd and restored to his home by his Great Father!

He knows his helplessness. No one knows it better, for he has tried the works of the Law and failed. He has even tried prayer and Gospel ordinances—but he has not succeeded in them so as to find rest unto his soul. He knows that he is broken in pieces, all asunder and, therefore, when he finds his help in the Lord Jesus, even he who feels himself to be such a helpless worm, what praises Christ will have and what love in return for all His gracious aid! The poor seeker has known in his own heart what he deserves at the hands of the Law. He has had a glimpse of the world to come and the terrors of Judgment and the burnings of eternal wrath. And with the unquenchable fire scorching his very face, he must and will praise His Deliverer who has plucked him as a brand out of the burning!

All his seeking, I say, helps him to prize Divine Mercy, when he receives it, and trains him to praise God according to the promise of our text, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Never is a babe so dear to its mother as when it has just been restored from a sickness which threatened its life. Never does a father rejoice over his little child so much as when he has been long lost in the woods and, after a weary search, is at last brought home. No gold is so precious to a man as that which he has earned by hard labor and self-denial—the harder he has toiled to gain it, the more rejoiced is he when, at length, he has enough to permit him to rest.

No freedom is so precious as the new found liberty of a slave, no enlargement so joyous as that of one who has long been sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, bound in affliction and iron. No return to a country is so full of delight as that of sorrowful exiles who come back from cruel Babylon, by whose waters they sat and wept, yes, wept when they remembered Zion. “When the Lord turned, again, the captivity of Zion, we were like men that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, of which we are glad.”

If there are any seekers here at this good hour, I hope that if they have seen themselves in the picture which I have outlined they will still further be enabled to take heart and be of good courage! I am laboring, this morning, to drop words of consolation, even as the reapers, when Ruth came into the field of Boaz, let fall handfuls on purpose for her, that she might glean and return with a full portion.

II. Now we come to THE PROMISE—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Blessed promise! It is gradually, but surely, fulfilled. First, it is fulfilled unconsciously while the man is seeking. Did you ever think of this? Without knowing it, the humble seeker is already praising God. That confession of sin which he made with so many tears was a glorifying of God by bearing witness to the justice of God’s Law and the truth of the charges which it brings against our fallen nature. “My son,” said Joshua even to Achan, “I pray you give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him.” There is a measure of true praise in confession and it is as pure and real as that which angels present before the Throne of God!

The seeker, when he acknowledges that he deserves to be sent to Hell is, in fact, praising Divine Justice—he is adoring the Judge of All. Even though in so doing there is a mixture of unbelief and a forgetfulness of other attributes, yet there is a firm belief in Divine Justice and a suppliant adoration of it which is far from being unacceptable. There is also in the seeker a measure of delight in God’s mercy, for while the poor sin-smitten soul is craving for pardon, it confesses heartily how sweet mercy is, in itself, if it might but obtain it, how gracious forgiveness is, how precious loving kindness is if it might but be favored with them. No living man has so keen an eye to the tender attributes of God as he whose soul is covered all over with wounds, bruises and putrefying sores through a sense of sin!

Meanwhile, the seeking soul is really praising the Lord Jesus by appreciating the preciousness of His love and the value of His blood and saying within itself, “Oh that I might know the value of these in my own case! Oh that I could but touch the hem of His garment for myself! Would God I did but know what it is to be washed in His blood and to be covered with His righteousness!” There is in all these emotions a measure of latent praise none the less accepted of the Lord because it is not perceived by man. There is a precious fragrance of deep reverence and holy awe about a seeker’s prayers which render them sweet unto the Lord. So, you see, the seeker is already praising God and, thus, in a measure, the promise is fulfilled.

But the praise exceedingly abounds when the desire is granted . As a bird lies hidden among the heather but is seen when, at last, it is startled and made to take to the wing, so does praise take to the wing and display itself when, at last, those who seek the Lord are permitted to find Him! What thunderclaps of praise come from poor sinners when they have just found their All in All in God in the Person of Christ Jesus! Then their joy becomes almost too much for them to hold, vastly too much for them to express! Oh, the praises, the day and night praises, the continuous praises which rise from the returning, repenting soul which has, at last, felt the Father’s arms around its neck and the Father’s warm kisses on its cheek, and is sitting down at the table where the happy household eat and drink and are merry! Praising time has come, indeed, when finding time has arrived. Happy day! Happy day when we meet with God in Jesus

Christ!

Now, dear Soul, the promise secures that you shall find God in Christ, because the promise is that you shall praise Him—and you cannot praise Him until you have found His Grace and favor in Christ. Therefore I am sure you will enjoy salvation before long! Oh, it is not to be thought of that a soul should seek after God and not find Him! Imagine the penitent prodigal son seeking after his father, reaching his father’s house, searching in the chambers of his father’s mansion, going abroad into his father’s fields and crying, “My Father, my Father, I have lost you! Will you not be found of me?”—doing all this, I say, and doing this by the month and the year together and not finding his father, after all! There is no such parable as that in Holy Writ, nor could there be one—it would not be God-like or Christ-like!

There is nothing like it, as a matter of fact, nor shall there ever be, except where unbelief comes in and wickedly misrepresents the Lord. My God, in Your universe You think of everything! The beast has its lair and the sea bird has its home. The fish finds its food and even the insect has a table provided for it1 And as for Your poor creature, man, though greatly erring, You do not forget him! You have made us wonder that You are so mindful of him, that You have such tender regard unto him and do visit him so graciously! It is not possible that any of all your creatures should be seeking after You like a child that cries after its mother in the dark and not find You, after all! You are not far from any of us!

God may try you, He may let you wait awhile before He grants you the comforts of realized pardon. There may be that about you, especially that unbelief about you, which prevents your finding Him, but found of you He must be and He shall be before long! Which of you has a child who has offended you, but who, with many tears, comes to you and says, “My Father, forgive me,” and you will not forgive? You know that, for a while, you may chide and say, “The offense is great, it has been oft repeated. I cannot readily pass by it this time.” But if you see your child still weeping and still with a broken heart imploring your favor, does not your heart yearn over him? Do you not long to say, “My Child, I have forgiven and forgotten your fault”? You know you do! And if you, being evil, know how to forgive your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give pardon and Free Grace to them that seek Him! You shall praise the Lord that seek Him! Lay hold on that promise.

Well, and when you have found Him, to the joy of your heart, the promise of the text shall be fulfilled in a third sense, for you shall go on seeking and you shall go on praising. Seeking the Lord is sometimes used in Scripture as the alias for true religion and it very aptly describes it, for our life consists in endeavoring to know the Lord yet more and more. Now, since Christ has died, true religion is praise. The genius of the Christian religion is joy, its proper spirit is delight, and its highest exercise is praise! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Now we go up to the House of the Lord with the congregation of the faithful with songs of holy joy! Now we draw near to the feast of communion at the Lord’s Table with delight and, before we depart, we sing a hymn. Now we go forth to the good fight of faith and our battle song is a jubilant Psalm! Now do we even go to our beds of painful sickness and sing the Lord’s high praises there! Since Jesus died, our heaviness is dead, our murmuring is buried in His tomb. Since Jesus endured the wrath of God, which was due to us, that wrath has passed away forever and it is now the privilege, no, the duty of every Christian to rejoice in the Lord! Let all the people praise Him and let the redeemed of the Lord be foremost in the joy!

Nor is this all. There comes another day and another state, when we shall be in another place and then we shall praise the Lord, even we who seek Him. Every soul that has sought God on earth shall see Him and delight in Him in Heaven. What praises will you and I pour forth then! There are reasons why I consider myself to have been the greatest debtor to God of any man that ever lived—I can see special undeserving in my own case and special mercies on the part of God towards me. I challenge you all to bear witness that I am under bond to praise the name of the Lord more ardently than you because I am more deeply indebted to His Grace. Each one of you, I have no doubt, cater to the same vein of thought and not without reason. You will each feel as if you had the most cause to magnify His blessed name when you find yourself seated among the blood-washed and in your hands the palm branch of eternal victory! Oh, what a song shall go up then! What “shouts of them that triumph, and songs of them that feast” shall make Heaven’s high arches ring in that glad day when “they shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

What a promise this is! I leave it in your hands, only remarking that it takes the most delightful shape possible, because if you are a true seeker, the thing you want above all things is to be able to glorify God! You desire to be pardoned and to be renewed in heart with this objective—that you may be able to render acceptable praise to Him whom you have offended. Well, that is the very blessing which is promised you! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” And it includes, of course, the removal from your heart of everything that would prevent your praising Him—and the breaking down of every barrier that would keep you back from joining celestial choirs who, day without night, with their eternal symphonies circle His throne rejoicing!

III. Thirdly, THE PRAISE. “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” What will the praise be about? What will be the subject of the song? Ah, now I have before me an utterly endless task if I am to catalog the subjects of praise for a seeking soul when it has found peace with God! Why, Beloved, we praise Him to think that we found Him as we did! Some of you found Him so readily—you only heard a sermon and that one sermon led you to Christ! Others of us did not find Him so soon or so easily and, yet, we found Him in the very nick of time. Just when we were going to lie down in despair, when Satan suggested that no hope remained, then man’s extremity was God’s opportunity and we found the Lord exactly to the tick of the clock at the best moment! Blessed be His name!

Oh, to find Him at all! How great a blessing! If a man should lie a thousand years in the prison of despair, yet if he did but find Christ, at last, it were worth while to have suffered the thousand years of daily death! If we may but at last say, “My God, my God,” with unfaltering tongue and a heart that feels itself reconciled to Him, we shall make it our Heaven to praise Him with all our might! The chief point of praise, perhaps, with most saved ones is that they found such a Savior. Our Lord is represented as on the Cross when He utters this promise, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him,” and when we find the Lord we always find Him in Christ upon the Cross—and the Atonement becomes a chief feature in our joy.

Do you remember the first time you had a view, by faith, of the Incarnate God bearing human sin—when that grand doctrine of Substitution flashed on your soul like the first sight of the sun to a man that had been blind? Do you remember when you first really knew that God did lay on Christ your iniquities and that He was punished instead of you, so that you cannot, by any possibility, be punished, for it were unjust, twice, to exact the penalty for one offense? Did you ever get the glory of that light concentrated on your soul, so that you knew, absolutely, that God, for Christ’s sake had forgiven you and justly forgiven you because of the blood of Jesus? Did you ever drink in the meaning of those words, “faithful and just to forgive us our sins”? Then I know after the first overwhelming impression of intense delight you did praise God, yes, and you have not left off doing so, for there is enough in that one simple fact to set you praising God throughout the ages of eternity! Salvation by substitution so satisfies the conscience that it fills the heart with overflowing delight—

*“The love I prize is righteous love,  
Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree.  
Love that exacts the sinner’s debt,  
Yet, in exacting sets him free.  
Love that condemns the sinner’s sin,  
Yet, in condemning, pardon seals.  
That saves from righteous wrath, and yet In saving, righteousness reveals.  
This is the love that calms my heart,  
That soothes each conscience-pang within, That pacifies my guilty dread,  
And frees me from the power of sin.”*

Oh, to think that such an One as Jesus should be our Savior, that Heaven’s Darling should condescend to assume our nature and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! That He should live such a life and die such a death! That He should present to God a work so perfect, without flaw, without excess! Is there not room for praises here? Now we are as clean before the Lord because we have been washed in Christ’s blood, yes, we are as pure as if we had never sinned! And standing arrayed in Christ’s righteousness, we are more righteous, even, than Adam before the Fall, for he had only a human righteousness, but we have a Divine righteousness. In Christ Jesus, the second Adam, we are nearer to God than if we had been born of the first Adam while untainted by sin!

Now, there is a man who is akin to God, even Jesus, our Brother, who is also very God of very God. Man is exalted to the highest conceivable degree in the Person of Jesus Christ and we have become heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. As the seeking soul learns more and more of this, it praises God more and more. Is it not so? Does not your soul bless the Savior? Yes, and the longer we live and the more we know about the Lord the more we find causes for extolling Him! Indeed, everything around us, within us and above us seems to suggest a reason for blessing His name! Think of our security, at this moment and, again, praise God!

Many a song has been poured from my soul as I have remembered that my Lord has given me a life that cannot die—that He has written me on His heart from where my name can never be erased—that He has made a Covenant with me to which He has pledged His honor and His word! And He has sealed it with His blood! I am His child and, by His Grace, I know that He never did and never can tear from His heart’s love even the least of His children—the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but the Covenant of His peace can never be removed—for so He has declared—

*“My name from the palms of His hands,  
Eternity cannot erase!  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible Grace.  
Yes, I to the end shall endure  
As sure as the earnest is given!  
More happy but not more secure  
The glorified spirits in Heaven.”*

There is abundant raw material for praise in all this! Where can you find better? “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

Brothers and Sisters, we see cause for praise in the very fact that we ever sought the Lord at all. Think what it was which made us seek Him— what but Sovereign Grace? What bedewed our eyes with the first tears of repentance? What fetched from our soul the first sigh of desire after Christ? What, I say, but GRACE? And from where came that Grace but from His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was? And from where that purpose but from His Divine Sovereignty, even as it is written, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”? Therefore let us glorify His holy name and think not of works or merits, or anything in man that could have won for us the love of the Most High! Boasting is excluded, but praise is secured! Give all the Glory to His holy name forever and forever, and let the text stand true in your case, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

Our final thought on this occasion shall be, if these things are so, let us praise the Lord, even we who have sought Him! If our poor friends, the seekers, are soon to bless His name, let us show them the way! We sought and we found—let us magnify the Lord at once! Do you think we praise our heavenly Father half enough? Do we not rob Him of His Glory by getting down in the dumps and giving way to care and, perhaps, to murmuring? This is not the right spirit for a Christian! Where there is so much

undeserved mercy, there ought to be more grateful joy! Do you think we are demonstrative enough in our praise? I am sure we are not! Few around us would ever dream that we were half as favored as we are!

Do we sing one-tenth as much as Christians ought to sing? We hum over a tune, now and then, very quietly, but we are terribly afraid of being heard and of annoying people. I do not find the giddy world much afraid of annoying us with their songs—do they not wake us up at night with their lewd discords? If we were half as earnest as we ought to be, we should sometimes, at least, make the streets ring with the praises of God! It would be well to be a little indiscreet occasionally and, now and then, provoke the charge of fanaticism, for this would be a proof of earnest sincerity! Once, at least, in our lives we should let our Lord ride through the streets, again, in public triumph amid our own most hearty enthusiasm, till Pharisees rebuke us and say, “Do you hear what these say?”—

*“Oh, for this love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break!  
And all harmonious human tongues  
Their Savior’s praises speak.”*

Yes, and all inharmonious tongues, too! Let all creatures that have breath praise the Lord—  
*“Yes we will praise You, dearest Lord,  
Our souls are all on flame.*

*Hosanna round the spacious earth  
To Your adored name!”*  
May the Lord set our hearts on fire! May we be full of exulting praise, marching on with hosannas and hallelujahs, magnifying, praising and extolling the Lord whom we sought in the hour of trouble, and whom we found in the day of His Grace!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 22.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—563, 775, 548.  
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THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY  
NO. 1047

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 21, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.” Psalm 22:27.**

SOME have thought that this Psalm was used as a soliloquy by our Lord when He was expiring upon the Cross. It may be so. Fitter words could scarcely have been conceived, even by our Lord Himself. We must not, however, strain a point to establish a conjecture, nor attempt to prove that which is not revealed to us. We have no sort of hesitation, however, in asserting that this Psalm describes both the outward sufferings and the inward emotions of our expiring Lord—and in that light it becomes a very wonderful Psalm, indeed. Its clear prophetic description is an evidence of our Lord’s Messiahship, and indeed, it is so full and plain that it is a key to His sufferings.

Here the Prophet explains the Evangelist, just as in ordinary cases the Evangelist is the expositor of the Prophet. Towards the close of this Psalm its tone is singularly altered—mournfulness departs and joy occupies its place—the mighty Hero sees the conflict ended, anticipates the victory and begins to chant the conquerors paean. We have selected our text out of that part of the Psalm which overflows with the joy of anticipated triumph, and we trust that this morning the joy of the Lord may be our strength so that we may be moved to prayer and nerved for action. As this is the annual Missionary Sabbath, I feel bound to preach upon the subject, yet, while I do so, I shall at the same time desire to speak personally to the souls of all present.

Remembering that we are in a dying world, I, a dying preacher to dying hearers, would not deliver even a single discourse without appealing to the consciences and aiming at the hearts of those who are present. Because we are thinking of heathens, or of the coming triumphs of Christ in the latter days, we must not forget those who are perishing before our eyes. Excuse me, therefore—no, commend me—if every now and then I drive right away from the subject to assail men’s hearts.

I. Our first point this morning is, I think, pretty clear in the text, namely, that THE CONVERSION OF THE NATIONS TO GOD MAY BE EXPECTED. “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship Him.” We are all agreed that such a thing is to be desired. It is, indeed, a “consummation devoutly to be wished,” since this is the true and only remedy for the ills of human society. Nothing else will ever cure earth’s woes but the bringing of her back again to her God from whom she has wandered.

We are equally well agreed, I think, in the sorrowful conclusion that such a consummation does not appear at all likely to the eye of observation and the judgment of reason. How little progress has the Kingdom of God made in the world in these latter days! In the heroic age of Christianity the Cross was borne as a conquering symbol from land to land in a short space of time! The Apostles were clothed with extraordinary power and their immediate successors, retaining much of their spirit, went from strength to strength till the nations heard the testimony of Christ and myriads submitted to it.

A long pause has intervened, with only occasional breaks, such as the Reformation, the times of refreshing under the Methodists, and the partial revival of our own times. Despite these hopeful outbreaks of life, the progress of Christianity has been very slight, indeed, compared with what might have been expected from its rapid strides at the commencement, and compared with what might have been expected from the force of its essential truth, and from the fact that its message commends itself to the best sympathies of the human heart. Alas, alas! The battle is long and weary, and the end is not yet. So far from going on to victory, we so decline that men taunt us with the decadence of our holy faith and foretell that we are nearing the period of decay when something better will supplant the Gospel.

We do not believe the insinuation! We reject it as blasphemy! And yet we should not wonder if our lethargy and non-success have been the soil in which this noxious thought has grown. It is unquestionable that the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, except to those who regard it with very sanguine eyes, has not progressed of late as we could have desired. It would be fair to conclude, judging of things to come by the things that appear, and setting aside the hopes of faith and the teachings of Revelation, that it is not probable that so spiritual a faith as that of Christ should ever subdue the nations. Men need a coarser system of religion— their minds are groveling, they desire a creed which will tolerate their lusts—they crave a religion which will afford scope for their pride and their self-will.

The doctrines of the Gospel kindle men’s hostility when they are fairly and honestly preached—there would be more opposition to it if it were not so frequently diluted, and even falsified by its professed teachers. True Christianity causes a warfare and a division, and has to force its way against inveterate hatred. Only the Grace of God can make it spread. Yet, for all that, Brothers and Sisters, we judge not after the sight of the eyes, neither do we look into the future through the glass of human calculation. We believe in God, and viewing the future with the eyes of faith, we expect a complete triumph! As in the past, so in the future, the Church walks by faith. We are to believe, and we shall be established. The sooner we have done with reasoning and conclusions drawn from things that can be seen, the better! After all, our only reason, as far as I can see, for the firm conviction that the Gospel will yet subdue the nations lies in this—that God will have it so—He has promised it, and He can effect His own purposes.

Certain persons in these days tell us that we must not expect to see the nations converted to Christ, nor hope for any general spread of the Gospel. I have heard it said that we are to look upon the world as a great wreck, going to pieces out on the yonder surf where a thousand breakers loosen every timber, and quicksand is hungry to engulf the whole—and all we can hope to do with a life boat is to pluck, here and there, a soul out of the general catastrophe. God’s elect will be rescued but the nations will perish, and the mass of mankind will be castaways. According to this theory we are not to hope for a glorious future upon earth in the last days—at least not one brought about by the conversion of men under the preaching of the Gospel.

They give us another picture which I need not paint this morning—but the universal spread of the Gospel in the world is thought by them to be unscriptural! I cannot agree with them. I think them in error, and I have these reasons for it. Our new-born nature craves for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom and prays for it instinctively. Nor is the instinct wrong—for the Lord, when He was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, said, “After this manner pray you,” and He gave them as part of the manner of their prayer the right to express the desire, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done in earth as it is done in Heaven.” Do not your souls long for the conversion of your families? Does not the same desire make you pant for the salvation of the people among whom you dwell— your townsfolk and your countrymen?

And when you are nearest to God and most spiritual, have you not still larger aspirations? Do you not pray for the conversion of all mankind? Yes, have you not found yourselves breaking out with a cry like that of dying David, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory?” Do you think the Lord has taught His spiritual people to desire this, not in moments of excitement, but in times of sober fellowship with Himself, and will He not grant it? Surely God the Holy Spirit knows what the mind of God is! Does He not make intercession in the saints according to the will of God? He has taught us to desire and long for, and pray for this because He intends to give it! The prayers of the saints are the shadows of coming blessings. As you may prognosticate the storm by the motion of the mercury in the barometer, so may you much more infallibly foretell the future from the emotions, the longings, and the agonies of the saints of God! Therefore I feel that the whole earth must be filled with the Lord’s Glory because the souls of His saints pine for it.

Does it not, again, seem a very unlikely thing to you that on this earth, where God has stood, as it were, foot to foot in the Person of His dear Son with evil, that evil, after all, should vanquish Him and win the day? Eden has been blasted, Calvary has been stained with blood—this is defeat so far—at least Satan thinks it so. Will it ever end in triumph? Shall it always be that the Deliverer’s heel shall be bruised, and is the time never coming when the same wounded heel shall break the serpent’s head? Is half the prophecy uttered at the gates of Eden to be fulfilled, and the other half to be null and void?

Up to this moment we see the Church persecuted, the Truth of God despised, God dishonored, Christ rejected, idols set up, doctrines of devils taught and the whole world lying in the Wicked One! Is Satan forever to have his own way? Shall the King of kings never win this world unto Himself? Has He not died for the whole world? Is it not so said? We who hold the doctrine of a special redemption of the elect, and hold it firmly, yet never quarrel with those texts which speak of the redemption of the race, because we look for it, and believe that it will yet come. We trust the time shall hasten on when, as the morning chases away the darkness, so the Truth, and the right, and the Christ of God shall, from among the sons of men, destroy sin, error, and rebellion! In his den has the old lion been bearded, and in his own forest shall he be slain?

Even here, where Satan has held high carnival and been Lord of Misrule, even here shall he be defeated and his power abolished! The strong man in his own house shall be bound by a stronger than he, and Christ shall be victor where the foe of God and man once reigned supreme. For this purpose He came into the world, that He mighty destroy the works of the devil, and I see not how this could well be if there is not to be a wider spread of the Gospel than we have seen as yet. And again, Brethren, we look for the extension of the Redeemer’s reign in the world on account of the promises of reward for His Redemption—“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

Do you think that He is satisfied yet—satisfied with a mere handful? For, certainly, not enough are saved as yet out of the world’s vast population. Is Christ, the great King, satisfied to settle down in a corner of the world as ruler over one scanty province? Think you that He does not expect to divide the spoil with the strong when the nations shall flock unto Him and their kings shall bow down before Him? Brothers and Sisters, the present state of affairs does not satisfy us, and since our Lord’s heart is larger than ours, it surely does not satisfy Him! What Christian minister is satisfied with the progress of the Gospel? What lover of the souls of men is fully at ease under present conditions? I shall never be at peace while so many of my hearers are unsaved!

Yet, none of us bore the pangs which He endured, and cannot, therefore, measure the vastness of the expected recompense. Surely the ascended Redeemer deserves a numerous seed, a countless progeny, to be His crown of rejoicing! Shall not Jesus at last have the pre-eminence? Shall He not win more souls than Satan shall destroy? Is sin to prove itself mightier than Divine love? When the tale is told and the number is made up, shall there be more in the kingdom of Satan than in the kingdom of Christ? Shall it be so? I dare not think it! My soul revolts from the dreary supposition and therefore I look forward to the spread of the Gospel over all parts of the world, and a period of the ingathering of the sons of men to Christ so large as to make up innumerable multitudes and swell the army of the saved beyond all human computation.

But, Brethren, these are only inferences and hopes, though fairly gathered from our spiritual instincts and from Divine Truths. Let us turn to Scripture and read a few of its utterances which appear to us full of hope for the future. David shall be our first witness. Mark you, I am not about to give all the texts on the subject, nor a tenth of them, nor even do I suppose that I have selected the best. I have merely gathered a few as I remembered them. In the Second Psalm God declares, concerning His dear Son, our Lord Jesus, “Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said unto Me, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You.” What is added? “Ask of Me and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.” Will the heathen never be His? Shall He never possess the far-off lands and call them His own? Be you sure that His prayers will yet be heard!

Turn next to that Seventy-second Psalm, of which I might read the whole, for from beginning to end it flows over with gracious promises, but, as we should not have time to go through the whole, let us read from the eighth verse. “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.” Turn to the 17th verse—“His name shall endure forever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him. All nations shall call Him blessed.”

If David is questioned yet again, he will reply in something like the same manner in the Eighty-sixth Psalm, at the ninth verse—“All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.” We see not this as yet, neither in any era of human history has it been performed. We, therefore, confidently expect it by-and-by. That glorious Evangelist of old prophecy, Isaiah, has many passages to the same effect, and we will, therefore, quote one or two of them. In his second chapter, at the second verse, you will find him saying, “It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

“And many people shall go and say, come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Of a similar purport is the 11th chapter pretty nearly all through, where he speaks of the days of peace wherein the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and says in the ninth verse, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” The 40th chapter also is a bright window through which the future may be seen resplendent in the sunlight of God. If you turn to the fifth verse, the Lord concerning the first advent of His Son: “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” This is but one verse out of many similar ones in the same connection.

In the 60th chapter he begins, as you know, with these words, “Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to you: your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see, and flow together, and your heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto you, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto you. The multitude of camels shall cover you, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto you.”

The whole of Isaiah is full of such clear visions and plain promises. If you will read in Daniel, you will find that the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands is to break in pieces the image of gold, and iron, and clay, and is to fill the whole earth. In one of his night visions Daniel saw four great kingdoms, typified by four beasts. All these have passed away, as we know, and another part of his dream is even now being fulfilled. But then he saw a fifth monarchy, altogether dissimilar from those which had preceded it, which is most assuredly to be of equal extent, consequence, and glory with those which preceded it—yes, it is infinitely to excel them.

We do not pretend to go into the minutiae now or at any other time, for our knowledge thereof is slender but, at any rate, we gather from Daniel and others that a day is coming when the kingdom of Christ shall be conspicuously among men and His scepter of right and truth shall sway mankind. Time fails me, otherwise there are many passages I might mention, such as Habakkuk 2:14—“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,” and Micah 4:1-3. Note, however, our Lord’s own parable of the mustard seed which was the least of all seeds, but it grew and became a great tree. Some may think that the mustard seed parable has been fulfilled, and to these we grant that, compared with its beginning, the Gospel is a great tree—but I cannot feel that we have reached at all to the satisfactory fulfillment of the prophetic parable as yet.

There are birds of the air yet to come and build their nests in the branches of it. Though little at the beginning, the Gospel kingdom is to be far greater than any of us have dreamed. The beloved Disciple, I think, learned the future aright, when in the visions of God at Patmos, he heard a voice which said—“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.” That is yet to be, and for it we hopefully and joyfully look.

Now, Brethren, I have reminded you of this doctrine, which I believe is held by most of you, not because I thought you needed confirming in the belief of it, but because the consideration of its joyful hope is likely to fire you with holy ardor. We shall not labor well if we do not labor in hope. If we think mission work to be a forlorn enterprise, we shall go about it with faint hearts and slack hands. If we do not believe in a great success ultimately to come, we shall not use great means. We shall straiten ourselves in action if we narrow our expectations. Certainly we have not used very great means yet, for all the missionary operations now being carried on in the world are very little more than casting the crumbs from under our table to the poor heathen dogs. We have not done so much as to give the fragments of the Gospel feast to the nations.

A few cheese parings and candle ends Christians have given away to missions, but little more. Liberality has barely yielded the tail-corn of her barn and the dregs of her wine vat. We have not learned self-denial for Christ, and pinching ourselves for His service is a rare thing among us. The men who have gone abroad have not always been the pick and chief of the Church—honor to them that they have gone at all—but small honor to the men of greater ability who ought to have gone forth but have laid out their talents in some poor worldly business, and occupied their time in a far less worthy cause. If the Church expects small results from missions, I readily concede that she is acting consistently with her anticipations! And if she has, indeed, given up the work as a hopeless case, I think she is doing about as little as she could consistently with the bare appearance of obeying her Lord’s commands to evangelize the nations.

May the day come when her spirit shall revive, when she shall feel that the earth belongs to Christ and shall hear her Master’s voice pealing like thunder within her conscience, “Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” May she rise to the dignity of her position and perceive that her field is the world, since the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof. All things are possible to him that believes—may we yet receive the faith which subdues nations! When the Church is ready for great events they shall occur to her.

God has blessed us already up to the full measure of our fitness to be blessed, and perhaps a great deal beyond it. We have seen more gracious results than we could have expected from our poor efforts, but when the whole Church shall become fired with the love of Christ—when every man’s heart shall glow with a furnace heat of ardent desire for the glory of Jesus—then like molten lava from the red lips of a volcano the current of Church life shall burn a passage for itself. As soon as Zion shakes herself from the dust and goes forth to war in the strength of her Lord, she shall cause her enemies to flee before her as Midian fled before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

II. Our text teaches us very plainly that THE CONVERSION OF THE NATIONS WILL OCCUR IN THE USUAL MANNER OF OTHER CONVERSIONS. And here it is that I need the attention of unconverted persons especially. “The nations,” it says, “shall remember and shall turn unto the Lord, and shall worship before Him.” Observe the first step. They shall “remember.” In this manner conversion begins in men. When he had come to himself the prodigal said, “How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare?” He remembered the house from which he came. The nations will one day remember God.

Mysterious traditions are floating among them now. In mystic verse and hoary legend memories of the Creator are still preserved. Man is far off from God, but there lingers in the race some recollection of a happy past when God and man were friends. It is so with individuals after their kind. Oh, may some of you have recollections which look God-ward and remind you of what you learned at your mother’s knee, of what was taught you by a father’s earnest lips! May you remember from where you have fallen and repent! Such regrets are holy and healthful. The prodigal remembered his sins, they came forcibly before him. The harlots and the wine cups were remembered with sorrow and loathing. May you, dear Hearers, be moved by penitent memories of all the unhallowed past, for so shall repentance be created within you.

The nations will, by-and-by, remember the wickedness they committed—their debauchery, covetousness, tyranny, cruelty, and idolatry will be seen in their true colors—and they will mourn for them with sincere hearts. Oh, when will it come—that blessed Bochim? At this moment I pray God’s Spirit to make some of you remember your transgressions. May they come up in dread array before you! May you be convicted of sin and made to tremble before God! The nations will remember their idolatries against God and the disappointments which have come of them. They will say, one to another, “To what purpose is it that we have worshipped these gods of stone? Have they helped us in the day of trouble? We have sacrificed unto them. Have they given us rain in the day of drought? Have they helped us in the hour of death?”

And, as they recollect this, they will turn unto God. I would that some here might remember and say, “What has the flesh done for us? What have the pleasures of the world ministered to us, after all? We are even now degraded and made ashamed. What fruit have we in these things?” Blessed memories will one day come over this wicked world and lead it to turn unto the Lord. It is the work of the missionary to stir the world’s memory—to go and tell it over, and over, and over again about its Savior— for there is a power which God has kept alive in human consciences which will respond to the voice of the Gospel. I hope that response will be found in some here today. But, the day is coming when the conversion of the nations shall begin by their remembering their God, remembering their sins, remembering the disappointment of their idols and remembering to turn unto the Lord.

The next step in the conversion of the nations will be their turning to the Lord. Do you note that? “They shall remember and turn unto the Lord.” It is not merely they shall turn. Ah, my dear Hearers, there is a vast difference between “turning” and “turning to the Lord.” Some of you turn from drunkenness to total abstinence and I am glad enough of that, but it is far short of a saving change! Others turn from profanity to decent speech! And we are thankful for that, but that, also, is not salvation! Genuine conversion lies in turning to the Lord. Therefore, in Hindustan, it is a very small gain that has been effected by educational institutions— the people are evidently turning, but what does it matter if they turn from a false god to no god? Is it really a turn for the better?

I do not know whether we might not more hopefully contend against an idolatrous Hindustan than with an infidel Hindustan. It is much the same devil, though he may appear in a different shape. The conversion of the heathen will not come through their being gradually civilized into Christianity—do not entertain any hope in that direction. God will turn them to Himself and the gracious work will be done. We do not at home see sinners gradually come to God by processes of reformation, for generally these reformations lead to self-righteousness. But we find them coming to God first, and then reforming afterwards—and even so shall we find it with the heathen. We have first to seek their turning to God, and after that we may look for civilization, education, refinement and so on. Man must first, in the Gospel, come to his Father, and then shall he lose his rags of barbarism and put on his robes of education and his shoes of progress and liberty, and hear the music and the dancing of joy. First, the kingdom of God and His righteousness must be sought, and all the rest shall follow.

Note the next point. “They shall worship before Him.” Every sinner who has truly turned to God becomes a worshipper—he adores the Christ, he adores the Father, he adores the Spirit—he was a rebel before, he is a worshipper now. What a blessed sight it will be to behold an adoring world! At this day around the august Throne of Heaven all the stars are floating, perhaps inhabited each one by a distinct race—from every star as from a silver bell there ascends to the Throne of God music most sweet and solemn. From only one star—this sin-darkened earth—discordant sounds arise. This poor earth shines not in the light of Jehovah as once it did—a demon’s wing has covered it and hidden from it the light of the central sun—it is swathed in cloud and mist today.

But can’t you see, it begins to shine forth! Seen from the Throne of God it is not altogether darkness. As when the new moon first shows her slender ring of light, so the earth is rimmed and edged with a Divine illumination which shall increase till the whole circle of the globe shall be irradiated and shall, in full orbed splendor, reflect the Glory of God! Then, also, shall music blend with the growing brightness—light and sweetness shall be wedded again—and earth, like a lamp of God’s sanctuary and a golden bell of the high priest’s garment shall shine forth and ring out the praises of her God. O blessed consummation! May the Lord send it, and send it soon!

But, you can plainly see that the conversion of the nations follows the usual rule, and by no means differs from the conversion of men at home. It is a remembering, a turning to the Lord, and a worshipping of Him. They turn to Christ, they look to Him and are enlightened—and then, straightway, they begin to adore and reverence Him who has saved them. It is clear, then, that we are to seek the salvation of the nations by using the ordinary means. If we expect to see them saved in some extraordinary way differing from what we have up to now seen, we shall be disappointed, and we shall be led into practical mistakes. We have nothing to do in Hindustan, or in Caffraria but just what the Apostle did in Asia Minor, and what we are doing here—we are to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I do not believe that any race of men needs a peculiar Gospel, or a novel mode of administering it. There may be different styles of preaching—God will give us those—but there need be no other mode of action than the Apostolic one—“They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” The mode prescribed in the marching orders of our grand Captain is this—“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”—not found schools, nor debate with skeptics, nor civilize, but “preach the Gospel.” “Preach the Gospel.” “Preach the Gospel.” Do this to every creature and the sure results will follow in one place as in another! Men shall remember, shall turn unto the Lord, and shall worship Him.

Dear unconverted Hearer, the very best means for your conversion are being employed now, and, therefore, I would have you remember that if these fail, neither would you be converted though one rose from the dead. This deserves your solemn consideration and I beseech you to lay it to heart.

III. The last point is the most important of all. THE MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS RESULT ARE TO BE FOUND AT CALVARY. Our text is in a Calvary Psalm. Its connection is full of sacrificial suffering. If you desire to comprehend its real meaning you must hear it from the dying lips of the Incarnate God. It is through the Cross that the nations shall fear and tremble and turn to God.

Note then, first, that the death of Christ secures the conversion of the nations. Every conversion is the result of the death of Christ. It is the Spirit’s work to minister life and spiritual health, but Your blood, O Christ, has the glory of it! It were vain to talk of conversion if there had been no Redemption, or to speak of man’s remembering and turning to God if Your Cross, O Savior, had not been lifted up as the way of salvation for all who look to it! On the Cross the Lord Jesus redeemed effectually all His people and He must have them. On the Cross He established the Covenant of Grace for all the souls for whom He died, and He will lose none of them, nor suffer them to miss the blessing. His blood shall not be shed in vain!

The stipulations of the Covenant—signed, sealed, and ratified by His own blood—must stand fast and firm! And one of those stipulations is this, “in You shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” It must, therefore, be so! I do not look for the triumph of the Church to her treasuries, nor to her institutions of learning, nor even to her zeal, or to the popular ability of her preachers. I look to the Cross! O conquering Crucified One, You have secured the victory, for You have finished the redemption of myriads, and therefore they must be saved! Let us, when fainting in conflict, fall back into the arms of a dying Savior and we shall find courage for our future fray.

The death of Christ is, moreover, our motive for attempting the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. Because Jesus died we feel that He must be glorified. I never feel so ardent for His cause as when I have been baptized afresh into His agonies. If we stand at His Cross and view His crown of thorns, and His marred Countenance, and His pierced hands, and nailed feet. And if we gaze with affection into the gash where the soldier’s spear set—if we approach His heart—we cannot but feel that we must have human hearts to worship Him.

He is Lord of my soul, and I would gladly see Him equally dear to my brothers. Jesus has won many hearts in England and in other countries, too, but oh, He must have more! He must have more! He must have all of England for His own! He must have Scotland! He must have the United States! He must possess Europe—He must govern the whole world—it is imperative that He should possess them! We feel that He must reign! If we could throw ourselves upon the spikes of His foes to win victory for Him we would rejoice. If like the old Swiss hero we could gather up all the death-bearing lances into our own bosom and die in opening a road to victory for our fellow soldiers it were a destiny for which to bless God!

It would be a glorious thing to die, if by our martyrdom the world might be won for Him! High thrones for Jesus, where shall we find them? Bright crowns for Jesus, where shall we find them? We will snatch them from your heads, you kings, if there are no others! No, your diadems are too mean for His brow, and are only worthy to be thrown into the dust before Him—they have not luster enough for Him. We will find jewels for Him in the tears of penitents, and gold in the songs of Believers! We will weave wreathes for Him out of emancipated souls and perfected spirits! He must have them! He must have them! Such an One as He cannot but be great unto the ends of the earth.

And, Brethren, as His death is thus the security of future triumph and is to us the impelling motive for the winning of it, so is His Cross the instrument of our victory! We shall conquer the world, but it will be by the Cross! The old legend of Constantine, “In hoc signo vinces,” has truth in it for us. By this shall we conquer—by the Cross, by the preaching of Jesus Christ, and nothing else! I charge the Church of God not to hamper herself with a mass of lumber, either of ceremonies, buildings, schools, or officers—but to go forth with the sling and the stone of David! Saul’s armor is, however, in good favor at this hour, and the Church looks everywhere but to her God.

It is miserably amusing to mark the way in which our so-called National Church tries to win men to God. It has recently been stated that in seven of the leading Ritualistic churches in London the subscriptions to foreign missions only reached the sum of £7 13s. 2d. for a whole year! It is fair to add that one of them contributed £5 13s. 10d. to a special fund for Honolulu, but even with this extra effort the total is not raised to £14, and the average is not £2 apiece! These seven superfine Apostolic Churches contributed between them £13 7s. for foreign missions, and yet the incumbent of one of them, before the Ritual Commission, stated in his evidence that the cost of his choir, alone, was “about £1,000 a year”!

O model Church, with what wisdom have you acted? Behold you give £2 for the salvation of the heathen, and a £1,000 for a box of whistles and a set of singing men and singing women to make music with! Verily, this is a plain index of the whole business! Theirs is a religion of sensuous gratification and not of soul-winning. To charm ears with music, eyes with dainty colors, and noses with incense—this is their religion! Men pay money for these delights, even as they would for the opera or any other amusement in which their tastes find pleasure. But, for the winning of souls abroad, a few halfpence may suffice to show the lack of zeal.

Dear Friends, we know that souls are not to be won by music. If the world were, indeed, to be conquered by chants, to be converted by songs, regenerated by organs and saved by little boys in surplices, then it would be time for us to cease our ministry and give place to choir boys, opera singers, organists, and organ blowers! Then might we set up a vast array of gilded pipes, lift up the crucifix, wave the censor, cry, “These are your gods, O Israel.” But, while the Word of God remains unchanged, we shall rely upon the blood of the Lamb and resolve to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Our hope of success lies, under God, in the preaching of the Gospel. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” The preaching of the Cross will win the world, but all else is vanity of vanities!

Therefore, Brethren, let our ministry be full of Christ! Whether we preach at home or abroad, let us preach Substitution and tell of the vicarious sacrifice of Calvary! Let Jesus’ death be our first theme and our last theme—utter all others in proportionate harmony—but let this be first and chief. Let our Lord in our ministry be “the chief among ten thousand.” Let His Cross be the standard to which all other Truths of God shall rally. Oh, preach Christ, live Christ, catch the spirit of Christ, devote yourselves to Christ, drink of His Cross and be baptized with His Baptism—and then it shall be that all the nations shall remember and shall turn unto the Lord—and all the kindreds of the people shall worship before Him!

Sinner, your hope is at the Cross! Hasten there! Anxious Soul, your peace is at the Cross! Fly there! Despairing Soul, your salvation is at the Cross! Look there! One look will save you! God help you to give it now. Through those tears which dim your eyes look at once, for Jesus smiles upon you Look to Him and you shall now have everlasting life! God bless you all, and God prosper His work in the world, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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LIFE’S NEED AND MAINTENANCE  
NO. 1300

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 18, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“None can keep alive his own soul”  
Psalm 22:29.**

WE must commence by noticing the connection so that we may arrive at the first meaning of the words. There is a day coming when the true God will be acknowledged as Lord and God by all mankind, for the 27th verse tells us—“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You.” In that day the greatest of men will bow before Him. The verse from which we cull our text says, “All they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship.” The prosperous ones, those who have grown rich and great, shall receive good at the hands of the Savior and shall rejoice to adore Him as the Author of their fatness! Kings shall acknowledge Him as their King and lords accept him as their Lord.

Then shall not only the riches of life, but the poverty of death, also, render Him homage, for as men shall go down to the dust of the grave, in their feebleness and weakness they shall look up to Him for strength and solace, and shall find it sweet to worship Him in death. Men shall know that the keys of death are in His hands. “All they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him,” and it shall be known all the world over that the issues of life are in the hands of Jesus Christ. They shall understand that He is appointed as Mediator to rule over all mortal things, for the government shall be upon His shoulders. He shall open and no man shall shut, and shut and no man shall open, for it is His Sovereign prerogative to kill and to make alive. “None can keep alive his own soul.”

I pass on from this meaning with the hopeful belief that this dispensation is not to end, as some suppose, without the conquest of the world to Christ. Surely “all kings shall bow before Him, all nations shall serve Him.” The shame of the Cross shall be followed by honor and glory—“men shall be blessed in Him, all nations shall call Him blessed.” The conviction grows with me every day, the more I read the Scriptures, that the disheartening views of some interpreters are not true, but that before the whole of prophecy shall be worked into history, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Leaving this, we come to consider a more spiritual meaning which we believe to be as truly the sense of the passage as the other. You will notice, if you read the Psalm carefully, when you come to its close, that our Savior seems to delight Himself in being made food for the saved ones among the sons of men. In the 26th verse He says, “The meek shall eat and be satisfied.” Here, He is thinking of the poor among men, to whom He has ever been the source of abounding comfort. To them His Gospel has been preached and thousands of them have found, in Him, food for their souls which has satisfied them, filled their months with praise and made

their hearts live forever.

The poor from the highways and hedges feast to the full at His royal table! Yes, the blind, the cripple and the lame—the very beggars of the streets—are among His household guests! Christ is very mindful of the poor and needy. He redeems their soul from deceit and violence, and their blood is precious in His sight. Especially do the poor in spirit feed on Jesus. Over them He pronounced the first benediction of the Sermon on the Mount and of them He declares, “theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” What a feast do poor perishing spirits enjoy in Jesus when His flesh becomes to them meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed!

Nor is this all the feeding upon Christ, for in the 29th verse we hear of it again. Not only the poor feed upon the Bread of Heaven, but the great, the rich and the strong live upon Him, too—“all they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship.” There is no other way of life for them, for, “none can keep alive his own soul.” The saints, too, when they have grown in Grace. When they have satisfied their hunger and are fat and flourishing in the courts of the Lord’s House, must still eat of the same heavenly food. The fat need Jesus as much as the lean, the strong as much as the feeble, for none can do without Him—“none can keep alive his own soul.” Thus the rich and the poor meet together and Jesus is the Food of them all. The empty and the full, alike, draw near to the Redeemer’s fullness and receive Grace for Grace.

Among those who feel their need of Jesus, there are some of a mournful type of character who count themselves ready to perish. They dare not number themselves among the meek who shall eat and be satisfied, much less could they think of themselves as the fat upon earth who shall eat and worship. No, they stand back from the feast as utterly unworthy to draw near. They dare not believe themselves to be spiritually alive unto God. They reckon themselves among those that go down into the Pit. They bear the sentence of death in themselves and are prisoners under bondage through fear. Their sense of sin and personal unworthiness is so conspicuous—and so painful—that they are afraid to claim the privileges of the living in Zion.

They fear that their faith is expiring, their love is dying out, their hope is withered and their joy departed. They compare themselves to the smoking flax and think themselves to be even more offensive than the nauseous smell given forth by the smoking wick. To such comes the Word which precedes my text—“They that go down to the dust shall bow before Him.” Christ shall be worshipped, even by them! Their last moments shall be cheered by His Presence. When, through depression of spirit, through the assaults of Satan and through inability to see the work of the Spirit in their souls, they shall be brought so low as to be down to the dust, they shall be lifted up from their misery and made to rejoice in the Lord, their Redeemer, who will say to them—“Shake yourself from the dust. Arise and sit down. Loose yourself from the bands of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.”

When souls are thus brought down, they begin to learn for themselves that, “none can keep alive his own soul.” A poor broken-hearted spirit knows this, for he fears that the inner filth within his soul is at its last gasp, and he is afraid that his faith, love and all his graces will be as bones scattered at the grave’s mouth. But then he learns what I trust we shall believe at this time without such a painful experience to teach it to us, namely, that none of us can keep our own soul alive, but that we must have food continually from above and visitations of the Lord to preserve our spirits. Our life is not in ourselves, but in our Lord!

Apart from Him we could not exist spiritually, even for a moment. We cannot keep our own soul alive as to Divine Grace. That is to be the subject of this morning’s meditation and may the Holy Spirit render it profitable to us!

I. The first point of consideration out of which the rest will come is this—THE INNER LIFE MUST BE SUSTAINED BY GOD. We are absolutely dependent upon God for the preservation of our spiritual life. We, all of us, know that none of us can make his own soul live. You have destroyed yourself, but you can not make yourself live again. Spiritual life must always be the gift of God—it must come from without—it cannot arise from within. Between the ribs of death, life never takes its birth. How could it? Shall the ocean beget fire, or darkness create light? You shall go to the morgue as long as you please, but, unless the trumpet of the Resurrection shall sound there, the dry bones will remain in their corruption. The sinner is “dead in trespasses and sins” and he will never have even so much as a right desire towards God, nor a pulse of spiritual life, until Jesus Christ, who is “the Resurrection and the Life,” shall quicken him.

Now, it is important for us to remember that we are as much dependent upon the Lord Jesus and the power of His Spirit for being kept alive as we were for being made alive in the first place. “None can keep alive his own soul.” Do you remember when you first hung upon Christ for everything? That same dependence must be exercised every day of your life, for there is need of it. You remember your former nakedness, your poverty, your emptiness, your misery, your death, apart from Christ? Remember that the case is not one whit better if you could now be separated from sin. If now you have any Grace, or any holiness, or any love, you derive it entirely from Him and from moment to moment His Grace must be continued to you. For if connection between you and Christ should by any possibility be severed, you would cease to live spiritually. That is the Truth of God we want to bring forward.

Here let us remark that this is not at all inconsistent with the undying nature of the spiritual life. When we were born-again there was imparted to us a new and higher nature called the spirit. This is a fruit of the Spirit of God and it can never die. It is an “incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.” When it is imparted to the soul it makes us partakers of the Divine Nature. And it keeps us, so that the Evil One touches us not so as utterly to destroy us. Yet this fact is quite consistent with the assertion that we cannot keep our own soul alive, for it is because the Lord keeps us alive. The newborn nature is safe because the Lord protects it—it survives the deadly influences of the world because the Lord continues to quicken it.  
Our new nature is united to the Person of Christ and we live because

He lives. We are not kept alive by independent power, but by perpetual renewal from the Lord. This is true of every man living. “None can keep alive his own soul”—no, not one. You young people think, perhaps, that old Christians get on better than you do. You imagine that their experience preserves them, but, indeed, they cannot keep their own souls alive anymore than you can! You tried and tempted ones sometimes look with envy upon those who dwell at ease, as though their spirituality was selfsupporting! But no, they cannot keep their own souls alive anymore than you can! You know your own difficulties, but you do not know those of others. Rest assured, however, that to all men there are these difficulties and that no man can keep his own soul alive.

This is the Truth of God at all times—at no one moment can we keep ourselves alive. While sitting in this House of Prayer you may dream that assuredly you can keep yourself here, but it is not so. You might sin the foulest of sins in your heart while sitting here! And you might grieve the Holy Spirit and cloud your life for years while worshipping among the people of God. You are not able to keep your own soul alive in your happiest and holiest moments! From your knees you might rise to blaspheme and from the Communion Table you might go to the seat of the scorner if you

were left to yourself— *“All our strength at once would fail us,*

***If deserted, Lord, by You.  
Nothing, then, could use us,  
Certain our defeat would be  
And those who hate us  
Their desires would see.”***

I seldom find myself so much in danger as when I have been in close communion with God. After the most ecstatic devotion, one is hardly prepared for the coarse temptations of this wicked world. When we come down, like Moses from the mountain, if we encounter open sin we are apt to grow indignant and break all the commandments in the vehemence of our wrath. The sudden change from the highest and holiest contemplations to the trifles and vexations of earth subjects the soul to so severe a trial that the poet did well say—

*“We should suspect some danger near*

*When we perceive too much delight.”*  
Even when our delight is of a spiritual kind we need to be on our guard after having been filled with it—for then Satan avails himself of the opportunity. We are never safe unless the Lord keeps us.

If we could take you, my Brothers and Sisters, and place you in the society of saints. Give you to keep perpetual Sundays, make every meal a sacrament and set you nothing to say or do but what should be directly calculated to promote the glory of God, yet even then you could not keep your own soul alive! Adam in perfection could not keep himself in Paradise! How can his imperfect children be so proud as to rely upon their own steadfastness? Among angels there were those who kept not their first estate. How shall man, then, hope to stand unless he is held up? Why is this? How do we know that our text is true?

We gather arguments from the analogies of Nature. We do not find that we can keep our own bodies alive. We need Divine preservation, or disease and death will deftly make us their prey. We are not self-contained as to this mortal existence, any one of us, no, not for five minutes can we live upon ourselves. Take away the atmospheric air and who could keep himself alive? The heaving lungs need their portion of air and if they cannot be satisfied, man soon becomes a corpse! Deprive us of food—leave us for a week without meat or drink—and see if we can keep our natural body alive. Take away from us the means of warmth in the time when God’s cold rules the year and death would soon ensue.

Now, if the physical life is not to be sustained by itself, much less can the higher and spiritual life! It must have food. It must have the Spirit to sustain it. The Scriptures present to us this figure of the body which dies if severed from the vital organs, and of the branch which is dried up if cut off from the stem. Toplady versifies the thought and sings—

*“Quickened by You, and kept alive,  
I flourish and bear fruit.  
My life, I from Your sap derive,  
My vigor from your root.  
“I can do nothing without You!  
My strength is wholly Yours.  
Withered and barren should I be  
If severed from the Vine.”*

Yonder lamp burns well, but its future shining is dependent upon a fresh supply of oil. The ship in rapid motion borrows force from the continuance of the wind, but the sails hang idle if the gale ceases. The river is full to the bank, but if the clouds should never again pour out their floods it would become a dry trail. All things depend on others and the whole upon the Great Supreme! Nothing is self-sustained! Unless God, Himself, sustains it, no being exists. Even immortal souls are only so because He has set His seal upon them and declared that they shall inherit eternal life, or in consequence of sin shall sink into everlasting punishment. Hence we are sure that “none can keep alive his own soul.”

But we need not rely upon analogy, we can put the matter to the test. Could any Believer among us keep any one of His graces alive? You, perhaps, are a sufferer and, up to now you have been enabled to be patient. But suppose the Lord Jesus should withdraw His Presence from you and your pains should return again? Ah, where will your patience be? Or, I will suppose you are a worker and you have done great things for the Lord. Like Samson you have been exceedingly strong. But let the Lord be once withdrawn and leave you to attempt His work alone and you will soon discover that you are as weak as other men and will utterly fail!

Holy joy, for instance, take that as a specimen. Did you rejoice in the Lord, this morning, when you awoke? It is very sweet to wake up and hear the birds singing within your heart. But you cannot maintain that joy, no, not even for an hour, do what you will. “All my fresh springs are in You,” my God, and if I am to joy and rejoice, You must anoint me continually with the oil of gladness! Have you not, sometimes, thought in the morning, “I feel so peaceful and calm, so resigned to the Divine will. I think I shall be able to keep up this placid spirit all day long.” Perhaps you have done so and, if so, I know you have praised God for it. But if you have become perturbed, you have learned, again, that to will is present with you, but how to perform that which you would, you find not.

Well, if for any one fruit of the Spirit we are dependent upon the Lord, how much more will this be true as to the essential life from which each of these Graces springs? This Truth of God is equally illustrated by our need of help in every act of the Divine life. Dear Friends, have you ever tried what it is to perform any spiritual act apart from the Divine power? What a dull, dead affair it becomes! What a mechanical thing prayer is without the Spirit of God! It is a parrot’s noise and nothing more! It is a weariness, a slavish drudgery. How sweet it is to pray when the Spirit gives us feeling, unction, access with boldness, pleading power, faith, expectancy and full fellowship! But if the Spirit of God is absent from us in prayer, our infirmities prevail against us, and our supplication loses all prevalence.

Did you ever resolve to praise God and come into the congregation where the sweetest Psalms were being sent to Heaven? Could you praise God till the Holy Spirit came like a Divine Wind and loosened the fragrance of the flowers of your soul? You know you could not! You used the sacred Words of the sweet singers of Israel, but hosannas languished on your tongue and your devotion died. I know that it is dreadful work to be bound to preach when one is not conscious of the aid of the Spirit of God! It is like pouring water out of bottomless buckets, or feeding hungry souls out of empty baskets! A true sermon such as God will bless, no man can preach of himself! He might as well try to sound the archangel’s trumpet. We must have You, O blessed Spirit, or we fail! O God, we must have Your power, or every action that we perform is but the movement of a robot and not the acceptable act of a living, spiritual man!

Have you ever, dear Friends, had to know that you cannot keep alive your own soul by your own blundering and failures when you have resolved to be very wise and correct? Did you ever get into a self-sufficient state and say, “Now, I shall never fall into that temptation, again, for I am the burnt child that dreads the fire”? And yet into that very sin you have fallen! Have you not said, “Well, I understand that business. There is no need to wait upon God for direction in so simple a matter, for I am well up in every particular relating to it and I can manage the affair very well”? And have you not acted as foolishly in the whole concern as the Israelites did in the affair of the Gibeonites, when they were deceived by the old shoes and clothes and the moldy bread, and asked no counsel of the Lord? I tell you, our strength, whenever we have any, is our greatest weakness! And our fancied wisdom is our real folly.

When we are weak we are strong! When, in a sense of entire dependence upon God, we dare not trust ourselves, we are both wise and safe! Go, young man, even you who are a zealous Christian—go without your morning prayer, into the house of business—and see what will befall you! Venture, my Sister, down into your little family without having called upon God for guidance and see what you will do! Go with a strong resolve that you will never be guilty of the weakness which dishonored you a few days ago—and depend upon the strength of your own will and the firmness of your own purpose—and see if you do not, before long, discover to your shame how great your weakness is! No, try none of these experiments, but listen to the Word which tells you, “None can keep alive his own soul.”

And now, should any think that he can keep his own soul alive, let me ask him to look at the enemies which surround him. A sheep in the midst of wolves is safe compared with the Christian in the midst of ungodly men! The world waylays us, the devil assaults us! Behind every bush there lurks a foe. A spark in mid ocean is not more beset, a worm is not more defenseless. If the sight of foes without are not enough to make us confess our danger, look at the foes within. There is enough within your soul, O Christian, though you are one of the best of saints, to destroy you in an hour unless the Grace of God guards you and keeps your passions in check—and prevents your stubborn will from asserting its own rebellious determinations.

Oh, what a powder keg the human heart is, even at its best! If some of us have not been blown up, it has been because Providence has kept away the sparks, rather than because of there being any lack of powder within. Oh, may God keep us, for if He leaves us, we need no devil to destroy us— we shall prove devils to ourselves—we shall need no tempters except the lusting after evil which now conceals itself so craftily within our own bosom! Certainly, dear Brothers and Sisters, we may be quite sure that “none can keep alive his own soul” when we remember that in the Gospel, provision is made for keeping our soul alive! The Holy Spirit is given that He may continually quicken and preserve us—and Jesus Christ, Himself, lives, that we may live, also.

To what purpose would be all the splendid provisions and the special safeguards of the Covenant of Grace for the preservation of the spiritual life, if that spiritual life could preserve itself? Why does the Lord declare, “I, the Lord, do keep it,” if it can keep itself? The granaries of Egypt, so full of corn, remind us that there is a famine in the land of Canaan! The treasures laid up in Christ Jesus assure us that we are in need of them! God’s supplies are never superfluous, but are meant to meet real needs. Let us, then, all acknowledge that no man among us can keep alive his own soul.

II. This brings me, secondly and briefly, to notice that THIS TRUTH BRINGS GLORY TO CHRIST. “None can keep alive his own soul.” Weakminded professors are prone to trust in man, but they have, here, an evident warning against such folly! How can they trust in a man who cannot keep alive his own soul? Shall I crouch at the feet of my fellow man and ask him to hear my confession and absolve me when I know that he cannot keep alive his own soul? Shall I look up to him and call him, “father in God,” and expect to receive Divine Grace from the laying on of

 his hands, when I learn that he is a weak, sinful being like myself?

He cannot keep alive his own soul! What can he do for me? If he lives before God, he has to live upon the daily charity of the Most High—what can he have to give me? Oh, look not to your fellow virgins for the oil of Grace, for they have not enough for themselves! And whatever name a man may dare to take, whether it is priest, “Father,” or Pope—look not to him—but look to JESUS in whom all fullness dwells! The Glory which accrues to Christ from our daily dependence is seen in His becoming to us our daily Bread. His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! And we must feed upon these continually or die! Eating is not an operation to be performed only once, but throughout life, and so we have to go

to Jesus again and again and find sustenance in Him as long as life lasts.

Beloved, we honored our Master when He first saved us—and through being daily dependent upon Him we are led to honor Him every day. If our hearts are right, we shall honor Him more and more every day, as we more and more perceive our indebtedness to Him. He is our daily Bread upon which we feed continually, and the Living Water of which we continually drink. He is the light which everlastingly shines upon us. He is, in fact, our All in All daily to us and all this prevents our forgetting Him. As at the first He saved us, so He still saves us! And as at the first we prized Him, we still prize Him. More than that, as our life is maintained, not only by Him, but by our abiding in union with Him, this leads us to abide in love towards Him. Union is the source of communion and love.

The wife remains a happy wife by loving fellowship with her husband. When the betrothed one is married to her beloved, the wedding day is not the end of it all. The putting on of the ring is the beginning, not the end. And so, when we believe in Jesus, we are saved, but we must not idly feel, “it is all done, now.” No, it is only just begun! Now is the life of dependence, the life of faith, the life of obedience, the life of love, the life of union commenced and it is to be continued forever! This makes us love, honor and adore our Lord Jesus, since we only live by being one with Him. We have, also, to remember that our life is daily supported by virtue of what the living Redeemer is still doing for us, as well as by receiving the fruit of His death and of our spiritual union with Him.

He ever lives to make intercession for us and, therefore, He is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” The life of the ascended Redeemer is intimately bound up with our life—“Because I live, you shall live, also.” How this honors Christ, for we are thus led to realize a living Savior, and to love Him as a living, breathing, acting Person. It is a pity when men only think of a dead Savior, or of a baby Savior carried in the Virgin’s arms, as the Church of Rome does. It is our joy to have a LIVING Christ, for while He lives, we cannot die! And while He pleads, we cannot be condemned! Thus we are led to remember Him as a living Savior and to give Him honor He is due.

But oh, my Brothers and Sisters, what must be the fullness of Christ when all the Grace which the saints have must come out of Him and, not merely all they have had, but all they obtain every day comes from Him? If there is any virtue. If there is any praise. If there is anything heavenly. If there is anything Divine—all this of His fullness have we received and Grace for Grace! What must be that power which protects and preserves millions of saints from temptation and keeps them amid perils as many as the sands of the sea? What must be that patience which watches over the frail children of God in all their weaknesses and wanderings, in all their sufferings, in all their infirmities? What must be His Grace which covers all their sins and what His strength which supports them under all their trials? What must the Fountainhead be, when the streams which flow to any one of us are so deep that we cannot fathom them, so broad that we cannot measure them?

Yet millions of happy spirits are, each one, receiving as much as any one of us may be, and still there is a fullness abiding in Christ the same as before, for it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell! Not a saint lives a moment apart from Him, for, “None can keep alive his own soul.” The cries of babes in Grace and the shouts of strong men who divide the spoil all come from the life which He lends and the strength which He gives! Between the gates of Hell and the gates of Heaven in all those pilgrims whose faces are towards the royal city—all the life is Christ’s life and all the strength is Christ’s strength—and He is in them, working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure! Blessed be the name of the Lord Jesus who thus supplies all His people! Does not this display the exceeding riches of His Grace?

III. Thirdly and practically, THIS SUBJECT SUGGESTS THE PATH OF WISDOM FOR OURSELVES. “None can keep alive his own soul.” Then, my dear Brothers and Sisters, what manner of persons ought we to be? Let me have your earnest thoughts on this point for a minute. Do not let anyone among us look back to a certain day and say, “On that occasion I was regenerated and converted, and that is enough.” I fear that some of you get into a very bad condition by saying, “If I can prove that I was converted on such-and-such a day, that will do.”

This is altogether unjustifiable talk! Conversion is a turning onto the right road—the next thing is to walk in it. The daily going on in that road is as essential as the beginning if you would reach the desired end. To strike the first blow is not all the battle—to him that overcomes the crown is promised! To start in the race is nothing. Many have done that who have failed! But to hold out till you reach the winning post is the great point of the matter. Perseverance is as necessary to a man’s salvation as conversion. Remember this, you not only need Grace to begin with, but Grace with which to live in Christ Jesus.

Learn, also, that we should diligently use all those means whereby the Lord communicates fresh support to our life. A man does not say, “Well, I was born on such-and-such a day, that is enough for me.” No, the good man needs his daily meals to maintain his existence. Being alive, his next consideration is to stay alive and, therefore, he does not neglect eating nor any operation which is essential to life. So you, dear Friends, must labor for the meat which endures to eternal life—you must feed on the Bread of Heaven. Study the Scriptures daily—I hope you do not neglect that. Be much in private prayer—your life cannot be healthy if the Mercy Seat is neglected. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of some. Be eager to hear the Word of God and endeavor both to understand and practice it.

Gather with God’s people in their many spiritual meetings, when they join in prayer and praise, for these are healthful means of sustaining the inner life. If you neglect these, you cannot expect that Grace will be strong within you—you may even question if there is any life at all. Still, remember that even if a man should eat and drink, that would not keep him alive without the power of God! Many die with whom there is no lack either of air or food. You must, therefore, look beyond the outward means, to God, Himself, to preserve your soul. Let it be your daily prayer, “Oh

Savior, by whom I began to live, daily enable me to look to You that I may draw continuous life from Your wounds and live because You live.” Take these things home and practice them.

Keep, dear Friends, also, clear of everything which has a tendency to destroy life. A sane man does not willingly take poison. If he knew it, he would not touch the cup in which it had been contained. We are careful to avoid any adulteration in our food which might be injurious to life and health. We have our chemists busily at work to analyze liquids, lest inadvertently we should imbibe death in the water which we drink. Brethren, let us be equally careful as to our souls! Keep your chemist at work analyzing the things of this life. Let conscience and understanding fit up their laboratory and prove all things. Analyze the sermon of the eloquent preacher lest you drink in novelties of doctrine and falsehoods because he happens to put them prettily before you.

Analyze each book you read lest you should become tainted with error while you are interested with the style and manner, smartness and elegance of your author. Analyze the company you keep. Test and try everything lest you should be committing spiritual suicide, or carelessly squandering life away. Ask the Lord, the preserver of men, above all things, to keep you beneath the shadow of His wings that you may not be afraid of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction which wastes at noonday. Because His Truth has become your shield and buckler, you are safe. Watch your life carefully, but look to Jesus Christ from day to day for everything.

Do not become self-satisfied so as to say, “Now I am rich and increased in goods.” If ever a child of God imitates the rich man in the parable and says, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years,” he is a fool as much as the rich man was! I have known some become very exalted in spiritual things. The conflict is almost over with them— temptation has no power, they are masters of the situation—and their condition is of the most elevated kind. Well, ballooning is very pleasant to those who like it, but I think he is safest who keeps on the ground! I fear that spiritual ballooning has been very mischievous to a great many and has altogether turned their heads. Their high conceit is falsehood.

After all, my Friend, to tell you the truth very plainly—you are no better than other people, though you think you are and in one point I am sure you miserably fail—

humility. When we hear you declare what a fine fellow you are, we suspect that you wear borrowed plumes and are not what you seem. A peacock is a beautiful bird, what can be more brilliant? But I am not enraptured with his voice, nor are you! And so there may be fine feathers about certain people, perhaps a little too fine, but while they are showing themselves off, we know that there is a weak point about them and we pray that it may not cause dishonor to the cause of Christ. It is not our part to be hunting about for the failings of our fellow Christians, yet boasting has a tendency to make us examine the boaster!

The practical thing is to believe that when we are proud, ourselves, there is something wrong with us. Whenever we stand before the mirror and think what fine fellows we are, we had better go, at once, to the Great Physician and beseech Him to give us medicine for our vanity! Mr. Peacock, you are certainly very handsome, but you should hear yourself croak! Professor, there are fine points about you, but there are sorry ones, too! Be humble and so be wise. Brother, if you get an inch above the ground you are just that inch too high! If you have anything apart from Christ—if you can live five minutes on past experience—if you think that you can live on yesterday’s Grace you are mistaken!

You put the manna away so very carefully. You stored it up in the cupboard with such self-content. Go to it to-morrow morning, instead of joining the rest of your Brethren in gathering the fresh manna which will fall all around the camp. Go to the cupboard where you stored up yesterday’s manna! Ah, as soon as you open the door you close it again! Why did you shut that door so quickly? Well, we need not look inside the cupboard— the smell is enough! It has happened as Moses foretold it—it has bred worms and it stinks as he said it would. Cover it up as quickly as you can. Dig a deep hole and throw it all in and bury it! That is the only thing to do with such rottenness. Day by day go to Christ and you will get your sweet manna. But begin to live on past or present attainments and they will breed worms and stink as sure as you are a man. Do not try it, for, “none can keep alive his own soul.”

IV. Last of all, THIS SUBJECT INDICATES A WAY OF USEFULNESS for everyone here present who is a child of God. I think the great business of the Christian’s life is to serve God and he can do that, mainly, by aiming at the conversion of sinners! It is a grand thing to be blessed of God to turn sinners from the error of their ways. But listen, Brothers and Sisters, there is equally good work to be done by helping struggling saints. The old Roman said he thought it as much an honor to preserve a Roman citizen as to slay an enemy of his country—and he was right. There is as much acceptance before God in the work of instrumentally preserving souls, alive, as in being made the means of making souls to live in the first place.

The upholding of Believers is as necessary an exercise for Christian workers as the ingathering of unbelievers. I want you to think about this. If there is a person nearly drowned, a man will leap into the water to bring him out. And he gets great credit for it and deserves it. And so when a man saves a soul from death by earnest ministry, let him be glad and thank God. But if a man is starving and ready to die, and you give him bread. Or if he is not reduced to that point, but would have been so had you not interfered, you have done as good an action in preserving life as the other friend who snatched life from between the jaws of death! You must never think little of the work which instructs the ignorant Christian, which clears the stumbling blocks out of the way of the perplexed Believer, which comforts the feeble-minded and supports the weak. These necessary works must be done, while soul-saving must not be left undone!

Perhaps some of you never will be the means of the conversion of many. Then try to be the means of comfort to as many as you can. To be the means, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, of nurturing the life which God has given, is a worthy service and very acceptable with God. I would urge the members of this Church to watch over one another. Be pastors to each other! Be very careful over the many young people that have come among us and, if you see any backslide—in a gentle and affectionate manner

endeavor to bring them back. Do you know any despondent ones? Lay yourselves out to comfort them! Do you see faults in any? Do not tell them of them hastily, but labor, as God shall help you, to teach them a better way. As the Lord often preserves you by the help of others, so in return seek to be, in God’s hands, the means by which He shall keep your Brethren from going astray, from sinking in despair, or from falling into error.

I hold it out to you as a good and blessed work to do—will you try to accomplish it? Now, if you say, “Yes,” and I think every Christian, here, says, “Yes,” then I am going to speak to you concerning the collection, Brothers and Sisters. This is Hospital Sunday and we must contribute our full share! Do you see any connection between this subject and the collection? I think I do. Here are these poor sick folks who will die unless they are carefully looked to, unless medicine and a physician’s skill are provided for them. I know you are ready, enough, to look after sick souls—the point to which I have brought you is one which involves such readiness.

Well, now, he who would look after a sick soul will be sure to care for a sick body! I hope you are not of the same class as the priest in the fable who was entreated by a beggar to give him a crown. “By no means,” said the reverend father, “why should I give you a crown?” “Will you give me a shilling, Holy Father?” No, he would not give him a shilling, nor even a penny. “Then,” said he, “Holy Father, will you, of your charity, give me a farthing?” No, he would not do anything of the sort. At last the beggar said, “Would not, Your Reverence, be kind enough to give me your blessing?” “Oh yes, my Son, you shall have it at once! Kneel down and receive it.” But the man did not kneel down to receive it, for he reasoned that if it had been worth a farthing the “holy father” would not have given it to him. And so he went his way.

Men have enough practical sense to always judge that if professed Christians do not care for their bodily needs, there cannot be much sincerity in their zeal for men’s souls. If a man will give me spiritual bread in the form of a tract, but would not give me a piece of bread for my body, how can I think much of him? Let practical help to the poor go with the spiritual help which you render to them! If you would help to keep a Brother’s soul alive in the higher sense, be not backward to do it in the more ordinary way. You have an opportunity of proving your sincerity and gratifying your charity, for the boxes will go round at once!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 22.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—103 (VER. III), 407. 668.  
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KEEPING THE SOUL ALIVE  
NO. 3444

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 27, 1870.

**“None can keep alive his own soul.”  
Psalm 22:29.**

SELF-SUFFICIENCY is the sin of nature—all-sufficiency is the supply of Divine Grace! Ishmael, sent away into the wilderness with his bottle, is man trusting in himself—Isaac, dwelling by the never-failing wells of Gerar, is man led by Grace to trust in the unfailing supplies of the God of all consolation! It is as hard to get man away from self-trust as it would be to reverse the course of Niagara. He begins by believing that he can make himself alive—and when he is convinced that this is not possible, he then tries to entrench himself behind the idea that he can keep himself alive. No, though man is dead in trespasses and sins and it is but a rank absurdity to imagine that death can produce life, yet the sinner still thinks that by something of his own he can create a soul within the ribs of death, that a sinner may grow into a saint of himself, that the man who is as full of sin as the leopard is full of spots, may yet, by his own innate energy, cast off his spots and become pure! I say that when man is cured of that rank absurdity, he then will need as much trouble to be cured of another, for even those who are alive unto God fall, more or less, into the false confidence that they can keep their own souls alive, and he out of us all who best knows that he can do no such thing has, nevertheless, sometimes caught himself acting as if he did believe that he could keep his own soul alive! To be sound in Doctrine is one thing, but to have that orthodoxy in the heart is another thing. To believe that I am dependent every day upon the Grace of God is easy, but to carry that dependence and the sense of that dependence into all my dealings with God and with man—this is not nature, but is in itself a work of Grace!

Now, it is upon our entire dependence upon God as Believers that I am to speak tonight. We have, if we are Believers, been made alive from the dead. Our souls have been quickened by the life of Christ—we live with the life that Christ has given to us, but we cannot keep ourselves alive any more than we could first make ourselves alive. That is the point to be thought over tonight—may its rich and humbling instructions be sanctified to us all. First, let me—

I. BREAK UP THIS DOCTRINE A LITTLE.  
It is like one of the loaves brought to Christ—it needs breaking and we will break it up thus. The Believer’s life must be dependent upon God. He cannot maintain it by his own strength because of its very nature. It is a derived life. We know how plainly our Savior puts this in the parable of the vine. The life of the Christian is not the life of the separate plant put into the soil to suck for itself through its own throat, the nourishment out of the earth. It is the life of a plant which derives all its sap through the stem—through a root that is not in itself. It does not bear the root, nor a root, but the root bears it, so that once you cut away the branch from the vine, you have taken away the life from the branch, for though the life is in the branch as long as it is joined to the vine, yet it is not so in the branch, itself, that it is there at all apart from the vine. You are dead—then where is your life? Your life is hid with Christ in God, and if you live at all, this is the reason! “Because I live, you shall live also.” Your life is not in yourselves as a separate life. Your life, the true life of your soul, is a derived one, and is in Christ Jesus! Another illustration from the same blessed Word of God gives us the like sense. We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. There is life in my hand— undoubted life—but let that hand be laid down upon the block, and the headsman’s axe separate it from the arm, and there remains no life whatever in the hand that is separated from the vital center, the heart. The limb moves and has life in itself, in a certain sense, but it is derived life, relative life—it only lives at all, in fact—because it is joined to something else in which its life more truly dwells. You see then, Brothers and Sisters, that none can keep his own soul alive, because the soul’s truest life is not in itself, but lies in Another, even in Christ its Head!

Furthermore, the life that is in a Believer is a very dependent life. We are born in regeneration, but after a child is born it will not live if the mother’s care shall cease. It must be nursed. It must be fed. It must have a thousand little needs supplied, which, if neglected, would be pretty sure to end that little life right speedily. When our dear converts are born to Christ, our anxieties for them are not ended. Their life is but a frail and feeble thing and though we believe they shall not die, but live, yet they only live because the great Father of the Christian family takes care that they shall be supplied with the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, that they shall be continually nursed in the ordinances of God’s house, that they shall be trained and instructed and brought up until they come to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. Brothers and Sisters, just as the life of the baby would not be sustained unless something was done for it which it could not do for itself, so the life of the Christian is of the same sort—dependent upon the blessed offices of God the Holy Spirit, and of the gracious Redeemer who watches over all the children of Grace as a nurse watches over her child. Yes, but you tell me that this is a great Truth of God for young Believers, but what of those that become adults in Christ? I reply that still if the figure does not hold good, yet the Truth, itself, does, and we will change the figure and come back to the one we had before. The fully-developed arm will die if separated from the trunk, just as surely as the infant’s arm—and yonder huge branch of the ancient oak, itself a tree—yet were it sundered from the oak, must wither. It matters not how great the growth of a Christian, nor how mature his experience, he still owes all he has and all he is to his union with Christ—he cannot keep his own soul alive! If I might use such an allegory, it is something like this—all Believers are pensioners upon the court of Heaven. They begin, we may say, as pensioners when they are converted, to draw out of Heaven’s bank but a small pension. They are poor in Grace, poor in faith, poor in everything—but they draw a pension just as large as they can manage to live upon. By-and-by they are promoted, and their pension is now not £50 a year, but £100. Byand-by they are promoted yet again, but as they are promoted and draw more pension money, they spend more. There are certain demands upon them which require them to spend whatever they get! So at last we will suppose that one of them has come to a high rank and he draws out of the court of the King’s Bank at the rate of £10,000 a year. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, if at any moment that pension should be stopped, he is just as poor a man as he that drew his £50, for, as I have said, he spent it as he received it—and if he is now rich, he is only rich because of the constant income which his gracious King is pleased to give him! But if that were stopped, he could no more keep alive his own soul, though he has come to the first rank in Grace, than he could who has just commenced to draw from the Bank of the King of Kings! Your spiritual riches all flow in from Christ, and if you are once separated from Him, you are naked, and poor, and miserable, be you who you may!

Still further breaking up this one Truth of God, let me remark that the Believer’s life is always an endangered life. In some way or other it is always in such danger that no man can keep it alive. I find that with some Christians, and with myself, one chief spiritual danger is that of sloth. I mean a tendency to grow lethargic, to stop short where you are, to be pleased with attainments already reached, to lose youthful elasticity and ardor. Well now, when is a soul more in danger than when it falls into spiritual sloth? Then, indeed, the great arch-enemy comes into the Christian camp, as David and Abishai stole into the camp of Saul—and as the great dragon, the enemy of souls—finds a Christian sleeping, he lifts his spear, and if he might but smite him this once, he would not need to smite him a second time! Oh, if Sovereign Grace did not hold back that diabolic hand, if he could but give that one stroke, he would make a full end of the Christian! Now, as we are, most of us, given to slumber at certain times, and may be surprised with it, the truth is most sure that we cannot keep our own souls alive! But if our temptation should not be that of slumbering, yet who among us does not sometimes get faint? The most valorous Believer sometimes finds his faith turn to unbelief. When David was in the midst of battle, we find that the king waxed faint, and Ishbosheth, the son of Goliath, had almost slain him! And there have been times when the offspring of some gigantic evil which in other days we slew, has now been too much for us, and then we feel faint just when we most needed to be strong! He that never has fainting fits may laugh at this, but I think he knows but little of spiritual life, for spiritual men find that all too often these fainting fits come upon them and then they feel that they cannot keep their own soul alive. Moreover, if we are neither faint nor slumbering, yet—I think I may speak for every Christian here— our life is attended with many temptations. Is there one Christian here who is never tempted? I was about to say I wish I could pursue his calling, but I think he cannot have looked at it correctly. There are temptations everywhere! Some of you work among ungodly associates. Some of you are in places still more perilous, namely, with those who profess to be religious, but who lie and whose example is generally more evil than the example of even outrageously godless men! Oh, there are snares in your business and there are snares in your pleasures! There are temptations in your needs, you poor. There are temptations in your plenty, you rich. There are perils in your knowledge, you men of reading. There are perils in your ignorance, you who read not at all. There are evils that will pursue you in the street, that will follow you to your homes, that will even come to your beds! They will not let you find a shelter anywhere from them, for Satan spreads his snares wherever he sees God’s birds of paradise! Who, then, amidst such dangers, can hope to keep his own soul alive? Even if we had an independent life, which I have shown you we have not, yet with such perils surrounding us, the Psalmist was absolutely correct when he said, “None can keep alive his own soul.”

Once more. Remember that all the supplies of our spiritual life are put, not in us, but into Christ. We are not like the camel that can traverse the desert and carry with it, its own supply of water for many days. No, we must drink continually from the flowing Well, Christ Jesus, or we die. Everything that any one of us shall need between here and Heaven is ready for us, but it is all in Christ—there is not a grain of it in ourselves! When the Egyptians were passing through the seven years of famine and had eaten up all their own food, there was quite enough corn in Egypt to keep them through the seven years, but it was all under lock and key in the granary, and Joseph had to keep it all. And so for the spiritual famine between here and the gates of Heaven there is enough heavenly corn provided, but it is all in the granaries of the Covenant, and it is all in the keeping of Jesus! If you want it, you must go to Jesus for it! There is nothing but emptiness, beggary, famine and death in all the fields of Nature. You shall ransack heart, head, memory and judgment through and through—but you shall not find so much as a solitary meal for your hungry soul to live upon within yourselves! Only in Christ is there enough! And there is enough in Him for all of His people, blessed be His name! So, then, because all the stores are in Christ, and there are no stores in ourselves, the text comes true again—“None can keep alive his own soul.” We have thus broken up the Doctrine. And here we will pause a minute. Secondly, let us—

II. SEE WHAT OUR EXPERIENCE SAYS TO THIS DOCTRINE. I will speak of some of the experience of God’s servants and I should not wonder but what I shall be, as it were, holding up a mirror in which many here will see themselves! Many of us have verified that we cannot keep our own souls alive in the following way—first, by having our carnal security all shipwrecked. Do you remember years ago, now, or it may be only months ago with some of you, that you felt so confident? You had had a long time of peace and happiness. Whenever you went up to God’s House, the Word was very sweet to you. In private prayer you had much fellowship with Christ. At the Lord’s Table you sat at the King’s banquet and you said to yourselves, “I wonder how it is that so many Christians are doubting and fearing? I am not. My mountain stands firm. I shall never be moved.” You hardly dared to say that, but you whispered it to yourselves. You felt grateful to God that it was so, but I think there was a little self-congratulation—and you looked down a little upon some of your Brothers and Sisters who were not quite so joyous and confident as you! Well now, shall I tell the story? It has happened to me, and I must blushingly tell it. I doubt not it has also happened to you. Within a very short time a temptation surprised you and you fell into the trap. God’s face was hidden from you—your soul was troubled and the scene was all changed—and whereas yesterday you could write yourselves down in big letters with certainty as a child of God, now you felt that if you were one, you were the meanest of them all! You could have taken the chief seat in the synagogue yesterday, but now if there were a mouse hole you would have been glad to creep into it, and if there were a doorkeeper’s place vacant, you would be happy to take it if you might but still be numbered with the household of God. I should not wonder but what you were a better man in the last case than you were before, though you did not think so. Well, it was then when you began to perceive that you could not keep alive your own soul, for what you built up so delightfully, turned out to be only just a card house—and Satan had but to give it one flip with his finger and over it went! You had piled up your habitation, and you thought it was all made of strong stone, but it was only rubbishing cement—and the first frost that came, cracked it from the foundation right up to the top—and soon it began to totter about your ears! You have passed through that, and if you have, you know that you cannot keep your own soul alive!

Again, did you ever feel like this, my dear Brothers and Sisters? The Sabbath is coming round and on Saturday night you are very glad that tomorrow is the Sabbath, but somehow or other you do not feel that interest in spiritual things that you did some months ago. You go up to the House of God and take your seat. The preacher seems different—perhaps you half think he must be—but yet you hear of others who are feeding on the Word and so you conclude that there is a lack of appetite in yourselves, for you do not seem to enjoy it. Then those hymns—why, they used to be like archangels’ wings to you, and now you are just criticizing the style of the music and not much else. You do not drink into the Word when you get home and get your Bible open. Why, it used to blaze before your eyes! The promises seemed as if they were written in letters of light—but now that Bible is very dull to you. You pray you could not give that up, but you rise from your knees as if you had not prayed—and you feel in all your religious exercises a kind of dullness and sleepiness. You go about it all. You cannot give it up and do not want to give it up. You would not give it up—you would sooner die than give it up—but still, you cannot stir your soul. I have often felt spiritually like those poor people who have taken opium, or some other drug, who have to be walked about by the hour together, for fear lest they should go to sleep—and I have heard of people sticking pins into them to keep them awake. I have tried to stick pins into myself in a spiritual sense to try to wake myself up. What is wrong with me, to be sleeping while poor souls are perishing? How is it that I do not feel this Truth of God more? Why does not that Truth of God affect me more? It did once—why does it not now? Well now, whenever you are in that state of mind, you have learned this lesson—you cannot keep your own soul alive. Why, you cannot even wake your soul, much more quicken it! You cannot even stir it to vigor, with all your attempts, much less, then, could it be possible for you to preserve spiritual life! That must be a work of Grace—your experience must teach you that.  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you ever found, under a severe trial, how difficult it is to exercise the Grace that you before thought you possessed very abundantly? You are just now, perhaps, being tried in your faith. You used to sing Luther’s Psalm—  
*“Loud may the troubled ocean roar! In secret peace our souls abide.”*  
Well, now the ocean has hardly began to roar. It is only just a little storm—but the sacred peace—where is that? Why, you are running to your neighbor to say, “What shall I do? There is such-and-such about to happen!” Your neighbor might well reply. “Did not I hear you sing the other day—  
*‘Let mountains from their seats be hurled Down to the deeps and buried there! Convulsions shake the solid world— My faith shall never yield to fear,’*  
and yet here you are! Here you are!” Ah, yes, we may smile, but we have all been through it. It reminds me of what an old country man used to tell me. “Ah,” he said—old Will Richardson—“I always find, Sir, that I could do a long stretch of mowing in the winter! And I often think when the snow is on the ground and I see my old sickle hanging up, that I’d like to go out and do some harvesting, and I’d do it with the best of the young’uns, but, you know, when the time comes for mowing I find that old Will cannot do much of it, and when the harvest comes round I find that it is very little that makes a good day’s work for an old man like me.” And you and I think like that sometimes. We say, “Oh, if I had a temptation now, how I could master it!” And then it comes and we find that we cannot master it. “Oh, if I were tried, how I could stand!” And we are tried and we cannot stand. Now this ought to teach us that we cannot keep our own soul alive. Depend upon it, Brother, that the very Grace which you set most store by is probably that in which you are most deficient—and that virtue which you could almost wish to expose to peril because you feel yourself so safe in that respect—is just the joint in the plating of your armor through which the arrow would find its way! Boast not of anything! Above all, boast not of your best things, for they may prove your worst in the day of trial! You have found it so. It may be so again. “None can keep alive his own soul.”  
Another piece of experience is this. You who love the Master may, perhaps, have been sometimes in a position in which you have been fascinated by a temptation. You know the figure I am using now in connection with the word fascination. Some of those large pythons that have to be fed upon living animals will have a rabbit, perhaps, put into, their cage for them to feed upon. We are told that the poor little rabbit will sit up on its haunches quietly, calmly and still— because the python has fixed its eyes on the creature and fascinates it—and if it could escape, if the cage door were open so that it could run away, it cannot! It feels itself spellbound and sits there, incapable of that motion by which it might escape—fascinated by the serpent’s eyes. Have you ever been in that position under a sin, and you would have fallen into it, only just then the spell was broken by Providence? Something happened that you could not have looked for, and you escaped because you were a child of God! If you had not been a child of God, that fascination would have continued till it would have ended in your destruction! And if you have ever been under that fascination you will dread ever to expose yourselves to it again. You will take care to keep out of harm’s way again, but you will have learned at least this lesson, that you may be cast, even in Providence, in such positions that nothing but the Supernatural Grace of God could deliver you, and you will then have seen that none can keep alive his own soul!  
But one more illustration taken from our experience. We have seen others fall into great sin and that observation must have helped us to see that we could not keep ourselves. I do not wish to revive old memories for the sake of pain, but I would revive them for the humiliation they ought to cause us all. Have you ever known a man whose prayers comforted and edified you, whose language about the things of God was full of savor, full of instruction to the young and even of comfort to the old? Have you ever seen that man earnest, indefatigable, generous? Have you ever thought to yourselves, “I wish I were half as good as he”? Have you not known the time when a look from his eyes would have cheered you, and a good word from his lips would have been a blessing to you? And yet you heard one day—and it was as though you had been felled to the earth—you heard that man had been living a life of sin, had been a hypocrite and deceived the people of God! Well you remember that! Perhaps you remember that such a thing has happened not once, nor twice, and there are black marks down in your recollection concerning such an one, and such an one, and such an one. Did you write down after that in your diary, “But I should never do the same”? Then you are a fool, be sure of that! But if, instead of that, you wrote down in your diary, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe.” If you fell on your knees and said, “Lord, keep me, for—  
*“Unless You hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline,  
And prove like them at last,”*  
then you have learned a good lesson, and you have learned also the meaning of my text, “None can keep alive his own soul,” for that is what God meant to teach you! May you learn it from others, and not have to painfully learn it by your own falls into sin. My time has failed me, yet must I keep you a little longer while I dwell with great brevity, in the next place, upon—  
III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS OF THE TEXT.  
I have shown you the Doctrine and the experience which backs it up. Now what are the practical lessons? They are these. First, never entertain a good opinion of ourselves. “What, never believe that I am saved?” Oh, yes, if you are saved, always believe that! But then, what is your ground for believing that you are saved? If that lies in your goodness, then away with it, for it is a bad foundation and the sooner you get off of it, the better! My dear Brother, you are no better than the poor publican when he smote upon his breast and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and if you think you are any better than he, you do not know yourself! You will go down from this Tabernacle without a blessing if you are able to get higher up than he, and can say with the Pharisee, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men.” Nothing but a heap of dust and ashes—and a mass of misery and sin—are you but for Sovereign Grace! “In me,” says the Apostle, “that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.” That is to say, “In me, inexperienced me, uninstructed me, unenlightened me, whatever else of good or of virtue may be appended to the word, me, there dwells no good thing!” Grace, Grace, Grace alone can keep and must keep us! But as for any absolute personal acquirement, no confidence can be placed in any of these! Dear Brothers and Sisters, take care that you have never a good opinion, then, of yourself.  
The next lesson is never get away from the Cross. This Psalm is all about Christ on the Cross. “None can keep alive his own soul.” The life of souls is in the dying and living Savior. If you can live a day without feeling the blood of sprinkling, you have lived a dangerous day! If you feel that you can afford to go into any Christian duty without a Mediator, you are in danger! Dear Brothers and Sisters, always sing —  
*“There is a Fountain filled with blood,”*and sing it always because you always need that Fountain and always need the washing!  
Another lesson is never neglect the means of Grace. If you cannot keep alive your own soul, then do not neglect the means through which God helps your soul to live. If you could live without food, why then, you would not come to the table at the time of meals, but as you cannot keep alive your soul, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. I have known some who have said, “Oh, well, I can do as well at home. I can read this good book or that.” Sir, I know what it always comes to—it comes to bringing leanness into the soul and, by-and-by, if persisted in, it ends in apostasy, and proves that the man never had the Grace of God at all! I find that I cannot do without the means of Grace, and I believe that if I cannot, you cannot, my Brothers and Sisters.

But there is a further lesson—never rest on the means of Grace, for even by their use you cannot keep alive your soul! Do we live on sermons, live on hymns, live on other people’s prayers? Oh, no! The sermon is only useful because it is like a ladder to help you to climb. The prayer of another is only useful because it may be like a torch from another altar to set your sacrifice on a blaze. Never neglect the means, but never depend upon the means. Go above the means to the God of the means, and do not be satisfied with the mere means of Grace, but try to get the Grace of the means!  
So let me add again, and I will sit down, never run into temptation. If you cannot keep your soul alive on safe ground, what can you do in the midst of pestilence? Those Christian people who are always saying, “Well, I do not see the harm of this,” and, “I think I may do that”—I am afraid their Grace must be very problematical—they cannot have any at all, or they would not talk in that way! A man who wishes to be living and healthy, but who feels his life to be in jeopardy, will not run any unnecessary risks. Go you not into the path of temptation, for even while the devil tempts you, you may expect Divine help, yet if you tempt the devil to tempt you, I do not know that there is any promise that God will help you! Bless God daily, dear Friends. Bless God daily if you are kept. As you cannot keep alive your own soul, if your soul is kept alive, bless God for it! Oh, I think that the children of God, when they get to mourning and saying, “I have not as much faith as So-and-So, I have not the love of the Apostle Paul, I have not the joy of such-and-such a Christian,” they would do quite as well if they were to sit down and say, “Lord, while I mourn that I have not these things, I do bless You if I have half a grain of faith, for that will keep me out of Hell.” If you have not got sunlight, do be thankful for candlelight. Ah, the day may come when you will be glad to get the slightest evidence, so while you have got it, thank God for it! We ought to lament that we have not more Grace, but we ought to be thankful that we have any at all! If I am not a full-grown man in Christ, and ought to be, I ought to mourn over my dwarfed estate! But if I am a child of God at all, there is something to be thankful for! Praise His name, then! Lift up the notes of song, you mournful ones! Yes, let every Believer bless the name of the Lord!  
And so let us close by saying this—if God has kept you alive, and you bless His name for it, show your gratitude by helping others. “None can keep alive his own soul,” but often a word from a Brother may be a word from the great Father of us all. A gentle admonition from a matron may help a young Sister. A word of wisdom from a father in Christ may help the young Brother. Oh, watch over one another! Be pastors to each other. “Bear you one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” I am sure that in this great London of ours, much of our safety against a wicked world will lie in keeping our ranks close. I know that young men coming up to London, even if they have the Grace of God in their hearts—if they get isolated and separated, are very likely to be led astray. Therefore, if there is any young Christian in the Tabernacle tonight who is spending his first Sunday evening in London and does not know anybody here, I say, my dear Brother, hook on to one of our classes! Lay hold of somebody tonight that belongs to the Church and try to make friends with him, for none of us can keep alive his own soul, and it is not good for man to be alone! God may mean by joining you with this Church and bringing you into some of the various classes, to bless you and keep your soul alive!  
Ah, you have come up, have you, and taken a job in London. And you come out on Sunday evenings, and your mother told you to come here, and you are glad to listen to my voice tonight. Well, next Sunday afternoon, my Sister, there is Mrs. Bartlett’s Bible Class downstairs where you will meet with many Sisters in Christ who will be glad to talk with you and cheer you. Perhaps if you do not go into that class, you will be quite lonely, and by degrees grow cold and get laid aside. You will not be able to stand alone, very well, so come and get a hold of some of your Sisters in Christ, and by God’s Grace, though you cannot depend upon them, yet they may be the means in God’s hand of helping you to stand! Soldiers, close your ranks! Each man to his fellow stand firm for Christ! The enemy is doing all he can to break our solid ranks. Let us be true to one another, and true to the great Captain who is at our head! Up to where the blood-red Cross is the banner to which we all shall rally, let each man turn their eyes, and then next, let each man look right and left upon his fellows and help to hold up such as begin to stagger in the dreadful battle—and who knows but that thus we may help to keep ourselves upon our feet, for he that helps others shall be helped himself! He that waters others shall be watered himself. God grant it may be so with you all, and may Jesus make and keep alive all our souls! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 27.**

Very much of the language of David used here, I trust we can make our own. May the Spirit of God lead us to understand, by experience, what he has written.

Verse 1. The LORD is my light and my salvation. I find no comfort anywhere else but in Him, and expect salvation from none but Himself. “The Lord is my light and my salvation.”

1. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Who can stand against Him? What strength can resist His strength? What darkness can baffle His light? What foes can prevent His salvation?

2. When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. “They wanted to destroy me altogether—to eat me right up.” If they did not destroy me, it was not from lack of heart to do it, nor even from lack of power, for there were many of them. But I had not to fight, for they fell before they reached me. “They stumbled and fell.”

3. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. Let them come on. They fell before—they will fall again. Let them come on. God was strong enough to meet them and overthrow them once. He will do it again! Therefore, why should we fear? Ah, dear Brothers and Sisters, those who have had the most experience of the Divine fullness will rest most confident that nothing can harm them!

4. One thing have I desired of the LORD that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His Temple. He only wished to be always like a child at home—live in God’s house—no temporal structure, but wherever he was, he wished to feel that he was near to God—that all places were the mansions of the great Father, so that he might always have his eyes fixed upon the beauty of the Lord, and his ears always open to listen to the voice of the Lord. Ah, if we can once get ourselves wholly given up to God, it will take our thoughts off the various oppositions we meet with—and we shall no more be afraid!

5, 6. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret places of His Tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His Tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the LORD. It is a blessed resolution, not always easily carried out, but still it ought to be. Our life ought to be singing. It used to be sinning—it ought now to be singing, since the sin has been put away. Oh, happy are the men that know their God! If the whole world would be full of storms, yet may they rest in peace! Get near to God— acquaint yourself with Him and be at peace! The remedy for all trouble is dwelling near to God!

7, 8. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, Seek you My face, my heart said unto You, Your face, LORD will I seek. Are we always mindful of Divine monitions? When the still small voice in the heart says, “Seek you My face,” Brothers and Sisters, do we always at once respond and say, “Your face, Lord, will I seek”? I am afraid we are often as the horse and the mule which have no understanding—and need to have the bit, and the bridle, and the rod. But happy are those who have a sensitive nature—quickly feel the movements of the Spirit of God!

9, 10. Hide not Your face far from me; put not Your servant away in anger: You have been my help: leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. He prayed, you see, and it looked a little unbelieving when he said, “Leave me not, neither forsake me.” But it was not so, for at once he confessed that he did not think that God would leave him, even when our father and mother, who are the last to leave us, should do so. “Then the Lord will take me up.”

11-14. Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path because of my enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of my enemies, for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say on the LORD. I suppose he meant that last sentence to be his own personal recommendation, derived from his own experience. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” He had tried it—proved its wonderful power as the restorative to his heart, and so he says—“Wait, I say, on the Lord.”

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1767 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH AMONG MOCKERS  
NO. 1767

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.”  
Psalm 22:8.**

DAVID experienced what Paul afterwards so aptly described as “cruel mockings.” Note the adjective, cruel—it is well chosen. Mockings may not cut the flesh, but they tear the heart. They may shed no blood, but they cause the mind to bleed internally. Fetters gall the wrists, but the iron of scorn enters into the soul. Ridicule is a poisoned bullet which goes deeper than the flesh and strikes the center of the heart. David in the wilderness, hunted by Saul and on the throne abused by Shimei, knew what it was to be the butt of scorn, the football of contempt. Many a time and often he was the song of the drunk and the byword of the scoffer.

But what have I to do with the son of Jesse? My heart remembers the Son of Man. What if David suffered despising and scorn? He knew it but in small measure compared with our blessed Lord! Well is it said, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord.” It is not amazing that such an one as David should have to cry, “My soul is among lions,” when the Lord of All, the perfectly pure and Holy One, was driven to utter the same cry, saying, “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.”

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, if you have to pass through a like painful experience, count it no strange thing, for a strange thing it is not! Reproach is the common heritage of the godly. Do not think that this fire which you suffer is the first that ever burned a saint. Others have had to bear the enmity of the world long before you! Remember that, of old, from the first moment when sin came into the world, there were two seeds, the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—and between these two seeds there is an enmity of the most deadly kind which will never cease! It may assume different forms and it may be held in check by many forces, but it will always continue, forever the same, while men are men, sin is sin—and God and the devil are opposed.

It was so, you know, in the house of Abraham—he was a man that walked before God and was perfect in his generation—and yet in his family there were the two opposing powers. Ishmael, born after the flesh, mocked him that was born after the Spirit. When Rebekah had brought forth twin sons, yet the fact of their being twins of holy Isaac did not prevent the enmity that arose between Jacob and Esau. Nothing will prevent the seed of the serpent from exhibiting its spite towards the Seed of the woman! Even kinship and brotherhood go for little in this strife. In fact, a man’s foes full often are they of his own household. Count it no marvel, then, if you are derided! It seems to be a necessity of the holy Nature of God that it should incur the enmity of the evil nature of fallen man and that this evil nature should show itself by direct and bitter attack.

Remember “Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.” Henceforth, bow your shoulders to the yoke! Expect that if you follow the Crucified, you will have to bear the Cross, for so it will be. I trust that our present meditation may be useful to any of God’s servants who are feeling the sharp lash of envious tongues, that they may not, thereby, be driven from their steadfastness. If any, in their hearts, are bowed down because they are conscious that possibly they have given the scoffers some opportunity to mock them, may they even in this, take heart, for David had done so, and yet he was not crushed by the blasphemies of the wicked.

I. The first thing to which I shall call your attention at this time is that a truly gracious man is like David and like the Lord Jesus, in that HIS TRUST IN GOD IS KNOWN. Even the enemies of this holy man who is mentioned in the text, and, as I interpret it, even the enemies of our Divine Lord and Master, never denied that He trusted in God. This, indeed, is the commencement of their scoff—“He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him.” From which I gather that every gracious man should have an apparent, manifest, public trust in God. He should not merely trust Him in his heart, alone, but that trust should so enter into his entire nature that he does not conceal it nor think of concealing it.

He should be so open in the avowal of his confidence, that his enemies, before whom he is naturally restrained and on his guard, nevertheless are able to spy out this precious thing within him and are forced to bear their witness, though it is mockingly and jestingly, that, “He trusted on the Lord.” Such a testimony is all the more valuable as coming from an enemy! You know our character is not likely to be drawn too prettily by those who hate us—the utmost will be sure to be said against us! But if even our enemies say of us, “He trusted on the Lord,” we may be very thankful that we have so lived as to extort this testimony from their lips.

What, then, ought a child of God to do in order to show that he really does trust in the Lord? How did Jesus do this? Well, I think that in our Lord’s case it was His wonderful calmness which compelled everybody to see that “He trusted on the Lord.” You never find Him in a flurry. He is never worried nor confused. He is beset behind and before with men who try to catch Him, but He is as self-possessed as if He spoke among friends. He does not appear to be the least upon His guard and yet, instead of their catching Him, before long He either catches them, or else they retire, saying, “Never man spoke like this Man.” He was always cool, peaceful, ready, self-composed. You notice His inward quietude not only when enemies are round about Him, but when He is surrounded by a great mob of people all hungry, starving, famishing—He breaks the bread and multiplies it—but not before He has made them all sit down on the green grass by hundreds and by fifties.  
He will have them in companies, arranged in ranks, for convenient distribution. And when they are all placed in order, as if it had been a wellmarshaled royal entertainment, then it is that He takes the bread and, looking up to Heaven, with all deliberation asks a blessing and breaks and gives the food to the disciples. The disciples make no scramble of it—it is an orderly festival and the thousands are all fed in due time and in majestic decorum—for Christ was calm and, therefore, master of the situation! He never looks as if He had fallen into difficulties and then adopted expedients to get out of them! His whole life is pre-arranged and ordered in the most prudent and peaceful manner.

Nothing upon this earth, although He was so reduced that He had nowhere to lay His head and although He was sometimes so weary that He sat down upon a well to rest, could put Him out of the way, or disarrange His perfect collectedness! He was always ready for every emergency. In fact, nothing was an emergency to Him! What a beautiful picture that is of Christ on board ship in a storm! While they that are with Him are afraid that they will go down, that the wind will blow them into the water, or blow the water over them, so that they will certainly be drowned—what is He doing? Why, He is asleep! Not because He forgot them—no, but because He knew that the vessel was in the great Father’s hands!

It was His time for sleep. He was weary and needed rest and so He carried out that which was the nearest duty—and in all peacefulness laid His head on a pillow and slept! His sleep ought to have made them feel at ease. Whenever the captain can afford to go to sleep, the passengers may go to sleep, too. Depend upon it, He that manages everything would not have gone to bed if He had not felt that it was all right in the hands of the Highest, who, at any moment, could stop the raging storm! I wish we could be similarly restful, for then even our enemies would say of us, “He trusted on the Lord.” I wish we could have that steadfast, imperturbable frame of mind in which our Lord untied the knots with which His foes would have bound Him—for then our assailants would marvel at our quiet confidence.

Jesus knew no hurry, but calmly and deliberately met each matter as it came and grandly kept Himself free from all entanglement. Oh, for the holy quiet which would prevent our going about our business in haste! “He that believes shall not make haste,” but do everything as in the infinite leisure of the Eternal who is never before His time and is never behind. If we could do that and did not get so flurried and worried, and tossed about and driven to our wit’s end, then our enemies would say with astonishment, “He trusted on the Lord!”

Brethren, this ought, also, to come out not merely in our calm and quiet manner, but also by our distinct avowal. I do not think that any man has a right to be a secret believer in the Lord Jesus Christ at this time. You will tell me that Nicodemus was—that Joseph of Arimathaea was— and I answer, “Yes,” but therein they are not our exemplars. These weak Brothers were forgiven and strengthened—but we may not, therefore, presume. Times, however, are different now—by the death of Christ the thoughts of many hearts were revealed—and from that day those secret disciples were among the foremost to avow their faith! Nicodemus brought the spices and Joseph of Arimathaea went in boldly and begged for the body of Jesus.

Since that day when Christ was openly revealed upon the Cross, the thoughts of other men’s hearts are revealed, too, and it is not now permissible for us to play hide and seek with Christ. No, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved.” The open confession is constantly, in Scripture, joined with the secret faith! The Lord Jesus Christ puts it, “He that denies Me before men, him will I deny.” And if you read it, the text sets denying in opposition to

 confession, so that it really means, “He that does not confess Me before men, him will I not confess when I come in the Glory of the Father.” Our Lord does not reckon upon leading a body of followers who will always keep behind the hedge, hiding themselves in holes and corners whenever there is anything to be done for His Glory—and only running out at mealtimes when there is something to be had for themselves!

I know some professors of that sort, but I have very little to say to their credit—they are a cowardly crew. No, no! We ought to distinctly declare that we believe in God and we should take opportunities, as prudence dictates, of telling our friends and neighbors what our experience has been about trusting in God—telling them of deliverances we have received, of prayers which have been answered—and of many other tokens for good which have come to us as the result of our faith in God. To trust in man is a thing of which we may be ashamed, for we find man to be as a broken reed, or as a spear that pierces us to our heart when we lean on him. But, blessed are they that trust in the Lord, for they shall be as trees planted by the rivers of water! They shall bring forth their fruit in their season and even their leaves shall not wither! God, in whom they trust, will honor their faith and bless them yet more and more! Let them, therefore, honor their God and never hesitate to speak well of His name.

So, then, I say, first, a calm belief and, secondly, an open avowal should cause even our adversaries to know that we have trusted in the Lord. And, then, I will add to that, that our general conduct should reveal our faith. The whole of our life should show that we are men who rejoice in the Lord, for trusting the Lord, as I understand it, is not a thing for Sundays and for places of worship, alone—we are to trust in the Lord about everything! If I trust the Lord about my soul, I must trust Him about my body, about my wife, about my children and all my domestic and business affairs. It would have been a terrible thing if the Lord had drawn a black line around our religious life and had said, “You may trust Me about that, but with household matters I will have nothing to do.” We need the whole of life to be within the fence of Divine care. The perfect bond of Divine Love must tie up the whole bundle of our affairs, or the whole will slip away.

Faith is a thing for the closet, the parlor, the counting house and the farmhouse—it is a light for dark days and a shade for bright days—you may carry it with you everywhere and everywhere it shall be your help. Oh, that we did so trust in the Lord that people noticed it as much as they notice our temper, our dress, or our tone! The pity is that too often we go forward, helter-skelter, following our own wisdom, whereas we ought to say, “No, I must wait a little while, till I ask counsel of the Lord.” It should be seen and known that we are distinctly waiting upon God for guidance. What a stir this would make in some quarters! I wish that without any desire to be Pharisaical, or to display our piety, we, nevertheless, did unconsciously show the great principle which governs us!

Just as one man will say, “Excuse me, I must consult a friend,” or, “I must submit the case to my solicitor,” so it ought to be habitual with a Christian—before he replies to an important matter—to demand a moment wherein he may wait upon God and obtain direction! In any case, I wish that it may be so usual with us to ask guidance from above that it may be noticed as our habit to trust on the Lord. Once more, I think this ought to come out most distinctly in our behavior during times of trouble, for then it is that our adversaries are most likely to notice it. You, dear Sister, have lost a child. Well now, remember that you are a Christian woman—and sorrow not as those that are without hope. Let the difference be real and true, and do not be ashamed that others might observe it.

When your neighbor lost her child, it occasioned a quarrel between her and God, but it is not so with you, is it? Will you quarrel with God about your baby? Oh, no! You love Him too well. And you, Brother, you are perplexed in business and you know what a worldling does—if he has nothing more than outward religion, he complains bitterly that God deals harshly with him and he quarrels with God! Or, perhaps, to make things better, he does what he ought not to do in business and makes them a great deal worse. Many a man has plunged into rash speculations until he has destroyed himself commercially! But you, as a Christian man, must take matters calmly and quietly—it is not yours to speculate, but to confide. Your strength lies in saying—“The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

You must not be so eager to be rich that you would put forth your hand to do iniquity in order to seize the golden apples—that is the reverse of faith! You are now to play the man and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, you are now with resignation, no, with more than that—with a sweet acquiescence to the Divine will—to show men how a Christian can behave himself. I have never admired Addison’s words as some have done, who, when he came to die, sent for a lord of his acquaintance and said, “Watch how a Christian can die.” There is a little pride about that, but I desire that every Christian should say in his soul, “I will show men how a Christian can live. I will let them see what it is to live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. Those who do not believe there is a God shall yet be led to feel there must be a God, because my faith in Him does speed so well and I obtain so many unnumbered blessings as the result of it.”

I say, most earnestly, that especially in the time of sorrow and bereavement, when other people are sore put to it because they have lost their joy, and the light of their house is quenched, it is the Believer’s duty and privilege, by his holy calm of heart, to show his trust in God! If religion cannot help you in trouble, it is not worth having! If the Spirit of God does not sustain you when you lose your dearest friend, you ought to question whether it is the Spirit of God! You ought to ask, “Can this be the Spirit which bore up the martyrs at the stake?”—if now that you are passing through these waters, you are carried away by them? If our faith shines out in dark times, even as the stars are seen by night, then is it well with us!

Oh, that you and I might, in all these ways so live that all who see us should know that we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! It would be ridiculous if a man went into society with a label on his coat, “This man trusts in God,” and it would be a pretty clear sign that he needed to be thus ticketed. I would have you shun all distinctive phylacteries in matters of religion as too much flavored with the leaven of the Pharisees! But when the possession of godliness proclaims itself, even as a box of precious spikenard tells its own tale, you need not be ashamed of it! Display and ostentation are vicious, but the unrestrained use of influence and example is commendable. In these days when men glory in their unbelief, let us not be bashful with our faith!

If, in a free country, men should not persecute an infidel, they certainly ought not to silence a Believer. We do not intend to smuggle our religion through the land. It is not contraband and, therefore, we shall bear it with us, openly, in the sight of all men—and let them say if they please—“He trusted on the Lord.”

II. Secondly, THIS TRUST ON THE PART OF BELIEVING MEN IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE WORLD. “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him.” Observe that they restricted the Savior’s trust to that point— “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him.” But now, in the first place, our faith is not confined to merely receiving from God. No, Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord does not deliver us, we will trust Him. See how firmly Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood to it that they would not bow before the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up! “Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of your hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.”

There was great faith in that, “if not.” We must not live and wait upon God with a kind of cupboard love, just as a stray dog might follow a man for bones. we must speak well of our God even if He scourges us, for therein lies both the truth and the strength of faith. Job has put it—“Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Whatever happens to us—if our faith is the work of the Holy Spirit—we shall hold on to our trust in God. Neither is our faith limited to what men call deliverance. It is a misrepresentation when His enemies say, “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him” because though it is the truth, it is not the whole truth.

Our blessed Lord continued to trust in the Father though the cup did not pass from Him and though no legions of angels were sent to deliver Him from Pilate. Though the enemy was permitted to exercise all his malice upon Him until His blessed body was nailed to the accursed tree, yet the faith of our Divine Lord and Master was not moved from its steadfastness. He trusted in God for something higher than deliverance from death, for He looked beyond the grave and said, “You will not leave My Soul in Hell, neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” In all His pains His heart said, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him.”

The blind world cannot understand this. They say, like their father, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” They insinuate that Christian people trust God for what they get out of Him. Now I have often thought that if the devil could have put it the other way, he would have been very rejoiced to do so. Suppose he could have said, “Job serves God for nothing,” then the ungodly world would have shouted, “We told you so! God is a bad Paymaster! His servants may serve Him as perfectly as Job, but He never gives them any reward.” Happily, the accuser’s grumble is of quite the opposite kind. Neither one way nor another is there any pleasing the devil— and it is not a thing we desire to do. Let him put it as he likes! We serve God and we have our reward, but if the Lord does not choose to give us exactly what we look for, we will still trust in Him, for it is our delight!

It is a misrepresentation to say of a Believer that, “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him,” if he is supposed to trust for no other reason. And, dear Friends, our faith is not tied to time. That is the mistake of the statement in the text. They said, “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him”—as much as to say, “If God does not deliver Him now, His trust will have been a folly and God will not have answered to His confidence.” But it is not so. Brethren, if we are in the fire, tonight, and we are trusting in God, our faith does not mean that we expect to come forth from the furnace at this very hour. No, we may not come out tonight, nor tomorrow, nor next month—it may be not for years! We do not tie God down to conditions and expect Him to do this and that—and then if He does not, in His wisdom, see fit to do it, threaten that we will trust Him any more!

The very worst we could do would be to make the Eternal God a slave to time, as though He must do everything at our bidding and measure His Divine movements by the ticking of a clock! The Lord did deliver His Son, Jesus Christ, but He suffered Him to die first! He was put into the grave before He was lifted up from the power of death. And if it had not been that He died and lay in the tomb, He could not have had that splendid deliverance which His Father did vouchsafe Him when He raised Him, again, from the dead! Had He not yielded to death, there could have been no Resurrection for Him or for us! So, Beloved, it may be God has not effected His purpose with you, yet, nor has He quite prepared you for the height of blessing to which He has ordained you. Receive what He is going to give you and gratefully take the painful preliminaries. High palaces must have deep foundations and it takes a long time to excavate a human soul so deep that God can build a gorgeous palace of Grace therein!

If it is a mere cottage that the Lord is to build in you, you may escape with small troubles. But if He is going to make you a palace to glorify Himself with, then you may expect to have long trials. Coarse pottery needs not the laborious processes which must be endured by superior vessels. Iron, which is to become a sword for a hero, must know more of the fire than the metal which lies upon the road as a rail. Your eminence in Grace can only come by affliction! Will you not have trust in God if severe trials are ordained for you? Yes, of course you will! The Holy Spirit will be the All-Sufficient Helper of your infirmities! I say it is misrepresentation if we limit the Holy One of Israel to any form for our deliverance, or to any time for our deliverance. Let not the Lord of Love be treated like a child at school, as if He could be taught anything by us!

So, also, our faith must not judge at all by present circumstances. The ungodly world judges that God has not delivered us because we are now in trouble and are, at present, distressed by it. Oh, how wrongly the world judged Christ when it judged Him by His condition! Covered with bloody sweat and groaning out His soul to God beneath the olives at midnight— why, they that passed by who did not know Him must have judged Him to be a man accursed of God! “Look,” they would have said, “we never heard of a man that sweat blood before—sweat blood in prayer! And yet listen to His groans! He is not heard by God, for evidently the cup does not pass from Him.” If any man had looked at our Lord Jesus when He was on the Cross and had heard Him cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” they would have certainly concluded that He was the most ungracious and undeserving of men—for had He been a saint, surely, they say— “God would not have forsaken Him.”

Yes, but you see they only saw a little of our blessed Master’s career! They only looked upon a span of His existence! What a grievous error it was to have estimated His life by His brief passion, knowing nothing of its grand intent! Look at Him, now, while harps unnumbered sound His praises and all Heaven rejoices to behold His Glory and the Father looks upon Him with ineffable delight! This is the same Jesus who was crucified! What do you think of Him now? You must not measure a man by a little bit of his life, nor even by the whole of his earthly career, for it is nothing compared with the hidden future of his life in eternity!

These men measured David’s faith and measure our faith by what they see of us on one day—we are sick, we are sorry, we are poor, we are troubled and they say—“We told you so! This faith of theirs is not worth having, or else they would not fare so roughly or be found in so much heaviness.” Faith and feeling are in contrast. Outward circumstances must never be made the tests of the value of pious trust in our God! We must not judge God by His dealings with us nor judge ourselves by them! Let us still hold on to this pure, simple faith that the Lord is good to Israel. Let us love the Lord for a whole eternity of His love and then for everything— for every turn of His hand, for every frown and stroke and rebuke—for He is good in everything, unalterably good! If with this faith of ours we are praying and pleading and God does not answer us, does not help us, but leaves us in the dark, yet still let not our trust waver. If any man walks in darkness and sees no light, let him trust and trust on until the light shall come.

So, then, we have just touched upon two points—that a true man’s faith is soon made known, but that, though it is known, it is usually misunderstood. We live among blind men—let us not be angry because they cannot see!

III. Thirdly, THIS TRUE FAITH WILL, IN ALL PROBABILITY, BE MOCKED AT SOME TIME OR OTHER. It is a great honor to a man to trust in God and so to have his name written upon the Arch of Triumph which Paul has erected in the 11th Chapter of Hebrews where you see name after name of the heroes who served God by faith. It is a glorious thing to mingle our bones with those who are buried in that mausoleum which bears this epitaph, “These all died in faith.” It is an honorable thing to be a believer in God, but there are some who think the very reverse and these begin to scoff at the Believer.

Sometimes they scoff at faith itself. They count faith itself to be a folly of weak minds. Or else they insult over one particular Christian’s faith. “Oh,” they say, “he professes to trust in God. This man talks after this mad fashion! Why, he is a working man like other people—works in a shop along with me! What has he to do with trusting God any more than I have? He is conceited and fanatical.” Or in other circles they cry, “This is a man of business! He keeps a shop and I dare say he knows as much of the tricks of the trade as we do, and yet he talks about trusting in God! No doubt He pretends to this faith to win religious customers.” Sometimes the mockery comes from one of your family, for Faith’s foes live in the same house with her.

The husband has been known to say to his wife, “Ridiculous nonsense, your trusting in God!” Yes, and parents have said the same to holy children and, alas, children have grown up to speak in the same fashion to their parents to the wounding of their hearts. As if faith in God were a thing that could be scoffed at, instead of being the most wise, proper and rational thing under Heaven! Faith in God is a thing to be reverenced rather than reviled! True religion is sanctified common sense! It is the most commonsense thing in the world to put your trust in One that cannot lie! If I trust myself, or trust my fellow man, I am thought to be in the first case, self-reliant, and in the second case I am judged to have a charitable disposition. Yet in either case I shall, sooner or later, prove my folly!

But if I trust God, who can bring a reason against my confidence? What is there to be ridiculed in a man’s trusting his Maker? Can HE fail that created the blue heavens, that settled the foundations of the earth and poured out the waters of the great sea? Can the Almighty retract His promise because He is unable to fulfill it? Can He break His cord because circumstances master Him and prevent His performance of it? “Trust you in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” The day shall come when it will be known by all intelligent beings that unbelief of God is folly, but that faith in the Eternal is essential wisdom. God give us more faith in Himself! No doubt we may expect to have all the more of the laughter of the ungodly who will make a spectacle of us for our faith— but what of that? We can bear mockery and much more for His sake who died for us.

And then men scoff at the very idea of Divine interposition. They judge the Lord’s deliverance to be the main point of our faith. “He trusted God that He would deliver Him.” “Look,” they say, “he fancies that God will deliver him, as if the Creator had not something else to do besides looking after him, poor miserable creature that he is! He is nothing to God—a mere speck—the insect of an hour, and yet he trusts in God to interfere on his behalf.” The philosophers laugh whenever you speak of Divine interposition and figure that we must be in the last stage of lunacy to expect anything of the kind! They believe in laws, they say—irreversible, immutable laws, that grind on like the great cogs of a machine which, when once they are set in motion, tear everything to pieces that comes in their way. They do not believe that God fulfils promises, or answers prayers, or delivers His people. Their God is a dead force, without mind, or thought, or love, or care.

He, who in Nature acts according to law is yet believed to have no power to carry out His own Word which must always be Law to a truthful being. Why, some of us are as sure that God has interposed for us as if He had rent the heavens and thrust forth His right hand visibly before the eyes of all beholders! The wise ones laugh at us for this, but we are not abashed—rather do we reply, “Laugh if you like, and as long as you like; but we daily receive unnumbered blessings from God in answer to our cries! And your laughter no more affects us than the noise of the dogs by the Nile disturbs the flow of the river. We shall believe in spite of all your merriment and if it please you to go on with your laughter, we, also, will go on with our faith.” The object of the ungodly man’s scorn is the idea that God should ever interfere to help His people in human affairs, but you stand to it, O true Believers, for He does still show Himself strong on the behalf of them that trust in Him. Let them say and laugh at you as they say it, “He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him,” but let none of these things move you.

Further, we have known this mockery to extend to all kinds of faith in the Divine Love. “Let Him deliver Him,” they say, “seeing that He delighted in Him.” Perhaps you have unwisely told out the tale of God’s special love to those who are now making fun of you—you have cast your pearls before swine and they turned against you. They say, “This man says God loves him above others! That He chose him before the world began! That He redeemed him from among men with the blood of Christ! He says that God has called him by His Holy Spirit; that He has admitted him into His secrets and made him His child!” And then they laugh right lustily, as if it were a rare jest!

How the world rages against electing love! It cannot endure any specialty in Grace. The idea that one man should be more Beloved of Heaven than another, it declares as horrible. The heathen could not understand a certain brave saint because he called himself, Theophorus, or, “Godbearer.” But he stuck to it, that he was so, and this made his foes the more wrathful. God dwelt in him, he said, and he would not give up his happy belief and, therefore, they ceased not to mock. It was a carrying out of our text, “Let Him deliver him, seeing He delights in him.” Well, well! We can afford to bear these mockings, for if we are beloved by a King—it will not much matter if we are sneered at by His subjects! If we are beloved by God, it is a small concern though all men should make us the subject of their jest!

Ungodly men are exceedingly apt to find amusement in the trials involved in the life and walk of faith. Their cry of “Let Him deliver Him” implies that their victim was in serious difficulty from which He could not extricate Himself. This is no novelty to the Believer, but it makes rare fun for the ungodly. What is the good of faith if the Believer suffers like others, endures the same pains, losses and diseases as others? So the men of the world argue. They would be Believers, too, if it would bring them a fortune, or a handsome salary, or at least a loaded table and a full cup! But when they see a saint on the dunghill with Job, or in the pit with Joseph, or in the dungeon with Jeremiah, or among the dogs with Lazarus, they sneer and cry, “Is this the reward of piety? Is this the recompense of godliness?”

They like to spy us out in our time of trouble and taunt us with our confidence in God and, alas, there is so much unbelief in us that we are all too prone, in such seasons, to question the justice and faithfulness of the Lord and to say with David, “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.” It seems hard for us to be mocked by the base ones of the earth—to become the song and the byword of the ungodly—yet this has happened to the excellent of the earth and will happen yet again. Set your account that this is a part of the covenanted heritage and accept it with joy for Christ’s sake!

IV. Now, I must close with this point (though there is much more to be said)—THE TIME SHALL COME WHEN THE FAITH OF THE MAN WHO HAS TRUSTED IN GOD SHALL BE ABUNDANTLY JUSTIFIED. I think it is no small thing to have the ungodly bearing witness that, “He trusted in God that He would deliver Him.” I have known what it is to be exceedingly grateful to ungodly men for helping me to believe that I am truly a child of God. Somebody, years ago, uttered an atrocious lie against me—an abominable slander. I was very low and heavy of spirit at the time, but when I read it, I clapped my hands for joy, for I felt, “Now I have one of the marks and seals of a child of God, for it is written, ‘Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.’”

The love of the Lord’s Brethren and the hatred of the Lord’s enemies are two things to be desired! We may gather that we are not of the wicked when they will not endure us in their company—when our very presence irritates them—and they begin to rail and jeer. It has happened to us even as Jesus said—“If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” So that there is justification, as it were, of our faith even from the lips of adversaries—and we ought to be thankful for it instead of being downcast about it.

Another justification awaits us and in due season it will come. Brothers and Sisters, the day will come when God will deliver His people. You will be brought out of your trouble—it may not be immediately, but it will be seasonably. You may most wisely, in the meantime, learn to glory in your tribulation! Your bitters shall turn into sweets and your losses into gains. Your sorrows shall be your joys, your struggles your triumphs—perhaps in this life this transformation may occur, even as the Lord gave to Job twice as much as he had before—but certainly in the life to come you will find the tables turned. Then, what will the ungodly say? They say now, “He trusted on God that He would deliver him,” but they will be compelled to say as they gnash their teeth, “God has delivered him.”

Whereas the ungodly ridicule the idea that God delights in His people, the day shall come when they shall be made to see that He does delight in them. When the Lord appears on behalf of His people and gives them “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,” the wicked shall gnash their teeth and be filled with confusion! When the Lord shall turn, again, our captivity, even our most desperate foes shall be made to say, “The Lord has done great things for them.” They shall wonder and be sorely vexed to see how the Lord has such favor to His chosen. If they do not see it in this life, oh, what an exhibition ungodly men will see of His delight in His people in the world to come!

Dives sees Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom—what a sight for him! They that scoff at God’s poor people, here, shall see them exalted to be kings and priests to reign with Christ forever and ever! And what will they say, then? What can they say but be compelled to bear witness that their faith was justified! Brethren, at the Last Great Day, ungodly men will be witnesses on behalf of the saints. If any doubt whether the saints trusted in God, the wicked will be compelled to come forward and say, “They did trust, for we laughed at them for it.” Of this and that man they shall say, “He trusted on God that He would deliver him.” In that day the unbelieving will be swift witnesses against themselves, for as they ridiculed the children of God here, they will have it read out before them as evidence of their enmity against the Lord—and how will they answer it?

A man is generally much grieved with anyone who injures his children. I have known a man behave patiently to his neighbors and put up with a great deal from them. But when one of them has struck his child, I have seen him incensed to the last degree. He has said, “I cannot stand that! I will not look on and see my own children abused.” The Lord says, “He that touches you, touches the apple of My eye.” Jesus rises from His Throne in Glory and stands up indignantly while His servant Stephen is being stoned. If I had no other amusement whatever, I would not, for merriment sake, mock the people of God, for it will go hard with those who make unhallowed mirth out of the saints of the Host High! If any of you have ever done so—if you have done so ignorantly—may the Lord forgive you and bring you to be numbered among His people, as was Saul of Tarsus.

And if any of you have done so knowingly, be humble and penitent, and the Lord will forgive you and receive you among His people. But whether you revile or flatter, it is all one to us. We are at a pass with you—we trust in God that He will deliver us—and we cannot be removed from this confidence. O you mockers, we will not be fooled out of our hope, nor jested out of our peace! We cannot find anyone like our God to trust to, and so we will not depart from Him in life or death, but will rest in Him, by His Grace, come what may, even till we see Him face to face!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 22.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—675, 22 (PART II), 56. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3006 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD”  
NO. 3006

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 29, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE BAPTIST CHAPEL, BROMLEY, KENT,  
ON TUESDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 16, 1866.

**“The LORD is my shepherd.”  
Psalm23:1.**

I CANNOT say anything that is new upon this text. I have not even the desire to do so, but if I can remind you of old and precious Truths of God and also put you in remembrance of sweet experiences which are past, this will not be an unprofitable topic for our meditation.

I like to recall the fact that this Psalm was probably written by David when he was a king. He had been a shepherd and he was not ashamed of his former occupation. When he had to wear a crown, he remembered the time when he had handled the shepherd’s crook and, as a lad, with his sling and stone, had kept watch over his father’s sheep in the wilderness. Some persons are too proud to remember their early employments, though such pride is both their folly and their shame. Many persons would not like, in their public devotions, to make use of expressions which would have any reference to their secular calling, but it seems to be perfectly natural, in David’s case, to hear him say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” for he had, himself, been a shepherd and knew just what the word implied.

By the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, let us see what we can get out of the metaphor used in our text. We must, of course, remind ourselves that we are not in the country where these words were written. We must, in thought, go to the East in order to get the full meaning of them. It is a great mercy that the Bible was not written according to the fashion of the West, for everything has changed in our part of the world. If this Book had been written, for instance, in the style of the earliest literature known in England, probably we would not have fully understood it, and other nations would have been altogether puzzled by it. But, in the East there has been little or no change for centuries. Oriental manners and customs are almost the same today as they were in the days of David, so that if we could go to Palestine at the present moment, we might find just such a shepherd as David was and, in examining his habits and actions, we would learn the meaning of the metaphor that David used when he said, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

We shall notice three things about the text. First, this sentence, if it is true to us, guarantees us certain privileges. Secondly, it involves us in duties. And thirdly, it suggests to us enquiries.

I. First, if this sentence is, indeed, true of each one of us, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” then THIS GUARANTEES US CERTAIN PRIVILEGES.  
And first, the Eastern shepherd was the guide of his flock. The sheep never thought of going before him—it would have been an anomaly in nature for the sheep to go first and for the shepherd to follow. They had no need whatever to know the way across the trackless dessert—it was enough for them that the shepherd knew it. They need not know where the green pastures still remained throughout the droughts of summer, or where there were quiet resting places where they might lie down at noon. It was sufficient for the sheep that the shepherd knew—all that they had to do was patiently to follow where he led the way. David had, no doubt, often gone on in front of his flock, thinking with an anxious heart of the place where he would lead them. And as he looked back at them, he could see that they were patiently following him, with no distraction to trouble their poor brains and no vexations to worry their quiet minds. Happy that they were provided for, they grazed as they went along the way, not knowing and not needing to know where they were going, but quite content because their shepherd led the way.  
Transfer this thought, Christian Brother or Sister, to yourself, and see how the Lord is your Guide. Look at the past and note how He has guided you. How very little you and I have had to do with it, after all! We have struggled. We have fretted. We have repined and we have fumed against the working of Providence, but, after all, I do not know that we have had much more to do with it than the sheep in the stream has had to do with the way in which it has floated to the other side! There is far more of the hand of God in our life than there is of our own hand—if our life is what it ought to be. Think of our childhood, of the home where our lot was cast, of our youth, of the place where we were bound as apprentices, or where we first learned the rudiments of our various callings. And since then, what strange paths some of us have trod! If we had been told, years ago, that we should be found here today, in the circumstances in which we are now found, we could not have believed it. There have been times, in our past history, when it has seemed as if a single straw might decide our destiny. We were at the crossroads and the left road might have led us into endless sins and sorrows, but we were guided in the opposite direction, and so we were made to walk beside the still waters and to lie down in green pastures. There have been many times when only a word was needed—no, when a weight no heavier than a feather from the wing of a butterfly was all that was needed to turn the scale against us and to send us into quite a different orbit from that in which we now move! We can truly say that we have been Divinely led until now and, although the journey has been like that of the children of Israel in the wilderness—in and out, backwards and forwards, progressing and then retrograding and often standing still—yet the Lord has led us by a right way up to this present moment and we can

truthfully say— *“Still have we found that promise good*

***Which Jesus ratified with blood!  
Still is He faithful, wise, and just,  
And still in Him let Israel trust.”***

It is easy to say that the Lord has been our Shepherd in the past. It may not be so easy to say that He is our Shepherd in the present and will be our Shepherd in the future. Yet we have nothing to do with the future except to follow in the path of humble trust in the Lord and of obedience to His Word. It is not for me to sit down and make a plan of all I mean to do next week, or next month and so on through all my life. I have no right to forestall my troubles, or to begin to calculate my future needs. I am bound to live in simple dependence upon God, who sends just enough manna for each day, but no more. If I am in any dilemma, if I am in any difficulty, if I do not know which way I should take, had I not better go and tell my Heavenly Father and ask Him to direct me? I must remember that I am not my own shepherd and that I am not to guide myself any more than the sheep is to guide itself—but that I am to look to my great Shepherd, to watch for indications of His will and to receive those indications either from His Word, or from His Providential dealings with me, or from the operations of His gracious Spirit within my heart. And then I am to follow where God leads me, having nothing to do with the making of the road, but only following the Lord, my Shepherd, wherever He leads me.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I wish we remembered this Truth more than we do. I mean, in all things. For instance, in the matter of doctrinal opinions, some people have a certain minister as their shepherd. You know that there are certain people who will not go an inch beyond the point to which Mr. A\_\_\_\_ leads them. Then Mr. B\_\_\_\_ is the Prophet of somebody else. Mr. C\_\_\_\_ is the very pope of another and Mr. D\_\_\_\_ is the perfection of doctrine to a fourth! And beyond these earthly leaders none of them will go. Let us, however, all follow the Lord as our Shepherd! I am to make my appeal to this blessed Book and to ask His gracious Spirit to teach me what is here revealed—and when His Spirit has taught it to me, I am to let that be sufficient and to believe it. Even if I am the only person who so believes it, that shall make no difference to me. If God has guided me, I must follow!

So is it with regard to all the various stages of our life. The young Christian ought to seek God’s guidance in the important matter of marriage. And the young tradesman should seek Divine guidance as to where he shall set up his business, or commence his daily labor. In emigrating to another land, in moving from one house to another, in every step of life, we act wisely when we say, “O Lord, let everything be as You will. We bring here the ephod that we may enquire what is Your will even as they did of old.” There ought to be a distinct recognition on our part that we desire that God should guide us—and we should constantly come to Him to consult with Him, for, if we do not, we shall be constantly making mistakes and getting into confusion. And, then, who but ourselves shall bear the blame in that we went before the fiery-cloudy pillar, chose our own path and so fell into the ditch? One of the Puritans said, “He who carves for himself will cut his fingers and get an empty plate.” And it is so, in the order of God’s Providence. And another said, “He who runs before the cloud goes on a fool’s errand and will have to come back again.” And so it shall be. The sheep before the Shepherd is out of place and out of order—but the sheep behind the Shepherd— quietly, patiently and humbly following him, is both according to the order of Nature and the order of Grace. Let us, then, as the Lord’s sheep, learn to take that position and not attempt to usurp the prerogative of our great Shepherd!

Another great privilege which naturally comes to us through this relationship is that we have provisions for our needs. An Eastern shepherd, of course, provides for his flock as far as he can. This may not be a very difficult matter in England, but it is exceedingly difficult in countries where fodder is not so readily obtainable as it is here. In the summer droughts, the shepherd will have to go on foraging afar. And when those droughts have continued a long while, there will be only a few places, by the banks of the deep rivers, where grass can still be found. Then the prudent shepherd, as soon as he finds that the winter is coming on, will seek to shelter his flock in those secluded pastures which still remain green. And then, as spring returns, he conducts them to the spot where the young grass is waiting for them. He has to be always thoughtful and they have to be never thoughtful, at least with regard to their daily provender. He thinks of autumn while it is still springtime and he has his eyes upon the winter even in the midst of the summer. As for the sheep, it is enough for them if they lie down in the grass that is nearest to them, or walk gently by the still waters just where they are.

Now certainly, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as the Eastern shepherd thus provides for his sheep, so will God provide for us! We have a double set of needs, yet we shall find that God is as all-sufficient for us as He would be if we had a sevenfold set of needs! I say that we have a double set of needs. There are, first, our bodily needs, and these are many and they are constantly recurring. I am not quite certain that to have a sure provision for this life is the most excellent thing for our spirituality. It is, of course, the most comfortable thing and, in many respects, the most desirable and gives the most opportunities for usefulness. But I am not sure whether fullness of bread is not always a very great temptation. Certainly, if I have need to find deep, robust, vigorous piety, I must confess—though I have no preference for one class over another—that I have usually found it among those who have had to live from hand to mouth and to struggle hard for their daily bread—for this experience brings men and women into real and palpable contact with the God of Providence and, as I appeal to these children of poverty and ask them whether God supplies their needs, they take out their little diaries or, if they do not carry them in their pockets, they carry them in their hearts—and they begin to tell of instance after instance in which the God of Abraham has revealed Himself to them as Jehovah-Jireh and, as they look forward to the future, they confidently cry, “The Lord will provide!” Sometimes, such a promise as this, “Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure,” is very sweet to me, but when I have heard it from the lips of some poor bedridden old woman who has long been depending upon the charity of others—and she has told me of remarkable interpositions of the Lord’s hand in her times of need—then the promise has seemed to glisten and glitter with unusual and extraordinary radiance! Are not some of you, dear Friends, sometimes in such a plight that you have to say, in the morning, “Where shall I get bread for this evening’s meal?” This must be a choice text for you, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Remember that ancient promise, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.”

Our greater need, however, is our spiritual need—and there are often moans among God’s people because they are not spiritually fed as they ought to be. It is the crying sin of some ministries that they are not feeding ministries. If I am to believe what I am told by many of God’s people, they do not find the service of the sanctuary to be satisfactory to their souls. Brothers, if we profess to preach the Gospel and this is the case with us, it is a grievous fault on our part and we must mend our manners in this respect! But far oftener, I think, the Lord’s people are not fed because of their own folly. They look up to the pulpit, but they do not see much there—if they looked up to the hills, from where comes their help, they would never be disappointed! When we look to the pastor, but not to the Master, the Master says, “They are looking to the wrong person, so they shall get nothing.” But when we look to the Master, He often supplies our needs through the pastor! Let us esteem the Divinely-chosen channel as far as we should, but let us never forget that it is the Fountain that yields the supply! Though you may be tempted to say, when such-and-such a man is taken Home, “I shall never be able to enjoy any other ministry as I have enjoyed that man’s,” you must check yourself and say, “It is the same living Truth of God that survives, it is the same God who still lives, whoever else may die.” “The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you” and, therefore, you shall still be fed, for the Lord is your Shepherd!

He, who can truly say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” may make sure of a third blessing, namely, that of constant keeping and safe protection. How many are our enemies! Brethren and Sisters, we are exposed to attack on all sides. “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” A cold shiver has often gone through me when I have witnessed or heard of the fall of some whom I have honored and respected—and of whom I would have said that it was more likely that the stars would fall from their orbits than that these people should fall from their integrity! But, alas, the best of men are but men at the best and some brightly shining objects in the Church’s sky have proved to be only meteors—“wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” It is pitiable and it is also humbling—and it should lead to great heartsearching and make each one of us ask, “Shall I forsake Him too?” And why should you not do so? What is there in you, dear Friend, more than there is in any other professor? Why should you not prove to be an apostate after all? What is there about me that I should stand where so many others have fallen? There is nothing to hold me up if I am left to myself—but if, confessing my liability to fall, confessing my liability to be seized by the lion, the bear and the wolf, I can still say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” I am safe! The sheep is not safe because it says, “I am stronger than the lion,” or, “I am able to escape from the bear,” or, “I shall always be able to avoid the wolf.” Silly sheep, what can you do to protect yourself from your foes? Yet the sheep might feel safe enough if it knew that David was near, to snatch it out of the jaws of the lion, or to rescue it from the paws of the bear and, Beloved, we know that our Shepherd will never let any of His sheep perish! He has owned us too long and bought us too dearly—and loved us too well to ever let us go. You remember that He said to His disciples, even concerning the children who believed in Him, “It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” He also said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any (man or devil) pluck them out of My hand.”

So, if you are the Lord’s sheep, you shall be protected, provided for and guided till you reach the upper fold on the hilltop of Glory!  
You all know that the meaning of the text has not been even half brought out by these three thoughts, for, to shepherdize, to pastorize, to exercise the pastoral office is a very great and important work. The work of a true shepherd is not restricted to guiding, supplying and protecting the sheep—there are a thousand other things that he has to do. I think I have heard that there is no animal (except a man) that has so many forms of sickness as a sheep has. It may be afflicted in any part of its body, from its feet up to its head. There is not a single portion of a sheep but seems to be subject either to internal or to external ailments—it almost always seems to need doctoring. A shepherd requires to be to his flock all that a father is to his family, only that he has 50 families instead of one! At certain seasons, he must be up all night looking after the lambs and yet be all day watching over the sheep. Then, in addition to their sicknesses, sheep have a great number of follies. If there is a hole in the hedge, they are sure to find it out and press through it. If there is the richest clover in the field and nothing but dry sand outside, they will get through the hedge! And if but one leads the way, all the rest will follow it in its folly! If one should leap over the railing of a bridge into a river, they would all follow, even though they should all be drowned. They are prone to wander and ready for all sorts of mischief—but they never assist the shepherd in the slightest degree. In this respect, we are just like the silly sheep, yet, our good Shepherd supplies all the needs, pities all the infirmities and pardons all the wanderings of His poor wayward flock. We may indeed say that like as a shepherd pities his flock, and cares for them, so our Heavenly Father pities them that fear Him, and lovingly tends them day and night with constant care. Just as Jacob told Laban that in the day the drought consumed him and the frost by night, so that his sleep departed from his eyes, Christ can say that He watches over His blood-bought flock and keeps everyone of the sheep with meticulous care!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I feel as if I could not say any more about these privileges of the Lord’s sheep, but as if I needed to stop and sing about them. What music there is here—“The Lord is my Shepherd.” That little word, “is,” puts the whole matter beyond all question. “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Then I shall be safely guided right up to the hilltop of Heaven! I shall always be amply provided for! My fortune is made and I shall be no loser, come what may. My bank is good and its wealth can never be diminished. While as to all other matters—protection from my foes, or whatever else I shall need between here and Heaven—all is secured to me because Jehovah is my Shepherd!  
II. Now, in the second place, I must speak more briefly upon THE DUTIES WHICH ARE INVOLVED IN THIS RELATIONSHIP.  
As a shepherd has duties appertaining to his office, so also have the sheep. The first duty of a sheep—that which naturally comes to a sheep—is confidence in the shepherd. When I have heard people talk of silly sheep, I have often wondered whether, if the sheep could speak, they might not talk of more silly men, for, of all the foolish things that a sheep never did, surely this is one—as it was in the meadow, eating the grass, it never did stop all of a sudden and say to itself, “I do not know what will become of me in the winter! There will be deep snow on the ground and I shall not be able to get at the grass. I cannot really see how I shall be provided for!” I never heard, even in a fable, of a sheep’s woolly head being disturbed in that fashion—it has a shepherd to provide for it and it relies upon him to provide for all its needs! Yet you and I dear Friends, sometimes do this silly thing which a sheep would not do! We say, “we cannot imagine what we shall do if we are ever in such-and-such circumstances!” We probably shall never be in such circumstances, yet we keep on supposing what we would do if that were our lot! Some persons have a little factory in their house for making trouble. When God does not send them any, they make some for themselves! And I have heard that homemade troubles are just like homemade clothes—they never fit properly and they always last longer than any others! The trouble that I make for myself is sure to be a far greater trouble than any that God sends me!  
You smiled at what I said just now, but it is a fact that many Christians who might be happy and who ought to sing all day long, begin foretelling tomorrow’s sorrow and, as God will not give them tomorrow’s strength until tomorrow comes, they find their imaginary burden too heavy for their backs to bear! You know how the brave little band of warriors fought at Thermopylae. Bravery alone would have been of small service to them, so they took their stand in a narrow pass, where their foes could only advance one at a time and, consequently, Leonidas and his brave followers, though very weary, could hold the pass against the Persian host! Now, Beloved, you are at the narrow pass of “today.” Therefore, meet your troubles one by one and, as they come, God’s Grace will make you more than equal to them and enable you to overcome them! But when you get into the broad field of months and years and begin to think of a month’s troubles, and a year’s trials, you will fear that you will never be able to conquer them! Get into your proper place and stand there like a sentinel who is willing, if necessary, to die at his post.  
Our first duty, then, as the Lord’s sheep, is confidence in our Shepherd. And, next, we must love our Shepherd. Dr. Thomson, in his admirable work, The Land and the Book, tells us that in the East, there often springs up an intimate affection between the shepherd and his sheep. There are some sheep which will keep at a distance from the shepherd. If he sits down at one end of a field, they are pretty sure to be at the other end! But there are others which keep closer to him and there are some which are so fond of the shepherd that you never see him without also seeing them close by his side. If he stops, they stop. If he moves, they move. They love the pasture, but they love the shepherd still better. Dr. Thomson tells us that these sheep are generally the fattest of the flock because the shepherd is sure to give them the best of the food. They love him and he loves them. He loves all the sheep, but he loves these with a very special kind of love and, Beloved, if we loved Christ more, we would have more true happiness, more real spiritual enjoyment. I am afraid that some of us who love our Lord are like Peter when he followed Christ afar off. We would be far happier if we could take John’s position and lean our heads upon Christ’s bosom.

There is an election inside the Election of Grace. You know that Christ had many disciples, but that out of them He chose 12 to be His Apostles. Out of those 12 Apostles, He chose three favorites, Peter, James and John—and out of that select band of three—He chose one who was called “that disciple whom Jesus loved.” They were all the sheep of the Good Shepherd and all of us who believe in Jesus are God’s children, but there are some who seem to be more dutiful and more obedient children than others are—and who walk in closer communion with their Lord. And these have the best of the Christian life and the highest degree of spiritual enjoyment. I hope that you and I, who call Christ our Shepherd, love Him much and feel that the love of Christ constrains us to yield to Him our heart’s deepest affection.  
Another duty of the sheep is that of following the shepherd. It is a fractious, wandering, troublesome sheep that is always wanting to have its own way and to go where it pleases. It is true that the shepherd still loves the wandering sheep and that he seeks it until he finds it. But there is another thing that he does which the parables do not tell us, and that is he punishes the wandering sheep. When the shepherd finds his wandering sheep, he rejoices over it, but he takes care that the sheep shall not rejoice, and he makes it sorrow for having wandered from him. We are told, by those who have watched Syrian sheep, that they are often lame. A shepherd who was asked by a gentleman what made a certain sheep lame, replied, “I lamed that sheep. I did it on purpose.” “Why did you do that?” asked the gentleman, and the shepherd answered, “It was always wandering and I could not afford the time to go after it, so I lamed it, and it cannot wander away now.” Sometimes when the sheep have been wandering, they get such a stroke from the shepherd’s crook that you would think it would break their backs. Certainly, this is what you and I will get if we are Christ’s sheep and yet persist in wandering. Like the Eastern shepherd does, He will lame us because He will not lose us. He will even beat us because He loves us. Whether obedient children will escape the rod, or not, it is certain that those who are disobedient shall be made to smart for it as surely as their father loves them!  
There is one other thing that ought to be true of me if the Lord is my Shepherd, and that is, I ought to recognize His rights over me and His property in me. The Eastern shepherd is usually the owner of his sheep. He may sell it, or kill it, or do what he likes with it—and no one can dispute his right to do so. And a genuine Christian feels that Christ has an absolute right in him. Whether he is to live or to die, to sorrow or to rejoice, should be no matter of choice to a Christian. He should feel that whatever is his Master’s will is also his will. The seal of an American Missionary Society is an ax standing between an altar and a plow, with the motto, “Ready for either”—ready to work in God’s field yoked to the plow, or ready to fall beneath God’s sacrificial axe and to smoke upon God’s altar—ready, with Paul, to be offered up when the time of our departure is at hand! We have not a true idea of the rights of God over us, or even of our own condition before Him unless we feel that we are the sheep of His pasture and that He may do with us exactly as He wills.  
III. Now I want, just for a few minutes, to speak upon the third point, which is this—THE TEXT SUGGESTS A GREAT MANY ENQUIRIES.  
We must not flippantly talk as if all the promises in Scripture belonged to all of us! For, my dear Friend, it may be that the Lord is not your Shepherd—and if that is the case, the sheep’s portion is not yours. We ought to be very careful not to put God’s promises into the hands of those to whom they do not belong. The other day I saw a little tract bearing this title, “It is certain that God loves you.” And I burned it, for I was afraid that somebody who had no right to it, might see it and believe that it was true. I do not believe that God loves every individual who might pick that tract up in the sense in which such an individual would understand the expression. I know that God loves, in a certain sense, all the creatures that He has made. But such love as that gives me no comfort as long as I am an unreconciled sinner under condemnation because I have not believed in God’s dear Son! I dare not say to everyone of you, “The Lord is your Shepherd,” for I do not think that all of you are His sheep. I cannot help fearing that there are some here who have no part nor lot in this matter, for they are still “in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.”  
I am going to put a few questions to you, or to point out some of the characteristics of one who can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” If I am the Lord’s sheep, I shall have something of the sheep’s disposition. I shall perceive that His Spirit has worked in me, at any rate, some Divine gentleness. I know some professors who seem to me to be more like wolves than sheep. They snap their jaws like wolves do and their very speech seems to be like a wolf’s howl. They dislike this and they hate that, and they cannot endure the other—in fact, nothing pleases them. A sheep has its likes and its dislikes, but it does not snarl, snap, howl, or growl—it is the wolf that does that—the sheep is of a gentler disposition. A man who cannot bear an insult is surely not a Christian. A man who always revenges an injury done to him is surely not a Christian—that is, one who is like Christ—“who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.” He could truly say, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” The giving up of what is our right—the giving up of what we may fairly claim as our own—is the very mark of Christ’s sheep!  
Again, sheep are known by being gregarious in their habits. They always like to be in flocks and “we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Many a time have I blessed the Holy Spirit for having inspired John to write that verse! And it is quite possible that some of you, dear Friends, when you could not find any other evidence of Grace, have been glad of such a mouse-hole as this into which your poor, tried, timid soul might creep and hide—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” A genuine love to the true children of God is a sure sign that we are Christ’s sheep, just as the fact that the sheep flock together helps to prove that they are sheep! May we have more of this love to all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ—not merely a love to some saints because they happen to be our own relations, or because they belong to our denomination, or because they agree precisely with us in sentiments!— but a love to all the saints, as saints, for Christ’s sake—yes, a love even to the bad-tempered ones, the irritating ones, the unsaint-like “saints.” It is very hard work to love some of these “saints.” I have often said that I know same good people with whom I would sooner live in Heaven forever than live for half an hour on earth, for they always seem to look at things at so curious an angle that I cannot possibly agree with them. Yet I must love them for Christ’s sake, for, if I do not love them, I must question whether I really am myself one of Christ’s sheep.  
Another evidence of being a sheep is that they are very particular in their feeding. A wolf can eat what the sheep would not touch, for the sheep must have nothing but that which is sweet and clean to feed upon. We have heard of some professors who can enjoy very questionable food. Mr. Rowland Hill had a man in his church who used to go to theatres and when Mr. Hill questioned him as to how he could make a Christian profession and yet frequent such places, he said, “Well, you see, Mr. Hill, I do not often go there. I only go occasionally just for a treat.” “Ah,” said the good minister, “then you are worse than I thought you were.” And then he used this illustration. “Suppose somebody should spread a report that Mr. Hill was accustomed to eat carrion? Well, it would be a horrible story, but suppose I should say, ‘Oh, no! I do not eat carrion every day as a common article of diet—I only have a little now and then for a treat’? People would say, and say truly, ‘What a filthy taste he must have! What a horrible appetite to call that a treat which is so foul!’ So, my Friend, when you say that you do not go into evil company except sometimes for a treat, that proves which way the wind blows in your soul—and proves the direction in which your heart is set. It proves that you really love sin, or you would not roll it as a choice morsel under your tongue.”  
Oh, that God would teach us, by His Grace, to estimate the true value of our actions, not by their outward appearance, but by the desire of our heart that prompts us to them. For, if we are kept back from sin merely by motives of respectability, or because our fellows are looking upon us, we are as guilty before God as if we had actually committed the sin because our heart still goes after its filthy idols!  
We may also judge whether we are Christ’s sheep by one or two texts which Christ Himself has given us. I quoted to you, just now, our Lord’s own words, “My sheep hear My voice.” Did you ever hear Christ’s voice? I did not ask whether you ever heard your minister’s voice, but whether you ever heard Christ’s voice. Did He, Himself, ever speak to you so that you recognized that it was Christ’s voice that you heard? Besides that hearing of their Savior’s voice, Christ’s sheep have a wonderful discriminating power by which they recognize Him. I heard a gentleman who had traveled in the East say that he thought the sheep must know their shepherd because of the clothes which he wore, so he put on a shepherd’s garments and went up to some sheep, but not one of the sheep mistook him for their shepherd. Then he called one of the sheep by its proper name, but it took no notice of him—and that reminded him of our Savior’s declaration, “A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” The sheep have such a keen ear that they can detect the tones of their own shepherd’s voice and can distinguish it from all others.

So is it with Christ’s sheep—they are not deceived by the voice of strangers, though others are deceived. I venture to prophesy that within 10 years from this date, the whole of this country will be permeated by Popery. The advance that Romanism has made during the last 10 years is so terrible that if it continues to increase at only half that rate, my prophecy will prove to be a true one. The very name of Protestantism will die out unless God sends us a revival of Evangelical religion, for the fashion of the age is so set towards that which is gaudy, sensuous and sensational—and the whole trend of ecclesiasticism is so directly towards ceremonialism, that if we who love the old faith, do not bestir ourselves, we and our fellow countrymen will plunge into the Stygian bog of Popish superstition! Some of you will hardly believe what I am saying, but if you will only turn your mind’s eye in the direction to which I am pointing, you will see that the advance of Romanism and Ritualism in this land is quite extraordinary. The only people who will not be swept away by this tidal wave of ceremonialism, are those who have heard the voice of Christ and so have the first mark of His sheep! If you have ever been justified by faith in Jesus, you will not be cajoled by a so-called “priest.” If you have ever spiritually eaten the flesh of Christ, you will never degrade your Christian manhood by munching the man-made wafer-god! If you have ever really known Jesus Christ as your Savior, what will you care for the so-called “sacrifice of the mass”? You will know that it is only a Satanic invention to delude souls! If you have ever been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, the fiction of “baptismal regeneration” will be an abomination to you! If you have ever been vitally united to Christ, the living Vine, all the false and foolish talk about being saved by the power of sacramental efficacy will be as a stench in your nostrils which you cannot endure!  
So I come back to the question I asked just now—Have you heard the voice of Christ? Do you know the meaning of the whispering of His Spirit? Have you passed from death unto life? Have you been transformed from a wolf into a sheep? Have you been translated out of the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son? If so, relying upon the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood has redeemed every one of His chosen flock, you can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” But if not, and you continue to follow your own devices, they will lead you to destruction! God grant that this may not be the lot of any one of us, but may we all come, with childlike confidence, and put our trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the one and only Savior of sinners. And then shall each one of us be able to say, with David, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”  
May God bless each one of you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
NO. 3060

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1907.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.  
*“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”  
Psalm 23:1.*

[See Sermon #3006, Volume 52—“THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.” Sermons on the Parable of the Good Shepherd are as follows—#1877, Volume 32—OUR OWN DEAR SHEPHERD; #1713, Volume 29— OTHER SHEEP AND ONE FLOCK; #995, Volume 17—THE SHEEP AND THEIR SHEPHERD and #2120, Volume 35—THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS—OR, SHEEP WHO SHALL NEVER PERISH. Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

DOES not this sound just like poetry or like singing? If you read the entire Psalm through, it is written in such poetic prose that though it is not translated into meter, as it should have been, it reads just like it. “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” It sounds like music for this, among other reasons, because it came from David’s heart. That which comes from the heart always has melody in it. When men speak of what they know and from the depths of their souls testify to what they have seen, they speak with what we call, eloquence, for true eloquence is speaking from the soul. Thus David spoke of what he knew—what he had verified all his life—and this rendered him truly eloquent.

As “truth is stranger than fiction,” so the truth that David spoke is more sweet than even fancy could have imagined. And it has more beauty than even the dream of the enthusiast could have pictured. “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” How naturally it seems to strike on the ear as uttered by David who had, himself, been a shepherd boy! He remembers how he had led his flock by the waters in the warm summer, how he had made them lie down in shady nooks by the side of the river, how, on sultry days, he had led them on the high hills that they might feel the cool air and how, when the winter set in, he had led them into the valleys that they might be hidden from the stormy blasts. Well could he remember the tender care with which he protected the lambs and carried them—and how he had tended the wounded of the flock. And now, appropriating to himself the familiar figure of a sheep, he says, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” I will try to preach experimentally tonight and I wonder how many of you will be able to follow the Psalmist with me while I attempt to do so?

First of all, there are some preliminaries before a man can say this—it is absolutely necessary that he should feel himself to be like a sheep by nature, for he cannot know that God is his Shepherd unless he feels in himself that he has the nature of a sheep. Secondly, there is a sweet assurance—a man must have had some testimony of Divine care and goodness in the past, otherwise he cannot appropriate to himself this verse, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” And thirdly, there is a holy confidence. I wonder how many there are here who can place all their future in the hand of God and can join with David in uttering the last sentence, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”

I. First then, we say THERE IS A CERTAIN CONFESSION NECESSARY BEFORE A MAN CAN JOIN IN THESE WORDS. We must feel that there is something in us which is akin to the sheep. We must acknowledge that in some measure we exactly resemble it or else we cannot call God our Shepherd.

I think the first apprehension we shall have if the Lord has brought us into this condition, is this—we shall be conscious of our own folly—we shall feel how unwise we always are. A sheep is one of the most unwise of creatures. It will go anywhere except in the right direction. It will leave a fat pasture to wander into a barren one. It will find out many ways, but not the right way. It would wander through a forest and find its way through ravines into the wolf’s jaws, but never by its wariness turn away from the wolf. It could wander near his den, but it would not instinctively turn aside from the place of danger. It knows how to go astray, but it knows not how to come home again. Left to itself, it would not know in what pasture to feed in summer, or where to retire in winter.

Have we ever been brought to feel that in matters of Providence, as well as in things of Grace, we are truly and entirely foolish? I think no man can trust Providence till he distrusts himself—and no one can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” until he has given up every idle notion that he can control himself or manage his own interests. Alas, we are, most of us, wise above that which is written and we are too vain to acknowledge the Wisdom of God! In our self-esteem we fancy our reason can rule our purposes and we never doubt our own power to accomplish our own intentions! And then, by a little maneuvering we think to extricate ourselves from our difficulties. Could we steer in such a direction as we have planned, we entertain not a doubt that we could avoid at once the Scylla and the Charybdis—and have fair sailing all our life! O Beloved, surely it needs but little teaching in the School of Divine Grace to make out that we are fools! True wisdom is sure to set folly in a strong light.

I have heard of a young man who went to college and when he had been there a year, his father said to him, “Do you know more than when you went?” “Oh, yes!” he said, “I do.” Then he went the second year and was asked the same question, “Do you know more than when you went?” “Oh, no,” he said, “I know a great deal less.” “Well,” said the father, “you are getting on.” Then he went the third year and was asked, “What do you know now?” “Oh,” he said, “I don’t think I know anything.” “That is right,” said his father, “you have now learned to profit since you say you know nothing.” He who is convinced that he knows nothing as he ought to know gives up steering his ship and lets God put His hand on the rudder. He lays aside his own wisdom and cries, “O God, my little wisdom is cast at Your feet. Such as it is, I surrender it to You. I am prepared to renounce it, for it has caused me many an ill and many a tear of regret, that I should have followed my own devices. But from now on I will delight in Your statutes. As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so shall my eyes wait upon the Lord my God. I will not trust in horses or in chariots; but the name of the God of Jacob shall be my refuge. Too long, alas, have I sought my own pleasure and labored to do everything for my own gratification. Now would I ask, O Lord, Your help that I may seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and leave all the rest to You.” Do you, O my Friends, feel persuaded that you are foolish? Have you been brought to confess the sheepishness of your nature? Or are you flattering your hearts with the fond conceit that you are wise? If so, you are indeed fools! But if brought to see yourself like Agur when he said, “I am more brutish than any man and have not the understanding of a man,” then even Solomon might pronounce you wise! And if you are thus brought to confess, “I am a silly sheep,” I hope you will be able to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I cannot have any other, I want none other—He is enough for me.”

Again, a sheep is not only foolish, but it is a very dependent creature. The sheep, at least in its domesticated state, as we know it, must always be dependent. If we should take a horse, we might turn him loose upon the prairie and there he would find sufficient food for his sustenance. And years later we might see him in no worse condition than that in which we left him. Even the ox might thus be treated and still be able to provide for itself. But as for the silly sheep, set it alone in the wilderness, let it pursue its own course unheeded—and what would be its fate? Presently, if it did not wander into places where it would be starved, it would ultimately come to ruin, for assuredly some wild beast would lay hold upon it and it has no means of defense for itself.

Beloved, have we been brought to feel that we have of ourselves no means of subsistence and no power of defense against our foes? Do we perceive the necessity for our dependence upon God? If so, then we have learned another part of the great lesson that the Lord is our Shepherd. Some of us have yet to learn this lesson. Gladly would we cater for ourselves and carve for ourselves—but as the good old Puritan said, “No child of God ever carves for himself without cutting his fingers,” we sometimes fancy that we can do a little for ourselves—but we shall have that conceit taken out of us very soon. If we, indeed, are God’s people, He will bring us to depend absolutely upon Him day by day. He will make us pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”—and make us acknowledge that He opens His hands and gives us our food in due season. Sweet is the meal that we eat, as it were, out of His hands! Yet some will rebel against this dependence as very humiliating. Men like to vaunt their independence—nothing is more respectable in their eyes than to live in independent circumstances. But it is no use for us to talk of being independent—we can never be.

I remember a dear Christian who prayed very sweetly each Sunday morning at a certain Prayer Meeting that I once attended, “O Lord, we are independent creatures upon You.” Except in such a sense as that, I never knew any independence worth having! Of course he meant, “we are dependent creatures upon You.” So we must be. We cannot be independent even of one another—and certainly we are not independent of God, for when we have health and strength, we are dependent upon Him for their continuance. And if we have them not, we are dependent on Him to restore them to us. In all matters whatever, it is sweet, it is blessed to see the tokens of His watchful care. If I had anything of which I could say, “God has not given me this,” I hope, by Divine Grace, I would turn it out of doors. Food, raiment, health, breath, strength—everything comes from Him and we are constantly dependent upon Him! As Huntington used to say, “My God gives me a hand-basket portion. He does not give me an abundance at once, but He gives it, basket by basket, and I live from hand to mouth.” Or, as old Hardy once said, “I am a gentleman commoner on the bounty of God. I live day by day upon morning commons and evening commons—and thus I am dependent upon Him—independent of the world, but dependent upon God.” The sheep is a dependent creature, always needing some help. And so is the Christian. And he realizes the blessedness of his dependence when he can say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

These are the two principal points upon which we view this Truth of God with regard to Providence. I might wander from what I wished to be the subject of this evening. And I might be doing good if I were to show you some other points of comparison between the Christian and the sheep. O Beloved, there are some of you here present who know yourselves to be sheep by reason of your frequent wanderings. How often have we made this confession, “We have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep”? And we feel it this night, bitterly ruing the waywardness of our hearts. But it is well to be the sheep of God’s pasture even if we have been wandering sheep! We do not read of wandering dogs, because dogs are naturally wild, while sheep are always accounted to be someone’s property. The straying sheep has an owner— and however far it may stray from the fold, it ceases not to belong to that owner. I believe that God will yet bring back into the fold every one of His own sheep and they shall all be saved. It is something to feel our wanderings, for if we feel ourselves to be lost, we shall certainly be saved! If we feel ourselves to have wandered, we shall certainly be brought back.

Again, we are just like sheep by reason of the perverseness of our wills. People talk about free-will Christians and tell us of persons being saved and coming to God of their own free will. It is a very curious thing, but though I have heard a great nanny free-will sermons, I never heard any free-will prayers. I have heard Arminianism in preaching and talking, but I have never heard any Arminian praying. In fact, I do not think there can be any prayer of that sort—it is a style that does not suit prayer! The theory may look very nice in argument and sound very proper in discourse, though we somewhat differ from it. But for practical purposes it is useless! The language will not suit us in prayer and this alone would be sufficient reason to condemn it. If a man cannot pray in the spirit of his own convictions, it shows they are a delusion from beginning to end, for if they were true, he could pray in that language as well as in any other! Blessed be God, the Doctrines of Grace are as good to pray with as to preach with! We do not find ourselves out of order in any act of worship when once we have the old fundamental Doctrines of the blessed Gospel of Grace! Persons talk about free-will Christians coming back to Jesus of themselves. I intend to believe them when they find me a freewill sheep that has come back of itself—when they have discovered some sheep, after it has gone from its fold—stand bleating at its master’s door, asking to be taken in again! You will not find such a sheep and you will not find a free-will Christian, for they will all confess, if you thoroughly probe the matter, that it was Grace, and Grace alone that restored their souls—

*“Grace taught our souls to pray,  
And made our eyes overflow—  
‘Tis Grace that keeps us to this day  
And will not let us go.”*

II. The next thing is THE ASSURANCE THAT THE LORD IS OUR SHEPHERD. It is very easy to say, “The Lord is a Shepherd,” but how shall we appropriate the blessedness to ourselves and be able to say, “The Lord is our Shepherd?” I answer that He has had certain dealings with our souls in the past which have taught us that He is our Shepherd. If every man and every woman in this assembly should rise up and say, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” I feel convinced it would be, in many instances, the solemn utterance of a lie, for there are, it is to be feared, many here who have not God for their Shepherd. He is their Guide, it is true, in some sense, because He overrules all the hearts and controls all the affairs of the children of men. But they are not the people of His pasture, they are not the sheep of His hand. They do not believe— therefore they are not of His fold. And if some of you should say that you are, your own conscience would belie you! How, then, does a man come to know that the Lord is his Shepherd?

He knows it, first, because Jesus Christ has brought him back from his wanderings. If there is anyone here who, after a course of folly and sin, has been fetched back from the mountains of error and the haunts of evil. If there is one here who has been stopped in a mad career of vice and has been reclaimed by the power of Jehovah Jesus, such a one will know, by a happy experience, that the Lord is his Shepherd! If I once wandered on yon mountaintop and Jesus climbed up and caught me, and put me on His shoulders and carried me home, I cannot and dare not doubt that He is my Shepherd! If I had belonged to some other sheep-owner, He would not have sought me. And from the fact that He did seek me, I learn that He must be my Shepherd! Did I think that any man convinced me of sin, or that any human power had converted me, I would fear I was that man’s sheep and that he was my shepherd. Could I trace my deliverance to the hand of a creature, I would think that a creature might be my shepherd! But since he who has been reclaimed of God must and will confess that God alone has done it and will ascribe to His free Grace, and to that alone, his deliverance from sin, such a one will feel persuaded that the Lord must be his Shepherd because He fetched him back from his wanderings—He snatched him out of the jaw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear.

We know still further that like a shepherd, He has supplied our needs. Some of you, Beloved, know of a surety that God is your Provider. Sometimes you have been brought into such straits that if it had not been for an interposition of Heaven, itself, you never could have had deliverance! You have sunk so deep down into poverty and loved ones and acquaintances have stood so far aloof from you that you know there is but one arm which could have fetched you up. You have been reduced, perhaps, to such straits that all you could do was to pray. You have wrestled at the Throne of God and sought for an answer, but it has not come. You have used every effort to extricate yourself and darkness has still compassed your path. Again and again you have tried till hope has well-near vanished from your heart. And then, adding vows to your prayer, you have said in your agony, “O God, if You will deliver me this time, I will never doubt You again!” Look back on the path of your pilgrimage. Some of you can count as many Ebenezers as there are milestones from here to York! Ebenezers piled up with oil poured on the top of them—places where you have said, “Hitherto, the Lord has helped me.” Look through the pages of your diary and you will see, time after time, when your perils and emergencies were such as no earthly skill could relieve and you felt constrained to witness what others among you have never felt—that there is a God, that there is a Providence—a God who compasses your path and is acquainted with all your ways! You have received deliverance in so marvelous a way, from so unseen a hand and so unlikely a source, under circumstances, perhaps, so foreign to your wishes—and yet the deliverance has been so perfect, so complete and wonderful—you have been obliged to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Yes, He is! The sheep, we know, fed day by day in good pasture, may forget its Shepherd. But if for a time it is taken from the pasture and then brought home again, after having been nearly starved, it says, “Truly, He is my Shepherd.” If I had always been supplied with bread, without the pinch of anxiety, I might have doubted whether He had given it, and ascribed it to the ordinary course of passing events. But seeing that “everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need,” I acknowledge that it is my God who supplies all my need! Yes, and with gratitude I will write it down for a certainty—“The Lord is my Shepherd.”

But, Beloved, do not be distressed even though you should not have had these particular trials and deliverances, for there is a way whereby we can tell that the Lord is our Shepherd without encountering so many rough and rugged passes, as I will show you presently. I have heard it said, by some, that a man cannot be a child of God unless he has gone through a certain set of trials and troubles. I recollect hearing a sermon from these words, “Who passing through the Valley of Baca makes it a well.” Certainly the preacher did not make his sermon a well, for it was as dry as a stick and not worth hearing. There was nothing like cheerfulness in it, but a flood of declamation all the way through against hopeful Christians, against people going to Heaven who are not always grumbling, murmuring, doubting, fumbling for their evidences amidst the exercises of their own hearts, always reading and striving to rival Job and Jeremiah in grief, taking the Lamentations as the fit expression of their own lips, troubling their poor brains, vexing their poor hearts, smarting, crying and wearying themselves with the perpetual habit of complaining against God, saying with poor Job, “My stroke is heavier than my groaning.” Such persons measure themselves by their troubles, trials, distresses, tribulations, perplexities and no end of things—things that we will not stop to recount! We believe, indeed, that such things will come to a child of God. We think every Christian will be corrected in due measure—we would be the last to deny that God’s people are a tried people! They must all pass through the furnace of affliction and He has chosen them there, but still, we believe that religion is a blessed and a happy thing and we love to sing that verse—

*“The men of Grace have found  
Glory begun below!  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow.”*

And what though some of my Hearers have not yet had to swim through the rivers. Though they may not have had to pass through the fiery furnace of Providential trial, they have had trials enough and trials that no heart has known except their own suffering which they could not tell to flesh and blood, which have gnawed their very souls and catered into the marrow of their spirits. Bitter anguish and aching voids such as those who boast about their trials nearer felt, such as mere babbling troublers did never know, deep rushing of the stream of woe with which little bubbling narrow brooks could never compare! Such persons fear to murmur—they cannot reveal their sufferings because they think it would be showing some lack of trust in God. They keep their trials to themselves and only speak of them into that ear which hears and has no lips to babble afterwards.

“But,” you say, “how can you tell that the Lord is your Shepherd if you have not been tried in any of those great deeps?” We know that He is because He has fed us day by day in good pasture. And if He has not allowed us to wander as far away as others, we can lift up our eyes to Him and each one of us say, “Lord, You are my Shepherd. I can as fully prove that You are my Shepherd by Your keeping me in the grassy field as by Your fetching me back when I have wandered. I know You are as much my Shepherd when You have supplied my needs day by day as if you had allowed me to go into poverty and given me bitterness. I know You are as much my Shepherd when granting me a continua1 stream of mercy, as if that stream had stopped for a moment and then had begun to flow again.” People say, if they have had an accident and been nearly killed, or have narrowly escaped, “What a Providence!” Yet it is as much a Providence when you have no accident at all! A good man once went to a certain place to meet his son. Both his son and he had ridden some distance. When the son arrived, he exclaimed, “Oh Father! I had such a Providence on the road.” “Why, what was that?” “My horse stumbled six times and yet I was not thrown.” “Dear me!” said his father, “but I have had a Providence too!” “And what was that?” “Why, my horse never stumbled at all! And that is just as much a Providence as if the horse had stumbled six times and I had not been thrown.”

It is a great Providence when you have lost your property and God provides for you. But it is quite as much a Providence when you have no loss at all and when you are still able to live above the depths of poverty! And so God provides for you. I say this to some of you when God has blessed and continually provided for you from your earliest youth. You, too, can each of you say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” You can see this title stamped on your mercies, though they come daily. They are given to you by God and you will say, by humble faith, the word, “my,” as loudly as anyone can! Do not get to despising the little ones of the flock because they have not had as many trials as you have had! Do not get to cutting the children of God in pieces because they have not been in such fights as you have! The Shepherd leads the sheep where He pleases and be you sure that He will lead them rightly! And as long as they can say from their hearts, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” do not trouble yourselves about where or how they learned it!

III. Now we finish up with THE HOLY CONFIDENCE OF THE PSALMIST. “I shall not want.”  
“There,” poor Unbelief says, “I am wanting in everything. I am wanting in spirituals, I am wanting in temporals and I shall always want! Ah, such distress as I had a little while ago you cannot tell what it was—it was enough to break one’s heart and it is coming again—I shall want.” That is what Unbelief says, but you must write your own name at the bottom and then I will repeat this, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” That is what David said and I think David’s faith far preferable to your unbelief. I might take your evidence in some matters, but I really would not take it before David’s. I would accept your testimony as an honest man in some respects, but the words of Inspiration must be preferable to your words of apprehension! When I find it written, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” I would rather take one of David’s affirmations than 50 of your negations.  
I think I hear someone saying, “I would bear the want of any temporal good if I could but obtain spiritual blessings. I am in want this night of more faith, more love, more holiness, more communion with my Savior.” Well, Beloved, the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not want even those blessings—if you ask of Him, He will give them to you, though it may be by terrible things in righteousness that He will save you. He often answers His people in an unexpected manner. Many of God’s answers to our letters come down in black-edged envelopes, yet mark you, they will come. If you want peace, joy, sanctification and such blessings, they shall be given to you, for God has promised them. The Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not want. I have often thought of that great promise written in the Bible—I do not know where there is a greater one—“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” “No good thing!” It is a mercy that the word, “good,” was put in, for if it had said, “He, will withhold nothing,” we should have been asking for many things that would be bad for us. But it says, “no good thing!” Now, spiritual mercies are good things and not only good things, but the best things so that you may well ask for them! For if no good thing will be withheld, much more will none of the best things! Ask, then, Christian, for He is your Shepherd and you shall not want! He will supply your needs. He will give you whatever you require. Ask in faith, doubting nothing, and He shall give you what you really need.  
But still there are some who say, “The text applies to temporal matters,” and persist in it. Well, then, I will accept this sense—the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not want for temporal blessings. “Ah,” cries one, “I was once in affluence and now I am brought down to penury. I once stood among the mighty and was rich—now I walk among the lowly and am poor.” Well, David does not say, “The Lord is your Shepherd, and you shall not come down in society.” He does not say, “The Lord is your Shepherd and, therefore, you shall have 500 or a thousand pounds a year.” He does not say, “The Lord is your Shepherd and, therefore, you shall have whatever your soul lusts after.” All David says is, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” There are different ways of wanting. There are many people whose foolish craving and restless anxiety make them always in want. If you gave them a house to live in and fed them day by day, they would always be wanting something more. And after you had just relieved their necessities, they would still want. The fact is theirs are not real wants, but simply fancied wants. David does not say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore I shall not fancy that I want,” for though God might promise that, it would need His Omnipotence to carry it out, for His people often get to fancying that they want when they do not. It is real needs that are referred to. “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not really want.” There are many things we wish for that we do not really need, but there is no promise given that we shal1 have all we wish for. God has not said that He would give us anything more than we need, but He will give us that.  
So lift up your head and do not be afraid! Fear not, your God is with you! He shall prevent evil from hurting you. He shall turn darkness into light and bitter into sweet. He has led you all the way and all the way this shall be your constant joy—He is my Shepherd, I shall not really want that which is absolutely necessary. Whatever I really require shall be given by the lavish hands of a tender Father. Believer, here is your inheritance, here is your income, here is your yearly living—“He is your Shepherd, and you shall not want.” What is your income, Believer? “Why,” you say, “it varies with some and others of us.” Well, but, a Believer’s income is still the same. This is it—“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” That is my income and it is yours, poor little one. That is the income of the poorest pauper in the workhouse who has an interest in the Grace of God—the Lord is her Shepherd, she shall not want! That is the income of the poor foundling child who has come to know the Lord in early life and has no other friend—the Lord is his Shepherd, he shall not want! That is the widow’s inheritance—the Lord is her Shepherd, she shall not want! That is the orphan’s fortune—the Lord is his Shepherd, he shall not want! That is the Believer’s portion, his inheritance, his blessing!

“Well now,” some may say, “what is this Truth worth?” Beloved, if we could change this Truth for a world of gold, we would not! We had rather live on this Truth of God than live on the finest fortune in creation! We reckon that this is an inheritance that makes us rich, indeed—“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” Give me ten thousand pounds and one reverse of fortune may scatter it all away. But let me have a spiritual hold of this Divine Assurance, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” and then I am set up for life! I cannot break with such stock as this in hand! I never can be a bankrupt, for I hold this security—“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” Do not give me ready money now—give me a checkbook and let me draw what I like. That is what God does with the Believer. He does not immediately transfer his inheritance to him, but lets him draw what he needs out of the riches of his fullness in Christ Jesus! The Lord is his Shepherd; he shall not want. What a glorious inheritance! Walk up and down it Christian! Lie down upon it, it will do for your pillow—it will be soft as down for you to lie upon. “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” Climb up that creaking staircase to the top of your house, lie down on your hard mattress, wrap yourself with a blanket, look out for the winter when hard times are coming and say not, “What shall I do?” but just hum over to yourself these words, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.”  
That will be like the hush of lullaby to your poor soul and you will soon sink to slumber. Go, you business man, to your counting-house again, after this little hour of recreation in God’s House, and again cast up those wearisome books. You are saying, “How about business? These prices may be my ruin. What shall I do?” When you have cast up your accounts, put this down against all your fears and see what a balance it will leave—“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” There is another man. He does not lack anything, but still he feels that some great loss may injure him considerably. Go and write this down in your cash-book. If you have made out your cash-account truly, put this down—“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” Put this down for something better than gold and silver—“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” He who disregards this Truth, knows nothing about its preciousness, but he who apprehends it, says, “Ah, yes, it is true, ‘The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.’” He will find this promise like China wind of which the ancients said that it was flavored to the lips of him that tasted it! So this truth shall taste sweet to you if your spiritual palate is pure—yet it shall be worth nothing to you but mere froth if your taste is not healthy.  
But Beloved, we must divide our congregation before we send you away and remind you that there are some of you to whom this Truth of God does not belong. Perhaps some of you professors of religion may want this Truth badly enough, but it is not yours. The Lord is not your Shepherd—you are not the sheep of His pasture and the flock of His hand. You are not sheep, but goats—unclean creatures, not harmless and undefiled as sheep, but everything that is the very reverse! Oh it is not only eternal loss, it is not only everlasting injury that you have to regret—it is also present loss and present injury—the loss of an inheritance on earth, the loss of an inheritance below. To be deprived of such a comfort as this is a terrible privation. Oh, it is enough to make men long for religion if it were only for that sweet peace and calm of mind which it gives here below! Well might men wish for this heavenly oil to be cast on the troubled waters of this mortal life even if they did not anoint their heads with it or enter into glory with the joy of their Lord upon their countenance!  
Beloved, there are some I know here—and your conscience tells you whom I mean—who have a voice within your own hearts which says, “I am not one of Christ’s sheep.” Well then, there is no promise for you that you shall not want! The promise and the Providence are for Believers, not for you. There is no promise that all things shall work together for your good, but rather you shall be cursed in your basket and cursed in your store, cursed in the field, cursed in your house, cursed in your going out and cursed in your coming in, for, “the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.” It does not merely peep in at his window but it is in his house! Yet God “blesses the habitation of the just.” If you do not repent, the curse shall follow you until your dying day and not having Christ for your Shepherd, you shall wander where that hungry wolf, the devil, shall at last seize upon your soul—and everlasting misery and destruction from the Presence of Jehovah must be your inevitable, miserable and inexpressibly awful doom! May the Lord in mercy deliver you from it!  
And this is the way of salvation—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” “He that believes and is baptized”—we omit nothing that God has said. “He that believes and is baptized”—not he that is baptized and then believes (which would be reversing God’s order), but “He that believes and is baptized—not he that is baptized without believing, but the two joined together! He that believes with his heart and is baptized, confessing with his mouth—“he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Do you neglect one part of it? It is at your peril, Sir! “He that believes and is baptized,” says God. If any of you have neglected one portion of it—if you have believed and have not been baptized—God will save you. Still, this promise says not so. “He that believes and is baptized.” It puts the two together and “what God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” What He has ordered let no man disarrange. “He that believes”—that is, he that trusts in Jesus—he that relies upon His blood, His merits, His righteousness—“and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1149 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MY RESTORER  
NO. 1149

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 28, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He restores my soul.”  
Psalm 23:3.**

THIS sweetest of the Psalms sings of many mercies which the happy soul of the Believer receives—and it traces all those benefits to one Source—namely to the Good Shepherd, Himself. “I shall not want.” Why? Because the Lord is my Shepherd. I lie down in delicious repose in green pastures. Why? Because “He makes me.” I march onward making holy progress beside the still waters. Why? Because “He leads me.” In the prospect of death I am calm and free from fear. Why? Because He is with me, His rod and staff they comfort me. The crown is composed of many costly things—gold, pearls and rare gems from the land beyond the river— they are all blended in one diadem—and that diadem is, without a question, joyfully placed upon the head of the Great Shepherd of Israel. The poet laureate of Scripture sings surpassingly in this Psalm, and every line is dedicated to the Beloved of his soul, in whom were all his fresh springs.

My object, while handling a part of one of his verses shall be the same as his own—I also would speak of “things which I have made touching the King,” with the view of extolling His name. I desire to glorify Him from one particular point of view, namely, as The Restorer who, Himself, brings back our wandering spirits when we forsake His ways. I would just now write the first word of the text in capitals, capitals as large as you can find. “HE restores my soul.” He, He alone, He and not another. Unto Him be praise!

I. The text is full of lessons and reminders, and reminds us, in the first place of OUR TRUE POSITION as Believers. Let us dwell upon it in that light. What is the true position of every Believer? It is that of a sheep abiding close to its Shepherd. The text suggests that the sheep has gone astray and the Shepherd brings it back in order to put it into the position which it ought never to have left. The fittest condition of a Believer is in communion with Christ. It ought not to be a privilege occasionally enjoyed—it should be the everyday life of the soul. We are to abide in Jesus, walk with Him and live in Him.

Paul did not say, “For me to specially rejoice is Christ,” or, “For me to feast on holydays is Christ.” No, he said, “For me to live is Christ.” Christ is the ordinary bread of the common meal as well as the fat things full of marrow for the banquet. He is water from the rock as well as wine on the lees well-refined. To us, His name is the watchword of earth as we expect it to be our passport into Heaven. We need fellowship with Jesus, not as

a luxury for red-letter days and Sabbaths, but as the necessary provision of every day of our lives. “Abide in Me” is His Word to us for all seasons, and we ought to strive to realize it, so that always, by night and by day, on the Sunday and equally on the weekdays—in our joys and in our cares— we should abide in Him.

Christ is not merely a harbor of refuge, but a port for all weathers. Do not think, Beloved, that I am setting up too high a standard when I say this. I am so sure I am not that I will repeat what I have said—the proper condition of a child of God at all times is that he should sit with Mary at the Master’s feet, or, with John, should lean his head upon the beloved Redeemer’s bosom. I think this will be clear, first, if we remember our obligations to Jesus. When we were newly converted and first knew our sins to be blotted out, if we had been asked how we should, in the future, act towards our Lord, we should have set up a very high standard.

“Did He die for me, bearing all my sins in His own body? Then I will forever view His death as the grandest miracle of love! And my grateful heart shall have communion with Him by love and praise. Has Jesus really forgiven me? Am I clean through being washed in His most precious blood, clean every whit, and made a child of God, and accepted in the Beloved? Oh, then, I will praise Him and bless Him, and magnify Him, and live to Him all my days! As to ever being weary of Him—impossible! As to ever growing cold and indifferent towards Him—better my heart should cease to beat than that it should ever be.”

Do I not accurately describe what you thought at the first? Have I not truthfully described the ardor of your espousal love? You have not realized your ideal, but that is what you rightly judged to be, and, Beloved, it is what you ought to have been. It is not a higher condition than your solemn obligations to Christ really demand. If an angel had never heard of men before, and should suddenly alight upon this earth and meet with one of our race—and hold talks with him—he would be filled with wonder at what he discovered. Suppose that we should tell him that we fell into sin and were condemned to die, but that the great Maker of Heaven and earth condescended to take upon Himself our Nature, and died in our place? Can you imagine the angel’s astonishment at the condescension of the Son of God?

After his first amazement had passed away, he would say to us, “And do you not love Him infinitely? Are you able, within the limits of your little heart, to hold all the love you feel for such unutterable Grace? How do you live? Do you not feel that you cannot do half enough for Him? You certainly will never fail in obedience to Him! In trust of Him. In zeal for Him— that would be quite impossible!” How deeply would we blush and strive to cover our faces as we confessed to our angelic questioner that for such surprising love we have made but a poor return.

I am quite sure, however, that we should quite agree with the angel as to what was due to our Lord—our conscience and our heart awarding Him the highest affection and the most constant service. Such deeds of love as Jesus has performed for us can never be adequately requited, but at the very least they ought not to be insulted by lukewarm and casual communion! They demand our heart, our soul, our all. With Him who has healed us we desire evermore to remain. With our Ransomer we would live in lifelong discipleship and be His servants, to go no more out forever.

Moreover, our relationships to the Lord Jesus require perpetual communion with Him. Know you not that you are the friends of Christ? And if you are friends, will you not show yourselves friendly? But how can you be friendly if by the space of a week you have no converse with Him in the house, or in the field, or by the way? Is this your kindness to your Friend? You are more than friends—you are His brothers and sisters. “The same is my brother, and sister, and mother,” said He, and can you treat a Brother so indifferently as to walk towards Him as if He were a stranger and a foreigner—and scarcely exchange a token of affection by the months together? Is this brotherly? Did David treat his Jonathan thus?

More than that, in wondrous love Jesus has called Himself your Husband and taken you to be His spouse. Is not that strange love, or the lack of it, which would allow a married pair to walk together week by week without the fellowship or affection? Surely, their marriage bands would be bonds, and their unity would be misery! I can conceive of scarcely any worse torment than conjugal union without affectionate communion! Shall I be the bride of Jesus and my love never be displayed in converse with Him? Shame upon me, a thousand times shame, if I allow a day to pass unblest with thoughts, and words, and deeds of love!

Yet more, the Lord has been pleased to call us members of His body. Now, every member of the body must carry on vital fellowship with the head. It must exercise inevitable, though not always conscious, fellowship. In the spiritual body communion should be consciously enjoyed at all times. Shall the hand become indifferent to the head, or the foot refuse commerce with the brain? If we are in good health, no such schism in the body will ever occur—but with the head all the members will abide in affectionate, unbroken communion. We may suspect paralysis if life ceases to flow through the entire corporate body, and so communion is suspended. It is clear to all who are taught of God that our relationships certainly require of us that we abide in the Lord Jesus.

Moreover, Beloved, this case ought to need no pleading, for if we would have happiness, where is happiness to be found but in walking near to Jesus? I speak what I know, and the common testimony of all the saints is with me—we say that out of Heaven there is no Heaven but nearness to Christ! Fellowship with Him is Paradise without a serpent in it. It is Canaan, itself, without the Canaanite foe. Communion with Jesus is the porch of Glory. It is the Saturday night of the eternal Sunday. It is the dawn of the heavenly day. Communion with Christ, if it is not actually Heaven, is certainly the choicest suburb of the new Jerusalem!

Did not our poet cry—

*“Where can such sweetness be,  
As I have tasted in Your love,  
As I have found in Thee?”*

Now, men do not ordinarily need to be stirred up to that which is their delight! Their spirits fly after their joys as eagles to the spoil. Where their heart moves with pleasure, it draws all their powers after it. And if, indeed, it is so, (and who shall contradict it?), that fellowship with Christ is the richest of all joys, the most intense of all delights, why are we so hard to move? Oh, how sluggish are our hearts, how dull our spirits, that we do not fly after Jesus with rapture of desire and do not labor perpetually to abide in Him!

While this should draw us, another consideration should drive us, namely, that our daily necessities demand that we should live in fellowship with Him. If we are foolish and ignorant, where should we dwell, but with the Teacher? If always weak, to whom should we resort but to the Strong for strength? Let the child abide by its parent, the scholar with the master, the patient by his physician, the poor man with his helper. To whom should we go in our hourly needs but to Him who has, up to now, been our All in All? Israel could not afford to be a single day without the manna, nor can we be satisfied for an hour without the Bread of Life. “Without Me, you can do nothing,” says our Lord, and we have proven His words to be true. Do we need more humiliating evidence? Are we willing to fall into a condition in which we can do nothing else but sin? I hope not. We ought never be satisfied except when, abiding in Jesus, we are clothed with His power and are bringing forth much fruit to His praise.

Remember, yet further, that when out of fellowship with Christ our perils are infinite. When unfaithful to His love we are readily seduced by every temptation. Without His love in our hearts we become victims to other loves which lead us into idolatry, plunge us into hurtful lusts and poison the wells of our joy. We must either be enthralled by the surpassing love of Jesus, or we shall be fascinated by the world’s deceits. One of the two masters must rule us, either the Prince of the power of the air, or the King of Kings! When Christ is with us we are safe, for what wolf can rend a sheep when it is close to the Shepherd’s hand? When we are away from Jesus, we are not only in peril, but are already despoiled—to lose fellowship with Jesus is loss enough, in itself—even if no further calamity occurs.

Ships without a pilot, cities without watchmen, babes without a nurse, are we without Jesus. We cannot do without Him. The less we attempt it the better. Samson without his locks is the sad type of a Believer out of fellowship. How dare we go forth to business on any day without the Presence of the Lord? As well might the warrior go to battle without shield and buckler! Should we not daily pray, “If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up there”? How can we go to our beds till He has kissed us with the kisses of His mouth? May not even the dreams and visions of the night prove our downfall if our souls are not committed to His keeping? For my part, I love to murmur to myself, as I place my head on my pillow, those charming lines—

*“Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,  
I lay me down to rest,  
As in the embraces of my God,  
Or on my Savior’s breast.”*

The benefits of fellowship with Christ should constrain us to abide in it. If any man would grow in Grace. If he would be filled with the Spirit. If he would know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. Especially if he would be made like to Him in all things who is the Head, he must abide in Christ. The whole compass of a Christian’s permissible ambition is to be realized in fellowship with Jesus and nowhere else. All that I ought to be, or can desire to be—when I am in a right state—I can be in my Lord, by walking near to Him. Nothing good can any Believer obtain by forsaking his Master. Following Christ afar off is evil, only evil! And that continually abiding in Him is peace, joy, holiness, Heaven!

Therefore, Beloved, I say again, let us strive after that which ought to be the habitual position of every Christian, namely, abiding in Christ— this is for babes in Grace as well as men in Christ Jesus, for the obscure as well as the famous.

II. Our text, in the second place, reminds us of OUR FREQUENT SIN. “He restores my soul”—He often does it. He is doing it now. Now, the Lord would not do what is unnecessary and, therefore, this shows me that I often wander from Him, or else I would not need to be brought back. Beloved, I grieve to say that with man’s professors of godliness, suspended communion is the chronic state of things. I must confess my inability to comprehend the Christian life of many who are called Christians. It is not for us to judge their real condition before God, nor will we attempt to do so, but we cannot help observing the inconsistency of their acts.

They have believed in Christ, let us hope. Let us hope, also, that their faith produces enough good works to prove itself to be a living faith. But, for all that, their religion is cold, joyless, passionless. There are thousands of Christian people whose religion seems to lie entirely in attending religions services on Sunday, and occasionally, perhaps, coming out on a weekday to a lecture. They observe private devotions of a very stereotyped order and keep a Bible somewhere or other, and this is about it. To them prayer is a formality, praise is forgotten, the reading of the Bible is a drudgery, meditation a mere memory and their whole Christianity more like a mummy than a thing of life. With them the complaint that they are out of communion with Jesus is superseded by the question, “Were they ever in it?”

I am afraid we have in this Church and in all Churches, scores and hundreds of members whose highest emotions in reference to love to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ reaches no higher than the inquiry—

*“Do I love the Lord or not?  
Am I His, or am I not?”*

Conscious enjoyment of the love of Jesus and familiar communion with Him they know nothing of, and indeed, they look upon such things as the luxuries of a high class of saints, very pleasant to read of in biographies, but not matters of daily possession. They heartily admire the good people who can attain to such eminent positions, but to dwell there, themselves, has never occurred to them as at all possible. Beloved, this is a sad state of things! It is a condition of life in which I tremble for you, because you are starved in the midst of plenty, you are willfully pinching yourselves with penury while infinite wealth is all around you.

You live as hired servants and not as sons! You get the duty of religion without the enjoyment of religion. You wear its yoke but do not feed in its pasture. You seem to me to forego all the cream of our holy faith and to partake of nothing but its skimmed milk. You leave the sunny plains of communion for the frozen regions of negligent living and therefore you shiver with fear while others exult with gladness. You have chosen your position in the outer courts of the temple. You never enter into the holy of holies. You do not pass within the veil to behold the Glory of the Lord. You are sailing to Heaven, but you are stowed away in the hold in the dark.

You appear to me in your religion to live like the beggars who come round to our back doors for the bones and the stale crusts. And therefore I am not very much surprised when I hear that some of you feel a craving for amusements and say that you are very dull, and need lively company and gaiety to make life bearable. If my child were to say that he must go continually to the confectioner’s or to the eating-house, I should say to myself, “Surely the food on my table is sufficient for him.” But if upon inquiry I found that he did not eat at my table except occasionally, and that he always made choice of the barest bones and driest crusts, I should be at no loss to comprehend why he was so frequently seen at other places of supply. If you are not living upon Jesus, and rejoicing in the measureless bliss which He is capable of bestowing upon you, I do not marvel if you go off to the world for your sweetmeats and feel a leaning towards the leeks and the garlic and the onions of Egypt!

Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are, indeed, His people, may the Holy Spirit save you from the dull religion in which you live and bring you into that condition in which you shall see your Lord, abide in Him, and rejoice in Him! A miner who lives the most of his days underground is not doing his country justice when he speaks of it as dourly, close, and suffocating. It is so down below, but it is not so up above! Religion wears but a grim aspect to those who know nothing of its secret joys, its sacred banquets, its ecstasies, and its calm satisfactions.

There is a bleak side and a sunny side to every hill. Those who are careless in their fellowship will know the worst side of things. The brighteyed dweller in the sunny south is a very different man from the Eskimo who drive their dogs among the ice fields and hide away through long months of winter in which the sun never sends forth a glimmer to cheer the earth. Who cares to be one of the Eskimos of Christianity, or the Laps and Fins of the Church? Yet, alas, these abound on all sides! We have to confess that others of us, in whom this departure from Christ is not chronic, are, nevertheless, subject to acute attacks of declension—and there are seasons when it is, indeed, well for us that He restores our souls.

How soon are we turned out of the way! How little a thing may mar our joyful fellowship with Christ! Have you been in worldly company in the evening? Did you marvel that you could not enjoy communion at evening prayer? Have you become fond of your possessions, or have you been eager to increase them? Then your idols have grieved your Lord. Have you been unreconciled to your losses and fretted against God for His dark Providences? “If you walk contrary to Me,” He says, “I will walk contrary to you.” When our proud spirits chafe and fret against our heavenly Father, we cannot expect smiles and caresses from Him. We may easily lose fellowship with Christ by pride and self-esteem—if He indulges us with happy hours of sacred joy, we are very apt to think that we are somebody—and straightway we hold our heads very high. And whenever that happens we are very likely to fall into the mire and be there until our own garments abhor us and we cry for help like the sinners we are.

Christ delights to meet us on terms of Grace. He is to be fullness and we emptiness! He the mighty Helper and we the fainting sinner. He the Savior and we the lost ones. While we say that we are rich and increased in goods, He knows that we are false and He leaves us. But when we see that He has the gold and the white raiment, and we the nakedness and the beggary, then are we arrived at terms which befit both Him and us. Vain is it to boast, for we have no beauty! His are the eyes which are as a flame of fire. His the countenance goodly as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His the crown of light and the mantle of glory.

Unto Him must all honor be ascribed. Those who honor Him, He will honor. Humility sits at Jesus’ feet and that is the chosen place of loving fellowship. We may lose the Presence of Christ by forgetfulness of duty, or of His Truth. We may, on the other hand, lose it by evil thoughts and absorption in fleeting cares. We may lose the company of Christ by inconsistent actions or by idle conversations. “Oh,” some of you say, “is that so? Will Jesus be gone from us so soon?” It is even so. Those who know Him best have found out that He is like His Father and there is a trait in His Father’s Character which is very conspicuous in the Son. It is written, “The Lord your God is a jealous God,” and Jesus is a jealous Lover. He will not cast away His people—He is faithful to the worst of them—but if we do not walk with Him in holiness He will withdraw Himself from us for a while.

Can two walk together unless they are agreed? If we grieve Him He will make us grieve. Cold, unloving, irreverent walking will soon cause the beams of the Sun of Righteousness to glance no more upon us. Blessed be the name of our Beloved, He comes back before long, and He says, “For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercy will I gather you.” But even the small moments of His forsaking are all too long! A little of His absence is painful for a true spirit to bear. But I leave this mournful point for something more consoling.

III. The text reminds us, also, of OUR LORD’S FAITHFUL LOVE. “He restores my soul.” This is not what He might have done, or would have done had He been changeable as we are. There are some who teach that Jesus leaves His roaming sheep to perish. As a punishment for their wanderings He gives them up to the wolf. I hope that very few believe that doctrine now—it is so dishonoring to the Good Shepherd that I hope all God’s people will give it up once and for all. Yet such was the belief of many at one time.

Ah, I do not wonder that some believed it, for I have often been hard pressed with the fear that it would turn out to be so in my own case. But I am here this morning to say concerning my Lord, “He restores my soul.” He has not cast me off, or left me to myself, or abandoned me to my own devices—but in love to my soul He has plucked my feet out of the net, drawn me up from the horrible pit and set my feet upon the Rock of His immutable love. To leave His sheep to perish is not like our Savior. The heart refuses credence to such an idea, it so unlike He. My witness is that, “He restores my soul.” He has done this so often that He may well be described as always doing it.

The Psalmist puts it in the present tense, as if the Lord were in the habit of doing so, and were even at this moment in the act of restoring his soul. Truly I must confess that I wander and He restores me. Child of God, as numerous as your sins have been, so numerous have His restorations been! After a hundred times erring, you might have provoked Him to say—“He is given unto his idols, let him alone; My Spirit shall no longer strive with him.” But no, He turns His hands again upon you and once more leads you in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

The mother forgets not her suckling, though it is often fretful and peevish. She still has compassion upon the son of her womb—and even thus it is with Jesus. We are too deeply engraved on the palms of His hands to be, at last, left to die. We have cost Him too dearly for Him to relinquish us. Having restored our soul a hundred times, He still restores it. It is the way of Him—it is the habit of His love. The text lovingly insinuates that He is ready to restore us now. He is at His old work again. Even now, “He restores my soul.”

Where are you, dear Brother? Dear Sister? Have you grown very dull and cold of late? Jesus is waiting to make your heart burn within you. Do you feel half-dead spiritually? Your Lord and Master is even now ready to quicken you by His Word and to restore unto you the joy of His salvation! If you ask me why the Lord is thus quick to restore His people, I can find no answer in them or their merits, but a little further on the Psalmist gives you the reason why Christ thus acts in faithfulness and tenderness. “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” He would not restore us for our sakes. There is nothing in us which could be pointed out to the eye of Justice as a claim for restoration, though much might be remembered which, on the footing of the Law, would ensure our ruin!

Here is our safety. The Lord Jesus has willed to save us, and He stands to His purpose and decree. He has put forward His own veracity and immutability as guarantees of the Covenant! His own honor would be in jeopardy should one of His people be lost. Therefore for His own name’s sake He restores the wanderer, lest His enemies should say, “God has forsaken His people,” and lest the hosts of Hell should boast, saying, “The Lord began to save them, but He was not able to finish the work.” “For His name’s sake.” Deep and blessed reason! Immutable, immovable foundation of comfort! For His name’s sake He restores our souls when we wander from His way.

Strange are the means He uses. Sometimes it is a most heavy rod. At other times a sweetly fascinating love call. Singular are the modes of dealing with His people. He will break them in pieces and crush them beneath His feet, apparently in hot displeasure, but all with the view of making them sick of sin and eager after Himself. He will tear them as a lion tears his prey, and this not to destroy, but to save them. Is it not written, “I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal”? Often by dispensations of terror He leads us into ways of Grace and frequently that which appears to be our utter destruction ends in our complete restoration, according to His Grace. Let the text stand as a type and testimony of His immutable love. “He restores my soul.”

IV. During the short time which remains for me to discourse to you, I want to throw my whole strength into the last consideration. Our text, emphasized as I have emphasized it, reminds us of HIS SUPREME POWER. “HE restores my soul.” HE, HE, HE alone restores my soul! From first to last my revivals and refreshing come from Him. He Himself first made my soul to live—yes, He was Life itself to me. You had no life, Beloved, till Jesus passed by and saw you lying dead in sin and said to you, “Live.” You were like Lazarus in the tomb. You were beginning to stink with corruption and sin, and His voice, when it said, “Lazarus, come forth,” was life to you.

You did not help the Savior in your quickening—how could you? You exercised no concurrent action—He took the first step and quickened you when you were dead in sin. He began to save you because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. You owe your regeneration entirely to Him and it is not surprising that your revival should come from the same source. Surely He who regenerated can restore! He who created can renew! Restoration is not a more difficult work—no, it is but a secondary work compared with the new creating of the soul. The Lord, even Jesus Christ, who did at the first give you life, can revive you again—and He can do it by Himself— being to your soul her medicine as well as her physician.

All the evils under which a Christian smarts arise from the absence of

Jesus, or else obtain their power to injure from the fact of the Lord’s being away. There are corruptions which dwell always in us, but these do not dare to show their faces when Jesus reigns within in revealed Glory. The traitors lurk in their holes when the King is in the city—they will not venture forth till they hear that He is offended and is gone. While the flag flies on the castle to mark that my lord is at home, His enemies are on their best behavior, for they have a dread of His sword. When our fellowship with Jesus is active, sin lies dormant, or is so thoroughly subdued that it makes but a struggling gasp for life.

So, then, if at this time I have become proud, or petulant, or idle, or cannot pray, or will not submit to the Divine will, or have fallen into spiritual sickness—it is quite certain that all the mischief is occasioned by the loss of my Lord’s company—and it is clear that His coming back to me will restore my soul. If His absence has developed all this evil, then His Presence can surely put it away. Should it happen that the temptation is outward, still no outward temptation has any force when Christ is present. Let all the world’s charms attempt to seduce us, they are horrible distortions when contrasted with the loveliness of Jesus. Only let us see His face and all earthly witcheries have lost their enchantment.

Suppose that we were tempted to skepticism? Christ is the antidote for that venom. No man doubts when Christ is present with him. At the sight of Him even Thomas cries, “My Lord and my God.” Can we despond while He consoles? Can the children of the bride chamber mourn while the Bridegroom is with them? On the other hand, pride cannot live where Jesus is seen. “When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead,” said the beloved Apostle. His Presence is the death of every sin, the life of every Divine Grace. Therefore it is that the text says, “He restores my soul.”

The hunger, famine, and disease of war need but one cure, and that is peace. The woes of the Believer’s soul need but one remedy, and that lies in the words, “Abide in Me.” The Presence of Christ has everything in it that the soul can possibly need. I see the green leaves of a plant most dear to all who love the woods in spring. It is now nestling under a hedge upon a shelving bank, just alone a trickling stream. I ask it why it does not bloom and it whispers to me that it will bloom by-and-by. “But, sweet primrose, why not put forth your lovely flower at once and gladden us with your beauty?” She answers, “I am waiting for him.”

For whom do you tarry, you herald of spring?—  
*“All love on you to rest their weary eyes,  
Rending therein a history of dearest ties.”*

She meekly answers, “I am waiting for my lord, the sun.” Do you not need other friends and helpers? “No,” she says, “the coming of my lord will be enough, and when he puts forth his strength I shall put on my beauty.” But will you not need soft, pearly drops of dew to glisten on the leaves? Are not your blossoms most frail to gaze upon when all around keeps time and tune therewith, when the violet and harebell are in your company, when the buds are swelling and “the green-winged linnet sings”? To which she replies, “He will bring them, he will bring them all.” But are you not afraid of the killing frosts and the dreary snowstorms? “He will chase them all away,” says the little plant. “I shall be safe enough when he brings on the spring.”

Believer, you are that plant and Jesus is your Sun! He will bring you healing beneath His wings and joy in the light of His Countenance. He restores our entire manhood—every regenerated faculty grows strong when He is near. Every Grace drinks in new life from communion with Christ! Faith triumphs, love burns, hope prophesies, patience becomes strong for endurance and courage is bold for conflict. Christ is such fare that all the Graces can feed on Him, and all grow strong upon the sacred viands. The best of all is that He is a restoration which is available now, available at once. I felt, the other day, heavy at heart, dull, dead. I thought of myself as though I were a branch of a tree cut off and so I meditated thus with myself—“If I am a branch of the vine, and have been removed from my stem, my only hope is to get back into the place from where I came and be grafted in again, and begin to suck the sap again, and feel the life flowing through me,”

Then was it sweet to remember that there is no possible state into which a Believer could fall, even if it were the most desperate that could be conceived, but what Christ can restore him perfectly and at once! Then for my own comfort and renewal I began with my Lord thus—I looked at Him upon the Cross. I stood before Him as a sinner and wondered at Him that He should die for sinners. And I trusted Him and I said to Him, “Lord, You know I trust You. I have no hope but in You and I cling to You as a limpet clings to the rock. With all my heart and soul I cling.” I began to feel the sap flow from the stem into my branch at once as soon as I had got into contact with my Lord! By a simple faith, I felt that virtue went out of Him to heal my soul.

Once having established the flow of the sap, it flowed more, and more, and more, for as I thought about my salvation through Him, being myself guilty, and He my Righteousness, I began to love Him and my soul began to glow with a passion towards Him. And I wanted to be telling others what a dear, good Savior He was, and in a few moments after I had bemoaned myself as dead to Him and a castaway, I felt as much warmth of love to Him as ever I had done in all my life, and could say in the language of the spouse, “Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib”!

Now, I believe that this is the natural process to go through for the restoring of your soul. Some of you professors may be feeling, “I do not know how it is, but I am not what I ought to be, I am out of gear with Christ. I wish to act into a better state of heart, to be more pleasing to God them I am, by walking nearer to Him.” If such is your state, mind what you do. Try what I have described, or, unless you are wide awake, there will come to you Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, and tell you there are other ways of getting your souls restored.

First, he says, you should repent bitterly of all this wandering of heart. That is correct enough, but who is to give you this repentance? And then, says he, you must be more attentive to the outward means of Grace, you must set aside longer times for prayer and be more diligent in searching the Scriptures privately. That also is all correct. Whatever he bids you, that observe and do, as Christ said of the Pharisees, but that is not the way to obtain restoration of soul! The way to Heaven is never round by Sinai! Always be afraid of directors who lead you in that direction. All our healing lies in Christ. Christ is the Physician, and Christ is the Medicine, too.

The way to get your soul restored is not to try to restore it yourself, nor to undergo any processes by which it may work itself right. No, but go straight away to Christ and lay hold on Him, just as you are, whatever your condition may be. Coming into contact with Him, you shall soon have to sing in the words of the text, “He restores my soul.” Let others talk of their sacraments, “He restores my soul.” Let men boast and glory of special ways of raising their souls to Heaven, “He restores my soul.” Let some rejoice because their souls need no restoring, but are always strong, I cannot say that, but I can say, “He restores my soul.”

I hope this morning I shall have many Beloved Brothers and Sisters of like mind, who will go out of this house saying not only, “I knew He could restore my soul,” but, “He restores my soul. I was very cold when I came in here, as cold as the weather itself, but Jesus has thawed the ice of my heart.” Perhaps you have to confess that you were in a very bad state of mind—ugly-tempered—and I do not know what besides. Perhaps you were worried out of anything like peace and rest. Now, then, is the time to try the great Restorer. Before you leave your seat, labor to get into contact with Christ by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Do, I pray, return to Him as at the first. O Branch, come back to the Stem! Let the sap flow again. “But I am not in a fit condition,” you say. What? Have you gone back to that old Sinai idea of fitness? Have you gone back to that legal demand? Come as you are! Come as you are to Jesus. I mean you saints. Are you going to play the fool as sinners do? Sinners say they are to get ready for Christ, and fools they are for saying it. Are you about to say the same? You will be worse fools still! Come just now. Whatever you have been, let the connection between you and Christ be consciously felt and quickened by an immediate application to Him by simple faith, and you shall yet say, as you rise into more than your former vigor, “He restores my soul.”

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END OF VOLUME 19 Sermon #1595 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH  
NO. 1595

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil,  
for You are with me; Your rod  
and Your staff, they  
comfort me.”  
Psalm 23:4.**

Do you know I had laid this text by? I meant that this choice promise should be kept in store and stock till I came near the Jordan and I hoped that then, in my last hours, I might be privileged to enjoy its sweetness and sing with joyful lips—

*“Yea, though I walk through death’s dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill;  
For You are with me, and Your rod  
And staff me comfort still.”*

The other day I found that I needed to eat this heavenly loaf at once and I did so. Fathers tell their children, “You cannot have your cake and eat it, too,” but this rule does not hold good of the consolations of God. You can enjoy a promise and still have it. Yes, and all the more because your faith has fed upon its fatness. I got honey out of this verse some days ago when a tempest howled around me, but its sweetness is still there. I shall enjoy it, I doubt not, as I come near death’s gate, but I have had it already sealed to my own soul with richness and fullness of comfort by the blessed Spirit of our God. Would to God that every Believer who is burdened might find it as precious to his heart as I have found it to mine.

This verse is, no doubt, very applicable to the experience of when he comes to die but, for certain, that is not its only intent. It has an inexpressibly delightful application to the dying, but it is for the living, too! And at this time if, through any peculiar trials, your heart is cast down within you and you are walking through the death-shade, I pray you to repeat the words of the text and may the Lord help you to feel that they are true—“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” The words are not in the future tense and, therefore, are not reserved for a distant moment. Do not postpone to the future that which you so greatly need in the present.

Though I walk, even at this hour, through the dark valley, You, O Lord, are with me! Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. David was not dying—the Psalm is fall of happy, peaceful life. He is lying down in green pastures and following his Lord by still waters. And if a cloud has descended upon him and he feels himself like one threatened with death, he nevertheless expects goodness and mercy to follow him through all his days. The song is not to lie upon the shelf till our last day, but is to be sung upon our stringed instruments all the days of our lives! Therefore let us sing it at this hallowed hour in the courts of the Lord’s House and in the midst of them that love Him.

I. I call your attention, first, to THE PASS AND ITS TERRORS—“the valley of the shadow of death.” Get the idea of a narrow ravine, something like the Gorge of Gondo or some other stern pass upon the higher Alps where the rocks seem piled to Heaven and the sunlight is seen above as through a narrow rift. Troubles are sometimes heaped on one another, pile on pile, and the road is a dreary pass through which the pilgrim, on his journey to Heaven, has to wend his way. Set before your mind’s eye a valley shut in with stupendous rocks that seem to meet overhead, a narrowing pass, dark as midnight itself. Through this valley, or rocky ravine, the heavenly footman has to follow the path appointed for him in the eternal purpose of the Infinite mind. Through such a dreary rift many a child of God is making his way at this moment—and to him I speak.

Our first observation about it is that it is exceedingly gloomy. This is its chief characteristic. It is the valley of the shadow—the shadow of death. Death is terrible and the very shadow of it is cold and chill and freezes to the marrow. I have stood under rocks which have not merely cooled me, but have cast a horribly damp chill as though the embrace of death had been about me and its cold within me. One hastens to escape from such a deadly shade which has tended to strike you with fever. And such, it seems to me, is the shade cast by the wings of death when the man feels that he is under such trouble that he cannot live and would not even wish to do so if he could. The joy of life has been like the sun under an eclipse and in the chill, dark, damp shade of a terrible sorrow the man has cowered down and beneath the icy touch of doubt has shivered, has felt fevered and frightened and has been as one out of his mind.

I speak to some young hearts here who, I hope, know nothing about this gloom. Do not wish to know it! Keep bright while you can. Sing while you may. Be larks and mount aloft and sing as you mount! But there are some of God’s people who are not much in the lark line—they are a great deal more like owls. They sit alone and keep silent. Or if they do open their mouths, it is to give forth a discontented hoot. Companions of dragons and very suitable companions, too, such mournful ones need all the gentle sympathy we can afford them. Even those who are bright and cheerful do, many of them, occasionally pass through the dreary glen where everything is doleful and their spirits sink below zero.

I know what wise Brethren say, “You should not give way to feelings of depression.” Quite right—we should no more. But we do. And perhaps when your brain is as weary as ours, you will not bear yourselves more bravely than we do. “But desponding people are very much to be blamed.” I know they are, but they are also very much to be pitied and, perhaps, if those who blame quite so furiously could once know what depression is, they would think it cruel to scatter blame where comfort is needed. There are experiences of the children of God which are full of spiritual darkness and I am almost persuaded that those of God’s servants who have been most highly favored have, nevertheless, suffered more times of darkness than others.

The Covenant is never known to Abraham so well as when a horror of great darkness comes over him and then he sees the shining lamp moving between the pieces of the sacrifice. A greater than Abraham was early led of the Spirit into the wilderness and yet, before He closed His life, He was sorrowful and very heavy in the Garden. In this heaviness, for which there is a necessity, Believers have a black foil which sets out the brightness of eternal love and faithfulness. Blessed be God for mountains of joy and valleys of peace and gardens of delight! But there is a Valley of Death-Shade and most of us have traversed its tremendous glooms.

Moreover, there are parts of human life which are dangerous as well as gloomy. In journeying through the passes of the East, an escort is usually needed, for robbers lurk among the rocks and shoot down upon the traveler, or block up his way with sword and spear. The name of the Khyber Pass is still terrible in our memories and there are Khybers in most men’s lives. There are points in human history that are specially dangerous. Oh, you that are beginners, I do not wish to frighten you! I do not want to tell you that the ways of wisdom are terrible, for they are not! No, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.” But, for all that, there are enemies on the road to Heaven and there are, “Cut-throat Lanes” where, when the enemy finds your spirits cast down, he pounces upon you unawares with temptation—and before you know it you may be wounded and sorely grieved.

There are spots in the Valley of Death-Shade where every bush conceals an adversary; where temptations spring out of the very ground like the fiery serpents from among the desert sand; where the soul is among lions, even among them that are set on the fire of Hell! If you have not yet come to that part of your pilgrimage, I am glad of it and I hope that you may be spared it, in answer to that needful prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.” But if you are called to walk through this dangerous ravine, what will you do? Why, say this—“Yea, though I walk through that dangerous pass of which I have heard, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Remember that a Christian man is never so much in danger from abundance of temptation as from the carnal security of his own heart. We are often most in jeopardy when we are not tempted—and the worst devil in the world may be no devil at all. “Deliver me,” said a man of great experience, “from a sleeping devil, for if he roars at me, he keeps me awake. But when he leaves me alone, then my heart presumes that all is safe and I am betrayed.” You young people, or old people, too, who are placed, in the course of Providence, in positions of great trial and temptation need not wish for an easier pathway, for it may be that you are safer now, being on your guard, than those who are not fiercely tried, but sit at ease and are in great peril from sloth and spiritual indifference. Better consume with fire than perish of dry rot!

The cold mountains of trial are far safer than the sultry plains of pleasure. I am not, therefore, alarmed at manifest danger—neither would I have you greatly dismayed because there is a gloomy gorge between you and Heaven. One of the chief reasons of the gloom is the fact that this terrible pass is shrouded in mystery. You do not know what the sorrow is. The shadow—the shadow of death—what does it mean? You cannot discern the form which broods over you. You cannot grasp the foe. It is of no use drawing a sword against a shadow! Bunyan represents the pilgrim as putting up his sword when he came into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He had fought Apollyon with it, but when he came into the midnight of that horrible valley, it was of no use to him. Everything was so veiled, magnified and blackened in the dark.

Hob-goblin as he called them, hovered around—strange shapes and singular forms of doubts which he could not meet with reasoning or overcome with argument. A man can pluck up courage against a thing he knows, but an evil which he does not know unmans him! He does not know what the trial is and yet a strange, joy-killing feeling is upon him. He cannot see the extent of his loss in business, but he fears that his all will go—he does not know the end of his child’s illness, but death appears to be threatening. All is suspense and surmise and the evil of evils is uncertainty.

That which frightened Belshazzar when the handwriting was on the wall was, no doubt, that he could see the hand, but he could not see the arm and the body to which the hand belonged. It seemed so singular to see the mystic handwriting in letters of lightning and no more! So, sometimes, it seems to us as if we could not make out our condition—could not understand God’s dealings with us. We have seemed to be at crosspurposes with Providence. We have come to a place where two seas meet and we cannot understand the current. Our temptation has been comparable to a cyclone and we do not know which way the hurricane is sweeping—we are in the power of a whirlwind, jerked to and fro.

Such things happen to God’s people now and then. And what are they to do when they get into these perplexities, these mysterious troubles that they cannot at all describe? They must do—and God help them to do—as this blessed man did, who in the peace and confidence of faith went on his way singing—Yea, though I walk through the valley shaded by the mysterious wings of death and though I know nothing of my way and cannot understand it, yet will I fear no evil, for You are with me. You know the way that I take. There are no mysteries with my God. You have the thread of this labyrinth and You will surely lead me through. Why, therefore, should I fear? Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me!

Gloom, danger, mystery—these three all vanish when faith lights up her heavenly lamp, trimmed with the golden oil of the promise. Nor is this all. The idea of solitude is in the text. The path is lonely and the pilgrim sings, “Yea, though I walk”—as if he walked alone, no one sharing his shadowed pathway! Solitude is a very great trial to some spirits and some of us know a great deal of what it means, for we dwell alone, in a spiritual sense. But you will say, “Do you not mingle with crowds?” Yes, and there is no solitude like it. When your office and position set you as on a mountain all alone, you will know what I mean. For the sheep, there are many companions, but for the shepherd few.

Those who watch for souls come into positions in which they are divided from all human help. Nobody knows your cares or can guess the burden of your soul. And those who try to sympathize with you fail in the generous attempt. Some of you, perhaps, are in a position in which you complain, “Nobody was ever tried as I am. I feel as if God had set me as a mark for His arrows.” Or possibly you murmur, “There may be many more afflicted than I, but none in my peculiar way. I suffer a singularity of trial.” Just so and that is an essential part of the bitterness of your cup— that you should lament that you are alone. But will you not say, with your Divine Master, “You shall leave me alone and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me”?

Now is the time for faith. When you trust God and a friend, there is a question whether it is God you trust or the friend. But when the friend has left you and only God is near, no question remains. If you and I are walking together and a dog follows us, who knows which is the dog’s master? But when you go off to the left and I turn to the right, all men will see which one of us owns the dog by seeing which he follows! If you can trust God alone, then you are really trusting Him! And if, when creature streams run dry, you can stoop down to the Creator’s overflowing well and drink there, then you are a Believer and there is no mistake about it.

It is profitable to be driven into loneliness that we may prove whether we are solely trusting in God or not. It is a bad thing to be standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the land. An angel stood in that fashion and it suits angels—but it is not a safe posture for such burdened beings as men and women! We must get both feet on the Rock of Ages, or the foot which stands upon the sea of changeful self will be our downfall. My Soul, wait only upon God! When Faith’s only foundation is the power and faithfulness of the Lord, she learns to glory in the absence of all visible help and sings with joyful heart—“Yea, though I walk through death’s dark valley, unattended by human companion, I will fear no evil, for my God is near!”

Let me remark, further, that though this valley is thus gloomy, dangerous, mysterious and solitary, yet it is often traversed. Many more go by this road than some people dream. Among those who wear a cheerful countenance in public there are many who are well acquainted with this dreary valley—they have passed through it often—and may be in it now. When I wear the sackcloth of sorrow, I try to bind it about my loins under my outer garments and not where all shall see it, for has not the Master said, “You, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast”? Why should we cast others down? There is enough sorrow in the world without our spreading the infection by publishing our troubles.

Storybooks are sent me to review and when I perceive that they contain harrowing tales of poverty, I make short work of them. I see quite enough of sorrow in real life—I do not need fiction to fret my heart. If men and women must write works of fiction, they might as well write cheerfully and not break people’s hearts over mere fabrications. If I must weep, let it be over an actual grief and not over a painted affliction. But so it is—some like to tell the story of their sorrows and care little what may be the influence upon others—they might have a little more consideration for their fellow man. If my own heart is bleeding, why should I wound others? Sometimes it is brave to be speechless, even as the singer puts it—

*“Bear and forbear, and silent be.  
Tell no man your misery.”*

It is surely true that a great number of God’s best servants have trod the deeps of the Valley of the Shadow and this ought to comfort some of you. The footsteps of the holy are in the Valley of Weeping. Saints have marched through the Via Dolorosa—do you not see their footprints? Above all others, mark one footstep! Do you not see it? Stoop down and fix your gaze upon it! Go on your knees and view it! If you watch it well, you will observe the print of a nail. As surely as this Word of God is true, your Lord has felt the chill of the death-shade. There is no gloom of spirit, apart from the sin of it, into which Jesus has not fallen! There is no trouble of soul, or turmoil of heart which is free from sin, which the Lord has not known. He says, “Reproach has broken My heart and I am full of heaviness.”

The footprint of the Lord of Life is set in the rock forever, even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death! Shall we not cheerfully advance to the Cross and death of Jerusalem when Jesus goes before us? I shall close my remarks upon this Via Mala of terrors by showing that dark and gloomy as it is, it is not an unhallowed pathway. No sin is necessarily connected with sorrow of heart, for Jesus Christ our Lord once said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.” There was no sin in Him and, consequently, none in His deep depression! We have never known a joy or a sorrow altogether untainted with evil, but in grief, itself, there is no necessary cause of sin. A man may be as happy as all the birds in the air and there may be no sin in his happiness. And a man may be exceedingly heavy and yet there may be no sin in the heaviness. I do not say that there is not sin in all our feelings, but still, the feelings in themselves need not be sinful.

I would, therefore, try to cheer any Brothers and Sisters who are sad, for their sadness is not necessarily blameworthy. If their downcast spirit arises from unbelief, let them flog themselves and cry to God to be delivered from it. But if the soul is sighing, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,” its being slain is not a fault. If the man cries, “My God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember You,” his soul’s being cast down within him is no sin. “If need be,” says the Apostle, “you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” Not only, “If need be you are in the temptations,” but, “you are in heaviness through them.” There is a necessity for the heartbreak, for it is in the heaviness of the spirit that the essence of the trial is found.

Does not Solomon say, “The blueness of a wound cleans away evil”? If the blow is not such as to leave its bruise, there has been no chastening that will do us good. Heaviness of spirit is not, therefore, on every occasion, a matter for which we need condemn ourselves though it will be well, always, to turn a severe side to one’s self. However we may censure ourselves for heart sorrow, we must be careful not to condemn others—for the way of sorrow is not the way of sin, but a hallowed road sanctified by the praying of myriads of pilgrims now with God—pilgrims who, passing through the valley of Baca made it a well, the rain also filled the pools. Of such it is written, “they go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appears before God.”

Thus much upon the dark and dangerous Valley of the Shadow. II. Our second head, upon which we shall speak for a little while, is THE PILGRIM AND HIS PROGRESS. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” The pilgrim, you observe, first, is calm in the prospect of his dreary passage. I do not think that it is one-half so hard to bear a trouble as it is to think of it beforehand. The poet well said that many of us—  
*“Feel a thousand deaths in fearing one.”*  
The outriders of trouble are often of a fiercer countenance than the trouble itself. We suffer more in the dread of something than in the endurance of the stroke. Here we have a man of faith who is calm in expectancy of trouble—“I shall walk,” says he, “through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I expect to do so, but I will fear no evil.”  
Have you, my Friend, a trouble evidently drawing near to you? Are there tokens of a storm all around you? Then look bravely at the future! Let not your heart fail you while waiting for the thunder and the hurricane. David said, “Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.” Encamped enemies generally trouble us more than actually contending foes. When once the enemy raises the war cry and comes on, we are awakened to valor and meet him, foot to foot. But while he tarries and holds us in suspense, our heart is apt to eat into itself with perplexity.  
We can see that our deadly foe is in his camp, but we do not know whether he will attack us at the middle watch of the night, or at the dawn of the day. We do not know when his onslaught will be—this suspense distresses the soul and, therefore, the glory of a faith that can say— “Though I know that I shall soon suffer, yet in the prospect of it I am at rest. I fear no evil.” Beloved, pray to be calm in the prospect of trial—it is half the battle! Is it not written of the Believer, “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord”? Furthermore, the pilgrim is steady in his progress. “Yea, though I walk through the valley,” he says. He does not run in haste. He walks quietly along.  
We are generally in a hurry to get our trouble over, like those who say, “If medicine must be taken, let it be taken as soon as possible.” There is a season for all things. Let us wait till the trouble comes from the hand of the Lord, for He will time it to the second. “There! I must know the worst of it,” cries one. “I feel in such a horrible state of suspense that I must end it one way or another.” But, my dear Friend, faith is not in such a frightful bustle—“He that believes shall not make haste.” Faith is quick when it has to serve God, but it is patient when it has to wait for Him.  
There is no hurry about the Psalmist, “Yea, though, I walk” he says— quietly, calmly, steadily. The pace of the experienced man of God is a walk. Young people fly—“they shall mount up with wings as eagles.” Growing men “run and are not weary.” But when a man of God becomes a father in the Church and is endowed with abounding strength, he walks and does not faint. Walking is the regulation pace for veteran soldiers of Christ—all the rest is for the raw recruits! So David, in effect, declares—I shall walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death as quietly as I walk my garden in the evening, or go down the street about my business. My affliction does not unfit me for duty. I am not flurried and worried about it. May God give you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, this calm faith. I pray that He may give it to me, for I greatly need it. I have often confessed my need of it and confessed it with shame and confusion of face, for I serve a blessed Master and I ought never to fear, nor allow pain of body to produce trembling of heart. O sacred Comforter, shed abroad in my heart the peace of God!  
The next point about the pilgrim’s progress is that he is secure in his expectancy. “Yea, though I walk through the valley.” There is a bright side to that word, “through.” He expects to come out of the dreary pass to a brighter country! Just as the train of his life enters into the dark tunnel of tribulation, he says within himself, “I shall come out on the other side. It may be very dark and I may go through the very bowels of the earth, but I am bound to come out on the other side.” So is it with every child of God. If his way to Heaven should lie over the bottom of the sea, hard by the roots of the mountains where the earth, with her bars, is about him, he will traverse the road in perfect safety. Jonah’s road to Heaven lay that way and a special conveyance was started for him—“The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.”  
I do not suppose there was ever any other fish of the sort. Naturalists cannot find such a whale, they say, nor need they look for it, for the Scripture says, “The Lord prepared a fish.” He knew how to make it to hold Jonah and the fish accommodated its passenger and brought him right to shore. Providence makes special preparation for every tried saint. If you are God’s servant and are called to a very peculiar trial, some singular Providence, the like of which you have never read of, shall certainly happen to you to illustrate in your case the Divine goodness and faithfulness! Oh, if we had more faith! Oh, if we had more faith, life would be happy, trials would be light! Brethren, is it not an easy thing to walk through a shadow? If you get up in the morning and saunter down the field and the spiders have spun their cobwebs across the path in a thousand places, you brush them all away—and yet there is more strength in a cobweb than in a shadow!  
The Psalmist speaks without fear, for he regards his expected trials as walking through a shadow. Trials and troubles, if we have but faith, are mere shadows that cannot hinder us on our road to Heaven. Sometimes God so overrules afflictions that they even help us on to Glory! Therefore let us walk on and never be afraid. Let us be sure that if we walk in at one end of the hollow way of affliction, we shall walk out at the other. Who shall hinder us when God is with us? The main point about this pilgrim and his progress is that he is perfectly innocent of fear. He says, “I shall fear no evil.” It is beautiful to see a child at perfect peace amid dangers which alarm all those who are with him. I have read of a little boy who was on board a vessel that was being buffeted by the tempest and everybody was distressed, knowing that the ship was in great peril.  
There was not a sailor on board, certainly not a passenger, who was not full of fear. This boy, however, was perfectly happy and was rather amused than alarmed by the tossing of the ship. They asked him why he was so happy at such a time. “Well,” he said, “my father is the captain. He knows how to manage.” He did not think it possible that the ship could go down while his father was in command! There was folly in such confidence, but there will be none in yours if you believe with an equally unqualified faith in your Father who can and will bring safely into port every vessel that is committed to His charge! Rest in God and be quiet from fear of evil! This pilgrim, while he is thus free from fear, is not at all fanatical or ignorant since he gives a good reason for his freedom from alarm. “I will fear no evil,” says he, “for You are with me.”  
Was there ever a better reason given under Heaven for being fearless than this—that God is with us? He is on our side! He is pledged to help us! He has never failed us. He must cease to be what He is before He can cast away one soul that trusts Him. Where, then, is there room for terror? The child is confident because his mother is with him—much more should we be serene in heart since the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Immutable God is on our side! “Whom shall I fear?” Whom shall we select to honor with our dread? Is there anybody that we need to fear? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?” Christ has died and risen again and sits up yonder at the right hand of God as our Representative—who, then, can harm us? Let the heavens be dissolved and the earth be melted with fervent heat, but let not the Christian’s heart be moved! Let him stand like the great mountains whose foundations are confirmed forever, for the Lord God will not forsake His people or break His Covenant. “I will fear no evil, for You are with me.”  
There is something more, here, than freedom from fear and a substantial reason for it, for the true Believer rejoices in exalted companionship. “You are with me.” You—You, You—the King of kings, before whom every seraph veils his face, abashed before the awful majesty of his Maker. “You are with me”—You before whom the greatest of the great sink into utter insignificance—YOU are with me! How brave that man ought to be who walks with the Lion of the tribe of Judah as his guard! What steady footsteps should that man take who treads upon a rock and knows it. “You are with me.”  
Trembling Brother, you would feel perfectly safe if you had your eyes opened to see the companies of angels that surround you. You would rejoice in your security if you saw horses of fire and chariots of fire encompassing you. But such defenses are as nothing compared with those which are always around you! God is better than myriads of chariots! “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels,” but the glory of it is that, “God is among them as in Sinai.” God is with every one of His children! We dwell in Him and He dwells in us. “I in them and they in Me,” says Christ. A vital, everlasting union exists between every believing soul and God—then what cause can there be for fear? “You are with me.” Oh for Grace to be brave pilgrims and to make steady progress with heavenly company as our glory and defense!  
III. Now, I shall close with my third head, which is most evidently in the text—THE SOUL AND ITS SHEPHERD—for David says, “Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” You see the Psalm is all about a shepherd and a soul that feels itself to be like a sheep. The rod and staff, the tokens of shepherdry, are the comforts of the saints. What are the uses of the rod and staff? Consider, first, that the rod was used for numbering the sheep. “Then shall the sheep pass, again, under the hand of him that counts them.” The shepherd holds his rod and the sheep are counted as they pass under it.

It is a very blessed thing when the soul can say, “The Lord counts me one of His. I am in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but I am one of the Lord’s own purchased flock. I am in great sadness, but I am numbered with His redeemed.” The Good Shepherd keeps all His sheep and He will preserve them in the gloomy valley. “The Lord knows them that are His.” And the Lord will show Himself strong on behalf of His own. He says, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” If He numbers me among His own, though I am the meanest of them and the feeblest in faith and lowest in Grace, yet He will protect me! Since I can say, My Beloved is mine, and I am His, I am sure of every good thing! We need no better comfort, for when His disciples rejoiced because the devils were subject unto them, their Master said, “Nevertheless, rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.” If with His rod, the Shepherd of Israel has pointed you out as His own, you may well be of good cheer, for the Lord will not lose one part of His portion, nor suffer the enemy to devour one of His flock.  
Next, the rod is used for rule. The shepherd’s crook, which is now put into the hand of a bishop to show that he ought to be a shepherd, is the emblem of power and government. The shepherd is not only the keeper, but the lord of the sheep. Remember that your Savior is your Sovereign. You call Him Master and Lord and you say well. Do you feel the spirit of obedience? I trust I do, for I long to serve Him. I am not what I ought to be nor what I want to be, but my heart longs to obey His will. I accept His Law to be my Law and I wish always to be one of His most loyal subjects. I delight to think that the Lord reigns. It is a part of my song—“The Lord is king.” My heart shouts it! I would proclaim it at the market of every town! Let Jesus Christ reign and reign forever and ever. The joy is that He does reign! His rod and staff are the emblems of the Shepherd-King and as we submit to His supreme sway, we find a comfort in His royal power and dignity.  
A third meaning, for the words are very full of doctrine—is this—the rod and staff are meant for guidance. It is with his rod that the shepherd leads his flock. It is most sweet, most comfortable to believe that the Lord is guiding us. “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterwards receive me to Glory.” We are not half awake as the sheep of Christ, but if we were to watch our Lord, we should see Him gently leading His by a right way. When we are not willful, but wait upon Him, He leads us on in a way which we should not have chosen of our own accord—but it is the safe and right way. When we do not know which road to take, we are not left to make a foolish choice, but we hear a voice behind us saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” It is a blessed thing, when we are in a troubled condition, to be quite confident that the Lord, Himself, brought us there, for then we are sure that the road must be right, since our Shepherd never misleads His flock. If we follow where Jesus leads, the Guide is responsible for the road.  
The next meaning of the rod and staff is that of urging onward. The sheep, sometimes, are lazy and will not stir. And then the shepherd pushes them on, a bit, with his rod and staff. Have you ever felt the Divine nudging? Perhaps in a sermon you have had a pretty sharp thrust. I know I have had to lay on the rod, at times, in the Master’s name, upon certain fat sheep who are not quite as nimble as they ought to be. But their wool is so thick that I can scarcely make them feel! The Great Shepherd knows how to touch them. He can give such a push, when sheep are lingering behind, that all of a sudden you see them leap forward and you wonder how it is that they go to the front so eagerly! If I am troubled and I feel that it speeds me on in the right road—if it drives me to prayer, if it makes me honor God more—then the rod and staff comfort me.  
It is a happy thing to be afflicted towards Heaven! It is an evil thing to be comfortable in doing nothing—a horrible thing to be sinking into indifference and not to care whether you get out of it or not. But it is good to be tried and so made earnest for more Divine Grace. It comforts a wise man to perceive that the rod is working for his good. The rod and staff mean chastisement, for if a sheep goes astray, the shepherd pulls it back by the leg with his crook and makes it feel that it cannot wander without suffering for it. So does the Lord chasten us. Blessed be His name for chastening, though it is not joyous but grievous, “nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby.”  
Oh, how blessed are those words, “nevertheless, afterward!” It is a condescending thing for God to take enough notice of you to chasten you! A man does not whip other people’s children and when God afflicts a Believer and his soul within him is broken down, let him say within himself, “Blessed be God for this tribulation! Whom He loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.” Sweet is the pain that seals the Father’s love! Blessed is the anguish caused by our Shepherd’s hand! Oh, dreadful pleasure that would arise out of God’s letting me alone, to never taste it! But blessed grief, blessed heartbreak which assures me that God has not forgotten me! O Lord, Your rod, when it chastens me, does comfort me!  
But, last of all, the rod and the staff are used by the shepherd to protect his flock. With these he contends against the beasts of the field that the lambs may not be torn apart. And, oh, how glorious is Christ when He comes forth with the weapons of His eternal power to fight the lion that would tear our soul! Think of Him in Heaven pleading for His people, pleading the merits of His blood, using His intercession as a staff with which He smites the wolf and chases away the lion and the bear so that not one of us may be destroyed! He must, He will protect His own elect! You may think that Christ bought His people with His blood and that He will lose them, but I do not believe it. When a thing has cost you dearly, you take great care of it—and if it cost you your life—you would not readily part with it.  
“Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has, will he give for his life.” And when he has once given up his life, that which he has purchased with it is dearer to him than all the world. Christ would sooner lose His life than lose His people! He died once to save them and until He dies, again, they shall never perish! Has He not said it Himself, “Because I live you shall live, also”? Unless they live, He does not live! His life has entered into them and it can never leave them. “I give,” says He, “unto My sheep eternal life.” And what can, “eternal life,” mean but a life which lasts forever? Oh, may God give to everyone here the faith which I have been talking about!  
Perhaps some of you have never trusted your souls with Christ. You know that faith is the way of salvation—why do you not follow it? Simply trust Him. Simply trust Him. Simply trust Him now! It is wonderful, the power of faith to change the heart! When you trust a man, you love him. You cannot be an enemy to a man in whom you trust. The effect of faith upon the affections is marvelous—it changes their whole nature and bent. God give you to know Christ, for they that know His name will put their trust in Him and when you know Him and trust Him, then shall you confess with us unto the Lord, “Blessed is the man that trusts in You.” God bless you, dear Friends, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE OVERFLOWING CUP  
NO. 1222

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“My cup runs over.”  
Psalm 23:5.

THE Psalm culminates in this expression. The poet can mount no higher. He has endeavored to express the blessedness of his condition, in having the Lord for his Shepherd, but after all his efforts, he is conscious of failure. His sonnet has not reached the height of the great argument, nor has his soul, though enlarged with gratitude, been able to compass the immeasurable gifts of Grace. And therefore, in holy wonder at the lavish superfluities of mercy, he cries, “My cup runs over.” In one short but most expressive sentence he does as good as say, “Not only have I enough, but more than enough! I possess not only all that I am capable of containing, but I inherit an excess of joy, a redundancy of blessing, an extravagance of favor, a prodigality of love—my cup runs over.”

We do not know when David wrote this Psalm. There seems, however, to be no period of his life in which he could have used this expression in reference purely to his temporal circumstances. In his youth he was a shepherd boy and kept his father’s flock. And in such an occupation there were many hardships and discomforts, in addition to which he appears to have been the object of the ill-will of his brothers. He was not rocked on the knee of luxury, nor pampered with indulgences. His was a hardy life abroad and a trying course at home. And unless he had been deeply spiritual, and therefore found contentment in his God, he could not have said, “My cup runs over.”

When he had come forth into public life and lived in the courts of Saul, and even had become the king’s son-in-law, his position was far too perilous to afford him joy. The king hated him and sought his life many times. If it were not that he spoke of Grace and not of outward circumstances, he could not have, then, said, “My cup runs over.” During the period of his exile, his haunts were in the dens and caves of the mountains and the lone places of the wilderness, to which he fled for his life like a hunted partridge. He had no rest for the soles of his feet—his thirst after the ordinances of God’s house was intense and his companions were not such as to afford him solace—surely it could only have been in reference to

 spiritual things that he could, then, have said, “My cup runs over.”

When he came to be king over Israel, his circumstances, though far superior to any which he may have expected to reach, were very troublous ones for a long season. The house of Saul warred against him and then the Philistines took up arms. He passed from war to war and marched from conflict to conflict. A king’s position is, in itself, a thorny place, but

this king had been a man of war from his youth up, so that, apart from the Grace of God and the choice blessings of the Covenant, he could not even, on the throne, have been able to say, “My cup runs over.” In his later days, after his great sin with Bathsheba, his troubles were incessant and such as must have well near broken the old man’s heart.

You remember the cry, “O Absalom, my son, my son! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son”? That was the close of a long trial from his graceless favorite—a trial which had been preceded by many others—in which first one member of his family and then another departed from the paths of right. Nor did it close the chapter of his adversities, for the troubles of his heart were enlarged even to the last, and the good old man had to say upon his deathbed that, though he rejoiced in the sure Covenant of God, yet his house was not so with God as his heart could have desired.

We cannot, therefore, take the text and say, “This is the exclamation of a man in easy circumstances who was never tried. We cannot say this was the song of a favorite of Providence who never knew an ungratified wish.” Not so. David was a man of troubles. He bore the yoke in his youth and was chastened in all his old age. You have before you, not a King Croesus, whose long prosperity became, itself, a terror, nor an Alexander whose boundless conquests only excited new ambitions, nor even a Solomon whose reign was unbroken peace and commercial gain, but David, the man who cried, “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of the waterspouts; all Your waves and Your billows have gone over me.”

So did the spiritual outweigh the natural, that the consolations of the son of Jesse exceeded his tribulation, and even in his most troublous times there were bright seasons of fellowship with the Lord, in which he joyfully said, “My cup runs over.” Let us think of some cups which never run over. And then consider, if ours runs over, why it does so. And then, thirdly, what then?

I. SOME MEN’S CUPS NEVER RUN OVER. Many even fail to be filled because taken to the wrong source. Such are the cups which are held beneath the drippings of the world’s leaky cistern. Men try to find full satisfaction in wealth, but they never do. Pactolus fills no man’s cup, that power belongs exclusively to the river whose streams make glad the city of God. As to money, every man will have enough when he has a little more, but contentment with his gains comes to no man. Wealth is not true riches, neither are men’s hearts the fuller because their purses are heavy. Men have thought to fill their cups out of the foul pools of what they call, “pleasure,” but all in vain, for appetite grows, passion becomes voracious and lust, like a horseleech, cries, “Give, give.”

Like the jaws of death and the mouth of the sepulcher, the depraved heart can never be satisfied. At the polluted pool of pleasure no cup was ever filled though thousands have been broken—it is a corrosive liquor which eats into the pitcher and devours the vessel into which it flows. Some have tried to fill their souls with fame. They have aspired to be great among their fellow men and to wear honorable titles earned in war, or gained in study. But satisfaction is not created by the highest renown. You shall turn to the biographies of the great and perceive that in their secret hearts they never gained contentment from the most grand successes they achieved.

Perhaps if you had to look at the truly miserable, you would do better to go to the Houses of Parliament and to the palaces of those who govern nations, than to the outskirts of poverty, for awful misery is full often clothed in scarlet, and agony feasts at the table of kings. From the sparkling founts of fame no cups are filled. Young man, you are just starting in life. You have the cup in your hand and you want to fill it. Let us warn you (those of us who have tried the world) that it cannot fill your soul, not even with such poor sickly liquor as it offers you. It will pretend to fill, but fill it never can! There is a craving of the soul which can never be satisfied, except by its Creator. In God, only, is the fullness of the heart, which He has made for Himself.

Some cups are never filled for the excellent reason that the bearers of them suffer from the grievous disease of natural discontent. All unconverted men are not equally discontented, but some are intensely so. You can no more fill the heart of a discontented man than you can fill a cup which has the bottom knocked out. A contented man may have enough, but a discontented man never can—his heart is like the Slough of Despond into which thousands of wagon loads of the best material were cast—and yet the slough swallowed up all and was none the better. Discontent is a bottomless bog into which if one world were cast, it would quiver and heave for another.

A discontented man dooms himself to the direst form of poverty, yes, he makes himself so great a pauper that the revenues of empires could not enrich him. Are you the victims of discontent? Young men, do you feel that you never can be content while you are apprentices? Are you impatient in your present position? Believe me, as George Herbert said of incomes in times gone by, “He that cannot live on 20 pounds a year cannot live on forty.” So may I say—he who is not content in his present position will not be content in another though it brought him double possessions. If you were to accumulate property, young man, until you became enormously rich, yet, with that same hungry heart in your bosom you would still pine for more. When the vulture of dissatisfaction has once fixed its talons in the breast, it will not cease to tear at your insides.

Perhaps you are no longer under tutors and governors, but have launched into life on your own account, and yet you are displeased with Providence. You dreamed that if you were married and had your little ones about you, and a house all your own, then you would be satisfied. And it has all come to pass, but scarcely anything contents you. The meal provided today was not good enough for you. The bed you will lie upon tonight will not be soft enough for you. The weather is too hot or too cold, too dry or too damp. You scarcely ever meet with one of your fellow men

who is quite to your mind—he is too sharp and rough-tempered, or else he is too easy and has “no spirit.” Your type of a good man you never see— the great men are all dead and the true men from this generation fail.

Some of you cannot be made happy—you are never right till everything is wrong—nor bearable until you have had your morning’s growl. There is no pleasing you. I know men, who, if they were in Paradise would find fault with the glades of Eden and would propose to turn the channels of its rivers and shift the position of its trees! If the serpent were excluded, they would demand liberty for him to enter and would grow indignant at his exclusion. They would criticize the music of the angels, find fault with the cherubim and become weary of white robes and harps of gold—or as a last resource they would become angry with a place so completely blessed as not to afford them a corner for the indulgence of their spiteful censures. For such unrestful minds the cup which runs over is not prepared.

Some, too, we know, whose cup never will run over because they are envious. They would be very well satisfied with what they have, but someone else has more, and they cannot bear it. If they see another in a better position in society, they long to bring him down to their level. Now, surely, Friend, if you find your own lot hard to bear, you cannot wish another man to suffer it, too! If your case is a hard one, you should be glad that others are not equally afflicted. It is a happy thing when a man gets rid of envy, for then he rejoices in the joy of others and with a secret appropriation which is far removed from anything like theft, he calls everything that belongs to other men his own, for he is rich in their riches, glad in their gladness and, above all, happy that they are saved.

Some of us have known what it is to doubt our own salvation and yet feel that we must always love Jesus Christ for saving other people. I charge you, cast out envy! The green dragon is a very dangerous guest in any man’s home. Remember, it may lurk in the hearts of very good men. A preacher may not be able to appreciate the gifts of another preacher because they seem to be more attractive than his own. Good people, when they see another useful, are too much in the habit of saying, “Yes, but he does not do this,” or, “She does not do that,” and the remark is made, “He is very useful but very eccentric,” as if there ever was a man who did anything in this world that was not eccentric. Their very eccentricities, (which are uncomfortable things), God often overrules to be the power of the men and women whom He means to employ in striking out new paths of usefulness.

What you call imprudence may be faith, and what you condemn as obstinacy may only be strength of mind necessary for persevering under difficulties. Bless God for gracious men as you find them and do not want them to be other than they are. When Divine Grace has renewed them, help them all you can and make the best use you can of them. And if their bell does not ring out the same note as yours and you cannot change its tone, and yet you feel that your note would be discordant to theirs, pray God to tune your bell to harmony with theirs, that from the sacred steeple there may ring out a holy, hallowed, harmonious chime through the union of all the bells and all their tones in the sole praise of God. Envy prevents many cups from running over.

So, once more, in the best of men unbelief is sure to prevent the cup running over. You cannot get into the condition of the Psalmist while you doubt your God! Note well how he puts it. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” He has no fears, or forebodings, or doubts. He has given a writing of divorce between his soul and anxiety. And now he says, “My cup runs over.” What are you fretting about, my Sister? What is the last new subject for worry? If you have fretted all your life, your husband, your children and your servants have had a sad time of it. Your husband feels, with regard to you, “Good woman. I know nothing in which I could find fault with her, except that she finds fault with others and that she grieves when there is no cause for grieving.”

May the Lord be pleased to string your harp so that it may not give forth such jarring notes as it now does, but may yield the joyful music of praise. Your great need is a more childlike faith in God! Take God’s Word and trust it and, good Sister, your cup will run over, too. What is your trouble, Brother? You were smiling just now at the thought of how some women are troubled, for you thought, “Ah, they do not have the cares men have in business!” Little do you know! There is a burden for women to carry which is as heavy as that of their husbands and brothers. But what is your distress? Is it one that you dare not tell to God? Then what business have you with it? Is it one which you cannot tell to God? What is there in your heart that forbids your unburdening it?

Is it one which you refuse to tell to God? Then it will be a trouble and a curse to you—and it will grow heavier and heavier till it will crush you to the earth. But, O, come and tell your great Helper! You believe in God for your sons—believe in Him about your property! Believe in God about your sick wife or your dying child! Believe in God about your losses and bad debts and declining business! A bare bosom before the Lord is necessary to perfect satisfaction. I have proven God and I speak what I know—I have had a care that has troubled me, which I could scarcely communicate to another without, perhaps, making it worse. I have done my best and I have prayed over it but have not seen a way of escape and, at last, I have left it with God, feeling that if He did not solve it, it must go unsolved. I have resolved that I would have nothing more to do with it and when I have done that, the difficulty has disappeared—and in its disappearance I have found an additional reason for confidence in God—and have been able, again, to say, “My cup runs over.”

We must walk by faith with both feet. Some try to walk by faith with the left foot, but their right foot they will not lift from the earth—and therefore they make no progress at all. Wholly by faith, wholly by faith must we live! He who learns to do that will soon say, “My cup runs over.” I have not time to enlarge, although much more might be said, for there are cups

which never have run over, and never will.

II. But now, secondly, WHY DOES OUR CUP RUN OVER? Assuming that we have really believed in Jesus and that not with a wavering faith, but in downright solemn earnest, then joy will follow our faith. Our cup runs over, first, because, having Christ, we have in Him all things. “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also, freely give us all things?”—

*“This world is ours, and worlds to come:*

*Earth is our lodge, and Heaven our home.”*Between here and Heaven there is nothing we shall need but what God has supplied. The promise is, “Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” As the old Puritan puts it, earthly comforts are like paper and string which you need not go to buy, for you will have them given to you when you purchase more valuable things.

Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Our God is not like the Duke of Alva, who promised to spare the lives of certain Protestants and then denied them food so that they died of starvation. He does not give His eternal life and then deny us that which is necessary to the securing of it! He will give us manna all the way from Goshen to Canaan, and cause the gushing Rock to follow us all the time we are in the wilderness. “No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.” “Your shoes shall be iron and brass and as your days so shall your strength be.” I climbed a hill the other day, and as I went down the steep side a sharp stone made a tremendous gash in my shoe, and then I thought of that promise, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass.” If the road is rough, a strong shoe shall fit the foot for it. As with the Israelites, their feet did not swell, neither did their garments wax old upon them, so shall it be with you. You shall find all things in God and God in all things.

But there is another reason why our cups run over. They run over because the infinite God, Himself, is ours. “The Lord is my shepherd.” “My God,” the Psalmist styles Him. One of the most delightful renderings ever employed in a metrical translation of the Psalms is that of the old Scotch version—

*“For yet I know I shall Him praise,  
Who graciously to me  
The health is of my countenance;  
Yes, my own God is He.”*

I feel as if I could stop preaching and fall to repeating the words, “My own God,” “My own God,” for the Lord is as much my God as if there were no one else in the world to claim Him! Stand back, you angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, and all you hosts redeemed by blood! Whatever may be your rights and privileges, you cannot lessen my inheritance! Assuredly all of God is mine—all His fullness, all His attributes, all His love, all Himself, all, all is mine, for He has said, “I am your God.” What a portion is this! What mind can compass it?

O, Believer, see, here your boundless treasure! Will not your cup run over, now? What cup can hold your God? If your soul were enlarged and made as wide as Heaven you could not hold your God! And if you grew and grew and grew till your being were as vast as seven heavens and the whole universe, itself, were dwarfed in comparison with your capacity, yet, still, you could not contain Him who is Infinite! Truly, when you know, by faith, that Father, Son, and Spirit are all your own in Covenant, your cup must run over!

But when do we feel this? When do we see that our cup runs over? I think it is, first, when we receive a great deal more than we ever prayed for. Has not that been your happy case? Mercy has come to your house and you have said, “Why have I received this? I never dared to seek so great a blessing.” “He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think.” You knelt down and prayed God to deliver you in trouble—He has done it, but instead of just barely carrying you through, He has set your feet in a large room and you have said, “Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? Had you delivered me by the skin of my teeth I had been grateful, but now my cup runs over.” You asked the Lord to give you sufficient sustenance for the day and, look, He has bestowed upon you a great many worldly comforts and His blessing with them all. Must you not say, “My cup runs over”?

You asked Him to save your eldest daughter, but in His infinite mercy He has been pleased to convert several of your children, perhaps all. You began to teach in the Sunday school and you prayed to the Lord to give you one soul. Why, He has given you a dozen! Will you not say, “My cup runs over”? When I began to preach I was sure my little meeting house seemed large enough and my sphere sufficiently extensive. And if the Lord had said to me, “I will give you a thousand souls as your reward before you shall go to Heaven,” I should have been overjoyed and cried my eyes out with weeping for delight. But now, how many thousands has He given me to be the seals of my ministry? My cup runs over! My God has dealt with me beyond all my expectations or desires!

It is His way! He gives like a king! He has outstripped my poor prayers and left my faith far in the rear. I am persuaded, Beloved, that many of you know many things concerning God which you never asked to know. You possess Covenant blessings which you never sought and you are in the enjoyment of attainments which you did not think it possible for you to gain—so that the cup of your prayer has been filled to the brim and it runs over! Glory be to the All-Bounteous Lord! So has it been with the cup of our expectation, for we ask many things and then from lack of expecting them we fail to receive them. But have you not indulged large expectations, some of you? Have you not had your day-dreams in which you pictured to yourself what a Christian might do?  
And the Lord has given you more than imagination pictured! You sat at

Mercy’s gate and said, “Would God I might but enter to sit among the hired servants.” But He has made you sit at the table and killed for you the fatted calf! You were shivering in your rags, and you said, “Would God I might be washed from this filthiness and my nakedness clothed a little!” But He has brought forth the best robe and put it on you! You said, “Oh, that I had a little joy and peace!” But, lo, He has made music and dancing for you, and your spirit rejoices abundantly in the God of your salvation! I will ask any Christian here if Christ is not a good Christ?

You know when Henry the Eighth married Anne of Cleves, Holbein was sent to paint her picture with which the king was charmed. But when he saw the finished work, his judgement was very different and he expressed disgust instead of affection. The painter had deceived him. Now, no such flatteries can ever be paid to our Lord Jesus Christ. The painters, I mean the preachers, all fall short—they have no faculty with which to set forth beauties so inexpressibly charming, so beyond all conception of mind and heart! The best things which have ever been sung by adoring poets, written by devout authors, or poured forth by seraphic preachers all fall below the surpassing excellence of our Redeemer! His living labors and His dying love have a value all their own!

There are great surprises yet in store for those who know the Savior best. Jesus has filled the cup of our expectation till it runs over. And I may say the same of every mercy that He has brought in His hands—it has been a richer mercy, a rarer mercy, a more loving mercy, a more rapturous mercy, a fuller mercy, a more lasting mercy than ever we thought it possible for us to receive! I speak to some who live by faith in their Lord’s service. You have learned to expect great things, my Brothers and Sisters, and you will learn to expect greater things, still! But has not God always kept pace with our expectation? Has He not outrun us? Has He not presented us with His kindness? The path of a man who lives by faith is like a gigantic staircase—it winds up, up, up, in God’s sight, into the clear crystal—but as far as we are concerned it seems to wind its way among dense clouds, full often dark as night.

Every step we take, we stand firmly on a slab of adamant, but we cannot see the next landing place for our foot! It looks as if we were about to plunge into an awful gulf, but we venture on and the next step is firm beneath our feet. We have ascended higher and higher—and yet the mysterious staircase still pierces the clouds—though we cannot see a step of the way. We have found our Jacob’s ladder until this time to be firm as the everlasting hills! And so we climb on and we mean to do so, with the finger of God as our guide, His smile as our light and His power as our support. The blessed Voice is calling us and our feet are borne upward by the summons, climbing on and on in the firm belief that when our flesh shall fail, our soul shall find herself standing on the threshold of the new Jerusalem! Go on, Beloved! God will do far more than you expect Him to do, and you shall sing, “My cup runs over.”

Sometimes, too, the text is true of the Christian’s joy, “My cup runs over.” The other night as I sat among our young men in the ministry, and we were all singing, “I am so glad that Jesus loves me,” I did not wonder that the writer of that piece made them repeat that delightful Truth over and over again. “I am so glad that Jesus loves me.” You can excuse monotonies, repetitions and tautologies when that dear word is ringing in the ears, “Jesus loves me,” “Jesus loves me,” “Jesus loves me.” Ring that bell again and yet again! What need of change when you have reached a perfect joy? Why ask variety when you cannot conceive of anything more sweet? There is music, both in the sound and the sense, and there is enough of weight, force and power in the simple utterance of, “Jesus loves me,” to allow of its being repeated hundreds of times and yet never palling upon the ear!

Now and then I hear of an interruption of a sermon by a person who has found the Savior—how I wish we were often interrupted in that way! I wonder, when men first learn that Jesus suffered in their place, that they do not shout and make the walls ring! Surely it is enough to make them! What a blessing it would be if that old Methodist fire, which flamed so furiously in men’s souls that they were forced to let the sparks fly up the chimney in hearty expressions, would but blaze away in our cold, formal assemblies! Come, let us pour out a libation of praise from our overflowing cups, while we say, again, “I am so glad that Jesus loves me.” Have you not sat down when you have been alone and felt, “I am so happy because I am saved, forgiven, justified, a child of God! I am beloved of the Lord! This fills me with such joy that I can hardly contain myself”?

Why, if anyone had come to you at such a time and said, “There is a legacy of 10,000 pounds left you,” you would have snuffed at it, and felt, “What is that? I have infinitely more than that, for I am a joint heir with Christ. My Beloved is mine and I am His. ‘My cup runs over.’ I have too much joy. ‘I am so glad that Jesus loves me.’” At such times our gratitude ought to run over, too. Our poet’s gratitude ran over when he wrote that remarkable stanza—

*“Through all eternity, to You  
My grateful song I’ll raise;  
But, oh, eternity’s too short  
To utter half Your praise!”*

I have heard cold critics condemn that verse and therein prove their incompetence to enjoy poetry! Would they cramp the language of love by the rules of grammar? May not enthusiasm be allowed a language of its own? It is true it is incorrect to speak of eternity as, “too short,” but the inaccuracy is strictly accurate when love interprets it! When a cup runs over it does not drip, drip, at so many drops per minute—it leaps down in its own disorderly fashion—and so does the grateful heart!

Its utterances are as bold as it can make them, but they never satisfy itself. It labors to express itself in words and sometimes it succeeds for a while, and cries, “My heart is composing a good matter, I speak of the things which I have made touching,” but before long its rushing overflow

stops up the channel of its utterance and silence becomes both necessary and refreshing. Our souls are sometimes cast into a swoon of happiness in which we rather live and breathe gratitude than feel any power to set it forth. As the lily and the rose praise God by pouring forth their lives in perfume, so do we feel an almost involuntary outgush of our very selves in love which could, by no artistic means, tell forth itself. We are filled and overfilled, saturated, satiated with the Divine sweetnesses—

*“Your fullness, Lord, is mine, for oh,  
That fullness is a fount as free  
As it is inexhaustible,  
Jehovah’s boundless gift to me.  
My Christ! O sing it in the heavens!  
Let every angel lift his voice;  
Sound with ten thousand harps his praise, With me, you heavenly hosts, rejoice!”*

III. Now, thirdly, WHAT THEN? The first thing is, let us adore Him who has filled the cup. If the cup runs over let it run over upon the altar. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Remember, dear Christian Friends, that preaching is not a result—it is a means to an end—and that end is the worship of God. The design of our solemn assemblies is adoration. That, also, is the aim and result of salvation, that the saved ones may fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb in His Glory. Preaching and praying are like the stalks of the wheat, but hearty worship is the ear itself. If God has filled your cup, worship Him in the solemn silence of your soul. Let every power, passion, thought, emotion, ability and capacity adore the Lord in lowest reverence for the Fountain from which flow the streams which have filled us to the brim.

The next thing is, if your cup runs over, pray the Lord to make it larger. Does not the Apostle say, “Be you also enlarged”? Does not David speak of having his heart enlarged? There is too much of narrowness in the largest-hearted man! We are all but shallow vessels towards God. If we believed more and trusted more, we should have more, for the stint is not with God. Pray like Jabez of old, “Oh, that you would bless me, indeed, and enlarge my coast.” The next thing is, if your cup is running over, let it stop where it is. Understand my meaning—the cup stands under the spring and the spring keeps running into it and so the cup runs over. But it will not run over long if you take it from where the spring pours into it.

The grateful heart runs over because the fountain of Grace runs over. Keep your cup where it is! It is our unwisdom that we forsake the fountain of living waters and apply to the world’s broken cisterns. We say in the old proverb, “Let well enough alone,” but we forget this practical maxim with regard to the highest good. If your cup runs over, hear Christ say, “Abide in Me.” David had a mind to keep his cup where it was and he said, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” When I preach away from here, I always like to go to the same house in the town, and I say to my host, “I shall always come to you, as long as you invite me, for I do not think there is a better house.”

If a man has a good friend, it is a pity to change him. The older the friend, the better. The bird which has a good nest had better keep to it. Gad not abroad, I charge you, but let the Lord be your dwelling place forever. Many have been fascinated by new notions and new doctrines and, every now and then, somebody tells us he has found a wonderful diamond of new truth, but which generally turns out to be a piece of an old bottle. As for me, I need nothing new, for the old is better and my heart cries, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Until they find me a better fountain than the Lord has opened in Christ Jesus, His Son, my soul will abide in her old place and plunge her pitcher into the living waters! Where my cup is filled there shall it stand and run over, still.

Once more, does your cup run over? Then call in your friends to get the overflow. Let others participate in that which you do not wish to monopolize or intercept. Christian people ought to be like the cascades I have seen in brooks and rivers, always running over and so causing other falls which, again, by their joyful excess cause fresh cascades and beauty is joyfully multiplied! Are not those fountains fair to look upon where the overflow of an upper basin causes the next to fall in a silver shower, and that, again, produces another glassy sheet of water? If God fills one of us, it is that we may bless others! If He gives His ministering servants sweet fellowship with Him, it is that their words may encourage others to seek the same fellowship. And if their hearers get a portion of meat, it is that they may carry a portion home.

If you get the water for your own mill and dam it up, you will find that it will become overgrown with rank weeds and becomes a foul thing. Pull up the sluices, Man, and let it run! There is nothing in the world better than circulation, either for Grace, or for money! Let it run! There is more a-coming, there is more a-coming! To withhold will impoverish you, to scatter is to increase! If you get the joy of God in your heart, go and tell it to poor weeping Mary and doubting Thomas—it may be that God sent you the running over on purpose that those who were ready to perish might be refreshed.

Last of all, does your cup run over? Then think of the fullness which resides in Him from whom it all proceeds. Does your cup run over? Then think of the happiness that is in store for you when it will always run over in everlasting Glory! Do you love the sunlight? Does it warm and cheer you? What must it be to live in the sun, like the angel Uriel that Milton speaks of! Do you prize the love of Christ? Is it sweet to you? What will it be to bask in its unclouded light? O, that He would draw up the blinds, that we might catch a glimpse of that face of His which is as the sun shining in his strength! What will it be to see His face and to enjoy the kisses of His mouth, forever? The dew which distils from His hands makes the wilderness rejoice! What must it be to drink of the rivers of His pleasure?

A crumb from His table has often made a banquet for His poor saints, but what will it be when the Tree of Life will yield them 12 manner of fruits and they shall hunger no more?

Bright days ought to remind our souls of Heaven, only let us remember that the brightest days below are not like the days of Heaven any more than a day in a coal mine when the lamp burns most brightly can be compared to a summer’s noon! Still, still, we are down below. The brightest joys of earth are only moonlight. We shall get higher before long, into the unclouded skies, into the land of which we read, “there is no night there.” How soon we shall be there, none of us can tell! The angel beckons some of us. We hear the bells of Heaven ringing in our ears even now. Very soon—so very soon—we cannot tell how very soon, we shall be with Jesus where He is, and shall behold His Glory! Brethren, the thought of such amazing bliss makes our cups run over! And our happiness overflows as we remember that it will be forever and forever and forever!

Eyes never to weep again, hands never to be soiled again, bones never to ache again, feet never to limp again, hearts never to be heavy again— the whole man as full as it can be of ineffable delight, plunged into a sea of bliss, deluged with ecstatic joy—as full of Heaven as Heaven is full of Christ! Dear Hearer, the last word I have to say is this, do you know what it is to be filled with the love of God? Unconverted Hearer, I know you are not happy. You say, “I wish my cup would run over!” What are you doing with it? “I am trying to empty it of my old sins.” That will not make it run over. “I have been washing it with my tears.” That will not make it run over. Do you know the only way of having joy and peace in your heart?

What would you do with an empty cup if you were thirsty? Would you not hold it under a fountain until it were full? This is what you must do with your poor, dry, empty soul! Come and receive of Jesus, Grace for Grace. “For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.” Hold your empty cup under the stream of Divine Fullness which flows to the guilty through Jesus Christ and you shall also joyfully say, “My cup runs over.” The Lord pour His mercy into you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 23.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—725, 708, 711.  
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THE OVERFLOWING CUP  
NO. 874

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING JUNE 6, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My cup runs over.”  
Psalm 23:5.**

THE fault of being too happy, if it exists anywhere, must be a very scarce one. A far more prevalent vice is that of dwelling upon the dark shades of life, to the forgetfulness of its brighter lights. We drink our wormwood in ostentatious publicity, but eat our honey behind the door. It is noteworthy that if a man’s life is prosperous, it glides away rapidly and leaves little trace upon his memory. We write sorrows in marble and mercies in the sand! The history of nations becomes dull and unromantic when it flows happily, so that it has been wisely written, “Blessed is that nation which has no history.”

When affliction comes, there is an event to mark, a notch to be scored on the tally—war, famine, pestilence—these are landmarks of history. But when nations continue in an even flow of peace, history is like a vast unbroken dead level. Our mind tenaciously retains the remembrance of its sorrow, but human nature is so constitutionally ungrateful as to forget its mercies without an effort. How much of the staple of our conversation consists in complaint! It is so cold for the season, it is so intolerably hot— there is too much drought, or the rain is perfectly awful. Business is shocking The young wheat is turning yellow for want of dry weather, or the turnips are just good for nothing for lack of rain.

We are great experts in discovering reasons for murmuring—like illhumored curs, we bark at everything or nothing. And I suppose if we should fail to discover any reasons for discontent, we should think it quite sufficient cause for utter weariness of this mortal life. More or less we are all bitten with this madness. It comes so natural to us to detail our grievances and hardships, and only by mere accident, or as a conscientious duty, do we relate the story of the Lord’s goodness towards us.

Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us see if we cannot touch a sweeter string this morning. Let us lay aside the trombone and try the dulcimer. With Christians, a cheerful carriage should be the rule. Of all the men that live, we are the most fitted to rejoice. We have the most reasons for it and the most precepts for it—let us not fall behind in it. Heaven is our portion and the thoughts of its amazing bliss should cheer us on the road. Christ has given to us such large and wide domains of Grace and glory that it would be altogether unseemly that there should be poverty of happiness where there is such an affluence of possession.

In considering our own portion, which must be a blessed one, since “the Lord is the portion of our inheritance and of our cup,” let us see if we cannot find themes for song and abundant cause to stir all that is within us to magnify the Lord.

I. Our privileged lot is described in the text as a cup and a view of that happy portion will, I trust, be suggestive of gratitude. I shall invite you, in the first place, TO SURVEY YOUR PRIVILEGED PORTION. You have a cup. There is no small privilege implied in the use of such a term as that to describe your lot. Remember you were once, (and not so long ago but what your memory may well carry you back to it), wandering in a dry and thirsty land where there was no water. Hungry and thirsty, your soul fainted within you. You hastened to the broken cisterns, but they held no water.

All your former confidences were as deceitful brooks which fly before the hot breath of summer. The wells of pleasure were empty and you were in a parched land where hope smiled not. Your former delights proved to be but a mirage, fair to look upon, but unsubstantial as a dream. You crouched at the foot of Sinai and even presumptuously attempted to climb its ragged sides—but you failed to find a drop of water there. Do you remember when Christ said to you*—*

*“Behold, I freely give  
Living water, thirsty one,  
Stoop down and drink and live”?*

Oh, what a change for you! You thirst no longer, for within your soul Jesus has an ever-springing well of living water. You believe in Him and all the cravings of your nature are supplied. Think of the full cup which Jesus holds to your lips—contrast it with your former poverty when you were ready to perish in despair—and rejoice this morning that you have a royal cup to drink of which will never fail you. Time was, too, when you were in something more than need—you were in a degradation whose remembrance crimsons your cheek. Your riotous living ended in a mighty famine and you gladly would have filled your belly with the husks that swine did eat.

A trough was then far more your portion than a cup. Many of us recollect with shame and confusion of face, to what excess of riot we ran. And wonderful, indeed, it is that the cup of a holy God should be at our lips! In many cases blasphemy defiled the lips and lasciviousness polluted the body. But we are washed, renewed, sanctified, by God’s Divine Grace, and now, with rags removed and a fair white robe girt about our loins, we are permitted to sit at the table of the banquet where music and dancing make glad the heart and the wines on the lees well-refined refresh the guests.

From such need to such abundance, from such shame to such honor, what a change! Our portion is no longer that of the forlorn or the degraded. We do not pine in despair or wallow in pollution, but we sit as children at the table, drinking with joy from our allotted cup. Remember too, Beloved, and the contrast will, I hope, inflame your gratitude, that another cup was once set at our place at the table and of it we should have been compelled to drink had it not been for the interposition of the Surety of the Covenant.

That deep and direful cup of the Lord’s wrath, into which He wrings out the wormwood and the gall till its bitterness is beyond degree, was once ours. Of that black cup you and I must have been made to drink forever and ever—for we could never have emptied it—but must eternally have been filled with the horror and amazement which are its dregs. Now, as we showed you last Lord’s-Day morning [CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US, NO. 873] our Divine Redeemer has drained that cup on our behalf, for He was made a curse for us and now we have to bless God that our portion is not with the wicked whom the Lord shall destroy, but with the chosen whom the Lord accepts in the Beloved.

Ours is not the cap of damnation, but the cup of salvation—not the vial of wrath, but the flagon of consolation. We have nothing to do with that cup, the dregs whereof “all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them,” but ours is a golden goblet which to the last drop is full of bliss and immortality. From the depths of condemnation to our present standing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, what a change! As we think of the portion of our inheritance this morning, how shall we sufficiently admire that amazing love which brought us from the jaws of gaping Hell and set our standing on a rock at the very gates of Heaven?

To make this cup, which represents our present privileged position, stand out yet more brightly before you, let me now speak of it at length. The intention of the Psalmist was to picture himself as a favored guest in the house of the Lord. When you are entertained in an Oriental house, a portion of meat is served out for you which constitutes your mess or portion. To highly esteemed and welcomed guests, a further honor is given— oil is poured upon the head. And yet further, a certain cup is placed before the favored one containing the portion which he is to drink.

Now David felt himself to be not a beggar knocking at the door of mercy, receiving a crust and a sip by the way, but he felt that he had been received by the great Master of the feast and permitted to sit down to receive the supply of all his necessities and, what was more, to receive of the luxuries of the feast as one who was thoroughly and heartily welcomed to all that was provided. Brothers and Sisters, a little while ago you and I were among the blind and the halt and the lame lurking in the hedges and the highways, far off from the heavenly banquet—but Eternal Mercy has brought us, by living faith, to sit down at the feast which Mercy has prepared.

This day ours is the lot of those who are saved! Ours is a portion with the justified! We sit at the table, this day, with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob—having been made children and heirs of God, even as they were. We participate in the pardon, the justification and the security which God gave to his saints in the olden times and which Christ clearly revealed to His Apostles in the latter days. All heavenly things are ours! We are denied none of the luxuries of the banquet of mercy. Whatever belonged to any child of God belongs to us! Whatever was enjoyed by the brightest of the saints may be enjoyed by us, if by faith we are sitting at the table of Divine Grace!

This day we are no more strangers and foreigners, no more excluded and shut out—we are brought near by the blood of Jesus and our portion today is like that of the ewe lamb which ate of its master’s bread and drank from his cup. In David’s use of the term, “cup,” far more is included, for I take it he refers to accepted worship. In some of the rites of the Jewish law, you will remember that after the sacrifice the worshippers and the priest together sat down and partook of the remainder of the thank offering. God had received His portion of the meat offering. Then the drink offering was poured or laid upon the altar, and then the worshipper, himself, in token of God’s acceptance, was permitted to eat and drink of the same.  
Now, Beloved, at this moment every Believer here is accepted in the Beloved. That precious Christ, who has satisfied God on our behalf, has now become our satisfaction, too. He who offered Himself to God an offering of a sweet smell, has become to us our meat, indeed, and our drink, indeed—what God feeds upon, we feed upon, too. As He feels an intense satisfaction in the life, and work and death of His dear Son, we find the very same kind of satisfaction after our measure and degree. Is it not most delightful to think that it is a part of my life’s privilege, as a child of God, to live as an accepted worshipper, dear to the heart of God? It is a high joy to know that my prayers and praises, my soul’s high desires to honor her God, her sighs, her tears and her works, are all accepted of God. Oh, greatly blessed is that life which is thus honored! He has made us priests unto God and we drink from the bowls before the altar with holy joy and reverent exultation.

But by the cup was meant yet more than loving entertainment and sacrificial acceptance, for the Psalmist, in the 116th Psalm, at the 13th verse, speaks of taking the “cup of salvation.” Such a heavenly cup belongs to every Believer throughout the world! It is a part of your heritage this day, Beloved, that your sins are forgiven. That you are justified through the righteousness of Christ. That you are saved from the wrath of God—so saved as to be preserved in future and to be ultimately brought into the kingdom and the Glory. You have, at this hour, salvation as your portion! Some of God’s people only hope that they are saved. Such can scarcely sing that their cup runs over. Others conceive that they are saved for the present, but are not thereby saved eternally.

Oh, but those who have come to know that God never plays fast and loose with us! That if He has saved us once, our salvation is secured beyond all risk. That the love of God is everlasting love and cannot be removed. That the blood of Jesus Christ does not in part redeem, but effectually redeems—those, I say, who have come to understand the fullness, the infinity, the immutability, the eternity, of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus—those are they who can rejoice in an overflowing cup! The lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places and they have a goodly heritage. The lot of the saved is a lot to be envied—theirs is a right royal heritage.

Jeremiah further mentions a “c up of consolation,” and that cup of consolation, O Believer, is also yours this morning! You have your trials, but, oh, what a comfort to know that your trials work your lasting good! You are vexed with adversities, but what bliss to learn that they last but for a moment and end in eternal Glory! We mind not the black clods of trouble when we learn that light is sown in them for the righteous. It is true we are sometimes, if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations, but our mourning ends at morning. Our dark nights will soon be ended and then a daylight comes of which the sun shall go down no more forever.

The cup of comforts, which the Holy Spirit fills and brings to us, is so rich, so suitable, so operative upon our nature that we may well rejoice as we think of it this morning. The saint’s lot has its blacks, but it has also its whites. Drops of wormwood are ours, but milk and honey are not denied us. We mourn at Marah, but we sing at Elim. Bochim still stands, but Bethel is ours, too. The lion roars, but the turtledove also yields her cheering note. Clouds are above us, but the stars smile on us. Our sea has its ebbs, but, by turns, it comes to the flood. Winters bluster and freeze, but summer comes soon and blossoms with merry joys, and autumn follows with its mellowness. We are cast down, but we are not destroyed—no, we are not even injured—for if for a little time we seem to be losers by our castings down, we before long discover our greater gain.

Happy are the people that are in such a case, yes, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. The cup of tried David is far better than that of proud Belshazzar. None are so comforted as those to whom the Holy Spirit is Comforter. Still let us dwell for a minute or two longer upon the portion of the righteous. We read in the New Testament of the “cup of blessing,” and although that alludes to the cup at the Lord’s Supper, yet without wresting the words, we may say that the whole portion of God’s saints is a cup of blessing. You are blessed in all respects, Believer.

As last Sabbath morning it was our painful duty to remind the unconverted that they were cursed everywhere—in basket and in store, in their home and abroad, in all that they had and did—so now with joy we remind you that those who love the Lord are blessed in all respects! Their cup, that is to say, their lot in life, is all blessing. Even that which you like least is filled with blessing. You are blessed by every morning’s sun—its beams speak benediction. You are blessed with every setting sun—the darkness is but a curtain to screen your rest. You are blessed in your poverty—contentment shall cheer you. You are blessed in your abundance—Grace shall consecrate it. Every way you are blessed. Your cup has not a single drop in it from the surface to the bottom but what is sweetened with the unchanging love of your Divine Father.

The cup of our life is, moreover, a cup of fellowship. The whole of a Christian’s life ought to be fellowship with Jesus. What the cup is at the Lord’s Table, that our entire life should be. If we suffer, we suffer with Christ. If we rejoice, we should rejoice with Him. Bodily pain should help us to understand the Cross and mental depression should make us apt scholars at Gethsemane—while the high joys which our soul sometimes partakes of should conduct us to Tabor and lead us upward even to the place where the Conqueror sits high aloft on His Father’s Throne. It is a great blessing to a child of God, whatever happens to him, if he can see it overruled to the conducting of him in the footsteps of his Master into fellowship with his Covenant Head.

I shall notice but one more matter about this cup, though, indeed, the phrase seems to me to be rich even to excessiveness with suggestions for thought. Our life cup is distinctly connected with the Covenant. “This cup,” said the Lord at the table, “is the New Covenant,” and so the whole of life which is compared in our text to a cup, manifests the Covenant faithfulness of God. Nothing happens to a child of God but what was in the Covenant. The whole of Christian life is studded with God’s fulfillment of the Covenant. You have your troubles, but it was promised that you should have them. In your sadness you are revived with consolation, for it was promised you that God would set the bow in the cloud that you might look upon it and see that He was faithful, still.

Oh yes, if you did but know it, the smallest event of your history as well as the largest incident in your biography—all would fit together like pieces of mosaic and when all fitted together you would read clearly, “Covenant love and Covenant faithfulness.” To come back to our simile, all the wine of the cup of human life is to the Believer warm with the spices of eternal faithfulness. There is not a single drop in all the contents which is not aromatic with the unchangeable, immutable veracity and faithfulness of our Covenant God. Will you, dear Hearers, put these things together, which I have poured from the cornucopia of the text?

Look upon the whole of your life, O Christian, in that light now cast upon it—for life is a very sacred thing with us, and though the many say death is a very solemn thing—we have learned that life is equally so. Regard a Christian’s life as sublime—reaching far beyond the level of the unbeliever’s barren existence—because the spiritual is elevated, pure, heavenly. It is God in man struggling with Satan—the Christ of God fighting with evil. Heaven and Hell in the Believer’s life find a battlefield where hottest warfare rages. Our life in Christ is a sublime thing, a thing that angels look down upon with wonder and astonishment. The cup which is set on our Master’s table for us is no common cup—it is a celestial chalice for solemnity. It is a royal bowl for dignity—a golden cup for richness.

The portion of every Believer, when it shall be seen by clearer eyes and understood by loftier intellects, will be perfectly amazing in its rare displays of the loving kindness and faithfulness of God!

II. Secondly, I invite every Believer here to REJOICE IN THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS PRIVILEGE. “My cup runs over.” Two or three words about this as far as it may relate to temporals. A small number of Believers are entrusted with much of this world’s goods—their cup runs over with wealth. Here is cause for thankfulness, for God has never taught us to deprecate riches, nor to wring our hands in sorrow if they happen to fall to our lot. Be thankful to the bounteous Lord for your abundance!

At the same time, here is a note of danger. Our Lord Jesus once said and He has never retracted the saying, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” That is to say, in plain language, it is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, unless something more than ordinary is done. Our Lord has told us, however, that while it is impossible with man, it is possible with God—and we rejoice to constantly find a slender line of these camels going through needles’ eyes. Rich men are led into the kingdom of Heaven—the human impossibility becomes Divine fact! Still, riches are no small hindrance to those who would run in the ways of the Truth of God.

The danger is lest these worldly goods should become our gods—lest we should set too great store by them. Andrew Fuller one day went into a bullion merchant’s and was shown a mass of gold. Taking it into his hand, he very suggestively remarked, “How much better it is to hold it in your hand than to have it in your heart!” Gold in the hand will not hurt you, but gold in the heart will destroy you! Not long ago, a burglar, as you will remember, escaping from a policeman, leaped into the Regent’s Canal and was drowned—drowned by the weight of the silver which he had plundered! How many there are who have made a god of their wealth and in hastening after riches have been drowned by the weight of their worldly substance!

Notice a fly when it alights upon a dish of honey. If it just sips a little and away, it is fed and is the better for its meal. But if it lingers to eat again and again, it slides into the honey, it is bedaubed—it cannot fly—it is rolling in the mass of the honey to its own destruction. If God makes your cup run over, beware lest you perish, as too many have done through turning the blessing into a curse. If your cup runs over, take care to use what God has given you for His Glory. There is a responsibility attached to wealth which some do not seem to realize. Among our great men, how few use money as they should! Their gifts are nothing in proportion to their possessions.

Alas, things are even worse than this with some who are miscalled honorable and noble. Our hereditary legislators are some of them a dishonor to their ancient houses and a disgrace to the peerage from which they ought to be ignominiously expelled. What right have gamblers to be making laws? How shall we trust those with the affairs of the nation who bring themselves down to poverty by their gambling and set an example which the poorest peasant might well scorn to follow? God will visit our land for this! Wickedness reigns in high places and there the reckoning will begin. Would to God that our great men would remember that they are responsible and that wealth is not given them to lavish upon their passions, but to employ for God and for the common cause. If your cup runs over, call the poor to catch the drops and give an extra spill that they may have the more!

Moreover, the Church of God needs your substance. Thank God we can, some of us, say with regard to our Churches, there is not so much a lack of Divine Grace, or a need of men, or of anything as of the financial means—and the gold and the silver are somewhere. God has given it to His Church—it is somewhere. But there are very many Church members who hold back the wealth which they ought to consecrate to the cause of God—and if they do this, their running-over cup will witness to their judgment and will not be to their honor and glory in the day when God shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ!

But I do not intend to dwell on that. I shall speak rather of spirituals. I want each Believer here now to look at his lot in a spiritual light and in it to feel that his cup is running over. Our cup overflows because of the infinite extent of the goodness itself which God has bestowed. The spiritually good things which God has given to us are so many that we never can contain them all! If the capacity of our mind could be enlarged a thousand-fold, yet such are the exceeding riches of God’s Christ that we never could contain all that God has laid up in Him as the portion of His people. Think for a minute—the Lord God has given to every Believer here, a whole Christ, a full Christ, an everlasting Christ, an exalted Christ—to be his eternal portion!

Now who can hold the whole of Christ? Behold His matchless Godhead, His immaculate Manhood, His power, His wisdom, His beauty, His Grace! Look at His works, His life of innocence, His death of disinterested affection, His triumph over Hell and the grave! Look at His Second Coming and the splendors of His millennial reign. Now all these belong to us if we belong to God. And how shall we compass them all? Must not our cup of necessity run over? Remember next that God has made with every one of you who love Him, even the poorest and the weakest, a Covenant of Grace of which the beginning is beyond all human doubt—for that Covenant was made before the earth was—a Covenant which is ordered in all things and sure and which will never run out because it is the Everlasting Covenant and will stand as long as eternity endures.

In that Covenant all things are yours! God has given over to you even Himself! “I will be their God and they shall be My people.” God the Father is yours! God the Son is yours! God the Holy Spirit is yours! Oh, what can you say if all this is yours? Your soul cannot hold them all, your cup must run over! Look again, Beloved, at the promises which are given us in holy Scripture. Why, any one promise is more than enough for us. “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Why, there is a meal for a man for the next 12 months if he will never read another verse. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands.”

Oh, do but let that lie under your tongue like a wafer made with honey! Take but one such promise and you shall be like Ruth, who did eat and was satisfied, “and left”—for you cannot receive it all. But then take the range of the promises from Genesis to Revelation. How is this Book, like a beehive, filled with 10,000 cells and every cell distilling virgin honey such as enlightens the eyes of the man that tastes of it! Oh, who can hold the fullness of the promise? Who can contain all the words which the Holy Spirit has written, full of consolation to the mourning children of God? But suppose you could, by some enlarged capacity, grasp all the promises? Yet, Beloved, how would you be able to receive God Himself, and yet He is yours! The Infinite God is the portion of the faithful!

You have enjoyed, sometimes, the visits of the Holy Spirit. You know what it means for the Holy Spirit to be at work in your soul. Now, I am sure you will bear witness that at such times you have been conscious of the narrowness of your soul. You have felt, “O that I could hold my God. This sweet love of His, of which I am now conscious, is more than a match for me. Holy Spirit, how can You come to dwell with such a poor one as I am? I am but a bush and You a fire, and matched with You I am like a glowing, burning bush. How can I bear such Glory? I tremble lest I am consumed with over excess of bliss and love.”

Many of God’s saints have been ready to die while they have had vivid impressions of the love of God and of the Glory which God had prepared for His elect. Their joy has been too great! One heart could not palpitate fast enough! One soul could not hold one 10th of the bliss which God was pleased to pour into it! By reason, then, of the greatness of the blessings themselves and the infinity of their number, it often happens that our cup runs over. O you that are sad today and yet Believers. You who are poverty-stricken today, and yet heirs of all this wealth! I would lovingly chide you and ask how you can thirst when your cup can no more contain all that God provides for you than the hollow of an infant’s hand can hold the wide, wide sea?

Furthermore, does not our cup often run over because of our sinful contractions of its capacity? I have already hinted at the necessary narrowness of our capacity because we are mortal. But how often you and I fill up our soul with carnal joys and cares and then if God’s love does come into us, it must soon run over, for there is so little room! How often, too, are we sadly straitened in our longings after Divine things, so that when they come to us we have not room enough to receive them! I must confess that I have enjoyed more of God than my desires have ever aspired after. Oh, what stinted desires we have! He has said, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” But we scarcely open our mouths at all. Men who are eager after wealth stretch their arms like seas to grasp in all the shore—but we win a little of Divine Grace and then we sit down basely content.

We have not the consecrated ambition we ought to have. O that our desires were like the horseleech, so that concerning God they should always cry, “Give, give.” O that we never felt we had attained, were always dissatisfied with ourselves, seeking to do more, to know more, to love more, to kill self more and to be more consecrated to our dear Lord! Oh, our flat desires! I have heard that in the old times in England, on Christmas morning, the poor villagers were allowed to call at the house of the lord of the manor, each one with his basin, which it was the custom to fill to the brim. I guarantee you the basins grew sensibly larger every year, till one would think they had rather brought the bushel measure from the barn than the basin from the cupboard!

It was wise of the poor folk, for His Lordship could not do less than fill whatever they brought. Alas, we are not so wise! We rather lessen our vessels than increase their size. You have not because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. God has done exceeding abundantly above what we have asked, or even thought. Mind how you read that text, it does not say, “above what we can ask”—no, no! We can ask for what we will and can think of boundless things and God can make us think of as great things as He can do, but above what we have asked, or think, God frequently gives to us. Beloved, I will now ask you a question. How would it be with you if God had filled your cup in proportion to your faith? How much would you have had in your cup?

Alas, I lament to say, while my God has never once failed me, but has been very faithful, constantly faithful, abundantly and richly faithful, yet my poor faith, if it were unusually tried, would hardly be found to His honor and Glory, unless He should be pleased to greatly enlarge and graciously to sustain it. Sad that we should have to make such a confession, but we do, with shame. Is not that the confession many of us must make? If it were only to us according to our faith and God did not, in Sovereignty, step beyond His own rule in the kingdom, how poor should we be, measured by our faith! Our cup runs over, indeed.

Suppose, my Brethren, our portion were to be measured by the returns that we have ever made to God for mercies we have enjoyed? Ah, should not we be starved from this day forth? What have I done for Him that died to save my wretched soul? Will you dare turn to the page in which memory records the service you have rendered to your Lord in thankfulness for His great love—ah, cover it up, it is not worth remembering. You have taught a child or two, you have preached to a congregation, you have offered a few prayers. Oh, our teaching, how feeble! Our preaching, how little in earnest! Our praying, how heartless! Our giving, how scant and how grudging! Oh, how little are our returns compared with what we owe to Him from whom we have received all we possess! We are, indeed, unprofitable servants.

If our portion of meat were measured out according to our labor and devotion, long fasts would be our lot and feast days would be few and far between. But the Lord’s thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways, for such is the abundance of His forgiveness and longsuffering that our cup still runs over. I shall only detain you with one more remark on this point. Note the supreme excellence of every blessing which God has given, for this tends to make the cup overflow. Every Covenant mercy which the child of God enjoys has this distinguished excellence in it—that it is eternal. The sinner’s best lot is only for a time. Ours, if it were slender, would far exceed the sinner’s, because it lasts forever! Better that a man have but a shilling a day forever, than that he have a gold piece but once in his life, which, being spent, he has no more.

If the Lord pardons you, it is forever. If He adopts you, it is forever. If He accepts you, it is forever. If He saves you, it is forever! There is eternity set as a Divine stamp upon every mercy. Believer, does not this make your cup run over, to think that everlasting love is yours? Moreover, your portion, whatever it may be, is received direct from God. Ishmael was sent into the desert with a bottle, but the bottle dried up, and Ishmael was thirsty. But we read of Isaac that he lived by the well Lahai-roi. There was always an abundance for Isaac, for he lived by the well. You have seen a rustic lad lie down at full length at the springhead on a summer’s day and drink—behold in him a picture of the Believer’s life.

The saint does not drink of the stream far down in the valley, warmed by the world’s sun and mired by the world’s sin. He drinks at the wellhead where the current leaps up all cool and living from the great deep. There is another quality about the Sovereign gifts of Grace—they come to us in living union with Christ. If I get a mercy apart from Christ, it is like a rose plucked from the bush—it delights me with its perfume and appearance for an hour, but soon it withers and I put it away. But a spiritual mercy is like a living rose on the bush—it blooms and lasts and we smell it again and again and again. Our blessings are dear, indeed, as they come to us through Christ Jesus.

And what is best of all, every one of these blessings in the Covenant are best to us because they are brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. You know a table may be well spread and yet a man may not be satisfied because he has no appetite, or he cannot reach the food. But the Holy Spirit has a way of making our cup run over because He gives us an appetite—He brings the food to us and helps us to receive it. He enables us to digest it and inwardly to be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. The mercies of the Infinite are the more choice because the Holy Spirit understands how to break the bread for us and feed us. He makes us to lie down in green pastures.

We would fumble with mercies and spoil them like bad cooks that spoil good meat—but the Holy Spirit knows how to bring up the meat ready dressed for us and to give us the appetite and to make us feed upon His dainties with spiritual palates and refined tastes.

IV. Now to close, I call upon those who have this cup to RESOLVE ON SUITABLE ACTION, seeing that this is their position, “My cup runs over, then let me, at any rate, drink all I can. If I cannot drink it all as it flows away, let me get all I can.” “Drink,” said the spouse, “yes, drink abundantly, O my Beloved.” The Master’s message at the communion table always is, “Take, eat!” And again, “Drink, drink all of it.”

Oftentimes, when the Lord says to us, “Seek My face,” we answer, “But, Lord, I am unworthy to do so.” The proper answer is, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” If you bring a man to a table and he is not hungry, you tell him to eat, but he may be bashful and he does not like to help and cut and carve for himself, and he takes but little. I guarantee you, however, if his hunger becomes very vehement, he will not wait for two permissions—he will cut and carve for himself after a mighty rate! O that our spiritual hunger were greater, for Christ never thinks believing sinners presumptuous in applying the promises, or laying hold upon the provisions of Divine Grace!

The worst form of presumption is not to take what Christ offers. I know some in this House, today, who are very presumptuous, for they might have peace, but they will not. God has provided comfort for them, but they will not receive it, and they write bitter things against themselves. Month after month and week after week their cup runs over and yet they do not drink. There are promises exactly suitable to their case, but they think they are too humble to drink. It is not so, it is always proud humility— wicked, base, bastard humility—rank pride, that makes us think Christ is unwilling to forgive, or accept, or bless us. O dear Heart, never be hungry for lack of will to come and take! Let God’s invitations be your persuasions. Let His precepts to believe be accepted over the head of your unworthiness.

Say to yourself, “I know these things are too good for me and I am not worthy of them. But if He does not shut me out, I certainly will not shut myself out. If He bids me come and take and believe, He means it—He offers like a king and I will take as a needy one should take from one so rich, who cannot miss it, but who will be glad to bestow it.” Well, that is my first piece of advice—your cup runs over—drink! The next is, if your cup runs over, Christian, and you drink of it, communicate to others. We too much neglect the comforting of those that are bowed down. Should not it be a part of the duty of every Church member to be a pastor to others who may be dispirited and sad? In such a Church as this, of course, the pastorate of one man is something even less than nominal, for I will not even accept the name if it is intended that I am thereby to carry out the duty.

We can never have in a Church of 4,000 members proper oversight unless every member exercises oversight over the other, bearing one another’s burdens and so fulfilling the Law of Christ. I charge you do this! I know many of you are diligent in this duty, but be more so! Look after the sad and disconsolate and let the telling of your experience be as the putting of the bottle of cooling water to their thirsty lips. Again, if God has made your cup to run over, then seek to serve Him, not after the order and measure of bare duty, but according to the enthusiasm of gratitude. I mean, give to God, you that have it! If he has given much to you, give much to Him! Depend on it, there is great wisdom in this, even from a selfish point of view. Good measure, pressed down and running over, will God return into your bosoms.

If you cannot give money, then give your time, your talents—and, believe me, the more you do for God, the more you can do and the more happiness you will have in the doing of it! It is lazy Christians who grow rusty. It is unused keys that lose their brightness. You that rot away in inglorious ease, you know not the joy that belongs to the child of God! The Christian should feel, “I shall do all I can do and a little more, getting more strength from God than I had, that I may do, still, a little in excess. I will not measure my duty by what others say I ought to do, but reckon that if I draw back, I would not. If I might make some reserve, I could not. If I might deny my Lord something, yet I dare not, would not think of such a thing. The love He plants in my heart will not permit me.”

If your cup runs over, let your service run over. Be “fervent in the Spirit, serving the Lord.” Let your generosity run over—give without stint. Let your prayers run over—pray without ceasing. Let your hymns run over—praise Him as long as you have breath. Let your talk of Him run over—tell the universe what a good God He is to you. Praise Him! You can never praise Him enough. Exaggeration will be impossible here. Let the loftiest praise be heaped upon the head of Christ and He will deserve something better. Let the angels make way for Him and let them pile their thrones one upon the other. Let them conduct Him to the seventh Heaven—over to the Heaven of heavens and let Him fill a lofty Throne there, yet, even then, He is not so high as His Father has set Him!

Words cannot describe His Glory—it bows down all language beneath its weight. Metaphors, similes—though they were gathered with the wealth of wit and wisdom from all quarters of Heaven and earth—cannot reach even to the hem of His garments. Your love and your fidelity, your diligence and your zeal are not fit, even so much as to unloose the laces of His shoes, He is so great and so good. O talk much of Him, then! Let your talk run over like the language of Rutherford in his letters, where he seems, sometimes, to break through reason and moderation to glorify his Lord! Let your language of Christ be like the Apostle Paul, where he puts aside all syntax, grammar, speech and all else and makes new words and coins fresh expressions, and confuses tenses and moods and I know not what beside, because his soul could not express itself after the commonplace language of mankind!

O let your praise run over to your Lord and King! Love Him! Praise Him! Exalt Him! Magnify Him! Live out His life again! You can but praise Him so! Die in His arms, that you may forever extol Him in the upper skies! May God grant us to be Christians rich in spiritual wealth, spending our strength and substance like the princes we are, for Him who is more than a prince and greater than a king!

*PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 23, & 30.*  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #396 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN  
NO. 396

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1861, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?”  
Psalm 24:3.**

THERE is little doubt that this Psalm has a primary reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. He it is who alone ascended up on high by His own merits and by virtue of a perfect obedience stands in God’s holy place. He alone of mortal race has clean hands and a pure heart. He has not lifted up His soul unto vanity, nor has He sworn deceitfully—therefore has He received the blessing and righteousness from the God of His salvation. At His ascension the glorified spirits flooded Heaven with music while they sang the language of the seventh verse, “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lift up, you everlasting doors and the King of glory shall come in.”

It would be a delightful theme for Christian meditation to consider the ascension of Christ in relation to His work—what we obtain by it—and the glories with which it was accompanied, when, with a shout of saved joy, He returned to His own Throne and sat down forever having finished the labor which He had undertaken to perform. But this morning, I must take the text apart from its connection for I desire to make it the basis of a set of parables or illustrations with regard to Christian life. I think we may fairly compare the life of a Christian to the ascent of a mountain and we may then ask the question, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?”

This has been, in fact, a favorite metaphor and even that mighty master of allegory, John Bunyan, who needed never to borrow from another, must have the Hill Difficulty somewhere or other to make his story complete. He must tell how the pilgrim “fell from running to going and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees because of the steepness of the place.” Without putting any strain upon the text, I conceive I may use it as a most serious question while I picture our course to Heaven as an ascent into the hill of the Lord.

Behold, then, before your eyes, Believer, the hill of God. It is a high hill even as the hill of Bashan, on the top thereof is that Jerusalem which is from above, the mother of us all. That rest—

*“To which our laboring souls aspire,*

*With fervent pangs of strong desire.”*  
This mount of which we speak is not Mount Sinai, but the chosen hill whereon are gathered the glorious company of angels, the spirit of the just made perfect, the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven. And we are the pilgrims, full often joyous with faith but sometimes weary and footsore making the best of our way to the top of this mountain of God, where we shall see His face and rejoice in Him forever more.

I, your fellow pilgrim, propose the question, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?” No sooner does the question escape my lips than I hear a jubilant shout from a company yonder who cry, “We shall—assuredly we shall! There is no doubt about our eternal safety. We shall most certainly attain the summit, rest our wearied feet thereon and dwell with God forever.” Well, confidence is good if it is good, but if it is presumption, nothing can be more ill. Let us, then, look at those who are so sure that they shall ascend into the hill of the Lord.

I notice, first, that some who speak thus are young beginners. They have not yet trod the rough part of the mountain. They have only as yet danced upon the green knolls which are at the base of it—no wonder that their untried sinews find it easy work to ascend an easy pathway. Their limbs are supple, their muscles strong and the marrow in their bones is as yet not dried up. They laugh at difficulty and they defy danger. “Ah,” they say, “whatever the danger may be, we can brave it. And however stern the toil, we are sufficient to surmount it.”

Ah, young Man, but be you warned—if you speak thus in your own strength you shall soon find it fail—for the boastful man who journeys in his own strength is like the snail which, though it does but crawl, yet spends its own life and wastes itself while it makes but sorry way. Your strength is perfect weakness. And your weakness such that difficulties shall soon subdue you and terror shall cow your spirit. Oh, do you not know there are troubles to come and you have not endured them yet? There are attacks of Satan. There are temptations from without and from within. You will find it go hard with you if you have nothing but your own strength. You will lie down to die of despair before you have reached onetenth of the way and the summit you shall never see.

Oh, young Man! There are rocks most sharp and steep which mortal strength can never climb and there are rugged ravines so tangled with briars and so bestrewn with flint stones that they shall cut your feet. No, cut your very heart and make it bleed if you have not something better to trust to than your own strength. How much of our early courage in the Christian life is the courage of the flesh. And though it is a sorrowful thing to lose this, yet it is a blessed loss. To be weak is to be strong, but to be strong is to be weak. It may seem a paradox, but we are never really so mighty as when our might has fled and never so truly weak as when we are filled with our own strength and are reckonings upon ease and security.

Be not so bold—take warning and look to a superior arm— *“For they that trust their native strength  
Shall melt away and droop and die”;*

while those who trust in the Lord—  
*“Swift as the eagle cuts the air,  
Shall mount aloft to His abode;  
On wings of love their souls shall fly  
Nor tire amidst the heavenly road.”*

In looking upon this group who are so confident that they shall ascend the hill of the Lord, I detect some others who speak out of sheer ignorance. “Oh,” they say, “it is not far to Heaven. It is little matter to be a Christian—you have but to say—‘God be merciful to me,’ and the thing is done—it is but a mere trifle. As for the new birth,” they say, “no doubt it is a great mystery, but possibly it may be of very little importance. It will be, no doubt, found after all, that ministers and Christians make much ado about nothing, for it is a mere run to the mountain summit.”

Ah, poor ignorant Soul, your folly is too common. To the unaccustomed traveler there is nothing more deceptive than a lofty Alp. You say, “I could reach the mountain-top in half-an-hour,” and you find it to be a day’s full journey, for its twisting roads and rugged sides and precipitous acclivities come not into the reckoning of a distant observer. And so is it with religion—men think it so simple, so easy—but when they once begin to ascend they find it stern work to climb to Glory.

The young soldier gets on his armor and says, “One rush and I will win the battle,” but when his banner is torn and his armor is indented and battered with the heavy blows of the adversary, he finds it quite another thing. I beseech you, count the cost—you who say that you can ascend into the hill of the Lord. I tell you, Sirs, that it is so hard a thing that the righteous scarcely are saved. And where shall the ungodly and the wicked appear? It is by the skin of their teeth and often so as by fire that many who are saved enter into the eternal rest.

I will not merely say it is hard, but I will say it is impossible. It is as easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle as for any man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven if he rely in any degree upon his own strength, or think that the passage thereto is easy and he needs no help that he may pass through it. Be you persuaded, O ignorant Man, that the hill of God is higher than you dream. That is not the summit which you see—the mountains brow is far beyond your eyesight. It is higher than your understanding, it is loftier than your groveling conceptions. The eagle’s wing has not reached it, man has not with his eye beheld it. To the spiritual only is it manifest and they know that it is higher than the clouds. Be not you so ignorantly brave, but learn the read from the lips of Jesus and then ask Him to help you to run therein.

But among this very presumptuous group I perceive others who say, “We shall ascend into the hill of the Lord,” for in their hearts they imagine that they have found out a smooth grassy way which they shall avoid all the roughness of the road. Some new prophet has preached to them a new salvation. Some modern impostor has declared to them another way besides the good old path and they think that they shall now, without wearying their limbs and blistering their feet, be able to ascend to the summit. Take care, take care, presumptuous Soul, for rest assured the greener the path may look the more is the danger of it. On the sloping sides of the lofty mountains there are verdant splits so deliciously green that even after a shower they can look no greener. But only put your foot upon them for a moment, only venture your weight and you will be swallowed up, unless there is someone near at hand to lay hold upon you.

The green mantle covers a tremulous mass of mire. The verdant carpet is only a coverlet for a deadly bed of bottomless bog—for the bogs and quagmires are deceptive enough. And so these new systems of divinity, these new schemes of getting to Heaven by some universal fatherhood, or by part-obedience, or gorgeous ceremonies—I tell you, Sirs, these are but quagmires which shall swallow up your souls! Green deceptions, they

may seem to be like velvet beneath your feet, but they shall be as Hell if you dare to trust them. Still to this day, “Strait is the gate and narrow is the way and few there are that find it.” Still as there is no royal road to learning, there is no royal road to Heaven—no way by which you can pamper your sins and yet be saved—indulge the flesh and yet inherit eternal life.

There is no way by which you can avoid the new birth and still escape from the wrath to come. No way by which you may enter into Heaven with iniquity hidden in your soul. Corruptions must be taken away. Lust must be denied. The right arm must be cut off and the right eye must be plucked out. There is no new, no easier path to Heaven—and you who think you have found it are mistaken, indeed.

Some few others I mark in this group who say, “We shall ascend into the hill of the Lord.” And why, Sirs? You look as if you had a heavy load to carry. “Yes! Yes!” they say, “but these are necessities for the journey. We have half a dozen staves under our arm that if one of them should break we may take another. And we have bottles of rich wine that we may refresh ourselves. We have food so that when we grow weary we may recruit our strength. We have excellent garments that when a storm comes on we may cover ourselves from it. We are fully provided for the journey—we shall certainly ascend the mountain.”

This is just the way in which the worldly-wise and self-sufficient talk— and those who are rich and lumbered with much serving in this world. “Ah,” they say, “we shall readily ascend to Heaven. We are not poor—we are not ignorant—we are not led away by the depraved vices of the vulgar mass. We shall be able to climb certainly, for we have all things and abound.” Yes, but this is what makes your climbing difficult. You have a load to carry. You would ascend better if you had it not—one staff is good for a traveler—a competence you may seek for, but a bundle of staves must be heavy to carry. And multiplied riches make it hard to climb the narrow way of life for they bring many cares and many sorrows and thus they cause the feet to slip when they might stand fast.

Say not because of your wit and your wisdom and your own moral strength that you are the better equipped for the journey. These are your dangers. Your confidences are your weaknesses. That on which you rest shall give you no rest and that on which you depend—if it is anything but God—shall pierce you to your very soul. O Sirs, if you can say, “I shall ascend into the hill of God”—if with your hand upon your heart you can appeal to Heaven and say—“The ground-work of my confidence is not in myself, but in the Promise—not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—not in man but in God, not in what I am but in what God has promised to do for me”—then be as confident as you will.

Then let no stammering stop you of your boasting, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. But if this confidence springs from anything short of a firm, fixed, simple, unmingled faith in Christ—I pray you give it up— for it is a deadly snare and will certainly destroy your soul.

We have thus paused to listen to the group who are so sure of ascending the hill of the Lord. But hark! I can hear groans and sobs and moans. I look around and certainly my eyes are gladdened with the aspect of these men who seem to be so sad. Why do you mourn, Brethren? Why are you sad? “Oh,” they say, “we shall never ascend the hill of God. We shall never reach the top-most height.” Brethren, if I had been allowed to judge, I should have thought you the very men who would ascend and yet you say you shall not? And if I had looked at the other group, I should have thought they never would gain the top and yet they say they shall. How strong it is!

Men so often misjudge their own state that the most unlikely think themselves sure, while the most holy are the most afraid. Come, Brethren, I would stop your mourning and wipe your eyes. I would put a song into your mouths instead of the notes of lamentation. Let me have your reasons that you think shall you never ascend the hill of God. The first reply is, “I shall never get there, for I am weak and the hill is exceedingly high. And, Sir, you have told us that godliness is a great steep and that true religion is a towering up and I am so weak. To will is present with me, but how to perform I find not. I can do nothing. I am emptied entirely—I know that this can never be performed by me.

“To perfect holiness and perfect rest I can never come, for I am the weakest of the entire family and that steep is too lofty to be attained by tottering feet like mine. My bones ache, my knees bend, hot sweat drenches my garments. My head is giddy and I drag my bleeding feet with anguish from crag to crag.” Oh, my dear Brother, be of good cheer! If that is your only cause of mourning, lay it aside, for remember while you are weak, it is not your strength which is to carry you there, but God’s. If nature had undertaken to ascend into the celestial mountain, indeed, you might despair—but it is grace—all-conquering grace that is to do it—

*“Weak as you are, yet through His might,  
You all things shall perform.”*

It is true the hill is steep, but then God is omnipotent. It is certain that the Alp is high, but higher still is the love and grace of God. He has borne you, He has carried you and He will carry you even to the end—when you cannot walk He will take you in His arms. And when the road is so rough that you cannot even creep along it, He will bear you as on eagles’ wings till He bring you to His promised rest. Again, I say, if it were yourself that you had to look to, it would be right in you to mourn—but you are not to look to self. Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. “Ah, but,” says a second, “my difficulty is this—not only am I weak, but I am so sorely tried, the road is very rough to me. You spoke of grass just now—there is none where I am—I have looked at that promise, ‘He makes me to lay down in green pastures,’ and I cannot say it is true of me.

“Instead of it I must say He leads me by the rough torrents and suffers me not to lie down at all, but upon the steep ascents where the stones cut my feet, He leads my weary and sorrowful way. I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath—all His waves and His billows have gone over me. If the road is rough like this, I shall never ascend into the hill of God.” O Christian, Christian! I beseech you take down your harp from the willow now. For if this is all your fear, it is a foolish fear indeed. Why, man, “the road is rough”—is this a new thing? The road to Heaven never was anything else but rough and so you may be the better assured

that this is the right way.

If your road were smooth, you might fear that you were like the wicked who stand in slippery places. Because your pathway is rough, the better foothold for a mountain-climber. There is nothing so much to be feared as that smooth glass-faced rock on which the foot slips back and slides. No, those stones and flints give foothold. Stand then, strong in the strength of God and be of good courage. Your afflictions are proofs of your sonship. Bastards may escape the rod, but the free-born child of God must not— would not if he might. You know, too, that these afflictions are working for your good. They are rough waves but they are driving your ship into port—they are blustering winds but they make your ship scud over the briny deep into the eternal rest which remains for your soul.

Your troubles, I tell you, are your best mercies. Where did the Israelites get their jewels, their earrings and necklaces? Why, from Egypt, from Egypt only. And so you, too, though you have lain among the pots, shall yet be as the dove whose wings are covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold. Let not the roughness of the road dismay you—it is the better proof that it is the right road to Heaven. Why, you will have a worse trouble yet, perhaps. That is poor consolation, you say —but, then, save your tears till you get to it. Cease your weeping now and if this is poor comfort, yet methinks it is true common sense. You will come to places soon where you will have to crawl on your hands and knees. And when you think to grasp the root of some tree to drag you up you will grasp a thorn and every thorn shall pierce your flesh.

But even then those thorns shall be heavenly lancets to let out your bad blood. And that roughest part of the road shall be the speediest way to Heaven—for the steeper the road—the sooner we shall be at the summit. So be of good cheer and mourn not until you come where there is more cause to mourn. And then mourn not, for you shall come to a place where there is more cause for joy. The more sorrow, the more consolation. Therefore up, you poor dispirited one. You shall yet ascend into the hill of God!

“But I,” says another—“I have been sorely tempted. Across my path there is a torrent—a swollen torrent. And I cannot wade through it. I fear the deep waters would carry me down and dash me on the rocks. I shall never be able to ascend.” During last week, while in one of the wild valleys of Cumberland, we were rained in for two or three days, so that we could not get home. And I feared I should not be able to arrive in town to preach today. For across a high mountain-pass which we had to traverse, the little brooks had been swollen by the heavy rains till they roared like thundering rivers and it would have been impossible for any creature to pass without great danger of being swept away.

So it sometimes happens in the Christian’s career. Temptation gets swollen to its brim, no, bursts its banks—and roaring like an angry torrent—it bears all before it. Ah, well, Christian, the Lord knows how to deliver you out of your trouble. He never did yet send temptation without making a way of escape. I was pleased to notice but last Thursday, how, across these brooks, the sheep which fed upon the mountain side could spring from stone to stone, rest a moment in the middle, while the angry flood roared on either side. And then leap and spring again—you would think they must be drowned. But yet their feet were fast and firm. I thought then of that text, “He makes my feet like hind’s feet and makes me to stand on my high places.”

Do you not know, tried Christians, that others have gone through as much temptation as you and they did not perish?—nor will you! Job was sorely tried—the brook was swollen indeed, but it did not carry him away. He was safe, for he could say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Come, now, there are stepping-stones across the brook if you have but faith enough to find them. You shall leap from stone to stone—though they be wide apart—they shall not be too wide for you. And though they shall seem as though they would be moved yet they shall never be, till you have safely passed by the swelling danger.

“Ah,” says another, “but my trouble is worse than that. I have lost my way altogether. I cannot see a step before me. A thick fog of doubt and fear hangs over me. I shall never ascend into the hill of the Lord.” And we, too, have passed through the damp and clinging mists. The dense masts on the mountain summit wet you through very speedily, ruin the prospect and cause alarm to the timid. The descent on the left hand seems bottomless and the ascent on the right appears to be lost in clouds. Mist is the mother of exaggeration—all things loom out in indefinite greatness. The little brook magnified by the haze swells into a river and then enlarges into a tremendous lake. The mountain tops are in the seventh heavens.

Every stone becomes a rock in the mist—such is the exaggeration which an imagination can perform when nature wears her veil. So when a poor Christian comes into doubts and fears everything looks bad and black against him. “Oh,” says he, “I shall surely fall by the hand of the enemy.” It is only a cart-rut—he is sure he will be drowned in it. It is only a stone, which he might put into a sling and throw at some Goliath but he fears it is a tremendous rock and shall never be able to pass by it. He is in a mist and sees no light and knows not his way. Well, Christian, so you say you shall never get to the top because of this?

Why, man, there have been tens of thousands who have been in quite as thick a mist as you and yet they have found their way. Many a Christian has had quite as black doubts and fears as you and yet have come to light at last. Doubts and fears never kill the Christian. They are like the tooth-ache—they are very painful—but they are never mortal. So doubts and fears are very grievous to a believer, but a myriad doubts and fears will not suffice to kill him, or deprive his soul of his interest in Christ. Come, Man, do you not know what the text says? “If any man walk in darkness and see no light, let him”—do what? Let him despair? No. “Let him trust in the Lord”!

Now is the season for faith. When you have nothing else to trust—put your hand within the hand of the Eternal God and He will wisely lead and powerfully sustain and bring you on your way to the promised rest. Let not these doubts fret you, nor distress you, nor cast you down. It is this very mist through which David passed and all God’s people have been surrounded with more or less of it and it does not prove that you are out

of the way.  
“But,” says another, “my woe is worse. I have been going down hill. My  
faith is not so strong as it was—I am afraid my love has grown cold. I  
never felt so much of the blackness of my nature as I do now. I think I  
have grown worse. My depravity has broken up like the floods in the days  
of Noah. I am sure now it is all over with me. I thought I was vile when I  
began but I know I am depraved now. I shall never ascend to the hill of  
God.” And so, Believer, you have been going down hill, have you? Allow  
you not that most men who have to go up had must sometimes to descend? You say, “How is that?” Well, in climbing a mountain, it often occurs that the path winds downward for a season, to enable the traveler to  
avoid a precipice, or comb a beetling crag, or reach another peak of the  
range.  
Part of the road to Mont Blanc, the king of the Alps, is a descent—and  
on the great mountain passes there are frequent spots where the load  
runs readily at the horse’s heels. “But how can going down help me to get  
up?” you say. It is a strange paradox, but I do not believe Christians ever  
mount better than when they descend. When they find out more of the  
baseness of their hearts., when they are taken from chamber to chamber  
and shown the idolatry and blasphemy of their hearts—it is then they are  
growing in grace. “Oh,” say they, “it is all over with me now.” It would have  
been all over with you if you had not come here. “Ah,” say they, “the Lord  
is about to slay me now.” No, no—only to slay your pride. He is putting  
you in your proper place—  
*“If today He deign to bless us,  
With a sense of pardoned sin;  
He tomorrow may distress us,  
Make us feel the plague within.  
All to make us  
Sick of self and fond of Him.”*  
It is all up hill, Brethren, even when it is down hill. It is all towards  
God, even when sometimes it seems to be away from Him. And when we  
are discovering most our own baseness and vileness, it is only that our  
eyes washed with tears may be like the eyes of doves washed with milk  
and fitly set—that we may behold the King in His beauty—seeing less of  
self and more of Him.  
I will not keep you much longer on that point, for I fear by the aspect of  
some of your countenances that I weary you. And yet I know not why I  
should. For surely this is a question which is important to each of us and  
I seek to put it in as comely a parable as I can. I hear yet another groan.  
“Ah,” says one, “I shall never ascend into the hill of God.” Why? “Oh,” he  
says, “because, though I have come up a little way, I feel in such danger.”  
Brethren, do you know when a Christian man looks down it is enough to  
make his head swim? The Christian life is very much like the walk of  
Blondin upon his lofty rope. There he is high up in the air. If he look down  
he must perish.  
Sometimes Christians with a little faith think of looking down—and  
what a cold shudder thrills them! The hypocrite has fallen. I may fall.  
Such-and-Such a professor has come down, I may come down, too. There is the roar of a tumultuous crowd beneath who are expecting that we may fall. No, they are longing to say, “Aha! aha! The eyes of Samson are put out and the mighty are destroyed.” Now Little-Faith, what business have you with looking down? Look up, man. Look up! The Scripture does not say, “Let us run with trembling the race that is set before us, looking to our own tottering legs.” No, it says, “Let us run with patience the race  
that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”  
What if the crag is steep and the precipice is grim? What is that to you?  
You will never fall while your faith is fixed on your God! What if the jaws  
of death are open wide and his teeth are sharp as knives—what is that to  
you? Because Christ lives you shall live also. What if the fires of Hell are  
hot and the flames of Tophet vehement—what is that to you? There is no  
damnation to him that is in Christ Jesus—who walks not after the flesh,  
but after the Spirit. Up man! Look up! As the poor sea boy, climbing the  
giddy mast, dares not look down upon the awful deep but upward to the  
calm blue sky—where shines the bright unclouded sun—so must you look  
up to the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither  
shadow of turning.  
Or if it is dark with you, look up to yon star of Bethlehem, who shines  
still calmly, lovingly above your head. He bids you silently look unto Him  
and stand securely. Look up, poor Little-Faith and you Much-Afraid, for  
you shall ascend into the hill of the Lord.  
I shall crave your attention a moment or two, while I now, in the third  
place—having listened to those who said they could climb and to those  
who said they could not climb—picture to you the man who is able to ascend into the hill of the Lord. Methinks I see him. He has nothing in himself. But he has everything in his God. Let us look at him from the sole of  
his foot to the crown of his head. You notice, first, that he has put on  
shoes of iron and of brass. His feet are shod with the preparation of the  
Gospel of peace. You will want those shoes, O heavenly pilgrim! When the  
Lord said He would give you those shoes of iron, you thought they would  
be too heavy for you, but you will find out that you have to tread on  
stones that are hard as iron.  
When He said He would give you shoes that were made of brass, you  
thought they would be too strong. You will find it a long way and a very  
stiff ascent and anything else than brass would be worn out. Young Christian, have you had your feet shod yet? You are of no use for climbing

unless you have. Unless you have peace with God through Jesus Christ  
our Lord, which is the preparation of the Gospel of peace, you can never  
ascend into the hill of Lord. But observe that the pilgrim is girt about his  
loins to keep his garment from tripping him up—he is girt with the girdle  
of Truth and sincerity.  
You, too, my Hearer, must be sincere in your profession—your heart  
must be right in the sight of God—or else climbing will be fatal work to  
you, because you climb presumptuously and you shall come down desperately. I observe that the pilgrim has in his hand a strong staff. It is cut  
from the Tree of Life, it is called the Staff of Promise. And he knows how to  
thrust his Alpenstock deep into the ground and to draw himself up  
thereby, or stop himself as he is going down a crag, lest his foot slipping, he fall. He has a Staff of Promise. See to it that you get it. Get a promise every day. Don’t be content when you pray, unless you can plead the promise of God, or else you will be like a man going to the bank without a  
check.  
You must take the promise when you go to God and you will get that  
bestowed upon you which the promise guarantees. Go not up the mountain, Pilgrim, without this staff. Take warning once more. If yonder pilgrim  
is ever to ascend the summit, his shoes of iron and of brass will not be  
enough—his girdle not enough, his staff not enough—he must have a  
Guide. He that travels without a Guide will lose his way in this ascent to  
the hill of God. It reminds me of the old story of the man who said to his  
advocate when he was about to be tried—“I’ll be hanged if I don’t plead for  
myself.” “You will be hanged if you do,” said the lawyer. So there are some  
men who say they will try for themselves—they will be their own guide—  
they will find their own way.  
Yes, but they will be lost if they try it. If they put their souls into their  
own keeping and rely upon their own wisdom, they shall find their wisdom to be fully worthless. Christian, rely upon your Guide, your Comforter—the Holy Spirit. Go not one step of the way apart from His monitions and His promptings. Wait on Him. Be of good courage, saying, “I  
waited patiently for the Lord, for He will assuredly direct me in the path of  
peace.”  
But even with a Guide, that man will never gain the summit unless He  
marks the way. And what is the way? The way to the hill of God, you  
know, as well as I can tell you, is Christ Himself. “I am,” says He, “the  
Way.” We begin in Christ, we must go on with Christ, we must end with  
Christ. As guilty sinners we come to Christ for pardon. As needy sinners  
we must come to Him to receive of His fullness day by day and at the last,  
when with joyful spring we shall leap to the flowery summit and be safe—  
that last spring must still be taken in the one blood-besprinkled way—the  
open side, the pierced hands and feet of Christ. For another way to the  
summit of the hill of God there is none—and he that thinks there may be  
shall be mistaken now—and fatally deluded at the last.  
Be wise, then, Pilgrim and with your shoes upon your feet, with your  
staff in your hand, your girdle about your loins, your Guide by your side  
and the loving Lord before you, climb with patience into the hill of God.  
But take care that you lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset you, or the road will be painful to you and your end shall not be  
such as you would desire.  
I come, in the last place, to complete the picture. I come to end the allegory and to stimulate the exertions of every climber of this heavenly  
mountain by describing what is to be seen and to be enjoyed upon the  
summit. He who shall ever climb the hill of God and come to Heaven at  
last will find, first of all, that all his toil is done—  
*“Servant of God, well done  
Rest from your loved employ,  
The battle’s fought, the victory’s won,  
Enter your rest of joy.”*  
No crags, no slippery places now. No roaring torrents, nor ascending or  
descending paths—

*“Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me,  
Now shall my labors have an end,  
In joy and peace and You.”*

Brethren, do you and I think enough of Heaven? Do we not think too much of earth? Do we not think too much of the toil and too little of the time when it shall all be over? A few more days and you and I, Believers, shall have done fighting with Satan, have done with temptations, have done with cares, have done with woes. An hour’s work and an eternity of rest! One day’s toil. And when I shall have accomplished as an hireling my day, then You come, O sweet and gentle rest! “For they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” Courage, Pilgrim, courage! Up that crag, man! Now put hand and knee to it—up!—for when you have climbed a little higher, yes, but a very little, you shall lie down to rest and then no more fatigue or sorrow.

And there too, when we come to the top of the hill of God, we shall be above all the clouds of worldly care and sin and temptation. Oh, how deep is the rest of the people of God above! How calm is their sky!—

*“No vain discourse shall tempt my soul,*

*Nor trifles vex my ear.”*  
No need to go out to a business which distracts my longing spirit. No need to toil at a labor which fatigues my body and thus puts my soul into an ill state for prayer. No need to mix with worldly-minded men, who make a jest of my solemnities and would engage my mind with trifles unworthy of notice. No, above the world, above its distractions and attractions, my soul shall rise when it shall ascend into the hill of God.

And, Brethren, what a prospect there shall be from the summit! When we shall mount to the hill of God what sights we shall see! You know from lofty mountains you can look on that side and see the lakes and the rivers. And on this side the green and laughing valleys and far away, the wild black forest. The view is wide, but what a view is that which we shall have in Heaven! There shall I know even as I am known. “Here we see through a glass darkly, but there face to face.” And chief and foremost—best of all—my eyes shall see the King in His beauty. We shall behold His face. We shall look into His eyes. We shall drink love from the fountain of His heart and hear the music of His love from the sweet organ of His lips.

We shall be entranced in His society, paradised on His bosom. Up, Christian, up. Christ waits for you! Come, man, tread the thorny way and climb—for Christ stands on the summit stretching out His hands and saying, “Come up here, to him that overcomes will I give to sit upon My Throne, even as I have overcome and am set down with My Father upon His Throne.”

And there is this sweet reflection to close with—all that we shall see upon the top of the hill of God will be ours. We look from earthly mountains and we see, but we do not possess. That mansion yonder is not ours. That crystal beam belongs not to us—those wide-spread lawns are beautiful, but they are not in our possession. But on the hilltops of Heaven all that we see we shall possess. We shall possess the streets of gold, the harps of harmony, the palms of victory, the shouts of angels, the songs of cherubim, the joy of the Divine Trinity and the song of God as He reigns in His love and rejoices over us with singing. No, God the Eternal

One Himself shall be ours and ours forever and forever.

What better encouragement can I give to you poor tired, worn-out, wearied and all-but-despairing Christians? Take courage. The last six days have tired you very much. Put away your trials today—you have had enough to cast you down—but is not the reflection of today enough to lift you up? Oh, remember the summit will repay you for the toil in climbing it. Though rough may be the road, it is but short at the longest and the rest, the rest, will make amends. O man! Men will suffer more to get rich than you do to be found in Christ. Go on, go on, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved—and having done all—still stand.

Would that some here who have never tried to climb that mountain would remember that if they climb it not now, they will have to descend forever! If now they turn not their faces to the steep ascent and go up it like men, they must fall eternally. Good God, what a fall! On what slippery places do they stand! I see them reeling even now! What a desperate dash was that! They fall, they fall, on through darkness, through blackest darkness, black as death and Hell—on, on they fall, for the pit is bottomless! Down, down descending from the lower depths to the lowest depths, from Hell to Hell’s profoundest deep, from eternity of woe, on, on, on to woe trebled, multiplied sevenfold!

May God grant that we, having faith in Christ, may tread the bloodmarked way and enter into “the rest which remains for the people of God!”  
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A TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE

NO. 750

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 13, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift them up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.”  
Psalm 24:9.**

ON Monday evening we expounded this Psalm. We then enlarged upon the glorious ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and His triumphal entrance within the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, to which we believe this verse is to be referred. Having on that occasion endeavored to set forth the literal and proper meaning of the words, amplifying them at some length, we trust we may be permitted to use them tonight rather by way of accommodation while we speak on quite another subject, and give a different turn to the flow of our thoughts. Not that we wish to supersede the natural sense of the prophetic song, although we think that without violence, and even with profit, we may borrow a sentence from it to point a moral of practical godliness.

It is worthy of observation that the Scotch commentator, Dixon, gives what I am about to suggest to you as the true meaning of the text, as also do some one or two other authors, to say nothing of our hymn writers who claim poetical license for the boldness of their paraphrases. I should myself very strongly object to tamper with the literal sense. The allusion of the Psalmist, no doubt, is primarily to the ascension of the Ark of the Covenant into Mount Zion, where it was permanently to be lodged, and that historical fact was a type of the ascension of Christ into the Jerusalem which is above, where He sits as the Representative of His people. Let the meaning be fully understood and admitted, then we shall feel at liberty to use the words we here find for certain practical purposes.

Give ear then, dear Friends, to the doctrine which I am anxious to set before you. The Lord Jesus Christ, in order to our salvation, must not only enter into Heaven but He must enter into our hearts. He must not only sprinkle the blood within the veil, but He must sprinkle the blood within our conscience. All that Christ has done for us will be of no use unless there shall be a great work done in us. It is not only Christ on the Cross who is our hope, but “Christ in you,” says the Apostle, “the hope of glory.

At the time of conversion, Jesus Christ enters into the soul, and it is by such a triumphant entrance, when His Word comes into our hearts, that we get the personal knowledge of salvation.

I. First, then, THE GREAT THING TO BE DESIRED BY EACH OF US IS THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING OF GLORY INTO OUR SOULS. Brethren, what if I should say that Heaven would not be Heaven without this? Certainly there would be no happiness here on earth, no Heaven below to any one of us unless we had Christ in our hearts!

There is nothing but mischief in man’s heart when Christ is not there and another lord usurps dominion over Him. In vain is the Gospel preached to any one of the sons of men so long as they, like the strong man armed, keep the gates of the castle of their heart. The eyes of the understanding are blind to the way of peace. Until Christ shall come and take that castle by storm, there is no doing anything for that man—the spirit that works in him is the “spirit that works in the children of disobedience”—he is deceived by Satan and made a willing slave to that tyrant of evil.

What you need, Sinner, for your salvation, is that Christ should come unto you, for if He should come unto you, then that dead soul of yours would live. His Presence is life. He quickens whom He will. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. When He comes into a soul, spiritual life is there. The sinner wakes up to consciousness and rises from the grave over the mouth of which his reckless indifference, like a great stone, has been rolled, and he cries, “What must I do to be saved?” When Christ comes into the heart, sin is seen to be sinful. In the light of the Cross man begins to repent. He sees that his sin has slain the Savior, and he loathes it. He now seeks to be delivered both from its guilt and from its power.

The coming of Christ does that. It takes away the guilt of man. Christ in the heart, revealed to the soul, speaks peace to the troubled conscience. We look to Him and are lightened, and our faces are not ashamed. We see the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness in Christ. Here we wash and are made clean—as for the reigning power of sin, nothing can ever conquer that but the incoming of Christ. If a man serves an evil master, the only way of getting rid of that hated despot is to bring in the rival Sovereign. “No man can serve two masters.” The introduction of the King of Glory, Christ Jesus, is the sure way of casting out that old master, Satan, the prince of the power of the air.

When the Lord Jesus comes, bringing life, and light, and pardon, He puts down the power of sin and every blessing comes in His train. Oh, when Christ rides through the streets of our souls they are strewn with flowers of hope and joy! Then we hang out the streamers of our sacred bliss! We sing of His praise! We are ready to dance before Him for holy mirth! Then straightway we love purity and seek for perfection! Then we adore the living God whom we had before forgotten, but of whom we can now say, “Our Father who are in Heaven.” We receive the spirit of adoption to which we had been strangers before!

Then, as soon as Christ has entered our heart, our course is heavenward—our way is towards our Father’s face, whereas before, with our backs to the Sun of Righteousness—we wandered into denser gloom. And we would have found our way into outer darkness where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. O Sinner, if you could but get Christ into your heart, you would say, “I have all things, and abound. I am full!” But until then you will be naked and poor, and miserable. Or if you are, indeed, a living soul, you will be uneasy and dissatisfied until Christ has entered into you with all His glorious train, His Spirit and His Word. You will be like a house without a tenant, cold, cheerless, dilapidated, desolate. Your heart will be as a nest without a bird—a poor, sad thing! You will be like a body without the soul that quickens it.

But if Jesus comes, He will make a man of you after another sort than that frail image which your father Adam bequeathed you. He will make you new in the image of Him who created you. “Behold, I make all things new,” He says. Oh, you cannot tell the influences of His scepter when He sits upon the throne of the heart! You cannot tell what showers of mercy, what streams of benediction, what mountains of joy, and hills of happiness shall be yours when Jesus comes and reigns in your soul!

This, then, is the great business that we ought to see to—that Jesus Christ should come unto us—not merely that we should hear of Him with the ear, or talk of Him with the tongue, but that we should have Him as a priest before the altar, as a king upon the throne of our heart, the chief and highest in the reverence and the affection of our inmost soul.

II. Secondly, THERE ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO CHRIST THUS COMING INTO OUR HEARTS. The text speaks, you notice, about “doors” and “gates.” Surely, if there were doors and gates that needed to be lifted up before Christ could enter into Heaven, much more are there doors and gates that must be opened to receive Him into our hearts! Remember that when Jesus Christ went up into Heaven, the doors were lifted up, and the gates were opened, and they have never been shut since.

There is no passage that says, “Down with your heads, you gates, and be you fast closed, you everlasting doors!” Not a word of that sort. Heaven’s gates are open wide. What, then, is shut? Why, the gate of the human soul, the door of the human heart. There are many gates and doors, bars of iron, and bolts of triple steel that stand in the way of Christ. Sometimes it is our wicked prejudice. We do not want to know the Gospel. We are confirmed in our own self-righteousness, or we hold the traditions of our fathers who trusted in some outward forms and ceremonies. We do not want to know Christ.

Perhaps the very name of the preacher of the Gospel is hateful to us, and the name of the place where Christ is lifted up is detestable to us. What a blessing it is to us when these gates of prejudice are taken away, and the hearing ear is given, and the soul pants to know what this Gospel is! Alas, though, it too often happens that when prejudice is removed, there then remains the gate of depravity—our love of sin is a strong barrier. We should soon have hailed Christ were it not that we had harbored an old foe of His. We do not care to give up our former love to lay hold of the true Bridegroom of men’s souls.

The great difficulty in the way of sinners getting to Heaven is that they love sin better than they love their souls. A little drink, a little merriment, a favorite lust, a Sunday holiday—any of these trifling joys, these groveling husks that are only fit for swine—will keep souls from Christ and prevent their laying hold of eternal life. Man loves his own ruin! The cup is so sweet, that though he knows it will poison him, yet he must drink it! And the harlot is so fair, that though he understands that her ways lead down to Hell, yet like a bull he follows to the slaughter till the dart goes through his liver! Man is fascinated and bewitched by sin. He will not give up the insidious pleasures which are but for a season, and to gain them he will run the risk of the everlasting ruin of his undying soul. Oh, when God takes away the love of sin, then the gates are lifted up and the doors are opened. What is there that could prevent our welcoming Christ if we did but hate our sins?

Another great door is our love of self-righteousness. Though I have spoken of the love of sin as the strongest door, ought I not to correct myself, and say that, perhaps, the love of our own righteousness is a stronger door still? Men may give up their grosser sins while they will hold fast to their fair, but carnal righteousnesses. Yet your own righteousness will as certainly destroy you as your iniquities. If you rest upon what you have done, however good in your own eyes, or however praiseworthy in the esteem of your fellow men that doing may be, you rest on a foundation that will certainly fail you. Your merits or your demerits are alike useless for salvation. God grant that we may no longer boast of ourselves, but put away the Pharisee’s pride and never utter the Pharisee’s prayer. The doors must be lifted up.

Then, again, there is that door which I may call the iron gate that enters into the city, the innermost door of all, the key of which it is, indeed, hard to turn—the door of unbelief. Oh, that unbelief! It is the ruin of souls, and ah, what trouble, and labor, and anxiety it gives to us who are ministers of the Gospel! When talking with anxious enquirers we are often amazed at the ingenuity with which they resist the entrance of Light and Truth into their hearts. I do not think I have ever been so much astonished at the invention of locomotive engines, electric telegraphs, or any other feats of human mechanism as I have been at the marvelous ingenuity of simple people in finding out reasons why they should not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

After we have proved to them to a demonstration that it is both the most reasonable and the fit thing in the world to trust themselves with Christ, they ask, “Why this?” Or, “Why that?” Or they argue, “But one thing, and but another.” We may patiently go through the whole process again, and even when that is done there comes another, “but.” I have hunted these people till they have got to their holes, and I have tried to dig them out, and unearth them, but I find that they can always burrow faster than I can follow them. It is only the Grace of God that can deliver us from this ruinous thing, unbelief!

You would count it a strange thing, if, when a man condemned to be hanged had a pardon presented to him, he were so ingenious as to find out reasons why he should not escape the gallows! And when these reasons were all refuted, their fallacy exposed, and the good tidings confirmed, he should keep on finding out more reasons why the sentence of execution should be carried into effect! You would say, “Why, foolish man, let these sophistries alone. Put your wits to better use. Get your liberty first, and then enquire into the manner it was procured afterwards.” Men will not take God at His word, and trust Christ at His call. That great doctrine of, “Believe and live,” they will reject.

Still, still they will object! O that these gates and doors were all removed! Do not, I beseech you, my dear Hearers, do not let me talk about this matter as though I were speaking to people on the moon. It is into your own hearts that admission is sought, and remember that there are doors which keep Christ out. There are gates and doors which some of you willfully close against Him. Though in His stead I have stood these many Sundays knocking as best I could at the door—no, not I, but Christ knocking there through me—you have resisted every appeal. You know that His head is wet with dew and His locks with the drops of the night, yet you have kept these doors fastened still.

They have shaken sometimes a good deal. They have almost seemed to me as if they were on the jar—I have hastened to see if I could not put my finger in at the hole of the door—but could not do so. I wish my Master would! How is it that with such a Friend outside, standing there in such a lovely attitude, laden with blessings, and ready to enter that He may bless you—how is it that still you will invent further bars, and make fresh locks to keep Him out?

III. Our third point is this—IN ORDER FOR CHRIST TO ENTRER WE MUST BE WILLING TO REMOVE THESE BOLTS. You will notice that the text says, “Lift up your heads, O you gates,” as if the gates were to lift their own heads up. It is addressed to them as though they were to get out of the way. Continually, dear Friends, I have to tell you that salvation is by Divine Grace—emphatically I shall have to impress this upon you presently. Yet, at the same time, we never did say, and we hope we never shall say that we see no necessity to make any appeals to your will.

We never said that God would save you against your will. We never thought so. We never believed that a man was plunged into the blood of Jesus Christ if he was unwilling to be washed in it. We never believed that a man had the robe of righteousness put on him by force, he, meanwhile, resisting with all his might. We never believed that there were pilgrims on the road to Heaven who went there driven like convicts in the chain gang, instead of marching willingly and cheerfully towards their desired rest. We never meant to say that you were mere machines whom God had deprived of free agency, or that in order to make you saints He made you blocks of wood or pieces of marble.

No! We have been in the habit of addressing you as reasonable beings, and of talking to you as those who had a will to choose or to refuse. We have tried, with the motives of the Gospel, to influence that will. Let us remind you that the gates are bid to lift up their heads—therefore, in God’s name, Sinner, be willing! Be willing that Christ should enter into your heart, for, remember, He never does enter against our will. He makes us willing in the day of His power, but willing we must be. True, willingness is His gift, but we are made willing. In the case of every soul that comes to Christ there is first given to him the willing mind.

“Oh!” says one, “I am willing enough!” Thank God for that, dear Hearer, for the most of men will not come unto Him that they may have life. “Oh!” says another, “I am sure my will is good to come to Christ!” I am glad to hear that, for there is a question we have often to ask, “Will you be made whole?” But there are some men who do not want to be made whole, and would rather hobble on their crutches, cripples as they are! They would rather indulge their inclination as sinners than be purified and brought into the obedience of faith.

Among those I address tonight there may be individuals, perhaps, who would not like to have their conscience touched. Here is one man who is making money in a bad trade. “Oh,” he says, “I do not want that preacher to make me uneasy!” There is another man here who has been getting so used to his sinful pleasures that it would now be inconvenient for him to give them up. He has even made an appointment that he feels he must keep, and if he were apprehensive that the Grace of God might come and overtake him tonight, he feels as if he would rather not. Do not be frightened! It will not occur to you, for the Lord will first give you this premonition of His intending to bless you. He will make you long to be blessed. Before He puts that cup of cooling water to your month, He will make you thirsty.

Before He enriches you with His treasure He will make you feel that you are naked, and poor, and miserable. Before Christ goes through the gate, the inhabitants of the city shall be willing to receive Him. No, with outstretched hands they shall look over the battlements and say, “Come in, King of Glory! I long to see You! Come, and welcome! I will throw the gates of my soul wide open to receive You, do but come! I long for You! I watch for Your coming as they that watch for Your appearing! Yes, more than they that watch for the morning light.”

IV. Fourthly, while you must thus be made willing, IT IS GRACE THAT MUST ENABLE YOU TO BE SO. Notice, “Be you lift up, you everlasting doors.” “Lift up your heads.” “Be you lift up.” We speak to a man as a man, and so we must speak to him. Next to this we speak of what God can do, blessed be His name, as a God, when He comes to deal with us, making us willing. And then coming in, with that great arm of His power, entirely to remove those gates which creature strength could not push an inch out of the way.

I think I see the inhabitants of that city when the cry is heard, “Lift up your heads, O you gates!” trying to lift them up! Trying with all their might, but they cannot do it. The gates are too heavy. The bars seem to be rusted. The bolts are fast in their places. The people cry, “How shall we ever open the gates of this city, and how can we let in the King?”—when an invisible Spirit stands by the side of the wall amid all the struggles, and as He puts out His power, the gates go up, and the doors fly wide open!

This is how it is with the sinner. God the Holy Spirit comes in and helps our infirmities. And what we could not do because we are weak through the flesh, He helps us to do. The love of sin is given up to begin with, and then the Holy Spirit enables us to give up the sin which we no longer love. Unbelief becomes to us a burden, and we cry, “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief!” and He does help that unbelief and we do believe! That which we could not do, we do! He who made us willing, makes us able! Where the will is present, the power is not withheld. When God has subdued the obstinacy of your heart, He will speedily overcome the infirmity of your hands. If you are thirsty, you shall drink. If you are hungry, you shall eat. If you would have Christ, you shall have Christ, for if you can not open the gates, He can.

The difficulty with these gates is that they are everlasting! Though I cannot say that the gates which shut Christ out of our hearts are everlasting in one sense, yet they certainly are as old as our own nature—for the old inbred corruption of that stood out against Christ. And they are such perpetual gates that they never would have been removed if it were not for the Grace which came to remove them. And they are everlasting in such a sense that they will be there in time and there in eternity. The man who will not have Christ now, will not have Him when he comes to die, and will not have Him in eternity. Even then the gates will still shut out the Savior. The Savior will be forever a stranger and an alien to that man’s heart! May God give to you who have been shutting Him out the will to open the door, and then may He come and say, “Be you lift up, you everlasting doors,” and may Jesus Christ come in!

V. Not to linger, however, on any one point, let us proceed to notice the willingness of Christ to enter. We have shown you that it should be our great desire that Christ should come in, but that there are obstacles. We know that we must be willing to remove them, and that Divine Grace will come to our assistance. What next?—JESUS WILL ENTER. There is no difficulty put here after once the gates are lifted up. There is no suspicion nor surmise that He will not enter. It seems to follow as a matter of course. “And the King of Glory shall come in.”

Oh, yes! When the gates are opened, He shall come in! He was willing to come in before. He had sent His servants, and said to them, “Open the gates.” He had finished the work which He came to do. He was waiting to be gracious. There was never any unwillingness in Him! The unwillingness was all in us! And as soon as ever that unwillingness is taken away, and the gates are opened, the King of Glory shall come in. May the Lord bless me in speaking for a moment to some here who are willing to have the Savior, but who think that He will never come into their hearts.

O Beloved, do not suffer this infernal suggestion to depress your spirits! Are you poor? Believe me, it does not matter what dress you wear, nor in what humble cottage you live, nor how your face may be begrimed with your toil if you are willing! The King of Glory will come in! He loves to live in those men’s hearts whose bodies, like His own, suffer fatigue, and wear the garments of the workman. Perhaps you say, “But my body has been defiled with sin.” But where He comes He cleanses the house by His Presence!

You never hear it said, “The world is not fit for the sun, because it is so dark, for where the sun comes he makes light.” And if after a long winter the world has grown cold and frostbitten, it is not said of the spring, “You must not come, for the world is not fit for you!” No, but the genial influences of spring loosen the rivers, and clothe the earth with verdure, and bid the bonds of frost be removed! And so spring makes a palace fit for herself and strews it with flowers from her own hands.

My Master will come into your house and live, though you are not worthy that He should come under your roof. He was born in a manger where the horned oxen fed. He will be born in your heart, where devils once dwelt. My Lord, when He does stoop, may well stoop as low as He can. It is the greatest wonder that He should stoop at all—not that He stoops in any one particular direction, for, after all, though some of you may have been gross offenders, while others of us, from our youth up, have never uttered an oath, nor entered upon a lascivious action—yet there is not so much difference between you and us as that it should seem strange that He should come to you.

If you are black in one sense, we are black in another. And if you have been a drunkard, well, I have been an unbeliever. And if you have been a thief, well, I have played false to God. And if there is one sin into which I have not plunged, I have plunged into another. We are very much alike, after all, and it is not so wonderful a thing, if we once get our hearts filled with the true wonder that Christ should have saved sinners at all, that He should condescend to display that wonderful Grace by saving those who, in the recklessness and daring of their crimes, are ostensibly such great sinners! Jesus Christ will come in.

“Well, but suppose He should not?” says one. Ah, never suppose what cannot be! “Him that comes unto Me, I will in nowise cast out.” Why, the very angels must sometimes be astonished as they say, “Lord, here is such a one coming—shall we shut the gate?” “No,” says He, “for I have said that him that comes, I will in nowise cast out.” Surely, when the angel of mercy saw Saul of Tarsus coming, he said, “Lord, here is a man who has had his garments spattered with the blood of Stephen! Here is that fierce wolf who has whetted his fangs in the blood of many of the saints! Here comes this blasphemer, this persecutor—must not he be excluded?”

No. The gate stood open and he found admittance. And as he entered he turned round, and said to the others who were timidly standing outside, “I obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.” O Soul, if you desire to have Christ, there is no reason why you should not have Him! No, you shall have Him! If you have got so far, by His Grace, as to have said, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors,” then “the King of Glory shall come in,” and you shall find a Savior in your heart if you are but willing to receive Him there.

VI. And now, lastly, observe that our text says, “THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN. This title belongs to the Savior. It proclaims Him in His highest authority. How shall I interpret this to you? The weight, the exceeding eternal weight of glory which belongs to the King of Glory, I cannot explain. O that your thoughts may excel my words! I think I hear a cry, “Behold, your King comes! The King! The King! Stand back, make way! The King comes.”

There is a moment’s bustle, and it is succeeded by a breathless pause. Everyone forgets the business in which he was engaged and loses the thread of thought in which he was absorbed. All eyes turn, as if by instinct, to look from what direction that cry has broken on their ears: “THE KING OF GLORY!” A thrill passes through your nerves, a shock goes to your heart as you listen to the note which tells of His high prerogative. “Who is this King of Glory?” What peerless Prince is this, with a name above every name, and a royalty higher than the kings of the earth?

“THE LORD OF HOSTS, HE IS THE KING OF GLORY.” And while you look, He is near. You look, you gaze, you behold the pageantry of His high estate, and awe stifles your breath, admiration chains your senses. “Could I have one wish,” said that eloquent preacher at the Hague, Mr. James Saurin, “Could I have one wish to answer my proposed end of preaching today with efficacy, it would be to show you God in this assembly.” And I say to you, Brothers and Sisters, could I present at the door of your hearts the King of Glory, and constrain you to see Him, you would not hesitate, but open wide the gates to admit Him!

Behold the King! Resplendent with all the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world! Invested with all the offices of dignity which Jehovah has put upon Him! Wearing all the brilliant trophies of His victorious achievements. Hark! Hark! The trumpeters proclaim Him! Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, in loud and swelling notes announce His advent! The acclamations of the redeemed, a vast throng, greet Him! And He rides in triumph straight up to your heart!

One glance at Him, Sinner, shows you plainly that He challenges your submission by all the grandeur of His title, by all the illustrious insignia of His solemn functions, by all the renown of His mighty acts. As the King of Glory, He must come in—

*“But know, nor of the terms complain,  
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign.  
To reign, but not with partial sway,  
Thoughts must be slain that disobey.”*

As liege subjects, then, you must yield Him all your homage. Oh, are you willing that the priest should come in? “Yes,” you say, “that is what I want. I want Christ to come in with His precious blood, like a priest, and sprinkle me with hyssop, and take away my sins.” He will come as a priest, but not if you refuse him as your King.

“Yes,” says another, “I am quite willing to receive Christ as a prophet. I want to understand the doctrines. They have puzzled me a great deal, and I want to comprehend them.” Well, Christ will come as a prophet, but He will not come as a prophet unless you are willing to receive Him, also, as your King. O Sinner, Jesus Christ must have the mastery in your heart, or you shall not have Him at all! Come, now, you have followed your own will—that must be given up. Do you not like that yoke? Do you say, “No, I never did wear one”? You must wear it, or you will be lost.

Look at it, now—see how softly it lies! It will never gall your shoulders. “My yoke is easy: My burden is light.” Now, you know you have been your own master and what incessant mutiny there has been in your members. Your own will has been too impotent a ruler to hold the reins of government or maintain peace. You know very well that your own passions have made a great slave of you. Why, the man who gives way to drunkenness— where is there a worse slave in the world than he? Or, take the man who has a passionate temper—why, he does and says a thousand things that he is disgusted with afterwards—but he seems to be driven by his foolishness without the slightest self-control. A worse slavery than that of any galley slave that was ever chained to the oar, is that slavery of a bad temper.

Now, would it not be better to be a servant of Christ than to be the slave of your own hateful lusts, or your own capricious whims? I know what you will say—you cannot serve King Jesus, for your companions would laugh at you, and hold you up to ridicule. Oh, what a mean-spirited creature, then, you must be! And so will you let any peering fool be your chieftain, and become the vassal of any man bolder in wickedness than you are? Why, Sir, do you call yourself an Englishman? Are you a man at all, that you can yield yourself up to be chaffed after this fashion? What? Would you let the gibes or taunts of a workmate restrain you from following what you believe to be good?

Why, I am ashamed of you! Putting aside Christianity altogether, I blush for you as a coward. Surely, you might say to them, “What do I care for your laughs, I can always give you as good as you send, only I take care it shall not be in your spirit. I can hold my own, and if you choose to serve the devil, surely it is a free country. I have as much right to serve the King of Glory as you have to serve the Prince of Darkness. If you choose to go to Hell, let me go to Heaven, surely, you will not pass a law against that!”

There are workmen, I believe, and men of business, and gentlemen, as they are called, of the upper circles who are the most abominable tyrants in their dealings with one another. If you choose to be a Christian, you are sure to get the cold shoulder among the upper classes. No, but the very working men, who prate their democracy, will not let you be a Christian without meeting you at the shop door and saying, “Ah, here is a Presbyterian,” or “a Methodist,” or something of the sort. What is this but trampling upon liberty of conscience with arrogant tyranny? How can we boast of our love of freedom while such a state of things prevails? Surely, a man has a right to his religion, and you have no right to interfere with him about it.

But now, my dear Friend, you are afraid of being laughed at. Let me ask you, which is better, to be a servant of man or a servant of Christ? Whichever way you may judge, you can never enter Heaven’s door, to wear Christ’s crown unless you are here willing to be Christ’s servant, and to bear Christ’s Cross. “Well, but I do not like this. I do not like that.” Refer to the Bible—that is the Master’s Book. As it is written there, so let your life and actions be ruled. You remember what the mother of Jesus said to the servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee? “Whatever He says unto you, do it.” I do not see how you can serve Christ if there is anything in that Book which you see to be there, and yet willfully neglect.

Perhaps there are some of you whom that sentence will hit very hard. I know persons who say they are Baptists in principle, but they have never been baptized! Baptists without any principle at all, I call them—persons who know their Master’s will, but who will not obey it. I can make great excuses for Brethren who do not see it. I think they might see it if they liked. But if they do not discern the precept, I can understand their not obeying it. But when people know their Lord’s will, and do it not—though I am sure I would not wish to speak hastily on such a matter—I am not certain whether willful disobedience to a known command of Christ may not be a token of their

 rejecting Christ altogether. I should not like to run the risk for myself, at any rate.

I should feel it unsafe to say that I believed I was saved, while there was some command of my Lord which I could obey, which I clearly saw to be my duty, and yet to which I solemnly declared I would withhold my obedience. Surely, in such a case, I have not let Christ come into my heart! If you would have Christ, He will be absolute Lord and Master—every humor and stubbornness of yours must be set aside—for where He comes He comes to reign. As He makes His entrance, He comes as the “King of Glory.” That is to say, He must be a glorious King, glorious to you—One whom you seek to glorify.

You must not receive Him as though He were some paltry potentate that you did not care for, but He must be full of glory to you—the “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”—you must receive Him into your heart! Not as men receive a common guest, but as men receive their dearest and most honored friend— one whom they love and reverence with all the powers of their nature. He must be the King of Glory to you. And from now on it must be your desire to glorify Him. This is not a hard thing to ask, for oh, it is the pleasure, it is the ante past of Heaven! It is unspeakable bliss to live to the glory of Christ!

Even when one is suffering, suffering is sweet if it brings Him honor! If one is despised for Christ, it is delightful to be reproached if it does but make Him more glorious—

*“If on my face for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproaches be,  
I’ll hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If You remember me.”*

Oh, to glorify Christ! I think Heaven would lose half its charms for me if I could not glorify Christ there. And the vast howling wilderness were Heaven on earth to me if I might but glorify His name here below! To glorify Christ is far more to the Christian’s mind than harps of gold, streets of crystal, or gates of pearl. This is the true music of the soul! The true excitement of triumph! The true chorus of eternity—that He ever lives, that the crown is on His head—that God also has highly exalted Him. Oh, this is our exultation, this is our joy, our triumph, our blessedness! If we can but promote His glory, the place where we can best promote it shall be our Heaven. The sick bed, the hospital, or the poor house shall be our Heaven, if we can there best serve the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of Glory.

The year is fast drawing to a close. We call it “the year of Grace, 1866.” Oh, that it may, indeed, be “the year of Grace” to some unconverted persons here! It may be that I am not casting my net tonight where there are many such to be found. Most of you, my Hearers, are members of the Church of Christ. You are saved, I trust. Still there are sure to be here and there, like weeds growing in a garden of flowers, some who are still strangers to the Lord Jesus Christ. I would to God that the Holy Spirit would move them to say, “Come in, Savior! Let the King of Glory come in!”

Oh, let this true saying of the faithful and true witness be your encouragement: “If any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” What a blessed thing! You breakfasted with the devil, and dined with the world—what a mercy if you should sup with Christ! And what a blessed supper you would have! Why, when you woke tomorrow it would be to breakfast with Christ! It would be to hear Him say, “Come and dine,” and then to sup with Him again, and so on until you come to eat bread at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

May the Lord bless you. And if He grants me my heart’s desire, you will each of you say to your souls, “Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift them up, you everlasting doors! And the King of Glory shall come in.”

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THE COVENANTER  
NO. 1975

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 31, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant and His testimonies.”  
Psalm 25:10.**

THIS Psalm is intensely earnest. “Unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” The sentences are ingots of gold. Every word is exceedingly weighty with sense and sincerity. I take it that one reason for this weight is the fact that David was in affliction. He says, “I am desolate and afflicted. Look upon my affliction and my pain.” Pain is a great disenchanter. Flowery speeches suit the summer tide of our health, but we find them not in the winter of our grief. Pain kills fine phrases as a mighty frost kills butterflies and moths. You can play with religion until you are laid low and then it becomes serious work. The romance of religion is one thing—the reality of it is another. It would be a great blessing to some if they were shriveled with a little pain, otherwise they will grow unbearable in their pride. The frog drinks and drinks—and thinks he will soon swell into an ox—one single bitter drop is mingled with the stream and he is back into a frog again. It is often the best thing that can happen to us that we should be reduced to our true selves and not be left to strut about as noble somebodies. May our meditations this morning be solid and leave on our minds no savor of unreality!

Mixed also with David’s suffering was a sense of sin. Read verse eleven, “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” And again, in verse eighteen, “Forgive all my sins.” No man need have a worse trouble than conviction of sin. A thorn in the flesh is nothing to a thorn in the conscience. A sense of sin is another great disenchanter. This bursts the bubbles of conceit by thousands. When the heart is awakened and sin is laid bare by the Spirit of God, so that we are truly humbled by it, life ceases to be sport and an awful earnestness pervades our being. To carry burning coals in the bosom is nothing compared with bearing sin in an awakened conscience. There is no cheating your soul when sin lies hard on it and no attempt is then made at dealing with God in a dishonest manner. But, crushed into the dust, we pine for a real atonement and a real faith in it—and the true seal of the Spirit to make our pardon sure. When sin is truly felt, we come before the great Father, not with mimic sorrow, but with downright soul-weeping and heartbreaking. We cry to Him, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” If we feel either of these two things, pain or sin—and who among us can hope to be without them at all times?—then we shall see the solemn side of life and look for those sure consolations by which we may be sustained. I hope that our subject of discourse today may help in that direction.

One other thing is notable about David in writing this Psalm—whatever his trouble might be and however deep his sense of sin—he always looked Godward. He cries, “Unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” “Remember me for Your goodness’ sake, O Lord.” In our text his mind dwells upon “the paths of the Lord.” The ungodly fly away from God when He chastens them, but the saints kiss the chastening rod. The child of God goes home when it grows dark. We seek our healing from the hand which has wounded us! Which way do you look in a storm? If the Lord is now your haven, you shall fly to Him in the last dread storm, for that way your eyes have turned these many years. If you look for everything from God, you are looking out of the right window. When your eyes look toward the great sea of Divine All-Sufficiency, you shall not look in vain. You may have to come again seven times before you see your deliverance and when you see it, it may seem no bigger than a man’s hand, but you shall not be ashamed in the end. I trust this mark and evidence of a child of God is upon many of you this morning and if it is, you are among the Lord’s host whom I would call to the battle! With your eyes looking right on and your eyelids straight before you, come with me to the rallying-place of the Lord of Hosts!

In my text I see two things worth talking about. The first is, the spiritual covenanter—“such as keep His Covenant and His testimonies.” And, secondly, here is his notable experience—“all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant.”

I. Observe in the text the footprint of THE SPIRITUAL COVENANTER. You have all heard of the old Covenanters of Scotland. Their decision of mind and force of character—their theory of government for the kingdom of Scotland was quaintly unpractical—but it grew out of true and deep fear of the Lord. The Old Testament spirit in them was not enough tinctured with the meekness of the Lord Jesus, or they would not have touched the weapons of steel, but in this mistake they were very far from being alone. In my bedroom I have hung up the picture of an old Covenanter. He sits in a wild glen with his Bible open before him on a huge stone. He leans on his great broadsword and his horse stands quietly at his side. Evidently he smells the battle afar off and is preparing for it by drinking in some mighty promise. As you look into the old man’s face you can almost hear him saying to himself, “For the crown of Christ and the Covenant, I would gladly lay down my life this day.”

They did lay down their lives, too, right gloriously, and Scotland owes to her covenanting fathers far more than she knows. It was a grand day, that in which they spread the Solemn League and the Covenant upon the tombstones of the old Kirk yard in Edinburgh—and all sorts of men came forward to set their names to it! Glorious was that roll of worthies. There were the lords of the covenant and the common men of the covenant—and some pricked a vein and dipped the pen into their blood, that they might write their names with the very fluid of their hearts! All over England there were men who entered into a like Solemn League and Covenant and met together to worship God according to their right and not according to human order-books. They were resolved upon this one thing—that Rome should not come back to place and power while they could lift a hand against her—neither should any other power in throne or Parliament prevent the free exercise of their consciences for Christ’s cause and Covenant!

These stern old men, with their stiff notions, have gone. And what have we in their places? Indifference and frivolity! We have no Roundheads and Puritans, but then we do have scientific dress-making and we play lawn tennis! We have no contentions for the faith, but then our amusements occupy all our time! This wonderful 19th Century has become a child and put away manly things. Self-contained men—men in whom is the true grit—are now few and far between as compared with the old covenanting days!

But I want to speak this morning, not of the old covenanters, but of those who at this day keep the Covenant of the Lord. Would to God we had among us great companies of “such as keep His Covenant and remember His Commandments to do them”! The true covenanter is one who has found God and, therein, has made the greatest discovery that was ever made. He has discovered not only a God, but the living and true God—and he is resolved to be on living terms with Him for time and for eternity! He will henceforth never shut his eyes to God, for his longing is to see more and more of Him. He is determined to be right with God, for he feels that if he were right with all his fellow creatures and everything about them, yet if he were wrong with God, he would be out of order in the main point. He has settled in his own soul that he will know the Lord, be right with Him, at peace with Him, yes, and in league with Him! It is not natural for men to thus cling to God and seek after Him—but it has become natural to this man—so that he hungers and thirsts for the living God. By this very fact the man is ennobled! He is lifted up above the brutes that perish. A man capable of the idea of covenant with God and taken up with a passion for it, must surely be born from above! There must be a Divine Nature within him, or he would not be drawn towards the Divine One above him. It is even so—the Spirit of God has been working here!

Already, too, this man has discovered another Covenant, whose ruins lay between him and God and block the road. Turning to his Bible, the Believer discovers that we were, from the first, under covenant towards God. He reads of the first Covenant, the Covenant with our first father, Adam, which was broken by his disobedience, whose fatal breach has brought upon us unnumbered losses and woes. This Covenant the Believer has not ignored, for he has felt his share in its failure and come under the condemnation of it. His very desire to be right with God has brought home to him the judgment of the Law. He has smarted under the lash of it. He has seen the Lord arrayed in robes of justice avenging the quarrel of His Covenant and he has said to himself, “What shall I do? The Law is holy and the Commandment holy and just and good. But I am carnal, sold under sin.”

Brothers and Sisters, we are condemned under the first Covenant, not only by the act of our representative, but also through our personal endorsement of his rebellion by our own actual sin. That Covenant, which should have been a Covenant of life, has become a Covenant of death to us. You know what I mean, for I speak to many who know, by deep personal experience, what it is to be the prisoners of the Covenant, shut up in soul despair and numbered for destruction. You could not keep the Law—you felt you could not, though you wished you could—the future was against you. As for former violations of the Law, you could make no amends for them—the past was against you. Even then your inward corruptions were gnawing at your heart like the worm that never dies and the horseleech that is never satisfied—the present was against you. Yet despite all this, you still followed after the Lord and could not live without Him!

This covenanter of whom I speak is one who has, through Divine enlightenment, perceived a better Covenant and sure salvation therein. He has seen in the Lord Jesus a Second Adam, greater than the first, and he has heard the glorious Lord exclaim, “I have given Him as a Covenant for the people.” He has seen Jesus pledged unto God to make good the breaches of the broken Covenant! The Believer has seen the Son of God arrayed in blood-stained garments coming from Gethsemane. He has seen Him answering at the bar for the broken Law, scourged with the chastisement of our peace and bound with the bands of our condemnation. I say the Believer has seen the beloved Surety of the New Covenant meeting the Law’s demands at Calvary, surrendering His hands to be nailed for our sins, His feet to be fastened up for our wanderings and His heart to be pierced for our wantonness!

O my Soul, have you not seen your Lord bareheaded amid the tempest of Divine wrath for sin? Have you not heard Him cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me”? If so, you have seen how, out of the old Covenant, the new was born, like life from between the ribs of death! Our soul has stood in the midst of the horrible tempest, half-blinded by the lightning and deafened by the thunder. At last there has been a tear in the black mantle and a shower of wondrous love has followed the black tempest—and a Voice has been heard, sweeter than the harps of angels, saying, “It is finished.” Thus have the Lord’s covenanted ones come forth from under the old Covenant into a Covenant of Grace, in which peace and joy abound! Now are we in happy league with God! Now we would think and feel and act in harmony with God! Our covenant with Him shall compass all our life—we are His and He is ours. “The Lord is my portion, says my soul” and, on the other hand, “The Lord’s portion is His people.” Henceforth we would have no life except for the living God! He is our ambition and our expectation, our end and our way, our desire and our delight! He rejoices over us to do us good and we rejoice ourselves in Him and seek His Glory.

The spiritual covenanter has the Covenant with God written on the tablets of his heart. I have known Believers, when first converted, follow a hint given them by Dr. Doddridge in his, “Rise and Progress of Religion,” where he draws up a covenant which he invites the reader to sign. Some have executed a deed with great solemnity and have also observed the day of its signature from year to year. Very proper, no doubt, to some natures, but I fear that to the more timid and conscientious, such covenants are apt to cause bondage. When they find that they have not, in all things, lived up to their own pledges, they are apt to cut themselves off from all part and lot in the matter—this is the Covenant of Works and not of Grace! It is a covenant on paper and not the Covenant written upon the heart and mind. The true covenanter wills the will of God. It is not merely that God commands him to do right, but he longs to do it. God’s Law is his love. That which is pleasing to God is pleasing to His people because their hearts are made like His own. The Divine likeness is restored by the Spirit of Grace and, therefore, the will of the Lord is written out upon the new-born nature. Holiness is the passion of a true Believer. He consents and assents to the Law, that it is good, and the Divine Life within him delights itself in the Law of the Lord. This is the surest sort of Covenant— this Divine writing in the nature, according to that gracious promise—“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” “I will put My Law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts.” O happy man whose covenant with God is the Covenant of his own desire, who wills and wishes and longs and labors to yield himself fully and wholly unto the Law of his God!

This covenanting man does not regard himself any more as one by himself, for he is joined unto the Lord and has entered into the closest fellowship with Him. None can separate him from God—the union is vital and complete. He has thrown his little all into God’s great all and taken God’s great all unto himself to be his heritage forever! And now, therefore, he is in God and God in him. You ask me what it is which thus binds the man to God? I answer—he feels that he is joined unto the Lord for many reasons and among the best because the Lord has chosen him to be His own. He is old-fashioned enough to believe that God has a choice in the salvation of men and he perceives, because faith has been granted him, that the Lord has evidently chosen him unto salvation. He often cries, “Why me? Why me?” and yet knowing that those whom the Lord calls by Grace, He first predestinated thereto, he is not ashamed to believe in his election!

Now the man that believes that God has chosen him—that is the man to enter into covenant with God and to keep that covenant! He that is chosen of God chooses God and chooses Him because he is chosen. The vows of God are upon him. Such amazing Grace compels him to a consecrated life.

Moreover, in addition to the choice of God, this covenanter sees a blood-mark upon his body, soul and spirit. The redemption made on the Cross, whatever its other bearings, is seen by the Believer to be specially for him. He cries, “For me the bloody sweat! For me the spitting and the scourging! For me the nails and the spear! Truly I am not my own, I am bought with a price.” This blood-bought man feels that he cannot be as other men are—he must subscribe with his hand unto the God of Jacob and acknowledge and confess that he belongs only to the Lord. Others may be their own lords, but as for us, we have been redeemed, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God! O Sirs, if you know your election and your redemption, you must and will dedicate yourselves unto the Lord by a covenant which cannot be broken! If the choice of the Father and the redemption of the Son do not supply us with a potent force towards holiness, what can do so? Well may we be the covenanted ones of God when we are thus distinguished.

Besides, the covenanting Believer feels that he has been the subject of a special call. Whatever God may have done with others, he knows that He has dealt specially with him in a way of Grace and mercy. The Lord has said to him, “I have called you by your name; you are Mine.” A Voice has called him from his kindred and from his father’s house as surely as Abraham was called. The Lord, Himself, has brought him out of darkness into marvelous light. Whatever the Gospel may be to the congregation at large, it has been the power of God to him, for in it he has felt the touch of a Hand unfelt before and heard the sound of a Voice unheard in all the days gone by. Omnipotent Grace has awakened the echoes of his soul. “When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek.” This special and effectual call is another mighty reason for entering into league and covenant with God. By that Omnipotent call, O Lord, I render up myself to You. Let the world do as it wills, we cannot account for its folly, but as for us and our house, we will serve the Lord. Our bonds of amity with the world are broken—let it do and say what it will—but to the Lord are we bound forever by that same power which has fetched us out of our former slavery. What with election, redemption and calling, what more can we say?

Yes, I can say something more, for this true covenanter feels that he is now united to God in Christ Jesus. Matchless doctrine, unity with God through Jesus Christ! No man knows all the name and nature of the man quickened of the Spirit. You cannot tell from where he comes, nor where he goes. We talk of aristocrats, but Believers are the aristocrats of Heaven and earth! We often hear the words, “royalty,” and, “blood royal”—the blood royal of the universe is in the man that believes in Jesus! He has made us unto our God, kings and priests. By virtue of our union with Christ, we are one with God and partakers of the Divine Nature. The day shall come when all the gewgaws and trappings of courts shall be laid aside as faded tawdriness—and then the true dignity and honor of the twice-born, the quickened by the Holy Spirit, shall be truly seen. To be members of the body of Christ—this means glory, indeed! To be married unto the King’s Son, even to the Lord Jesus—this means such bliss as angels cannot reach! Do you wonder that because of such immeasurable privilege we make a sure covenant with God?

There are three or four things I would say briefly about this true covenanter—the Lord make each one of us to be of his stamp! You may know him by his attachment to the Lord Jesus, who is the sum, substance, surety and seal of the Covenant. You may also know him by his zeal for the Gospel through which the Covenant is revealed to the sons of men. He will not hear anything which is not according to the old Gospel, for he counts another Gospel to be a pestilent evil. He is very fond of the word, “Grace,” and with the thing itself he is altogether enamored. The man that is in covenant with God cannot bear the idea of human merit—he loathes it—it raises his indignation. Have I not known some Christian people come out from hearing certain sermons with their souls on fire with holy wrath? I feel, in casting my eyes over many modern writings, as if I had breathed poisonous gas and was likely to die. We cannot endure the smell of sacramentarianism, priestism and human righteousness! Others may feed on philosophical morality, but nothing but the Grace of God will do for us! Cats and dogs may feed on any rubbish, but men of God must live on the Grace of God and nothing else! Our keeping the Covenant and the testimonies binds us to a firm adherence to the Inspired Gospel and the Grace of God which is the Glory of it.

He who is, indeed, in covenant with God is known by his continual regard to the life, walk, and triumph of faith. He has faith and by that faith he lives and grows. He is and has and does all things by faith—and you cannot tempt him away from that faith wherein he stands. Carnal sense and fleshly feeling are not able to tempt him from believing. The highest enjoyment proffered by a fancied perfection cannot charm him from standing by faith. “No,” he says, “I must trust, or else it is all over with me. My element is faith and, as a fish out of water dies, so do I die and all my covenanting with God dies, too, unless I cling by faith to the promise of a faithful God.” Though all men should live by sight and feeling, yet will not the true covenanter quit the hallowed way of faith in the Lord!

This covenanting man will also be known by his stern resolve to preserve the Gospel in its purity and hand it on to others. When the Truth of God was made known to Abraham, it was committed to him and to his descendants as a sacred deposit of which they were to be the guardians and trustees. It was theirs to keep that lamp burning by which the rest of the elect would, in due time, would be saved from darkness. At this hour the eternal Truths of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are given over to certain chosen men and women to be preserved by them till the coming of the Lord. This keeping is to be accompanied with a constant proclamation, so that the Truth of God may spread as well as live, and may go on conquering and to conquer. O you who are the covenanted ones of God, let not His Gospel suffer damage!

I charge you that love the Lord to bind the Gospel about you more firmly than ever. Bear aloft the standard of our grand army. The bloodstained colors of the Cross—bear them to the front—spread them to every wind and uplift them on every hill! And if you cannot spread the Truth and are shut up to defend it, then do so even to the death! Wrap the colors about your heart! Be wrapped in them as in your shroud if you cannot live bearing them as your flag! A true covenanter says, “Sooner death than false of faith.” The crown of our Lord Jesus shall never suffer loss. We will do everything for Jesus! We will, for His sake, bear reproach and for His sake labor to win souls unto God. We vow that He shall be glorified in our mortal bodies and that by some means His great name shall be made known to the ends of the earth. O my comrades! I am revived by the very thought of you. God has yet His faithful covenanters who have not bowed the knee to Baal, to whom the Lord is God and King forever and ever!

II. Under our second head let us now study THE COVENANTER’S NOTABLE EXPERIENCE. The text says, “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant and His testimonies.”

Observe, first, that the Lord makes many approaches to covenanting men. He does not leave them alone, but He comes to them and manifests Himself to them. By the expression, “All the paths of the Lord,” I learn that the Lord has many ways of drawing near to His chosen. Not in the public highways of Grace, only, does He meet those with whom He is on terms of peace, but in many private and secret paths. In a grass field, a path is made by constant treading, and God makes paths to His people by continually drawing near unto their souls and communing with them. The Lord has many paths, for He comes to them from different points of the compass, according as their experience requires. He sometimes uses this way and sometimes another, that He may commune with us. He will never leave His covenanted ones alone for long. Often does He say, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

I like the word, “paths,” as we have it in our English version, for it seems to say that the Lord has walks of His own. He makes ways for Himself and comes along them quietly, taking His people at unawares. On a sudden He whispers a Word of heavenly promise and then is away again. But He is not long gone—He makes another path and comes to us with new unction and fresh revealings. His visits to us have been many and gracious. O my Hearer, if you will give yourself to God, God will give Himself to you! Young man, I invite you to the grand destiny of one that shall henceforth live with God, to whom God shall manifest Himself. Will not this be a distinguished honor? Do not think it unattainable! God may be reached—if you will consecrate yourself to Him this day by a Covenant of Salt through Jesus Christ the Ever-Blessed Sacrifice—you shall know the visitations of the Almighty! You shall, like Enoch, walk with God!

Believe me, I speak truth and soberness. Between this place and the pearly gates, the Lord will come unto you, yes, He will take up His abode with you. When you cannot get to Him, He will come to you, for He is a great path maker. His ways are in the sea and He leaps over the mountains. He has a desire to the work of His hands and that desire will break through stone walls to reach you! What a life is that to which the Lord makes innumerable paths! Happy shall He be who shall attain to it!

Note, next, that all the dealings of God with His people are in a way of mercy. “All the paths of the Lord are mercy.” This is well, for the best of the saints will always need mercy. Those who keep His Covenant are still kept by His mercy. When they grow in Grace and come to be fully developed Christians, they still need mercy for their sins, their weaknesses, their necessities. The Lord exercises mercy to the most highly instructed Believer as well as to the babe in Grace—mercy to the most useful worker as much as to the most weary sufferer. Thank God that His mercy towards us is forever!

That mercy will always be “tender mercy,” abiding mercy and abounding mercy. His mercy is constant as the day, fresh as the hour, new every morning. Mercy covers all. In every gift of Providence and in every way of predestination, mercy may be seen. It would be greatly to our advantage to think more of the mercy of God to us. So much of His mercy comes and goes without our noticing it! Shame that the Lord should thus be deprived of the revenues of His praise!

In Hebrews I find the word here used is, “wheel tracks,” such ruts as wagons make when they go down our green roads in wet weather and sink up to the axles. God’s ways are, at times, like heavy wagon tracks and they cut deep into our souls—yet they are, all of them, mercy. Whether our days trip along like the angels mounting on Jacob’s ladder to Heaven, or grind along like the wagons which Joseph sent for Jacob, they are, in each case, ordered in mercy! I stand by the happy memories of a tried past, as in summer weather I walk down a green lane and as I look at the deep ruts which God’s Providence made long ago. I see flowers of mercies growing in them. All the crushing and the crashing was in goodness. Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life! Yes, “all the days of my life”—the dark and cloudy, the stormy and the wintry— as surely as in “the days of Heaven upon the earth.” Brothers and Sisters, we may sing a song of unmingled mercy! The paths of God have been to us nothing else but mercy. Mercy, mercy, mercy! “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.”

The Psalmist says, “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.” That is to say, God has always shown the Truth of His Word. He has never been false to His pledges. He has done according to His Word. Moreover, the blessings which God has promised have always turned out to be as He represented them. We have followed no cunningly devised fables. The blessings of Grace are not fancies or frenzies, exaggerations or mere sentiments. The Lord has never fallen short of His promise. He has never kept His Word to the ear and broken it to the heart. All the ways of God have not only been merciful and true, but they have been essential “mercy and truth.” We have had truth of mercy; verity of mercy; substantial, solid, essential mercy. I have found no delusion in trusting in God. I may have been a dreamer in some things, but when I have lived unto God I have then exercised the shrewdest common sense and have walked after the rule of prudence.

It is no vain thing to serve God—the vanity lies on the other side. I know that many of you think that Christian experience leans to the region of sentiment, if not of imagination—but, indeed, it is not so! The surest fact in a Believer’s life is God’s nearness to him, care for him, love to him. Other things are shadows or shinings which come and go, but the goodness of God is the substance, the truth, the reality of life. How I wish I could persuade you of this! But, alas, the carnal mind will not receive spiritual things! I may bear witness of that which I taste and handle, but you will not believe me. Divine Spirit, come and open blinded eyes!

To this rule there is no exception— “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant.” They say there is no rule without an exception, but there is an exception to that rule. All God’s dealings with His people are gracious and faithful. Sometimes the ways of God are full of Truth and mercy manifestly—they have been so to me in many a notable instance. I hope I do not trouble you too often with personal experiences. I do not narrate them out of egotism, but because it seems to me that every Christian should add his own personal testimony to the heap of evidence which proves the Truths of our God. If I tell you about John Newton, you answer, “He is dead,” but if I tell you of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, he stands before you!

Some 10 days ago I was called to bear a baptism of pain. I had a night of anguish and the pangs ceased not in the morning. How gladly would I escape from these acute attacks, but it seems I may not hope it! I felt worn down and spent. Far on in the morning my ever-thoughtful secretary came by my bedside and cheered me greatly by the news that the letters brought tidings of considerable help to the various enterprises. In fact, there was far more coming in than is at all usual at this season! A legacy was reported of £500 for the Orphanage and £500 for the College. Another will was mentioned in which the Orphanage was made residuary legatee. Living friends had also sent large sums as by a kind of concert of liberality! They did not know that their poor friend was going to be very ill that morning, but their Lord knew, and He moved them to take away every care from His servant. It seemed to me as if my Lord said to me, “Now, you are not going to fret and worry while you are ill. You shall have no temptation to do so, for I will send you so much help for all My work that you shall not dare to be cast down.”

Truly in this the paths of the Lord to me were mercy and truth! Many and many a time have I been lost in wonder at the Lord’s mercy to His unworthy servant. I bow my head and bless the name of the Lord and cry, “Why this to me?” Ah, Brothers and Sisters! One can bear rheumatism or gout when mercy flows in as a flood! “Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?” Seeing it all comes from the same hands, we should receive it with equal cheerfulness. Now will I suffer with patience and endure with tranquility, for the Lord has dealt graciously and tenderly with His servant! I have often found His consolations abound in proportion to my tribulations, insomuch that I am on the lookout for the mercy when I begin to feel the smart, even as a child looks for the sweet when he finds himself called upon to take medicine. Those more closely around about me say, “Now that you have a bad time of personal suffering, you will see the Lord doing wonderfully for you”—and they are not disappointed. Indeed, I serve a good Master—I can speak well of Him at all times—and specially do I find Him kind when the weather is rough around His pilgrim child!

Have you not found it so in your way? Come, dear Friends, you cannot speak this morning, for one is enough for a public assembly, but you can speak when you have had your dinners and your children are round about you. Tell them how gracious God has been to you in your times of trouble. Utter exceedingly the memory of His great goodness!

Mark you, when we cannot see it, the Lord is just as merciful in His ways to us. We may not expect to be indulged and pampered by being made to see the mercy of God, like silly children that will be in a pet and a fume unless their father stuffs their mouths with sweetmeats and their hands with toys. God is as good when He denies as when He grants! And though we often see the marvelous tenderness of our God, it is not necessary that we should see it to make it true. Our God is wise as a father and tender as a mother—and when we cannot comprehend His methods, we still believe in His love. This is not credulity, but a confidence to which the Lord is fully entitled! There can be no doubt about it, that “all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His Covenant.”

I hear some say, “These things do not happen to me. I find myself struggling, alone, and full of sorrow.” Do you keep the Covenant? Some of you professing Christian people live just any way and not by Covenant rule. You do not live to God. You do not keep His Covenant. You do not observe His testimonies. You are not living consecrated lives! Therefore, if you do not enjoy His mercy and His truth, do not blame the Lord! The text says that all His paths are mercy and truth “unto such as keep His Covenant.” Remember the saying and do not expect the blessing apart from it. O child of God, be more careful to keep the way of the Lord—more concentrated in heart in seeking His Glory—and you shall see the loving kindness and the tender mercy of the Lord to you. God bless this feeble testimony of mine to all who are assembled here this morning!

I have this much to add to it—What a bliss it is to have entered upon the spiritual life and to be in covenant with God! If there were no mercy joined to it of a Providential character, it would nevertheless be the grandest thing that ever could happen to any of us to be living onto God. I call all short of this death and I know no other name for it. What solidity we have in godliness! It puts eternal rock beneath our feet. There are fascinating things in life about which you are almost afraid to enquire, for fear they should not prove to be what they seem. All earthborn joys are of this kind—their charms are on the surface, their beauty is skin deep. But in regard to the life consecrated to God by His Covenant and then enriched by His mercy—you may pry, dig, search—and the more you do so, the more you will be positive that now you are in the land of realities! Though we do not see, yet we perceive with a perception clearer than sight—and we shall so perceive through life! And when they fling back those golden gates and we peer into the spirit land, then shall we value, most of all, the life which observes the Covenant of God and is surrounded with mercy and truth!

What a wondrous thing the life of a consecrated man will seem to be when it shall be viewed in its completeness in the light of the eternal Throne of God! Then will the embroidery of love be seen in its beauty and the fabric of life will be acknowledged to be worthy of a God. Things not seen as yet will be seen, then—and things known in part will be seen in all their bearings! I suppose that one of the engagements of Heaven will be to observe how kindly our God has dealt with us upon the road. At any rate, when we come to the Glory Land, we shall only reckon that to have been true life which was spent in communion with God. Link us with God and we live—divide us from Him and we are dead!

I hear worldlings mutter—“What is the man thinking? We know nothing and care nothing about being in covenant with God.” Truly you despise the life I set before you, but it is your own way of life which most deserves scorn, O you who live for gain or pleasure! I will sketch you with the pencil of the Truth of God. It is a country scene and it passed under my own eyes but a few hours ago. I sat by the river, at a point where abundant springs poured forth new streams. It was a brook, wide but shallow, and the pure water glided along refreshingly under the overhanging boughs. Little children were there, wading into the stream and enjoying its cool waters. One of them was a true representative of your wealthy merchants. He went fishing with a bright green glass bottle and his ventures were successful. Again and again I heard his voice ring out most joyously and impressively, “Look! Look! Here! Here! Such a big ’un! I have caught such a big ’un!” It was by no means a whale which he had taken, but a fish which might be half-an-inch long. How he exulted! “Such a big ’un!” To him the affairs of nations were as nothing compared with the great spoil which he had taken. That is the gentleman upon the Exchange who has made that successful speculation! For the next few days he will astonish everybody as they hear that it was “such a big ’un!” Earth, Heaven and Hell—time and eternity—may all accept the go-by, now that the glass bottle contains its prey! I confess I was not carried away with admiration for the child’s fortune, neither did I envy him the fullness of his satisfaction.

His brother, not far off, varied my picture for me. He was less richly endowed and yet he had a very serviceable tin can with which he fished most diligently. Soon I heard his voice pitched in another key—“Nasty little things! They won’t come here! I can’t catch ’em! They’re good for nothing! I won’t try any more.” Then the impetuous genius threw his tin can with a splash into the water—and his enterprise was ended. That is the gentleman whose company has been wound up, or whose goods will not command a market. Things will not come his way. He cannot get on. He has made a failure of it and is in the Gazette. All society is out of order, or he would have been sure to succeed. He is sick of it all for the present. You smile at my boys! O worldlings, these are yourselves! You are those children—and your ambitions are their stories—

*“O happy man that lives on high,*

*While men lie groveling here.”*  
Without God you are paddling in the brooklet of life, fishing for minnows! If you get a grip of God, because He has laid hold on you, O Man, there is then a soul in you! Then have you come to be allied with angels and akin to seraphim! Apart from God you subside into shameful littleness. O Lord Jesus pity those who forget You! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 25.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—116 (SONG II), 664, 663.  
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GREAT PARDON FOR GREAT SIN  
NO. 2988

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 17, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1862.

**“For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” Psalm 25:11.**

THIS striking prayer is hemmed in, as it were, between two promises. It looks like a fossil embedded in a mass of stone! What is the meaning of it being here? Why is it put in such a peculiar position? The Psalmist is both praising and preaching—how is it that he turns to praying? Beloved, I think it was to teach us that prayer is never out of place. When the Apostle Paul was writing the most doctrinal of his Epistles, he sometimes paused in the midst of them to offer a supplication, as when he said, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When engaged in any holy duties, you may even refrain from praise for a moment in order to present a prayer to God. Nor would it be amiss for us, sometimes, to break the thread of a sermon, that the people might pause and join with the preacher in asking God’s blessing upon the message of mercy and upon all who hear it. Certainly, my dear Friends, you will never find any time inopportune for prayer if your heart is true and your faith in full force.

The Mohammedans have their fixed hours for prayer and when they hear the signal from the minaret of the mosque, wherever they may be— in the street or in the market place—they bow their heads to Allah and repeat their form of prayer. Without their boastful showiness, you may “pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” We need not be confined to special seasons when a summons is given, but, at all times and in every place, we may “continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” When your hands are measuring out your goods, when they are pushing the plane, or driving the nail— when you are driving the plow, or threshing the corn—if you are speeding along the iron way, or walking among the cornfields, your heart may have fellowship with Him—

*“Who is within no walls confined,*

*But habits the humble mind”—*  
who counts all places holy where men are holy, and all spots suitable places for prayer when the heart is in a prayerful frame! My Soul, wait upon God in your daily calling and think not that you can ever approach Him at an unseasonable hour, or lift up your cry to Him when He is otherwise engaged, so that He cannot attend to your petition!

Were it necessary to my present purpose to explain the connection of this prayer with the scope of the Psalm, it would not be difficult. The promise that the Psalmist had just recited is, “unto such as keep His Covenant.” It was the besetting sin of Israel to break the Covenant. Do you not see that the condition here mentioned would shut the door of hope to many? The greatness of the promise often stirs up our deepest anxieties, lest any of us should seem to come short of it. Depend upon it, Brothers and Sisters, that the prayer for pardon which is never unfitting at any time, can never be more fitting than when our hearts are lifted up with the loftiest apprehension of God’s Covenant!

My principal aim tonight, however, is to bring my Hearers and myself, all of us, to feel with David that our iniquity is great. When I have done this, I shall very briefly try to show how the very greatness of our iniquity may become a plea with God—“Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.” And I shall close with some earnest entreaties to those who have never sought pardon for sin, to seek it now.

I. Well then, first, DAVID DECLARED THAT HIS INIQUITY WAS GREAT.  
The word used in the original conveys the idea of quantity as well as of quality. Not simply was his sin great in its atrocity, but there was very much of it! Any one sin was great, but it was not merely one, but ten thousand times ten thousand in multitude! His sin was as great in its bulk as it was black in its heinousness. Now, I do not know, although David had one very terrible fall, that any humble-minded person here would consider himself to be superior to David. He was a man after God’s own heart and, notwithstanding the great blot upon this sun, we would not hesitate to say he is a sun for all that. For David presents a character so admirable, so all but matchless in the harmony of the different Graces that we think he certainly approaches very near to his great Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly, if David felt his iniquity to be great, it would be very foul presumption in any of us to think ours to be little! At any rate, we must come out, one by one, and say, “I reckon myself to be a better man than David was,” or else we ought to subscribe heartily with our hand to the Truth of God that if David’s was great, our iniquity must be great, too!  
But leaving David out of the question—not comparing ourselves with others—we will draw some few pictures by which the greatness of our iniquity may be seen. Our sin is great when we consider against Whom it is committed. In an army, if a soldier strikes his comrade, it is, of course, a misdemeanor. But if he should strike some petty officer, it is considered to be a more grievous offense. And if he should strike the commander-in-chief, it would become so great a crime that I know not what penalty short of death might be awarded to it! Now, in the world of morals, as God sees it, there is much difference in sin when we consider the difference in the person against whom it is committed. You and I think the worst sin is the one that hurts us the most!  
We have heard, I daresay, the story of the lawyer who was waited upon by a farmer, who asked him what would be the penalty for a man whose horse was always going into his neighbor’s field and eating his corn. He had warned him several times and told him it was the result of his broken fence which he ought to have mended. The lawyer said, “Of course, there would be a considerable fine, no doubt.” “Well, Sir,” the farmer said, “it is your horse that has done this.” “Oh,” said our friend the solicitor, “that is quite a different question. I did not know it was my horse before I gave my opinion.” So it is, generally, with regard to anything that is done amiss—if it hurts you, or if it hurts me—we feel very indignant about it. But if it only offends the Majesty of Heaven, we make light of it! What fools we are! If it shall offend such puny, insignificant creatures as we are, there is something seriously wrong in it—but if the Divine Majesty is insulted, we pass it by as though it were a mere trifle!  
There really is a difference in the sin according to the person against whom it is committed. I will put it thus. A man has just now been striking another—striking him with an intent to do him harm. “That is bad,” you say. “Yes, but it was his own father that he struck.” “Yes,” now you say, “that is far worse for him to have injured the man whom he ought to have loved and honored.”  
So, since God is our Creator, any attack that is made upon His government, any willful violation of His Law is aggravated by the fact that we owe Him such unfounded allegiance! “It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves! We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Sinners, did you ever think of this? You have offended Him who made you, in whose hands your breath is and under whose control are all your ways. When you have used profane words, it has been against the High and Lofty One, against Jehovah, who rides upon the sky and launches abroad His thunderbolts and shakes Heaven and earth with His terrible voice! Against Him, before whom the holy angels veil their faces, and humbly bow themselves, unworthy to lick the dust of His feet—it is against God that you have offended! Sinner, you think this is a little matter, but I tell you that it is the fact that makes your iniquity great!  
Yet further, sin derives some degree of its sinfulness from the fact that it is at once against a most just and equitable Law. We sometimes read in the newspapers that persons are severely punished for offenses against the game laws of our country. Well, I suppose it is a very wicked thing to shoot another person’s hares and pheasants and partridges. Were I a preserver of game, I daresay I would consider the offense of the tenant farmer who shot a bird that was feeding on his corn, to be very aggravated. As I am not, I do not particularly see its flagrant character. No doubt it is wrong, though it looks to me more like a misdemeanor than a felony. When a law is proved to be harsh and severe, there will always be some mitigation in our judgment of the culpability of breaking it. If we consider such-and-such a law hard and tyrannical, not suited to the times and out of keeping with the age, then we say, when a person breaks it, “Well, he had better not have done it—it is an offense against statute law and he ought not to have committed it.” Still, we do not think it to be so black as when the offense is against a just, equitable, proper and righteous law which harmonizes with strict, unvarying equity. Now, such is the Law of God.  
What can be more fitting than the law of the Ten Commandments? Infidelity itself has burned pale before those Ten Commandments. We have heard of men who have attempted to improve the Law of God by a new commandment and have found themselves unable to do it, for they perceived it to be so complete that it embraced all forms of criminality. Those who have abhorred other parts of Scripture have said, as they read the ten precepts, “These are just and righteous.” They are, indeed, the fundamental stones of natural morality! They are such as even Nature, itself, would approve to be right and proper for the government of the world. Well then, Sirs, if you have broken these good commandments. If you have run your head against these holy, just, and righteous precepts, your iniquity is great! If you could turn to any Law of God, and say, “This is harsh, this is tyrannical,” there might be some excuse for you—but those commandments were made for your good! If you keep them, they will bring you their own reward. If you break them, they will bring their own penalty into your body, mind and heart. Why, then, have you been so foolish as to violate them? Assuredly, in so doing, your iniquity has become heavy as a millstone and if it is about your neck when you come to die, it will sink you in the floods forever!

But, dear Friends, we ought, each of us, to remember that our sin is all the greater because it has been committed by us, for sometimes an offense is all the worse because of the person who has committed it. When the noble Caesar saw Brutus stab him, he said, “And you, Brutus!” There was force in his dying words, for Brutus had been his dear friend, one who owed no little to him and, surely, the Lord might say to us, when we sin, “And you, too. And you! You whom I have fed day by day. You who are clothed by My charity and nourished by My bounty! You, living in this fair province of the universe which is called the world, this beautiful fair round green earth! You—partakers of such innumerable favors—you sin against Me?” Ah, Christians, you who are Heaven’s favorites, you who are allowed to enter into the Lord’s cabinet councils and to understand the secrets of His Covenant, you who are Christ’s own spouse, the bride of the Prince of Heaven—your sin is all the blacker because of that light of His Countenance in which it has been your privilege to walk!  
But to hurry on, as I throw off these hints to be worked out in your own minds rather than to be dwelt upon in my discourse, let me remind you again that our sin is certainly very great because of the amount of it. Innumerable times have we transgressed. It is not as though we had done wrong once and then washed our hands of it. Who can count his errors? What man can tell the number of the small dust of his transgressions? As for the drops of dew twinkling in the morning light, as for the drops of the ocean making that vast flood, as for the stars of Heaven and the sand of the seashore—the incalculable number of all these sinks into insignificance when compared with the infinite host of our transgressions against You, O God of Heaven and earth! This very day, have there not been more sins than moments, more transgressions than heartbeats, more offenses than pulses? God only knows the total of the sins of man! Only His Infinite mind can reckon the iniquity that crops forth from the polluted soil and wells up from the deep spring of depravity that is hidden in the very core of our corrupt nature! Count your sins if you can, O you children of God, and then fall on your knees, bow your heads, cover your faces and say, “Our iniquity is indeed great.”  
Nor is this all. We ought also to remember that we have sinned and offended without any provocation. When a poor wretch, pinched with hunger, snatches a loaf from a bake shop and eats it ravenously in the street, what magistrate could forbear to treat him leniently? But when a rascal does a wanton mischief without cause, or commits a willful robbery without conscience, what defense can he set up? With such utter defiance of law and order, we have patience and we say, “Let the full punishment fall upon his guilty head.” And that is what you and I have done—we have sinned for sinning’s sake. When we spent our money in sin, it was for that which is not bread, and our labor of iniquity was for that which did not profit us. You and I have not been gainers by all that we have done amiss. There may have been times when you had the excuse of getting something by sin, but not always. For instance, what excuse is there for swearing? Lust may plead a pleasure, wine may ease a pain, avarice has an eye to gain, but the cheap swearer, from his open sluice, lets his soul run out in sorry curses, losing all the patience he possesses for the mere sake of venting forth black and ugly words that have no meaning. This is infamous! What if I say it is infernal to sin for the mere sake of sinning? We heard of one, the other day, who said, when reproved for cursing, that he would continue to swear—yes, if he had an angel on each shoulder, he would still go on cursing! There seem to be some of this sort who, for the mere sake of dabbling in the mire, will do it and, in truth, we have all, in our time, sinned in open defiance of the Almighty and, therefore, our iniquity is heavy.  
Sons of men, I put it to you, as one of yourselves and, therefore, willing to be your advocate—but I must rather take up the cause of Him against whom we have offended—what has He ever done to us that we should hate Him? He has made us, fed us, clothed us—for which of these good works do we forget Him? He has sent His Son to redeem His people—is this a cause why we should despise Him? He follows us day after day with invitations of mercy, stirs up our consciences, hedges up the road to Hell as though He would not let us perish—for which of these things do we requite Him with evil? What has the Most High done to provoke you? Has He ever done you a displeasure? In what respect has He thwarted you except for your good? What pleasure that is a real pleasure has He denied you? Is His yoke heavy? Is His burden intolerable? Are His Commandments like the whips of Solomon, or His Laws like the scorpion of Rehoboam? Has He made His little finger thicker than the wires of human law? Do you not know that men, in superstition, will make laws ten times harder than God’s Laws ever were—and will keep them? It cannot, therefore, be that God has thus offended you. O why then, sons of men, do we despise our God? What can there be so good in sin that we will have it and God’s anger with it? What can there be so sweet in Hell that we choose it and despise the glories of Heaven? Verily, in this arrant folly, this flagrant malice, this frantic madness, our iniquity is indeed great!  
Yet further, what if I should say that we have gone on in sin after we have, some of us, known and felt the evil of it? I speak advisedly when I appeal to almost all of you now present and ask—must not your iniquity be great because it was not done in ignorance? Many here were nursed in the lap of godliness. Your sins, therefore, are 10 times heavier than other men’s! The lamp of the sanctuary lit some of us to our cradles. The hush of lullaby had the name of Jesus mingled with it. Perhaps the first song we learned to sing was concerning the children’s best Friend. The first book that we began to read contained His sweet name and many were the times when we were pressed by godly ones to think of Jesus and to give our young hearts to Him. But we put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness—and knowing the good from the evil, we did willfully choose to do that which is wrong. Ah, for this thing, when we have sinned against light and knowledge, does not our transgression become greater than that of the people of Tyre and Sidon who perished in their sin?  
And then, when we had learned by experience, as well as by education, that sin was bitter, we still went on in it. There is a young man yonder who went astray once and smarted for it—and he thought he would never be such a fool again. But it has happened to him according to the true proverb, “The dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” Some men seem only to get out of one ditch to roll into another! There are plenty of persons who, when they put their fingers in the fire and burn them, run and get them bound up and healed, only to go to the next fire and thrust in, not their finger, this time, but their arms up to their elbows! Take care that one of these days, Man, you do not have your body and soul consumed in that fire which can never be quenched! How foolish some are who have been in the spendthrift line! After they have emptied their pockets and found themselves beggars, they have gone to their friends who used to take a glass with them—such jolly companions, such dear friends as they used to be—but they do not know them now. “Oh, no!” they say, and give them the cold shoulder, now that their clothes begin to look a little out at elbows. I have seen these people get employment again and throw themselves out of it by their ill character. I have seen them get a respectable situation perhaps two or three times and then go and ruin themselves all over again—and still expect their friends to set them up once more—set them up on purpose that they may have the pleasure of tumbling down! When men do this so many times, certainly their iniquity becomes heavy.  
I have put the case strongly concerning one or two delinquents. They are, however, only representatives of us all, for when we have smarted for an offense, we have committed it again. Burnt children are afraid of the fire, but burnt sinners are not—they will go to the fire again, like the moth which gets to the candle, singes her wings and flies off a little—but she must go again and if you lift her out of the melted grease around the light, she will fly back again the first opportunity she gets, as if she thought it her ambition and her life’s best glory to be consumed in the fire! Iniquity is indeed great when it is committed against experience! Men deliberately run upon the pikes of damnation—they destroy their own souls by a sort of spiritual suicide!  
At times, men’s offenses to their fellow men lose some of their guiltiness by an apology. Why, sometimes, when we have been aggrieved by some little offense and a proper apology has been promptly made, we could have wished we had never taken notice of it, for we did not like to see the good man so sorry about it. We freely forgave him, and felt as if we did not need him even to feel that he had done wrong because he took it too much to heart, so we passed over the offense because of the repentance. But how great is the guilt of that man who, having sinned, refuses to repent? And is not this exactly the case of many here present—sinning from your cradles, but never repenting? Repentance is hidden from your eyes—you go on from bad to worse, from dark to deeper stains. The Ethiopian has not changed his skin, nor the leopard his spots. You have sought no physician for your healing. You have let the deadly gangrene grow yet more putrid, until the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. Careless Sinner, I would that I could play the part of Mr. John Bunyan’s Captain Boanerges and his ensign, Mr. Thunder, and run up the black colors before your eyes, bearing as the escutcheon the flaming thunderbolts of God’s Justice! You who will not repent must incur the fierce wrath of God. Lo, He has bent His bow and made it ready! He has fitted His arrow to the string—He takes aim at you tonight! The arrow shall soon fly and reach your heart! Oh, that you had Grace given you to repent! O Spirit of God, break the man’s heart! Take hold of Your great hammer with which You do cleave mountains and dash that heart in pieces, that the sinner may cry out, “Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.”

With some men, their iniquity becomes all the greater because they have sinned against promises which they have made, vows which have been registered in Heaven and covenants which they have signed with the Most High. You know who I mean. You were ill with the fever some few years ago—you were given up! You turned your face to the wall and you remember how, in the bitterness of your soul, you cried, “O God, if you will but spare me, mine shall be another and a better life for the future!” You were spared, but your life has been worse, rather than better. You remember, too, when the cholera was abroad and there were many falling on the right hand and on the left—you were terrified and alarmed—and you sought God after a sort and told Him that if He would but spare your life, that life would be spent in His service. What have you been doing since then? It is true that you sometimes go to the House of God, but it is only in the evening when you have made your money in the morning! You do not mind giving God the tail end of Sunday! The first two or three weeks after you got better, the shutters were up, there was no rioting, no swearing, no loose conversation. Your neighbors said, “What has come over the fellow? He is quite a different man.” Yes, you had another heart for the time, but not a new heart—and now you are as reckless as ever. Do you think God has forgotten your promises? Do you think that registered covenant of yours has been blotted out? No, Sinner, no! It stands fast against you to make your guilt more infamous and your transgressions more heavy. Take heed! Take heed! Take heed! When God shall hold it up against you, at the last tremendous day, you will read your doom in that broken promise—in that lie which has been uttered against the God of Grace and goodness!  
Most of us, at some time or other, have sinned thus against resolutions and promises and, consequently, our iniquities are heavy. O dear Friends, I have a task too hard for me in such a subject as this! When I talk of the glories of the love of Christ, I feel at home. When I speak of the matchless Grace of the Everlasting Covenant, my heart is well at ease. But to prove man’s sin heavy is a task too hard for me! Not that it is hard in itself. The evidence is clear, but to procure a conviction is the difficulty. The jury is not impartial. Your conscience is like an unjust judge. Oh, how hard it is to make any man believe himself to be so bad as the Word of God says he is! None but the Spirit of God can make a man call himself a sinner and mean it. Nothing but the Irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit can ever bring a man as low as the Word of God would have him lie. If you can feel, in your soul, tonight, that your iniquity is great, that it deserves God’s wrath, displeasure and punishment—if you can pray from your very heart, “O Lord, pardon You my iniquity, for it is great”—I shall have hope of you that the first sparks of the Divine Light have fallen into your soul, never to be quenched, but to blaze out in the brightness of salvation forever!  
II. I shall now turn, very briefly, to the second part of my subject—to show how THERE IS A PLEA IN THE VERY GREATNESS OF OUR SIN.  
Is not this a very strange text? Look at it again. One needs to read it over 20 times. Is it really so written, “Pardon my iniquity, for it is great!” Can you believe your own eyes? Imagine a prisoner at the Old Bailey pleading with the judge that he would kindly let him off because he was such a great offender! We would think that it would be a very legitimate reason why he should not be pardoned. The pith, however, of the whole text lies in those words which we sometimes forget to quote, “For Your name’s sake.” That alters it. It is now an argument—it was not before. “For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.”  
Let me show you that there is a plea here. If salvation were by merit, then, supposing all men to have fallen and none of them to have any merit, yet it would be a rule that the man who was the least offender should have the first turn at being saved. If the choice of God depended in any way upon man’s condition, we would naturally expect that the man who had the least sin would be forgiven first, for, putting all on an equal basis in all other respects, the choice, if made at all, with reference to the man, would naturally be the choice of the man who had committed the least iniquity. But, dear Friends, please remember that in the Covenant of Christ and the way of salvation, the choice is made upon reverse principles—not according to man’s merit, but according to God’s Glory. The aim, end, and objective of God in salvation is to glorify His own Character! Therefore, if His choice may be said to be guided by any principles which we can at all understand, that choice would be guided to select those who would the most magnify His Grace and glorify His own name. Well now, if God would do that great work of pardoning sin in such a way as to glorify His own name, the most fitting persons to be saved are the biggest sinners!  
Let me put it thus. Here is a number of persons and they are all sick. And here is a physician who intends to get a name for himself. He is full of benevolence and kindness, but, at the same time, one part of his objective is to get a name. Now, you will perceive that in the selection of his patients, he will not pick out a man who has a sore finger, for it will never tell very much to his credit that he healed a man who had a sore finger. But there will be, perhaps, a few cases among the sick of a very extraordinary sort. Some of them will have an affliction, a disease quite unknown to the faculty. Medicines have been tried, but their cases have been so stubborn that the best doctors have given them up as hopeless. Now, the physician says, “These are the cases that I will select.” Granting that he is able to cure whomever he wills, you can see that if the objective is his own glory, he would rather take those in which there is the most room for the display of the healing art than those who have the least sickness and might be the most readily cured.  
Yet again. Suppose a man means to have a character for generosity. There are a number of debtors assembled and he is determined to discharge their liabilities. There is a man who owes sixpence and another who owes a pound. Well now, if he pays their debts, he will never have much credit for liberality there! But another man comes in who is head over heels in debt. What is the sum he owes? Fifty thousand pounds? Let us say a hundred thousand pounds! Let us say half a million! Well, now, here is the opportunity for the liberal man to display his liberality because here there is room for it! So is it in Divine Grace. You, proud Pharisee, come to God and say, “Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men.” And He replies, “Then there is no room in you for My Grace to work.” But yonder poor publican dares not lift so much as his eyes towards Heaven, but smites upon his breast and cries, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” “There is a case for Me,” says Sovereign Mercy—and the pardon comes to the poor sinful publican!  
Mark, when I speak of sinners, I do not mean merely those who have been great sinners, or those who have been, in comparison with others, little sinners, but I mean those who feel themselves to be great sinners. I say the more we feel our guilt, the more fit we are for mercy. The more broken down we are with hopelessness on account of our own lost estate, the more room there is for the triumphs of Christ’s Grace. Now, there is many a moral man here tonight who never offended against the laws of his land, or the laws of outward propriety, yet he feels himself to be as black as Hell. Well then, there is room in him for Grace to glorify itself! We have noticed that men of the worst character are often the most selfrighteous. There is many a Pharisee whose morals would not pass muster though he vaunts his piety as a harlot flaunts her broidery and many a scamp who would be a disgrace to the meanest society if his character were known, brazens it out as though he never had offended against a single Law of God. Again, I say you who feel that you are the very chief of sinners! You who groan and mourn on account of sin, be not silenced at the Mercy Seat because of the greatness of your guilt! But rather, with the inimitable skill of the Syrophenician woman, turn the very desperateness of your case into a reason why the Lord should save you!  
Now tonight, upon your knees, wrestle with the God of Mercy, and say, “Pardon me, for my transgression is great. And my Hell will be great. But if You will save me, Your honor will be great! If You will redeem me, the power of Your blood will be great! If You will give me a new heart, the transforming power of Your Spirit will be great! O God, save me! God be merciful to me, a sinner!” This is, as Luther says, to cut off the devil’s head with his own sword. When the devil says to you, “You are a sinner,” say to him, “I am, and Christ died to save sinners.” And when he says, “But you are a big sinner, you are a Jerusalem sinner, a bigger sinner than any other,” say to him, “Yes, that is true, but Jesus said ‘that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
I have tried, and I am trying, to preach a wide Gospel. I do not like to have a net with such big meshes that the fish get through. I think I may catch you all if the Lord wills. If the vilest are not shut out, then you are not shut out, Friends. And if you believe in Christ with all your heart, you shall be saved! But oh, what if you should say, “I care not for forgiveness. I do not want pardon, I will not seek it! I will not have it—I love my sins—I love myself”? O Sinner, then, by that deathbed of yours where you shall see your dreadful sins in another light. By that resurrection of yours where you shall see eternity to be no trifle. By that doom of yours. By the last dread thunders. By the awful sentence, “Depart, you cursed,” of the Judge, I beseech you, do me but this one favor! Acknowledge that you had an invitation tonight and that it was affectionately pressed upon you. I have told you, in God’s name, that your sin is not a trifle with God—that it is not a matter to be laughed at or to be whistled over. I have told you that the greatness of your sin need not shut you out. What is needed is that the Spirit of God should teach you these things in your heart. But do remember, if your ears refuse these Truths of God, and if you reject them, we are a sweet savor unto Christ as well in them that perish as in them that are saved! But woe unto you—woe unto you, who, with the Gospel ringing in your ears, go down to Hell!” Verily, verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for you! May God save you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
ROMANS 10:1-15.

Verse 1. Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Let this be our “heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel.” Sorrows upon sorrows have come to the Lord’s ancient people even down to this day—and they have been scattered and peeled, and rent and torn in almost every land. Who does not pity their griefs and woes? Let it be our heart’s desire and daily prayer for Israel that they may be saved through faith in the Messiah whom they have so long rejected.

2. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. In Paul’s day, they were most diligent in the observance of every form of outward devotion—and many of them sincerely desired to be right with God. But they did not know how to attain the desired end.

3. For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. Perhaps I am addressing some who are very anxious to be right with God. They are by no means hypocrites, but are really awakened to a sense of their danger, yet they cannot get peace of mind. And the reason is that, like the Israelites, they are “going about to establish their own righteousness.” “Going about”—that is to say, struggling, striving, searching, worrying themselves to get a righteousness of their own which they will never obtain—and being ignorant of “the righteousness of God” which is completed in Christ and which is freely bestowed upon all who believe in Him. Alas, they “have not submitted themselves unto this righteousness of God” and there is a kind of hidden meaning in the Apostle’s expression. They are so proud that they will not submit to be saved by the righteousness of another, even though that other is the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. Yet this is the main point—the submission of our proud will to the righteousness of God.

4. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Christ is the ultimatum of the Law of God and when we go to the Law, accepted and protected by Him, we present to the Law all that it can possibly demand of us. Christ has fulfilled the Law on behalf of all who believe in Him, so that its curse is abolished for all of us who approach it through Christ.

5-9. For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which does those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven; (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. “The righteousness which is of faith” is quite another thing from the righteousness which is of the Law of God. It is not a thing of doing, and living by doing, but of trusting, and living forever by trusting. What are you doing—you who would gladly clamber up to the stars, or you who would plunge into the abyss? There is nothing for you to do! There is nothing for you to feel! There is nothing for you to be in order that God may accept you! But, just as you are, if you will receive Christ into your heart and confess Him with your mouth, you shall be saved! Oh, this glorious way of the salvation of sinners—so simple, yet so safe—so plain, yet so sublime—for me to lay aside my own righteousness and just take the righteousness of Christ and be covered with it from head to foot! I may well be willing to lay aside my own righteousness, for it is a mass offilthy rags, fit only to be burned!

10-14. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How can there be true prayer where there is no faith? How shall I truly pray to God if I do not really believe in Him? “For he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

14. And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? We must know what it is that we are to believe—and knowing it we shall be helped by the Holy Spirit to believe it.

14. And how shall they hear without a preacher? If the Word of the Lord does not get to a man either by the living voice, or by the printing press, which often takes the preacher’s place, how is he to believe it? You see here what I have often called “the whole machinery of salvation.” First comes the preacher proclaiming the Gospel. Then comes the sinner listening to it. Then comes the hearer believing it and, in consequence, calling upon the name of the Lord as one who is saved with His everlasting salvation!

15. And how shall they preach, except they are sent? Here is the great engine at the back of all the machinery—God sending the preacher—God blessing the Word—God working faith in the heart of them that hear it!

15. As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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A SERMON  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.”  
Psalm 25:14.**

THIS text is a great deep, but at the outset we must say that we have neither the time nor the skill at this time to attempt to fathom it. Our business just now is not so much to dive into its profound mystery, as to skim over its sparkling surface, to touch it with our wing as the swallow sometimes does the brook, leaving its soundings still unexplored. The current of thought here is too deep and too broad for the short meditation of a weekday evening. But where the very surface is rich, as it were, with “dust of gold,” we cannot fail, if God the Holy Spirit blesses us, to be enriched by even the superficial reflections we may gather up from it.

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” Mark the word used—“THE LORD”—Jehovah in the original—the I AM THAT I AM. The very name is associated in the thought of every right-minded person with awe. Is it not the name of the one only living and true God, and none who take it in vain shall be held guiltless? The gods of the heathen are no gods, but our God made the heavens! It is by Him that the heavens were stretched out as a curtain and as a tent to dwell in. He is the Preserver of all things. In Him “we live, and move, and have our being.” As we find Him manifested, both in the book of Nature and in the Book of Revelation, He is a God “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” The Lord is a good God, and we cannot think of Him without awe. If you have ever heard His voice in pealing thunder or the rolling avalanche, or if you have seen the flashes of His spear in the lightning of the tempest, or if you have marked His going upon the mighty waves at the tempestuous sea, you must have felt within yourselves that He is high and mighty—in truth, a terrible God! Yet it seems from our text that there are some persons in the world in whom all emotions of dread in connection with God are suppressed by feelings of quite another kind. Though clouds and darkness are round about Him, they have evidently passed through the clouds and have come to the other side of the darkness, for “the secret of the Lord is with them.” Before Him goes the pestilence. And hot burning coals are cast forth at His feet, but these persons must evidently have been preserved from the devouring pestilence by some mysterious power—and have escaped those burning coals by some gracious deliverance! They have come into familiarity with God! They know His secret and He shows to them what He does not make known to other men—His Covenant—the counsel of His will! There are such persons in the world, now, to whom the Eternal Majesty is so tempered by Infinite Mercy that they can devoutly sing—

*“The God who rules on high,  
And thunders when He pleases,  
Who rides upon the stormy skies,  
And manages the seas.  
This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our Love.  
He shall send down His heavenly powers,  
To carry us above.”*

Think of “the Lord,” then, according to this grand revelation of His name—Jehovah. Oh, that your thoughts of Him might bow you down with the lowly worship of the bright cherubim, and make you veil your faces as they do! Oh, that you might be led to feel how great God is and how little you are! Oh, that Grace were now given you to draw near to God and that the passage on which we have alighted might become a place of communion with Him!

Observe, then, first of all, a glorious privilege which may be possessed. Secondly, a favored class of people who do possess it. And thirdly, a choice and peculiar manifestation which God makes to them.

I. THERE IS A GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE WHICH MAY BE POSSESSED. The word, “secret,” here might, with greater propriety, be translated, “friendship.” “The friendship of the Lord is with them that fear Him,” but it also signifies in its root, that conversation which familiar friends hold with each other. Conversation in its most cherished exercise, that homely conversation which springs from mutual confidence and is, on the part of one man, the unbosoming of himself to another, is thus implied. If I may open it up in a phrase, it means, “The amity of true friendship.” Such is the favor vouchsafed to those who fear God. But taking the word as it stands, (for I dare say the translators weighed all these variations well before they chose the one before us), we will endeavor to give amplitude to the sense, while we keep to the word, “secret.”

Beyond a doubt, then, those who fear God have the secret of His Presence revealed to them. If a man rambles amidst the wonders of Nature with an atheistic heart, he may look up to the snowy peaks and down again upon the sweet grassy slopes. He may listen to the music of the waterfall. He may stand and admire the eagle as it soars aloft, or watch the wild goat as it leaps from crag to crag—and all these things may be to him but so much animated Nature—matter in so many various shapes and nothing more! I suppose it is possible for men to be familiar with all that is beautiful and sublime in the world of Nature, that “living visible garment of God,” and yet never catch the secret of His Presence, the traces of His handiwork, or the whisper of His voice. How different it is with the man who fears God, who has bowed before God’s Justice and seen it satisfied through the atoning Sacrifice of Calvary! Such a man, as he looks upon the things that are made, those silent witnesses of the eternal power and Godhead, says, “My Father made them all!” “Not hear God?” he says, “I as distinctly heard God speak in the thunderclap as I have heard my own father’s voice!” Not see God? Why, the veil seems thin that hides His glorious features while the works shine transparent that unveil His wondrous attributes! So that to the Christian it becomes a moral phenomenon that there should be people in the world who can survey the gorgeous plan, the unfailing order and the ample furniture, as it were, of this earth, with its wonderful adaptation of the means to the end, and then peer upwards to the heavens so grandly garnished, and contemplate the celestial bodies, ever restless, ever orderly in their motions, yet fail to apprehend the greatness, the wisdom, the goodness of the Creator! To us He is apparent everywhere— *“These are Your works, Father of good, Almighty! Yours this universal frame!”*  
He knows, he feels that fallen as he is, he can, while walking through this world, commune with God as Adam did before Paradise was lost to him. The secret of God’s Presence is with them that fear Him. We have heard of some who have said that they have never had any consciousness of the existence of spirit. Very likely. Very likely. I do not suppose, either, that pigs or asses, or any dumb driven cattle ever had any spiritual apprehensions! But some of us have a very clear consciousness thereof and, as honest men giving testimony, we claim to be believed. No, what is more, we are certain that we have not only a consciousness of the existence of spirit, but of a great and all-pervading Spirit we have a like clear knowledge! We cannot be mistaken about it! We are as sure that there is a God as we are that there is a world. No, sometimes more persuaded of the one than of the other! It is a part of our real consciousness. We have come to feel it, not merely in our imaginative moods, but when all our faculties were in full play—the secret of the existence of the pervading Presence of God is with us if we fear Him! No, it is not only in the open fields, amidst the enchanting scenery of the world, but much more in shady nooks and secluded places that we have found that Presence!  
Some months ago, I sat by the side of a woman who had not left her bed for several years. It was in a sloping room at the top of a cottage. The only walls were just the plastering that roofed it in. The room was hung round with texts of Scripture, which she had painted as she had been lying there. She was always full of pain—restless nights and weary days were her constant lot. When I sat down to talk to her, she said, “You cannot tell how the Presence of God has made this room seem to me, Sir! It has been such a palace that I have not envied kings upon their thrones when I have enjoyed the visits of Christ here. Though I have not known a wakeful hour free from pain for years, I assure you this chamber has been a very Heaven to me.” She was not an excitable, hysterical, silly, weak-minded woman. Far from that, she was as simple and sincere a creature as you might have found in fifty miles’ walk. The daughter of an honest, smock-frocked laborer and his quiet, godly wife. There was this poor woman declaring that God was ever in her room. As I talked with her, I began to feel that her witness was true, and to think that I had not felt more conscious of the Presence of the Almighty among the baseless, boundless mountains, or upon the watery plain of the vast ocean, where mighty waves in ceaseless concert roll, or even in the midst of the vast congregation, when on the Sabbath our solemn hymns, the outflow of feeling hearts, have swelled to Heaven with music such as pleases well the ear of God! Thus I did then perceive the mysterious secret of His Presence when I lingered by the lowly couch of His suffering saint! Why, had some skeptic called in there and merely suggested that “there is no God,” we would have laughed him to scorn, or else, perhaps, our pity for this ignorance might have turned our laughter into tears. Truly the secret of God’s Presence everywhere is with them who fear Him. They trust Him, they love Him, they lean upon Him and they get to feel that He is— and they have communion with Him as a man communes with his friend!  
And this secret of God’s Presence leads to the discerning of His hand. To the man who looks no higher than second causes, things that baffle his shallow wits like a continued drought in spring, or heavy rain in harvest, seem alike dreadful and bewildering. Though he cannot understand, perhaps, the laws of fluidity, he is likely enough to murmur at the dispensations that frustrate his conjectures. But the Christian says, “I believe that God ordains every drop of rain, or withholds every genial shower when He binds up the bottles of Heaven. I can find philosophy in faith.” And here he is right. It has well been said, “There is more wisdom in a whispered prayer than in the ancient lore of all the schools.” And wonderful it is how this simple, silent trust gives the Christian calmness and composure. At sea, when the tempest rages and the billows roar, the man who knows of nothing but the devouring element beneath and around him, full of alarm, may sigh to the winds. But the Christian who firmly believes that God holds the sea in the hollow of His hands and, that “all must come, and last, and end, as shall please his heavenly Friend,” waits the leisure of the righteous God, commits his way unto Him, assured that He has control over the storm and fulfils His great decrees unmoved by threatening clouds or scolding winds. Faith feeds his fortitude! Listening with the ears of faith, he constantly hears the footfalls of Jehovah. In the loneliness of his sorrow, he catches a sweet whisper, saying to him, “It is I, be not afraid.” The Divine Presence and the Divine hand, mysteriously hidden though they are, from all mortal eyes, are discerned by such as live in fellowship with God, for “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”  
Hence it is that the child of God carries on a secret conversation with Heaven. See him on his knees—he talks with God, he pours out his heart before the Lord. And in return—whether the world chooses to believe it, or not, it is a matter of fact with us—in return the great Invisible Spirit pours into the praying heart a stream of sacred comfort, keeps it in its time of trouble and gives it to rejoice in its moments of sadness. Oh, some of you are living witnesses that God talks with men! Had you never talked with Him, you would not be qualified to speak upon this question, but knowing that He hears you, and being conscious that He also answers you and speaks to you, you can declare and rejoice in the declaration that the secret of the Lord in this respect is with you. Why, the Christian makes communications to God of such a sort as he would not venture to make to his fellow men. I consider the confession of sins to a priest most degrading to that priest. To make his ear the common sewer of all the filth of a parish is horrible—and for any man to tell his sin at all to another is depraving to his own mind. But to tell it to God is a different matter, to lay bare his bosom, to let its inmost secrets be exposed to the great Searcher of Hearts, to pour out what one cannot say in words, nor even perhaps convey with signs before the great eye which still sees, the great Searcher who discerns it all—oh, this is blessed! Every child of God can say, when he is in a right state, that there is no reserve or disguise in the dealings of his soul with God! Is there a care which I dare not cast on Him? Is there a sin which I would not humbly and tearfully confess before Him? Is there a need for which I would not seek relief from Him? Is there a dilemma in which I would not consult Him? Is there anything so confidential that I may not divulge to man, but which I may not breathe out to my God? Oh, when we are in spiritual health, we do verily pour our hearts before the Lord to the very dregs! We wear our heart upon our sleeve as we draw near to the Most High. I tell Him all my woes and weaknesses, all my sorrows and sins, likewise, so my secret is with Him. Then the Lord is pleased in return to manifest Himself unto His people. He shows to His trustful saints what He never shows to faithless sinners. When the sinner reads the Bible, he sees only the letter—that is all he can see—but the Christian sees the Spirit of the Word! He perceives that “within this awful volume lies the mystery of mysteries”—and he is one of those—  
Thus he enters into the secret chamber of Revelation, while the unconverted, the unregenerated, the unsanctified, stand in the outside court and find no entrance within the veil. The heart of God is poured out into the Christian’s heart, so far as the Infinite can disclose itself to the finite. And as we tell the Lord what we are, He is pleased to tell us what He is. Surely, dear Friends, as these intercommunications go on, it would be hard to say how richly the inmost secrets of God may become known to His privileged people. Shall I be understood if I say that man may know a great deal more than he thinks he knows? He may know more of God than he knows he knows, for it is one thing to know, and another thing to know that we know! Do you notice how John says, “That we may know that we know Him”?—as if we might know Him and yet be hardly able to recognize how much we know Him. Now, many a time you have known the secret decrees of God, though you have not known that you knew them. “Oh,” you say, “how is that?” Well, God decreed, purposed and determined to save such-and-such a soul. You felt an irresistible impulse to go and pray for that soul as you had never prayed before. You mentioned that particular person by name before God and then you went out and exercised all the spiritual Grace you had in order to bring that soul to the knowledge of the Truth of God—and God blessed your endeavor and that soul was saved. Now, how was this? Why, the secret purpose of God had been made to act mysteriously upon you! You became God’s instrument—His conscious instrument in the fulfillment of it—and thus you were made privy to the decree, though scarcely aware that you were so!

I think there is such a harmony between the feeling of Christians and the purposes of God that you and I can never tell where these two unite, or where they separate. It often seems as if the Lord said to His people, “Now, I have ordained such-and-such things—in the volume of My Book they are written—and you shall desire and purpose just such things in your heart! And so the things that are in your heart shall carry out the things that are in My Book—I will not let you know it so as to go and tell it to others, but I will make you so know it that you will go and act upon it! I will let the secret of the Lord be with you.” We know not how often God gives His people premonitions of what He is about to do, nor how frequently! Unknown to ourselves, we take a course of action which is precisely the right course, without our knowing why we took it—only that we are led and guided by the Holy Spirit into such a track. I believe that this is especially the case with the ministry of the Word. I have sometimes been very sharply taxed about this matter. I was, a few days ago, upbraided by a good soul for exposing all her faults from the pulpit! I have been, not merely now and then, but very often thought by some people to be so dreadfully personal that they did not know how they could bear it—and yet I never saw those people, except from the pulpit, and did not know anything at all about them! The Word of God is quick and powerful, and “is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” When, therefore, we ask God to direct us in speaking His Word, it is no marvel that the effect is searching! Ah, and did we always, with all our hearts, give ourselves up to the motions of His Holy Spirit, we would be led and guided in a mysterious manner which we, ourselves, would scarcely understand—but it would make full proof of the fact that the “secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”  
I will venture to say that the Christian gets to know more of God, of the real Essence of God, by Divine Grace than all the philosophies in the world could ever have taught him. I read of God that He is a loving Father, that He is gracious towards the children of men. Now, if I fear Him with a filial reverence, He disposes me, by His Grace, to love the souls of men—He makes me tender and compassionate. Thus I get to apprehend, by a devout sympathy, something of what His love, and tenderness, and compassion must be. To meditate upon the attributes of God is one means of seeking knowledge, but to be conformed to His image is quite another way of understanding Him. Not till God makes you like Himself can you know what He is! In proportion, then, as we grow in Grace, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit more abundantly, we shall be more and more admitted into the secret of the Lord. The day is coming, Beloved, when we shall know more of God by our hearts—to say nothing of our heads, which probably never will be able to find out the Almighty to perfection— we shall know more of God by our hearts than we ever thought it possible to know, because our hearts shall be filled with Him! Everything obnoxious to Him shall be chased out and we shall be like His onlybegotten Son, dwelling in His Light and basking in His Love forever! “The secret of the Lord,” as to His very Character, “is with them that fear Him.” As they thus go from strength to strength, their heart pulsates with a love like the Divine Love. Their souls yearn towards sinners with a benevolence like the Divine Benevolence. They begin to make sacrifices comparable, in kind, though not in degree, to the great Sacrifice of God when He spared not His only-begotten Son. Their hearts move. Their spirits yearn. They cry over souls, as God is said to cry over them. “How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me; My repentings are kindled together.” Whenever God would picture Himself to us, He uses words suitable to our nature. But oh, how passing wonderful shall it be when God shall be seen in us, and we shall see God in ourselves— and so shall see God! That blessed promise, “The pure in heart shall see God,” is but another rendering of our text—“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” I wish it were in my power to explore this testimony of the Lord more fully and expound it more clearly, but for the present I must leave these few simple thoughts with you and pass on to observe that we have—  
II. A REFERENCE TO A FAVORED CLASS OF INDIVIDUALS.  
A peculiar privilege is conferred on a peculiar people, for it seems that the secret of the Lord is with some men, but not with others. Who are they who possess this sacred gift? A great outcry has been raised in this country of late about class and class interests. In our manufacturing districts, particularly, the rights of the upper class, who find the capital, and the claims of the working class, who bring their skill and labor into the market, are paraded before us in hot debates which often lead to an angry lock-out on the part of the employers, or a sullen strike on the part of the employed. Such feuds seldom bring much credit to either party. A great deal may be said concerning some of each to their praise, and not a little concerning some of both to their censure. So long as the struggle lasts, it must cause much heart-burning. I would the day were come when all this class talk was over, that we felt and acknowledged the common ties and mutual obligations by which all men depend upon all men—each class being dependent for its welfare and prosperity upon each other class, even as—“God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth.” Still, there always will be a favored class. God has so ordained it. But let me say they will neither be accepted because they are rich, nor rejected because they are poor. The favored class before the Lord has nothing to do with any position in society!—  
*“None are excluded then, but those,  
Who do themselves exclude.  
Welcome the learned and polite,  
The ignorant and rude.”*  
Neither has this secret of the Lord anything to do with education. It is not with every Oxford graduate—it is only with a very few of them! The secret of the Lord is not with every Cambridge M.A. nor with every man who has taken his degree at any university. You may read the Scriptures in the original languages. With Hebrew and Greek you may be familiar. Excellent and profitable studies they are, but you cannot discover the secret of the Lord by mere classical attainments. No mathematical researches or astronomical observation can discover it to you. In vain does one mount to Heaven and thread the spheres! Alike in vain does another walk the earth and beg the old rocks to tell him what happened before Adam held the lease of its broad acres, or tilled its soil! No, it is beyond the province of human learning, as it is foreign to the privilege of creature rank. Some people think that the secret of the Lord is lodged in mystic rites and draped in gorgeous ceremonies. There is among us a sect of ritualists who professes to have acquired it. They pretend to derive it from some man in lawn sleeves who put his hand on their heads! And if they cannot exactly communicate it, themselves, yet they can communicate a great deal, for they affirm that every little child sprinkled by them becomes, without more ado, a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven! With their guild I have no fellowship—of their weird arts I know little. Still, they say it is so—and it is all right with the little ones, no doubt, if they die in infancy, for are they not buried in consecrated clay? Listen to these gentlemen, these “successors of the Apostles,” these men who have “gifts” which empower them to declare and pronounce absolution and remission of sins! Do you hear the Gospel from them? Well you may from some of them, but then they tell you that they do not believe in the literal construction of the words they are paid to repeat, so they deliberately utter a lie! Or listen to others of them. Do they give you the Gospel? No, they display themselves in petticoats, embroidered vestments and such apparel as it were unlawful to appear in, save only when they are acting in their ecclesiastical theatres! You get no Gospel truth from them, nothing but priestcraft from beginning to end! Were they honest, they would go at once to Babylon, to Rome, to the Mother of Abominations, and consort with their own kindred! Thus we say the rite of ordination confers no privileges, and restrains no abuses! It does not teach a man the secret of the Lord, for the best ordained priest in England may still be as ignorant of God, our enemies, themselves, being judges, as if he had never been ordained at all.  
To whom, then, is it given to know the secret of the Lord, but to those who fear Him and hallow His name? To be conscious that I have sinned, to be humbled before God on account of it, to behold Jesus Christ as the way of Atonement, to accept Christ as my Savior, to come to God, blessing Him that I am saved through His dear Son—to feel a love to God because of His Grace to me, to yield up myself to His service, by His Holy Spirit to be led to live to His Glory—this it is to fear Him and thus it is that His secret is with me! “Why,” says one, “then the secret of the Lord may be with any poor servant girl!” Bless the Lord it may! “Oh, then,” says another, “the secret of the Lord may be with any humble workman, even though he is an illiterate and uneducated man!” Yes, certainly it may! “Then,” says yet another, “what becomes of the priesthood?” Why, I answer, we are all made priests! If we fear the Lord, we are admitted and initiated into the secret mysteries of religion—we become instructed in the way of the Lord, the Holy Spirit having promised that He will teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatever Christ has told us. Though we cannot claim rank, nor wealth, nor diploma, we can yet humbly say, “The secret of the Lord is with us, for He has taught us, by His Grace, how to live upon Him, how to trust Him, how to serve Him.” “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”

Do you answer to this description, my dear Hearers? Do you walk in the fear of the Lord? Says one, “I am a member of a Dissenting Church.” I do not inquire about that, for it has nothing to do with the secret. Do you fear God, I ask you? “Well,” says another, “I have always done my duty ever since I can remember, from my youth up.” That is your duty toward man, and it is well that you should never neglect it. But do you fear the Lord? Is the Lord the subject of your thoughts, the object of your love? And do you, therefore, revere and worship Him? If so, the promise is yours and the privilege shall not be withheld from you. “I want to know,” says one, “which is right among all the contending sects.” Well, go to the Bible—search the Scriptures—yet not as one who is proud of his own wits, but rather as one who fears the Lord greatly and inquires at His holy oracle prayerfully. Then, although you may not find every knotty point solved, or every quibble settled, you shall surely find this saying good, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.” Come to the Lord for instruction and there is nothing in His Word which He will keep back from you any more than from others, for “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” And come to the Lord for guidance and you shall not be left in doubt what fellowship of Believers to join, for, “it shall come to pass that in what tribe the stranger sojourns, there shall you give him his inheritance, says the Lord God.” The last thing we have to notice is—  
III. THE CHOICE AND PECULIAR MANIFESTATIONS WHICH GOD MAKES TO HIS PEOPLE.  
He will show them His Covenant. What a soft, sweet, encouraging assurance this Covenant gives us! To see God in Covenant is to find Grace in His eyes. To serve a Covenant God is perfect freedom and exquisite delight. God out of Christ is a consuming fire. Luther was known to say, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God.” The fear with which we think of God is all terror, dread and fright—in which we exceedingly tremble and quake until He unveils Himself in this mellow light of the Covenant of peace! For what could the vision do but scare me to destruction? But God, in the Covenant of His dear Son, is the hope, the desire, the delight of everyone that is godly—and their fear is not that of horror, but that of homage! What, then, does God teach His people His Covenant? Much every way. He shows them that His Covenant is everlasting. It was made in Christ before the world began. It abides steadfast and will forever remain unchangeable. So sure is it, that every blessing it provides is unconditional and irrevocable, being entailed upon all those who have an interest in its gracious provisions! He teaches them the fullness of this Covenant, that it contains all that is necessary for the life that now is, and for that which is to come. He teaches them the freeness of this Covenant—that it was made with them in Christ Jesus, not because of their good works, but because of the abounding of His Grace towards them. He teaches them that this Covenant is not the result of their tears or vows, their penitence or prayer, but that it is the cause of all these— ordered in all things and sure, it comprises all that their needs could lack, and all that their hearts could crave—it is all their salvation and all their desire! The Lord then shows His people that this Covenant was made on their behalf. Ah, there is the beauty of it!  
Each one of the blood-bought trophies of mercy is led to see that the Covenant was made with David’s Lord for him. So each heir of Heaven sets to his seal that God is true and makes David’s saying his own— “Though my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” He also shows His people that this Covenant is made with them by Sacrifice through the precious blood of Jesus, wherein God smells a sweet savor of rest. No Covenant could be of use to them, except it were a Covenant made with blood and based on propitiation. They understand that the old Covenant of Works failed because the first Adam was not able to carry out his part of it. God spoke to Adam after this manner, “If you will be obedient, you and your children shall be happy.” That, “if,” proved fatal. Adam could not observe the condition. The Second Covenant is on another footing. It was made with Christ. “If You will be obedient, You and those in You shall be blessed.” Christ was obedient, He kept the Law. He suffered to the death His Father’s will—and we come, without an, “if,” or a, “but,” to inherit the blessing which Christ has merited for us! Now it is no more, “If you do this, I will do that.” It is, “You shall do this and I will do that.” “A new heart will I give you; and a right spirit will I put within you; you shall repent of sin, you shall follow in My ways; you shall love Me; you shall serve Me; you shall persevere in holiness; and I will bless you.” There is not an, “if,” nor a, “but,” nor a, “perhaps” to foul the stream of God’s loving kindness! The Covenant was made with every elect soul in Christ beyond the hazard of a doubt, and beyond the chance of a forfeiture!  
Oh, Soul, has God ever shown you this Covenant? Do I hear anyone murmur that it is a horrible Doctrine? Then I am quite certain he has never been shown it. Or do I hear another affirm that were he to believe it, he would live in sin? I think very likely he would. I do not doubt it. To sin is your propensity, whatever you believe! But mind this, I do not exhort you to believe in that which has never been revealed to you, and has nothing to do with you. But yet another voice greets my ear—it is that of a penitent who says—“I come to Christ just as I am. I welcome the promise! I thank God there is now nothing left for me to do in order to make the promise sure, or to make the Covenant fast! I am a poor, lost, undone soul and throw myself at the foot of the bloody Cross. I look up to the Savior and say, “Jesus, I trust You to save me. I altogether trust You. I believe You have saved me—saved me in such a way that I can never be lost, for the Covenant that was made with me never can be broken and I shall never be cast away.”  
Surely, then, dear Friend, you have no wish to tamper with the lusts of the flesh, or to wallow in uncleanness! The Doctrine does not instigate you to live in sin! You would be a monster, indeed, if it did! No, you will say, “If God has made a Covenant with me, saved me from the curse, and endowed me with blessing—out of gratitude to Him, what is there I can render to Him for all His benefits? Nothing shall be too hard, nothing too heavy—  
*“‘Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn!  
Chosen of Him ere time began,  
I choose Him in return.’”*  
Let slaves go and work under the rod of the taskmaster if they will! Let the sons of the bondwoman pour contempt on the inheritance of the seed of promise if they like, but a seed shall serve Him, and it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation! The child of God has been shown the Covenant—therefore he knows he shall never be cast out of the family, for the love of the Father towards him will never change. He cannot love us more—He will not love us less. Such love in Him begets more love in us. What manner of men ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.”  
I can only pray that some hearts may be led to look to Jesus, that they may discover the choice secret. Christ is not only a party to the Covenant and the Representative of the Covenant, but He is the very impersonation of the Covenant itself! “I will give Him,” says the Lord, “To be a Covenant for the people.” Oh, if you have looked to Christ, you need not despair! He is holy! He is true! He has the key of David which can unlock the secret treasury in which are stored all Covenant blessings. Fear Him! It is the beginning of wisdom. Trust Him! It is the first breath of faith! Desire Him as newborn babies crave milk. Oh, that the fear of the Lord may haunt you through the watches of the night, and abide with you all the day long. So may the Lord bless you now and forever. Amen.

*“Happiest of the human race, To whom their God has given Grace, To read, to fear, to hope, to pray, To lift the latch to force the way.”*

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #741 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A TROUBLED PRAYER

NO. 741

BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.” Psalm 25:18.

IF this Psalm were, indeed, written by David at the time when his son Absalom had raised the rebellion against him, we can readily understand the distinction which he draws between his “affliction,” and his “pain.” It is a great “affliction” to have a son become a rebel and that subjects who owed so much to their monarch should become traitors against his gentle government. “Pain” was the acute sensation which David’s own heart experienced as the result of such calamity. He knew—

*“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is  
To have a thankless child.”*

None of us can guess the “pain” which David must have felt from the “affliction” of having such a son as Absalom, and the “pain” of mind, again, which he felt in being betrayed by his familiar counselor, Ahithophel, and in being forsaken by his subjects who in former days had honored him and rejoiced in him. He asked the Lord, therefore, to look not only upon the trouble, but also upon the misery which the trouble caused him. “If needs be,” says the Apostle, “we are in heaviness through manifold temptations”—as if not only the temptations were to be observed, but also the heaviness consequent thereof. So here we may bring before God’s notice not only our trial, but the inward anguish which the trial occasions us.

I can understand, also, why David should add, “And forgive all my sins,” because he knew that the revolt of Absalom was mysteriously connected with the Divine purpose as a chastisement for his sin with Bathsheba. He recollected how Nathan had told him that he should have war all the days of his life—and now he remembered it all—the bitterness of gall sickened his soul as he remembered that sin which had once been so sweet to his taste. He went back to the fatal day and the tears stood in his eyes as he thought of all the filth and guilt of his conduct—what a traitor he had been to Uriah—how he had dishonored the name of God in the midst of the whole land!

Well might he have said, “Lord, when You look upon this well-deserved affliction, and when You see the pain with which it brings my soul, then, though it will bring my sin to Your mind as it does to mine, yet let forgiveness blot it out. Yes, not for that sin only, but for all others that have preceded or followed it grant me a gracious pardon—forgive, I pray You, all my sins.”

1. It is well for us, dear Friends, WHEN OUR PRAYERS ABOUT OUR SORROWS ARE LINKED WITH PRAYERS ABOUT OUR SINS—WHEN, BEING UNDER GOD’S HAND, OUR SOUL IS NOT WHOLLY TAKEN UP WITH OUR PAIN, BUT WE ALSO REMEMBER OUR OFFENSES AGAINST GOD. I do not think it would have been worth one’s while to have preached from the text if it had only said, “Remember my affliction and my pain.” But when it is, “Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins,” the two things put together are very instructive.

Let us seek to get some edifying counsel from them. Our sorrows are profitable when they bring our sins to our minds. Some sorrows may do this by giving us lime for thought. A sickbed has often been a place of repentance. While the man was occupied with his daily work and the active labor of his hands, or could be from morning till night at business, sin escaped his notice. He was too busy to care about his soul. He had too much to do with earth to remember Heaven. But now he cannot think of business, or if he does he can get no profit or satisfaction from all his thoughts—now he cannot go to his work but must lie upon his bed until his health is recovered.

And oftentimes the quiet of the night, or the stillness of the day which once was given up to toil and drudgery has been blessed of God to work a solemn stillness in the soul in which the voice of God has been heard, saying, “Turn unto Me! Turn unto Me! Why will you die?” Some of you do not often hear God’s voice. You are in the midst of the clitter-clatter of this great city and the roar and din of it are so perpetually ringing in your ears that the still small voice of your heavenly Father you do not hear. And it may, perhaps, be a great mercy to you if, in your own house, or in the ward of an hospital, you may be compelled to hear Him say, “Turn unto Me! Turn unto Me! For I will have mercy upon you!”

Other afflictions remind us of our sins because they are the direct result of transgression. The profligate man, if God should bless those scourges of the body which have even sprung from his own vices, may find the disease to be a cure for the misdemeanors which produced it. We ought to thank God that He will not let us sin without chastisement. If any of you are sinning and find pleasure without penalty in the selfindulgence, do not congratulate yourself upon the apparent immunity with which you violate the laws of virtue—for that is the badge of the reprobate.

To sin and never smart is the mark of those who will be damned. Their smart, like their doom, being in reserve and stored up for sorer judgment. But if any man among you here is now smarting for the sin he has committed, I will not say, let him be hopeful, but I will say, let him be thankful! Let him remember that evidently God has not quite given him up—He has touched him with the rod, but He has not thrown the reins upon his neck! He has put a curb in his mouth and He is pulling him up sharply. God grant that it may be blessed to turn him from his wild career.

The extravagant man who has spent his money and finds himself in rags ought to look upon his sins through his rags. His present poverty may well remind him of his previous prodigality. The man who has lost a friend through ingratitude and now needs a friend but cannot find one, may thank himself for it, and be reminded of his baseness by his bankruptcy. There are many other sins, though we have not time to mention them, which are evidently the fathers of sorrows. And when you get the sorrowful offspring you should think of the guilty parentage—and if you would be rid of the child, go to God and ask Him to deliver you from the sin and divorce you from the transgression that produced it.

Other sorrows, likewise, remind us of our sins because they bear their likeness. It has been well remarked that oftentimes when God would punish us He just leaves us to eat the fruit of our own ways. He has nothing more to do than to let the seed which we have sown ripen, and then allow us to eat it. How often in reading the Holy Scriptures may you observe the quality of men’s sins in the nature of their punishment! Jacob deceived his father, and what then? Why, he was always being deceived all his life long!

He was a great bargain-maker, so everybody cheated him, of course! He would use his wily cleverness and as he would be clever and supplant, he had to become a dupe and be supplanted. That was the misery of his life because it was the besetting sin of his character. Now when a man loses money, loses it continually—notwithstanding all the skill and efforts he can employ—I would have him ask himself whether there may not have been some sin in connection with his money which has brought the punishment on him. He may have loved it too much! He may have obtained it in an illegal way! He may not have used it when he had it in a proper spirit—it may have been dangerous for it to remain with him lest it should have corroded his heart by its own cankering.

The losses a man suffers in business, I doubt not in many cases, and I am sure of it in some cases, ought to make him look earnestly at the way in which they came upon him. When we have heard of some who have gained wealth by one speculation and have lost it again by another speculation, I think it ought to be made the subject of enquiry with them how far their dealings were lawful, if indeed it were lawful for them to have entered upon such traffic in any shape or form. The question must be asked whether God may not have had a controversy with them in their counting-house. Is this an obligation with money?

Surely it often is so with the rearing of your family. If your affliction should come through your children turning out evil in life, or through what is a far lighter affliction—though, perhaps, you may not think it so— through your children dying in infancy, you may say to yourselves, “How have I behaved towards those children?” Is my child willful and disobedient? Then how about the training and the management that I have observed? Is my child perverse, vicious, worldly? How about my example as it was seen at the family hearth? May not my boy’s sins be only a reproduction of my own? Might not the fledglings that I have hatched roost in my family, disturb my peace, and bring me sorrow? May not my daughter’s stubbornness of heart be only my own obduracy that breaks out in the girl?

Might I not hear the voice of God saying to me, “See how you treated Me, and is it not meet you should eat the fruit of your own ways? You are a father, and how do you like to be thus treated—to be slighted in your discipline, and your affections set at nothing?” So I might continue, passing from our households to our respective positions in society. We sometimes find ourselves unable to maintain our station. With chagrin and mortification we have to take a lower place, and may we not then ask, Did we acquit ourselves before God in all that we might have done in our former standing? Did the rank we held elevate us and puff us up with vanity?

At any rate, we may bring ourselves to great searching of heart. When sorrow takes any particular shape it suggests its own particular questions. The problem must be studied to get at the solution. With regard to sickness, I am not certain whether the chastening hand of God for sin ought not to be more immediately recognized than is now, for the most part, common among us. In one sense God never punishes His people for sin. There is nothing vindictive in the rod He uses, and nothing expiatory in the sufferings they endure. God’s redeemed people were punished in Christ and it cannot be, therefore, that the penalty of the Law is exacted on them a second time.

Yet there is a sense in which the Church of God, under paternal discipline, is continually exercised with chastisement. Do you remember the Apostle’s words about the Corinthian Church? They had fallen into a very lax method of receiving the Lord’s Supper. They brought, everyone, his own bread and wine. Some of them were full, and others were hungry, beside which, other breaches of Church order were rife among them. And the Apostle says, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

Therefore I gather that sickness, at any rate, in the early Church, was likely to be sent by God upon the members for ecclesiastical offenses. I am not sure whether in like manner sacred corrections, though in a way not so easily discoverable, may not still be in exercise among the members of the Christian Church. I see that in ordinary Providence God visits men, and as there is a special Providence for His people, surely there is nothing harsh or unwarrantable in attributing a strong flood of adversity, as well as a refreshing stream of prosperity, to the hand of the Lord!

When a Christian, therefore, finds himself chastened in his body, he should go to God with this question, “Show me why You contend with me. Why do You lay Your rod upon me, my Father? You do not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. It is not from the heart, as though You had ceased to love. It must be from Your unerring judgment where in measure You do rebuke. Tell me, therefore, my Father, what is the cause? If You see a reason, tell me what that reason is—

*‘The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol is,  
Help me to tear it from Your throne,  
And worship only You.’ ”*

Our sins, then, may sometimes be discovered by the very image of our sorrows. What a great blessing it is to us when our sorrows remind us of our sins by driving us out of an atmosphere of worldliness! There is our nest, and a very pretty, round, snug nest it is. And we have been very busy picking up all the softest feathers that we could find, and all the prettiest bits of moss that earth could yield. And we have been engaged night and day making that nest soft and warm. There we intended to remain. We meant for ourselves a long indulgence, sheltered from inclement winds, never to put our feet among the cold dewdrops, nor to weary our pinions by mounting up into the clouds.

But suddenly a thorn came into our breast. We tried to remove it but the more we struggled the more it chafed, and the more deeply the thorn fixed itself into us. Then we just began to spread our wings and as we mounted it would seem as though the atmosphere had changed, and our souls had changed, too, with the mounting, and we began to sing the old forgotten song—which in the nest we never should have sung—the song of those who mount from earth and have communion with the skies.

Yes, when God is pleased to take away our health, our comfort, our children, our friends, it very frequently happens that then we think of Him! We turn from the creature with disgust. We leave the broken cisterns because they hold no water and begin to look out for the overflowing Fountain. And so our sorrows, driving us to God, make us, in the light of His Countenance, to behold and to grieve over our sins. This is a great blessing to us! Sometimes, again, our sorrows remind us of our ingratitude. You are unwell—now you recollect how ungrateful you were for your health. You are poor—“Ah,” you think to yourselves, “I used to grumble once over a good meal that I should be glad to have now.”

“Ah,” you say, “those garments that I used to think so shabby—how much I should prize their warmth now!” It is said that we never know the value of mercies till we lose them. It is a great shame that such a proverb should be true. We ought to be grateful to God without needing the bitter teaching of adversity. Our sorrow thus administers a rebuke—and kindles in us a remembrance of the goodness that we had never welcomed with our praise till the shadows fell upon us—and the night hid it from our view.

No crime among men is accounted more base than ingratitude, but few sins we less bewail before God. Bunyan has well said that he who forgets his friend is ungrateful to him, but he that forgets his Savior is unmerciful to himself. And I remember some other author who says that we are never surprised at the sunrise of our joys, as we are at their sunset. On the contrary, when storms of sorrow burst upon us we are sorely amazed, but when they pass away we take it as a matter of course. You all know how sad a blemish it was upon the character of Hezekiah that he rendered not again unto the Lord according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up in vainglory. The provocation of a thankless heart to a merciful God is no light matter. As the guilt is heavy, let our repentance be sincere.

Sometimes, again, sorrow reminds us of the sin of need of sympathy with those in like sorrow. “Ah,” says one, “I used to laugh at Mrs. So-andSo for being nervous. Now that I feel the torture, myself, I am sorry that I was ever hard upon her.” “Ah,” says another, “I used to think of such-andsuch a person that he must be a fool to be always in so gloomy a state of mind! But now I cannot help sinking into the same desponding frames, and oh, I would to God that I had been more kind to him!”

Yes, we would feel more for the prisoner if we knew more about the prison! We would feel more for the poor if we understood more of the pangs of need. Our sorrows may often help to remind us of our harshness towards some of the best of God’s afflicted ones. And I think, also, that affliction may be sent to admonish us of our neglect of Divine teaching. “Why that rod?” “Why that whip and that bridle?” Because I have been like the horse and the mule which have no understanding! Had I listened to the voice of God that I heard from the pulpit. Or had I hearkened to the counsels given to me in the pages of Scripture. Or if I had even noticed the dictates of my own conscience—yes, had I been more jealous of the motions of the Holy Spirit in my soul—I might never have entailed all this trouble upon me.

You know the old fable we used to read in our school books about the boy in the apple tree who would not come down when the good man with soft words admonished him. Then the man took to throwing turfs at him, but still he would not heed. And at length the man betook himself to stones and compelled him to come down. Oh, when God betakes Himself to stones, and we get cut with them, we might well say to ourselves, “Ah, light afflictions, you would not do! We laughed at the kind words, and even the turfs which struck our conscience without wounding our flesh would not do! And now He has come to blows with us!

God is always loath to use the rod. He is an unwise father who never chastens, but a much worse father he who chastens for nothing. God will chasten His people, but it takes Him a long time to bring Himself to use the rod. He does not wish to strike His children. He delights in their happiness and not in their sorrow. And when at last He does come to it, it is—if I may use such an expression in reference to Him—because our ill manners force Him to it. O Christian, in these your sorrows, be humble before the Lord your God. But still use Job’s enquiry, “Show me why You contend with me.”

I wish that some here, who have not the fear of God before their eyes, would look at it in this light. If you are inclined to pray about your troubles, take your sins into consideration, too. If you feel that you must go to God under the particular trial which is vexing you at present, go to Him about your besetting sins as well. Make the two into one bundle and go to Him, and say, “Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.”

This, then, is our first remark. It is fit that our sorrows should bring our sins to remembrance.  
II. Secondly, IT IS WELL WHEN WE ARE AS EARNEST ABOUT OUR SINS AS WE ARE ABOUT OUR SORROWS. This is the mark of a genuine penitent. I think you will have noticed in the late “Report” of the chaplain of Newgate the remark that many of the prisoners will pretend very great repentance when the chaplain is talking to them about spiritual things. But the chaplain can very readily discover those who are not truly penitent by their constantly trying to bring him round to tell them something about their punishment.  
Before the trial they frequently ask for information as to what term of imprisonment—how many months or years they are likely to get. Then, when they are undergoing punishment they frequently try to get some trifling favor through the means of the chaplain, showing that they think more of the punishment than of the theft. They are like the unhappy wretch in the condemned cell who often repents of the gallows that is to end his career, but does not repent of the murder that cut short his victim’s life. There are many such.  
So, if I go to God and only ask to have my sorrows taken away from me, what is that? I am no true penitent! I am like the child who cries bitterly because he smarts, but when the smart is over, he goes back to the offense again. If we were true children of God and had a truly repentant spirit, we should feel the rod to be less than nothing compared with the sin. We should say, “Lord, strike me! If You have but forgiven me I can bear the strokes! Strike, Lord, strike as hard as You will, for my sin is forgiven.”  
A good child will say, “My Father, you have forgiven me the offense. Ah, well, if I must be chastened, I will cheerfully bear it, for my sorrow is not that I smart, but that my sin should have caused you to be angry, and to make me smart.” This, then, is the mark of a genuine penitent—that he is as earnest about his sins as he is about his sorrows. Your trials have never worked in you what they were meant for until it is so. God sends your trial to make you see yourself—your weaknesses, your folly, your sinfulness, your distance from Him. And when those sins, those sweet sins of yours become bitter—when your soul nauseates and loathes them—then, probably, your affliction will be taken from you.  
But if you still yield to your sins with your left hand and would gladly lay hold of God’s mercy with your right, there is need that the rod be laid on your back again, and again, and again—for you have not yet feared the rod nor Him that has appointed it! Let any of you who are in trouble here, mend your prayer tonight. If you have been saying, “Lord, take away the sickness from my dear child,” you should say, “Lord if it is Your will, heal my child, but forgive my sin.”  
Or if any of you are very poor tonight, or if you are not well and you have a sense of sin, I pray you, I entreat you, as you kneel by your bedside—which I trust you all will—while you ask God to restore your health, or to remove your poverty, be quite as earnest about the forgiveness of your sins, or else it will betoken two things—that you are not a genuine penitent, and that, therefore, the affliction has not worked in you its great design.  
III. But, thirdly, IT IS WELL TO TAKE BOTH SORROW AND SIN TO THE SAME PLACE. It was to God that David took his sorrow. It was to God that David took his sin. Observe, then, we must take our sorrows to God. Ah, my dear Sister over yonder, where do you take your sorrows? Why, to your next door neighbor, to Mrs. This, and to Mrs. That! We are very, very fond of pouring out our tales of woe into the ear of some earthly friend. That may be a slight relief if discreetly done, but I think the verses of the hymn is not wrong which says—

*“Have you no words? Ah, think again  
Words flow apace when you complain,  
And fill your fellow creature’s ear  
With the sad tale of all your care.  
Were half the breath thus vainly spent  
To Heaven in supplication sent,  
Our cheerful song would oftener be  
‘Hear what the Lord has done for me.’”*  
Some children run and tell Mother, or tell Father. Do you the same! Go and tell your Father—you can tell your brethren afterwards if you will— but you had better let your Father know first. I think we should often hesitate to mention our troubles lest we should depress our fellow creatures. I am sure we should hesitate to mention them to men if we made it a rule first to bring them before our God. Your little sorrows you may take to God, for He counts the hairs of your head! Your great sorrows you may take to God, for He holds the world in the hollow of His hand! Go to Him, whatever your present trouble may be, and you shall find Him willing and able to relieve you!  
But we must also take our sins to God. Possibly this is a more difficult point. The sinner thinks that he must fight this battle for himself, wrestle with his own evil temper himself, and he himself must enter into conflict with his lusts and his besetting sins. But when he comes into the fight he soon meets with defeat, and then he is ready to give it all up. Take your sins to God, my Brothers and Sisters. Take them to the Cross that the blood may fall upon them to purge away their guilt and take away their power. Your sins must all be slain.  
There is only one place where they can be slaughtered—the altar where your Savior died. If you would flog your sins, flog them with the whip that tore your Savior’s shoulders. If you would nail your sins fast, drive the same nails through them which fastened your Lord to the Cross. I mean let your faith in the great Surety, and your love to Him who suffered so much for you, be the power with which you do conflict with evil. It is said of the saints in Heaven, “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb.” That is how you must overcome! Go to Jesus with your sins!  
No one else can help you. You are powerless without Him. You may confess all your sins to Him with a view of leaving them all with Him. He receives sinners! He receives their sins, too, when they are brought to Him in penitence. God has made to meet upon Him the iniquity of all His people, and you may take your sins and leave them in the hands of Jesus, who will counter-plead them with His merits and put them away in His mercy. And so shall you come away rejoicing! And, as we have remarked that we are not to take up the battle with our sorrows alone, nor with our sins alone, we may further say that the most sorrowful and the most sinful are welcome to the Lord Jesus.  
The most sorrowful may come! I mean those in despair. Those who are at their wits end. Those poor souls, who, through superabundant difficulty, are ready to do the most unreasonable things—ready, it may even be, to give way to that wicked, Satanic temptation of rushing from this present life into a world unknown by their own hands! Go, sorrowful one, go now to Jesus, whose tender heart will feel for you! Has your friend forsaken you? Have your lover and your acquaintance become your enemies? Seek no human sympathy just now, but first and foremost, in a flood of tears, reveal your case to the great invisible Helper.  
Kneel down and tell Him all that racks your spirit and fills your tortured mind, and plead the promise that He will be with you, and you shall find Him true though all else be false. And, as the most sorrowful, so the most sinful are welcome to Christ—the sinful certainly, but the most sinful especially. If your sin has become so outrageous that it were wrong for me to mention it here. If it has become so tremendous in its power, that, like the chain and ball at the convict’s foot, you cannot escape from it, yet still come with all your sins to Jesus! You vilest sinner out of Hell! You who are nearest to the gates of perdition! You who have had fellowship with devils till you have become almost a devil yourself! You who have lain steeped in the scarlet of sin till it has ingrained and entered into the very warp and woof of your being! You who are all over black within and without—go to the Savior, and take these words in your mouth—“Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.”  
And suppose the two conditions should have met in your heart—that you are at the same time the most sorrowful and the most sinful? Still go! The gates of Mercy are very wide! When Christ opened the Holy of Holies He did not make a little slit, but the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom so that the biggest sinner that ever lived might come through it to the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat. Oh, the amazing mercy of God! “As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His ways above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts.” Sin is, after all, a thing of the creature, but mercy is an attribute of the Creator, and the Creator’s attribute swallows up the creature’s fault. Thus says the Lord, “I will take away their iniquities and cast them into the depths of the sea.” The most sorrowful and the most sinful may go!  
And let us add that God can, with equal ease, remove our sorrows and our sins. It is wonderful how difficulties fly when Omnipotence encounters them! The sick man who has been given up by the physician has often recovered. And it has been, perhaps, his mercy that the physician gave him up, for where man has come to an ending, God has come to a beginning. The old proverb says that, “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity,” and most certainly that is true. God has but to will it and fevers fly and diseases disappear. As the soldier goes at the captain’s bidding, so does God say to Death, “Go,” and he goes, or “Come,” and he comes. Thus is it in our circumstances. How very often a day which opened as black as gathering clouds could make it has ended with a bright sunset! How frequently the beggar has found himself lifted up from the dunghill and made to sit among princes!  
I should not wonder but what some of you, in looking back and remembering the circumstances you are now in, are quite surprised to find yourselves where you are. This very morning I was talking with a gentleman who said to me, “I cannot bear waste in my household, and one reason is this—if ever there was a poor wretch who could live on hard fare once, and envy the very dogs a piece of bread, I am just that one—but God has been pleased to prosper me, and I often look back upon that season of poverty and of need, and thank Him for having helped me through it.”  
Well, you see, dear Friends, that God can turn the wheel and make the bottom spoke to be the uppermost one, and He can do it all in a few days. Come, then, though sin and sorrow rest like a double burden upon our body and soul—let us go to Him and say, “Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.”  
IV. Perhaps our last observation is more strictly to the text than anything else. It is that WE ARE TO GO TO GOD WITH SORROWS AND WITH SINS IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. You notice that all that David asks about his sorrow is, “Look upon my afflictions and my pain.” But the next petition is more express, definite, decided, plain—“Forgive all my sins.”  
Some people would have put it, “Remove my affliction and my pain, and look at my sins.” But David does not say so. He says, “Lord, as for my affliction and my pain, I do not say much about that—Lord look at it. I will leave that to You. I should be glad to have it removed. Do as You will. Look at it. Consider it. But as for my sins, Lord, I know what I want there—I must have them forgiven. I cannot bear them.” A Christian counts sorrow lighter in the scale than sin. He can bear that his troubles should continue, but he cannot endure the burden of his guilt, or the weight of his transgressions.  
Here are two guests come to my door. Both of them ask to have a lodging with me. The one is called Affliction. He has a very grave voice, and a very heavy hand, and he looks at me with fierce eyes. The other is called Sin, and he is very soft-spoken, and very fair, and his words are softer than butter. Let me scan their faces. Let me examine them as to their character. I must not be deceived by appearances. I will ask my two friends who would lodge with me to open their hands. When my friend Affliction, with some little difficulty, opens his hand, I find that, rough as it is, he carries a jewel inside it, and that he meant to leave that jewel at my house.  
But as for my soft-spoken friend, Sin—when I force him to show me what that is which he hides in his sleeve—I find that it is a dagger with which he would have stabbed me. What shall I do, then, if I am wise? Why, I should be very glad if they would both be good enough to go and stop somewhere else, but if I must entertain one of the two, I would shut my door in the face of smooth-spoken Sin and say to the rougher and uglier visitor, Affliction, “Come and stop with me, for maybe God has sent you as a messenger of mercy to my soul.” “Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sin.” We must be more express and explicit about sin than we are about trouble. Take the two expressions together. Use them and whether you blend, or contrast them, either or both will prove to be full of instruction.  
Before I close my sermon and dismiss this assembly, it may be necessary to notice some among you who have no affliction or pain. In too many instances I am afraid you have sin, so the latter part of the text will well suit your case. But oh, if you have not any affliction or pain, nor yet any cause of fear because your sins are forgiven, let me then suggest to you that you should be exceedingly happy! Your cup should overflow with joy.  
I do not think, Brothers and Sisters, that you and I rejoice enough. When engaged this morning, seeing enquirers coming in one after another, I thought within myself, “I have known the time, when I first began to preach the Gospel, that

 one soul God had given me as a fruit of my ministry made me so happy that I was ready to leap out of the body. Truly it is a happy thing to be the means of bringing one soul to Christ.” The poet says that*—  
“A thing of beauty is a joy forever.”*  
But a thing of Divine Grace is much more truly so, for the things of beauty here on earth may be consumed—but a work of Grace is everlasting! To be the means of saving one soul ought to set a silver bell ringing in your hearts that will never stop!  
You will say, “I am very poor, and very sick, but I have not lived for nothing, there will be one gem in the Redeemer’s crown that came there through my instrumentality. There will be one voice in the orchestra of the skies, which, humanly speaking, would not have been there if the Lord had not enabled me, by His Grace, to be the means of bringing that soul to Christ.” This ought to make us joyful! But then I thought, here have I been seeing thirty today, and most of them owed their conversion to the preaching of the Gospel here, and I have seen, perhaps, in my little lifetime, several thousands of souls and know of many others whom I never saw, who have been brought to Christ through our instrumentality.  
What? And down-hearted, and sometimes wretched, and distracted with care after this? I thought to myself, what a fool I am! And I suspect that if you and I, or any of us, were to consider the goodness of God to us, the fact that our names are written in Heaven, that Christ is ours, that Heaven is ours, that we are the children of God, and that we are justified by faith—we should say, “Why, why am I moaning and groaning about these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, and which will work out for me a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory? Come, my Soul, take down the harp and let your fingers roam among its strings. Say with old Herbert—  
*“My God, my God,  
My music should find You  
And everything shall have its attribute to sing.”*  
So, if we cannot go to God, asking Him to look on our affliction, let us ask Him to look upon our joy and to help us to increase it, and to grow in it, and then to keep us from sin in the future and to lead us in the paths of duty and of blessed service, to the honor of His name and the comfort of our own souls. May the Lord give you, in parting, His own blessing.

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STANDING AND SINGING  
NO. 3375

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 31, 1867.

**“My foot stands in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the Lord.” Psalm 26:12.**

You will remember our taking a pathetic verse for our meditation, some little while ago, which was the prayer of a saint in trouble, whose prayer was, “Look upon my affliction and my pain.” [See Sermon #741, Volume

13—A TROUBLED PRAYER—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] We must now look upon the reverse of the picture and think upon a Christian in prosperity and joy and, perhaps, as there may have been some comfort to afflicted souls before, so there may be some instruction tonight to those who are prosperous.

It is worthy of remark, at the outset, that the condition of a Christian cannot readily be judged by anyone but himself. Certainly his outward condition is a very unfair test of his real state. When Paul and Silas had been scourged and laid with their feet fast in the stocks, they seemed to others to be very miserable. But when, in the dead of the night, they began to sing God’s praises and the prisoners heard them, they proved themselves to be among the happiest of men! So was it with David. When the Psalmist wrote this song, he was slandered and vilified—every evil thing was laid to his charge. This was the case externally, and yet within, his mind was at such perfect peace that he could say, “My foot stands in an even place.”

It seemed to the common onlooker as though his foot would slip, as though he were like one hurled from the Tarpeian rock to be certainly dashed to pieces—but his soul’s experience was the absolute reverse of this. He seems to say to them all, “Hoot at me if you will! Seek to trip me up as you please! God is high above you all, and in Him I shall still stand my ground, for, blessed be His name, notwithstanding every attempt of the enemy to throw me down, my foot stands in an even place and in the congregation will I bless the Lord.”

There are two things in the text to which I would call your attention. The first is a Believer in a happy position. And the second is, a Believer engaged in a happy occupation. His “foot standing in an even place,” a happy position. “Praising and blessing God,” a happy occupation. We have here, first, then—

I. A BELIEVER IN A VERY HAPPY POSITION.  
Now, what does he mean by his “foot standing in an even place”? Well, is it not the very worst evil that a genuine Christian can suffer to fall into sin? To fall finally, would, of course, be our everlasting ruin. To fall at all, in any sense, is our greatest grief. Every true child of God would sooner sorrow a thousand times than sin once. His Father’s rod he has learned to love, but sin, even when it is the choicest pleasure, he has learned to hate. “Lord,” he says, “allow me to go anywhere except into sin. If the way is rough, so be it, if it is Your way, I will bless You for being in it. But if the road is ever so smooth, allow not my feet to tread it, if it is Bye-Path Meadow.” The worst evil that can befall a Christian, I say, is to fall into sin and continue to do so. On the contrary, one of the richest blessings that a Christian can enjoy is to be kept aright in his walk and conversation—year after year to wear a spotless character—year after year to be such an one as Daniel, that even the man’s enemies can find nothing against him except touching the Law of his God. Oh, this is a great honor! This is a rare jewel! There are some of God’s servants who will get to Heaven who never wore this jewel. They have been the Lord’s people, but yet their slips and falls have given them broken bones and troubled hearts—and they have been saved at the last “so as by fire.” But it is a choice mercy if the child of God is able not only safely to get into the harbor, but to get into the harbor without having touched a rock, without having sunk in a quicksand, without having suffered shipwreck—not only to come safely to Heaven, but to have “an abundant entrance ministered to him” into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Now, dear Friends, the standing which is spoken of in the text relates to the secure standing of the child of God in respect to sin—and it may be understood in two senses. Sometimes the Christian is in an even place with regard to common, outward sin. And secondly, he is at all times in an even place with regard to the sin of other men—there he stands in such an even place that sin touches him not.

First, I say there are some Christians who may take the language of the text in regard to outward sin and thank God that they are not just now exposed to vehement temptations. They are not journeying in slippery places, but their foot stands in an even place.

This may be occasioned by several causes. Sometimes it is caused by Providence. My Brothers, you have, perhaps, sometimes wished that you were rich. You have been in a little way of business and you have thought, “I wish I had a larger capital that I might launch out a little, that I might speculate, that I might get a larger income and accumulate at a faster rate.” Ah, you do not know. Those high places are slippery places, as some of late have proved to their own sorrow. You have need, instead of asking God to put you there, to thank Him that you are not so rich, that you are not therefore subject to the peculiar temptations incidental to great transactions of business, or great accumulations of gold. Comparatively, you may sit down and thank God that you are not in this position, but that your “foot stands in an even place.”

You may be thankful, too, if you are not extremely poor, for extreme poverty, like extreme wealth, is a very dangerous position. When a person is extremely poor, he may be tempted to steal. If he should be able to overcome that, he will be tempted to envy and may be very jealous of those who are better off than himself. And I do not know a more miserable spirit than an envious one! Nothing can be more un-Christian than to be angry with my fellow man because he happens to have more of outward good, and of inward excellence, too, perhaps, than I may happen to have. Thank God that your lot is cast in the middle place! If Agur’s prayer is fulfilled in you—“Give me neither poverty nor riches”—if you have just enough to have food and raiment, be content therewith and say, “I thank God that Providentially I am not exposed to the temptations of fashion and all its mazes, and I am not thrust into the temptations of penury with all its grief—in that respect my foot stands in an even place.”

How many a young man is dazzled with the idea of fame! “Ah” he thinks, “if I could but carve my name on that rock! If I could, I would mount higher than that last, and carve my name high up there!” Yes, but how many have rolled back, have tried to scale the battlements and have fallen to the bottom, mangled corpses?—

*“The path of glory leads but to the grave!”*Be thankful, young man, if God should mark out for you a quiet path of usefulness in the Sunday school, or in some village station, or in some place where, in the midst of your little family, you may bring your children up as a godly parent should, and at last, before the clods of the valley shall close over you, you may have, before you go hence, to thank God that your foot stood in an even place, though it might have slipped if you had been called to a more dangerous point on the hill! It is best for us to be thankful for the position in which Providence has placed us, for I suppose that most of us now present will see that we are not peculiarly exposed to either of the extremes and, therefore, in that sense our “foot stands in an even place.”

Sometimes this is the case not so much with regard to our own condition, as to the place of our abode and the surroundings of our family circle. How many of you young people ought to bless God that you are converted and live where you do! I know the temptation with some young persons is to wish to get away from the parental roof very early and to try to set up on their own account. Young woman, if you have a godly father and a godly mother, be in no great hurry to go away from the hearth where piety has been your joy! Young man, if you are apprenticed with godly people, do not be in such hot haste to be away from the place. This is a wicked city and for every place where a young man’s foot may stand “in an even place” in it, there are 50 places where it will need all the Divine Grace he has and a great deal more that only God can supply, to keep him from giving way to temptation!

I am afraid that now-a-days, such is the general business habit, as we say, and the fastness of our living, that many of our young people do not think enough of religious privileges. I have read of a Jew who would not trade in a certain town because there was no synagogue in it—he said he would rather be at another place because there was a synagogue there. And what the Jew felt in this respect, surely the Christian ought to feel far more! If you have to put up with far less money, yet if you have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, and mixing with God’s people, be not in a haste to throw away your golden privileges for the sake of those poor brazen gains which are pitiful in comparison with spiritual wealth! It is a wonderful mercy—a mercy which some of my dear Friends now present would prize very much if they could have it—it is a wonderful mercy, I say, to live in the midst of godly people! Contrast it to the living with the ungodly! There are those in this place now who, when they go home from this place of worship tonight, will hear oaths and blasphemy before they fall asleep. They will probably be startled in the morning by hearing the name of God profaned. Their religion provokes the animosity of their dearest friends! They cannot be at their work without hearing ribaldry and without being selected to be the butt of all the archers who shoot at them, sorely wound them and grieve them—for though there are no burnings at the stake now-a-days, yet there are “trials of cruel mocking,” and these “mockings” are sometimes very “cruel” indeed! There is all the difference between the plant in the sheltered corner of the garden and the other plant set out in the wild, bleak waste for every frost to nip! Be thankful, dear young friends, yes, and let us be thankful who are not so young, if we are placed in a position where we are not continually exposed to the vicious example, or to the frowns of gainsayers. Let us say thankfully with David, “My foot stands in an even place in that respect: and in the congregation will I bless the Lord for it.”

Besides this, our foot may be kept by Providence and Grace combined. Providence may have placed us where the ministry is instructive and established—and then our foot stands in an even place. I have known some shepherds of flocks and, in the short time in which it has been my privilege to preside here, I think I have seen them veer to all points of the compass. There are some I know now whose particular position in theology no one ever did know and, I suppose, will never be able to ascertain, for there seems to be no definite teaching, no declaration of Doctrines, no laying down of established Truths of God! And, mark you, it is a great mercy when the Lord teaches us something and makes us know what we do know, and when what we hear we understand and receive into our souls by the teaching of the Holy Spirit! It is a great mercy when we are not carried away by this fanaticism, nor the other enthusiasm, but when we are cast into connection with people who hold fast to the faith which is delivered to them and are not to be carried about by every novelty, but are conservative of the grand old Truths and hold fast to the Doctrines of the Cross of Christ! It may have been the lot of some of you, dear Friends, to sometimes be members of one church and sometimes of another—sometimes of a church given to quarrel and to break up, or, on the other hand, members of churches that are taken up with every novelty. Oh, be thankful that you have, many of you young Christians, round about you, fathers in Christ and matrons in Israel who confirm you in the faith, under God, and through whom your foot has been made to stand in an even place. For this mark of Grace, bless the Lord!

But to go still farther. Sometimes the Christian may thank God for his standing, not so much because of his position in life, nor because of the outward means of Grace, but because of the inward establishment and spiritual growth which God the Holy Spirit has given him. Oh, what a mercy it is, Christian, if your experience has been your own and you are come at last to a settled state of rest of heart! The devil sometimes says to you, “You will never be able to attain to the Glory and the Kingdom— you will never overcome your foes.” But you can say, “Ah, in this respect my foot stands in an even place, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.” Sometimes your outward troubles are very many and the fear is that they will be too much for you—but oh, what a mercy it is to be able to stand in an even place in that respect, and say, “Goodness and mercy followed me all the days of my life, and I am persuaded that they always will. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for God will be with me to be my Stay!” When experience and patience have produced in us unstaggering faith in God, what a blessed life we lead! But the unbelieving heir of Heaven, the man of little faith and little confidence in God—he is blown about by every wind and every difficulty staggers him—he is ready to weep under every trial! But the true Christian knows that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for him a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory! He believes that Jesus walks the stormy waters. He can hear Him say, “It is I,” and he is not afraid. He feels that he cannot suffer shipwreck while Christ is in the vessel with him and, therefore, if not always rejoicing, yet he is calm and patient, waiting for the salvation of the Lord. I think I know some of you who have been for years in this condition. You are not now as you used to be—all in Heaven one day and all in the depths the next. You are not so readily excited as you once were. An earnest Prayer Meeting fills you with holy joy, but it does not transport you quite out of the body as it once did. On the other hand, if some sharp affliction should come upon you, it still distresses you, but it does not perplex you and cast you into despair as it would once have done! You are no longer an infant, but you have become a man or woman in Christ Jesus! You have grown strong. You are rooted, grounded, and settled in the faith! Now, be very tranquil, dear Friends, and thankful that you can say concerning these things, “I am not to be moved by them— temptations that were once formidable to me are so no longer, for I know the promise and the faithfulness of my God—and my foot stands in an even place.”

Once more. This may sometimes be peculiarly true of the Christian, when he has been enjoying near, dear, and ripened fellowship with the Lord Jesus. We sometimes stand on Tabor with our transfigured Lord! It is not always Gethsemane. It is sometimes the mount of the first Glory and sometimes whatever occurs has no more effect upon us than tempests upon solid rocks! The joy of the Lord, the Presence of our Savior, the light of His love, the feast at His banqueting table—these things become so all-absorbing to us that we can say with Dr. Watts—

*“Let earth against my soul engage,  
And hellish darts be hurled.  
Still I can smile at Satan’s rage,  
And face a frowning world.”*

Such a soul, all taken up with Divine Love, sitting at the feet of Christ with Mary, has neither room nor time for Martha’s cares and encumbrances, but can rejoice and say, “My heart is fixed, oh my God! My heart is fixed, I will “sing and give praise.” Such an one may be poor and yet cannot be poor! Such an one may be sick and yet must be well! Such an one may be alone and yet not alone, for his Lord is with him! I wish that you and I could more often say in this respect, “My foot stands in an even place, and in the congregation I will bless the Lord.”

Now you can see that all this view of the text is but occasional. But there is a view of the text that is permanent. As I have already said with regard to the great sin, the sin which is unto death, the sin which would destroy a Christian, every child of God may at every time say, “My foot stands in an even place.” The child of God may sin, but he cannot sin away his birthright. The heir of Heaven may fall, and he may fall foully, too, but though he falls seven times, he shall be lifted up again—and the eternal hand of God shall keep him, even to the end! Beloved, it is our mercy to believe that—

*“Once in Christ, in Christ forever,  
Nothing from His love can sever.”*

If you stand on the Rock of Ages, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you stand on a Rock which never can reel beneath you, and from which no power, either earthly or infernal, can ever tear you! If you are in the hands of Christ, you know what He says—“No one is able to pluck them out of My hands; My Father which gave them to Me is greater than I, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hands.” Oh, how safe they are, then, in the hands of Christ, first, and in the hands of God after—as if to give a double security, a two-handed guarantee—the power of Christ and the power of the Eternal Father being both guaranteed to the safety of the Believer!

But may the Believer ever say within himself that he is safe? Beloved, he may never say that he is safe in himself! No, that were, indeed, but a lie! But he may always say that he is safe in Christ Jesus. He may never say, “My mountain stands firm; I shall never be moved.” But he may say—

*“My life is hid with Christ in God,*

*Beyond the reach of harm,”*  
And, “Because He lives, I shall live also.” He may not say, “I know that I, by my own strength, shall persevere to the end.” But he may say, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.” The perseverance of the Christian is not ensured by the Christian’s resolve to persevere unto the end, nor by the Christian’s own power, nor by any plans which the Christian can adopt! That perseverance is secured by the promise of Christ, by the energy of the Spirit, by the watchfulness of God and by the faithfulness of God to His own Covenant!

Oh, Christian, how happy are you to be loved with an everlasting love, to have your name written in an Everlasting Covenant, to know that if your house is not so with God, yet He has made with you an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure! Your foot stands at all times, in this respect, in an even place where justice and mercy are sweetly balanced, where justice and truth have taken away all irregularities, where the path is even and plain! Oh, let your tongue sing praises unto the Lord!

And now just a few words, and only a few words, though as earnest as possible, upon—  
II. THE CHRISTIAN’S HAPPY OCCUPATION.  
The Psalmist says, “In the congregation will I bless the Lord,” and surely we ought to do the same. Oh, think, dear Friends, in your own remembrance, how many professors have perished! I scarcely dare to look back upon them. They once floated as calmly upon the surface of the sea as you or I do. There they are. I see the broken hulks, the boards and broken pieces still tossing upon the surf! Can you see the corpses as they strew the ocean—corpses of warriors apparently as brave and as well armed as we are! There is Demas, he has made shipwreck. There is Judas, too, the first son of perdition. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we have been kept, if our feet have been made to stand in an even place and we do not bless the Lord, the very stones will cry out against us! Why is it that we have not fallen into sin as many others have done? Why, indeed, but that the Grace of God has prevented us? There was everything in us that would have led us into the same mischief—the same sin, the same unbelief, the same evil habit of departing from the living God—and if it had not been for preventing Grace which has held us fast, we would have made shipwreck as well as others! Let us praise God if, after 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years, or perhaps more, we are still spared to stand in the midst of the Christian Church upholding our integrity! Surely we ought to say, “In the congregation will I bless the Lord.”  
And then, again, as the Christian ought to do it, so it is the best thing that he can do, for nothing can be more useful to him. I fancy if we praised

God when we are in the enjoyment of mercies, we would keep mercies longer. If God had more gratitude from us when we are well, He would help us to continue in good health, but He knows that we need to be sick, sometimes, to make us know the value of health and, therefore, He sends us to the bed of sickness that we may learn a lesson of gratitude? And if we were more grateful, we might, perhaps, be spared some of our troubles. And so while we are kept standing, if we bless the Lord for it, it may be that He will continue thus to keep us, but if not, He may allow us to slip in order that we may learn where our great strength lies—and may thenceforth praise His name! Christian, to praise God will be of the utmost service to you. The fact is, you must praise somebody—and if you do not praise God, you will slip into praising yourself—and that will make you hateful in God’s esteem, for the Lord hates a proud look. If you once begin to say, “It is my own goodness and the excellency of my natural temperament that have kept me,” you will soon come down—and great will be the fall thereof. But if you praise God, it will keep you from, self-conceit.

To praise God is, also, one of the sweetest medicines for worldliness. Most medicines are very strange—sour or bitter. I sometimes think doctors make them thus, for many persons would not think them effectual if they were not nasty! Probably there might just as well be sweet medicines as bitter. I do not know why there should not be. Certainly praise, though it is sweet and pleasant, is profitable and curative, too!

It will cure you of worldliness quite as much as will sorrow. If you sit down to a loaded table and bless the Lord for it, the abundance will not give you “fullness of bread.” If you go abroad in the world and God increases your wealth, and you are grateful for it, it will not eat as does a canker, nor injure you, but the gratitude you have will be a sweet corrective force to keep you from being a mere earth-grubbing mole—as you would have been if you had not been lifting your eyes to Heaven and mounting up on the wings of praise, as the eagle does, with his face towards the sun! Praise God that you have been able to bear your prosperity and you will probably have a longer time of it, and you will get good out of it. Moreover, as you ought to praise God and it is useful to praise God, so let me say that it is honorable to God that you should praise Him. There ought to be somebody to speak well of Him, for this wicked world is constantly abusing Him. If a man’s own children do not praise him, where can he expect to have a good name? Oh, you who are the children of God, I am afraid you sometimes give your God a bad Character! Those long faces of yours. Those dolorous tales about Providential afflictions— when they hear and see these, the world says, “Ah, we always said so— they are a miserable set and they serve a very hard Master!” But it is a gross lie! There never were servants that had such a good Master as we have! We love His House! We love His service! We love His wages! We love Him! We are the happiest people in all the world and though the worldling will have it that we must be wretched because we are religious, we reply, “Our religion is our joy and our comfort! It is our delight and our bliss! We wish we had more of it! We serve a blessed God and we will speak well of His name.”

To bless the Lord, while it is honorable to Him, will often be useful to our fellow creatures, and this should be the most practical point. David said, “In the congregation will I bless the Lord,” by which I understand he felt that his blessing God might be useful to others, else he might have shut himself up in his room and praised God there. David was not like some of whom we know. I hear of some about the country who say, “I shall not go to the place of worship in my village. I cannot get on with the minister. I buy Mr. So-and-So’s sermons and I find more Truth in them, so I shall stay at home.” You remember the view the Apostle took of this when he wrote, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is”—a very bad manner, let me say, by the way the Apostle mentions it! If there are a few people of God anywhere, join with them, and if they are such a people as you cannot think of joining as people of God, open a place of your own! Make it a point of conscience that where you have a house, God shall have one, and that where there is a tent for you, there shall be an altar for Him! How much might the Kingdom of God spread if Christian people everywhere took care of this! David could have praised God alone, it is true, but he was not satisfied with it. He loved that genial warmth, that glow of holy fire which always comes when hearts come together. And so he says, “In the congregation will I praise the Lord.”

There are several ways of doing this. You may praise the Lord, you know, by singing—and what a delightful employment that is! I sometimes wish we all knew how to sing. It is very well for us to sing our best, but that best might be a great deal better. Our Moravian friends can, nearly all of them, sing, and if you were to go to their settlement you would find all of them able to join in the sacred song. It is miserable work where there are two or three fellows in white surplices who get up to praise God, or where there is a big machine out of which the music is brought. I suppose the Lord does have mercy upon such folly, but how there can be anything like spiritual worship coming from a box of pipes I cannot understand! The hearts of God’s people praise Him out of living organs! We must bring something like spiritual worship and when we have learned to praise God with the understanding as well as with our hearts, surely it will be none the less acceptable to Him, but all the more! He ought to have the best of the best and when we bring Him our praise it should be the best praise that it is possible for even hearts to make!

But there are other ways of blessing Him. You who cannot sing, can perhaps praise Him by your preaching. Oh, how we can help the Lord when we speak well of His name from the pulpit! It enlarges the scope and sphere of our praise when we can call upon hundreds, or on these occasions here, in this house, upon thousands of others, and say, “Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together! Come, let us bow down and worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker—let us come into His Presence with thanksgiving and unto His courts with joy.” It is sweet work to preach when our preaching is blessing God!

Some of you cannot preach and you cannot sing. Well, you can bless God by your conversation. May the Lord give us many of His servants to bless Him in the farmyard, in the counting-house, behind the counter and in the factory! To bless Him when they are driving their carts, whose hearts are so full of praise that they naturally speak well of God as they speak well of some good friend who has helped and prospered them! Let me enlist you to bless God this very night before you go to bed—bless Him, I mean, in talking to someone else to whom your testimony for God may be blessed. Now, I charge you—you who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are His followers—if He has treated you badly, tell of it, speak honestly!

If you have found Him to be a hard Master, tell it to warn others against Him! But I know you cannot! You dare not say a word against Him, though you can say ten thousand words for Him—and would do so if it were not for your bashfulness. You can all say—

“Lord, **unloose my stammering tongue.  
Who should louder sing than I?”**

Tell others that you have tasted and handled the good Word of Life, that you have found it a delightful thing to weep the tears of penitence, to turn with faith to the Savior and trust in Him. Do you say, “To whom shall I tell it?” Go, husband, tell it to your wife! My good Sister, tell it to your husband! Tell it to your child! Tell it to your brother! “Andrew first finds his own brother, Simon Peter.” You go and do the same! Tell others and so help them to praise Him, too!

And there is another way of blessing God, even without much time. A Christian can bless God by his life. I heard somebody say of a Christian Brother at Manchester that “he preached with his feet.” Ah, that is a noble way of preaching! May we have many such preachers! That is to say, by practical living, by walk and conversation. May you praise God by your consistent cheerfulness! There are Brothers and Sisters in this place to look at whose face is always enough to make one feel happy! They are not better nor richer than many I know of, but they seem always happy. They seem to live with Jesus—and when they speak, they speak well of Him. I am sure they are the most likely people to bring in converts. Ask the Lord to make your face to shine. Pray that you may look at Him until you are changed from glory unto glory! You know what that means—that the Glory there is in Christ may come upon you—from glory to glory—that your face may shine like that of Moses, the Light of God’s Countenance being upon you through your praising and blessing Him!

I am afraid my sermon has no relation to some here present, but I ask them whether God has not been good to them in many respects. They have been kept alive—let them be grateful for the mercies they have and let their gratitude lead them to penitence, to think that they have sinned against so good a God! Ah, my Hearers, if you will but repent and come to Him, He will be found of you. Knock and His door will be opened. Speak to Him and He will hear and listen to you! Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and He will wash you in His blood and bring you to His Father’s right hand in the Kingdom! The Lord bless these words, spoken in much conscious weakness, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 37:17-40.**

17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. They must stand, therefore, for how shall he fall whom God upholds?

18-19. The LORD knows the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. These are bad times now. Everyone complains and, indeed, there seems to be abundant cause, for distress is universal. But let us fall back on the promise. “In the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”

20-23. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall be consumed; into smoke shall they vanish away. The wicked borrow and pay not again: but the righteous show mercy and give. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth: and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way. There is a mutual delight, you see. If we delight in God, God delights in us. He delights in the conduct of His people. When they walk with Him, He takes pleasure in every step that they take. What do you say, Brothers and Sisters? Have you tried to live today so that God may take pleasure in you? He cannot do it if we have lived carelessly, or fruitlessly, or selfishly. But when we live to Him, then the Lord delights in our way.

24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with His hand. Just going to fall, but in came the interposing hand. Grace catches us up when sin would throw us down.

25. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. It was so unusual a thing that David had never seen it. I have several times seen the seed of the righteous begging bread, but in every case it has been because of their drunkenness or their laziness, or because of their own vice which they brought upon themselves. But, as a rule, God takes care of the children of His children. He does not allow them to want. They may be brought into great straits, but He will not permit them to come to beggary.

26-29. He is always merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the LORD loves justice, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. There is a grand time coming (oh, that God would hasten it!) when truth and righteousness shall rule the earth, and then shall the godly have their portion! At the present time—

*“Every prospect pleases,*

*And only man is vile.”*  
But the day shall come when the vile person shall cease from off the earth and the saints shall have the Kingdom.

30. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. You may often judge a man by his mouth. The physician looks at the tongue to see how the man is—and so is a righteous man known by his mouth and his tongue, for he talks of justice.

31-40. The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut of, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright. For the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #956 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THINK WELL AND DO WELL  
NO. 956

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For Your loving kindness is before my eyes: and I have walked in Your Truth.” Psalm 26:3.**

THROUGHOUT this Psalm David is laboring under the fear that he should be judged and condemned with the ungodly world. He feels in his own heart that he is not one with the enemies of God, and he shudders lest having hated their society on earth he should be shut up in their company forever. His agonizing prayer is, “Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.” In urging reasons before the Throne of Grace why he should not be reckoned in the same condemnation as the ungodly, he urges not self-righteously, but truthfully and confidently that there was a difference made by Grace between himself and them.

“I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evildoers. And will not sit with the wicked.....Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your honor dwells.” There was a difference, he declares, between himself and the wicked, even in the current of his thoughts. While their thoughts ran upon the world, vanity, sin, rebellion, hypocrisy, and violence, his meditations were upon all the marvelous works of God, and especially upon His loving kindness—“Your loving kindness is before my eyes.” it is an encouraging fact when we can honestly feel as before God that our thoughts are habitually exercised upon Himself and upon Divine Truth. “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

We may form a better judgment of ourselves probably from the tenor of our thoughts than from any other evidence. If our thoughts all go downward, downward we ourselves are going. But if there are some breathings towards the heavenly, some aspirations of our spirit towards the pure and perfect Father of Lights, then may we have hope that we, also, are ascending towards the heavenly places, and shall dwell in them hereafter. David could urge, besides the secret evidence of his devout thoughts, the public proof of his holy acts—“I have walked in Your Truth.” It would be vanity for a man to find evidence of a renewed heart in his private meditations if those thoughts were not sufficiently deep to lead him to practical godliness.

The thoughts become a valuable evidence because of their influence upon the life, but if they were so powerlessly superficial that our daily life was in no degree affected by them, they would be as salt that has lost its savor. If our actions are evil, it is vain to take comfort from our thoughts. If actions speak louder than words, they may well speak louder than thoughts. We must display outward holiness, or else our inward experience of Grace exists only in pretense. You may think of what you will, but if your whole conversation is according to the will of the flesh and not after the will of God your thoughts are nothing—you have deceived yourself as to their tenor—they cannot be as you say they are, thoughts truthful, holy, devout and Divine.

Put the two together, holy thoughts and holy living, and you have two sure evidences of a renewed nature. And if God has given you both of these, though you will probably confess that you have them not in the measure in which you would desire to have them, yet bless the Grace that has so worked upon you, and rejoice this morning, and go on in holy confidence to ask for a greater measure of the same Divine working. Would to God our thoughts may become uniformly gracious, and our lives perfectly consistent with our thoughts—and with the Divine Word.

I mean, this morning, to take the two parts of the text separately, and then to consider the link which unites them. First, then, we shall have to consider the mind occupied with a fruitful subject. Secondly, the life ordered by a right rule. And thirdly, the link which connects the two.

I. First then, may every Christian experimentally know to a fuller degree what it is to have A MIND OCCUPIED WITH A FRUITFUL SUBJECT. “Your loving kindness is before my eyes.” It is exceedingly profitable to the Christian to have always some subject of thought upon his mind. The mind that is vacant, frivolous, unoccupied, will be sure to issue in a barren and unprofitable life. I fear, to a very large extent, in this age the minds, even of good people, are empty, and void, and a waste.

Years ago, when the influence of the Puritan age yet lingered among us, the female members of Christian Churches were generally women of very considerable education. Their range of reading was very different from that of their sisters in these days, and their theological knowledge was profound. While the men who were members of our Nonconformist Churches, were, as a rule, persons of very clear doctrinal knowledge— perhaps rather too much given to controversy, and to pushing their own views without sufficient tolerance for the views of others.

On the whole, Nonconformist Christianity was highly intelligent, thoughtful, and meditative. Men and women then, when they joined the Church, knew what they believed, and believed what they knew. They were prepared to be counted singular for their belief, but were equally prepared to justify themselves for talking up so separated a position. They were students of the Word of God and of such books as opened up to them the Word of God—so that our armies of Believers, if they were fewer than now, were nevertheless very strong, because the warriors handled their weapons well, were well drilled, and at home in the holy war.

I fear a great many Christian people do not think much about their religion. They give their guinea subscription, they occupy their seat at the meeting house, they attend the Prayer Meetings, but they are little given to thinking out a system of doctrine, or to ransacking the weaning of Scripture. Contemplative pursuits are not so general among Christian professors as I could wish. Not that I desire to see an increase of a certain amateur class of people who are always expounding prophecy, or spelling out types, and leaving ragged people to perish in ignorance, and the masses of our city to remain not evangelized.

The sooner we bury the last of our Prophetic pretenders the better. They expose the Truth of God to ridicule and rather hinder, than promote, the cause of religion. Louis Napoleon was to be the Antichrist, and to conquer all Europe—I wonder how they will play their cards now! Of late they have grown so impudent as to foretell the future with all the brass of a Sidrophel, a Lilly, or a Dr. Dec. I hope their failures will open the eyes of the public to their folly.

I so reverence the inspired prophecies that I wish a race of students would succeed these charlatans. We need devoutly meditative people who will think about the precious things of God in a practical, gracious way, such as the Holy Spirit inspires. We need men who are not forever occupying themselves with theories and speculations, but with the solidities and with the practical parts of theology. A band of such men, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, would have a great influence for good. And if all professors were such, the Church would be rich, indeed.

Observe, that when the mind does not receive holy matters to feed upon, as a rule it preys upon itself. Like certain of our bodily organs which, if not supplied with nutritive matter, will soon begin to devour their own tissues, and then all sorts of aches, pains, and ultimately diseases will set in. The mind, when it eats into itself, forms doubts, fears, suspicions, complaints, and nine out of ten of the doubts and fears of God’s people come from two things—walking at a distance from God, and want of spiritual nutriment for the soul.

If you, Believer, do not meditate upon some Scriptural subject, your minds will probably turn to vanity or to some evil within yourselves, and you will not long think of the corruption within without becoming the subjects of a despondency which will turn you into Mistress Dispondencies or Mr. Feebleminds, whereas by musing on the promises of the Holy Spirit you would grow into good soldiers and happy pilgrims. Of some who do not feed their souls constantly with spiritual nourishment Satan takes an advantage and fills them with unholy thoughts.

It is a very frequent complaint with persons who desire to be in the fear of God all day long, that they are molested with horrible insinuations, dreadful suggestions, and revolting ideas. And they fly to the pastor sometimes to know whether they can be the children of God at all, or if the children of God, what remedy they can use by which they shall be able to escape from this horrible torment.

I suggested yesterday to a friend laboring under this serious complaint, that he should take care never to go out in the morning without placing under his tongue a text of Scripture like a wafer made with honey. And I exhorted him at all times to occupy his mind with heavenly subjects, so that there should be the less likelihood of the thoughts running after that which is evil. The best way to prevent a bushel measure from being filled with chaff is to fill it first with wheat. If the channel of the soul is filled with a strong stream of devout thought, there cannot be much mud and filth lying in the bottom.

A powerful stream of holy contemplation will scour the thoughts and bear away the foul deposits of unholy thought. There is nothing like keeping the mind occupied, for Satan finds some evil still for idle brains to think upon. It is true that weeds and nettles choke the good seed, but it is equally true that when the good seed gets strong above ground it will choke the weeds. Where Jesus is, the buyers and sellers are driven out of the temple. Dagon falls where the ark comes.

When Israel comes in the Canaanite must go out. Fill the cage of your heart with the birds of Paradise, and the foul birds will not have it all to themselves. If our soul shall become so full of thoughts of God and things Divine, that vain thoughts shall be banished, it will be a fine growing time for the plants of the Lord’s right hand planting. Learn from the text the usefulness of having some sacred topic before the mind’s eye.

David, in selecting the topic of Divine loving kindness did well, for let us remark upon that subject, that it is, first of all, a rightful subject of meditation. I mean, it is our bounden duty to think much upon it. Some things we may not think of, certain other topics we are barely allowed to think of, but other themes we must think of. Now the loving kindness of God is one of the things which is not left to our choice. We are bound to meditate much upon that. As Dr. Watts says—

*“Oh, bless the Lord, my Soul,  
Nor let His mercies lie  
Forgotten in unthankfulness,  
And without praises die.”*

Shall God, day after day, send such stores of mercy to such unworthy ones as we are, and shall we treat His continuous generosity as a matter of course, and not even think of it? Base ingratitude! Let us scorn such meanness. If we ought to think of our duty to God, and of our violation of that duty, yet much more of the loving kindness which makes our duty pleasure, and which covers over with a mantle of love the transgressions of our lives. Infinite goodness is a rightful subject of meditation, and it deserves a large share of our thoughts.

It is, besides, a good subject. It is good in itself, and it will do us good. The loving kindness of God—it is not possible any harm can come to us from retaining that subject too long in our minds. A man who has but one idea will sometimes become an unbalanced, inharmonious man— oftentimes he will fall into obstinacy, bigotry, or rashness through the excessive indulgence of that one thought—just as one feature exaggerated out of proportion with the rest will make an ugly countenance.

But you cannot think too much upon Divine loving kindness. You may make this, if you will, the one sole topic of your thought and yet escape narrow-mindedness or one-sidedness. It has so many links of union with all other subjects, that when you consider this it will bring up, as it were, compendiously a whole circle of profitable meditation. Think of the Divine loving kindness, and it shall be good, only good, and that continually. As you muse upon it your thoughts will humble you. “Why such goodness to me, to me who is less than the least of all Your mercies?”

The same theme will be equally sure to comfort you. “Is the Lord so good to me? Then amid every adversity my spirit shall rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation.” To think of this will stimulate you to be full of loving kindness to others who may have acted unjustly or ungenerously towards you. As God has loved you so bounteously you will be bound to pity and assist the poor and needy.

This subject will benefit you in all respects, and harm you in none. Ring this silver bell again and again, it is good for the hearing. Moreover, dear Brethren, it is a wide subject. To set His loving kindness before our eyes is not to select a narrow theme which we can soon exhaust. It is a boundless topic. The loving kindness of the Lord has no beginning. You may fly backward to the ages past in meditation deep and long—Divine loving kindness shall have no end.

You may look into the ages yet to come with joyful musings. Loving kindness is high as Heaven, to which it shall lift you. It is deep as Hell, from which it has redeemed you. It is wide as the east is from the west, for so far has He removed all your transgressions from you. Here is a subject in which you may expatiate without limit or fear of repetition. If up to now you have bathed in this stream up to the ankles, proceed in meditation deeper still, for you shall find it a river to swim in—a very broad river that cannot be passed over. The width of the subject is one thing which leads me to commend it to you as a theme for the most expanded intellect in time and in eternity.

And it is a pleasing subject. “Your loving kindness is before my eyes.” Nobody need grow weary of this. It is like traversing a country in which every single inch of the road opens up a new prospect. Here you see the loving kindness of God in the land in which you were born, in the times in which your life is cast, in the mercies with which your life is surrounded. You may see the loving kindness of God in your temporal mercies. You cannot go to your house or bedchamber without seeing it there. You see that loving kindness even more clearly in spirituals.

What a blessing to be interested in the Covenant of Grace! How many a holy hymn awakens memories of the tender mercies past! How this very House, and the seat you sit on, refreshes your recollections as to what God has done for you in days gone by! “The loving kindness of the Lord.” I never knew a man grow heavy in spirit from meditating upon this! I never knew a man become weary of the cares and burdens of life through thinking of God’s loving kindness! No, but he has grown stronger to bear his burden, or to fight his way through time’s conflict, when the loving kindness of the great Preserver of men has come visibly before his mind.

And you may add, it is a very plain and simple subject, and one that is suitable to us all. The loving kindness of the Lord is a topic that can be reached by the babe in Grace, and yet will not be superfluous to the most advanced. There are topics in Scripture so profound and surrounded with such metaphysical difficulties, and rendered so much more perplexing by the wisdom, or the unwisdom, of divines, that one might almost say to the Christian thinker, “You may pass those by, for you will never get much out of them. The quartz is too hard. There is too little gold to pay for breaking up.”

But when you come to this subject the unskilled convert may sit down and meditate on the loving kindness of God and be edified. While at the same time the most proficient scholar in the school of Christ shall find something fresh and new every time he meditates thereon. You are little read, you say. You have little access to the thoughts of great men. Your Bible is your only book. Ah, well, but the Providence of God will make you a second, and the experience of your heart, touching Christ and things Divine, will make you a third volume!

And put the three together, the book of Revelation, the book of Providence, the book of your inward experience, and with these three you have a wondrous library! And in them all you may read the loving kindness of the Lord towards your soul. I will finish this part of my subject by saying that this is always a suitable and a seasonable topic. The young Christian, in the early flush of his joy, may think on the loving kindness of God. It will help to keep him joyful and yet to make him sober.

The venerable Christian matron may, before she departs, dwell still upon this topic, and tell her children and her children’s children of what God has done for her. In your health or in your sickness, in your wealth or in your poverty, in your joy or in your sorrow—still, this theme of the loving kindness of God will be congenial and healthful. This you may study on the top of Amana when you have passed by the leopards’ dens. This you may rehearse in the Valley of Humiliation when you lie down with the shepherd boy among the flocks and sing—

*“He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride.”*

This you may think of when you are fighting with Apollyon, and the darts fly thick as hail, yes, fiery darts that burn as well as wound. And this you may think of in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, when heart and flesh fail you. This may be your last song, and as you enter into Glory it may be your first—

*“Soon shall I pass the gloomy vale,  
Soon all my mortal powers must fail.  
O may my last expiring breath  
His loving kindness sing in death!  
Then let me mount and soar away  
To the bright world of endless day,  
And sing with rapture and surprise,  
His loving kindness in the skies.”*

I have thus introduced to you the topic for mental contemplation. We will at once proceed to the second part of our subject.

II. The Psalmist sets before US A LIFE ORDERED BY A RIGHT RULE. “I have walked in Your Truth.” I wish we could say this as positively as he does, each of us. I am afraid we should have to alter it, and say, “I desire to have Your loving kindness before my eyes, and to walk in Your Truth.” I shall invite each of you to look over your diaries to see how you could make such a statement, and the following remarks I offer as reflections to help you.

He means, first, by the words, “Your Truth,” “I have tried to order my religion according to the Truth concerning God and the way in which He would be worshipped. I have worshipped the true God in the true way. I have searched to see what and who God is, how He would be served, and in what way. And according to what I have learned from Himself I have walked in His Truth.” Can you all say that?

Why, even all Christians cannot say as much! They worship God—yes, but how? As their fathers did or their grandmothers? Why have they worshipped God as they now do? Because the Word of God so teaches? No. But because their family has been so brought up. They never took the trouble to see whether it was right, and would not like to take the trouble now. Their family always did it, therefore they will always do it. Such people can say, “I have walked according to my ancestors.” But they cannot say, “I have walked in Your Truth.”

If their fathers had worshipped the devil, they would have done the same. If their family had worshipped Juggernaut, they would have worshipped him, too. It makes no consequence to some people what it is, they go in for, “follow my leader.” They are of one mind with the old Saxon king, who, when he was about to be baptized, stood with one leg in the water, and enquired of the bishop, “Where do you say my ancestors are gone? They knew nothing about your Christianity.”

“All cast into Hell,” said the bishop. “Well, then,” said this fine old conservative, “I will go with them. I should not like to be parted from my kith and kin.” Very much of this principle rules our country still. The majority of men do not walk in God’s Truth, nor care to know what God’s Truth is. I know they will say there are so many sects, and so on, as if there, after all, was such a difficulty about the Word of God that a simple-minded man could not find out what the Truth is. The Bible is a plain enough book, and if a man wishes to understand it he can.

Dear Brethren, if you are Christians, do be able to say, “I have desired to know the Truth about Yourself, O my God, and how You would be worshipped, and so far as I have learned I have walked in Your Truth.” He means next that he had walked according to God’s Law. He believed God’s Law to be the essential right, the just rule of action, and he had tried to do right in all respects. There is a line of Truth which you can clearly see, which needs not be laid down in words.

And it is a glorious thing when a man can say, “I may not have been always prosperous in business, I may not have succeeded as some have done, but what does that matter? I have kept a conscience void of offense. As a Christian man I have done the right and left the consequences with God.” This is true evidence of Grace reigning in the heart, when we can confidently say before God that, notwithstanding all our sins, transgressions, and infirmities, yet towards men we have walked in the Truth as God would have us walk. This is to have the outward life ordered in Truth.

And did not he mean this, also, that as God had been truthful to him, so he had been enabled by Grace to be truthful to God? “I have walked in Your Truth.” My God, You have never lied to me. I have also strived to be true to You. I have found Your promise to be always certain. I have labored to make my vows, which I have presented to You, as certain as the fulfillment of Your promises. Have you all done this? Years ago some of

you put on Christ, and avowed yourselves His followers.

By your Baptism you made a declaration of death to the world, and of life in Christ—has it been so? Have you walked in God’s Truth? He has never failed in anything towards us. Alas, what is there in which we have not failed towards Him? He has been true to us in the Covenant of His Grace—have we kept the pledge and bonds which bind us to His Church and to His cause? Can we say, “As You have walked in Your Truth to me so have I walked in Truth to You”?

If we have failed here I should not wonder it is because we have failed in the first part of the text. Our thoughts have not been enough with God and therefore our lives have not been true to Him. May we be helped in both parts of the text, so that while our hearts feed upon His Truth our feet may walk in His Truth, and we may be faithful Christians before the Lord our God.

III. But time flies, and I need space for the third head, which is, THE LINK WHICH BINDS THE TWO PARTS OF THE TEXT TOGETHER. “Your loving kindness is before my eyes. I have walked in Your Truth.” The one has been the consequence of the other. Because I thought much of Your love, therefore have I walked in Your Truth. Our thoughts very greatly influence our actions. It is questionable whether a man could long think on any subject without the course of his life being colored by it. Like certain silkworms which yield silk colored according to the food they have fed on, so our life gradually takes the tinge and hue of the thoughts to which we most accustom ourselves.

We have had in our police courts of late frequent instances of this. Boys have been studying literature of the Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin order—and they have become thieves of necessity. Men who have been deeply read in French novels, Byronic poetry, and German metaphysics have become dissolute and skeptical, and none could wonder. You cannot send the mind up the chimney and expect it to come down white. Whatever read, the thoughts traverse—all the faculties of manhood will go after them. So you see, Brethren, David had thought upon God’s loving kindness, and very soon his whole spirit went after big thoughts, and he walked in God’s Truth.

Let me show you a little of this. I will suppose, this morning, that you and I are meditating upon the subject suggested. Let us set God’s loving kindness before our eyes, and one of its most striking points is its eternity. It is certain that God loved those whom He now loves before time began. Those who are the favored sons of God have not lately come into the possession of His love—they were loved of Him before the foundation stone of creation was laid. It is a glorious doctrine! There is room for the soul to revel and riot with holy delight in it.

Everlasting love, love without beginning towards unworthy worms! Well, now, what comes of it? Why, naturally, the moment the heart gets into the enjoyment of it, it cries, “I will walk in God’s Truth. This great doctrine leads me to receive other great doctrines. I am not afraid, now, of doctrinal knowledge. If it is so that God has loved me before the world began, and has blessed me with all spiritual blessings accordingly as He chose me in Christ Jesus, then I am not afraid to consider the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, the doctrine of His foreknowledge and of His predestination, and all the other doctrines that spring therefrom. The brightness of this one gem has attracted me to enter into the mines of Divine thought, and I will seek from now on to be conversant with the deep things of God.”

Many would be much more sound in doctrine if they meditated more upon the eternity of Divine loving kindness. Now turn that loving kindness round again, get another view of it. Let another ray of light flash from this diamond. Think of the freeness of it! God’s loving kindness to us was utterly undeserved. He loved us, not because there was anything lovable about us, but because He chose to do so. He is an absolute Sovereign, and He does as He wills with His own. It is because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, that He has had mercy upon us.

Unworthy, did I say? More unworthy was I than any, least likely, as it seemed, of any of the sons of men to be a partaker of Divine love. If He so freely loved me, what shall I say? I must freely love Him in return. I cannot but reciprocate this love. If I cannot love Him as He loves me in degree, yet will I at any rate love Him as freely and willingly. Has He chosen me? I choose Him. Has He ordained me that I should be saved? My heart ordains that He shall be glorious. And if there is anything that I can do to serve Him, let me know what it is, for it must be, it shall be done.

Turn that loving kindness round again, look at another side of it, namely, its certainty. It is no fiction that God loves His people. If you are Believers in Christ Jesus, trusting alone to His merits, God as surely loves you as He is God. There is no question about the matter. His Divine love is as certainly yours as His power is displayed in creation. Well, then, let your obedience be real in return.

If He really loves me, then will I really love Him, and truly serve Him. It shall not be talk, and resolution, and pretense. There shall be that gift given, even if I deny myself to give it. There shall be that deed done, whatever self-denial it may cost me. The Cross I will take up—the singularity of being a Christian I will dare to encounter. The persecution it will bring I will rejoice in—the love of God to me shall produce obedience in my heart in return.

Then, again, another view of it. Set the loving kindness of God before your eyes, and think of the faithfulness of it. God’s loving kindness never pauses a minute. It has been as constant as the flight of time—never a moment but there has been love for that moment. Never an hour, but there has been the hour’s portion of loving kindness. You have often forgotten the Lord, but He has never forgotten you. You have turned aside from your fidelity ten thousand times, but He never once. If He had dealt with you justly, and not graciously, He had long ago divorced you from His heart.

But you are as dear to Him now as ever, and you shall be dear to Him when Heaven and earth shall pass away. Well, what then? Why, then, as constantly seek to serve Him. Let every day have its duty, and let each day’s duty be your pleasure and privilege. Do not be receiving without also giving out. As the sovereign goodness of God comes to you without a

pause, and there are no miscarriages in Divine Grace, so let there never be any forgetfulness, negligence, or delay in your gratitude, and the obedience which spring’s of it.

I would like you to think of the exactness of God’s loving kindness, and how it goes into detail with us in little things. Much of our life’s happiness depends upon little things happening rightly. If God ordained only the great events, and left the little things to chance, we should be very unhappy. But the loving kindness of God, while it gilds the whole landscape with sunlight, also has a beam for the tiniest insect and a ray for the eye of the smallest bird. Let our love to God also go into the minutest details— let us be earnest to be right in matters essential. But let us not be indifferent to things nonessential, as men call them.

God’s loving kindness goes into detail, so let my obedience. Let gratitude to God permeate my entire life. Let it flood the whole of my faculties. Let it saturate my manhood through and through. Great God, Your love surrounds me, I breathe it, I live upon it, I shall die in it, I shall live forever in it, it shall make my eternal bliss! So would my soul in obedience give up herself, her thoughts, her works, her desires, her judgment, her tastes, her everything to Your sweet love which has so wondrously embraced and encompassed me!

You see, there is a logical consistency between thinking of the love of God, getting to see its details and attributes, and the ordering of our life in the way of Truth. The one is the natural cause from which the other is sure to spring. Once more, let me say, when we are thinking upon God’s loving kindness, we must not forget what it is preparing for us. Within a short time you and I shall have faced the last article of death, or Christ Himself shall have come, and we shall be forever with the Lord. We have been washed in the blood of Jesus, our souls have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and for us there is prepared and reserved a crown of life that fades not away.

Anticipate the triumphant hour when this head which often aches with weariness shall be encircled with the crown of Glory! Think of the time when the hands that are worn with toil shall grasp the palm branch! And the feet that are weary with this pilgrimage shall stand upon the sea of glass—when our constant occupation shall be to glorify Him who has uplifted us from the miry clay, set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings forever! All this loving kindness is prepared for us, entailed upon us, ordained for us, and we are ordained to it by a decree which neither death nor Hell can change.

What then? Why then the trials of this life shall be treated as “light afflictions which are but for a moment.” And if duty at anytime involves these trials, we will not take them into consideration—but for the joy that is set before us will endure the Cross, despising the shame. Men and women of God, God’s loving kindness has prepared for you this heritage inconceivable, which heart cannot imagine, and, therefore, tongue cannot express. Will you not, for the sake of this, be willing to be despised, and be ready, if need be, to be spit upon and rejected from the society of men? Why, this, methinks, it was that glistened in the martyrs’ eyes.

There they stood at the stake, all calm and confident, though every bone was soon to be burned to cinder, and the whole frame of their bodies to become a mass of agony. The light that shone in the martyrs’ eyes was not the flame of the torch which kindled the firewood, but the light of everlasting Glory! The joy that made their hearts glad was not that of obstinacy which holds fast to its own way, but it was the firmness of a soul that is one with the immortal Christ, and anticipates being with God forever and forever!

The loving kindness of God before our eyes is that which can make us walk in God’s Truth though it be to prison and to death. God grant us more of the holy contemplation, and we shall be quite certain to have more of holy, consistent walking in the Truth.

I have done when I have made two or three more remarks. I have set these things before you as they ought to be, but things are not in this world as they should be. There are some men who have the first part of the text, at least they say they have, but they despise the second. They have set God’s loving kindness before their eyes, but do not walk in God’s Truth. They talk about being God’s elect, God’s Beloved, God’s dear people. Alas, some of them are dear at any price, their lives being, in many cases, utterly inconsistent with their profession.

What do we say of men who make the Doctrines of Grace an excuse for licentiousness? They have the Doctrine of Grace, but not the Grace of doctrine. What say we of them? Why, what Paul said—“Their damnation is just.” All their pretences to soundness, all their talk about orthodoxy is so much wind, nothing more. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The man who can cheat in business. The man who can lie. The man who is an unkind husband, a bad father, an unholy man—he may believe what he likes, or disbelieve what he likes—but he will be swept away from the Presence of God and the glory of His power when He whose fan is in His hand shall purge His floor and gather the wheat into His garner—and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

There are also men who say, “I have walked in God’s Truth,” but God’s loving kindness is never before their eyes. They boast about their admirable character, but they never think upon the Grace of God. They indulge the Pharisaic spirit. Permit us to say to such that they know not what spirit they are of. That life of theirs which they think to be so blameless seems to be correct because they are

 blind.

If the light shone in upon their actions they would discover their imperfections. Then would they find that they needed a Savior, and finding that they needed a Savior they might then be led to apply for one, and find one. But as long as they wrap themselves up in the notion that they are good, and that they keep the Law and have done so from their youth up— we must remind them with all earnestness that they are shutting themselves out of Heaven. They are denying themselves all prospect of everlasting life, for, “by the works of the Law there shall no flesh be justified.” We must be saved by Grace and by Grace alone.

My last word is this. Brethren, depend upon it that you shall find, each of you when you get dull and flagging in the practical part of your religion, that the proper way to revive it is to think more than you have done upon the loving kindness of God. I do not know whether you ever feel stupid. I do, dreadfully. When one gets a bad cold the mind feels terribly dead and dull. Some people are dull enough even when they are well, but what they are when illness is added it were hard to say.

Well, then, one says, “How can I consider myself to be a child of God? Why, I cannot pray. I kneel down and pour out what ought to be my desires, but I am afraid I do not desire them. I read the Bible, but it does not glow and glisten before my eyes as it once did. I try to love God, but do not seem to have any emotion left. I am like a dead log or stone.” What is the best way to quicken one’s self when you have got to be just a mere inanimate mass, and cannot awaken yourself into life? Of course—the Holy Spirit is the Quickener—but what means shall we use?

“Why,” says one, “turn over your sins and begin to think of them.” Well, I have known some become more dead than they were before through that, and the little life they had seemed to go out of them as they saw their transgressions. I believe there is no reflection that has so much, under God the Holy Spirit, of quickening power in it as a remembrance of the loving kindness of the Lord! I have said unto my soul, “You are dull and heavy today, my Soul, but Jesus did not love you because of your brightness and liveliness. You have, at any rate, a desire not to be so dull.

“Who gave you that? Was not it His own Grace that made you hate yourself for being so dull and stupid? And He loves you just the same.” Why, then, I am aware my soul makes me like the chariots of Amminadab—before I have hardly got through a little meditation upon my Lord’s love, my love is kindled. Dr. Watts hit the mark when he said —

*“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Your quickening powers,  
Come, shed abroad a Savior’s love,  
And that shall kindle ours.”*

If you doubt Christ’s love to you, you will not love Him. But remember that He still loves you, believe it, hold on to it, and your love will revive— *“And when your eye of faith is dim,  
Still hold on Jesus, sink or swim,  
Still at His footstool bow the knee,  
And Israel’s God your help shall be.”*  
If I am a dead soul and a lost soul and have not a grain of Grace, and have everything that is bad about me, still I will cling to the Cross, and say, “I will never depart from this place: if I perish, I will perish here.” Light will come unto you again, and the joy of the Lord will return, and your heart will wonder to find its own hardness depart, and your dumb tongue shall sing, and you, though once so lame, shall leap as a hart! God the Holy Spirit cause these meditations to be the means of quickening our spirits, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE SAINT’S HORROR AT THE SINNER’S HELL  
NO. 524

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Gather not my soul with sinners.”  
Psalm 26:9**

WE must all be gathered in due course. When time shall have ripened the fruit, it must hang no longer upon the tree, but be gathered into the basket. When the summer’s sun has perfectly matured the corn, the sickle must be brought forth and the harvest must be reaped. To everything there is a season and an end. There shall be a gathering time for every one of us. It may come tomorrow. It may be deferred another handful of years. It may come to us by the long process of consumption or decline. It may advance with more rapid footsteps, and we may in a moment be gathered to our people.

Sooner or later, to use the expressive words of Job, the Almighty shall set His heart upon each of us and gather unto Himself our spirit and our breath. That gathering rests with God! The prayer of the Psalmist implies it and many Scriptures affirm it. As Young sings in his Night Thoughts—

*“An angel’s arm can’t hurl me to the grave.”*Accidents are but God’s arrangements. Diseases are His decrees—fevers His servants, and plagues His messengers. Our mortality is immortal, till the Eternal wills its death. “Return, you children of men” can be spoken by none but our heavenly Father, and when He gives the word, return we must without delay.

I do not know, my Brothers and Sisters, seeing that our death is certain, and remains entirely in the hands of our gracious God, that there is any prayer which we need to offer concerning it, except, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” And this brief sentence, “Gather not my soul with sinners.” Scarcely can I commend those who plead to be delivered from sudden death, for sudden death is sudden Glory! Hardly can I advise you to request a hasty departure. For flesh and blood shrink from speedy dissolution. Pray not for long life, nor for an early grave—cheerfully leave all these matters to the choice of infinite Wisdom, and concentrate all your desires upon the one desire of the text.

Filled with a holy horror of the Hell of sinners, let us make most sure of our calling to the Heaven of the blessed. Let the fear of being cast forth with the withered branches increase our fruitfulness, and let our horror of the sinner’s character and doom lead us to cleave more closely to the Savior of souls.

We will divide our discourse thus—first, the gathering, and here let us behold a vision. Next, the prayer, and here let us note an example. Thirdly, a fear, and here let us observe a holy anxiety. And then fourthly, an answer yielding a consolation.

I. First, THE GATHERING. Let the man who has his eyes open behold the gathering of sinners, and in the sanctuary of the Lord let him understand their end. There have been many partial gatherings of the ungodly, all ending in sudden ruin and overthrow. Turn your eyes here. Two hundred and fifty men have impudently taken censers into their hands and have dishonored the Lord’s chosen servants, Moses and Aaron. Mark well their proud reviling of the Lord’s Anointed. In the gainsaying of Korah they all have a part. The people hasten from their tabernacles and they stand alone. It is but for a moment. Look! The earth cleaves asunder. They go down alive into the pit and the earth closes her mouth upon them. My soul trembles and hides her face for fear—and my fainting heart groans out her desire—“Gather not my soul with sinners”!

Look yonder, my Brothers and Sisters, to the city of palm trees surrounded by its strong munitions. All the inhabitants are gathered together within it. From the top of the walls they mock the feeble band of silent Israelites, who for six days have marched round and round their city. The seventh day has come and the rams’ horns give the signal of destruction. The Lord comes forth from His rest, and at the terror of His rebuke the walls of Jericho fall flat to the ground. Now where are your boastings, O congregation of the wicked? The sword of Israel is bathed in your blood, O accursed sons of Canaan. As we hear the shriek of the slaughtered and mark the smoke of the city ascending up to Heaven like the flames of Sodom of old, we reverently bow the knee unto Jehovah and cry, “Gather not my soul with sinners.”

Leaping over centuries—with weeping we behold the Holy City, beautiful for situation—once the joy of the whole earth, but now forsaken of her God—and beleaguered by her foes. All the Jewish people have come together from the four winds of Heaven—as the flesh is cast into the caldron and the fire burns fiercely, so are they gathered together for judgment. Well might their rejected Messiah weep over the devoted city as He remembered how often He would have gathered her children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and they would not. Now are they gathered in another manner—and the wings of vultures flutter over them, hastening for the prey.

See yonder the Roman armies and the mounds which they have cast up! Woe unto you, O city of Zion—for the spoilers know no pity. They spare neither young nor old. “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.” For the day of the Lord’s vengeance is come and the words of Moses are fulfilled, when he said—“The Lord shall bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies. A nation whose tongue you shall not understand. A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young.

“And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, which the Lord your God has given you, in the siege and in the desperate straits, wherewith your enemies shall distress you.” Hark! The clarion summons the warrior to arms. The veterans of Vespasian and Titus dash to the assault. Where are you now, O city polluted with the murder of Prophets, and stained with the blood of the Prophets’ Lord? Your walls protect not your sons, they keep not the temple of your glory. Look! A soldier’s ruthless hand hurls the red firebrand into the sacred precincts of the Temple, and its smoke darkens the sky!

Can you walk those smoldering ruins and behold the heaps of ashes mingled with burning flesh—the crimson streams of gore—and the deep pools of clotted blood? Can you linger there where desolation holds her reign supreme and refuse to see the justice of the God of Israel, or fail to breathe the humble prayer of the Psalmist, “Gather not my soul with sinners”? Wherever the enemies of God are gathered, there we have, before long, confusion and tears and death in whatever place sinners may hold their counsels. When the Judge of all the earth comes out against them, we soon see an Aceldama—a field of blood.

But, forgetting all these inferior gatherings, illustrious in horror though they are, my eyes behold a greater gathering which is proceeding every day to its completion. Every day the heavens and the earth hear the voice of God, saying, “Gather you, gather you My foes together, that I may utterly destroy them.” “Therefore wait you upon Me, says the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them My indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy.”

As the huntsman, when he goes forth to the battle, encompasses the beasts of the forest with an ever narrowing ring of hunters—that he may exterminate them all in one great slaughter—so the God of Justice has made a ring in His Providence round about the sinful sons of men. Within that circle of Divine power are imprisoned monarchs and peasants, peers and paupers. That ring encompasses all nations, polite or barbarous, civilized or rude. No impenitent sinner can break through the lines. As well might a worm escape from within a circle of flame. Every hour the lines grow narrower, and the multitudes of the Lord’s enemies are driven into the center where His darts are flying, where His sharp arrows shall pierce them.

I hear the baying of the dogs of Death today, hounding the unbelieving to their doom. I see the heaps of slain, and mark the terrible arrows as they fly with unerring aim. Multitudes of sinners are scattered from the equator to the poles, but not one of them is able to escape the Avenger’s hand. High and haughty princes, boasting their imperial pomp, fall like antlered stags, smitten with the shafts of the Almighty. Their valiant warriors, like wild boars of the forest, perish upon the point of His glittering spear.

The vision of the Apocalypse is no mere dream. He whose name is THE WORD OF GOD, shall tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And meanwhile, the angel standing in the sun cries with a loud voice to all the fowls which fly in the midst of Heaven, “Come and gather yourselves together into the supper of the great God: that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men: and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them: and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”

At the remembrance of all this, we may well exclaim with Habakkuk, “When I heard, my belly trembled. My lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when He comes up unto the people, He will cut them in pieces with His troops.” O God of all Grace, I pray You, by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus in which I trust, “Gather not my soul with sinners.” Let that Providence which gathers Your people from among men, lay hold on me. Let Your angels who keep watch and ward about Your people, keep me from the snare of the fowler and from the destruction which wastes at noonday.

But the scene changes—we see no longer the assembling of the multitudes in the great valley of the shadow of death—we track them further till we find ourselves on the threshold of the abode of spirits. You have seen the prisoners in their cells, waiting for their trial at the next assize. The strong hand of Law has laid them in durance, where they await the summons to appear before the judge. I pray you note the company and before the trumpet announces the judge, see what a strange gathering the prison contains. Do you mark them? There is the murderer, with blood-red hands. There is he who smote his fellow to his wounding. Yonder lies the wretch who perjured himself before God.

And here the man who pilfered his neighbor’s goods. However they differed from one another before, they are on a level in rank in this house of detention—and they all await one common jail delivery. It is no pleasant sight to visit these cells before the assize comes on. Crime, although as yet not condemned, is no comfortable vision. But what of earthly prisons? My heart sees a sight far more terrible—

*“Look down, my soul, on Hell’s domains,  
That world of agony and pains!  
What crowds are now associated there,  
Of widely different character.  
What wretched ghosts are met below,  
Some once so great, so little now;  
So gay, so sad, so rich, so poor;  
Now scorned by those they scorned before.”*

Multitudes are gathered together in the state where souls abide until their final doom is pronounced, both on their bodies and on their souls. It is a place of misery where not a drop of water cools their parched tongue. A state of doubt and terror and suspense—a place from which consolation is banished, where the “wrath to come” perpetually afflicts them. There in captivity abide the formalist, the hypocrite, the profane, the licentious, the abandoned, those who despised God and hated Christ and turned away from the glory of His Cross. There they are gathered, tens of thousands of them, at this day, waiting till the great assize shall sit. O God, “gather not my soul with sinners,” but let me be gathered with those whose spirits wait beneath the altar for their redemption, to wit, the resurrection of their bodies. Gather me with those who cry day and night until God avenges His own elect. Gather me with the multitude of spirits who wait the coming of the Son of God from Heaven, that their bliss may be complete.

But now, my eyes, prophetic in the light of Scripture, see another gathering. The trumpet has sounded, the prison doors are loosed and the gates of death give way. They come, bodies and souls—souls from the place of waiting in the pit of Hell. And bodies from their graves, from ocean and from earth—from all the four winds of Heaven, bodies and souls come together and there they stand—an exceeding great army. This time it is not in the valley of suspense. But “multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision.” “And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army. For His camp is very great: for He is strong that executes His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible: and who can abide it?”

“Assemble yourselves and come, all you heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: there cause Your mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down. For the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.” “And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it. And death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged, every man according to their works. And whoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Oh, well may you and I pray that we may have a part in the first resurrection—upon such the second death has no power. Grant us, O Lord, that we may not be with the wicked, the rest of the dead, who rise not until after a thousand years are finished. But give us a portion among those whose iniquities are blotted out, who have not received the mark of the beast in their foreheads, who therefore live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

May we be gathered with the harvest of the Lord, when He that sits on the cloud shall reap it with His golden sickle. But this gathering of which my text speaks is not the harvest of the righteous. It is the vintage of the wicked. When “the angel which had power over fire” shall cry, “Thrust in Your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth: for her grapes are fully ripe.” How dreadful that great winepress of Divine Wrath which shall be trod without the city, and how terrible that flow of blood, like a mighty stream of wine, so deep that it ran even unto the horses’ bridles by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. “Gather not my soul with sinners,” O God, in that terrible day.

I need not stop to paint—for colors equal to its terrors I have none— that dreadful place where the last gathering shall be held. That great synagogue of Satan, the place appointed for unbelievers and prepared for the devil and his angels. Where “sullen moans and hollow groans and shrieks of tortured ghosts” shall be their only music. Where weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth shall be their perpetual occupation. Where joy is a stranger and hope unknown. Where death itself would be a friend. No, I will not attempt to describe what our Savior veiled in words like these, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” “Where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” “Outer darkness, where shall be

wailing and gnashing of teeth.” We drop the curtain, hoping that you have seen enough to make you pray, “Gather not my soul with sinners.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters, when we recollect that that last gathering will be a perfect one. That there will be no sinner left with the saints— that, on the other hand, no saint will remain with sinners. When we recollect that it will be a final one—no redistribution will ever be made and that it will entail an everlasting separation—a great gulf being fixed, which none can cross, it remains for us to be solemnly anxious to be found on the right hand and to put up, with vehemence, this prayer—“O Lord, gather not my soul with sinners.”

II. Having thus shown the vision of the gathering, let me, with deep solemnity, conduct your minds for a little time to THE PRAYER ITSELF. I am sure we are all agreed about it, everyone of us. Balaam, if he is here this morning, differs not from me. The worst and most abandoned wretch on earth agrees with David in this. Sinners do not wish to be gathered with sinners. Balaam’s prayer is, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,” which only differs in words from David’s petition, “Gather not my soul with sinners.”

But then the reasons of the one prayer are very different in different persons. We would all like to be saved from Hell, but then there is a difference in the reasons why we would so be delivered. The same prayer may be uttered by different lips. In the one it may be heard and accepted as spiritual prayer, and in the other it may be but the natural excitement produced by a selfish desire to avoid misery. I know why you would not wish to be gathered with sinners—those of you who are ungodly and impenitent—you dread the fire, the flames which never end. You dread the wrath, the suffering. You dread the horrors of that world to come.

Not so with the Christian. These he dreads as all men must, but he has a higher and a better reason for not wishing to be gathered with sinners. I tell you, Sirs, if sinners could be gathered into Heaven with their present character, the Christian’s prayer would be what it now is—“Gather not my soul with sinners.” If sin entailed happiness. If rebellion against God could give bliss, even then the Christian would scorn the happiness and avoid the bliss which sin affords. His objection is not so much to Hell, as to sinners themselves. His desire is to avoid the contamination and distraction of their company.

Many of you will say, “Now I dislike the company of sinners.” Indeed, most moral people dislike the society of a certain class of sinners. I suppose there is scarcely one here today who would wish to be found in the den of the burglar, where the conversation is concerning plunder and violence. You would not probably feel very easy in the haunt of the harlot, where licentious tongues utter flippantly lascivious words. You shun the house of the strange woman. The pothouse is not a favorite resort for you. You would not feel very much at ease at the bar of the gin palace. You would say of each of these—“This is no joy to me.”

Even those of you who are not renewed by Christ despise vice when she walks abroad naked. I fear you cannot say as much when she puts on her silver slippers, and wraps about her shoulders her scarlet mantle. Sin in rags is not popular. Vice in sores and squalor tempts no one in the grosser shapes. Men hate the very fiend whom they love when it is refined and delicate in its form. I want to know whether you can say, “Gather not my soul with sinners,” when you see the ungodly in their high days and holidays? Do you not envy the fraudulent merchant counting his gold— his purse heavy with his gains, while he himself by his craft is beyond all challenge by the Law?

Do you not envy the giddy revelers spending the night in the merry dance, laughing, making merry with wine and smiling with thoughts of lust? Yonder voluptuary, entering the abode where virtue never finds a place, and indulging in pleasures unworthy to be named in this hallowed house—does he ever excite your envy? I ask you, when you see the pleasures, the bright side, the honors, the emoluments, the gains, the merriments of sin, do you then say, “Gather not my soul with sinners”? There is a class of sinners that some would wish to be gathered with—those easy souls who go on so swimmingly. They never have any trouble. Conscience never pricks them. Business never goes wrong with them. They have no bands in their life, no bonds in their death.

They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. They are like the green bay tree which spreads on every side until its boughs cover whole acres with their shade. These are the men who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Can we say, when we look at these, when we gaze upon the bright side of the wicked, “Gather not my soul with sinners”? Remember, if we cannot do so without reservation, we really cannot pray the prayer at all. We ought to alter it and put it, “Gather not my soul with openly reprobate sinners.” And then mark you, as there is only one place for all sorts of sinners, moral or immoral, apparently holy or profane, your prayer cannot be heard, for if you are gathered with sinners at all—with the best of sinners—you must be gathered with the worst of sinners, too.

I know, children of God, you can offer the prayer as it stands and say, “In all their glory and their pomp. In all their wealth, their peace and their comfort, my soul abhors them, and I earnestly beseech You, O Lord, by the blood of Jesus, ‘Gather not my soul with sinners.’ ”

Brethren, why does the Christian pray this prayer? He prays it, first of all, because as far as his acquaintance goes with sinners, even now he does not wish for their company. The company of sinners in this world to the saint is a cause of uneasiness. We cannot be with them and feel ourselves perfectly at home. “My soul is among lions, even among them that are set on fire of Hell.” “Rid me from strange children.” We are vexed with their conversation, even as Lot was with the language of the men of Sodom. We lay an embargo upon them—they cannot act as they would in our society—and they lay a restraint upon us. We cannot act as we would when we are with them.

We feel an hindrance in our holy duties through dwelling in the tents of Kedar. When we would talk of God, we cannot in the midst of company to whom the very name of Jesus is a theme for jest. How can we well engage in family devotions when more than half the family are given up to the world? How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land? You who sojourn in Mesech, you know how great a grief it is, what a damper it is to

your spirituality, what a serious hindrance it is to your growth in Divine Grace. Besides, the company tempts Believers to sin. Who can keep his garment pure when he travels with sinful companions? If I am condemned to walk continually in the midst of thorns and briars, it is strange if I do not mar my garments. Often our nearest friends get a hold upon our hearts and then, being enemies to God, they lead us to do things which we otherwise would never have dreamed of doing.

The company of the sinner is to the Christian a matter of real loss in another respect, for when God comes to punish a nation, the Christian has to suffer with the sinners of that nation. National judgments fall as well upon the holy as upon the profane, and therefore, through being mingled with the ungodly of this world, the Christian is a sufferer by famine, war, or pestilence. Well may he, from the little taste he has known of their company, cry, “Gather not my soul with sinners.”

Why, Brothers and Sisters, I will put you for a moment to the test—you shall be in the commercial room of an inn—you are on a journey and you sit down to attend to your own business, or to await the train. Now, if two or three fast men come into the room and they begin venting their filth and blasphemy, how do you feel? You do not wish to hear. You wish you were deaf. One of them cannot speak without larding his conversation with an oath. There is another, perhaps a man elevated above the situation which his education fits him to occupy, who, in his conversation utters the most abominable and atrocious language and the others laugh at him.

Before many minutes you will steal out of the room, for you cannot endure it. What must it be to be shut in with such persons forever? On board a steamboat, it may be, you fall into the middle of a little knot who are talking on some infidel subject in a manner far from palatable to you. Have you not wished yourself on shore, and have you not walked to the other end of the boat to be out of their way? I know you have felt that kind of thing. Your blood has chilled. Horror has taken hold upon you because of the wicked who keep not God’s Law. If such has been your experience, you can well understand the reason of the Psalmist’s prayer, for much of such torment you could not bear.

Moreover, I do not know any class of sinners whose company a Christian would desire. I should not like to live with the most precise of hypocrites. What ugly company to keep! You cannot trust them anywhere— always hollow—always ready to deceive and to betray you. I would not choose to live with formalists, self-righteous people, because whenever they begin to talk about themselves and their own good deeds, they do, as it were, throw dirt upon the righteousness of Christ, which is our boast— and that is ill company for a Christian. The Believer triumphs in the free Grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the efficacy of the blood of Jesus.

But the self-righteous man speaks only of his Church attendance or his going to Chapel, his fasting, his almsgivings and the like. We cannot agree with the person who relies on his self-trust. We could almost as well associate with the profane as we could with the self-righteous. As for blasphemers, we could not endure them a moment. Would you not as soon be shut up in a tiger’s den as with a cursing, swearing, thievish profligate? Who can endure the company of either a Voltaire or a Manning? Find out the miserly, the mean, the sneaking, the grasping—who likes to be with them?

Who wants to be with the angry, the petulant who never try to check the unholy passion—one is always glad to be away from such folks. You are afraid lest you should be held responsible for their mad actions, and therefore if you must be with them, you are always ill at ease. With no sort of sinners can the child of God be a fellow. Lambs and wolves, doves and hawks, devils and angels are not fit companions. And so through what little trial the righteous have had, they have learned that there is no sort of sinners that they would like to be shut up with forever.

But then, we have other reasons. We know that when impenitent sinners are gathered at the last, their characters will be the same. They were filthy here, they will be filthy still. Here on earth their sin was in the bud— in Hell it will be full-blown. If they were bad here, they will be worse there. Here they were restrained by Providence, by company, by custom—there, there will be no restraints. Hell will be a world of sinners at large, a land of outlaws, a place where every man shall follow out his own heart’s most horrible inclinations. Who would wish to be with them?

Then again, the place where they will be gathered alarms us—the pit of Hell, the abode of misery and wrath forever—who would be gathered there? Then, their occupation. They spend their time in cursing God—in inventing and venting fresh blasphemies. They go from bad to worse— climbing down the awful ladder of detestable depravity. Who would wish to be with them? Remember too, their sufferings. The pain of body and of soul they know, when God has cast both body and soul into Hell. Who would wish to be with them? Remember, too, that they are banished forever from God and God is our sun, therefore they are in darkness. God is our life, therefore they are worse than dead. God is our joy, therefore they are wretched to the extreme.

Why, this would be Hell, if there were no other Hell to a Christian—to be banished from his God. Moreover, they are denied the joys of Christ’s society. No Savior’s love for them, no blissful communion at His right hand, no living fountains of water to which the Lamb shall lead them. O my God, when I think of what the sinner is, and where he is, and how he must be there forever, shut out from You, my soul may well pray with anguish that prayer, “Gather not my soul with sinners.”—

*“You lovely chief of all my joys,  
You sovereign of my heart!  
How could I bear to hear Your voice  
Pronounce the sound ‘Depart’?  
Oh wretched state of deep despair,  
To see my God remove,  
And fix my doleful station where  
I must not taste His love.  
Jesus, I throw my arms around,  
And hang upon Your breast;  
Without a gracious smile from You  
My spirit cannot rest.”*

III. But I am afraid I weary you and therefore, dear Friends, let me take you very briefly to the third point. There is in our text A FEAR, as if a whisper awakened the Psalmist’s ear to trembling, “Perhaps, after all, you may be gathered with the wicked.”

Now, that fear, although marred by unbelief, springs, in the main, from holy anxiety. Do you not think that some of us may well be the subjects of it? This holy anxiety may well arise if we recollect our past sins. Before we were converted we lived as others lived. The lusts of the flesh were ours. We indulged our members. We permitted sin to reign in our mortal bodies without restraint. And there will be times to the pardoned man, even though he has faith in Christ, when he will begin to think—“What if, after all, those sins should be remembered and I should be left out of the catalogue of the saved?”

Then again he recollects his present backwardness. And as the little apple on the tree, so sour and unripe, when it sees the crabs gathered, is half afraid it may be gathered with them, so is he. With so little Grace, so little love, he is afraid he shall be gathered with the ungodly. He recollects his own unfruitfulness and as he sees the woodman going round the orchard, knocking off first this rotten bough, and then cutting off that other decayed branch, he thinks there is so little fruit on him that perhaps he may be cut off, too. And so, what with his past sins, his present backsliding and unfruitfulness, he is half afraid he may yet have to suffer the doom of the wicked.

And then, looking forward to the future, he recollects his own weakness and the many temptations that beset him. And he fears that he may fall, after all, and become a prey to the enemy. With all these things before him, I wonder not that the poor plant, set yonder in the garden, is half afraid that it may be pulled up with the weeds and burned on yonder blazing fire in the corner of the garden. “Gather not my soul with sinners.”

What man is there among you who has not need, sometimes, to tremble for himself? If any of you can say you are always confident, it is more than I can say. I would to God I could always know myself saved and accepted in Christ, but there are times when a sense of sin within, present evil, and prevailing corruptions make the preacher feel that he is in jeopardy and compel him to pray, as he does sometimes now, in fear and trembling, “O God, gather not my soul with sinners.”

IV. And here comes in, to conclude, THE ANSWER TO THIS PRAYER, which is a word of consolation. Brothers and Sisters, if you have prayed this prayer, and if your character is rightly described in the Psalm before us, be not afraid that you ever shall be gathered with sinners. Have you the two things that David had—the outward walking in integrity and the inward trusting in the Lord? Do you endeavor to make your outward conduct and conversation conformable to the example of Christ? Would you scorn to be dishonest toward men, or to be undevout toward God? At the same time, are you resting upon Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, and can you compass the altar of God with humble hope? If so, then rest assured with the wicked you never shall be gathered, for there are one or two things which render that calamity impossible.

The first is this, that the rule of the gathering is like to like. “Gather you together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them”—all the tares together—“but gather the wheat into My barn.” It is not, “Make a mixture of them. Throw them together in a heap—put the corn and the tares in My garner.” Oh, no—“Tares in bundles. Wheat in sheaves.” If then, you are like God’s people, you shall be with God’s people. If you have their life within, their character without. If you rest on their Savior. If you love their God. If you have a longing towards their holiness, you shall be gathered with them—like to like.

There is another rule— those who have been our proper comrades here are to be our companions hereafter. God will be pleased to send us where we wish to go in this life. That is to say, if in this life I have loved the haunt of the sinner. If I have made the theater my sanctuary. If I have made the drinking house my abode of pleasure and have found my solace with the gambler, and my comfort with the debauched. If I have lived merely for business and for this world, and never for the next, then I shall go with my companions. I shall be sent where I used to go—being let go, I shall go to my own company among the lost.

But on the other hand, if I have loved God’s House. If I can say with the Psalmist, “I have loved the habitation of Your House and the place where Your honor dwells.” If the excellent of the earth have been my companions, and the chosen of God have been my Brothers and Sisters, I shall not be separated from them. I shall have the same company in Heaven that I have had on earth. If I have walked with God here, I shall reign with God there. If I have suffered with Christ here, I shall reign with Christ hereafter. That is another thing which prevents your being gathered with the wicked.

Again, you cannot be gathered with the wicked, for you are too dearly bought. Christ bought you with His blood and He will not cast you into the fire. It is a doctrine we never can hold, that Christ redeemed with His precious blood any that are damned in Hell. We cannot conceive it possible that Christ should have stood their Sponsor in suffering and yet they should be punished, too. That He should pay the debt and then they should have to pay it also.

And again, you are loved too much. God the Eternal Father has loved you long and well, and proved that to you by His great gift and by His daily consideration and care of you. And it is not, therefore, possible that He should permit you, the darling of His heart, the child of His desire, a member of the mystical body of His only Beloved Son, to perish forever in Tophet.

Again that new nature within you will not let you be gathered with sinners. What does your new nature do—what must it do? It must love God. What? Love God and be in Hell? Your new nature must pray. What? Pray in the pit? Your new nature must praise the God that created it. What? Sing songs to the Divine Being amidst the howling of the damned? Impossible! If you have a new heart and a right spirit. If your soul clings with both its hands to the Cross of Christ. If you love Jesus and long to be like He is, you may have this fear, but it is a groundless one—for you shall never be gathered with sinners! Your feet shall stand in the congregation

of the righteous in the day when the wicked are cast away forever. I had hoped, this morning, so to have handled my text that perhaps  
God might bless it to the sinner—and who can tell it may be so? Sinner, if  
it is a dreadful thing to be gathered with you, what a frightful thing your  
gathering must be! My dear careless and thoughtless Hearer, this morning  
I have no burning words with which to awake you. I have no earnest tones  
with which to startle you. But still, from my soul I do entreat you consider  
that if it is a subject of horror to us to dwell with you forever, it must be  
an awful thing to be a sinner. And will you be a sinner any longer? Will  
you abide where you now are?  
Alas, you cannot save yourself. You are hopelessly ruined—you have  
lost all power as well as all virtue. You are as a dead thing, as a potter’s  
vessel that is broken to shivers with a rod of iron. But there is one who  
can save you, even Jesus. And His saving voice to you this morning is,  
“Believe in Me and you shall be saved.” To believe in Him is to believe that  
He can save you, and therefore to trust Him. Do you not believe that of  
Him who is God? Can you not believe that of Him whose ways are not as  
your ways, whose Grace is boundless, and whose love is free! Will you

now believe that Christ can save you and that He will save you?—and will  
you now trust yourself to Him to save you?  
Say in your heart, “Here, Lord, I give my soul up to You to save it. I believe You will and You can. Your nature and Your name are love, and I  
trust Your name. I believe in Your goodness. I repose in You.” Sinner, you  
are saved! God has saved you. No soul ever so believed in Christ and yet  
was left unpardoned. Go your way. Be of good cheer, “Your sins which are  
many, are all forgiven you.” Rejoice in Him evermore, for you shall never  
be gathered with sinners. May God give His blessing to you now, for Jesus  
Christ’s sake. Amen.

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SEEING GOD’S GOODNESS HERE  
NO. 3017

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 1, 1876.

**“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”  
Psalm 27:13.**

WE were favored with very much of God’s goodness last Sabbath evening, when we considered the rule of Grace in guiding a Believer’s life, namely, that instead of seeing in order to believe, he has learned to

believe in order to see. [Sermon No. 766, Volume 13—BELIEVING TO SEE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “Unless I had believed

to see,” says the Psalmist, “I had fainted.” And we should never have known true refreshment, nor enjoyed the comforts of the Lord, but should have been full of doubts and distracted with fears if we had not learned the sacred art of believing although we did not see, or even believing in spite of what we did see, or believing in order that we might see—fully expecting that sight would inevitably follow if our faith were but simple and true!

Those of you who were present last Sabbath evening will remember that I restricted my remarks, for the most part, to the one matter of our salvation. I tried to show to seekers that instead of first looking for evidences of salvation and then believing in Christ, they were to believe in Christ in order to obtain those evidences—that, instead of looking to their repentance and then having confidence in Christ, their repentance sprang from their confidence in Christ—that instead of saying, “We are not fully sanctified and, therefore, we fear we are not saved,” they were to remember that the certainty of their being saved by Grace, through faith, would be to their minds and hearts, the great motive power by which they would be enabled to obtain that sanctification which cannot be theirs as long as they remain in legal bondage and have doubts about being “accepted in the Beloved.” There were some set at liberty last Sabbath evening who had really known the Lord for years but were afraid to say definitely that they had trusted in Christ and that, therefore, they were saved. May God grant that all of us may not only come to Christ, but may we also exercise a simple, childlike faith which takes God’s Word as it stands in this blessed Book, believes it, receives it, lives upon it, asks no questions concerning it and will allow none to be asked by others!

On this occasion I propose to make a particular application of the general principle of our text. David was a man of many troubles. Especially in the latter part of his life, he was incessantly in the furnace and he says that he would have “fainted” under those many troubles if he had not “believed to see,” in the particular matter of his trials, “the goodness of the Lord” in that land which is the special sphere of trouble. David believed to see the goodness of the Lord, not only in the Glory Land yonder, but also in this land here below. He believed to see the goodness of the Lord, not merely when he emerged from the furnace, but also while he was in it! As a pilgrim and a stranger, he believed to see the goodness of the Lord during the days of his pilgrimage. He did not always see it, but he believed to see it—he believed in it and anticipated it and, by believing in it—he did actually come to see it with the eyes of his mind and to rejoice in it!

We all know that this world is a very unpromising field for faith. According to our varied experiences, we must all subscribe to the declaration that this earth is, more or less, a valley of tears, that it is not our rest, for it is polluted. There are too many thorns in this nest for us to abide comfortably in it. This world is under the curse, so it still brings forth thorns and thistles and, in the sweat of our brows do we eat our bread until we return to the earth out of which man was at first taken. Were this world really to be our home, it would be a terrible fate for us! If we were always to live in this huge penal settlement, it would be sad, indeed, for us to know that we had continually to dwell where the shadow of the curse always lingers and where we have only the shadow of the Cross to sustain us under it. But faith comes into this unpromising field and believes that she shall see the goodness of the Lord even here! She rushes into the fiercest fight that ever rages, fully believing that she shall see the banner of the Lord’s mercy and Truth waving even there. She bears the burden and heat of the earthly toil and expects to experience the loving kindness of the Lord beneath it all. She knows that she will see more of her God in the land beyond the flood, but still, she believes to see the goodness of the Lord even in this land of the living which is so distracted and disturbed with sorrows, cares and trials and tribulations!

I want to show you, first, that faith is infallibly persuaded of God’s goodness here. Secondly, that she expects clearly to see that goodness here. And thirdly, that it is this expectation and belief which sustain the soul of the tried Believer.

I. First, then, FAITH IS INFALLIBLY ASSURED OF THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD IN THIS TIME STATE.  
She is persuaded of this from what she knows of God, Himself. She could not believe that He could be otherwise than good. She reads the promises recorded in His Word and she believes that they are all true and reliable. She can detect nothing that is unkind or ungenerous in any of them—they are all couched in the softest, gentlest and most consoling words. The language used seems to her to have been selected on purpose to meet her case and to make the promise suitable and sweet to her sorrowing heart. She feels sure that God could not be unkind. With the Psalmist, she cries, “Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.” And though, like the Psalmist, she may have to write afterwards, “But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well near slipped,” yet she stands fast to her first declaration, “Truly God is good to Israel,” however much surrounding circumstances may seem to prove the contrary! She knows that from the necessity of the Divine Nature, God must be good to His people both here and hereafter.  
When faith turns to the Bible and reads the history of the Lord’s people, she sees that God has been good to them. And, knowing that He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” she draws the cheering inference that He will also be good to her. Inasmuch as she can distinctly see that the trials and difficulties of the saints in the olden times always worked their lasting good, she is convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that her trials and troubles, overruled by the same loving Lord who cared for them, will work to her lasting good and that God will bless her, now, as He blessed His saints in the olden time.  
Perhaps some of you have faith, but yet possibly through lack of thought, you have not exercised it upon this particular point. If you are given to murmuring against God, you will often think thoughts which you would not like to hear or to see in spoken or written language. If someone should say to you, “God has been very unkind to you. I am sure that you cannot see the goodness of God displayed in your life,” you would at once turn round upon such a slanderer and defend the Character of your God from such an unjust accusation! Although you often murmur against the Lord in your spirit, yet, if another person should say in words what you have felt in your heart, you would then see the wickedness of your murmuring and you would also see that in the depths of your soul, there is a firm confidence in the goodness of God to you. You need to stir up that holy fire and set it blazing, so that you may get comfort from its warmth, for it is true and it must be true, that God is now good and always good, and good to the highest possible degree of goodness to all His children in their worst calamities and their darkest seasons of sorrow.  
But there are some conditions of life in which it is really a trial to faith to believe in the goodness of the Lord, as, for instance, that of longcontinued, dire poverty. Some of God’s choicest saints are so poor that they not only lack luxuries, but they even lack the very necessaries of life. As a rule, possibly without exception, God does give His people bread and water, but sometimes the bread is only a very small portion and the cup of water—a very tiny one. I have known a child of God, who has said to me, “I have struggled hard against poverty. I have undertaken first, this, and then that, but, in every case, I have failed. My little vessel has tried to enter the harbor of prosperity, but the cruel winds have always driven it back again into the rough sea of adversity. If I had been a spendthrift. If I had been wasteful in the days of my prosperity, or if I had not used my substance for the cause of God, I could understand my failures. If God would again entrust me with ample means, I would cheerfully give to His cause, as I used to do, but, alas, I have not anything left after my daily needs are supplied.” Unbelief asks, “can this be the goodness of the Lord?” But Faith answers, “Yes, it is, and it must be. I would faint in this poverty. I would give up in despair if, under all my trials and hardships, I were not sure of the goodness of God to me! If I were even starving to death, God would still have a good word out of my dying mouth. Even if He should let me die of starvation, it must be right—and He must be good!”

There are others of God’s children whose trials come from constant sickness. And some forms of illness are so trying that we are apt to ask ourselves why we should be subjected to them. I talked, this morning, with an aged Sister in Christ who, years ago, met with a Providence by which her head was so severely injured that every other day her pain is almost unbearable. She can never go up to the House of God because the sound of the preacher’s voice, or of the singing of the congregation would be more than she could endure. When we talked together, gently and softly, concerning the things of God, she quoted to me Psalm 119:75—“I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right and that You in faithfulness have afflicted me.” If anyone asks, “Can it be the goodness of the Lord thus to keep away one who really loves His House and prizes His ordinances, to send her such sore sickness?” We must reply, “Yes, it must be right. We cannot see how God’s goodness can thus be manifested, but we are to believe that it is.” I may be addressing some others who are subject to peculiarly trying infirmities, which keep you from the work you love and the field of service where you have long been so happy and useful. Well, dear Friends, in such a case as that, you must believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living in thus making your life to be one of sickness, weariness and pain!  
The same rule also applies to our bereavements. How mysterious are the dispositions of Providence in this matter! Many whom we cannot afford to lose are taken away from us—while others who seem to do no good—continue to live. Death appears to spare the hemlock and to cut down the oak and the cedar! Where there is a man who only cumbers the ground, he is often allowed to remain, while others who are like pillars of Christ’s Church are taken away. I know a little village where there were but a few poor inhabitants and one man of substance whom I very greatly esteemed. Towards the small salary of the pastor in that village, my friend contributed three-fourths, if not nine-tenths. He was the mainstay of that little Christian community. When I found him, last week, very ill with fever, and joined with other friends in earnest prayer that his life might be spared, it seemed to us absolutely essential to the welfare of that village church that he should be kept here at least a little longer. But now that the Lord has taken him Home to Himself, what can we say? We must not begin to cavil at what God has done, but say to Him, We are sure that whatever You do is right. It cannot be wrong, it cannot be unkind! It must be the kindest thing that could have happened, the very thing which we would have wished to happen if we could have known what You know and if we could have formed our judgment upon the same principle as swayed Your Infallible Judgment.”  
We sometimes fancy that we should like to make a slight alteration in some of the arrangements of Divine Providence. We would not interfere with the great wheels that are always revolving, but just here and there, where a small cog rather inconveniently touches our personal interests, we would like to have it so altered as to let us alone. But, remorselessly, as we sometimes imagine, the great wheels grind on—our comforts are taken from us and our joy is destroyed. What then? Why, let us still say, “Lord, not our will, but Yours be done.” And let us kiss the hand that wields the rod as much as the one that bestows choice gifts upon us! It is far easier for me to say this than it is for yon poor widow to carry it out. It is easier for me to say it than it is for that weeping mother who has seen all her children taken before her to the silent tomb. But, my Sisters, my Brothers, if it is harder for you, then so much the more earnestly would I urge you to say it, for the very difficulty of the submission, when you have rendered it, would prove the sincerity of your confidence in your God and bring more Glory to Him! So, as we take our friends and relatives to the tomb and commit the precious dust to the earth, let us still believe to see the goodness of the Lord even there! If we do not look at our sorrows in that light, we shall faint under our repeated losses and bereavements. But if that is the light in which we view them, we shall see a Glory gilding even the graves that cover the bodies of our departed loved ones—and we shall rejoice in the full assurance of the goodness of the Lord to us, and even more to those who have gone to be “forever with the Lord.”  
Another matter may, perhaps, have greatly troubled some of you, namely, your unanswered prayers. You have been praying for certain people for a long time, but so far you have received no answer to your supplications. There is a Brother here who has prayed for years for the conversion of his wife—yet she is still unconverted. If he yields to unbelief, he will have many difficult questions to answer. God has said, “Ask, and you shall receive.” You have asked for a thing which, apparently, is for God’s Glory, yet you have not received it. And this will sometimes be a staggering blow to the earnest pleader. Some of you have prayed, as I have done, for the life of a friend, or you have sought some other favor from the hands of God, but He has not granted it. I believe there is a Brother here who has carried an unanswered prayer about with him for ten or a dozen years. I have known cases of Believers praying for 30 years and yet not obtaining what they asked for. And some of them, like the worthies of old, have “died in faith, not having received the promises.” They have not lived to see one of their children converted, yet their children have been converted, and saved through their prayers, too, long after the parents slept in their graves!  
In the cases of unanswered prayers, there is always the temptation to believe that God has not been faithful to His promises, that this bitter draught of unbelief is an addition to the sorrow which you feel at your failures at the Mercy Seat. This is the time when you will faint unless you believe to see the goodness of the Lord even now and here! You must feel that, in any case, God’s will must be done. You must still continue to pray, for you do not know what God’s will is, but you must pray with resignation, after your Savior’s perfect model in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” You will be comforted and helped if you can look upon your unanswered prayers in that light.  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, there is another thing that will sometimes press upon you very heavily, namely, the desertions which occasionally fall to the lot of the Believer as to his communion with God. Sometimes we are left in the dark. Whether you are, or not, I know that I have been where I could not see sun, or moon, or stars, or even get so much as a look from my Master to cheer my sad heart, or a word from His mouth to make my spirit glad. At such times we must remember that ancient message, “Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” If you cannot see, you must believe to see. And if your heart feels like a stone, still believe that Christ is your life. And if, instead of holy meditations, your soul is racked with blasphemous temptations and evil thoughts, still hold on to Jesus, sink or swim! If, instead of clear evidences of salvation, you are half afraid that the Lord has forsaken you, and given you up—and you fall into an unbelieving frame of mind—go again to the Fountain filled with blood, that this sin, like all others, may be washed away! Trust Christ all the more “when the enemy shall come in like a flood,” for then, “the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” Those must be strange Christians who never have any conflict raging within their souls. If that is true Christian experience, I wish I could get it—to be always at peace and at rest and never again have to wrestle with sins, doubts and fears! But, Beloved, if we cannot attain to that position—and I believe that the most of us cannot—let us still walk by faith, for, so we shall walk triumphantly even under the discouragements of our inward spiritual conflicts!  
One other point I must mention, and then I will leave this part of the subject. To many Believers, the sharpest trials they ever have to endure arise from troubles connected with the Church of Christ. What a grief it is to the godly when any portion of the Church of Christ does not prosper— when bickering arises among the members, when one Brother or Sister is jealous of another and when all our attempts to mend the split only make it worse. It must be very trying for some of you to have to go on the Lord’s-Day to listen to a minister who does not edify you, but rather provokes you to wrath! Or to attend church meetings, as I know that some do, and find them anything but a means of Grace. Or to have to meet with professors who, in their common conduct and conversation, instead of leading you onward and upward, do you as much mischief as if they were men of the world! It is sad to see even one of God’s ministers sound asleep and to see other professing Christians careless and worldly, and to see the whole ship of the Church like the vessel described by the Ancient Mariner—  
when there was no motion, no advance. When—  
*“The very deep did rot.”*  
It is a dreadful thing when there is such a horrid deathlike calm as this! Yet, even amidst such trials as these, we must believe to see the goodness of the Lord. We must still believe that the great Head of the Church has not forgotten her, that in her darkest times He still wears her name upon His heart and that He will yet return to her in mercy, cast out all her enemies, repair her broken walls and cause the banner of His love to float again over her citadel.  
II. Now, secondly, and very briefly, FAITH NOT ONLY BELIEVES IN THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD, BUT SHE EXPECTS TO SEE IT EVEN HERE

Sometimes, she sees it very soon. God does not guarantee to let His people see here the reason for all His Providential dealings with them, but He does occasionally do so. There is many a Believer who has lived to see the goodness of God to him. Bernard Gilpin’s case was a very clear one. As he was on his way to London to be burned at the stake, his leg was broken and he had to stop on the road. He said it was all for the best, and so it was, for, when he reached London, the bells were ringing, for Queen Mary was dead and Queen Elizabeth had come to the throne— so he was not burned! The breaking of his leg had saved his life! Some of us have also seen the goodness of the Lord displayed under very strange circumstances. It was so in connection with that terrible calamity at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. Notwithstanding all the sorrow and suffering that it brought upon us, as we now look back upon it, we see how God, by means of that calamity, called public attention to the preaching of His Word—and I have no doubt, that for every life that was then lost, a thousand souls have since been saved from going down to the Pit—so let God’s name be praised for that gracious overruling of a terrible crime! You may not have to wait even a day before you will distinctly see the goodness of the Lord! But you must believe it before you see it. It must be a matter of duty to you to now believe it and then, by-and-by, it may be a matter of privilege to you to see it!  
But faith does not always expect to see the goodness of God here at once. She knows that this is the land of mist and fog, and she is glad if she can see even one step before her. Yes, and she is quite satisfied to go on even if she cannot see a step before her. She puts her foot down on what seems to be a thick cloud, but she finds the ground solid beneath her. Without seeing where she is going, she takes the next step, relying upon the faithfulness of God—and again she is safe—and so she pursues her way in the thick darkness and with greater joy than those who see far ahead and compliment themselves upon their shrewdness! She knows that the day has not yet dawned, for the shadows have not yet fled away, so, while she is in this mortal state, she walks by faith, not by sight.  
Faith understands, too, that man is not endowed with that degree of judgment which might enable him, at present, even if the light were clearer, to distinctly see the goodness of the Lord. With such an intellect as he now has, a child is not likely to see the wisdom of his father in the use of the rod. Even if he is a well-instructed child, he may still scarcely be able to see it. The father is the better judge—he has seen more of life, he knows what the child does not know and foresees what the child does not even dream of! How can I, who can only see a little pool in front of me, judge as to how the Lord should manage the great ocean? Here I am sailing my tiny toy boat upon a pond—am I to lay down rules of navigation for God in steering the leviathans of the deep across the shoreless seas? Here I am, an ant of an hour, creeping about upon the little anthill which I call my home—am I to judge as to how God manages all the affairs of time and eternity? Down, foolish pride! What do you know? You are wise only when you know that you are a fool! But you are such a fool that you do not even know that until God teaches it to you! Lie down, then, and trust where you cannot understand.  
Faith also knows that, at present, she cannot see the whole plan and procedure of God’s Providential dealings with men. We cannot fairly judge the working of Providence by gazing at a part of it. There is an old joke about a student who took one brick to the market in order to show the people what kind of house he had to sell. But who could rightly judge of a house by looking at a single brick? Yet this would be less foolish than trying to judge as to the goodness of the Lord by the transactions of an hour! If, instead of trying to measure with a ruler the distance between Sirius and the Pleiades, we would just believe that God has measured that vast distance to an inch and leave such measurements to the Almighty Mind which can take in the whole universe at one sweep, how much wiser it would be on our part! God sees the end from the beginning and when the great drama of time shall be complete, then will the splendor as well as the goodness of the Lord be seen! When the whole painting shall be unrolled in one vast panorama, then shall we see its matchless beauty and appreciate the inimitable skill of the Divine Artist. But here we only look at one little patch of shade, or one tiny touch of color and it appears to us to be rough or coarse. It may be that we shall be permitted, in eternity, to see the whole of the picture, but meanwhile, let us firmly believe that He who is painting it knows how to do it and that He who orders all things according to the counsel of His own will, cannot fail to do that which is best for the creatures whom He has made and preserved in being!  
III. So finally THERE IS A WONDERFULLY SUSTAINING INFLUENCE ABOUT THIS PRACTICAL BELIEF IN THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.  
There is a man lying upon the surgeon’s operating table and the skillful surgeon has to cut deeply. Why does the man endure that operation? Because he believes it is for his lasting good. He believes that the surgeon will not cause him an atom of pain more than is necessary and, therefore, he lies quietly and endures it all. But imagine that any of us were there and that we fancied that the surgeon meant to do us harm instead of good! Then we would rebel! But the conviction that it is all right helps us to play the man and to bear the pain with patience. That should be your attitude towards God, my dear Friend. May your belief in His goodness enable you to bear the sharp cuts of the knife which He is using upon you!  
He must have been a bold man who was the first to plow the ground, all to bury bushels of good, golden wheat in the earth! But nowadays, our farmers do it as a matter of course. They go to the granary, take out that which is very valuable, go off to where they have made the death trench ready to receive it and cast it in there, knowing that unless it is cast in there to die, it will not bring forth fruit. And they believe they will see the fruit that will spring from it! Every farmer, when he sows his wheat, has the golden sheaves before his mind’s eye and the shouts of the harvest home ring in anticipation in his ear! And, therefore, he parts with his treasured store of wheat and parts with it cheerfully. So, dear Friends, let us part with our friends, and part with our health, and part with our comforts, and part with life, itself, if that is necessary, believing that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”  
Let me just add that if there is such sustaining power about believing to see the goodness of the Lord even here, what must result from the still higher belief of seeing the goodness of the Lord in another and better world than this? The expectation of that bliss may well bear us up on its wings far above all the trials and troubles of this present life. So let us entreat the Holy Spirit to administer to us this heavenly cordial. Then, in the strength of the Lord, let us go forth to serve Him with body, soul and spirit, to the highest degree that is possible to us!  
If there are any of you who have never believed, let me just tell you what is necessary before I close my discourse. The way of salvation is this—Believe God’s Word. Believe that your Maker cannot lie. Trust His Son, whom He has given to be the Savior of all who trust Him. And rely upon what His Word has declared—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” If you trust in Christ, even if you have not a fraction of other evidence of your salvation, you are a saved soul on that evidence alone! Cast yourself upon Him and you shall find that declaration to be true to you, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” But if you believe not, remember that this declaration is equally true, “He that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” May God save all of you from that awful doom, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

**“As idle as a painted ship Upon a painted ocean”**  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 27.

David is in the darkness of sorrow. His enemies are many and mighty and they make a dead set against him and seek to utterly destroy him. But he finds his comfort where every true Believer must always seek his solace, that is, in his God. Thus sweetly does the Psalmist sing.

Verse 1. The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? David leaves the broken cisterns of the earth which can hold no water, and goes directly to the Divine Fountainhead. He does not say, “Ahithophel is my light, Uzzia, the Ashterathite, is my friend and my joy. He says, “Jehovah is my light.” Candles soon burn out, but the sun shines on and, eventually, “the sun shall be turned into darkness,” but Jehovah, our God, is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” David does not say, “Joab is the strength of my life. Benaiah and the Cherethites are my bodyguard.” He says, “Jehovah is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” It is the height of Christian faith to find everything good in God. And it is an evil hour for us when we begin to trust anywhere but in Him. Build your foundation for eternity on a firm and unyielding soil, O Believer, and let every stone that is laid thereon be quarried from the Rock of Ages.

2. When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. If we are on the Lord’s side, discomfiture of our enemies shall be total and final—they shall fall to the ground. They may be very many, and very varied, so as to be described under two names—enemies and foes. They may be very ferocious, so that, like the wild beasts of the forest, they are ready to tear the flesh of their prey and devour it. And they may be able to make such attacks as actually come upon us—but just at the moment when they think they shall be able to swallow us, our God will interpose for our deliverance! It is marvelous how near to the edge of the precipice of ruin the Lord sometimes lets His people go, yet He always delivers them just at the right moment—and causes their enemies to stumble and fall.

3. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. True and simple faith in God alone always begets courage. It is the man who is trusting to the creature who is the coward. He who truly trusts in the Creator becomes a hero. Faith is the food upon which God would have His children fed. So, if you would do deeds of daring, lean only upon God—and then you shall have your heart’s desire.

4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after. A true Christian is a man of one idea, but that one idea is the noblest that ever possessed the human mind, or influenced the human heart. This idea is one which not only finds a lodging in his brain, but he carries it on in the practice of his daily life—“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.” And what is that one thing?

4. That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His Temple. That is, to gaze upon the mystery of God in Christ, for is not Christ “the beauty of the Lord?” He is rightly called “the brightness of His Father’s Glory, and the express image of His Person.” So all that we need on earth, or in Heaven, is a perpetual vision of Jesus Christ! “To behold the beauty of the Lord,” and constantly to be enabled to present our petitions in His Temple, and to receive gracious answers of peace to our supplications. “Father, my soul would gladly abide within Your Temple, near Your side. But if my feet must depart from there, still keep Your dwelling in my heart.”

5. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. The pavilion was the many-colored tent of the king, embroidered with needlework and richly furnished. It was always placed in the center of the encampment, so that if there were a night attack, the enemy must first break through the ranks of the armed men before reaching the royal pavilion. So the Christian is put into the very center of the Lord’s host! God’s Sovereignty encloses him and God’s angels surround him—and the enemy must first break through the angelic guard and overcome all the heavenly powers—before any Believer can be destroyed.

5. In the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. “The secret of His tabernacle” was the Holy of Holies, into which no man but the high priest ever entered—and even he only entered it once a year! But now the Christian is admitted into the holiest place of all, through the Sacrifice of Christ, and Christ’s Atonement and the Sovereignty of God conjoin to make the Christian’s position absolutely safe forever!

5. He shall set me up upon a Rock. The Rock of ages is immovable. It stirs not in the fiercest storm that ever rages. God is Immutable. He abides the same forever, so that we have three firm grounds of confidence—God’s Sovereignty, Christ’s Sacrifice and God’s Immutability.

6. And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies around me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy: I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the LORD. As David’s trust was in his Lord, all his praise was to his Lord. And where we place our confidence, there let us also display our gratitude. If we trust in men, it is not surprising if we worship and praise men. But if we trust alone in God, our homage and gratitude will be laid at His feet.

7, 8. Hear, O LORD, When I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, Seek you my face; my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek. Happy is the man who has a tender conscience—whose heart is like the waves of the sea which are easily moved by the breath of Heaven—so that when God breathes upon him by His Holy Spirit, his soul is moved and controlled by that Spirit.

9. Hide not Your face far from me; put not Your servant away in anger. The sharpest trial a Christian can know is to be forsaken of his God. As the very pith of the agony of Christ upon the Cross lay in His being deserted by His Father, so the extremity of a Believer’s anguish is found when he, also, has to cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Send us any trial that You will, O Lord, but let us never lose the light of Your Countenance! We are rich in poverty, we are strong in weakness, we are healthful in sickness, we are living even in death while we have our God with us—but if our Lord shall once hide His face from us, we are in trouble, indeed!

9. You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, use your past experience to encourage you for the present. Draw arguments from your past experience to use with God in prayer, even as David did—“You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my soul was burdened with sin, You were my Helper. You did enable me to look to Christ when I lost friend after friend, when I passed through fierce conflicts with the devil, when I was sick, and health and strength failed me, You were my Helper.” Many of you can thus look back upon a long life and say to God of it all, “You have been my Helper.” And this gives you a foothold in your wrestling with the great Angel of the Covenant—so mind that you grasp Him firmly and say, “Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!”

10. When my father and my mother forsake me. They are not likely to do that, yet, if they should do so, what then?  
10, 11. Then the LORD will take me up. Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies. This is a prayer which all Christians have good need to pray, for there are so many enemies who will, if they can, cause us to stumble. So many who watch for our halting that we need to pray, “Lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies.” Yet let me also say to you that it matters not how carefully and warily you may walk, nor how holy you may be—you will be sure to be slandered—yes, and sometimes by Christian people, too! There are always some to tell the lie, and others to repeat it, and some to believe in it, and even to rejoice in it. It would be a mercy if some people had no tongues, for, if they had none, they would commit far less sin than they now do!  
12. Deliver me not over unto the will of my enemies: for false witnesses have risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. David found enemies, as will you—and the holier you are, the more shall you have of them. Birds pick the ripest fruit. The highest towers cast the longest shadows and so is it that the highest holiness is generally the object of the most cruel attacks. Well, what are they to do who are passing through this trial? Do? Why go to their God about it as well as about everything else!  
13. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. With troubles without, and fears within, and slanderers and enemies of all sorts around him, the Christian had almost fainted; but faith puts the Divine smelling salts to his nose and as soon as ever the nostrils perceive the sweet perfume of God’s faithfulness, the man is revived! “I had fainted, unless I had believed.” So you see that you must do either the one or the other—you must either believe or faint, for, by unbelief and sin, a spiritual fainting fit will soon come on.  
14. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the LORD. Wait on no one else! Wait only on Him and then you shall not be discouraged or faint-hearted. Therefore, “wait, I say, on the Lord.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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BELIEVING TO SEE

NO. 766

BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“ **I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”  
Psalm 27:13.**

I HAVE taken the whole verse for my text, but I am not sure that I shall keep to it. The words in it at which I catch are these, “Unless I had believed to see.” Most people see to believe, but in David’s case the process was reversed and put into Gospel order—he believed to see and this is the keynote of our discourse. The prayer of my heart is that some may be led to believe to see, and that those who have been trying to see in order to believe may now come and trust in Jesus and believe and see the Grace of God. Here we have in the words I select for the text, a doctrine stated, many difficulties removed, and some directions afforded for the Christian life.

I. We have here before us a fundamental truth and DOCTRINE of our faith that the great act by which a man is saved, so far as he is concerned, is the act of faith. That is to say he gives up all other righteousness and casts himself upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment he does that he is saved—his past sins are forgiven him—his future is secure. That one simple act of confidence in Jesus, insignificant as it may appear to be, is the dawn of spiritual life, the evidence of security, the token of eternal salvation!

And here is the reason for this, namely, that faith is God’s appointed mark which He sets upon His favored ones, and by this may a man know whether he is saved or not, whether he is ordained unto eternal life or not—by his answer to this one question—“Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?” Or, in other words, “Do you trust in the Son of God?” The case is ordered in this wise—we have sinned, we have broken God’s Law—God’s Law must be honored. Sin cannot be committed without a penalty being inflicted.

The Lord Jesus Christ determined and stipulated in the Covenant of Grace that He would take upon Himself the form of Man and that He would suffer for the chosen many, even for His people, what they had deserved to suffer themselves on account of their sins, or a punishment that would be equivalent to that suffering. In due time the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. True to His word of promise He went up to Calvary— there He received, at God’s hands, that which was due from His people to the great offended Judge. There He paid their debts.

There, once and for all, He took the handwriting of ordinances that was against them and put it away, nailing it to His Cross. Now, virtually, all for whom Christ died were then saved. Their debts were then paid. Their punishment was then discharged. The debt due to the Sovereign Justice of God was then altogether borne, and Jesus Christ, then and there, “finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness” for His people. This Man, by His one offering, has perfected forever them that were set apart!

Once yielding His soul unto death and giving Himself up a sacrifice for men, He then and there saved His people as before the bar of God. These saved ones are known by their being brought to trust in Him as their once dead but now ever-living Lord. Without faith in Christ, my Hearer, you have no share in His blood. You have no interest in His righteousness. What He did upon the tree will have nothing to do in saving you. All His griefs, and groans, and pangs you will have no share in. Your debts remain unpaid. Your punishment has not been borne for you. You will have to endure the wrath of God forever!

In the prison you will be forever bound in chains of fire. Inasmuch as you have not believed, you have no share in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. But if you have come and trusted yourself with Christ. If, fully convinced that there is salvation nowhere else, you believe in Him, then your debts are paid! The punishment of your sin has been endured. You can never suffer, for God cannot punish two for one offense. You can never be summoned to God’s bar to be tried for your life. You are clear. Through Jesus’ blood you are ransomed. You are justified, accepted, adopted, saved. Who shall lay anything to your charge, seeing that Christ has died for you and made a propitiation for your sin?

Now, the whole of this hinges upon a man’s believing. If he believes then the great Gospel truth is that he is saved. Throughout all the Bible this is the one ray of light that comes out of the darkness to poor troubled man—“He that believes on Him is not condemned.” “He that believes on Him has everlasting life.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” These assertions occur over and over and over again so that I may safely say that this is the Gospel—that he that believes is saved, and that the faith by which he lays hold of Christ is to him proof positive that he is saved. He has God’s Word for it that he is redeemed in Christ.

II. We have now briefly stated the doctrine, but the main part of my subject will be to try and remove those many DIFFICULTIES which people newly awakened and quickened are sure to raise. The doctrine is that he that believes is saved. But men ask a thousand questions about it and see as many more difficulties—let us, therefore, try to meet and answer some of them.

1. And, first, how often do we hear it said, “I cannot think that I am saved. I do not trust in Jesus Christ—I am sure of it, and fear I am not saved because I feel no worthiness in me.” This is a difficulty which we can slay at once. If you did feel any worthiness in yourself, then you might rest assured that you were not saved because nothing is more clear in God’s Word than the fact that salvation is not by merit but by Divine Grace.

The Apostle Paul is very clear upon this point. He says, “It is not by works, but of grace.” And if any say it may be partly of each, he says, “No, if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Salvation is altogether, from first to last, a gratuitous act of GRACE—hence you do not need to look for any merit in yourself.

The case is parallel with this—It is sometimes the custom, when a new king attains to the throne, for a general amnesty to be proclaimed, and for all the prison doors to be opened. This is done, of course, not on account of the merit of the prisoners, but to do honor to the great mercy of the king. Now I think I see you, troubled one, sitting as a prisoner in a cell and the door is opened to you. You are told that you are free because the king would honor the day of his coronation.

But you reply, “I cannot believe that I am free, for I do not feel that I deserve it. The sentence which was passed upon me was one which I richly merited, and according to justice I cannot, therefore, walk out of that prison door because I know that I have done nothing to merit my discharge.” But, Man, if the ground of your discharge is not in any degree your merit, but only to the honor of the king, how simple-minded you are to sit on that stone slab any longer! Up with you, Man! Walk abroad! Take your liberty and do honor to the king’s bounty! O Sinner, you have no merit, that is true, but God forgives you to the praise and glory of His Grace, to the honor of His dear Son, to give Him a coronation! Come, then, walk out at liberty!

Or it is as though this should happen—Someone who is in a consumption has applied for admission to enter, say, into Brampton Hospital. Byand-by this person obtains the order, but no sooner does she get it than she is afraid to use it. She does not dare go to the hospital. and why? “Because,” she says, “I am not in good health.” Now, we answer at once, “But if you were in good health, you would have no need of an hospital. It is, in fact, your sickness and your bad health which give you any sort of congruity in entering there.”

So, when you tell me that you have no merit, my reply is, but if you had any, you would not want a Savior! Your demerit renders yours a suitable case to be met with by the merit of the Savior. It is your sinnership which, if there is any fitness, is your fitness. Not your righteousness, Sinner, but your guilt must be your plea when you wish to be pardoned. If money is to be given away, men do not urge their being possessed of riches as a reason why they should receive the charity, but one cries, “I am exceedingly poor,” and another says, “I am poorer still.” It is their poverty, not their substance, which is their plea with the generous heart.

And so it is between God and you. Not your fullness, but your emptiness! Not your goodness, but your badness! Not your merit, but your demerit! These you must plead before God, seeing that salvation is by Grace. Now, then, what do you say, Sinner? God tells you that if you believe in Christ you are saved. Is God a liar or not? I must push that with you. Does God speak truth or not? As for this trumpery objection of yours, that you have no merit, I have shown you that it is without a foundation—for if you had any merit, then why should you come to God for mercy?

But, meritless, worthless, altogether without any goodness, still the text says, “Blessed is he that works not, but believes in Him that justifies the ungodly.” What do you say—will you take God at His word, and believe what He says to be true?

2. But I hear another objection, one which is very frequently made, indeed. Someone says, “But I want to see in myself the evidences of salvation. I know that when a man is saved there very soon appears in his character certain signs and tokens which mark the work of the Holy Spirit. And I cannot believe that I am saved on the mere Word of God. I want to see the evidences of it.” I will tell you a story then.

When the Emperor Napoleon the First was one day reviewing his troops on what is now called the Place de la Concorde, sitting on his horse and thinking of other things, he let go of the bridle and in a moment his high spirited charger galloped away with him. A private in the ranks saw the danger, rushed from his place, seized the bridle, and saved the life of the emperor, who said to him, “Thank you, Captain,” and went on. “Of what regiment, Sire?” asked the soldier. “Of my guards,” was the reply.

Now it was a strange thing that the emperor should in a moment make him a captain for so small an act as that, and stranger still that the man should so simply and fully believe him as not to doubt for a minute, but ask at once of what regiment he was to be the captain! Now, what do you suppose the soldier did? Going back to his regiment he put down his gun, and said, “Whoever likes may take care of that,” and walking across the review ground up to the staff, he joined with them.

A general looking round at him said, “What does that fellow want?” “That fellow is a captain of the guard,” said the man, and gave the military salute. “You are mad, Friend!” “I am not mad. I am a captain of the guard.” “Who said so?” “He said so,” pointing to the emperor riding along. “I beg your pardon,” replied the general, and recognized him at once in his new office. The man took the emperor at his word. He wore no shoulder ornaments. He was not adorned with any gold lace. He had not received any of a captain’s pay. He had passed through no formal ceremony, but the emperor had simply called him “captain,” and that was enough for him.

Now I want to know whether the Lord Jesus Christ’s word is not as well worth taking as the word of the Emperor Napoleon. When he says to you, “Believe. He that believes has everlasting life,” the proper way for you to act is to feel and say, “That is true! I have everlasting life, although, as yet, I have not a jot of evidence of any other kind—yet if He has said it, that is enough for me! Though I may have come in here an ungodly, unconverted sinner, yet, since I have learned to trust the Savior this night, and do trust him, then I am saved! I will try to get these evidences by-and-by.”

I have no doubt that that soldier I told you of very soon began to look after his regimentals. He would not like to continue dressed as a private after that, but would want an officer’s uniform, and to appear in the army as a captain should appear. And so will it be with you by-and-by— but at first, my dear Friends, your faith must be grounded on the word of Jesus Christ, and on nothing else. Perhaps the devil will say to you, “What is that fellow doing here?” Tell the devil and all his angels, “HE said it who died on the Cross! HE said it who reigns in Heaven, that ‘Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.’’

Stand to it that if He said it, that is enough. You have the King’s Word for it! The imperial Word, the Word of the blessed and only Potentate who cannot lie. So, then, it is sufficient evidence to the believing heart that it has God’s Word to rely upon. Let me point you to the 36th verse of the third chapter of John: “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” And to the 18th verse of the same chapter, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” Are not these words quite sufficient, though as yet no other evidence can be seen?

But sometimes I have heard persons saying, “Well, but we must have evidences. We cannot trust Christ without them.” And consequently they try to manufacture signs of Divine Grace, whereas, be it never forgotten, that evidences are the product of faith, and not the cause of faith. You go into a room at winter time, and you say to yourself, “There is not heat enough in this room. I must try to make more heat.” And you set to work, by some plan or other, to do this. You say there is no evidence of there being a fire because there is no heat. True, but you will never make the heat produce the fire. Would it not be much better to go and look to the fire at once? And then you would get the heat which is the result of a fire.

So you say, “I am not so earnest, so reverent, so prayerful, so penitent as I should be, therefore I cannot believe.” Now, would it not be better to say, “If I believed more, I should have more of these evidences. Therefore let me go to my faith, which is the cause of the evidences, and not go to my evidences to get faith out of them”? It is as though you had a piece of ground and you said to yourself, “Well, now, here are these trees. They produce very little fruit—if I could secure a large crop, that would be evidence that the soil is good. I must put fresh fruit on the trees, and then that will prove that the ground is fertile.”

Not at all so. Make the soil good, and then the fruit will come naturally. So with your faith. Faith is the soil in which the fruits of faith must grow. Do not be thinking about the evidences. Think about the faith that will grow the evidences! Seek to go to Christ and trust in Him, and you will get the signs of Divine Grace soon enough. Your main business is with Jesus, not with evidences. Rest in Him—His finished work and ascension power—and if you depend there, without evidences, you will soon have plenty of them! But, if you look to external or other signs in order to get faith, you look, as I have already told you, in the wrong quarter, and reverse the order of Divine Grace.

To use an old proverb you “put the cart before the horse.” You do not go logically and properly to work. Trust in Christ for evidences, and you will have plenty of them in due time.

3. Commonly enough we hear people say, “I want to have a deeper repentance and then I could believe that I am saved.” Christ says, “He that believes is saved.” You say, “Well, that is what Christ says, but I am not satisfied with that.” Oh, atrocious thing! To make Christ a liar and suspect His Word! Still, you say you want a deeper repentance. Now, you are very like a man who is in a high fever, and delirious, and he cries out, “I want to feel that I am in this fever! I want to know the top and the bottom of this typhus! I want to know when it goes, and how it will go.”

But the doctor says, “Never mind, my dear Friend. Never mind the typhus. Just trust to me. Take the medicine.” He calms the man’s mind by reminding him that if he had not the typhus, he would not want the doctor. But now that the fever is there, it is not for him to know the disease so much as to trust the remedy. And when he gets well, he will understand about it better. So, poor Sinner, till you have come to Christ, your repentance is not worth a penny.

If you had a ton weight of it, your repentance would be of no value till you trusted Jesus. We must get you well first and then you shall know about the disease. Trust Jesus and believe His Word, and do not, in your delirium, be looking for those dark experiences which would not comfort you, though you think they would.

There is a man who has written a very offensive letter to a very kind friend who has often obliged him. This friend, when he received the letter, said, “Well, it was very wrong of you to write this letter, but I freely forgive you.” But the other said, “I do not think my friend has forgiven me, because I do not feel regretful enough. If I felt more repentant then I should think that he had forgiven me.” As if his friend’s forgiveness were not quite well enough assured to him by his friend’s word!

But now, supposing that man should bring himself to believe that his friend had forgiven him? Why, then he would find it an easy matter to repent, because he would say to himself, “Has my friend been kind enough to overlook so great a fault? Then how wrong it was of me to have written so against him! How grieved, how shocked I am to think that I should have fallen into such an offense against so generous a friend!”

My dear Hearers, you cannot get repentance by refusing to believe Christ’s Word. Trust Him! Trust Him and believe that you are saved, and then the sluices will be drawn up and you will repent! You will see Jesus Christ dying that you might live and you will say, “Did I slaughter that blessed Savior? Did I wound Him? Did I scourge Him and put Him to death? Then, you monstrous sins, away with you! Away with you!” You must first believe, and then repentance will come—not look to REPENTANCE as being the evidence, but look to Jesus, and to Jesus only, and, looking to Him, repentance will follow as a matter of course.

4. Then, running to the other extreme, we have heard many troubled ones say, “I cannot think that I am saved because I do not feel great joy. If I had greater joy then I should know that I was forgiven.” Somebody has left you a large estate, and you say to yourself, “Well, I have just read the letter in which the lawyer tells me that I am left a large estate, but, somehow or other I do not believe it, for if it were true, I should feel greater joy about it.” Why, you talk like a fool, Sir! If you believed it you would feel joy. It is because you do not believe it that you do not have joy.

You turn the thing upside down and want your joy to help your faith, whereas your joy must flow from your faith, and cannot possibly contribute to it. So, Man, if you will come and trust my Lord’s Word, and believe that you are saved because you trust Him, then you will have joy. You cannot be without joy. If you believed tonight that your sins were pardoned, would you not be glad? Certainly you would. Well, then, believe it! If you are trusting Christ, if you are resting wholly upon Jesus, He tells you that you are saved. Do not begin to say, “I have not the bliss I hoped to have.” You shall have that joy when you have looked for it, and have looked alone to Christ.

5. Then, I have known others who have said, “I could believe that I am saved if I had more sanctification.” That also is the wrong way to go to work. In a sweet little book which I have read lately, the writer well remarks, “Suppose you were in Brazil and you were in some of those brooks where diamonds are occasionally picked up and you found a large one unpolished. No matter how rough it might be, if you knew it to be a diamond, you would get it polished. But if you had any suspicion about it, you would not be likely to incur the expense and trouble of polishing it. It is your assurance of its being a diamond that would set you to work to take it to the lapidary to have it put upon a seal, and set.”

So we find salvation, and when we get it, it is a rough, uncouth thing. We want to have it, as we say, sanctified. Now, if we believe it is a diamond, if we believe that it is really and truly salvation, we shall then be in earnest to get that salvation perfected—to have the diamond’s facets all made to glitter in the light of Heaven. But so long as we have any doubts about the matter, we shall not think, nor be troubled, about perfecting our salvation.

The fact is that strong faith is the great sanctifying agent through the power of the Holy Spirit and the application of the precious blood of Jesus. You will never overcome your sins by doubting Christ! You will never get sanctification by putting your holiness into the place of Christ’s righteousness. It is no faith to believe that I am saved being sanctified. But it is faith to believe that I, being sanctified, and with all my sins about me, am still saved through the precious blood of Jesus! O Sinner, do not look to sanctification to back up the testimony of God’s Word. God’s Word is enough!

O take it! Rest upon it! Remember, you dishonor God when you want any other evidence except His naked Word. What would you, dear Friends, think of this in your own case? You promise your child a present and he wants evidences! You tell him that you love him and he wants you to call to him somebody else to bear witness to it. Shame on your naughty child, or else there must be something ill about yourself.

Now, as we cannot lay the blame on our heavenly Father, who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind—shame on us that we should be saying we want something else to make us believe God’s Word. O Beloved, let us believe Him when we cannot see it. And if we do not feel that we are saved, let us believe the Word which says we are, seeing it is the Word of Christ. I like that in Martin Luther. He says the devil said to him once, “Martin, do you feel that you are saved?” “No, I do not,” he said, “but I am quite as sure of it as if I did. Get you behind me, Satan!”

And that is the true way. Do you feel that you are saved? No, I do not expect to feel it—it is a matter of belief. I trust my Lord and Master. It is very sweet to get feelings, but Mr. Liveby-Feeling, as you well remember, according to John Bunyan, was a Diabolian, and got hung! I wish he had been hung to better purpose, for he still lives about these parts. If you live by feeling, it is miserable living. It is poverty sometimes, and riches at others. But if you live by

 faith upon the Son of God who loved you, and gave Himself for you, that is blessed living!

O for Divine Grace to do this, not to see to believe, but to believe to see! Put believing first—and repentance, sanctification—evidences and all else—will come afterwards!

6. I shall not weary you, I hope, if I mention that there are some who say they cannot trust Christ, cannot believe His affirmation that they are saved because they do not feel more love for Him. They are like a child who should say, “I do not believe my father’s word because I do not feel so much love for him as I ought to do.” Oh, but, my Child, if you believed your father’s word, a true and good love would come as the consequence!

And, Sinner, while you are saying, “I cannot believe because I cannot love,” you are putting things altogether out of gear. That is neither God’s method nor the way of wisdom at all. Go and believe your Father and then you shall feel a flame of love within your heart which you have never known before.

7. But another one says, “I could believe that I were saved if I had more of likeness to Christ about me.” Here again, you see, Christ has said, “He that believes has everlasting life,” and you say, “No, Lord, I do not agree with that. I believe that he that is like You has everlasting life, and I cannot see that I am like You, though I once hoped I would be, and therefore I cannot think that I am saved.”

That is to say Christ and you differ in opinion, and you set your, “No,” up against Christ’s, “Yes.” Oh, down, down, down with your proud, “No,” and just take this sweet assurance, that “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” Now, here is a man who has been cutting a seal and making your crest, but when you come to stamp your letters with it, you find that the impression is very bad, that it is not your crest at all. You cannot make out what it is!

It may be a crest, but it is not at all like one. Well, what will you do? Will you try to polish up your wax, and so make the impression like what you wanted it to be? Would it not be a great deal wiser if you were to get the seal altered? Would not that set it all right directly? If you were to send the seal back to the man who cut the die, and get him to make the seal properly, would not the stamp then be right? Now, how do we get likeness to Christ?

Why it is faith which puts the stamp there, and instead of saying, “The impression upon my character is not like Christ, therefore I must try to alter it,” my dear Friend, think about your faith! Go to Christ and through Him get your faith altered. And when the stamp is set right, then the impression will be perfect. There is no holiness, no true holiness apart from faith! It is not by doubting that we come to be holy. I never could overcome a sin by saying, “I am afraid I am not a child of God.” The devil knows this and consequently, whenever he can get us alone, he always begins with this, “If you are the son of God.”

He did this with our Lord, and if he could have led our Lord to doubt whether He was God’s Son, we know not what might have come of it, for certainly when he gets us to doubt whether we are children of God then we very soon glide into other sins. But when we can say to him, “Now, Satan, I am not ignorant of your devices. I know you are about to tell me of my unfaithfulness and of my great sin. I know all that, but the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses me from all sin. You may paint me as filthy as yourself, and filthier, too, if it so pleases you, and I will acknowledge that it is true. But then I will remind you that Christ has said, ‘I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions.’ ”

Why, you are more than a match for the devil then! O Brothers and Sisters, let us take Christ’s Word as we find it! I bring you back to the story I told you about the emperor and the soldier. And seeing He has said that we are saved, let us believe we are! If we have nothing else to prove it, let us stand to it before angels and devils, the assembled courts of Heaven and of Hell, all joined together, and say, “I have God’s Word for it, and I would put God’s Word even before an angel’s word. If Christ has said I am saved, then I am saved! If He has declared that the Believer has eternal life, I do believe! I do trust in Jesus, and therefore I have eternal life, and I cannot perish—neither can anyone pluck me out of Christ’s hands.”

Now, that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I would to God you had Grace to receive it! I pray that every one of us may be brought to depend upon the veracity of God and the merit of Jesus, and then, believing to see, instead of seeing to believe, we shall be sustained, and comforted, and greatly blessed.

III. And now I have a FEW DIRECTIONS TO GIVE TO MORE ADVANCED BELIEVERS upon the same subject. Beloved in the Lord, the whole course of the Christian’s life must be believing to see. We walk by faith, and not by sight. I hope the day may soon come when the noble example which has been set by our esteemed Brother, Mr. Muller, of Bristol, will be more constantly followed in all the Lord’s work.

Rest assured that if we will but believe to see, we shall see great things! I cannot forbear mentioning to you tonight what God has enabled us to see of late as a Church. We met together one Monday night, as you will remember, for prayer concerning the Orphanage and it was not a little remarkable that, on the Saturday of that week God should have moved some friend who knew nothing of our prayers to give 500 pounds to that cause!

It astonished some of you that, on the following Monday, God should have moved another to give 600 pounds! When I told you of that at the next Prayer Meeting, you did not think, perhaps, that God had something else in store, and the following Tuesday another friend came with 500 pounds! It was just the same in the building of this House. We were a few and poor people when we commenced, but still we moved on by faith, and never went into debt. We trusted in God, and the Tabernacle was built, to the eternal honor of the God who hears and answers prayer.

And, mark you, it will be so in the erection of this Orphan House. We shall see greater things than these if only our faith will precede our sight. But if we go upon the old custom of our general societies and first look out for regular income, and get our subscribers, and send round our collectors, and pay our percentages—that is, do not trust God, but trust our subscribers—if we go on that rule, we shall see very little, and have no room for believing.

But if we shall just trust God and believe that God never did leave a work that He put us upon, and never sets us to do a thing without meaning to help us through with it, we shall soon see that the God of Israel lives and that His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear! Brethren, let us remember Israel when they came to the Red Sea. There it was, a roaring, billowy sea—and they were bid to march through it! And they did march! And though the waters roared before them fiercely, yet so soon as the priests’ feet touched the flood, the depths stood upright on a heap and the waters were congealed in the heart of the sea!

And so shall it be with you, Brothers and Sisters, and with your faith. Believe in God and face your difficulties and they shall flee before you. Then, remember the Egyptians. They decided to do the same thing. They thought, “Oh, that is all right. We will do as these have done before us.” But notice, they said this because all their difficulties had been cleared away. There was the Red Sea all dry before them. Any fool could march through there! But, unfortunately, while faith can march through a sea dry-shod, unbelief only begins to march when it is all-dry—and presently, unbelief gets drowned.

Unbelief wants to see and God strikes it blind. Faith does not want to see, and God opens its eyes, and it sees God, ever present to help and deliver it. Now, you who are working for Christ, and you who are troubled in your business, you who are in any way exercised—remember the life of faith. Remember that you are not called to walk by sight, but by faith! Like David, believe to see, and great shall be your joy.

Now, beloved Christian Brothers and Sisters, the same thing must happen in our inward conflicts. If we want to grow in Divine Grace, we shall not do so by humbling ourselves, as we call it. The way to make advances in Divine life is to believe that you can only grow in Grace by God’s Spirit. To believe that since Jesus Christ is yours, all things are yours. My Brother, have you a bad temper? You will never overcome that temper by saying, “I cannot overcome it.” But if, by faith, you are able to say, “I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me,” you will overcome it yet.

No sin is ever slain by your saying, “Oh, it is my disposition. It is natural to me.” I know it is, and all manner of wickedness is natural to us. You have to rest upon a supernatural arm—you are a twice-born man. You are a new creature and you must not sit down in peace in any form of sin, but believe that you can overcome it by the power of your faith and of the Holy Spirit that is in you! Believe in order to see yourselves growing in Grace! Believe to see yourselves conquering sin in the name of Christ, and you shall do so!

And again, with regard to our perplexities in doctrines and matters of faith you must apply the same rule. Believe first and then you will see the Truth as it is in Jesus. How often the Christian comes across a passage of Scripture which seems to be dark and mysterious. He cannot, for a time, understand its preciousness, nor behold its beauty. But though he cannot see the golden ore, he knows that it is there, and, like one that searches for gold amidst the nuggets of quartz where it is embedded, in due time he will be enriched. It will not do to cast it away because nothing at present is

 seen—for before long the full value of it shall be known.

The Christian drinks water from a well which is deep, and by nothing but Faith’s long arm can he reach down so as to draw the living water. It is no surface supply which will do for us. Down deep in the depths of God’s spiritual Truths where no hand of reason can reach, we can let down our faith and the clear, fresh water will be drawn up to refresh our thirsty souls. If ever you are in a difficulty, bring faith to bear upon the Truth of God first, and you will understand and see afterwards. It depends upon which end of the telescope you use first and put to your eye how much you will see of the landscape—and the lengths and breadths of the Truth of God are only discovered when faith is first of all brought into exercise.

Remember, moreover, my beloved Brethren, that our only safeguard in times of prosperity is to exercise faith beforehand. Our text says, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Expect great things from God—work for them—and believe that God intends to do good to you. David was not taken by surprise when he saw God’s goodness. He had always believed in it—and when the full tide of Divine beneficence met his view he was not overcome, for he always, by faith, comprehended it.

You, my Brothers and Sisters, now high up in the mount, still let your faith lead your eye upwards, and you will not grow giddy and fall. Walk by faith and you will find yourself safe alike in trouble and in joy. In the night of adversity it will be as a pillar of fire to give you light, and in the daytime it will refresh you with its sheltering shade all through the wilderness. Believe, and you shall see without fainting, “the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

And once more, Beloved, we are on our journey to the skies. We are on our way to Heaven and if we want to have a foretaste of it, how shall we get it? We must not believe in Heaven only because we have had enjoyments on the road—we must believe that there is a Heaven because God has promised it, and we must go after it because the Word declares there is a great reward. And there, if we believe to see, we shall, even in this life, soon see something of that which we have believed.

Brothers and Sisters, we are tonight like Columbus in search of the New World. Eye has not seen it, ear has not heard it—but we believe in it and in our frail vessels we have launched, leaving the world behind us. Unbelief sometimes tells us that there is no goodly country, no land of life-unending, no city of the blessed, no haven of peace, no “Jerusalem the golden.” We have never seen it, but we believe in it. God has said it in His Word—“There remains, therefore a rest for the people of God.”

Therefore, up with all sail! Steersman, hold to the wheel! We are bound for another and a better land! We have no abiding city on that shore which we have left. If we were mindful of it, we might return to it. But we have left it once and for all, and we are now steering for the land which eye has not seen. And you know what happened to Columbus! It is happening to some here—to some of my gray-headed Brothers and Sisters. Ah, and young as I am, I, also, know something of that which I am about to describe.

When Columbus was drawing near to the shores of America, though he could not see the land, yet he marked the land birds flying round and round the masts, and lighting upon the cordage of the vessels, and he pointed up and said, “That is a bird that is not seen far out at sea. There is land somewhere!” His companions had been ready to throw him overboard and make back for Spain. But they thought better of it now. And by-and-by there came floating along weeds and branches of land produce, and they said, “Ah, after all, the old-fashioned navigator is right. We shall come to the land of gold!”

Now, sometimes God gives us blessed foretastes, happy earnests, delightful tokens that there is a better land till some of us, having believed to see, are almost come to see! I envy some of my dear friends who have been long in the Divine life, and are getting gray because I know that the angels often bring them bundles from the hills of myrrh and make glad their spirits with tastes of the wines on the lees well refined which are reserved for the feasts of the immortals when they sit down in the banqueting halls of the Eternal, and see the King in His beauty, and bask in the vision of His glory!

Oh, let us go on, we who are younger, who have scarcely begun the voyage, knowing that all is well! Storms may toss us about. Waves may dash against our hull. The billows may seem as if about to swallow us up. But our fathers have gained the beach. Their ships, like those of Columbus, are drawn up on yonder shore. They are safe and blessed. Hark! We can almost hear their song. Their, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” might almost be heard even here, were not this earth so full of noise—were not the whirl of the wheels of business so incessant. Let us, then, O let us believe to see, and we shall soon see it and glorify Him who taught us so to believe!

May God bless you, dear Friends, very richly in this believing to see, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.  
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Sermon #1371 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BRAVE WAITING  
NO. 1371

**DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”  
Psalm 27:14.**

THE Christian’s life is no child’s play. All who have gone on pilgrimage to the Celestial City have found a rough road, sloughs of despond and hills of difficulty, giants to fight and tempters to shun. Hence there are two perils to which Christians are exposed—the one is that under heavy pressure they should stay away from the path which they ought to pursue—the other is lest they should grow fearful of failure and so become faint-hearted in their holy course. Both these dangers had evidently occurred to David and in the text he is led by the Holy Spirit to speak about them. “Do not,” he seems to say, “do not think that you are mistaken in keeping to the way of faith. Do not turn aside to crooked policy. Do not begin to trust in an arm of flesh, but wait upon the Lord.”

And, as if this were a duty in which we are doubly apt to fail, he repeats the exhortation and makes it more emphatic the second time—“Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Hold on with your faith in God. Persevere in walking according to His will. Let nothing seduce you from your integrity—let it never be said of you, “You ran well, what hindered you that you did not obey the Truth of God?” And lest we should be faint in our minds, which was the second danger, the Psalmist says, “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.” There is really nothing to be depressed about. There is no real danger—you are safe while God lives, while Christ pleads and while the Spirit of God dwells in you—therefore be not dismayed, nor even dream of fear. Be not timorous and unbelieving, but play the man! “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart.”

The objective of our discourse this morning will be the encouragement of those who feel in any degree dispirited and depressed on account of the hard places of the way, or the opposition of the world. May the Divine Spirit, whose peculiar office it is to be the Comforter of His people, now give the oil of joy to all who mourn and courage to all who tremble! We shall look at our text under four heads. First, God is to be waited on. Secondly, courage is to be maintained. Thirdly, waiting upon God will sustain courage and, fourthly, experience has proven this—for David sets his own seal to the text when he says, “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” As much as to say—I have tried and proven the power of communion with God and, therefore, personally give my advice that you continually wait upon the Lord and you will be greatly strengthened.

I. First, then, dear Friends, GOD IS TO BE WAITED ON. That word, “wait,” is so exceedingly comprehensive that I quite despair of bringing out every shade of its meaning. The word, “walk,” describes almost the whole of Christian life and so does this word, “wait,” for, rightly understood, waiting is active as well as passive, energetic as well as patient and to wait upon the Lord necessitates as much holy courage as warring and fighting with His enemies. We are to wait on, wait upon and wait for the Lord, for it is written, “They that wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.” And, “blessed are all they that wait for Him.”

What do we mean, then, by, “wait on the Lord”? I say, first, let us wait on the Lord as a beggar waits for alms at the rich man’s door. We are very poor and needy, laboring under such necessities that the whole world cannot supply what we require. Only in God is there a supply for the deep poverty of our souls! We have gone to His door, many of us, and knocked and waited. And, in so doing, we have obtained very gracious answers. If others of us have not seen the door of Mercy open to us, let us still wait at the posts of the Lord’s door. Let us still knock and still hope for His salvation.

Are you seeking the Savior and are you trusting Him? Have you not yet obtained the peace which comes with believing? Then with great importunity continue in prayer and wait on, remembering that the blessing is worth waiting for—it is such a treasure that if you had to wait for a lifetime to fully obtain it, you would be well repaid when it came. Wait, but knock as you wait, with fervent pleading and strong confidence, for the Lord Himself waits to be gracious to you. Agonize in desire and let not the knocker of Heaven’s gate ever rest! Make the door of Mercy resound again and again with your resolute blows upon it.

The Lord is good to them that wait for Him. He will, in due time, answer you. It shall never be said that any were sent away empty from His gate. He has not spoken in secret in a dark place of the earth, nor said unto the seed of Jacob, “Seek you My face in vain.” Pray on, believe on, and as surely as God’s promise is true, He will, in due time, grant you conscious salvation. Your head shall be lifted high above your enemies round about you and you shall rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory! The devil bids you cease from prayer. He tells you that the little faith you have will never save you. Do not believe him! Stand fast, pray on, believe on, expect on—though the vision tarries, wait for it—it shall come, it shall not be long.

The Lord grant you Grace to wait in all humility, for what are you but a beggar, and beggars must not be choosers! It is good that a man both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Him. To cling to the Cross, to rest at the altar of our Lord’s Atonement is the safest course. Believingly to wait upon the Lord, pleading the all-prevailing name of Jesus, is the suppliant’s best posture. I trust many in the House of God this morning have passed from this stage to the next—they wait as learners for instruction. The disciple waits at His Master’s feet and, according as the Teacher chooses to speak, so the disciple’s ears are opened.

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet. Some stand in the crowd and listen a little and soon they are gone, but the true disciple abides in the school and waits to hear what his Master will say. We bow down at His feet with this humble resolve, that whatever He says we will hear and whatever His doctrine, precept, or promise may be, we will drink it all in with intense delight. The pupils of the old philosophers were apt to walk in the groves of academia till the wise men were ready to come and speak with them. And when any one of the wise men began to speak, the young disciples quietly followed his steps, eagerly catching up every precious sentence which he might utter.

Much more should it be so with us towards our Lord Jesus. Let us follow Him in every page of Inspiration, study every line of creation and learn of Him in all the teachings of His Providence. Let us catch the faintest whisper of His Spirit and yield to each Divine impulse. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” If you are to be instructed disciples it must be by a diligent, patient, persevering waiting upon Him who is the Fountain of all knowledge and the Sun of all light. May we never outrun our Master by conceited speculations and vain imaginations, but may we wait till He speaks and be content to remain in ignorance unless He chooses to withdraw the veil.

A third form of this waiting will come out under the figure of waiting as a servant waits upon his lord. A true servant is anxious to know what his master wishes him to do and, when he once knows it, he is happy to undertake it and carry it through. In great houses certain servants enquire of the master in the morning, “Sir, what are your orders for the day?” Imitate this and when you rise in the morning, always wait upon your Lord to know what His commands are for the day. Say, “Show me what You would have me do. Teach me Your ways, O Lord. Lead me in a plain path. Inform me as to what to seek and what to shun, for my will is to do Your will in all things.”

Notice how maid-servants watch their mistresses when they are waiting at table or serving about the house. A word is enough and sometimes a look or a nod of the head is all the direction needed. So should it be with us—we should eagerly desire to know the mind of the Lord and carefully watch for indications of it. As the eyes of a maiden are unto the hands of her mistress, so should our eyes wait upon the Lord our God. We, who are the ministers of the Lord Jesus, ought to be looking all around to see what we can do in God’s House. Good servants do not need to be told of every little thing—they have their master’s interest at heart and they perceive what should be done and they do it.

Oh, to be always waiting to do more and more for Jesus! I would go up and down my Master’s House, seeing what I can do for His little children whom I delight to cherish! What part of the House needs sweeping and cleaning, that I may quietly go about it? What part of the table needs to be furnished with food, that I may bring out, as His steward, things new and old? What is there to be done for my Master towards those who are outside and what is to be done for those already in His family? You will

never be short of work if, with your whole heart, you wait upon the Lord! We do evil if we stand idly gazing up into Heaven expecting His coming and making it a pretense for doing little or nothing to win souls! Our wisest course is, as men that expect their Lord, to stand with our loins girt and our lamps trimmed.

You know what the Orientals meant by having their loins girt—they gathered up their loose flowing garments when they meant work—even as a hard-working man among us takes off his coat and works in his shirtsleeves. Stand like workmen with your sleeves up—that is the English of it, ready for any work which your Master may appoint! You put on the uniform of the Lord Jesus years ago when you were baptized into His name—take care to keep it spotless, for it is known to be connected with a sinless Prince! Never, by disobedience, make the uniform to be a lie, for if you are not His servant, why should you wear the garb of His household? Beloved, “He that waits upon his master shall be honored.” Let us not fail in waiting upon ours.

Sometimes the servant will have to wait in absolute inaction—and this is not always to the taste of energetic minds. I suppose that walking round Jericho six days and doing nothing must have been very distasteful to the men of war who wanted to be coming to blows. They might have said, “Why should we and all the multitude march round the walls and do nothing? The men of war chafed in their harness and longed to be at the foe! It is said that Wellington kept back the Guards at Waterloo till far into the fight and it must, I should think, have needed much courage on their part to remain calm and quiet while cannon were roaring, the battle raging and the shots flying about them.

They must not stir till the commander-in-chief gives the order, “Up, Guards, and at them!” Then will they clear the field and utterly annihilate the foe. They were as much serving their country by lying still, till the time came, as they were by dashing forward when, at last, the word was given! Wait, then, upon your Lord in all sorts of service and patience, for this is what He would have you do. Another form of this waiting may be compared to a traveler waiting the directions of his guide, or a mariner waiting upon the pilot who takes charge of his ship. We are to wait upon God for direction in the entire voyage of life. He is at the helm and His hand is to steer our course.

I am fearful that some Christians very greatly fail in waiting upon the Lord for guidance, yet the types and examples of the Old Testament very strongly enforce this duty. I will give you one type and one example. The type shall be Israel in the wilderness. There was a straight way to Canaan and, I suppose, it would not occupy many days to go from Goshen to Jerusalem. They must not, however, take that way, but follow their leader. When they had wandered for a year in the wilderness, they might soon have reached the land, for, in fact, they were near its borders. But no, they must go where the famous pillar, which indicated the Presence of God, should conduct them!

If it remained stationary for a year, the tents must not move. If it was up early in the morning, again, and again, and again for a whole succession of weary marching days, Israel must not dare rest. Under the shade of the pillar of cloud must they abide by day and its light must be their glory by night. Everywhere they were to wait for the heavenly signal and never choose their own path. Do you watch the cloud, my Brethren? Do you wait upon the Lord for guidance? Do you continually say, “I pray You show me Your way”? Do you commit your own way unto the Lord? If not, how little you have learned the true position and privilege of the people of God!

The example I take from David’s own life. If you have noticed the 14th Chapter of the First Book of Chronicles, you will read that David, being threatened by the Philistines, enquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go up against them?” And he had for an answer, “Go up, for I will deliver them into your hands.” Encouraged by the oracle, he went forth to the attack and carried all before him like the breaking forth of a flood. The Philistines rallied again and spread themselves abroad in the valley—surely David might have felt quite safe in falling upon them again. What further directions could he need? Would not the former oracle avail, now that the same circumstances were occurring?

But no, the man of God did not feel safe until he had laid the new case before the Lord and it is recorded, “Therefore David enquired, again, of God.” This time the response was very different. Possibly to his own surprise David received orders not to go up after the Philistines, but to turn away from them and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. When he should hear a sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees, he was to bestir himself, but not just then. He followed the new directions and again smote the host of the Philistines!

Brothers, wait on the Lord often! Though you were wise in the last intricate business, you may be a fool over the next simple matter! In fact, it is over the simple matters that we make our great blunders in life, even as Israel did with the Gibeonites when they came with old shoes and bread that was moldy—half an eye might have sufficed to see through their trick but Israel acted hastily, ate bread with them, made a treaty with them—and inquired

 not at the hand of the Lord. Not so David—he was never slow to seek Divine guidance.

I admire that which comes out, incidentally, about him in the saying of Abimelech, the priest at Nob. When Saul accused him of having enquired of the Lord for David, Abimelech replied, “Did I then begin to enquire of God for him?” As much as to say, “He is an old frequenter of the Lord’s courts. He has enquired of God many and many a time before this. To accuse me of inquiring of the Lord for him, as though I was abetting rebellion, is unjust, for I only did for David what I had often done before.” And so it was that David behaved himself wisely in a perfect way— because he followed not his own judgment but waited on the Lord.

There was one occasion, when he marched against Nabal in the heat of his wrath, when he went in his own spirit and not under heavenly influences. And had it not been that the Lord sent a wise woman to cross his path, he would have shed blood that day and it would have been a

grief of mind to him all his life. Oh that we did more sincerely wait upon the Lord in the sense of seeking instruction as to our path in life—then would He fulfill His promise to us—“Your ears shall hear a voice behind you, saying, This is the way, walk you in it.”

I have not yet exhausted the word, “wait,” for we ought to wait upon God as a child waits upon its parent. Our children can seldom be accused of having small expectations with reference to us. They have almost countless desires and wants—and they always expect their parents to readily supply them—in which reckoning, I have no doubt, they have been strongly confirmed by their past experience! No little child thinks of providing for himself, nor does he dream of directing his own course in life. You cannot get that little head to be thoughtful about tomorrow’s food! You cannot force that little heart to be anxious about the next suit of clothes. To all suggested doubt, the little lips reply, “My father knows what I need and I am sure he will give it to me.”

Such is the happy, restful life of a loving child and this is as it should be with us. It is my Father’s business to provide for me. His name is Jehovah-Jireh. It is my Father’s business to preserve me. He has given His angels charge to keep me in all my ways. It is my Father’s business to mark out the future for me—I cannot see, even, into tomorrow! My eyes are dim, but my Father knows all about what shall be and He will be ready for whatever shall happen—therefore I should wait upon Him, raise no questions and expect great mercies. Blessed are they who are thus found waiting.

And then, perhaps, I may add one more thing—we should wait upon the Lord as a courtier waits upon his prince. He that is at court and seeks to rise to favor waits upon his prince with the desire to be employed in the royal service, that he may prove his loyal zeal. He counts any sort of employment at court to be a great honor. He tells his friends and they accept it as a subject of congratulation that he has obtained such-andsuch work to do for the king. He delights to increase the honor and dignity of his prince’s court, for he shares in it himself.

Brethren, how carefully should you and I endeavor to show forth the honor of our Lord Jesus among the sons of men! Has He not made us kings and priests? And should we not exalt His glorious name forever? We should seek to make our Lord Jesus famous to the world’s end—our daily conversation and our current character—our private and public behavior should all tend to increase our Master’s honor among the sons of men. We must be ready for anything for Jesus and everything for Jesus—counting that we, ourselves, are honored by disgrace if we bring honor to Him.

Sir Walter Raleigh was wise in his generation when he took off his richly embroidered cloak to spread it over a miry place, that Queen Elizabeth’s feet might not be dampened. The courtier knew how to smooth his own road by caring for his queen. And thus, with unselfish motives, out of pure reverence for our Lord, let us be willing to be made as the street to be walked over if Jesus can be honored! Let us lay out for our Lord the best that we have, even our life, itself, if by so doing we may bring glory to the holy and blessed name of our Redeemer! From now on it is ours to live unto the Lord and die unto the Lord! We will wait on the Lord and keep His way and may His Grace enable us daily to say, “I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.”

II. Secondly, COURAGE IS TO BE MAINTAINED. “Be of good courage.” Our good Lord and Master ought not to be followed by cowards. Be of good courage, you that wait on the Lord! Have the courage of hope concerning the faith which you are exercising upon Christ. You are just beginning, some of you, to believe in Jesus, and you are afraid that He will cast you away, or fearful that you will not obtain full salvation from sin. I have already told you to continue to knock at Mercy’s door—do so, but be of good courage—for that door will certainly open to you. He that asks receives, he that seeks finds and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

Take heart, poor fainting one, the Lord has a tender eye towards mourning souls! He is very good to those who seek Him. Though you are like poor trembling Mercy who fainted outside the door of the interpreter’s house, yet your Lord thinks upon you and He says, “Come in, you blessed of the Lord, why do you stand outside?” He will not suffer those to perish who humbly wait on Him. The light of His countenance shall yet be yours. Be of good courage, O Seeker! Be, also, of good courage, you who have newly found Him. Be bold to avow your faith. Remember that the trust which you repose in Jesus is a justifiable one and can be vindicated against all comers—therefore do not hide it.

I hate to see a Christian act like a rat behind the wall who comes peeping out, when everything is still, to see if anybody is about so that he may get his crumbs. If there is half a sound of a foot anywhere—away he slips and hides himself in his hole! No, if you belong to Christ, acknowledge it! What is there to be ashamed of? To believe the Truth of God—shall a man blush at that? To follow infinite purity and holiness incarnate in Christ Jesus—is there anything to be ashamed of in that? No, rather let us wear our colors before the face of all men and lift high our banner in all companies, for it is a cause for glorying rather than for blushing that we are on the Lord’s side! It is the best thing about us! It is the greatest mercy we have ever received! Why should we conceal it? Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and confess your faith before men, you that have newly been brought to Jesus.

Then go farther. Be of good courage in endeavoring to spread the faith which you have received. When you go to speak to others about the great salvation, be not afraid! If it is new work for you, I dare say you will tremble, but still do it and ask the Lord to give you greater confidence in proclaiming the tidings of His Grace. If you speak with infidels, be of good courage, though for a while you cannot lead them to believe. If you speak to those who are incensed against the Truth of God, be of good courage— what harm can they do to you that shall be equal to the harm you will suffer by being a coward? Be of good courage and undertake great things for Christ! Do not expect a defeat, but dare and venture all for Him.

Do something more than you are able to do, expecting strength beyond your own to be afforded you, and it will certainly come. “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart.” Be of good

courage, then, in the way of practical energy for the advancement of your Redeemer’s cause. Be of good courage when you pray for others. Wait on the Lord about your children and be of good courage and expect to see them saved. Wait on the Lord about your servants, about your brothers and sisters, about your neighbors—be of good courage about them— believe that God hears prayer and that your intercessions will bless those for whom you pray.

Intercession has great influence with God. It is no vain thing to wait upon the Lord for the souls of others. Thousands now in Heaven owe their conversion to the prayers of the saints and, therefore, plead with great courage! Never cease to pray! And when you pray, pray not as though you spoke to a tyrant reluctant to hear, or to a forgetful God who would fail to answer, but wait on Him with quiet confidence and you shall not come away empty. Be of good courage, too, in making self-sacrifices for the cause of Christ. If you lose a situation because you are honest, be of good courage—you will be no loser in the long run.

Are there some who despise you because you are a Christian? Be of good courage, their opinion is of very little worth and in the judgment of angels and good men you stand very high. Are you like Moses when he refused the treasures of Egypt with all the honors of the court? Be of good courage, the Lord will give you, even in this life, a recompense and, in the world to come, life everlasting! If it should come to losing all you have for Jesus’ sake, be of good courage, for he that loses his life for Christ’s sake shall find it and he that becomes poor for the cause of Christ shall be eternally rich! Be of good courage!

Once again, if you are called to endure great affliction, sharp pain, frequent sickness. If business goes amiss, if riches take to themselves wings and fly away. If friends forsake you and foes surround you, be of good courage, for the God upon whom you wait will not forsake you. Never let it be said that a soldier of the Cross flinched in the day of battle! Bear your Father’s will, glad to have such a Father’s will to bear! If Grace cannot enable us to endure all that Nature can heap upon us, what is Grace worth? Now is the time, my dear Brothers and Sisters, in the floods of adversity, to see whether your faith is real faith or not! Mere sunshine faith is not worth having! We need that which will outlive the most terrible storm that ever beclouded the heavens.

Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, though heart and flesh should fail you. Though eyes grow dim and the light of day should be quite shut out. Though hearing should fail and the daughters of music be silent. Though all the doors of the senses should be closed. Though the bearers of the body should totter and the keepers of the house should tremble, yes, though death itself should remove this feeble body, yet there is no cause for fear! We may exclaim with dying Jacob, “I have waited for Your salvation, O Lord.” Let not your hearts be troubled! Wait on the Lord and courage shall revive.

III. Our third point is that WAITING UPON GOD SUSTAINS COURAGE. Beloved, if ever you begin to grow weary in the good ways of God, wait upon Him with double earnestness. You have heard of the famous giant whom Hercules could not kill because the earth was his mother. Every time Hercules dashed him down, he obtained fresh strength by touching his parent and rose again to fight. We are of like nature—every time we are driven to our God, though we are dashed upon Him by defeat—we grow strong, again, and our adversary’s attempt is foiled. Our foe will never destroy us unless he can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord and that is impossible! Waiting upon God is the way to renew our strength until we mount up with eagle’s wings and leave the world below.

In the first place, our heart is strengthened by waiting upon God because we thus receive a mysterious strength through the incoming of the Eternal Spirit into our souls. No man can explain this, but many of us know what it is. We do not know how the Holy Spirit operates, but we are conscious that after a season of prayer we are often much refreshed and feel as if we had been ground young again. We have gone in before the Lord haggard and worn, desponding and, (shame upon us, we must add), ready to give up, turn tail and run away!

We have not long drawn near God before we have felt our spirit revive. Though our approach was mostly a groan, yet we did wait upon the Lord and the Eternal Strength came into us. How wonderfully do the secret springs of Omnipotence break into the feeble soul and fill it with might in the inner man! Through the sacred anointing of the Holy Spirit we have been made to shout for joy! We have been so glad in the Lord that we could not contain our joy! He that made us has put His hands, a second time, to the work and restored unto us the joy of His salvation, filled our emptiness, removed our weakness and triumphed in us gloriously!

The poor harp which had been long played upon could not, at length, yield music to its owner’s hands. In vain the fingers roamed over the strings, the more heavily they were struck the more discordant were the sounds. The harp was taken from the hall and laid aside in a quiet chamber and there its maker came to deal with it. He knew its frame and understood the art of tuning it. He put new strings here and there and set the rest aright—and the next time the harper laid his fingers among the strings, pure music floated forth and flooded the palace with melody! Where discord had peopled the air with evil spirits, all was changed and it seemed as though angels leaped forth with silver wings from every chord! Yes, go to your God, poor Soul, when you are out of order! Wait on the Lord and He will strengthen your heart by His mysterious power.

Besides this, waiting upon the Lord has an effect upon the mind which, in the natural course of things, tends to strengthen our courage, for waiting upon God makes men grow small and dwarfs the world and all its affairs till we see their real littleness. Poor David sat fretting about the ungodly as he saw them prospering in their way, while as for himself he was plagued all day and chastened every morning. Foolishly and ignorantly he complained of the Lord and questioned His justice, “until,” he said, “I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.”

Set your great troubles before the infinite God and they will dwarf into such little things that you will never notice them again!

He takes up the isles as a very little thing and the nations are as a drop in a bucket—and this great God will teach you to look at earthly things in the same light as He does, till, though the whole world should be against you, you would smile at its rage and though all the devils in Hell should rise against you, you would defy their fury! Our worst ills are utterly despised when we learn to measure them by the line of the Eternal. Thus you see that waiting upon God strengthens the heart by lessening the causes of fear.

And then it inflames the heart with love. Nothing can give us greater courage than a sincere affection for our Lord and His work. Courage is sure to abound where love is fervent. Look among the mild and gentle creatures of the brute creation and see how bold they are when once they become mothers and have to defend their offspring! A hen will fight for her chicks, though at another time she is one of the most timid of birds. Mr. White, in his book on Selborne, tells of a raven that was hatching her young in a tree. The woodman began to fell it, but there she sat. The blows of the axe shook the tree, but she never moved—and when it fell, she was still upon her nest! Love will make the most timid creature strong and, oh, Beloved, if you love Christ you will defy all fear and count all hazards undergone for Him to be your joy!

In this sense, also, perfect love casts out fear. It hopes all things, endures all things and continues, still, to wait upon the Lord. To have more love we must more continually wait upon the Lord and this will mightily renew the strength of our heart. Again, waiting upon the Lord breeds peace within the soul and when a man is perfectly at rest within, he cares little for trials or foes. It is conscience that makes cowards of us all, but let conscience be pacified through the atoning blood of Jesus and you can smile when others spit their venom at you and, like your blessed Master, you can bear their taunts without reply, for there is a heavenly calm within. A heart unsettled towards God is sure to be afraid of men, but when the soul waits on the Lord in glad serenity, it stoops not to fear.

And, Beloved, this waiting upon the Lord produces the effect of increasing our courage because it often gives us a sight of the eternal reward. And if a man gets a glimpse of the crown of glory, the crown of thorns will no more prick his temples. He that sees what he shall be in the day when Christ shall be revealed, mourns not because of what he now is while he bears the reproach of Christ. In fact, waiting upon God makes us see that we are in fellowship with Christ and causes us to know that the load we carry is a cross of which He always bears the heaviest end! It lets us see that His heart is full of sensitive sympathy towards us and so it makes us suffer without complaining. Is it not sweet to sing*—*

*“If on my face for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame  
For You will remember me”?*  
Thus waiting upon the Lord pours power into the central reservoir of our strength.  
IV. Now I finish with the fourth point, which is, EXPERIENCE PROVES THIS. I want you to keep your Bibles open at the 27th Psalm and see how my text is a summary of the entire Psalm. All the rest of the verse may be compared to the figures of an account and this closing verse is the casting up of the whole—waiting on the Lord is the path of wisdom. For, first, in the opening verses David had been surrounded by enemies. He waited upon the Lord and the Lord made them stumble and fall. Afterwards, when they fought against him, he told his sorrow to God and God lifted his head high above his enemies till he could sing in the sanctuary songs of exultant joy unto the Lord.  
My Brothers and Sisters, do the same when you are assailed! You are not in a country subject to actual war, but you have many adversaries, spiritual and otherwise. You have the Prince of Darkness armed against you and a host of evil spirits in high places. Wait on the Lord in this conflict and He will give you victory. Your strength is to sit still. Fret not! Quietly refer all the contests to Him who returns from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of His strength, because His foes and yours are trod beneath His feet. Wait on the Lord. Get away to the shadow of His pavilion. Hide in the secret of His tabernacle. Climb up upon the Rock and stay there—and all the adversaries of your soul shall be broken in pieces.  
Next, read the 7th and 8th verses and you will see David occupied in prayer, and there, too, he succeeded and prospered abundantly because in prayer he waited on the Lord. The very essence of prayer is to get the ear of God. You might as well whistle as pray, unless you pray in spirit and in truth—and the very spirit and truth of prayer must lie in communion with God Himself. If you have been praying after a fashion and you have not gained that which you prayed for, surely you have not yet reached the ear of God! Get into the secret place. Go close to your Lord and wait upon Him in very deed—then you shall have great courage in prayer, renew your strength and come back victorious.  
Next, David had been enveloped in darkness. He was afraid that God was about to forsake him. He had lost the light of Jehovah’s Countenance. I think I hear one say, “What am I to do in such a case?” Wait on the Lord! If He does not smile, still wait on Him. The smile of His face is delightful, but if you lose it, hide under the shadow of His wings! When He does not smile, He still loves. “Though He slay me,” said Job, “yet will I trust in Him.” Even when He seems an angry God, throw yourself at His feet! Let nothing drive you away from Him. If He lifts His sword to strike you, the further off, the heavier the blow will fall. Run close in, dear child, if your Father is going to whip you! Run close in, then He cannot strike hard. Draw very near to your Father’s heart. Lay hold on His strength and put Him against Himself, as it were, pleading His love against His wrath and saying, “You have sworn that You will not be angry with me, nor rebuke me, therefore deal tenderly with Your child.” If any walk in darkness and see no light, let him still trust and wait on the Lord. In the next sense we find David forsaken by everybody. Father and mother had left him—still he waits upon the Lord and the Lord takes him up. Now that you are quite alone, dear widow, and the husband of your love is gone, wait on the Lord! Now that the children, one by one, have been carried to the silent tomb, wait on the Lord and He will be better to you than 10 sons!

Now, young man, you are drifting about London without a helper—wait on the Lord and He will direct your ways. Yes, all of you who, either from persecution or bereavement, have come to be alone, remember the Lord sets the solitary in families and makes them families like a flock. Wait upon Him and all will be well. Next we find David in a difficult road, so that he prays, “Teach me Your ways, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies.” But waiting on the Lord met the case exactly. Whenever you cannot tell what to do, wait upon the Lord. When the road turns this way and that and you know not which is right, kneel down and pray—you will know which way to go when you rise from your knees, or if you do not, kneel down again. The directing post is best seen when we are in prayer. The oracle shall answer to you out of the excellent majesty when you have resigned your will and believingly sought directions from the Most High.  
To conclude, we find, next, that David had been slandered by His enemies—“False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.” What then? Wait upon the Lord! “Oh, but I must answer them.” Yes, and then you will make bad, worse. Your slanderers will forge another lie when you have answered the first. “Oh, but,” one says “I could bear such a charge if it were true.” Ah, but then you ought not to bear it! The truth of an ill report ought to grieve you, but if it is not true, never mind, let it alone. “Oh, but they say \_\_\_\_\_.” What do they say? Let them say it! No hurt will come of it. Wait upon the Lord!  
They rail at you. Take care not to rail back. Make no reply to howling wolves. When dogs bark, let them bark, for it is their nature. They will leave off when they have done and so, with all our adversaries, they will confute themselves if we will but leave them alone. Our strength is to wait upon the Lord! Tell Him about it and leave it with Him. Go to the Law? Yes, but get a suit which will not wear out in a hurry. Go to the Law and bring upon yourself no end of troubles. In all other things except slander—if you want a thing done—do it yourself. But there, if you want to be well defended, let others defend you. Dirt will rub off when it is dry— be bravely patient.  
Wait upon the Lord, commit everything to Him and He will see you through, even to the triumphant end. All that you can do in your own justification will only make more mischief. Hands off, there, and leave it with the Most High. So we close by repeating our blessed text—“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord,” May He keep you waiting courageously, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE ECHO

NO. 767

BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT SURREY CHAPEL, BLACKFRIAR’S ROAD.

**“When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek.”  
Psalm 27:8.**

THIS ready response to a Divine call may be looked at in three ways. It may be said of it, first, that it is the natural duty of man to God such as his responsibility to his Creator demands. I should not like to think it necessary to prove that statement in this assembly. Surely when God creates a man it is but a matter of right that the man created should answer to the call of his Maker. When the Creator says, “Seek you My face,” it is the natural duty of the creature to reply, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” And the more is this so, because our Creator renews our obligations hourly by exercising His sustaining power and maintaining our existence. In a certain sense we are “created” every day, because the creature would go back to its native nothingness—our bodies would return to the dust, and our spirits would expire—if it were not for a continued action of Divine Omnipotence by which we are retained in being.

Being, therefore, every day dependent upon the Preserver of men, it is but an everyday obligation that when God says, “Seek you My face,” the daily debtor should cheerfully reply, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” If any should say that this is not a duty on such grounds, I would reply that the commands of God are always so good and so reasonable that it must be the duty of man to obey them. If it were possible for the Most High to command anything unrighteous, or unreasonable, the question of His claims might be raised. But since what the Word of God commands is always most to our interest—at once the wisest and the best thing that we could possibly do—it becomes the duty of a rational and an intelligent being to follow the wise, loving, and tender counsels of the great God.

And when his heavenly Father bids him seek His face, he should readily answer, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” But, while I am quite sure that this is the case and dare never say otherwise, although prompt obedience is a duty, wherever it exists, it is a work of the Holy Spirit. There never was a mere man in this world, since the days of Adam, who ever did heartily make the reply mentioned in the text unless the Holy Spirit made him willing to do so in the day of God’s power.

We do not excuse those who are disobedient, but if any are obedient, the glory of their obedience must be given to the Holy Spirit who works all our works in us and makes us both to will and to do of the Lord’s good pleasure. We are quite certain that in our own case this was so, for the Lord said unto us, “Seek you My face,” hundreds and thousands of times, in our infancy, in His own Word—both when we read it and when we heard it preached—but we would not reply to the demand of God, but set our faces like a flint and went after our own devices.

But when He spoke effectually with that still small voice of the Holy Spirit which penetrates the soul, enlightens the understanding, sweetly bows the will, constrains the affections, and changes the nature—then it was, but never till then that we said, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” We heartily join in Mr. Bonar’s sweet verses*—*

*“All that I was, my sin, my guilt,  
My death, was all my own.  
All that I am, I owe to You,  
My gracious God, alone.*

*The evil of my former state  
Was mine, and only mine.  
The good in which I now rejoice  
Is Yours and only Yours.  
The darkness of my former state,  
The bondage—all were mine.*

***The light of life in which I walk,  
The liberty—is Yours.”***

And, therefore, in the third place, we may always view such a spirit as our text indicates as being an evidence of Election, an evidence of a saving interest in Divine Grace. How can we tell the Lord’s people? They are discovered by the Lord’s call. The call is general, and put in the plural, “Seek you My face,” but the response to it is personal, put in the singular, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” This becomes, sooner or later, the answer of every chosen soul! Everyone ordained unto eternal life receives, in due time, the new nature—and this living and incorruptible seed, hearing the Gospel of its great Author—responds to it as an echo to the voice.

There is a very excellent image which is sometimes used to illustrate this Truth of God. When our brave King Richard was shut up in prison, far away in Germany, you know how he was found out by Blondel, a troubadour. The king and the minstrel had composed a song between them. First the minstrel sang one verse, and then the king sang one, and no other man the whole world over knew what the verses were except the king and the minstrel. So the minstrel wandered through many realms, and sang the first verse of his song, sang it at all kinds of castle gates and dungeon doors, but there came no response, for the king was not within.

But at the last, as Providence would have it, he sang it in the right place and faintly from within he heard from the deep dungeon the voice which knew, and could sing, the second verse. And as he sang the third, and the fourth came through the iron bars, he knew that the king was there, for the verses could have been sung by no other than he. I am sometimes occupied in preaching the Gospel, and I preach it to thousands who give no response. There is no evidence of the Lord’s having chosen them. But another time there is a heart that says, “You say, ‘Seek you My face.’ My reply is, ‘Your face, Lord, will I seek.’ ”

Then I have found out the Lord’s chosen ones, found out the hidden ones, discovered as many as were ordained unto eternal life—for their believing is the response to God’s Gospel—and the evidence of their being the favorites of Heaven. They, and they alone, thus believe. As for those who believe not, they perish in their sins, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Look, then, at the text, in these three ways. I should be happy if I felt that you would all accept it in these lights, for I find too much of chopping and choosing among Christians between this Truth of God and that, and, by the Lord’s help, I am determined, so far as I know it, to pander to no man or set of men, but to hold myself ever free to preach every Truth that I find in my Master’s Book.

You may call it Arminianism, or Calvinism, or whatever “ism” you like, yet, if it is in this Book, you shall have to account for it at the Last Great Day, whether you receive it or not. I say, again, then, that the obedience of the text is but the natural duty of man but wherever it is carried out, it is by the work of the Spirit alone, and wherever it exists, it is an evidence of election and a proof of the indwelling of the Grace of God in the soul. But I intend to handle the text in another way and shall endeavor to speak of the spirit of loving obedience to God’s Word which this text breathes. I shall first say something upon the absence of that spirit. Then upon the cultivation of that spirit. And then upon a special outlet for that spirit, and, lastly, upon a reward for that spirit.

I. First, then, let me make a few remarks upon THE ABSENCE OF THIS SPIRIT IN SO MANY PERSONS. Ah, my dear Friends, it is mournful to think how few there are who can say, “When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek,” for the great mass of men, if they spoke honestly, would have to confess, “When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I know not the Lord neither will I be obedient unto Him.”

With some of you now present this has mournfully been the case. There has been in your heart a total absence of every response to the Divine Word. It has come to you in all sorts of ways, till it might be asked, “What further can be done to you?” You heard it from a mother’s tender lips, and she spoke it as no one else could have done. You had it after that in your own flesh, when through sickness you tossed on your bed. You had it afterwards from kind teachers, from earnest ministers. Some of you get a good word almost every day. The very glance of your wife is a loving, constant sermon.

Some of you are not without sharp pricks of conscience—the stabs of that sharp little dagger within your soul that would gladly slay your sins. But, for all this there has been no answer to God’s call. You have lived for vanity, if not for sin. You are neglecting the great salvation! He says, “Seek you My face.” It is the cry of all these houses of prayer which are open every Sunday, “Seek you My face.” But your answer has been, “I will seek anything but the face of God.” And this has been continued with some of you. Oh, that I should have to put this so seriously! You have done this, not for a week—a week is a long time for a sinful creature to hold out against God—but you have done this for months, yes, and even for years!

A year is a long time for a child to hold out against its father. How few monarchs can keep their patience with a besieged city for 12 or 14 years: “No,” they say, “we will drag each stone from its place and hang every citizen in the city by the neck.” Their patience soon grows cold and their wrath waxes hot. But God has laid siege to some of you, by the instrumentality of the Gospel, for 30, 40, 50, 60—did the little bird say 70 years?—and all the time you have continued to give God the negative. And while the demands of friends, and the requests of kindred have been complied with that wonderful Word, “Seek you My face,” it has received from you nothing but the cold reply, “With God I will have nothing to do.”

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me! The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” Oh, wonder of deep ingratitude—man—year after year turns a deaf ear to the sweet commands of Divine Grace! Now, in some of you, this cold negative has been disturbed a little, but not broken. Perhaps, from this very pulpit, some of you have heard appeals which have considerably shaken you. Many of us, before conversion, were frequently the subjects of impressions, and some of you unconverted ones are not long without them.

Christ has knocked at your door and you have heard His voice again and again. You are not long without such knocks. Christ has often knocked. He stands at the door and knocks, as the Scripture says. He does not knock and walk away, but He stands at the door and knocks. The knocks have been repeated and continued, and you have frequently but falsely said, “I will open.” You have vowed that you would change and turn. Shall all those vows be registered against you? Shall all those resolutions help to increase your doom, being evidence of your trifling with God and attempting to deceive the Omniscient One?

O Sinner, how much has been done for you? What more can be done for you, vain Man? What more shall be done for you, careless Woman? It is useless that you should be stricken any more—you will revolt more and more. You have suffered and you have smarted till your whole head is sick and your whole heart faint, and God’s rod has made you smart till you are full of wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores—but still you do not turn!

I have this much to say to you, and then I shall have to leave you to go to another part of the text. There is in this Book a very terrible passage which I commend to you who have up to now declined to accede to the Divine Word. You will find it in the first chapter of Proverbs, at the 24th verse, “Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nothing all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes; when your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish comes upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”

That is the voice of God to you, Sinner, you who have said, “I will not serve the Lord.” Take that bitter morsel and chew it. Roll it over again and again till you have got the very bitterness out of it. O may God make your sins as bitter as the judgment upon your sins! May the blessed Spirit lead you to the Cross of Christ, for you never will yield to the Cross of Christ unless the Holy Spirit constrains you. O that you may “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way”—the worst place to perish—to perish in the way and from the way, “when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Now, I will read the text again, and if any of you feel that its ready obedience is not found in you, that its joyful conformity to God does not in any way describe you, you need not listen to the rest of the sermon but just cover your faces, and may God help you to pray, and then, I trust, before the sermon is done, you will get an answer to your prayer. “When You said, Seek you my face; my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek.” Lord, if I cannot say that, break my heart now with Your great hammer and help me to yield myself up to Your will that I may be Yours now and Yours eternally.

II. Now, leaving that—not forgetting it in our hearts, though, for I trust we shall continue praying God to bless that short word to the unconverted—I now come to talk to the Believer about THE CULTIVATION OF A CONSTANT SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD’S WILL. My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, will you please notice in the text two or three points which I want you to attend to, and will you labor, by the help of God’s Spirit, to get your spirits up to them?

The first point is, notice the universality of this spirit of obedience in the text. David says, “When You said, Seek you My face,” he does not mention any time. Notice, “When You said.” If it were early in the morning, his heart said, “Your face, Lord, will I seek. I want You, for I have the day before me.” If it were at midday and the Spirit of God said, “Seek you My face,” David’s heart said, “O Lord, I will seek You. I want You now that the sun is scorching.” If it were towards evening and the voice said, “Seek you My face,” David said, “Ah, Lord, the day is far spent. I may well seek Your face now.” And if it were in the dead of night, when he awoke, his heart was still with God, and still ready to hear the Divine Word.

“When You said, then I said. When You commanded, I obeyed. When You called effectually, I yielded cheerfully.” Oh, what a mercy it would be if every Believer’s heart were in this state! Then we would not be sometimes obedient and sometimes have our own way—sometimes respond to the Divine voice and at other times put our fingers in our ears. Then we would be in so sanctified a frame of mind that whenever the Master came to us, whether at cock-crowing, or at the evening watch, He would find us with our loins girt about willing to go forth in His service. The text, you see, breathes the true spirit of service.

It shows a mind that was constantly under Divine influences, perpetually subject to the Divine will. The magnetic needle always desires the pole—the Christian’s heart should always desire communion with God. The rivers run into the sea—their waters continually flow into the mighty ocean—let our souls, by the stress of their new nature, continually be seeking conformity to the Divine will. Oh, it is easy to say it, but it is hard to do it when it comes to the pinch. To say, “Your will be done,” on the top of Tabor, is as easy as possible. But to say it in the gloom of Gethsemane is so difficult that none but God Himself can enable us to say it.

And yet it may be attained—entire resignation is within reach—for all things are possible to him that believes. Let us seek it with the fullness of

intense desire— *“Jesus, spotless Lamb of God,  
You have bought me with Your blood,  
I would value nothing beside Jesus—  
Jesus crucified. I am Yours, and Yours alone, This I gladly, fully own;  
And, in all my works and ways,  
Only now would seek Your praise.”*

Next to the universality, I would draw your attention to the promptness of the spirit of obedience expressed in the text. “When You said, then I said.” He did not ask questions. He did not stop to say, “Lord, when shall I do it? How shall I do it? Where shall I do it?” No, but, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” Beware of a questioning spirit in plain matters of duty—to delay to fulfill a conviction is to abide in sin! The Lord’s command is not to be quibbled at, but to be obeyed at once. We find not quibbling here, much less do we find any objection. There are no objections about himself, the work, or its difficulties. David at once, and on the spot acts as with the prompt movement of a soldier when commanded by his officer.

The Word is no sooner heard than the mind is swayed by it when the mind is under the sweet influences of Divine love. The Gospel according to Mark is regarded by some students as being peculiarly the Gospel of service. It is said that in the early Church the emblem for Mark was an ox to signify service. And it is very singular, whether that is so or not, that the evangelist Mark uses the word eutheos, or “straightway,” more frequently than any of the other Evangelists when he is speaking of Christ.

If you will notice, Mark always says, “straightway,” or “immediately.” For instance, in the very first chapter, “And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: and immediately the spirit drove Him into the wilderness...And when He had gone a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them.” This is the very mark of the true servant—when he knows his Lord’s will, he gives himself to it at once.

As the centurion said, “I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it,” so should it be with us. There should be a prompt response at once to the Divine will. Do you always find it so? Does not God have to speak to some of us many times and put a bit in our mouth, and a very sharp and cutting one, too, and tug at the reins a long while? Yes, and take to the whip, too, before He can get us to be as we should be? “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.”

But seek, my Brethren—this is what I am driving at—seek to cultivate a spirit of prompt obedience to the Lord’s will. Take the advice of Mary which she gave to the guests at Cana’s feast, “Whatever He says unto you, do it.” Whatever is the Word of God follow it in the strength of God at once, and without delay. There is a little story told of an infant class being examined by its teacher. The text to be thought about was, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” and the teacher said to the little girls, “How is that, my Dears? How do they do God’s will in Heaven?” One said, “They do God’s will in Heaven always, Sir.”

“That is well, but what next?” “They all do it; they all do it cheerfully, Sir.” The next one said, “Please Sir, they do it directly,” and the next, “They do it without asking any questions.” Good answers, certainly, and that is how we should do the Lord’s will—and so make a Heaven of this poor earth. O that our lagging feet were winged with sanctified alacrity, our obstinate necks made pliant with hallowed submission, our wavering hearts confirmed in constant holiness! This is one of the noblest works of the Spirit of holiness—may He make our nature the seat of so transcendent a miracle, so glorious a change!

Observe that next to universality and promptness, we are bound to note the personality of David’s reply. “You said, Seek you My face.” That was the command to all Your people, but, “Your face, Lord will I seek,” was the personal reply of the waiting servant of God. Egotism is, no doubt, a very bad thing when it means self-conceit, self-seeking, selfconfidence, self-laudation—but egoism in the sense of realizing one’s own individual responsibility is a most desirable virtue. We need two words— egotism to signify that vice which admires and loves itself, and is thoroughly detestable. And then egoism which determines that self shall be obedient, and pure, and firm, whatever others may be—this to be cultivated daily.

Look at good old Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Oh, it is a grand thing to see a man forcing his way up the stream, struggling with manful vigor against the general current, swimming as live fish will do, against the stream, not floating down it as the dead fish do, but saying, “Let the world take its way. I take mine.” “I, Athanasius, against the world,” said that brave old confessor. And so must we say sometimes, “I, I will seek Your face, Lord—let others do as they will.” Let us not be so attentive to other people’s vineyards that our own vineyard is not kept. Whatever else we neglect, let our own personal godliness be the object of our constant care.

Let our heart be sound in the statutes of Jehovah. Let us see that our own garments are kept unspotted from the world and that in our pilgrim life we keep to the very center of the road. True religion must begin at home. Unless we, ourselves, are in good condition, our Christian efforts cannot be healthily conducted. Depend upon it, the worm at the root of our usefulness is bred amidst the decay of our personal piety. When you and I lose power in the family, power in the Church, power in the world, it is because we have lost power with God in private. The Lord give us the habit and spirit of close, consistent, careful, conscientious personal obedience.

Then, too, the heartiness of David’s obedience demands our attention. “My heart said.” Not my lips only, but my very heart said it. My soul was stirred to its depths and moved to its center by the voice of God. Men who have great hearts are the men for power—they are full of force because their inmost nature is on fire. There have been some men in this world who have had little else to recommend them except that by which they have attracted their fellow men to yield them homage—like Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance—when he said to his soldiers at Austerlitz, “Soldiers, this battle must be a thunderclap; we must hear no more of the foe.”

And the men, filled with eagerness by his passionate energy, did his bidding and made it such a thunderclap that all Europe shook beneath the march of those men-at-arms. He had the power, somehow or other, of making men yield to him as if they were all machines, impelled by the force of his personal will. They were not dragged into battle, but rushedwith enthusiasm to the fight, longing to win glory or death.

Now the voice of God should be to the Christian a voice that speaks to all his soul, wakes up his dormant faculties and stirs the enthusiasm of his noblest nature so that his heart says, “I will, indeed, seek Your face.” As the British sailor, when Nelson said to him, “Ready?” replied, “Ready, yes, ready,” and fired red-hot shot at the foe, so should our hearts respond to God’s, “Seek you My face.” “Lord, blessed be Your name for telling me to do that, for You and I are of one mind here. You love me to seek Your face, and I love to seek You. My heart responds—not my lips, not my body, dragged slavishly into the form of obedience—but my heart says, ‘Your face, Lord, will I seek.’ ”

Dear Friends, get, hold, live out a hearty religion! Depend upon it that the religion which has not your heart in it is best left alone. I scarcely can recommend you to go through religious performances if you look upon them as a dull routine. Do let your souls be in the ways of God. If ever you have a happy feast, let it be on Sunday! If ever there is a delightful walk, let it lead up to God’s House! If ever there is a sweet song, let it be one of the songs of Zion! If ever there is a choice, retired, happy moment, let it be the moment which you spend in your closet in communion with God! O for more heart-work in our devotions!

Once more, cultivate the spirit of resolution in this matter. “Lord, Your face will I seek.” Not “I hope I shall. I trust I may. I desire to. I sometimes think that one day I shall.” No, but, “My heart said, Your face, Lord, will I seek.” Men do not grow much better in this world by hoping that they will. If a man does not get so far as resolution, he may reckon that he has not started upon his journey. The Christian man resolves in his

soul*— “Though floods and flames, if Jesus leads, I’ll follow where He goes.”*  
And if he cannot always carry out his resolution as he would, yet oftentimes his Master accepts the will for the deed.

To use John Bunyan’s homely metaphor, “You send your servant for a doctor, and put him on the horse: the horse is but a sorry jade and cannot go fast. But if the man tugs at the bridle, and uses the spur, and kicks and strains as if he would go if he could, you set the pace down as what the man would have it to be. You do not blame him for not going faster because you clearly perceive that he would go fast if he could. So the Lord often looks upon His servants and regards them.”

But what shall I say to those who would not go if they could, who do not say, “Your face, Lord, will I seek,” but who hope, and who trust, and so on? That means that they will give God the go-by with mere hopes and fears, and trusts, instead of the strong resolution—“Your face, Lord, will I seek.” In the teeth of all my natural sluggishness, in the face of all my business cares, I am resolved and set on this, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” Cultivate, then, a spirit of universal response to the Divine Word— prompt, personal, hearty, and resolved.

Before I leave this point—and then I will not detain you long with the rest—I cannot help thinking on an image which keeps coming to my mind while I am speaking. In the usual route which everybody takes in going through Switzerland there is a long tract of country where there are innumerable beggars and people trying, in various ways, to get money from the traveler. One way which generally succeeds is that of blowing an enormous horn just opposite certain rocks. As soon as this horn is blown, the rocks resound on either side, repeat the note exactly, and then again, and again, and again—sometimes, perhaps, 12 or 20 times the echoes take up the notes and prolong them, producing some of the sweetest effects that ever charmed the human ear—“Linked sweetnesses long drawn out.”

You want the boy to blow again, and as he blows another blast, and gives intonations and notes to it, the rocks begin to sing again. Those rocks reminded me, as I stood and listened to their sweet notes, of God’s people. Ah, I thought, you could not sing if it were not for the horn! You could not make any of these sweet notes if it were not for the living breath that is here! But you are so placed by God in His arrangements that as soon as the sound is made by the living mouth, it is taken up and repeated, sweet, and sweet, and sweeter still each time.

Thus should all the people of God be, so that when the Lord speaks, all the Lord’s people should take up the echo, and repeat it again and again by practical obedience to the Divine command. As the echo to the voice, so should your heart and mine be to the voice of God.

III. But, now, thirdly. We have spoken of the absence of this spirit, and the cultivation of this spirit. Now a word or two upon THE SPECIAL OUTLET FOR THIS SPIRIT SUGGESTED IN THE TEXT. The outlet suggested is seeking God’s face which I shall interpret to mean meditation, and especially the private and public worship of God. Now, you who love the Lord, you are all day long hearing God say, “Seek you My face,” when the morning light awakens you, it is God saying, “Up, My child. The natural light streams from the sun—come and seek the spiritual light—seek My face.”

If you wake to abundant mercies, why, all the provisions on the table ought to say to you, “I am God’s gift to you. Seek the face of the Giver.” Go to Him with a note of praise. Be not ungrateful. And suppose that you are in need and have to say, “What shall I eat, and what shall I drink?” Why, all your needs say to you, “Seek the Lord’s face. He has provision, go to Him.” Your abundance or your need may equally be a signpost to point you on the road to God. Suppose your child comes and asks you for something—it is God teaching you to do the same—to go like a child to your heavenly Father.

If you are full of joy, should not your joy be like the chariots of Amminadib, to bear you to Jesus’ feet? And if you are full of grief should not your sorrow be as a swift ship that is blown by the winds? Should you not get nearer to God? During the day perhaps you hear of the fall of some professor. What does that say to you? “Seek God’s face, that you may be held up.” Perhaps you hear a sinner swear. What does that say to you, but, “Pray for that sinner”? All the sins we see other men commit ought to be so many jogs to our memory to pray for the coming of Christ, and for the salvation of souls. In this way you may go through the world, and the very stones in the street will say to you, “Seek you the Lord’s face.”

If you meet a funeral, what does that say? “You will soon be dying. Seek the Lord’s face now.” And when Sunday comes, what a call is that— “Seek you My face!” Brothers and Sisters, I wish that we responded to each one of these invitations of our heavenly Father. His likeness is stamped in some of its lineaments on all His works. By the visible things of God the invisible things are to be discovered. Go forth, like Isaac, and meditate at eventide and you will find the heavens declaring His glory and the firmament showing forth His handiwork. The lilies of the field will tell you of One who has hidden His wisdom in the raiment which decks them more brilliantly than Solomon in all his glory.

As the Master Himself often retired for meditation and prayer to the mountainside and the garden’s shade, that alone with his Father He might seek the face of His God, so let us leave, awhile, the busy scenes of life and the haunts of men to spend a still hour in quiet meditation over the works of God’s hands. And then let us pour out our hearts into His ever-loving breast. How much we lose by not noticing God in Nature and the Presence of our Father besetting us behind and before! I wish we were more in prayer. I long for it for myself—I desire it for you, also. I wish we were more in praise, too. Well would it be for us if the blessings of God, poured out upon us so lavishly, excited in us true gratitude at all times. Happy would that man be who responded to each touch of God’s beneficent hand like a well-made instrument answers to the fingers of the player.

If our whole life were thus vocal with praise, the music of our grateful souls would come up with acceptance before God and we should find in our joyful spirits a continual feast! This joy of the Lord would be our strength—we should have meat to eat which the world knows not of. O that our days were more filled up with what will be our heavenly occupation, namely, adoring love, grateful wonder, thankful praise! As God is so continually saying to us, “Seek you My face,” let our spirit find vent for itself in this, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.”

IV. And, now, the last thing is WHAT WILL BE THE REWARD OF SUCH A SPIRIT? Have you a marginal Bible with you? If so, kindly read the margin. It runs thus, “My heart said unto You, Let my face seek Your face.” Ah, there is a new meaning there, and a blessed meaning, too. Let me read it again, “My heart said unto you, Let my face seek Your face.” I suppose that is the more literal, probably the more accurate rendering, and I gathered from that the thought of the reward of those whose spirits yield to the will of God.

That is to say they enjoy communion with God. It is the long-lost blessedness of Eden restored to us with greater sweetness added to it. In Paradise God came and talked with Adam as a man talks with his friend. Our first parents had communion with God which they lost by sin, but it is now more than restored to us in Divine Grace. Heaven will be the place of perfect fellowship but we may foretaste much of the bliss of the future world, and eat of the grapes of Eshcol before we ever tread the green fields of the better land. Yes, it means lost blessings restored, and future ones realized when we can set ourselves face to face with God, and hold blessed communion with Him.

Now, is this the life we are leading? Many Christians contrive to live without getting into the heart of Christianity at all. In the wilderness the children of Israel dwelt round the tabernacle, each tribe marching or resting in its appointed place. They were all under the protection of the cloud and followed the guiding pillar, and enjoyed the Divine blessing. But this was not enough—they might enter, and were bound to do so, the precincts of the tabernacle—and there witness the worship of God. And, bringing their sacrifice they also took part in the homage paid to their God and King. Beyond the outer court of the people was that of the priests—and there the favored few might go and present the incense before God on the altar of gold, spread before Him the show bread and light the seven-branched lamp. These enjoyed nearer fellowship with God—they were emphatically called the “servants of the Lord.”

There was, however, an inner place shut out from the eyes of priest and people alike, where once a year the High Priest entered alone, with blood, and he of all men living, drew near to God who dwelt between the cherubim in the Holy Place. Now, we are a royal priesthood and through the torn veil we have boldness of access to the very Mercy Seat in the holiest of holies, and we ought to realize and enjoy daily our high privilege! Far be it from us to remain in the camp outside the tabernacle. It is true we may be safe there and enjoy many mercies, but it is not living up to our blessings.

Go into the court and present your offering of prayer and praise! Go as a priest and enter the inner place, and stay till you have trod the secret place of the Most High—and face to face with God upon the Mercy Seat had real dealings with Him Himself. This is your right, and to neglect it is to despise one of the choicest blessings conferred by God on fallen, but now in Christ, redeemed ones. Let your hearts ever cry—

*“Lord, let me see Your beauteous face!  
It yields a Heaven below;  
And angels round the Throne will say,  
‘Tis all the Heaven they know.  
A glimpse—a single glimpse of You,  
Would more delight my soul  
Than this vain world, with all its joys,  
Could I possess the whole.”*

But we find in the text another thought of blessedness. On our face is reflected the likeness of God so that men see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven. We, by communion with God, may become manifestly like He, partakers of the Divine nature. As men we were made in God’s likeness—we fell and lost it—but by Divine Grace we are restored. How shall I illustrate this? Why, there is Moses. Moses on the Mount for 40 days sees God and when he comes down, the result, as shown in his face, is that his face shines! How could it be otherwise? God had been shining right into his face and he could not but reflect that delightful glory! That is the meaning, I suppose, of the passage, “Being changed from glory to glory, as by the image of the Lord.”

It is our looking upon God, producing sanctification—the light of God shining into our faces till our faces, also, shine with the reflected glory. “Let my face seek Your face.” Ah, Beloved, I could say some things I scarcely like to say about that text, for it looks not only as if the saints said to God, “Lord, look at me, and let me look at You. Show me Your face, and You look at my face. Lord, let us spend our time and our eternity in lovingly looking at each other.” But I wish the saint to understand that there is another way in which our face seeks Christ’s face.

It is thus expressed by the spouse, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine”—when the soul of the saint and the heart of the Well-Beloved fall into such visible union with each other that the conjugal kiss is given, and they come into the fullest, nearest, ripest, richest, and most celestial fellowship that can be known

this side Heaven— *“Like some bright dream that comes unsought, When slumbers over me roll,  
Your image ever fills my thought,  
And charms my ravished soul.”*

And again, as Dr. Watts has well put it—  
*“The smiles of Your face,  
How amiable they are!  
‘Tis Heaven to rest in Your embrace,  
And nowhere else but there.  
You are the sea of love,  
Where all my pleasures roll;*

*The circle where my passions move,  
And center of my soul.”*

May you and I often have in our hearts that panting, that longing, that sighing, that crying after fullness of fellowship with Jesus. May our hearts always say, “Lord, let my face seek Your face. Let my face never be satisfied till it sees Your face. Let my love never be satisfied till it is lost in the ocean of Your love. Let me never be content till self is wholly lost in the all-absorbing love of Divine Immanuel.” O so may it be! Then so shall it be, if your heart now says, in answer to God’s voice, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.”

I hope you have not forgotten the first point, however, and what I said about the unconverted. Let them take their portion. God grant that by getting their portion tonight, they may not get their portion in the flames of Hell. Then you Believers get your portion, also. Remember, the Lord’s portion is His people, and, on the other hand, “The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore will I trust in Him.” The Lord bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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A MIGHTY PLEA  
NO. 1144

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.” Psalm 27:9.**

IN times of distress it is somewhat a difficulty to have a choice of helpers, because while we are making our selection, the danger may have overtaken us. While the fox was considering which way to run, the hounds had seized him. While the sick man was selecting the physician and considering the medicine, his disease carried him off. It is well to be shut up to one sole help, if that help is all we need. It is for our good, in such a case, to have no alternative, but to have, as the old proverb has it, Hobson’s choice—that or none.

The Believer is exactly in that condition. He must trust in his God or remain without hope. He dares not look to others as he once did, for he has discovered their incompetence. He cannot rely upon himself as once he was foolish enough to do, for he has learned, by bitter experience, the folly of self-confidence. He is compelled to look to the Lord, alone. Blessed is that wind which drives the ship into the harbor. Blessed is that wave which washes the mariner upon the rock of safety, and blessed is that distress which forces a man to rest only in his God! Such was the condition of the Psalmist when he wrote the text. His spirit looked to God, alone.

In his past experience the goodness of the Lord shone forth as the pole star of his life’s voyage and, therefore, as to the future, he fixed his eyes steadily on that one sure guiding light, and trusted in the God of his salvation. In supplicating the Lord it is well to have a plea ready for use, a plea available under all circumstances and conditions—a plea of our own—not borrowed from the mouths of other men and perhaps but half suitable to ourselves. We need a plea which wells up from our inner consciousness and is our own personal plea, felt to be weighty in our own souls and therefore confidently urged before the Throne of Grace.

It is well to have a simple plea and one which we can understand, ourselves, for when we are in doubt we are like men in a mist and must have plain directions or we miss our way. If we have a chart in a fog we want it to be a very clear one, or else we shall not be able to see it. And when we plead with God in trouble we want the plea to be a very plain one, or else our minds may be so confused we shall not be able to urge it. A soul in sore distress is in no fit condition to puzzle itself over deep and dark reasoning—it needs a child’s plea, just as Dr. Guthrie, when near dying,

needed “Bairn’s hymns.’’

Blessed, then, is it, if we have a plea like this of the text, “You have been my help,” for this is a homely, personal, suitable, simple argument not fetched from afar by subtle wit, but grown at home in our own experience. He that runs may read it, and poor wayfaring men may comprehend it. The illiterate can use it as well as the learned. “You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.” Besides, this plea is good and full of real power. And I hope, before we have done this morning, we shall be able to show that there is much heavenly logic in it and that it is eminently full of that kind of argument which is most sure to prevail with the Host High.

Perhaps it may be well, here, to confess that the plea before us is not one which would ordinarily be available with our fellow creatures, for if they have helped us before, they generally conclude that the next time we ought to knock at some other door. Francis Quarles has well compressed the usual manner of men—

*“Man’s plea to man is, that he never more Will beg, and that he never begged before— Man’s plea to God is, that he did obtain  
A former suit, and therefore sues again.  
How good a God we serve, that, when we sue, Makes His old gifts the examples of His new!”*

Yet there are exceptions to the general custom of mankind, for I read the other day a case in point, in Mr. Moody Stuart’s, “Recollections of Dr. John Duncan, of Edinburgh,” who was a beautiful character, and a famous Hebrew scholar, and has lately gone to Heaven, much to the loss of the Free Church.

In that book I met with the following passage—“He was easily imposed upon, but the imposition never soured him, and he was willing to submit to it for the chance of doing good. He said, ‘I find they know how to get round me. They say, “You helped me before,” and I can never resist that. It teaches me how to pray.’ ” And now I think of it, many of us like to help our old pensioners, and they come up very boldly to our door remembering the many times in which they have succeeded. If you grant a man a favor several times, he becomes very free in seeking it again. So it seems that even among men it may be a plea, “You have been my help,” and most assuredly it is most prevalent argument with God.

No man shall be repulsed from the gate of Mercy who comes with this upon his lips—  
*“You have helped in every need,  
This emboldens me to plead.  
After so much mercy past,  
Will You let me sink at last?”*

I shall speak this morning thus—First, I shall try and depict Experience gratefully telling her tale—“You have been my help.” Then Necessity urgently pleading with Experience—“Leave not, neither forsake me.” And then Experience soundly instructing Faith—teaching her how to pray and how to expect an answer—“You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.”

I. First then, dear Friends, let us listen to EXPERIENCE GRATEFULLY TELLING HER TALE, “You have been my help.” I, the preacher, can say, and must say, with all my heart, “O God, You have been my help.” Rest a minute and let the testimony be repeated by all who can declare it. I know that many of you, if this were the fitting time, would rise up and say, “O God, You have been my help.” What would we have done without the help given us in time of need, given us from the Lord, Himself? How grandly has our God displayed His power and His mercy on our behalf!

Many of you whose heads are adorned with the silver locks of age will say, with troubling, tearful emphasis, “You have been my help.” Yes, and those of you in middle life, battling with its cares and trials, can do no otherwise but cheerfully confess, “The Lord is my helper, and has long been such.” And the younger ones among us, who have lately put on the harness would not like to be left out, for even in their short conflict they have received such aid that they gladly admit, “You have been our help.” If hands had to be held up now, that we might see at a glance those who could say that God has been their help, what a forest of hands would go up in this Tabernacle this morning! Yes, Lord, we Your servants, assembled here in thousands, do solemnly confess that You have been our help.

Now, as I cannot describe the individual experiences of everyone here present, I will just say a little concerning the man who wrote these words. As we find them in this Psalm, and as his experience is singularly like that of every other saint, we may, perhaps, touch most of you in some point or other. David could very early say, “You have been my help,” for while he was yet a youth the son of Jesse sought the Lord and struggled into spiritual life. I should think that his early experience was a very distinct and marked one—and one in which much saving help was displayed. He had deep convictions of sin, a clear view of the great Substitutionary Sacrifice that was to be offered, and in the end he obtained a very joyful sense of justification by faith.

David could look back to the days of his boyish conversion, when he fought hard with doubt and fear, and sin committed and sin dwelling within him, and yet was able to put his trust in the great Sacrifice, so that he said in retrospect, “You have been my help.” I invite every converted person here to look back upon that trying time when he was seeking the Lord with a burden of sin upon his back, assailed by a thousand sins and hindered by ten thousand temptations. You were, then, most wonderfully helped! You were helped to fall at the foot of the Cross and helped to look up and view the perfect Atonement there, presented by the Redeemer.

You were helped to leave your burden in your Savior’s sepulcher and helped to come away with a new song in your mouth—the sweet flavor of which is there to this hour. You were helped to repent and helped to believe—helped out of self-righteousness and helped out of despair. In memory of that matchless help you may well resolve to trust in the Word all

the days of your life. “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.” David, however, soon after his conversion, entered upon a scene of severe trial—at least, so I suspect.

He appears to have been sent from home to serve as a shepherd boy in the wild places of Judea. I fancy that his condition with regard to his brothers was very much like that of Joseph—they either envied or despised him. When Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint him, you will remember that all the rest of the family were at home and the youthful David was not summoned until the Prophet especially required it. But, as though he were not worth noticing, he was required to be away watching the flocks. And so, also, when he went, at his father’s request, to the battle against the Philistines, his brothers treated him with great scorn, as though he had no business to come near them, or to associate with great men like themselves, in battle for their country.

Poor David, therefore, was the marked one of the family, a speckled bird, the butt of household ridicule. But he could say, in looking back upon the times of his loneliness, “You have been my help.” Sweet were the songs which he sang among the sheep, such as, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” Happy were the quiet hours which he spent amidst the hills and vales of his native land, and by the rivers and the brooks where he made his flock to lie down. Many a time that harp of his, upon which he had learned to play so skillfully, had borne up his devout spirit on wings of music to the Throne of God, when his young heart sang in solitude the praises of the Most High.

Perhaps some of you look back upon your early troubles as among the bitterest you ever knew. We are always hearing people say that our young days are the happiest we shall ever see. It may be true with many, but there are others whose young days were darkened with sorrow. They had to bear the yoke in their youth and they can say, in looking back, that it was good for them it was so, for in those times the Lord was their helper. David’s father and mother had, in a measure, forsaken him, but God took him up. The Lord had regard to him when others despised him. He was the Lord’s Anointed when he was an alien from his mother’s children.

What joy it is if our early sorrows have left this inscription upon the tablets of our hearts, “You have been my help.” But David did not merely suffer when he was young, but did work for God—yes, he did grand exploits for his God and for his country while yet a youth—of which he could say with great fervor, “You have been my help.” It was no little thing when the shepherd lad rushed against the lion and took him by his beard and slew him. And when the bear had taken the lamb, it was no slight matter for a raw youth to battle with the monster of the woods and slay it in the name of God, that he might deliver his sheep from destruction.

The Lord was his helper that day, and grandly did he feel it, when he went with his sling and his stone to meet the gigantic Philistine! And openly did he confess his faith when he came back with the giant’s head, all dripping with gore, to magnify the Most High, who had delivered him and delivered Israel out of the hand of this mighty adversary. “You have been my help.” “The Lord delivered me out of the mouth of the lion and from the paw of the bear, and the Lord has delivered me from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine.”

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, I do not ask you to look back upon what the Lord enabled you to do in your younger days by way of selfcongratulation. I do not ask the old soldier to “shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won” that he may command admiration from younger warriors. But, that God may be glorified, I ask you to remember how the Holy Spirit came upon you in those early days and enabled you to be valiant for the Truth of God! Perhaps you had more zeal than knowledge in those days! Perhaps you possessed more confidence than prudence—but you did grand things for God and God was with you! He was with you, and so you might be content to go back to all the mistakes of youth if you might win back, again, its simple trust and burning love!

At any rate, stand here today and admit that whatever you may have accomplished which will bless your fellow men and honor your God, the glory of it is all due to the help given you by the Lord. David, after those first trying times, passed through another series of afflictions. He was called to court, but the king was jealous of him and very soon he had to escape from Saul’s murderous attacks. What continuous help did David receive from the God of his salvation! He was almost a prisoner in the caverns of Engedi but God delivered him. He was well-near captured among the hills, but Jehovah called off his pursuers. Many a time did he hold his life in his hand, for he was hunted like a defenseless partridge upon the mountains—but always, by some means or other, the Lord delivered him as a bird out of the snare of the fowler—the snare was broken and he escaped.

Look back upon the troubles through which God has brought you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters! Remember the times in which your feet had almost gone and your steps had well-near slipped, and say with grateful emotion, “You have been my help.” God helped David by raising him up many true friends. When he was in the cave brave spirits came to him, valiant and faithful men, who loved David as they loved their own souls. And when he asked for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, they went, their lives in their hands, to gratify his wish and let him drink of the water which he was accustomed to taste in his boyish days, for they were denoted to him.

Now, it is no small thing to have good, kind, faithful, earnest friends and adherents. And if you have had such, or have been favored with parents, brethren and friends who have been greatly attached to you, be sure to praise the Lord for them this morning, as I, myself, joyfully do in the midst of many tried and attached supporters, and say, “You have been my help.” On one or two occasions David found the Lord to be his help when he was in positions where he might scarcely have expected Divine aid.

When we plunge ourselves into trouble through our own fault, it is but natural to fear that we may be left to suffer for our folly. And it is peculiarly gracious on the part of our heavenly Friend to come to our rescue.

David had unwisely sought refuge with the king of Gath and there was placed in great jeopardy of his life, so that he had to play the madman in order to escape. But escape he did, through God’s gracious help. Yet another time, in his unbelief, he went and joined the army of this heathen king—and if the lords of the Philistines had not spoken against his going down to the battle, he world have been placed in a very awkward position, in having been called to fight against his own countrymen—but God delivered him, even then. With what regret may some of us look back upon our own follies! And with what thankfulness may we survey the mercy which plucked our feet out of the net. Where others would have left us in anger, because of our waywardness and ingratitude, You, O Lord, have been our help.

David obtained help under very strong temptations. It was a very strong temptation when he saw his adversary in the cave all alone, and might with one stroke of his sword have taken off his head. He was helped of God to spare his foe and he only cut off the hem of the king’s robe to let him see how completely he was in his power. Help also did he need when, in the dead of night, he went with Abishai, his captain, through the sleeping hosts of Saul and came to the place where lay his cruel enemy asleep. His spear stood temptingly near his pillow and a deep sleep was on him. And Abishai said, “Let me smite him, let me smite him but once, one stroke shall end it all.”

Who among ordinary men of war must not have wished to let that one single blow be struck? In what surer manner could a bitter quarrel be ended? But no, “I will not lift up my hand against the Lord’s Anointed.” David must have felt that God was superlatively his Helper that night to keep back his hand from blood. You, too, dear Friends, have been in such a position that you were strongly tempted to do wrong. Impulses both of your own nature and of Satan were strong upon you and you had almost put forth your hand unto iniquity. But you have been kept with an unblemished character to this day and you are compelled to say, this morning, “You have been my help.”

Yes, and David could remember, again, when God helped him in times of direst distress. Perhaps the greatest sorrow of David’s life, before he fell into sin with Bathsheba, was the destruction of Ziklag. He came back from the Philistines’ country to his own town of Ziklag and found the town totally sacked, everything taken away. And, what was worse, his own wives and children, and those of all his men, carried away captive. David might have borne up under this had his friends cheered him, but they were so exasperated that they fell angrily upon him and spoke of stoning him! He was their leader—he was not to blame in any respect for their loss—but merely in the bitterness of their hearts they spoke in foolish anger and hot haste.

Generally, at such times, men need a victim and in this case they would have made their noble leader the object of their wrath. It is written, “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,” and sorely did he need to do so. God brought him out of it, for he never lost a farthing by the sack of Ziklag, nor any of his men. They recovered their wives and their children, and, beside that, not only all their own goods, but all the spoil the plundering band had taken from other places. David could have sung, and no doubt did sing, “Ebenezer, up to now the Lord has helped us!” Or, in the words of the text, “You have been my help.”

Have not you had your Ziklag, you businessmen, when things were going all to the bad? You could not help yourself and bankruptcy stared you in the face. You did what you could, but it seemed as if you must be ruined. That was your Ziklag and the Lord helped you. Or perhaps there was disease in your house—one child had gone, another was sickening—your wife was laid by. You were unable, yourself, to lift hand or foot to help, all things were against you—it was your Ziklag. Or perhaps you are a minister of the Gospel and there was, in your Church, spreading disaffection and cruel ill will—and no one was found to stand up for you. Though you had been faithful before the Lord God of Hosts, you seemed quite left and deserted. It was your Ziklag, but you were helped through it.

And therefore, I beg you, do not, for the glory of God and for the comfort of tried saints, keep back your testimony, but say, “I was brought low, and He helped me, and, therefore, blessed be His name.” We do not talk enough about our deliverances! When you get home this afternoon, after dinner, if a friend or two should call, you will go over your bad times and your troubles, but you will not recapitulate your mercies. Have we not had enough of complaining? Let us touch another string and bless the Lord for all His loving kindness! What a tale some of us could tell of His mercies! No novel that was ever composed could possibly equal, in interest, my own experience of God’s goodness, and I think there are many here of whose lives the same could be said.

Rich with incident, crowded with wonders, crammed full of miracles have our lives been, for God has dealt so well with us that we often stand astonished at what He has done. “You have been my help.” Oh, yes, I will sum up the whole of my life in the one sentence, and, as we have seen a portrait sketched in a few lines, so will I give you my whole career in miniature—“You have been my help.” Listen, then, to the song of Experience, and hasten to join in it! It is most charming and cheering—“You have been my help.”

II. Our second point is NECESSITY PLEADING EXPERIENCE. “You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.” First, You have been my help, therefore it is consistent with Your holiness to help me. Lord, I am a poor sinner, unworthy to be noticed, and my doubts and fears sometimes tell me that it would not be fit for Your infinitely holy Majesty to look upon such a rebellious worm as I am. But, Lord, You have done it already! You have been my help and if it were not wrong for You to help me once, it will not be wrong for You to help me twice. If it did not

stain Your spotless robe to hold out your hand to a fallen and condemned soul in years gone by, it will not stain Your purity to lend me Your hand again.

I therefore bless Your condescending goodness and ask You not to leave me! You have been my help. Therefore, in the second place, it is within Your power to help me, for, Lord, my case today is not worse than it was when You did help me before, or, if it is, You are All-Sufficient. Lord, help me out of this affliction, for You did redeem me on a former occasion. I was weak and friendless then, and could not help myself. But Your own arm of mercy was fully equal to the emergency. Lord, I know it is quite sufficient now. If You had never delivered my soul out of such a puzzling, perplexing and intricate case as mine, I might have doubted, but as You have already been my help in times of great strait, when no way of relief was visible, You are able to help me again. Therefore I lay hold upon the hands of Your power and the arms of Your strength.

You have been my help. Therefore You can help me again, O Jehovah! I know You can! Again, my appeal is to Your Wisdom. Lord, You have been my help and if You do not help me now, all that help will go for nothing! It is of no use to have helped me so far, if You do not help me to the end. Now, Lord, I know You do not begin to build, and then leave the world incomplete, so that they that go by may say, “He began to build, but was not able to finish.” You have made an investment in me, good Lord. You have gone deep in expenditures of mercy and love with a poor worm like I, and if You stop Your hand, Lord, You will lose all you have invested. You must go right through with it, Lord, or else You will have lost all the works of Your love and Your power and Your goodness which You have already so lavishly spent upon me.

Is not that good pleading? “You have been my help”—Lord, if it were wise to help me so far, it must be wise to go through with it. Would it have been wise to bring Israel into the wilderness and feed them with manna for 40 years and then to let them die of starvation? What would the Egyptians say? Would they not ask, “Why did He bring them into the wilderness? Why did He conduct them so far and afterwards suffer them to perish?” Well does our poet put it—

*“The work which wisdom undertakes,*

*Eternal mercy never forsakes.”*  
For, if it is wise to begin with, it must be wise to carry it on. Lord Jesus, You have loved my soul as Jacob loved Rachel, and he was bound to serve for seven years to win her. And if he had served six and a half years, and then left off, he would never have had his Rachel. And You have, in Your infinite love, served for me these years, but if You leave off now, I shall never be Yours at last—my poor soul must perish unless, till the last hour of life, You shall still wait upon me in mercy, and refresh me with Your Grace.

To my own soul at this moment this plea, “You have been my help,” is a very powerful hold upon Divine Wisdom, and is an urgent reason why I may ask for Grace, still, to be given me. Perhaps the backbone of the argument lies in the attribute of Immutability. “You have been my help, if You can change, then can You leave me. But if You are, indeed, Jehovah, “I Am that I Am,” the same forever and forever—if You have once blessed, You are bound by the force of Your Nature to bless right on—as long as You are God and I require Your blessing. Have you not said, “I am God, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed”? What blessed notes that text contains! He who has kept you to this day, if He changed, might leave you. But since He cannot change, He will bear you right through!

How wicked we are to doubt our faithful God! The sun rose yesterday and nobody doubted but what it would be up this morning. And there is not a man living but what believes the sun will shine tomorrow. Do you trust the sun and will you not trust the God who kindles its light? The tide comes up to the shore and then recedes according to the regular motion of the moon, and everybody trusts the tide and is prepared for its coming in and its going out. And can you trust the unstable sea, and its fickle wave, and not rest upon the Immutable God?

You say the thing that was shall be, and surely God was forever and ever, and has kept His promises to His people—and therefore the thing shall be. If Heaven above can be measured, or the earth searched out. If the ordinances of the sun and of the moon can be changed, then may God forsake His people, but it can not, shall not be while He is still the same. I think there is one more argument here, namely, a plea to God’s love. “You have been my help.” Lord, surely if You did love me enough to help me before, You love me enough to help me still. It is the plea of a child to a father. “Father, you have always fed me, will you let me starve? You have always clothed me, will you let me be naked?” It is the argument of a spouse to her husband as she says to him, “My Husband, you have never failed me yet. Whatever I have needed you have supplied to me. Leave me not, neither forsake me.”

You know how the plea has power with a heart which is touched with true affection. It is with us and our God as thought He had guided us halfway through a wilderness. We did not know one inch of the road and had no provision for it, but He has helped up to now. If, when He had brought us right into the center of the waste, He should say to us, “Now I am going to leave you”—if we were in such a plight that on desert sand, where there was no pathway and no shelter, our guide should say, “Now I must leave you to yourselves”—we would clutch him by the sleeve and say, “Leave me not! I pray you do not leave me, else why have you brought me here at all?

“All the kindness of the past will be but cruelty, a studied tantalizing of me, if you leave me. Why did you bring me here? All the way I have come, I have depended upon you for everything. I could not have found my way so far, alone, and will you leave me now?” Oh, I think no man would be

so brutal as to resist such an argument. He would say, “If in my kindness I have undertaken the conduct of this poor ignorant creature and brought him so far, I cannot leave him till I have landed him safely at home.” Shall the Lord be less kind than man? Imagine that a child has fallen into the sea and you are a strong swimmer and have swam from the boat and clasped the child, and you are bearing him on your shoulders and swimming to land.

Suppose you should suddenly say, “My child, I have done something for you, but will do no more. I must drop you into the sea.” Would not the little one say, “Sir, you picked me up when I was sinking. I should have been dead long ago but for you. Do not throw me off, Sir. Strike out again, Sir! Let me still cling to you.” We may reason in the same manner with God. “My God, my God, if You had meant to let me be lost, why did You not do it years ago, and let me go down to Hell without hope? But now You have given me a hope of Heaven! You have let me know something of the joy of holiness. Some love to You and some longings after You have stirred my soul. Will You leave me now, O my God? It cannot, must not be.”

The pleading is mighty, Brothers and Sisters, I know of none better— “You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.”  
III. Now, thirdly, and briefly, here is EXPERIENCE INSTRUCTING FAITH. My venerable Brothers and Sisters, the first word of this instruction is to you. Experience says to Faith, “Trust God, for He has been your help so long.” How long? Fifty years for some of you. How old are you? Seventy, eighty? God has been your help, then, all that time! How long do you expect to live? To be eighty. You are 70 now. All you have seen through seven-eighths of life is that He is a faithful God. Can you not trust Him for the other eighth?  
Your sun is going down, its shadows are lengthening, but from early dawn all through the hot noontide He has been good to you. Can you not trust Him for the last few hours of eventide? Surely, surely God deserves that such long-continued kindness should not be received with ungrateful doubts! If He had meant to be a liar to you, you would have found Him out before this. If His promises were intended to be failures, they surely would have been failures to you before you had gone so far! Oh, believe Him for the rest of life and go singing into Heaven, “You have been my help.” May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, enable you to put down all unbelief! The Lord has been our help so constantly that the fact confirms our faith.  
If, in looking back upon our lives, we could find a point or two where God had failed us, we might, then, let our faith flag. I can only speak as I find—I cannot find one instance in all my life in which God was untrue or unkind to me. If we ever doubt God till we have cause for it. We shall never entertain any doubts so long as we live. Yesterday, as I looked at some little birds in a cage, I thought to myself, “These poor little creatures are entirely dependent upon those who feed them. If seed and water are not supplied to them, they cannot help themselves and must die. And yet there they sit and sing with all their might! Their state of dependence never distresses them. They have perfect confidence in their keepers.”

And, I thought, that is just my position. I am God’s singing bird. Perhaps I wonder where I shall get my bread from, or my sermon for next Sunday—and a great many cares and troubles come to me. But why should I be troubled? Instead of mistrusting my Keeper, who has fed me these many years, had I not better sit and sing as loudly as I can? Would not that be the best thing to do? The bird does it, and why should not a man do it, who is supposed to have more brains than a bird, but who sometimes does not seem to have half as much? Come, Brothers and Sisters, come! The Lord has constantly been true, let us not doubt!  
And then He has helped us so singularly. Some here present have been in very remarkable tribulations—trials the like of which have not befallen other people—at least, so they think! They have fallen to their lot and yet they have had singular rescues and helps. Well, then, when you come into the singular predicament of dying, you shall have the singular Grace of being able to rejoice when you die! Or, if any other remarkable trial should waylay you between here and Heaven, you shall find extraordinary deliverance from Him who has been your help.  
And I might say, in closing, God up to now has helped us in such a way that He has glorified Himself. We could not have believed that He could have so delightfully illustrated His Divine attributes as He has done in our past biography! There have been such flashes of light out of His excellent Glory that we have been astounded! So it will be to the last. God will be glorified in our mortal bodies while we live and when we come to die. He has been our help and He will be our help till, like a scroll, this world is rolled up and time itself expires, and we have reached eternity.  
I have two or three more thoughts to utter and I have done. To selfrighteous persons our text can have no sweetness. You have always done your best and have been very religious. You have believed that you deserve eternal life, and you have been on very good terms with yourselves. God has not been your help. You did not want Him—you have done very well without Him. You do not need washing in the blood of Jesus—you were never a very great sinner. You do not require help from the Holy Spirit—you have always been able to attend to the formalities of religion without assistance from supernatural power. And so this is your secret judgment of your condition.  
You cannot say, “You have been my help.” And I dare say you do not pray, “Leave me not, neither forsake me.” You do not see the need of it. Well, your fancied salvation is such an one that the sooner you are rid of it the better! It is such an one that if you can put a millstone about its neck and sink it in the sea, you will do well, for if you do not do that, it will sink you in Hell forever! That hope of salvation which is not grounded upon Christ and the power of God, but which rests in self, is nothing but counterfeit—it is damnation gilded, nothing better. Away with it! Away with it! And oh, may you be made to go as guilty, as helpless, as entirely dependent upon mercy and Divine strength—and then you will be in the way of salvation, but not till then.  
Oh, may the Spirit of God teach you this! I have, here, some poor trembling soul who is seeking Christ and he says, “O Sir, I could not use the plea of the text this morning.” Well, beloved Friend, perhaps not in the strong sense in which the Christian can, but you may still use it in a measure. For instance, you need to be forgiven. You need to be saved. You can say to your heavenly Father, “O God, You have preserved my miserable life. You have bid the sun to shine upon the evil as well as the good. You have sent the showers and the harvest for me as well as for the best of Your servants. Oh, if You have done this, do more and send me the gifts of Your Grace!”  
Besides, poor Heart, you can say, “You have given me this Sunday. You have permitted me to go and sit with Your servants. Though the meanest of them all, You permit me to hear the voice of Gospel invitation. You speak to me, and say, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.’ Oh, crown these gifts by giving me faith, by granting me life—the life of Your Holy Spirit! Save me, save me with a great salvation!” I think that is good pleading and especially if you can add, “O God, You have set forth Your Son Jesus to be a Propitiation for sin, and declared that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. By Your Grace I do trust in Him and rest my soul upon Him, alone. Do not reject me! Let me know Your great salvation, or I languish, faint, and die.”  
You shall not be long in such a case as that. If you believe, all things are yours! If your only hope is in Him who bled on the Cross, your transgressions are already blotted out! Go, and sin no more! Peace be unto you! Be of good courage! The Lord has looked upon you already with an eye of love! You are His and He will never leave you nor forsake you, world without end. God bless you all, dear Friends, and He shall have the honor and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 27, 28.  
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SAFE, THOUGH SURROUNDED BY SIN  
NO. 3535

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 8, 1869.

**“Unto You will I cry, O Lord, my Rock. Do not be silent to me, lest if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.” Psalm 28:1.**

[The original title of this sermon was SAFE, THOUGH SIN-SURROUNDED]

I HAVE no doubt that the first and most natural meaning of these words is this, that David passed through such mental distress, such accumulated grief, that unless his prayer should bring him consolation from Heaven, he felt that he must despair and so become like those who sink into everlasting despair, going down into the pit of Hell. I think it is a cry against his misery which vexed him—an earnest petition that he might not have to suffer so long as to drive him into that same despair which is the eternal inheritance of lost souls.

But in reading the other day Masillon’s Reflections of the Psalms, I noticed that that eminent French preacher gives quite another turn to the passage, and he seems to regard this as being the prayer of David when he was exposed to the association of the ungodly, fearful lest he should become in character like those that go down into the pit, and even if that should not be the first meaning of the text, it seems to me to be a natural inference from it, and if not, still the thought, itself, is one which contains so much of holy caution about it that I desire to commend it to all my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus tonight, and especially to such as are usually exposed to danger from evil society. We will begin, then, by remarking that—

I. MANY OF THE BEST OF GOD’S SAINTS ARE CALLED IN THE ORDER OF PROVIDENCE TO BE TRIED BY EVIL COMPANIONSHIP.  
“I pray not that You should take them out of the world,” said Christ, “but that You should keep them from the Evil One.” Hence we are not shut up in monasteries or nunneries. We have not to—  
*“Lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade.”*  
We are placed in the midst of our fellow men! We are not even placed among a selected body of men, but for the most part we are thrown down in the midst of society and, in the case of some, the society which they must inevitably keep is of the very worst and most dangerous kind. I say that first of all. This is, in a measure, the case with all, or nearly all of us. We are placed in a world in which there is nothing that is friendly to Grace, but everything that is opposed to the spiritual life. That man must be very happily circumstanced, indeed, who does not find himself a stranger in a strange land, and a foreigner among aliens who do not understand him! Go out into the world at all, and you have need to put your armor on, for it is an enemy’s country. There is no profession, no form of labor, no walk of life, no publicity, no retirement in which the Christian is not, in some measure, exposed to the deteriorating influence of ungodly society. As long as we are in this world, it must, in a measure, be so. There are few, indeed, who are screened from this danger, but there are some who are peculiarly exposed to it—some in the highest walks of life. It is not easy to be a Christian and to be among the great. “Gold and the Gospel,” said John Bunyan very truly, “seldom agree.” The high mountains are cold. The tops of the hills—the tempest sweeps along them. We have had mournful examples, lately, that the most eminent rank does not secure morality or guidance, even by the rules of commonsense. I have been inclined, lately, when I have read the papers, to interpret the term, “the scum of society,” to refer to those who float on the top, for certainly there is no rank of society that could have figured more abominably in the Divorce Court, no rank of society that could have exhibited itself so detestably upon the racecourse, than the peerage of this realm! And unless God mends the manners of the Right Honorables, their names will have to be Right Abominables—the term will be more suitable to them by far! It is difficult, depend upon it, to be great and to be good! No man need, then, be very ambitious to climb to the high places. Brains swim when risen aloft, that had been calm enough below. Be contented where you are, and rest satisfied with Agar’s portion, who prayed, “Give me neither poverty nor riches.”  
It must be difficult, too, for a man to keep himself free from the contamination of company in what are called the lowest ranks. Oh, how many of you, Christian Brothers, there are, the sons of toil—pure, and good, and holy men—who have tomorrow morning to go and mix with those who insert almost every sentence with an oath! I remember it was the complaint of one of our Sisters in the Poor House, not that the diet was sparse, not that the bed was hard, but that the language used by those with whom she must associate vexed her soul! Only in the lowest ranks men do not cover up their profanity. They have not learned that politeness which can blaspheme God secretly, but they speak right out their enmity and they couch their offensive thoughts of the Most High in the most offensive words! And hence the people of God thrust into such society are like holy Lot in the midst of Sodom who was vexed with the filthy conversation of the ungodly! Oh, dear young people, be very thankful, you that are yet nestling under the wing of parental care and have not to go into a rough and wicked world! I am afraid for some of you good young creatures to join the Church, lest your piety should not stand the test of this rough world, when you must, by-and-by, be thrust out into it! And you, my Brothers and Sisters, who, through the goodness of Providence are kept from being exposed to the temptations peculiar to the extremes of life, be very grateful, but, as you have less to contend with in this respect, bring forth more fruit unto God and seek to be more eminent Christians because of the advantages of your circumstances!

Yet Brothers and Sisters, I may as well come back to where I started. I suppose that we are, all of us, in whatever way of life we may be walking, exposed more or less to the associations of those who are not the servants of Christ. What business could a man select in which he would find that all with whom he had to deal were Christians? If there were, indeed, a parish of All Saints, it might be a very desirable place for residence, though I hardly know whether any man would be right in going to live there, since God’s objective in making saints on earth at all is that by casting them like salt in the midst of the earth, they may work for good and savor the mass. You must, you must mix, more or less, with those who will tempt you! Do not be in a hurry, therefore, to change your position in life. If it is not, in itself, sinful—in case it is so, give it up tomorrow—but if it is not, in itself, sinful, stand not aghast at its peculiar temptations! There are temptations elsewhere. You may go from the frying pan into the fire, as the old proverb has it, very readily. In getting out of one temptation, you may soon get into another and, on the whole, probably the temptation that is troubling you most is the best that you can have. It is the temptation that would not trouble you that would be the most dangerous, and when a man’s cross has been long on his shoulder, it begins to fit him—and he had better not change it for another. In every condition it is your lot to be crying to God for help, but do not be earnest to get out of the fire. This much the first point, then. The second is this. It appears from the text that—  
II. THE GREAT DANGER OF GOOD MEN IS LEST THEY SHOULD BECOME LIKE THE UNGODLY THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH THEM.  
Brothers and Sisters, I shall speak very much from observation, actual observation and, I fear, also partly from personal experience, when I briefly describe the way in which association with the ungodly tends to make Christians like they are.  
First, it too frequently happens that the Christian’s testimony is silenced. We always try to make excuses for not doing what it is disagreeable to do. Now it is the duty of the Christian, wherever he may be, to bear witness for his Lord, but self-love and the love of ease come in and they say, “You must not make religion offensive! You must not cast your pearls before swine—you must not bore people with your godliness.” This is said to be prudent and, to a great extent, it is prudent, but it is the easiest thing in all the world to think that we are prudent when we are really cowardly—and to make it out that we are using judgment when, instead thereof, we are only trying to protect ourselves from the sneers and jeers of the wicked! It is an easy thing only to bear witness for our Lord in the midst of those who thank us for so doing and who confirm our testimony—but to stand out for Christ before the congregation of the wicked—this is not so easy a task and oftentimes, when the good man has found himself in evil company, he has been tempted, as he thinks by a due regard for prudence, not to say anything for his Lord and Master. Now, in this, you become like they who go down into the pit of Hell! They do not praise God. They are silent about Christ. They talk not of the preciousness of His blood—they speak not of His eternal and unchangeable love. You speak not, either, and therein you become like they. Who shall tell the difference when both are silent?  
The next stage is when the Christian does actually fear, though he may not think he does, the sneers of his associates. You are like they the moment you are afraid of them! They have discovered in you a likeness to themselves the moment you tremble at them! But there are some tongues so foul, some whose wit is so sharp, whose remarks are so sarcastic that it is not to be quite marveled at that Christians are afraid to be thorough Christians in their presence! And yet, my Brothers and Sisters, what is there to be afraid of in the greatest man that ever breathed? What is there in our holy Christianity that we wish to cover up, to conceal in the presence of the most skeptical, the most witty, the most severe of the sons of men? Who are you that you should be afraid of man and the son of man who is but as a moth or a worm? Your Lord has given you in charge His precious Truth, and to live out that Truth of God in your own proper character—and will you, for fear of a feeble man, hide and conceal, and cover up with a bushel the Light your God has given you? Ah, then this is, indeed, to become like they, for they who fear man more than God make man their god! And what is this but to be idolatrous and to be godless? God deliver us from this!  
Another tendency will next crop up, and that is the inclination in Christian people to just yield a point or two. We are told that we must not be too precise and severe. Have I not often heard words like these, “If we exhibit too much of the Puritanism of religion, we shall probably disgust those with whom we associate—and more especially youthful minds will be repelled by the severity of our piety”? Oh, I could laugh, if I did not weep, when I hear men talk so, for to tell me that in this age there is any fear of any man being too severely Puritanical is to assert the thing that is not! It is a lax age. Their tackling is loosed, the old landmarks are pulled up! Principles—why, what do men care for principles, nowadays? There is no fear of being too tight and too precise, and if it were not so in this age, yet since we serve a jealous God we need never be afraid that we can be too jealous of our own hearts! George the Third, in his older days, did some very curious things which, very frequently, made people think him insane—but there was a kind of method in all his madness! One day he met a Quaker gentleman, and accosted him, and was introduced to his wife. George said, “And are you one of the Society of Friends, Madam?” She said she was. “Isn’t there a little too much lace there” he said, putting his hand on some portion of her dress. She said, “Well, I have deviated a little from strictness, I am sorry to say.” “And I am sorry to see it, Madam,” he said, “for when people once get away from their strictness, they generally go a very long way from it.” And there is very much truth in that. Albeit I am not speaking now about dress, but merely quote it as an instance, still, it is so, that when Christian people tolerate a little sin, they will tolerate a great sin—and when they give up some little point of virtue, they will give up some great point. “No,” says the thief. “I do not mean to break open that door! No, I do not mean to try and force my way into that house.” There is a little window, just a little window there, and here is a very little boy, and you mean to put him in? “Yes,” and when that little boy is in, he opens the big door, and the burglar enters! And it is so with the Church of God. Some little sin, as men will have it—some little deflection from the rigid line of right is tolerated—and then the door is open and all manner of mischief comes in thereby. God grant that we may not, by giving way here and there, pull down the bulwarks of our Church and so make the children of God to become like those that go down into the pit of Hell!  
There is a point, my Brothers and Sisters, I would bring before you in which oftentimes, I am afraid, Christians become like ungodly men—and that is in joining in a laugh over a jest which almost compels laughter, but which is not altogether clean. George Herbert tells us that in a jest we should take the wit, but leave out that which is evil, for— *“He pares his apple that would cleanly feed,”*but it is not always easy to pare the apple just at the time. When a Christian in company is seen to laugh over a doubtful jest, he has committed himself far farther than he thinks. It were much better if he drew himself up and said, “I could laugh with you at what little wit may sparkle in that quotation, but I cannot endorse the sentiment with which it is accompanied, nor allow it to pass without entering my protest against it.” Do we always do so? I am afraid that almost always we neglect the doing of that and, in that respect, we become like those that go down into the pit of Hell.  
Ah, Brothers and Sisters, how easy it is for us to fall little by little into the ways of the ungodly, to get to do as they do, and talk as they talk, and act as they act—and though on the Sabbath we take a different rule, yet on the weekday how much is the life of the professed Christian like that of the ungodly? I am not here to impeach the common Christianity of the age, but, if I were, what an impeachment might be brought against it! It is, alas, too true that many a tradesman who is a professing Christian is no more to be trusted than his infidel neighbor—that the Christian merchant is not proof against the injurious influence of the custom of his trade! We have had good men, whom, God forbid, that we should censure too severely, who ought to have stood out against the methods of mercantile finance in years gone by, but who fell into the custom of the rest and, therefore, the world can scarcely condemn them, but from the judgment of the Christian teacher, they cannot go unscathed! They ought to have known and to have done better. It is no excuse for a Christian that it was the custom of the business! He has no right to make himself the slave of men, nor yield to custom. Follower of Christ, independence of mind in carrying out integrity of purpose is that which you are bound to exhibit—and which the Holy Spirit will help you to achieve! May the day come when it shall not be our sorrowful task to have to utter such sentiments, but we are obliged to utter them now! And we beg Believers here to put up the prayer, and pray tonight that God would let His voice be heard in your hearts, lest you should become like they who go down into the pit of Hell!  
Brothers, just one moment here. There is nothing more horrible that I know of than that a man who professes to have been washed in the blood of Christ should defile himself as others do! What a dishonor to that dear name before which the angels bow, that we who wear it should act as Christ’s enemies do! Paul says, “I tell you, even weeping, that there are some who are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, for their god is their belly; their end is destruction; they glory in their shame”—and these were professors! Nothing can be worse for the Church—nothing more disastrous to the world—than for Christians to become like the unconverted! The flood came upon the earth when the sons of God entered into alliance with the daughters of men. The day of chastisement is always near the day of sin—and the day when the godly assimilate with the Christless will be the prelude of the great overwhelming flood of fire that shall sweep away the earth! Do let us, if we would bless our age, be firm for the right and for the Truth of God! If we would be happy, ourselves, if we would honor and glorify Christ, let our prayer constantly be that we may not be as the wicked are. But I must not tarry longer, for I have to notice, in concluding—

III. THE REMEDY TO WHICH DAVID RESORTED AGAINST THE DANGEROUS TENDENCY WHICH HE FELT.  
David was a great deal better man than we might have expected him to be in the position he occupied. When you hear persons condemn the glaring fall of David, you may join in their condemnation, but you may also ask them to remember the remarkable circumstances in which David was found. The sin which David committed, great and grievous as it was, was all too common—what if I say is all too common—in a soldier’s life! The first part of David’s life he spent as a captain of free-booters. That word does not quite describe his band, for they were not lawless robbers, but they were men, we are told, who were discontented and who fled from regular government—and we know from their character and conduct that they were rough, unbridled soldiers who would never have been governed by anyone less strong in character than David. Now associations like these he must often have felt to be extremely dangerous to his spirit.  
Notice, then, what this practical Christian used as his remedy. It was prayer—prayer with an earnest cry. He felt as if he were slipping and he cried, “Lord, grasp me, hold me! Arrest the sliding of these feet.” It was a cry such as a child uses when it is lost, and it cries for its mother—a piteous cry of sorrow, of fear, of alarm. “My God, my Father,” he seems to say, “I beseech You interpose. I slide. I fall. The precipice is beneath me— the ungodly seek to thrust me over it—come to my rescue, my God! Make haste and come to my rescue now.”  
Now, if David used prayer, I will confirm that by reminding you of David’s Master. When the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth he had many temptations to sin. His heart was not like yours and mine, a tinderbox to catch every spark of temptation but yet even He could not live here without much prayer. I say not that He could have sinned, but I do say that His holy Nature seemed instinctively to understand that it must use prayer, that it must use much prayer in order to constantly cast off the temptations of the world! Cold mountains, therefore, and the midnight air continually witnessed to the intercessions and pleadings of Christ when He held communion with His God.  
I shall not need, I think, to spend even a moment in making the personal application, and yet I will do so, after all, on second thought. If there is a working man here who is called to work with many men who are drunks and blasphemers, let him take this word of advice tonight— pray twice as much as if you worked with the godly! If there is a young woman here placed in peculiar circumstances of temptation, let me say— keep up your communion with God with greater earnestness than if you were living at home with Christian parents! Pray more! Pray more intently! Live nearer to God in communion. When a man is sick of some disease that takes away his strength, the physician urges him to take a more liberal diet. So with you. Live better, now that there are greater drains upon your spiritual constitution—if you do not do so you will be sorely sick, but if you maintain this, you will be kept above the evil.  
But I need your attention, in closing, to the last thought suggested by the text. The objective of David’s prayer was that he might hear the voice of God in his soul, “lest,” says he, “if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.”  
IV. WHAT, THEN, WAS THIS VOICE OF GOD WHICH DAVID DESIRED TO HEAR?  
Let me guess at it for a minute. Was it not, first, that voice which would awaken sacred memories? You have been exposed to temptation, my Brothers and Sisters, and you are ready to yield, but a voice reminds you of the day of your first espousals when your heart was warm towards Christ—of the days of your Baptism, when you were buried with Christ, professing to be dead to the world! It reminds you of the solemn vows that you made in years gone by, of solemn declarations that were registered before high Heaven that you would be firm and faithful, and keep Covenant with God. What? Will you, you, you—will you sin? A member of a Christian Church, one whose head has been leaning on Christ’s bosom, one who has heard His voice and rejoiced in it—can you, can you turn aside? Perhaps you have an invitation for tomorrow—can you accept it when it involves sin? It may be that this very night you would have fallen, but by the recollection of those holy and happy seasons that you have had at the Lord’s Table, those times of private payer, those hours when it was well with you, and you did walk with God, the still small voice of God calls to you, “What are you doing here, Elijah? Servant of God, what have you to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the muddy river? Turn aside from the ways of sin and seek your God.”  
That voice would do something more, however, than startle the recollections of memory—it was intended to infuse vigor and courage. Sometimes a captain’s voice has been known to win a battle, when the ranks are beginning to waver, when the pikes of the enemy are pushing forward. Here he comes—the gallant captain, always first in every charge. “‘Tis he! ‘Tis he!” they say, and he comes to the front and cries, “Will you flee before them? Will you play the coward? Standard-bearer, unfurl the banner and advance!” And at that word, so full of fire, and force, and energy, the enemy is made to quail, and on they dash and the victory is won! My God, let me hear Your voice within my soul just after that sort. When I shall begin to run before my spiritual foes, when association with them has almost overthrown me, let me hear the voice of Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself—and my Leader’s voice, as it calls me on, shall re-animate my spirit that I may win the day!  
The voice of God, moreover, may be regarded as that which actually impels the soul. “Let there be light,” said God, and light flitted through the darkness. God’s voice creates, upholds, strengthens, perfects! And when God’s voice comes into the heart of a sinking Christian, when that Christian thinks, “It is no use standing out any longer. I may as well give it up and become as others are”—then if that voice comes, it speaks to the heart and it throbs healthily! It speaks to the judgment, and it puts no longer bitter for sweet! It speaks to the will, and the will becomes firm for the right and for the truth! God’s voice, that breaks the rocks and splits the cedars of Lebanon, inspirits and encourages the heart of the Believer! Put up your prayer, then, tonight, you that are much tried and tempted, “Lord, let me hear Your voice! Let me hear it every morning before I go into the world.” Beloved, never look man in the face till you have seen the face of God! Oh, lock up your hearts every morning by prayer and give God the key, so that no evil may get in while you are out of doors. Oh, you do not know how some members of this Church grieve us by their inconsistency! I would sooner bury you than that you should sin so as to grieve God’s Spirit and cause the enemy to blaspheme. The Lord has kept many, many of you with garments white and unspotted, but if you want our hearts to break, profess to be Christians, and then go into sin!  
May the Lord keep you, my Beloved, keep you fast and firm amidst this crooked and perverse generation! You young people, you young men and women—may the Lord grant that none of you may ever turn your backs in the day of battle! And you old people—the greatest pain we have ever had has been brought to this Church not by young people, but by old people! It is the old fools that are the biggest fools when they are fools! When old people are wise, they are the wisest—but when they are foolish, they are the most foolish! God keep the aged, and preserve their reverend heads, that they may not disgrace them, but may be a crown of glory to them! The Lord keep the pastors, keep the Elders, be with you all, and keep you all pure and unspotted from the world! This is our prayer and desire. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **DANIEL 6.**

Verses 1-3. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom. And over these three governors, of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the governors and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Kings are never satisfied. The empire of Darius was always growing—and a Chapter or two farther on we find that he had 127 provinces. There is no end to the greediness of man, and what does he get by it, after all? One pair of hands can only do one man’s work! He only gains more toils and he has now to distribute the cares of his State among others. Then how good it is for any man when he is guided to a right, honest and hearty helper! Such was the lot of Darius. How advantageous, too, it may be for the people of God when a man like Daniel is put in the high places of the land! Doubtless he was exalted, not only for his own sake, but that he might be as a bronze shield and bulwark for the people of God in that foreign land. No extortions would now be committed on the Jewish race, for they had a friend at court. Blessed be God, we have a Friend at court, too, One who will take up our cause and speak for us to the King of Kings!

4. Then the governors and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault. Who can stand before envy? High places furnish very uncomfortable seats, for even if God exalt a man, men will try to pull him down! But he is an honorable man, indeed, who puts his enemies to their shifts before they can find anything against him.

4-7. Forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God. Then these governors and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius live forever! All the governors of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of you, O King, he shall be cast into the den of lions. We do not know with what ingenious arguments they moved the king’s mind to pass this, but we think we can conceive them. He had just conquered Chaldea—they would, therefore, say, “It will be an excellent test of the obedience of your new subjects if you touch them upon the point of their religion—try whether they will, for 30 days abstain from addressing their deities.” Perhaps, too, since Darius had a colleague on the throne, the younger Cyrus, who was much more popular than he, they may have egged him on by hinting that Cyrus was much too vain and that, therefore, if he would not allow anyone to address a petition, even to Cyrus, for 30 days, it would tend to show who was really loyal to Darius and would also test the temper of Cyrus. I cannot tell how they did it, but somehow or other they managed to lead the foolish old man to carry out their designs.

8. Now, O King, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not. The Babylonians entrusted their king with absolute power. Hence he could will this or that as he chose. The Persians believed their kings to be possessed of perfect wisdom—hence they never allowed a law to be changed, for that would be to suppose that the king who made it had made a mistake—a thing which could by no possibility ever occur. There is an amusing instance given by a modern traveler, who tells us that a few years ago one of the later Persian kings said he would never leave his tent in the plains until the snow had gone from some mountains to which he pointed. It happened to be a very late summer and the snow was long in melting—and his gracious majesty had to keep his place in his tent, while his troops were perishing with fever in a low marsh district, until they procured men to sweep the snow from the tops of the mountains in order that he might be able to move. It is inconvenient for men to play God—they cannot do it without bringing serious difficulty and danger upon themselves. So did Darius on this occasion. I never like men who, when they speak a hasty word, say they cannot change it. Rash vows are better broken than kept. You had no right to say you would do the thing, much less have you any right to do it when you have said you would do it. However, the law of the Medes and Persians could not be altered.

9, 10. Therefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house. That is right. The less we have to do with man, and the more we have to do with God, the better. He did not go to the king to complain, but he went into his house to tell his God about it!

10. And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem— That much-loved city, though now in ruins.  
10. He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before. ‘Twas bravely done. A man in a meaner position might have carried out his devotions in private without sin, but not so Daniel. He is a representative man—he must not play the coward—it is incumbent upon him to be more especially and deliberately public in all that he does, for if he is seen to slink in ever so small a degree, then all the saints will lose heart.  
11-13. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spoke before the king concerning the king’s decree: Have you not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of you, O King, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true. According to the law of the Mede and Persians, which alters not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel—Here is impudence! But they called Jesus Christ, “this Fellow.” Why, Daniel was the chief of the governors, the prime minister of the king, and yet they said, “That Daniel.” Evil hearts generally have evil mouths, and what can you expect but evil words out of evil mouths?  
13. That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah. That captive, that slave, that serf—so they seemed to put it, forgetting that he was their master by virtue of his high office.  
13-14. Regards not you, O King, nor the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sorely displeased with himself. There was a little conscience left. Calvin did not like the man at all. He said, “What right had he to hastily sign a decree which might take away the lives of the best men in his dominion? And his repentance does not seem to be a repentance of the act, but only of the consequences.”  
14. And set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Here was a great king, made himself out to be a god, and yet he cannot have his own way! When that famous potter, who was a true Christian, was brought before the king, the king said to him, “Unless you change your views, I shall be compelled to have you burned.” “Ah,” said Bernard de Palissy, “you are a king and yet say, ‘I shall be compelled,’ and I am a poor potter, but no man can make me use those words—I will be compelled to do nothing against my conscience.’” Oh, the holy bravery of men who are saved! When Bonner had one of the martyrs before him, he said, “I will convince you! Blazing wood will convince you!” “A fig for your wood,” said the man, “or a wagon-load of them. I can stand and burn better than you can wear your miter.” So the saints of God are strong and can bid defiance to the adversary through Divine Grace.  
15. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O King, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establishes may be changed. This is the reason of his deliverance, not his innocence, but his faith—we are told by Paul that it was faith that shut the mouths of lions.  
16-24. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel, Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spoke and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O King, live forever! My God has sent His angel, and has shut the lions’ months, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me; and also before you, O King, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives. Which was a piece of injustice, the throwing in of their wives and children, though we cannot say as much of the throwing of them in.  
24. And the lions had the mastery of them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1423 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SACRED SOLO  
NO. 1423

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.”  
Psalm 28:7.**

THIS passage has, to my mind, a peculiar charm. I do not know whether it breaks on your ears with like pathos and power. To me it seems charged with softness and sweetness, like some gentle strain of tender music. Let us read it again. “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.” I think I see a battle raging furiously, yet he whom it most concerns, after having displayed his prowess and fought valiantly, steps aside and, sitting down in a quiet place, bomb-proof and almost out of sound of the cannons’ roar, thus talks with his heart. He forgets the raging strife—he is expecting a joyful victory! He knows his weaknesses, but he has caught a glimpse of the Divine strength which is guaranteed to him.

He is trembling, perhaps, from the toil of the fight, and yet he rests as one insensibly subdued to settled calm and mild composure—he rests in God. In like manner, I want you, dear Friends, to get out of the crowd a while, this evening, and take shelter in a quiet place. Forget, just now, the various troubles of business. The domestic cares which often harass you and the inward conflicts which vex your souls. Whatever there may be to disturb, distress, or distract you, let it alone! Now, for a while, revel in that sweet peace which God, alone, can give, the peace of God which passes all understanding—and say unto your soul—“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.”

The sentence, you will notice, divides itself into three parts. The first tells us of an assured possession—“The Lord is my strength and my shield.” The second speaks of a definite experience—“My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.” There are no, “ifs,” no, “buts,” no suspense of the soul midway between hope and fear—he speaks without a trace of hesitancy, for he tells of his own actual experience. The third part of our text very properly closes with an expressed emotion—a very deep emotion it is—“My heart greatly rejoices.” And then, you see, the inward emotion is interpreted in a most proper fashion by an audible utterance—“With my song will I praise Him.”

I beg to call your studious attention to the remarkable form of this verse! There is a pair in the case of each of my divisions and the pair in each case consists of inward and outward. Notice, “The Lord is my strength,” that is inward. “My shield,” that is outward. “My heart trusted in Him,” that is inward. “And I am helped,” that is outward. “Therefore

my heart greatly rejoices,” that is inward. “And with my song will I praise Him,” that is outward. It is by no means trifling to note these arrangements in the structure of sacred poetry, for there is a lesson to be learned—it teaches us that truth and beauty are to be linked together and that to be holy we need not be uncouth.

Full often we may observe a beautiful form and an admirable fashion in the language which embodied the thoughts of the inspired Psalmist. If we look at them long enough and meditate upon them fondly enough, we shall discern a symmetry in all his hallowed compositions which charms the taste, rivets the attention and helps the memory. The sacred poet served the Lord with his best powers, reckoning nothing to be good enough for the Lord whom he loved so well! Slovenly preaching, doggerel verses and discordant singing ought to be avoided, if possible, and our devotion should have the sweetest possible expression.

I. Let us begin with the first division of our text and may the Spirit of God give us full faith to accept it in all its depth of meaning. We have here A SURE POSSESSION—“The Lord is my strength and my shield.” With a double grip he takes hold of the Divine Covenant. “The Lord is my strength and my shield.” He gets a two-handed grasp of the God of Salvation. A touch of the hem of the Savior’s garment will heal—what Divine virtue, then, must stream into a man who can hold with both hands—not merely the garment’s hem, nor even the garment itself, but the Lord Himself! “The Lord is my strength and my shield.”

Perhaps some of you cannot give the double grip. Then give the finger’s touch and it will save you! But do not be always content with that touch— ask to lay hold upon Jesus and say, “I held Him and I would not let Him go.” Ask to grasp Him, like Jacob at the brook Jabbok with the brave resolve—“I will not let You go except You bless me.” No, get beyond that and pray to have Paul’s hold of Christ, which was so strong and firm that he said, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” Both hands take hold, for the Psalmist sees a double blessing! He knows, also, that he has a double need, and so he takes a double grip. “The Lord is my strength and my shield.”

Were you to leave out the, “my,” repeated again and again in this verse, how the sense would be spoiled! Let us try it—“The Lord is a strength and a shield.” Well, that is very true, but of what use is that to me? My comfort must come from the fact that, “the Lord is my strength and my shield.” Faith matured by experience, faith strengthened by the promise, faith invigorated by the Holy Spirit, who is the Nourisher as well as the Author of it—such faith is fired with sacred energy when it dares to lay hold on God and say, “The Lord is my strength and my shield!” This is blessed work! God grant that each of us may know how to perform it and to this end let us seek the help of the Holy Spirit, without whom we can do nothing.

Notice what it is that David lays hold upon with his hands. “The Lord is my strength and my shield”—it is not the Lord’s promised Grace, nor is it the bounties of Providence which He has bestowed on me which I regard as my strength and my shield. It is not even the Lord’s work in my soul, nor the assurance of my faith, nor the ardor of my love that has become my strength and my shield. It is not the Lord’s Book, even, though its Inspired Oracles can enlighten the eyes, fortify the heart and refresh the spirit. It is not the Lord’s attributes of power and faithfulness and watchfulness—no, but it is JEHOVAH Himself who is strength and shield to me!

Now, he that lays hold on God has done a daring deed, at which even, “the man greatly beloved,” might stand aghast, were it not written, “Let him take hold of My strength.” Oh to say, “My God!” There is more eloquence in those two words than in all the orations of Demosthenes or Cicero! All the genius, learning and penetration of the heathen world could never teach us how to claim the Deity and take possession of the God of the whole earth! What can we discover in the philosophy of Pythagoras, Aristotle, or Socrates that will compare with this? The man who can truly say, “The Lord is mine,” has an inheritance which death cannot wither, which space cannot compass, which time cannot limit, which eternity cannot explore!

He may be poor in pocket-money, as I suppose the owners of large estates occasionally are, but he is infinitely rich, for he has real property and an absolutely indefeasible title to it. He may feel distressingly weak, but he is infinitely strong. He may account himself to be empty, but he has all things and abounds—he, I mean, who can say—“The Lord is mine.” Come, my Brothers and Sisters, be bold enough to look into your privilege! Think of it! What if you could say, “The world is mine”? It will be consumed by fire. What if you could say, “Heaven is mine”? Yet if the God of Heaven were not there, it would be a wilderness. Oh, Beloved! If you can say, “GOD is mine—Father, Son and Spirit are mine”—what more do you need to gratify your eager quest for unspeakable joy?

Come, can you conceive satisfaction more substantial than to be sure that God is your Father, your Redeemer, your Sustainer, your All—your All in All? Do you wish for a better song than this*—*

*So I my best  
Beloved’s am,  
So He is mine.”*

Can you imagine any sweeter music than the minstrelsy of a love so tuneful, touching as it does the strings of that mysterious instrument, the soul? Is not this the climax of all wishes, all passions, all desires, all delights? We hail you, son of Jesse, as the harmonious music of your sublime Psalms breaks on our ears! But oh, You Son of David! We adore You that You have taught us to take up the strains as our own! We, ourselves, have felt in fact what the sweet Psalmist felt in figure. We, as Your willing followers and Your acknowledged disciples, do now, by right and privilege which You have given us, appropriate to ourselves the poems, parables and prophecies which once vibrated in dark sayings from David’s harp, as precious utterances concerning heavenly favors to which Your Sovereign Grace has made us to be fairly and fully entitled!

Unhappy you must be who cannot call this God your God, whatever else you may have to glory in! But happy you who know that God is yours, however little of this world’s store may fall to your portion! Thus have we considered the double grip and what it lays hold upon. Let us not pass on

till we have imitated the grasp of faith and appropriated the infinite treasure. May the Holy Spirit enable us! Notice under what aspects God is thus laid hold of. Inwardly, first, as we have said, as our strength—“The Lord is my strength.” Brothers and Sisters, do you know how strong you are? If you have said, “The Lord is my strength,” I challenge you to say how strong you are! “Ah, Sir,” you say, “I know how weak I am.” That I will also take liberty to question, for albeit that you know yourself to be as weak as water, you are weaker yet—weaker than even your despondency has dreamed!

“I know I am nothing,” you say. Yes, but you would not even have had Grace enough to know you were nothing if God had not given it to you! To be nothing is ours by nature, but to know that we are nothing and to confess that we are nothing is a gift of His Grace! Brethren, we are emptier than emptiness and more vain than vanity! We may tax language and use extravagant hyperboles, but we shall never be able, fitly, to estimate our own utter insignificance! We are weakness itself, hampered with the conceit of power! And yet, if we can say in truth, “The Lord is my strength,” we cannot estimate how strong we are, for there is no measuring Omnipotence!

Come, let us consider the matter and let each Believer speak personally. He who made the heavens and the earth is my strength. He who fixes the mountains firm so that they start not from their places in the day of tempest, when the cedars are breaking, is my strength. Although He will one day rock Heaven and earth and before His Presence all creation shall flee away, yet He is my strength! These are but the hidings of power, but, truly, all the force reserved and lying latent in the Almighty bosom is engaged for His saints and is my portion. Whatever Omnipotence can do— (and that is a wrong expression to use, for Omnipotence knows no frontier or confines to its sphere of possible action)—is ours! All that God has done is but little in comparison with what He can effect when His arm shall be bared to complete His mighty purposes. Yet all the possibilities that pertain to God belong to His people! “The Lord is my strength.”

With Jehovah for our strength, we obtain a matchless capacity for endurance! It is marvelous how much a Believer can bear when the Lord sustains him. “Out of weakness we are made strong.” See that bruised reed over yonder? It is a fit emblem and a fair picture of a man alone. You cannot trust the weight of an ounce to it. It bends under its own slender weight even though there is no pressure to force it down. That is you, dear Brother! That is you, dear Sister! But see that strong and potent column which bears upon it a huge roof or an iron road across which will thunder thousands of tons? That is yourself when God is with you! Yes, you are stronger than that, for nothing shall be able to break the man to whom God is His strength!

“I could not bear that,” you say, “I know I should be crushed.” What are you thinking about—the loss of that favorite child? Thinking about the death of your dear husband? God grant that you may not have to suffer it. The death of a wife? The loss of all your goods, the cruel wounds of slander, or the desertion of friends? Are all those trials likely to befall you, and do you say, “Alas, I could not live if such afflictions should overtake me”? My dear Friend, if you can say, “The Lord is my strength,” you can bear anything and everything! You could bear a martyr’s death if the Lord should be your strength! He could make a stalk of wheat to bear up the whole world if He strengthened it—and the faintest and most trembling child of His that ever whispered a prayer—He can make to bear the greatest griefs and the heaviest trials without the slightest repining, for His Spirit can infuse unconquerable patience into the believing heart.

Of course, the power to endure depends upon the strength imparted and not upon the inherent fortitude of the individual. It does not make much difference what the struggle or what the sorrow if we have sufficient strength. A little child with a small basket may be overloaded, while His father with ten times the load to carry will walk briskly and whistle as he carries his burden along the street, thinking lightly of his burden. The increase of the burden is not the thing to groan about if there is a proportionate increase of strength! Emigrants have told us that they could labor with less fatigue in Australia than they could loiter in England! Whether that is so or not, assuredly it is easier to toil with Divine aid than to rest without it.

“As your days your strength shall be.” Mark that. If the Lord shall heap the load upon your poor shoulders, He will impart courage to your mind and vigor to your spirit so that you shall suffer all His righteous will and find your soul thrice blessed in the endurance! “The Lord is my strength.” Then we can, like Samson, slay the lion and find honey in it, or smite the Philistines and divide their spoil—

*“Let me but hear my Savior say,  
‘Strength shall be equal to your day!’  
Then I rejoice in deep distress,  
Leaning on all-sufficient Grace.”*

If the Lord is our strength, our inward strength, we can do anything! At times we faintly reckon that we cannot get through our task, for the tale of bricks appears to be doubled and straw is hard to find. Look up, for the Great Taskmaster always bestows upon us special ability when He demands of us peculiar service!

Perhaps we are called to a high and solemn engagement of more than common responsibility. We shrink with timidity and put our mouths in the dust at the thought of it, and say, “Who am I, and what are my qualifications, that I should be summoned to speak for God, to act as His ambassador, or to fill a post of such vast importance? I am but a child! How shall I undertake an enterprise at which venerable sires might well be daunted?” But the Lord’s answer is, “I will be with your mouth. I will be your strength.” Well, then, we may cry with David, “I will speak of Your statutes before kings and will not be ashamed!” If the Lord make us strong, there is no office upon which we may not venture, there is no duty we cannot perform, there is no sacrifice which we cannot cheerfully offer, there is no battle in which we cannot prevail!

Very likely I may be addressing someone who does not know or appreciate the faith which thus fortifies the feeble followers of Christ. Are you a very strong man and do you boast of your strength? Friend, the strength

of Samson served him a sorry turn when he was without his God—let his blindness warn you! Another man, conscious that he is a man of education and culture, doubts not that he can make his way in the world. Oh, Sir, Solomon’s wisdom was of poor account when he forgot the statutes of the Lord, pursued the fashions of his times and suffered altars to be built to the strange gods of his wives whose sensual fascinations took away his heart! There is no strength of muscle or of mind but in God. “God has spoken once. Twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God.” Blessed are they who look for strength to the strong, for wisdom to the wise, for safety to the Savior. They shall say, in the words of our text, “The Lord is my strength.”

David, in two grips, laid hold upon God as to the outward manifestation—“He is my strength and my shield.” Looking back upon the past, I trust that many of you can say that God has been your shield. It is He who protects us from known adversaries, from the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. He protects us from all the arrows that fly by day and from all the terrors that haunt us by night. From adversaries of whom we know and against whom we would be ever on our guard if we could, God is our shield. “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper.” He who has made the Lord his refuge and the Most High his habitation shall be safe. No real evil shall happen unto the just. “The Lord is my shield.”

Nor is He only our shelter from open enemies, He is our guardian against those dangers which we know not. How many perils may have menaced your personal safety, your domestic happiness, or your fair reputation of which you never knew! Thank God for unknown mercies, as well as for hair-breadth escapes! Often in traveling you may be within an inch of death and never be aware of it. Our gratitude to God may be stirred when we perceive a danger and escape it, but are we not even more beholden to Him when we do not even perceive the peril and reach our journey’s end, or awake in the morning, or live through a year without sickness, without calamity, without alarm? Without violently imagining mischiefs or nervously inventing perils, we may soberly judge that dangers have frequently hovered around us even in the calmest hours—and from all these we have been preserved because the Lord is our shield!

It is the greatest comfort to feel God’s Spirit within you making you strong. But it is no small joy to know that God is round about you, making you safe. “He is my shield.” Knowing, as we do, that our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour, and that he may be, perhaps, trying to seize upon one of us at this very moment—our security from his hostile attacks is this—“The Lord is our shield.” Satan wastes his arrows against the Eternal Buckler. There may be a plot formed against you by a cruel adversary whose hatred is unknown to you, but fret not yourself with fear of hidden dangers. Let them lie where God permits them to conceal themselves! Do not unearth the foxes nor stir up the young lions, for you are safe in your simplicity.

Is it not written that “the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den”? “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.” Though earth and Hell should blend their malice, they are safe whom God protects! The close designs and crooked counsels of those who conspire against the saints shall all be foiled, for there is One who frustrates every evil device and takes the wise in their own craftiness. “Where would you hide yourself,” said one to Luther, “if the elector of Saxony should withdraw his protection?” He smiled, and said, “I put no trust in the Prince of Saxony. Beneath the broad shield of Heaven I stand secure against Pope and Turk and devil.”

So he did and so do we. If we have but faith in God, we can sing, in the language of the text, “The Lord is my strength and my shield. He strengthens me within and He protects me without. What more do I need?” Before I leave those first two sentences, I want you to notice that this is a matter of fact, a fact which many here present can attest—“The Lord is my strength and my shield.” It is not a pretty speech that we have selected as an appropriate slogan for a retrospect, nor is it a piece of sentimental religious poetry which counterfeits a Christian’s experience! It is a positive fact, to which full many of us who have been tried and tutored in the pilgrimage of life can bear our personal testimony. “The Lord has been my strength.”

At this moment I set my hand and seal to that statement before you all. I should have proved myself to be weakness itself in many an emergency had not Eternal Power upheld me! I should have been far from calm resolution and drifted near to madness—not firm and steady, but frail and faltering—had He not interposed on my behalf and kept this heart in the hour of trouble! Is not the same confession due from each of you? You have waded through your trouble, dear Sister. You have escaped from that dilemma, my Brother. And do you not ascribe your deliverance to the Lord who strengthened you? Come, now, from where else did you get your strength? You cannot trace it to any other than a Divine source! Has not the Lord been your shield? Have not some of you been in positions in which no one else could have guarded you?

Perhaps your own fault has placed you in predicaments out of which you could never have extricated yourself had He not stretched out His hand and plucked your feet out of the net. Then you said to your soul, “This is no fiction. This is the finger of God!” It is right-hearted sincerity and not wrong-headed enthusiasm which prompts us, personally, to avow—“The Lord is our strength and our shield.” We can say it as deliberately as the miser might say, “The bank is my confidence, my money is my trust,” or as the merchant might say, “My wealth is on the sea, my ships bring me in my yearly income,” or as the mother might say, “My children are my joy.” We can boldly publish it and challenge all gainsayers, for it is really so, “The Lord is our strength and our shield!” Beyond doubt or question this is an assured possession!

II. Now, have patience with me while I endeavor, in the second place, to expound to you A DEFINITE EXPERIENCE. It is related in these words—

“My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.” Here, too, we have both inward and outward, as I told you before—“My heart trusted in Him,” that is work done indoors, within the soul. “I am helped,” that is mercy received outdoors, openly and actually. Notice the scrupulous loyalty of the Believer whose entire confidence is centered in God. “My heart trusted.” I did not say, ‘I trusted,’ as one who makes a profession with his lips, but rather with strong conviction and profound emotion, “my heart trusted.”

It is truly shocking to see people stand up and recite a creed to the truth of which they attach no importance. They say or sing, “I believe this and I believe that,” and as they repeat the words prescribed for them, they superstitiously turn in a certain direction. But happy is that man who, turning east, west, north, or south, does in his heart trust—does in his secret soul believe! There is no believing worthy of the name except heartbelieving. If your head believes a thing, it is of small consequence. But in soul-saving faith the heart is so believing as to trust and the mind is so assured as to be at peace. “My heart trusted in Him. My poor heart fluttered in the time of trouble, it was agitated, it was distressed, for all its visible refuge had fled away. But at last I said, ‘I must hang upon my God and to Him I must cling.’ In very despair of all other things, I cast myself at the foot of His Throne. My heart trusted in Him.”

Has it been so with you of late? Has your heart been trusting in God? That is a very strong expression of the Prophet when he speaks of the heart going a whoring from God. The language is vehement even to coarseness, but it is none too forcible, for it involves the commission of a spiritual uncleanness when the heart trusts any other helper than God. “My heart trusted in Him.” Oh, it is so easy for the heart to get to trusting in itself! And he that trusts his own heart is a fool! It is frightfully easy for the heart to rely upon man, as we know right well! Did you ever notice the middle verse of the whole Bible? It is the eighth verse of the 118th Psalm— “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.” The comparison will not bear a thought, the preference is infinite—for confidence in man will betray your hopes, but faith in God will enrich you beyond your expectations! May our heart always keep to that—trusting God— trusting in God alone. “My heart trusted in Him.”

In the next clause of the sentence, which is the outward manifestation of the inward experience, we have the result—“I am helped.” If I had been writing this Psalm of my own head, I think I should have written it thus— “My heart trusted in Him, and I was helped,” for it is a rule in composition that if you bracket two sentences together you should write them in the same tense. But, as old Master Trapp says, faith has no tenses, because faith deals with a God who has no tenses except the present, for His name is, “I AM.” Faith does not say, “I trusted in Him and I was helped.” No, she has all former mercy present before her eyes and she sings, “I am helped.” Nor does Faith say, “My heart trusted in Him, and I shall be helped.” Perhaps the needed help has not yet arrived, but she is so sure that it will come that she cries, “I am helped! Am I as poor as I was before I prayed? No, I am not, for I have obtained the blessing I asked for. I appear to be as weak as I was before I trusted Him, but I am not, for the Lord is my strength and, having trusted in Him, I am helped.” I wish we lived more in that blessed present tense in which God dwells!—

*“He fills His own eternal ‘now,’  
And sees our ages pass.”*

Now, Brothers and Sisters, let all the past of God’s mercy come up to your memory and let that be a part of the “now.” And then just take, as it were, a spring, and bounce forward into the future—yes, leap right across life, as though it were a narrow rivulet, into Heaven, and put the eternal future into the present, “now,” and sing as our sweet poet does*—*

*“Lo! A 'new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set:  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.”*

“I am helped.” I have now the good I crave. By faith I realize it as a present possession. I am helped. I am helped. The past lives in my gratitude, the future lives in my confidence and both alike meet in the present and my soul is glad! “My heart trusted in Him and I am helped.” You must notice, reverting again to the words of the text, that this confidence was, from first to last, confidence in God and, therefore, was it honored with a gracious result. “My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.” Many and many a time we have been obliged to say, “My heart trusted in So-and-So, and I am deceived.” But here it is, “and I am helped.”

Sometimes it happens, “My heart trusted in such an one and I am disappointed, though not deceived. He would have helped me, but he could not.” But here it is, “My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped,” All has happened according to promise—there has been no failure of faithfulness, no breach of Covenant, no forgetfulness, no delay. I am helped sufficiently, punctually, continually and so I always shall be helped till toiling and traveling days are over! Glory be to God for this! Dear Friends, have all of you who are Christians attained to a Christian experience? Doctrine, you know, is very important. It is well that you should learn it, understand it and adhere to it—but doctrine is only the Truth of God in which you are instructed and is useless for growth in Divine Grace until you experience the power of it in your own souls!

Do you know why so many people run away from the Truth, as it is in Jesus, and take up with strange conceits and new-fangled notions? It is because they have no inward experience of the old Truths of God. Let a man once have a deep experience of the evil of sin and I will guarantee you he will feel his need of a Savior and the necessity of the Atonement made by blood. Let him have an experience of the power of the blood upon his conscience, the peace that comes out of Substitution, and he will cling to the Cross! He will be ready to die for the Cross! He has such joy rising out of it as he never found elsewhere. I am obliged to cling to the Gospel, for if it is not true I am a lost man! I must hold fast to it, for all my hope is fixed there and if it is taken away, my sun is quenched, the well of my joy is dried up and life becomes a lingering death!

And, Beloved, an experience of those blessed Truths which God has revealed to us by His Spirit writes them where they cannot be erased! Not upon the tablet of the brain, from which they may be erased, for men forget, but upon the tablet of the heart from which they cannot be obliterated, for men do not disclaim that which has become a part of their inward consciousness and which God has made as dear to them as their lives! May you all have such a definite experience as the text sets before us. The Holy Spirit will work it in all the saints.

III. Lastly, here we have A DECLARED EMOTION—“Therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.” Here, again, is the inward phase, you see, “My heart greatly rejoices,” and then there is the outward embodiment of the internal feeling—“and with my song will I praise Him.” Behold a heart rejoicing with a sacred and intense delight! Some people’s rejoicing is but skin deep. They laugh, their face is surfaced over with smiles and their mouth bubbles up with silly glee. To my mind there is hardly anything more sad than the frequent laughter which exposes a vacant mind. The moment company has gone, this volatile mirthfulness subsides and the jolly companions resolve into solitary individuals, each one dull and dreary—far enough from any of them being happy.

You may, perhaps, have heard of Carlini, one of the most celebrated clowns of the beginning of this century. He was a man whose wit and humor kept all Paris in a roar of laughter! But he, himself, had little share of the cheerfulness he simulated so well and stimulated so much. His comedies brought him no comfort. Though a professor of mirth, he was a victim of melancholy. He consulted a physician and asked him for a prescription to relieve his lowness of spirits and habitual despondency. His physician gave him some medicine, but advised him by way of recreation to go to the theater and hear Carlini, whose fun and frolic were of such repute. “If he does not fetch the blues out of you, nobody will.” “Alas! Sir,” said he, “I am Carlini.”

And so, doubtless, it has often happened that men make glee for others when they are full of gloom themselves. The face smiles like summer, but the heart is freezing with the cold of winter. Not so the man who has laid hold on God. “My heart rejoices,” he says, “my heart rejoices.” No, he puts in the word, “greatly.” “My heart greatly rejoices,” as if it were as full of joy as ever it could be! As though it throbbed and danced joyously with a fullness of delight. “My heart greatly rejoices!” And Christians can say this whenever they lay hold on God, even though they are surrounded with a world of trouble! We know, sometimes, what it is to wear a sad face with a glad heart, just as some others are wearing a glad face with a sad heart. Blessed is the man whom God has taught greatly to rejoice! Let him indulge the holy humor to the best of his ability!

What, now, is the outcome of this sacred, soul-satisfying joy? He says, “With my song will I praise Him.” Whenever you feel exceedingly glad in the Lord, be sure to let people know! This is one of the emotions which ought never to be concealed. When I have been preaching among the Primitive Methodists, at the very mention of joy in the Lord, I have heard them shout out, “Hallelujah.” In Wales I have heard the, “Gogoniant”— glory be to God! We do not commit such improprieties here, do we? We are too quiet and proper to transgress the rules of enforced decorum! And yet, sometimes, it might be the most natural thing in the world for a Christian to feel that he could not hold his strong emotions in stiff restraint, but must shout aloud, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

Do you think, dear Friends, we sing enough? I do not think we do. The world is very pleased with singing of a certain sort. Tuneful airs are tacked on to trashy words. What foolishness we hear in the popular songs of the day! I have been quite unable to understand the sense when the sound has jingled in my ears. When I have asked, “What does it mean?” nobody has been able to interpret, or at least to make me comprehend it. To them it may have appeared like a clever ballad, but to me it seemed mere empty doggerel! Well, if they are not ashamed to sing their bacchanalian songs and sometimes to make night hideous with their choruses, surely we need not be ashamed to sing the songs of Zion—and to sing them with spirit, too!

Good woman, why don’t you sing? You would handle that box-iron just as well if you sang a Psalm. You could mend those children’s clothes quite as cleverly if you would sing a hymn. Good Friend, there, you could crack your whip as you walked along by the side of your pair of horses pulling the cart and yet hum a favorite tune. To get alone and sing some sacred melody by yourselves is very refreshing. My father had, years ago, a servant who was always singing. And when he asked her why, she said that it helped to keep bad thoughts away. I knew a boy who was so fond of singing the praises of the Lord that his employers would let him go out on the Common, sometimes, to give vent to his vocal powers, for he sang rather too much and too loud for a quiet house.

I love to see young Christians fall of joy! It is good, sometimes, to get away and have a time to yourself, as much as if you said, “I am not singing for any of you, but I am singing to God.” I listened one night and heard the nightingale with its delicious, “joog, joog, joog,” pouring forth such sweet music that it seemed to make the moon stand still, charmed with the strain! I know that the nightingale did not sing to me. He did not know that I was listening, nor would he have cared if he had known! Perhaps if he had noticed that I had been so close, he might have flown away! He was singing without regard to human ears. It is a sweet thing just to sing unto the Lord. Classical music is all very well, but heart music is the essence of sweetness. “My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoices and with my song will I praise Him.”

Did you ever, when you walk through the woods in springtime, come upon a stretch of blue hyacinth? You fancy that a piece has been torn away from the azure mantle of the sky and thrown down among the trees! Why are those hyacinths clothed in such cerulean splendor? For what purpose is their sweet perfume poured forth in such lavish profusion? Do you say, “They waste their sweetness on the desert air”? No, O Man! Know, rather, that God is near! Those flowers are His and this is His garden! He delights to gaze on their living sapphires! Did you ever light upon a clump of lovely flowers in a lone spot of forest, moor, or common where the foot of man has seldom profaned the soil? Have you not paused to admire?  
There they stand with their golden cups, like chamberlains of a king!

Why are they here in such gorgeous livery? Who is all this beautiful variety of form and color intended to greet? “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” What king has come to dine here and sip from those jeweled chalices? It is the eternal God who made them and who takes delight in the work of His hands! It is He who walks among these solitary beauties in the cool of the day. Did you not see the flowers bow their heads in worship as they felt His breath among their foliage? Down deep at the bottom of the sea the coral grows in luxuriant abundance and many-tinted shells that seem like unfinished rainbows are lying there unseen, never to be seized by human hands, or bartered in the market for gain. The Lord visits those cool grottoes and takes pleasure in His own delicate handiwork!

All things are not for greedy man! The Lord has His reserved gardens, His springs shut up, His fountains sealed. So let it be with us. Do not let us wait to praise the Lord till we can get an audience of our fellow creatures, though we may sometimes wish that our songs would charm their ears and win their love for Jesus. But let us, oftentimes, retire into holy solitude and then, all alone, break the silence of our loneliness, saying, “My heart greatly rejoices, and with my song will I praise the Lord. As long as I live and when I die, and when I rise again, and through eternity, with my song will I praise Him.”—

*“In blessing You with grateful songs,  
My happy life shall glide away.  
The praise that to Your name belongs,  
Hourly with lifted hands I’d pray.  
Abundant sweetness! While I sing  
Your love, my ravished heart overflows;  
Secure in You, my God and King,  
Of glory that no period knows.”*

How I wish that some would begin at this moment a life of praise! Begin by taking God to be your strength—begin by trusting in Christ to be your shield! Begin by an experience of the power of prayer to bring you help! If you do, you shall rise from height to height in your flights of praise! You shall, first, join with us below to sing as best you can and, afterwards, you shall mount into the upper orchestra where all the chosen singers meet and sit and chant with them the endless anthem which ascends unto Jehovah, our strength and our song!

God bless you, Beloved, and give you to know and prove the sweetness of this blessed text—and make you to sing David’s Divine song to the stringed instruments of your renewed hearts all the days of your lives. Amen.

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A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH MILITANT

NO. 768

BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT SURREY CHAPEL, BLACKFRIARS ROAD.

**“Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up forever.”  
Psalm 28:9.**

LET me direct your attention to the verse before the text, and then let us read the text in connection with it, “The Lord is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed. Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up forever.” You have in the eighth verse the Church militant reviewed, and in the ninth verse the Church militant prayed for. With regard to the Psalmist’s review of the militant Church, it is summed up in two sentences: “Jehovah is their strength,” and “Jehovah is the saving strength of His anointed.” The people of God are strong, then, for their strength is spoken of. They are weak in themselves, yes—they confess themselves to be weakness itself—yet by faith, when they grasp the power of the Almighty, they are no longer feeble but they venture to say with the Apostle, “ I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

The power of the army of the Lord does not lie in connection with any one of His soldiers, in the man himself—the Lord is their strength. They may differ in many respects but this is true of every single warrior in the host of the Lord, that the Lord is his strength. He has no strength in the flesh. He cannot find anything there which can assist him. All his springs are in his God and he draws all his supplies for power in spiritual conflicts from God and from God alone. If you were to review the Prussian army, you might very properly say that the needle-gun is their strength— and years ago we used to feel quite sure that the Armstrong gun was our strength.

But if you examine the ranks of the Lord’s people, you will perceive that they rest in no chariots, nor horses, nor weapons of war—whether carnal or spiritual—the Lord Jehovah is the strength of the whole company! Can you not picture David reviewing his troops, looking along the ranks of the king’s mighties who had been with him in the cave of Adullam and had done good service in his attacks upon the Philistines, and in various skirmishes and battles in their youth, and their riper years? Can you not hear him say, “The Lord is their strength”? Can you not hear him, as he relates the heroics of his heroes, declaring that in every case they were made mighty by the God of Jacob?

David adds that the Lord is his strength, too. The confidence of the soldiers was also the confidence of the captain. “He is the saving strength of His anointed.” The margin has it, “He is the strength of salvation to His anointed,” for David had many salvation’s, many remarkable escapes and deliverances—and these he does not attribute to his own agility, foresight, wit, or wisdom, much less to the valor of his brave right hand—but he confesses that the Lord who was the strength of the soldiers was also the savior of their anointed monarch.

Put in David’s place tonight, before the eyes of your faith, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and He will say the same! He, in His day of feeble flesh, fought and overcame by the power of the Spirit with which He was anointed. He fought the battle for us in the strength of the Most High. And now, looking all along the ranks of those whom He leads to battle and to ultimate victory, He testifies tonight, “The Lord is their strength. He is the strength of salvation to His Anointed.”

I do not intend, however, to dwell upon that verse but shall take you at once to the text which is a prayer for the Church militant, a prayer divided into four parts. We ought to pray constantly for the people of God—they always need it and it is always our duty to remember their necessities. It is always our privilege to pray for one another. Prayer is always useful to the Church and therefore we should delight to exercise it. The fire upon the altar of intercession should never go out, neither by night nor by day! Our prayer for the Lord’s people should be comprehensive. The Church of God needs many things and we must not be content to ask for one thing when the Church needs many.

We must be thoughtful about our prayers, so that, like David, we may say much in little. Some people’s prayers have very little in them. They much abound with the chaff of utterance but have but one grain of the wheat of meaning. We must not rush into God’s Presence and there offer any words that may come to mind, but we should direct our prayer unto God and meditate upon it, so that when we utter it there may be something in it, some meaning—not asking for a shadowy something, but pleading wisely for what we intelligently desire.

I make that remark because this prayer of David’s is peculiarly rich, eminently suggestive and full of meaning: “Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up forever.” Here are four choice blessings—let us take them one by one.

I. The first is, “SAVE YOUR PEOPLE.” In how many ways may this be desired for the elect of God? It may be offered, first, in reference to their conversion from their natural estate of sin, darkness, and death. Brothers and Sisters, we who are saved should never cease praying, “Lord, save the chosen who as yet are uncalled! Save those who are redeemed by blood but who are not yet redeemed by power! Save your people!” If you do not pray for sinners, I am afraid you are a sinner yourself, and know nothing about prayer. The old proverb is, “He that would go to Heaven alone, shall never go there at all.” And he who never has any melting of his heart towards the lost sheep who as yet are not gathered into the fold is most probably a wolf himself.

I am sure that one of the first instincts of the new nature is to begin to agonize for others. We may make our prayers as wide as we will, but still we must at times make them discriminating and peculiar. And while we say, “Let Your saving health be known among all nations,” it becomes us also to recollect the doctrine of Discriminating Grace, and to say, “Save Your people, O Lord! You have ordained them to eternal life. Fulfill Your purpose! O Lord Jesus, You have paid the price for them. Rescue out of the jaw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear Your own precious sheep!”

We may plead here with mighty arguments. We may besiege the Throne with irresistible weapons when we come with such a plea as this—“Lord, save Your people. Some of them know nothing about You. Some of them know more than they have ever practiced. Some of them are soaked in the crimson dye of sin. Some of them have grown gray in vice. Some of them, despite warnings, have hardened their necks and seem as if they would be suddenly destroyed without remedy. But, O Lord, we come in as intercessors for them. In the name of Jesus we plead for them as He pleads for them! Lord, save Your people! By some means, by any means, by our means if it may please You to honor us with such an honor, save Your people, those whom You love, but who as yet love You not!”

It is well often to pray—  
*“If some poor wandering child of Yours  
Has spurned today the voice Divine,  
Now, Lord, the gracious work begin!  
Let him no more lie down in sin.”*

But the words may be applied, also, to the carrying on of the work of sanctification in those who, in a certain sense, are saved. All who have believed in Christ are saved from the guilt of sin, but they are not all as yet completely delivered from the power of sin. No, we believe that none of them are, so that we may daily pray, “Lord, go on with the work of saving Your people. If You have brought them up out of Egypt, Lord, lead them through the wilderness till they enter into the Canaan of perfect holiness and rest. Some of Your people have very weak faith, save them from their unbelief, for it is a great sin and at the same time a great sorrow to them.

“Some of Your children have hot and angry tempers, Lord, save Your people from being passionate. Many of Your children are desponding— they give way to it, Lord—save them from unbelief. Others of them are proud and high-minded, Lord, save them from that folly. Numbers of them grow inactive, Lord, save them from lethargy. And others are slothful, Lord, save Your people from idleness.” It should be our object ourselves to “grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” and after that, we should seek our Brothers and Sisters good by the use of edification, and by the use of this prayer, “Lord, carry on the work of the saving of Your people.”

The text may also be very very much used in our prayers in reference to backsliders. I am afraid we often forget that very numerous class of people, backsliders. But when we think of them, we should evermore cry, “Lord, save Your people.” Some of them have been such dreadful hypocrites and have brought such dishonor on the Cross of Christ that we can hardly pray for them as the Lord’s people. Let us then plead for them as sinners. On the other hand, there are some even among the worst backsliders who have the vital spark in them. They are the people of God. They are God’s sheep, even though they have sadly gone astray—and for these our prayers must be constant, incessant, fervent, believing. “O Lord, save Your people.”

I exhort you who are walking in the light of God’s countenance to pray for your poor Brothers and Sisters who have been allowed to fall into sin. They are often despised by those who are at ease, and if you despise them, remember you may at some time fall into the same case yourself. “Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.” Meanwhile, you that are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of weakness. Let the prayer go up for that very, very numerous band of sadly broken hearts who, like David, have gone astray and brought shame upon themselves. Let us say, “Lord, save Your people; let them be as brands plucked out of the burning, and though we hate the garment spotted with the flesh, yet, Lord, save Your people.”

And do you not think that the prayer should be frequently put up by us in private for those of God’s people who are much tempted? There are some who go on the road to Heaven with finer weather than others, but there are not a few who always seem to have temptations dogging their heels. They are, perhaps, themselves, like Mr. Fearing, of whom John Bunyan writes that he did get from the Slough of Despond. “But, somehow, he seemed to carry the Slough about with him.” He had got the Slough in his own heart. There are some such still. They not only sometimes get doubts and fears, but their constitutional temperament is such that it keeps on doubting. Or there may be some other besetting sin and you may be constantly tempted by it. Let us pray for such.

And, again, some of God’s people are placed in positions in life where they are more tempted than others are. You good people, you children of godly parents, you husbands and wives who live in happy family circles perhaps scarcely know the miseries of some who are placed where ungodly people can dominate over them. It is a sad thing when the red of the wicked rests upon the lot of the righteous—the temptation is lest the righteous should put forth his hand unto iniquity.

Let us pray for such. They are plants of God’s own right-hand planting, but they seem to be planted in a bleak soil—not house plants, as some of you are—who can go often to the House of God and hear the Gospel. Perhaps they are living in some country town where there is no Gospel ministry, or where there is a mere make-shift pulpit with somebody in it who knows nothing about the Gospel. Now these people are just like plants that are pinched by the frost. Pray for them, that the great Farmer may shelter and protect them. Pray for these shorn lambs, that the good Shepherd may temper the wind to them, and let this be the prayer in every case, “Save Your people.”

And, Beloved, this prayer may also be applied to the whole Church. The Church of God at this day is said to be in great danger from a form of Popery. Certainly a form of Popery is very rampant just now in this land. It has a great deal of force about it so that it is not to be laughed down, but is to be met with sterner weapons than mere arrows of raillery. But we can cry for the Church, “Lord, save Your people! And whether it is philosophical speculation or superstitious error which may put Your Church, as some men may think, in danger, do You be pleased to keep the gates of Zion so that the gates of Hell may not prevail against her! Save Your people!”

Let us not tremble for the Ark of the Lord as if strange things were happening to us, and the Church should be overcome by these delusions. Many false professors will fall, but the elect are safe. “Christ’s sheep will hear His voice and follow Him; a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” We believe that if for awhile they turn aside to cunningly devised fables, they will soon discover that it is not the pasture they desire, and He who restores our souls will bring back His wandering ones. We are not afraid for the Church, but still it becomes us to fence her around, to ward off the foe and to protect God’s chosen. And therefore we must use all means, and none are better than this petition to the Great Shepherd to preserve His flock. I trust that so long as ever we live this will be one of our morning and evening prayers, “O Lord, save Your people!”

Before I leave this point, however, let me observe that if we pray this prayer, we must take care that we also carry it out in practice. To pray to God for that which I am not willing to promote by my own personal activity is to mock God! If, then, I say, “Lord, save Your people,” what ought I to do? Why, to put myself constantly on the alert to be the instrument of saving God’s people! For instance, if I meet with sinners, I should try to talk with them about Christ. If I meet with the ignorant, I should try to instruct them in the way of salvation. I should, whenever I go to the House of God, try, if possible, to get a word with somebody.

How can I say, “Save Your people,” and yet not try to do something to save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins? If I mean what I say, I shall help the sanctification of my Brothers and Sisters who are Believers. I shall try to reclaim the backslider. I shall endeavor to strengthen tempted men, and I shall, so far as possible, bear my witness against the errors of the times, or else how can I go to God and say, “Save Your people,” when I have not myself in any way contributed to that desirable result?

And how can some of you pray this prayer who have never cared for sinners? How can you say, “Save Your people,” when you only go up to a place of worship to get fed yourselves, and have no thought and no care about the dying sons of men? How can you say, “Save Your people,” when you neither give to God’s cause nor speak for Christ’s name? How can you dare to pray a prayer which must freeze upon your lips or rise up in judgment against you to condemn you for your hypocrisy? O dear Friends, let us take care that our prayers do not become swift witnesses against us to condemn us! Our bad example has a tendency to destroy others—can you and I pray, “Lord, save Your people,” when we are doing our best to lead them astray?

Our mere silence has a tendency to make men think that the Truth of God is not precious, and how can we pray, “Save Your people,” when, through our own slothful ignorance we help to lull men’s consciences into a slumber which could end in their everlasting destruction? Lord, burn this prayer into our souls as with a hot iron, but at the same time help us to feel its practical force in all the actions of our life: “ ‘Lord, save Your people.’ Help us to save them through Your Spirit.”

II. And now we come to the second prayer, “BLESS YOUR INHERITANCE.” After men are saved they have still many needs. We should not be satisfied with being saved. Some people are. They are thankful for it and they are satisfied with it—but we should not be so. There is a wreck yonder. The ship is going to pieces. Some brave men enter the lifeboat. They tug over those mountainous billows! They return in safety from the ship—they bring a half-drowned mariner on shore. He is saved! He is saved! Let us be thankful, but is that enough? Certainly not! Kind hands are preparing dry garments. Food is being procured. A cordial is ready for the man to drink, and if he has lost his all, a subscription is made for him that he may start anew in his business, and begin life again.

That the man should be sent back to his friends and to his country saved is a blessing, an unspeakable blessing. If only on broken boards and broken pieces of the ship we all get to land, it will be a great mercy. But when Paul and his crew got to shore in that way, it was not thought to be enough! They began to light a fire and Paul gathered sticks. And so, saved men want comforts after they are rescued. And, consequently, the prayer of the text is not superfluous—“Bless Your inheritance.”

Now, what does this prayer mean? It means a great deal more than I can tell you tonight. I should need to preach 20 sermons on such a text as this, but I will just mention two or three points upon which I hope we pray that God would bless His heritage. The first thing is that He would bless His Church with greater unity. The Church of God is too much divided. I thank God there is a real and hearty love among the Lord’s people in many places, and in this district I am sure there is no lack of it. Our being in this very Surrey Chapel tonight is a direct answer to the calumny of those who say that there is no love among God’s people. We do love each other, and we seek each other’s good. But it is not so everywhere.

There are some places where Ephraim envies Judah, and where Judah vexes Ephraim. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there are some who are a great deal fonder of the tribe than they are of the nation, and much more earnest for the prosperity of a regiment than for the victory of the army. It must not be so among us! We must pray, “Bless Your inheritance! Unite their hearts, O God. Give them to know one Lord, one faith, one Baptism! Take away everything which divides them, every error which splits them into sections. Bring them to be one in truth, one in Christ, one in love to each other.”

With this we ought to pray that they may be more earnest. Truly, this is the prayer that is needed, “Bless Your inheritance. Bless them with a drop or two of the Savior’s love in their hearts. Bless some of them with a little heavenly fire.” This is the great need of the times. The Church of God is well organized. Perhaps never in the history of the world has the Church of God been so potent in its organizations and possessions as it is now. But it lacks the first fire, the pristine zeal and energy which the Apostles and their immediate successors had. We want to have again the spirit of revival, not merely as we have it now, I trust, in a measure, but with sevenfold energy! O that the Lord would bless His people in this way, knitting them together in one and then sending the holy fire down upon the entire Church!

The Church stands too often like a train made up at the station, waiting for the steam to get up. We need the fire which shall create the impetus to carry us forward in our onward career. It is not enough to have right forms and orthodox creed—we need the holy zeal to make all these things instinct with life and power. Now, we can never work ourselves up into this state—we may pray ourselves into it, however. I do not believe in getting up a revival by the methods which some adopt. If we are to have a true quickening it will be by the Holy Spirit given to us in answer to fervent prayer. Therefore I say pray to God, “Bless Your inheritance,” and He will give us the sacred zeal which is now so much needed. God grant us it for His Son’s sake.

I believe that many of God’s people also need blessing in another respect, and that is with more happiness. It really is lamentable to see how, in certain quarters, misery is common among the people of God. They are a feeble folk in some places. Mr. Ready-to-Halt, whom John Bunyan speaks of, must have been the father of a very large family. I should say that the manufacture of crutches will never die out altogether—and really, in some places, it must be a most lucrative business—for many of the Lord’s people never get beyond, “I hope so,” or, “I trust so,” and no hymn in the hymn book is so sweet to them as—“’Tis a point I long to know.”

I did not put that hymn in “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK.” I had a debate with myself about it. I thought to myself, “Ah, well, they will know all about that without my putting it into the hymn book.” And I thought that if any of you wanted to sing it, you could sing it alone at home, but it did not seem to me to be a hymn that a whole congregation should use. It is a blessed hymn: I have to sing it myself sometimes, I am sorry to say. It is an excellent hymn, as expressing the feelings of some of God’s people— but it will not do for a whole congregation to get into that state! It is very well for the good wife to have a little black draught at hand when the child wants it sometimes, but to give the whole family the same might be a great deal more injurious than beneficial.

And so it is with regard to that class of hymns. It is suitable to a certain case of diseased spiritual condition, but it would be wrong to suppose or to insinuate that all the people of God at any one time, in one congregation, could be found in exactly the same condition of sad decrepitude of faith. Brethren, we must pray for the entire Church of God that it may be happier. May we have more faith in the promises, more reliance upon the “immutable things where it is impossible for God to lie!” May we have more confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit! More dependence in the abounding Presence of Jesus Christ to be the Succor and the Help of His people, so that, setting up her banners the Church may not creep along under mists and clouds, but be “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

Lord, bless Your people! Bless them with unity! Bless them with earnestness! Bless them with happiness! Bless them with confidence! And, indeed, there might be made a list so long that you might never cease prayer. And when you had completed it, you might begin again and your supplications would be an endless chain of blessings. “Bless Your inheritance.” Would it not be well, dear Brethren, for us to select some out of God’s inheritance when we are praying the prayer, in order to make this distinction and pray especially for them? It is not a bad habit of mentioning some persons in prayer before God in private by name.

Only do not do that in the way in which a man I used to know did it. Whenever he was offended with anybody he used to threaten them that he would pray for them. And really, such prayer as that, which was offered out of a sort of gracious malice is to be avoided. But do it without saying anything to anybody about it, and not making a boast of it. Put down some of God’s people who need certain blessings. For instance, there are certain ministers who need to be helped. Say, “Lord, bless Your inheritance.” There are certain workers in the Sunday school and elsewhere— certain Christians you know to be weak—certain others you perceive to be in peril. Put up prayers for such, that special blessings may come to them.

Remember how our Lord said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.” We know that He prayed for all of His elect because we have His prayer in the Gospel of John. But here He prayed for Peter by name, apart from the others, because Peter needed it. So must we particularize at times our prayer for the Church and plead for some by name. I am sure that Christians can never err if they pray for their own pastors and plead with God on behalf of those who watch over them as those that must give an account of the souls of all their hearers.

The Apostle says, “Brethren, pray for us.” And all God’s servants ever since have felt the need of the Church’s prayers. Pray for me, my Hearers. And you who worship here, pray for your esteemed pastor. And all of you pray much for those who minister to you in holy things. And before I leave this point, let me add take care that you practically prove the genuineness of your prayer. “Bless Your inheritance.” Take care that you bless them. So far as is in your power, seek to confer blessings upon all your fellow Christians. There are some of you who are always grumbling at the Church of God. You pretend to say, “Lord, bless Your Church,” and yet you curse it.

Why should you go and spread abroad the faults and follies of your own Brethren? Remember what Noah’s sons did with their father? Do you imitate them and not bring upon yourselves the curse of Ham? True, there is much that is mischievous in the Church of God, and among other mischiefs, there is the habit of always finding fault with Christian people. Pray, “Bless Your inheritance.” Bless that inheritance yourselves—if it is in your power—by conveying to others any spiritual or temporal gift to confer a blessing upon any of the purchase of the Savior’s blood. Be not slack to do so, lest your prayer should be a witness against your unfaithfulness to and your forgetfulness of the Lord’s people. “Bless Your inheritance.”

III. The third prayer is, “FEED THEM ALSO.” God’s people need, after they have life, to have that life sustained. They must have food or they will become faint with hunger—food, or they will become weak from want of nourishment—food, or they would actually die for want of the staff of life. In order that God’s people may be fed, I believe that it is His usual appointment to provide them ministers. When you pray, therefore, “Feed them also,” do not forget to ask for those disciples to whom Christ gives His bread that they may break it to the multitude.

When you are praying for the sheep, ask God to send those undershepherds whose business it is to lead the flock into the green pastures in their Master’s name. Do not forget to pray for students to be raised up and guided into the ministry. I remind the Church of this, for ought we not to pray that the Lord would send forth laborers into His harvest? Is not this a prayer that is constantly forgotten? When Jesus Christ ascended up on high we are told He received gifts for men, and those gifts were Apostles, Evangelists, and pastors.

I am afraid we do not plead for these ascension gifts. We do not use the office of an ascended Savior as we should, but let us try to do it from now on and never forget to say, “Lord, send pastors after Your own heart who shall feed Your people with knowledge and with understanding.” This prayer includes not only the agent by which they are to be fed but the very food with which they are to be fed. Pray, therefore, that the Lord would give His people a clear insight into the Truth of God that they may not be mistaken and so feed upon pernicious herbs instead of the sweet and tender grass by the still waters.

Ask the Lord to illuminate His people’s minds as to the doctrines of Covenant Grace, that they may see into the ancient things—that they may get to the depth that lies under and that rolls beneath, and may reach to the precious things of the everlasting hills. Why, half of the Lord’s people do not feed because they do not believe that that is bread which God puts on the table! They are afraid of some of His Truths because they have been told, “Oh, they are so high—it is such high doctrine.” “Savory meat,” I say, “such as my soul loves!” O that these people had but an appetite to feed upon these things from which they are kept back—not because the things are not good—but because they have been warned against them! Whatever is in this Book is fit for our souls to live upon! If God has revealed the Truth, O Believer, be not ashamed to accept it and to make it the nutriment of your soul!

Still, even if we had the prayer answered as to good pastors and sound doctrines, that is not all we need—the soul’s food is to really feed upon Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is received by the heart through communion with Him, and it is only by fellowship with Jesus that, after all, we get the marrow and the fatness of the Gospel. “The truth as it is in Jesus” is the only truth which really nourishes the spiritual man.

Talking this day with a Brother in the ministry—one who has been many years a preacher—he was telling me that he had been to the British Museum library. He was looking for sermons upon Christ, and in turning the books over, he said, he thought he had found pretty well 500 upon any other subject to one upon the Lord Jesus! Perhaps he was wrong in his estimate. But even supposing he had found but five upon other subjects to one upon the Lord Jesus, would not that account for the fact of the lamentations that are made about the leanness of the pulpit? Leave Christ out? O my Brethren, better leave the pulpit out altogether!

If a man can preach one sermon without mentioning Christ’s name in it, it ought to be his last—certainly the last that any Christian ought to go to hear him preach! If I saw a notice in the Blackfriars Road that there was a baker there who made a loaf of bread without any flour in it, I should not deal with him. He might say, “Well, I only did it that once.” Never mind, Sir. If you did it once, that is enough. If you could do it once, you have a fatal faculty that renders it impossible for me to confide in you. And if you can get through a sermon without Christ, my dear Friend, you may get whom you like, I shall not help you at your place, at any rate.

No, we must have the Lord Jesus Christ preached! And even the proclamation of Christ is not enough unless the Holy Spirit brings Christ home to the soul, opens up the spiritual faculty to receive Him, gives us a heavenly appetite, and then enables us to assimilate Christ—to take Him into ourselves, into our inward parts—and make Him part and parcel of ourselves by a holy appropriating faith. Unless this comes we cannot be fed! Though it seems a strange thing to say, yet I believe this prayer, “Feed Your people,” has a literal meaning about it in spiritual things. God Himself must absolutely put the spiritual food into our mouths or else all the pastors with the best doctrines and the best preaching of Christ will not accomplish the purpose. We are babes—we must receive our nourishment from our God—and from nowhere else! And if He is not pleased to convey it to our souls, we shall hear the Word, and see the Word, but feed upon the Word we never shall!

Now, what a good prayer this will be for next Sunday morning when you go to your places of worship, “Lord, feed Your people.” And as soon as ever the minister is seen, “Lord, feed Your people.” As soon as ever he opens his mouth, and you begin to enjoy the Word, do not stop short, but say, “Lord, make it real food to me, and to all my Brothers and Sisters. Feed them, also, for You alone can do it.” I think I ought to say before I leave that last point, that if you pray, “Feed them also,” you must remember that you must practically carry it out, just as Peter did, to whom the Lord said, “Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs.” If you know anything, tell it! If you have had any experience, declare it! If you have had any illumination, reveal it!

Do not eat your honey alone, or it will turn sour. Give it to others! If the Lord has given you but a crust, go and share it with some other hungry soul. If you would have God’s people fed, feed them with what God has given you. “Oh,” says one poor widow woman here, “how can I feed any of God’s people? I know so little.” Ah, you are like the woman of Zarephath who said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.”

Ah, but still that woman fed the greatest Prophet that was in the land, and with that very handful of meal! So it may be with you. A simple word which you may speak to some of God’s greatest servants may be a comfort to them for many a day. Do not despise in your soul the day of small things. Thank God for a little experience of His Divine Grace and tell that little experience out—for God can make your barrel of meal so that it shall not be exhausted, and your cruse of oil so to be multiplied as never to dry up!

IV. And now the last prayer is, “LIFT THEM UP FOREVER.” God’s people need lifting up. They are very heavy by nature. They have no wings, or, if they have, they are like the dove that lies among the pots. They need Divine Grace to make them mount on wings covered with feathers of silver and of yellow gold. By nature sparks fly upward, but the sinful souls of men fall downward. “Lift them up forever.”

David himself said, “Unto You, O God, do I lift up my soul,” and he, here, feels the necessity that other people’s souls should be lifted up as well as his own. There are three ways in which God’s people need to be lifted up. They want to be elevated in character. “Lift them up. O Lord, do not suffer Your people to be like the world’s people. Lift them up forever. The world lies in the Wicked One, lift them out of it. The world’s people are looking after silver and gold, seeking their own pleasures and the gratification of their lusts. Lord, lift Your people up above all this! Keep them from being muck-rakers, as John Bunyan calls the man who was always looking after gold. Keep them from having their eyes always downwards. Spare them from becoming carnal and sensual, lest they also become like others—devilish. O let Your Grace lift Your people up, so that in whatever neighborhood they may be found, they may be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.”

O my Brothers and Sisters, this is a prayer for which we might all go down on our knees 10 times a day for ourselves and for our fellow Christians, that God would elevate the general tone of true religion, that Christianity might become more powerful! I am not saying it is a fact, but I sometimes am afraid that the greatest mischief that there is in the world at the present time is an abundance of religious profession which is not genuine. You know very well how bad it is for trade when there is a great quantity of paper money about and not enough sterling bullion to back it up with. There is sure to come a panic and a crash.

I am afraid that the Christian Church issues a great deal of paper religion and has not enough bullion to back it up! After all, in God’s sight it is nothing but the solid gold that is worth having and the paper profession will be burnt to ashes in the fire. May God “lift up” His Church, and make her a truly golden Church, that her piety may be a true bullion piety! That the circulation of the Church may be a truly golden medium, and not a mere bill and paper piety. Elevate Your people in character, O God!

In the next place,” Lift them up forever,” that is, prosper Your people in conflict. In the battle, if they seem to fall, yet be pleased to give them the victory. If the foot of the foe is upon their necks for a moment, yet help them to grasp the sword of the Spirit and eventually to win the triumph. Lord, encourage Your people! Do not let them sit in the dust, mourning forever—

*“Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?”*

Suffer not the adversary to vex them and make them afraid, but if they have been, like Hannah, persecuted, let them, like Hannah, sing to the mercy of a delivering God! “Lift them up forever.”  
And then, thirdly, lift them up at the last. Lift them up by taking them

Home! Lift them up forever by bidding them dwell in Your Presence where there is fullness of joy! Lift them out of that sick bed! Lift them out of the tomb! Lift them up from the worm, from the rottenness of the grave! Lift them up at the last blast of the archangel’s trumpet, not their souls, alone, which You lift up as soon as they die, but their bodies also, which are the temples of the Holy Spirit! lift them up in both their natures, the spiritual and the material! Lift them up forever and cause them, as complete men, made perfect in Christ Jesus, to forever rejoice in Him! Lift every one of them up—

*“From beds of dust and silent clay,  
To realms of everlasting day.  
Feed them also, and lift them up forever.”*

O my Brothers and Sisters, that you and I may but get Home at the last! How I love that desire of David’s, in the 27th Psalm, where he says, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.” That one desire sucked all the others up, and this is the one desire, I trust, which we have*—*

*“Jerusalem! My happy home!  
Name ever dear to me.  
When shall my labors have an end,  
In joy, and in you?”*

Oh, to see the king’s face at Home in His own land! To see Him here in this exile through the perspective glass of faith is rich delight—but when this cheek shall lie upon His bosom, and these lips shall feel the kisses of His love—oh what ravishment, what infinite delight, what perfection of bliss to our complete manhood!

Courage, my Brothers and Sisters! Set your faces against the steep! Go up the hillside with Christ in the rough weather, for the top of the hill and the Palace Beautiful will make amends for it all in that land where the windows are agates, and the gates carbuncles, and all the borders are of precious stones—where the saints shall be lifted up forever! Oh, it will be joy and bliss to be there indeed! Till then, we will put the prayer together, and say, “Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up forever.”—

*“Pray that Jerusalem may have  
Peace and felicity.  
Let them that love You and Your peace  
Have still prosperity.  
Therefore I wish that peace may still  
Within your walls remain,  
And ever may your palaces  
Prosperity retain.  
Now, for my friends’ and brethren’s sakes, Peace be in you, I’ll say;  
And for the House of God our Lord,  
I’ll seek your good always.”*

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THE PEACE OF THE DEVIL AND THE PEACE OF GOD  
NO. 2157

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace.” Luke 11:21.  
“The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.”  
Psalm 29:11.**

PEACE is a condition of things greatly to be desired. To dread no outward disturbance and to feel no inward storm—who does not desire such a state? Peace has been called a pearl and rightly, for it is precious and smiles with soft, mild radiance bedecking the heart that wears it. It is, indeed, a pearl of great price—he that has it has more than riches. If his peace is, in very deed, the true pearl, he who wears it in his breast is one of the favored sons of God. There may be some few people in the world who do not love peace, but we love not their spirit. Certain stormy natures delight in tempest and, like sea birds, ride on the crests of raging billows. Men of the Byron type are restless and an atmosphere of peace suits them not. Their spirits, like thunderbolts, rush onward, finding pleasure in the crash with which they force their willful way.

I need not go out of my way for such, for in vain we speak to those who will not hear. The most of us were cast in another mold. We are not ravens and cannot remain forever on the wing. But, like the dove of Noah, we seek rest for the soles of our feet and we fly here and there until we find the olive leaf of peace. How often, amid the disturbances of this troubled world, have we cried, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest!” We were not reared like eaglets on stern crags among the callow lightning—we listen to the turtle’s voice and love the brooks that warble music as they flow. I know that many of you sigh for rest—you labor that you may enter into it. If you have found the rest which Jesus gives, your heart is sure to sing—

*“Forever here my rest shall be  
Close to Your bleeding side:  
This all my hope, and all my plea—  
For me the Savior died.”*

Peace and rest are two names for a flower which buds on earth, but only found full-blown in Heaven! Yet even the faint perfume of the unopened blossom excites our strong desire. Gently does the Savior attract us to Himself by that sweet call—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Every precious thing in this world is sure to be counterfeited. If the government mint issues gold and

silver money, rogues will be found to make spurious coin. The more a thing is cried up, the more is there need of caution that you are not taken in with base imitations of it. Satan is the cunning ape of God and whatever God does, he tries to do the same with his enchantments. Therefore, while there is a peace more precious than the gold of Ophir, there is another peace which is worse than worthless! When a soul is borne up upon the waters of false peace, its case is hopeless till that peace is dried up and the soul is stranded in self-despair.

I thought this morning I might do you some service if I tried to set forth the two peaces, the peace of the devil and the peace of God. May God the Holy Spirit give discerning hearts to all of you, that you may not be deceived by the poisonous imitation of the waters of peace! May you discern the counterfeit and reject it with indignation! And may you find the true peace at the feet of the Prince of Peace! Oh, for “the peace of God, which passes all understanding”! For my part, I should dread to give peace to anyone, upon any subject at the expense of the Truth of God. A temporary hope is ill purchased at the cost of cruel disappointment.

A poor woman was the loving mother of an only son. He was very dear to her. He fell sick, indeed, he was sick unto death but the mother could not bear to think so. She scraped together the necessary fee for a physician and, oh, the peace of heart she had when the trusted man came downstairs and said to her, “Your son will recover. There is no grave cause to fear. Nurse him carefully and very soon he will be at his post again.” The mother was restful of heart, for she believed the doctor. Within a single day her son died and those hours of false peace were the wormwood and the gall of her affliction. It was a sad, sad pity to have raised her hopes for she cried, “Oh, if I had known that he was going to die, I should not then so bitterly have felt his loss! But I am grievously disappointed. How could the doctor tell me he would live?”

The physician was either greatly mistaken, or else wished to soothe the mother’s manifest anguish. If the latter was the case, his untruthfulness was not wise. I cannot follow the same course. It is a pity to create a peace which is baseless. It is lamentable to me that anyone of you should be slumbering in peace when a great danger is near which will cause that peace to vanish as a dream when one awakes. Avoid that peace which will prove deceptive in the present and ruinous in the future—long for that which will keep your heart and mind today and forever. Follow me, I pray you, while I speak of the two forms of peace set forth in my two texts.

I. First, there is THE DEVIL’S PEACE. The foul spirit keeps things quiet in the heart over which he rules—“When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace.” The heart of man is not lawfully Satan’s palace, but he has made it so by capture. In his pride he loves to dwell in the midst of this captured stronghold so that he may vaunt himself over the Most High from whom he has taken the heart of His creature. Satan values a conquered human heart as a palace—he takes pleasure in domineering over the soul which he has forcibly torn away from God. That he may dwell securely, he covers himself with armor and he keeps constant watch and ward. Hence the house is quiet, for his watchful power puts down every token of mutiny against his tyranny.

The Psalmist describes the dreadful peace of the wicked in Psalm seventy-three—“There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” Everything goes smoothly with the man who is left in this fatal condition—“Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.” Though it would seem that they are really prospering, it is not so—they are set in slippery places and they will be cast down unto destruction. There is really nothing enviable in the condition of the godless, but everything pitiable. They cry, “Peace, peace,” where there is no peace. What peace can there be to those whose rebellions are so many? Satan makes conscience lie still that his power may be confirmed over the heart of the ungodly.

I may be speaking to some here who are in good health, have a fair trade and enjoy credit with their neighbors and therefore they have an earthly peace and care nothing about being at peace with God. My design shall be to disturb that peace, for if it is the peace of the devil. The sooner it is broken the better for the soul. This peace is often merely outward. Men put on the air of peace when they do not feel it in their hearts. You will often meet with irreligious men who tell you that they are perfectly happy and then ask—What do they want with Christ? They feel themselves all right—what need have they of a new birth? They are getting on so well without God’s blessing that they do not care to seek it. Their laughter is loud, their jests are endless, their cares sit lightly upon them.

They appear to have no anxiety for the faults of the past, the temptations of the present, or the recompenses of the future—and yet this peace is all external. The crust of ice is hardly strong enough to bear a fly. Follow them to their beds and see their fear! Listen to them in a thunderstorm—see them at sea in a tempest and you will find that they are the victims of an awful dread. Some display a peace of sheer bravado. They want to seem happy and therefore they put on the mask of the merry Andrew. The plowboy, when he goes through the churchyard, is afraid of ghosts and therefore whistles to keep his courage up—and many who are loaded with apprehension try to conceal it by those flippant songs in which they boast of “driving dull care away.” In the secret of their soul that same dull care sits on the throne of their hearts and is not to be driven away by the ballad, the fiddle or the dance.

Those are often the slaves of misery who figure as the children of mirth. Is it not so with many? When they speak of pleasure, it is from the teeth outward, for there is no Artesian well of joy springing from the depths of their soul. They hold themselves up as the mirror of pleasure while their heart is breaking with unutterable pain. In all who have not come to Christ and found peace through His precious blood, their peace is false. Let them say what they will of it, it has no foundation or justification. They have no peace with God for it is written, “There is no peace, says my

God, to the wicked.” The great God is the high contracting party with whom peace must be made and if He disowns it, in vain will a man pretend to possess it!

A sinner may say, “I am at peace as to God” but if this comes of forgetting or ignoring Him, it is a sorry sham. If a man has to forget God before he has peace, that fact betrays a fatal secret. If the man, on remembering God, is troubled, then his peace is a mere writing on the sand. Such peace is false peace and what true man will solace himself with that which is false? Better know that we are at war, if it is so, than dote upon a peace which is a fool’s paradise and only exists in fancy. I had rather be wounded in a thousand spiritual conflicts than be soothed into eternal destruction by a false peace! Let my hopes be slain by the sword of the Truth of God rather than nourished on the bread of lies. God forgive that we should prophesy smooth things for ourselves while the pen of justice is signing our death warrant!

One prayer I often pray—“Lord, let me know the worst of my case.” And though there is no great pleasure in such a petition, I would suggest that all of you should offer it. It can do you no harm. Pray with the Psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there are any wicked ways in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” See to it that you are not liars unto your own souls. To many this peace comes through ignorance. They do not know those terrible Truths which would make peace impossible. They know not that sin is a deadly viper and therefore they toy with it as with a bird.

They are scarcely conscious that they have committed any sin worth mentioning, but if the light of God’s Law were turned upon them they would see that they are guilty before God and exceedingly vile. They are not innocent, as they suppose, but guilty before the living God! Let the Holy Spirit work in a man a sense of sin and an expectation of judgment to come and I guarantee you he will have no more peace till he has fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the Gospel! If any of you are wrapped up in a peace woven in the loom of ignorance, I pray God it may be torn to shreds! “But,” cries one, “Where ignorance is peace, ‘tis folly to be wise.” No, no! But where peace is founded on ignorance, it is folly begetting folly!

Oh, be wise, and drink not the fool’s cordial! Know your true condition even though that knowledge may cost you present loss of rest. To keep men ignorant is one of Satan’s devices because they are then easier to govern—he dreads that you should go where the Gospel is preached! If any of you are under Satan’s dominion, you are here this morning against your tyrant’s wishes. If he could have his way you would never come within earshot of God’s Word! Even now he will try to make you feel drowsy and inattentive lest the arousing Gospel should awaken you. O my Hearers, shun the ignorance which fosters false peace and the false peace which would make you content without the knowledge of God!

The devil greatly rejoices because in these days so many ministers do not preach the Gospel—Satan is glad if he can poison the stream at the fountainhead! He rejoices if he can make the preacher of the Gospel a mere moral essayist, or a talker of his own inventions, for then those who go to hear him will be in no danger of being driven by trouble of mind to fly to Christ. I pray you, if you are wrapped in a peace that will not bear the light of day, bestir yourselves and escape from your perilous condition!

With many, however, it is not so much ignorance as thoughtlessness. Multitudes of persons know, if they would know, but they make no use of their knowledge for they never think. What a pity to perish forever from lack of consideration! A man has a letter given to him. He puts it in his pocket and does not open it. He goes out tomorrow for his day’s pleasure and he promises himself that he will open the letter on Tuesday, when the Bank Holiday is over. Suppose in that letter there should be a warning of some plot against his life, or information of his mother being at the point of death, or of the sudden illness of a favorite child? What will he say to himself if he opens that letter too late? The Bible is to many a man God’s unopened letter. Alas, how little do men search the Scriptures! If they do read them, they do it mechanically and do not think over their warnings.

Why will not men think? Thoughtlessness is one of Satan’s great nets in which he entangles many. If the devil can keep you from thinking, he will keep you from believing! If he can keep you in the giddy whirl of vicious pleasure, or even of idle levity, he can make sure of you. Possibly he can effect his purpose by getting you absorbed in politics, or parish matters, or science, or business. Little does he care which, so long as he can draw you off from thinking of God and of your soul and of eternal things. Oh, that I could draw a mighty bow and shoot some piercing shaft which would go over the wall and carry death to that traitor, False-Peace! How gladly would I blow a blast most loud and break the spell of the Father of Lies and bring you from under his fatal fascination!

This peace, in many cases, is also the result of carnal security. Men say, “Well, well. We have not been much troubled yet and why should we care? We have lived in sin and we have not suffered for it. In fact, we have prospered through our contempt of scruples.” Of old, men said, “Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were.” And today they cry, “No deluge of fire has broken out upon us. These Christians say that the earth and all the works of men will be burned up and the very elements will melt with fervent heat! But we see no likelihood of it! In the heavens there is no sign of the Son of Man—no cloud, no Great White Throne—no token of the Judgment! Everything goes on calmly enough—why need we disturb ourselves?”

Thus, like the sluggard in the Proverbs, they ask for a little more slumber. They are willingly ignorant that once upon a time, in the olden days, it was so upon this earth and men married and were given in marriage. And they ate and drank and were drunken—and as it was told them, so it happened—for the Flood came and swept them all away! “When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them.” Beware, O men of this generation, lest this happen unto you, also, and the deluge of fire be upon you before you have escaped to Christ who alone is the Ark of souls! Will things always be as they have been? Can you be

sure of it? Are you not warned that it will not be so? Your eyes are not so clear as once they were! Your limbs are not so vigorous as once they were. If there is no change in the world, there is a great change in you during the last few years!

Before tomorrow’s sun has risen you may lie upon the bed of death! Therefore, I pray you, set it not to your seal that you have much goods laid up for many years—for this night your soul may be required of you. In a moment shall you be troubled—the Avenger shall leap through the window, though you think you have made fast the door—and you shall not escape. O Sirs, shall not my voice disturb your wicked slumbers, or must you sleep on till the trumpet shall awaken you, not to hope, but to condemnation? Soon shall He come who now would save you, but then must condemn you to the place of everlasting banishment! O Lord, have mercy upon those who are bewitched by carnal security! Break the enchantments of the deceiver.

Some, again, have a peace that comes of superstition. “Well,” they say, “we know that this is true which has been spoken, but it does not bear upon us. We are all right—we were made members of Christ, children of God and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven in our infant baptism! We have been confirmed and we have partaken of the holy communion. We have attended our church, or we have gone to our meeting-house with much regularity. Therefore we feel that for us there is a sure hope.” O Souls, beware of saying, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these.” Joab, in the day when Solomon executed the vengeance of God against him, instead of confessing his fault and seeking mercy, hoped for safety in the sanctuary and therefore stood with his hands upon the horns of the altar.

The tidings came to the king, “He is by the altar.” But the stern sentence was given, “Fall upon him, and bury him.” And so he perished in the Holy Place where God’s sacrifice was known to be offered. So will you die if you do not trust in the Lord Jesus—even though your hands should lie upon your Baptism and your Lord’s Supper. No outward performance can enable you to dispense with inward repentance and faith. If your heart is not right with God you shall perish with the sacramental bread in your mouth and go from the baptismal waters to the fires of Hell! Beware of the peace which is drawn from the stagnant pool of superstition—it will carry death into your soul.

Alas, there is a peace which does not lie in believing too much, but in believing too little! Unbelief brings false peace to thousands. If Satan can persuade you that, after all, these things are not so. If he can lead you to disbelieve your Bible. If he can lead you to think that there is no God, or that, if there is a God, He takes no account of men and will never call them to judgment—then the arch-deceiver will make sure of you and keep his goods in peace! I charge you, beware of that peace which is founded upon the denial of those Truths of God which your own conscience teaches you. Sin must be punished and if your peace is built upon the supposition that it will not be so, your foundation is even less to be depended upon than the sand. Hazard not your soul upon a lie!

I fear that many are kept in peace through companionship. Hand joins in hand—the man would be troubled, but he meets his old friend who is a skeptic—and he laughs his fears out of him. The woman gets home and talks with what she calls, “her friends,” who are as godless as herself— and she is by their tattle confirmed in her carelessness. O Sirs, your friends cannot deliver you if you lose your souls through their means! Choose rather as friends those who roughly tell you solemn truths than those who with excess of sweetness would flatter you to your everlasting undoing.

Once more, dear Friends, I say this—and may God make it come with power to some—peace caused by the devil is often the awful prelude of the last tremendous storm. One who described to me the earthquake in the south of France said, “That morning when we rose, I never saw more lovely weather. Everything smiled deliciously across the blue Mediterranean and the azure sky was without a cloud. Suddenly, without a moment’s warning, a tremor seized the earth and there was a great cry of men and women in their fright.” It usually happens, before tremendous convulsions of Nature, that there is an ominous calm. You must have noticed, a few minutes before a storm, how awfully still everything becomes. The air is motionless, the birds sit mute upon the bough—not a leaf is stirring, all is silent expectation.

Deceive not yourself—with wings of flame the tempest is hurrying on and while you speak it bursts upon you—casting all things into confusion and amazement. Before the last dread hurricane of doom a soul may be asleep and all around it there may be a deep calm. Beware of the treacherous peace! Beware of insensibility! Your unfeeling state should warn you that you are given over to destruction. In the higher and colder latitudes, when men feel a sleepiness stealing over them, their companions stir them up and rub them and will not let them slumber—for to sleep is to wake no more. The man pleads, “Let me sleep a half-an-hour and I shall be so refreshed.” Alas, if he sleeps he shall do ill, for he will grow rigid in the death which frost brings to one! Go on, wise friends, and compassionately shake him! Hurry him to and fro, or rub him vigorously till he grows sore!

I cannot get hold of you at this present hour with my hands, nor would I wish to give you a bodily shaking, but oh, that I could do this spiritually and wake you up! I cannot leave you to sleep your soul into perdition! Come, Woman, you must bestir yourself, you must quit this fatal stupor, this deadly peace or else you will pass away from the world of hope, and wake up in the dungeon of despair! I have now spoken as much as I think wise upon this terrible subject—may the Holy Spirit bless it to you all! It is not my speaking—it is your thinking which is now needed. The Lord move you to holy thought!

II. Now we come to the second part of our discourse upon which we hope to speak with far greater pleasure. The Psalmist says, “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” Here we have THE LORD’S PEACE. I trust

numbers of you are now enjoying it! A man of God lay dying, but he was very calm—more—he was supremely happy! He filled the house with cheerfulness. All who came to see him, knowing that he was about to die, as he well knew himself, went away edified and comforted by the interview with this thrice-happy man.

One said to him, “Friend, how is it that you have such peace?” He answered, “I can see no ground or cause for it save this—it is written, ‘You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.’” Was not that a satisfactory reply? There is a weight of argument in it. If your mind is stayed on God He will keep you in perfect peace. You could not keep yourself in perfect peace in the hour of tribulation, or faintness, or decay—but the Lord can keep you. When heart and flesh fail, God will be your joy! Then shall you receive Christ’s legacy— “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” I love that text because of the double view it gives of the Peacemaker. Here is a dying Savior making His will and saying, “Peace I leave with you.” Here is the living Savior stretching out His hands and saying, “My peace I give unto you.” He has not only left it in His will, but He has given it with His hands.

Now, Beloved, the peace that we should desire to possess is, first of all, a peace which is a blessing—“The Lord will bless His people with peace.” False peace is a curse, but to be soundly at peace with God is an unalloyed blessing and it brings no sorrow with it. To fall back upon the Father’s bosom and say, “I know that He Himself loves me and I know that I love Him”—to look up to Jesus and to say, “He loved me and gave Himself for me”—to feel the moving of the Holy Spirit and to yield ourselves up to His influences—this is peace unspeakable! To have no quarrel with God. No, to have no difference between His will and your own—this is a delightful experience!

Men may hate me, but if my God loves me, what does it matter? I may feel the cut of sharp, ungenerous words, but if my God speaks peace unto me, who can make trouble? “He will speak peace unto His people and to His saints.” This is joy, indeed! Do you know it? It is not only a blessing in itself, but it is a blessing in its consequences. There is no man so humble as the man that is at perfect peace with God—he marvels at the blessing he enjoys! There is no man so grateful. There is no man so courageous. There is no man so little affected by the world. There is no man who bears suffering so patiently. There is no man who is so ready for Heaven as the man who is at perfect peace with God and knows it! The peace of God, which passes all understanding, is a sacred guard to the soul—it shall keep our hearts and minds by Jesus Christ.

The value of peace as keeping the heart and mind is exceedingly great. It wards off all sorts of evils and preserves us unto the day of the Lord’s appearing. The more you enjoy peace with God the better. False peace is as stupefying and deadly as opium. Even the smallest drop of this sleeping mixture may be mischievous to the spirit and you may soon imbibe so much of this false confidence that it may deaden the conscience and create a fatal hardness of heart. But of God’s own peace you may drink to the full and no harm will come of it! You may be as happy in the Lord as possible and be all the better for it. Get strong faith and even full assurance and it will never make you idle—it will be a blessing and only a blessing to you all your days. “The Lord will bless His people with peace.”

Note, next, that this peace only comes from God. “The lord will bless His people with peace.” You cannot get that peace apart from the Lord himself—it is of no use to try to work it out yourself. You say, “I will get better. I will keep the Law, I will do this and do that”—you will never dig peace out of the soil of your own works. You cannot spin peace out of your own heart, as a spider spins her web. You must go to the Lord for peace and there is only one way in which you can go to Him—Jesus says, “I am the way.” Go to the Father through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit! Trust the Father, rest in Christ, yield to the Holy Spirit and you shall have the peace that God gives!

O dear Hearers, if you could come and talk with me and I could comfort you, it might be of no use to you. If you could go to some full-fledged priest and he could absolve you, it might only be one of the darkest of delusions. But if you go to God and get His peace, that peace is solid and abiding—it is founded on eternal Truth! It is guaranteed by the God of holiness! It is judged to be sound by the Judge of all the earth! Here we have peace from lips that cannot lie, peace from a heart which cannot change, peace through the blood which has made a full atonement! I pray you, seek this peace and make sure of it. You see how spiritual it is, for you must come to God for it and you can only come to Him in spirit and in truth. You see how little it depends upon externals, upon chapel-going, or church-going—it is only by a spiritual approach to God that this blessing can be obtained. Come to the Lord and Giver of peace. Come to Jesus who is our peace! Oh, may the Divine Spirit lead you to come to Jesus now, at this moment, for in coming to Him you shall receive rest! Plead now this promise—“The Lord will bless His people with peace.”

This peace comes only to His own people— “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” He will never bless those with peace who remain in rebellion against Him. “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” Say, are you one of His people? Are you loyal to the Prince Emmanuel? If so, the Lord has bought you with His precious blood and you are His. The Lord will bless His bloodbought people and cause them to be His by power as well as by price. Do you rest in Christ alone? Is the atoning Sacrifice your soul’s great hope? If so, you have been begotten again unto that lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the Lord will bless with peace His people who have risen with His own dear Son.

If you have the faith of God’s elect, you are one of His elect! If you have done with self, the world and sin as the main desire of your heart, you are among His people. If you yield yourself to God to live unto Him, then you are one of His people and the Lord will bless you with peace. The more closely you cling to the Lord Jesus, the more clear and full will your peace be. Do you belong to Him so that He can call you one of His people?

“Well,” says one, “I belong to the Church.” That is a secondary matter. Many are in the visible Church who do not belong to God. “Oh, but I belong to such-and-such a place of worship well known for spiritual life.” So you may, and yet not be one of the Lord’s people, for tares grow among the best of the wheat.

Say, O Heart, do you trust alone to Jesus the Savior? Have you given yourself over to the Lord, to be your own no longer? Are you affianced unto Christ, your all to be His and yourself to be His bride? Then the Lord will bless you with abundance of peace. Here is a practical statement, see if it is not true. Notice, again, that this is peace in the time of tempest and peace after storm. Read over again this 29th Psalm—it is the Psalm of the thunderstorm. Hear how the voice of God thunders through it from end to end. The great cedars of Lebanon are split, the mountains are moved, the wilderness of Kadesh is shaken and the trembling hinds drop their young in their fright! The whole earth rocks beneath the tremendous Voice and is lit up with flames of the lightning of the Lord. Yet the Psalm ends with those gracious words—“The Lord will bless His people with peace.”

Some of us enjoy our greatest peace when the Lord is abroad and the thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies. We feel a rapture as we perceive that our Father is very near and is speaking so that we hear His voice. In spiritual storms that voice is our comfort and after the tempests are over the Lord speaks a sweet hush to the hearts of His children. He allays our fears while He whispers, “It is I, be not afraid.” Brothers and Sisters, you will have many a tempest between here and Heaven, but before the tempest, through the tempest and after the tempest, “The Lord will bless His people with peace.”

As I turned my text over last night, it seemed to me to be a very wonderful passage. It is a sort of revolving text, like a gun which is always loaded and may be perpetually discharged. It is a flowing fountain, ever beginning with fresh streams. “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” We have had peace with God those 40 years, yes, but we have a promise of peace for today. Suppose we should live another 40 years? We shall still have the same promise—“The Lord will bless His people with peace.” I should like an everlasting check from some millionaire running thus—“So often as this check is presented at the bank, pay the bearer what he asks.” Few persons possessed of such a document would fail to put in an appearance at the bank! We should be regular visitors!

O you children of God, you have such a promissory note in the text before you! The Lord has endless, boundless peace within Himself and when you have long enjoyed peace with Him you may go to Him again and say, “Lord, renew my peace. I am troubled, but You are unmoved—bless me with Your peace.” When you are rich and find that riches bring cares, bring these to your God who will bless His people with peace. When you are poor, do the same. When children are born to you and with them come family cares, take the new burden to the Lord, for He gives peace. And if the children die and you weep as your young shoots are cut off, still turn to the Lord and believe that He will bless you with peace. If you grow sick, yourself, and the tokens of a deadly disease appear upon you, still be calm, for He will bless you with peace. When you must go upstairs and lie down upon your last bed to rise no more, then, even then, the Lord will bless you with His ever-living peace! And when you wake up at the sound of the last trump the Lord will still keep you in perfect peace.

“There remained a rest for the people of God.” This is always the heritage of His believing ones—“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Whatever shall befall our race according to the dark page of prophecy. Whatever of terror shall break forth throughout the endless ages of the yet-to-be, the Lord will bless His people with peace! Take this Truth of God home to your heart and live upon it and you may dwell perpetually in the Presence of the King. I have done when I have said the following words. First, let us enquire whether we are resting on a false or a true foundation. Am I addressing a stranger to this Tabernacle, here today for the first time? I would not wish to do you anything but real good and yet I should like to search you to the foundation.

Is your hope built on a false peace? Then I would like to overthrow it and leave no stone upon another. Refuges of lies must be swept away before refuges of Divine Grace will be sought. If you take shelter behind “a bowing wall and a tottering fence,” I would desire to find a hand towards sending it over, for it will go before long, and it had better go while you can seek another shelter. You will never be on a right foundation until you are off the wrong one. As long as your happiness and peace are false and yet are fair to look upon, you will not seek true peace! Therefore, I would break the idols to shivers! Will you look to this? Will you give over being too secure? May I ask you to accept nothing as a ground of comfort which is not true?

Do not believe in a security which is only of temporary value. Believe eternal Truth and seek eternal life. Do not wrap yourself about with a comfort which you dare not prove and test. If you dare not examine it to the very bottom, away with it! If it will not bear the closest search, leave it to those who can afford to run great risks, for you cannot. If you dare not think about your state, you can be sure that there is something wrong with it. Walk in the light of God and have no fellowship with unfruitful hopes which are works of darkness. May I entreat you, when you have laid these things to heart, to seek at once to have close dealings with God? Do not say, “I will begin searching the Scriptures.” That is a good thing in itself, but if you rest in Scripture reading and do not go to God Himself, your Bible may be made a stumbling stone for your soul!

Do not say, “I shall attend more religious services.” This, also, may be well, but religious services will ruin you if you put them in the place of personal dealings with God! Your living soul has personally to do with the living God. Come to HIM this morning if you have never been before. Come at once. Delay no more! Do you shrink? Do you want an introduction? Do you need a friend to go with you to Heaven’s high court? Behold, the Son of God waits to be your Mediator and Intercessor! Come to the Father through the Son and you will in no wise be cast out! Get a hope, O

my Hearer, which will last you to the last! Get a hope which you can die with! I charge you by the living God and by Christ Jesus, who will surely come to judge the quick and dead, get a confidence which will endure the test of death, judgment, and eternity!

Seek to have “boldness in the day of judgment.” No small matter this. Make sure work for the day of trial. How can you be sure unless your trust is built upon the Foundation which God Himself has laid? Behold the All-Sufficient Sacrifice! Rest in the Divine Expiation, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. “But can we be sure?” cries one. There are thousands of us who possess the assurance of a child-like faith. We could not rest a minute if we were not sure in such a matter! I could not be content with a salvation which did not give me certainty in my soul, for sin is real and I must have real pardon—my trouble of heart is real and I must have real confidence in a Savior! My inward sinfulness is real and I must have a real new birth unto holiness.

In the day when I took hold of Christ Jesus my Lord, I found in Him such real peace that I knew and was persuaded that He is able to save. If any call me a dogmatist, I plead guilty to the charge. I must dogmatize when I am sure! I cannot live without being certain! Doubt in this matter is death! I accept my Lord’s Atonement! I rest on it and I find peace to my soul. “If,” “but,” “perhaps”—those are daggers in my heart! Where is the comfort to any soul in what he does not know to be true? The sap and substance of consolation lie in the certainty of the truth believed. If you are not sure, never rest till you are! Once know assuredly that God is good to Israel and that He will bless His people with peace and then go on to enjoy as much of that peace as your soul can hold!

Sing both by day and by night. “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice.” As for me, I know whom I have believed and the resolve of my soul is to magnify my Lord, world without end—

**“Down from above the blessed Dove  
Is come into my breast  
To witness Your eternal love,  
And give my spirit rest.  
My God, I’ll praise You while I live,  
And praise You when I die,  
And praise You when I rise again,  
And to eternity.”**

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 73, 29.***HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—734, 715, 726. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #87 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE MAJESTIC VOICE  
NO. 87

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 22 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.”  
Psalm 29:4.**

ALL God’s works praise Him whether they are magnificent or minute. They all discover the wisdom, the power and the benevolence of their Creator. “All Your works praise You, O God.” But there are some of His more majestic works which sing the song of praise louder than others. There are some of His doings upon which there seems to be engraved in larger letters than usual, the name of God! Such are the lofty mountains which worship God with uncovered heads both night and day. Such are the rolling seas, too mighty to be managed by man, but held in check by God. And such, especially, are the thunder and the lightning. The lightning is the glance of the eyes of God and the thunder is the uttering of His voice. The thunder has usually been more especially attributed to God, though philosophers assure us that it is to be accounted for by natural causes. We believe them, but we prefer, ourselves, the first great cause and we are content with that odd and universal belief that the thunder is the voice of God. It is marvelous what effect the thunder has had upon all kinds of men. In reading an ode of Horace the other day, I found him in the first two verses singing like a true Ithurean, that he despised God and intended to live merrily. But, by-and-by, he hears the thunder and acknowledging that there is a Jehovah, who lives on high, he trembles before Him! The most wicked of men have been obliged to acknowledge that there must be a Creator when they have heard that marvelous voice of His sounding through the sky! Men of the stoutest nerve and the boldest blasphemy have become the weakest of all creatures when God has, in some degree, manifested Himself in the mighty whirlwind, or in the storm. “He breaks the cedars of Lebanon,” He brings down the stout hearts. He lays down the mighty and He obliges those who never acknowledged Him to reverence Him when they hear His voice! The Christian will acknowledge the thunder to be the voice of God from the fact that if he is in the right frame of mind, it always suggests to him holy thoughts. I do not know how it may be with you, but I scarcely ever hear the rolling thunder but I begin to forget earth and look upwards to my God. I am unconscious of any feeling of terror or pain—it is rather a feeling of delight that I experience, for I like to sing that verse—

*“The God that rules on high  
And thunders when He pleases,  
That rides upon the stormy sky  
And manages the seas—  
This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love!  
He shall send down His heavenly powers  
To carry us above.”*

He is our God and I like to sing that and think of it. But why is there something so terrible in that voice, when God is speaking—something so terrific to other men and humbling to the Christian? The Christian is obliged to sink very low in his own estimation. Then he looks up to God and cries, “Infinite Jehovah, spare a worm, crush not an unworthy wretch! I know it is Your voice. I reverence You with solemn awe. I prostrate myself before Your Throne. You are my God and beside You there is none else.” It might well have occurred to a Jewish mind to have called the thunder the voice of God when he considered the loudness of it when all other voices are hushed. Even if they are the loudest voices mortals can utter, or the most mighty sounds—yet are they but indistinct whispers compared with the voice of God in the thunder! Indeed, they are entirely lost when God speaks from His Throne and makes even the deaf hear and those who are unwilling to acknowledge Him hear His voice!

But we need not stop to prove that the thunder is the voice of God from any natural feeling of man. We have Scripture to back us up and, therefore, we shall do our best to appeal to that. In the first place, there is a passage in the book of Exodus where I would refer you. There, in the margin, we are told that the thunder is the voice of God. In the 9th Chapter and the 28th verse, Pharaoh says, “Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunder and hail.” The original Hebrew has it, and my margin has it—and the margin of all of you who are wise enough to have marginal Bibles—“Voices of God.” “Let there be no more voices of God and hail.” So you see it is not a mere illusion, but we are really warranted by Scripture in saying that, “the thunder is the voice of God lifted up in the sky.” Now, for another proof. To what shall we refer you unless we send you to the book of Job? Beginning in his 37th Chapter at the 3rd verse, he says, “He directs it under the whole Heaven and His lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roars; He thunders with the voice of His excellency: and He will not stay them when His voice is heard. God thunders marvelously with His voice; great things does He, which we cannot comprehend.” And so he says in the 40th Chapter at the 9th verse, “Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like He?” I am glad, in this age, when men are seeking to forget God and put Him entirely out of the Creation—trying to put laws in the place of God, as if laws could govern a universe without Someone to execute those laws and put power and force into them—I am glad, I say, to be able to bear testimony to something which men cannot deny to be caused immediately by God, the Mighty One, Himself!

There is one striking proof I would offer to you that the thunder is the voice of God and that is the fact that when God spoke on Sinai and gave forth His Law, His voice is then described, if not in the first passage, yet in the reference to it, as being great thunders. “There were thunders and lightning, exceedingly loud and long.” God spoke, then, and He spoke so terribly in thunder that the people requested that they might hear that voice no more! And I must refer you to one passage in the New Testament which will bear me out thoroughly in describing the thunder to be, indeed, the voice of God. Look at John, in the 11th Chapter, where Jesus lifted up His voice to Heaven at the tomb of Lazarus and asked His Father to answer Him. And then a voice came from Heaven and they that stood by said, “that it thundered.” It was the voice of God which was then heard and they ascribed it to the thunder. Here is a remarkable proof that the thunder has usually been ascribed to God as being His voice! And when God’s voice has been heard on any remarkable occasion, it has always been accompanied by the sound of thunder, or, rather, has been the sound of thunder itself.

Well, now, leaving these considerations altogether, we come to make some remarks, not upon the voice of God in the thunder, but upon the voice of God as elsewhere heard. It is not only heard there, naturally, but there are spiritual voices and other voices of the Most High. “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” God has spoken in various ways to man in order that man might not think Him a God so engrossed with Himself that He does not observe His creatures. It has graciously pleased the Divine Being to sometimes look upon man, at other times to stretch out His hand to man and, sometimes, to reveal Himself in mortal appearance to man and frequently to speak to man. At sundry times He has spoken absolutely without the use of means—by His own voice—as, for instance, when He spoke from Sinai’s blazing mountaintop. Or when He spoke to Samuel in his bed and said unto him several times, “Samuel, Samuel.” Or when He spoke to Elijah and Elijah said, “he heard the whirlwind and he saw the fire.” And after that there was “a still small voice.” He has spoken immediately from Heaven by His own lips on one or two occasions in the life of Christ. He spoke to Him at the waters of Jordan, when He said, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” He spoke to Him on another occasion, to which we have already referred. He spoke— it was God that spoke, though it was Jesus Christ—He spoke to Saul, when on his way to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He has spoken several times by His own voice without the intervention of means at all. At other seasons, God has been pleased to speak to men by angels. He has, as it were, written the message and sent it down by His messenger from on high. He has told to man many wonders and secrets by the lips of those glorious beings who are flaming spirits of His, that do His pleasure. As frequently, perhaps, God has spoken to men in dreams, in visions of the night when deep sleep falls upon them. Then, when the natural ear has been closed, He has opened the ear of the Spirit and He has taught Truths which, otherwise, men could never have known.

More frequently, still, God has spoken to men by men. From the days of Noah even until now, God has raised up His Prophets, by whose lips He has spoken. It was not Jeremiah who uttered that lament which we read—it was Jehovah—God in Jeremiah speaking through the natural organs of his voice! It was not Isaiah who foresaw the future and foretold the doom of millions—it was God in Isaiah thus speaking. And so with every Prophet of the Lord now living and every minister whom God has raised up to speak—when we speak with power and efficacy and unction—it is not we, who speak, but it is the Spirit of our Father who dwells in us! God speaks through men and now, also, we know that God speaks through His own written Word of Inspiration. When we turn to the pages of Scripture, we must not look upon these words as being, in any degree, the words of men, but as being the Words of God. And though they are silent, yet do they speak. And though they cause no noise, yet, verily, “their God has gone forth throughout all the world and their noise unto the ends of the earth.” And again—God even now speaks by the use of means. He does not make man speak, He does not make the Bible speak merely of itself, but He speaks through the Bible and through the man— as really as if He had used no books or employed no man to speak for Him! Yes, and there are times when the Spirit of God speaks in the heart of man without the use of means. I believe there are many secret impulses, many solemn thoughts, many mysterious directions given to us without a single word having been uttered but by the simple motions of God’s Spirit in the heart. This thing I know, that when I have neither heard nor read, I have yet felt the voice of God within me and the Spirit, Himself, has revealed some dark mystery, opened some secret, guided me into some Truth, given me some direction, led me in some path, or in some other way has immediately spoken to me, Himself. And I believe it is so with every man at conversion—with every Christian—as he is carried on through his daily life and especially as he nears the shores of the grave—that God, the Everlasting One, speaks, Himself, to his soul with a voice that he cannot resist, although he may have resisted the mere voice of man. The voice of the Lord is still heard, even as it was heard before. Glory be to His name!

And now, my Beloved, I come to the Doctrine, “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” First of all, essentially. “The voice of the Lord” must be “full of majesty.” Secondly, constantly. “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” Thirdly, efficaciously, in all it does, “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.”

I. First, then, “The voice OF THE LORD IS FULL OF MAJESTY.” Yes, and so it should be. Should not that voice be full of majesty which comes from Majesty? Is not God the King of Kings and the Ruler of the whole earth? Should He, then, speak with a voice below His own dignity? Should not a king speak with the voice of a king? Should not a mighty monarch speak with a monarch’s tongue? And surely, if God is God, and if He is the blaster of all worlds and the Emperor of the universe, He must, when He speaks, speak with the monarch’s tongue and with a majestic voice! The very Nature of God requires that all He does should be Godlike. His looks are Divine looks. His thoughts are Divine thoughts. Should not His words be Divine words, since they come from Him? Verily, from the very Essence of God we might infer that His voice would be full of majesty!

But what do we mean by a voice having majesty? I take it that no man’s voice can have majesty in it unless it is true. A lie, if it should he spoken in the noblest language, would never be majestic! A lie, if it is uttered by the most eloquent lips, would be a mean and paltry thing, however it might be spoken! And a lie, wherever uttered and by whomever, is not majestic! A lie can never be truth and truth only can ever have majesty about it. And because God’s Words are pure Truth, unalloyed with the least degree of error, therefore does it come to pass that His words are full of majesty. Whatever I hear my Father say in Scripture, wherever He speaks to me by the ministry, or by His Spirit—if He speaks it, there is not the slightest alloy of untruth about it! I may receive it just as it is—

*“My faith may on His promise live,*

*May on His promise die.”*  
I need not reason about it, it is enough for me to take it and believe it because He has said it! I need not try to prove it to the worldling. If I were to prove it, he would believe it none the better. If the voice of God’s majesty does not convince him, surely the voice of my reasoning never will. It need not stand and cut and divide between this voice of God and the other, I know it must be true if He has said it and, therefore, I will believe all that I believe God has said, believing that His voice is full of majesty!

Then, again, when we speak of a majestic voice, we mean by it, that it is a commanding voice. A man may speak truth and yet there may be but little majesty in what he says because he speaks it in a tone that never can command attention and catch the ear of his fellow creatures. In fact, there are some men, expounders of the Truth of God, who had better hold their tongues, for they do Truth an injury. We know full many who affect to preach God’s Truth. They go out to battle, they take the lance in their hands to defend the honor of Christ, but they wield the lance so poorly—they have so little of God’s Spirit—that they do but disgrace His holy name! It would have been better had they remained at home. Oh, Beloved, God’s voice, when He speaks, is always a commanding voice! Let the monarch arise in the midst of his creatures—they may have been conversing with each other before—but hush, his majesty is about to speak! It is so with the majesty of God—if He should speak in Heaven, the angels would hush their hallelujahs and suspend the notes of their golden harps to hear Him! And when He speaks on earth, it is at all times becoming in all His creatures to hush their rebellious passions and make the voice of their reason be silent. When God speaks, either from the pulpit or from His Word, I hold it to be my duty to keep silent! Even while we sing the glories of our God, our soul stands trembling. But when He speaks forth His own glories, who is he that dares to reply? Who is he that shall lift up his voice against the Majesty of Heaven? There is something so majestic in the voice of God, that when He speaks, it commands silence everywhere and bids men listen!

But there is something very powerful in the voice of God and that is the reason why it has majesty in it. When God speaks, He speaks not weakly, but with a voice full of power. We poor creatures, at times, are clothed by God with that might and when we speak, Grace comes pouring from our lips. But there are oftentimes seasons when we meet with small success. We talk and talk and have not our Master’s feet behind us, nor our Master’s Spirit within us. And, therefore, but little is done. It is not so with God—He never wasted a word yet! He never spoke a solitary word in vain. Whatever He intended, He had but to speak and it was accomplished! Once he said, “Let there be light,” and instantly light was. So He said in past eternity that Christ should be His first Elect, and Christ was His first Elect! He decreed our salvation—He spoke the word, and it was done. He sent His Son to redeem and proclaimed to His elect, justification in Him. And His voice was a powerful voice, for it did justify us! Any other man’s voice could not pardon sin—none but the voice of the monarch can speak pardon to the subject. And God’s is a majestic voice, for He has only to speak and our pardon is at once signed, sealed and ratified! God is not pompous in His words. He does not speak big-sounding words without meaning. The simplest word He utters may have little meaning to man, but it has a power and meaning in it equal to the Omnipotence of God. There is a majesty about the voice of God which might suffice to nerve my soul to fight the dragon. To say, “Where is your boasted victory, Death? Where is the monster’s sting?” That one promise has majesty enough in it to make the dwarf a giant and the weakling one of the mightiest of the Most High! It has might enough in it to feed a whole host in the wilderness, to guide a whole company through the mazes of mortal life—Majesty enough to divide the Jordan, to open the gates of Heaven and admit the ransomed in! Beloved, I cannot tell you how it is that God’s voice is so majestic except from the fact that He is so mighty and that His words are like He!

But just one more thought concerning the voice of God being essentially majestic and I must trouble you to remember this even if you forget everything else that I have said! In some sense, Jesus Christ may be called the Voice of God. You know He is called the Word of God frequently in Scripture—and I am sure this Word of God, “is full of majesty.” The Voice and the Word are very much the same thing. God speaks—it is His Son. His Son is the Word, the Word is His Son and the Voice is His Son. Ah, truly the Voice, the Word of God, “is full of majesty.” Angels! You can tell what sublime Majesty invested His blessed Person when He reigned at His Father’s right hand. You can tell what was the brightness which He laid aside to become Incarnate. You can tell how sparkling was that crown, how mighty was that scepter, how glorious were those robes bedecked with stars! Spirits, you who saw Him when He stripped Himself of all His glories—you can tell what was His Majesty. And oh, you glorified, you who saw him ascend up on high, leading captivity captive—you beloved songsters who bow before Him and unceasingly sing His love—you can tell how full of majesty He is! High above all principalities and powers you see Him sit—angels are but servants at His feet and the mightiest monarchs like creeping worms beneath His Throne! High up there, where God, alone, reigns, beyond the sight of angels or the gaze of immortal spirits—there He sits, not merely Majestic, but full of majesty. Christian, adore your Savior! Adore the Son of God! Reverence Him and remember at all seasons and times how little you may be, your Savior, with whom you are allied—the Word of God—is essentially full of majesty!

II. Now the second point. IT IS CONSTANTLY FULL OF MAJESTY. God’s voice, like man’s voice, has its various tones and degrees of loudness. But it is constantly full of majesty—whatever tone He uses—it is always full of majesty! Sometimes God speaks to man with a harsh voice, threatening him for sin—and then there is majesty in that harshness. When man is angry with his fellows and he speaks harshly and severely, there is little majesty in that. But when the just God is angry with sinful mortals and He says, “I will by no means spare the guilty,” “I, the Lord, am a jealous God.” When He declares Himself to be exceedingly angry and asks who can stand before the fury of His Countenance—when the rocks are cast down by Him—there is a majesty in that terrific voice of His! Then He adopts another voice. Sometimes it is a gentle didactic voice, teaching us what He would have us learn. And then how full of majesty it is! He explains, He expounds, He declares. He tells us what we are to believe—and what a majesty there is in His voice then! Men may explain God’s Word and have no majesty in what they say. But when God teaches what His people are to hold to be Truth, what majesty there is in it! So much majesty, that if any man takes away from the Words that are written in this Book, God shall take away his name out of the Book of Life and out of the holy city—so much majesty, that to seek to mend the Bible is a proof of a blasphemous heart—that to seek to alter one Word of Scripture is a proof of alienation from the God of Israel! At another time God uses another voice—a sweet consoling voice. And oh, you mourners who have ever heard God’s comforting voice—is not that full of majesty? There is nothing of the mere trifling that sometimes we employ to comfort poor sick souls. Mothers will often talk to those who are sick in some gentle strain—but somehow it appears to be affected and is, therefore, not full of majesty. But when God speaks to comfort, He uses His majestic words. “The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed,” says the Lord who has mercy on you! Oh, is there not majesty in this sweet voice? “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I never forget you.” How sweet, but yet how majestic! We cannot avoid being comforted by it if God speaks it to our souls. Sometimes God’s voice is a reproving voice—and then, too, it is full of majesty. “The ox knows his owner,” He says, “and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.” And He speaks reprovingly, as if He had a controversy with them and calls the mountains and the hills to hear His reproof of them on account of sin. “I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.” But God’s reproving voice is always full of majesty! At other times it is a voice of command to His children, when He appears to them and says, “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.”

And how majestic are God’s commands, how mighty is His voice when He tells us what to do! Some of you have a very poor estimation of what God’s voice is. God tells you to be baptized in honor of your Lord and Master. He speaks to you and He tells you to come round His Table and to remember His dying sufferings. But you do not think much of it. It seems to be lost upon you. But let me tell you that God’s voice of command is as full of majesty and ought to be as much regarded by His people as His Word of promise or His Word of Doctrine! Whenever He speaks, there is a majesty about His voice. Whatever tone He may adopt, there is majesty. Ah, Beloved and there are times coming when God will speak words which will be evidently full of majesty—then He will speak and say, “Arise, you dead and come to judgment.” There will be majesty in that voice for Hell shall then be unlocked and the gates of the grave sawn in two. The spirits of the dead shall again be clothed with flesh and the dry bones shall be made alive once more. And He will speak, by-andby, and summon all men to stand before His bar. And there will be majesty in His voice, then, when He shall say, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” And oh, dread thought, there will be tremendous majesty in His voice when He shall exclaim, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Again—God’s voice is full of majesty in all the different degrees of its loudness. Even in calling, there is a difference in the loudness of God’s voice. Many of you were called gently to Christ and you did not seem to hear the thunders of Sinai, like many of God’s people. But whether the voice is loud or soft, it is always full of majesty!

And in all its mediums it is full of majesty. God has, sometimes, chosen the poor to speak His wisdom. If I go and hear a countryman or an untaught man, preach—who makes many mistakes in grammar—yet if it is God’s Word that He preaches, it “is full of majesty.” And sometimes when a little child has repeated a text, we have not noticed the child by reason of the majesty of the voice! In fact, the meaner the instrument employed, the greater the majesty in the voice, itself. I have noticed a tendency in many to despise their poorer Brothers and Sisters, members of smaller Churches, where there is a more humble minister than one they are in the habit of hearing. This is all wrong, for God’s voice is full of majesty and He can speak as well by one as the other!

III. In the last place, I must briefly refer to the majesty of God’s voice WHEN IT IS REVEALED IN ITS EFFECT—when it is spoken home to the heart of man. Just look at the Psalm and let me briefly refer to the facts here mentioned. I shall not understand them naturally, though, doubtless, they were so intended by David, but I shall understand them spiritually. As Dr. Hawker remarks, “Doubtless, they were intended to set out gracious operations, as well as natural ones.”

First, the voice of the Lord is a breaking voice. “The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars.” The most proud and most stubborn sinner is broken before Him when He speaks! I believe that even the spirit of Voltaire, stubborn as that spirit was, and hard as a millstone, would have been broken in a single instant if God had but spoken to him. The hardest heart I have here needs only one syllable from God to break it in a moment! I might hammer away to all eternity, but I could not do it. Only “the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.”

In the next place it is a moving voice, an overcoming voice. “He makes them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.” Who would ever think of a mountain moving? It stands so fast and firm. But God’s voice, like His voice in Zerubbabel, speaks to the mountain and says, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” There is not a mountain standing in this world that God cannot move away by His voice, whether it be the mountains of Rome, or the mountains of the false prophet, or the mountains of colossal systems of heresy, or infidelity, or idolatry! God has only to speak the word and the idols shall fall from their thrones and the firm mountains shall skip like a calf!

In the next place, the voice of God is a dividing voice. “The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire” or, as it should be, “The voice of the Lord puts out with flames of fire.” You saw the lightning on Friday and you remarked, then, when God’s voice was heard, that the flash seemed to part the cloud and divide the sky. Just so with God’s Word. Where God’s Word is faithfully preached and His voice is spiritually heard, it is always a dividing voice. You bring all kinds of different characters into a Chapel and God’s word splits them all in two. It is in this place God divides you. The Son of God holds His Throne and sits in judgment here. It divides men from men. It divides sinners from their sins. It divides sinners from their righteousness. It splits through clouds and darkness. It divides our troubles, breaks a way for us to Heaven. In fact, there is nothing that the voice of God cannot divide! It is a dividing voice.

And then, again, the voice of the Lord is such a loud voice, that it is said to shake the wilderness. “The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.” Stand in the middle of a wilderness or a desert and conceive if you could make anything hear. But when God speaks, His voice rings through the wilderness and startles the desert, itself! Minister of God, you have only to speak God’s voice and you will be heard! If you have only half-a-dozen to hear you, you will be heard further than you know of! None of us can preach a Gospel sermon, but it is heard and talked of more than we imagine. Yes, there is not a pious conversation with a poor woman but may be carried all over the world and produce the most wonderful effects! Nobody can tell how loud is God’s voice and how far it may be heard. “Lift up your voice; lift it up; be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.” And your voice may be ever so weak and your ability ever so little—only lift it up and God Almighty, by His Grace, may make the very wilderness to shake—yes, He may make the very wilderness of Kadesh to tremble!

And then in the 9th verse there is another idea which I must not pass over, although I might have preferred to do so. “The voice of the Lord makes the cattle to calve.” By this I understand what the ancients believed—that so frightened were the cattle by the noise of the thunder, that the period of calving was often hastened on and frequently premature. It is just so with God’s voice. If a man has in him a desire towards Christ, the voice of God makes him bring forth that desire to the joy and rejoicing of his soul. And very frequently, when a man has a bad design towards God, God has only to speak and his design becomes abortive. It is brought forth, as it were, before its time and falls like an untimely fruit to the ground! Whatever man has within him, God can make it come out of him in a single moment. If he has a desire towards God—God can bring forth that desire and He can bring forth the soul and make it live. And if it is a desire against God, God can frustrate that desire, kill it, overwhelm it and overthrow it—“for the voice of the Lord makes the cattle to calve.”

And in the next place, the voice of God is a discovering voice. It “discovers the forests.” The trees were your former hiding place—but in the forest, however thick it may be, there does the lightning gleam. Under the mighty trees, however thick their covering, the voice of the Lord is heard. God’s voice is a discovering voice. You hypocrites! You get to hiding yourselves under the trees of the forest—but God’s voice thunders after you when it speaks! Some of you hide under ceremonies, good lives, resolutions and hopes. But God’s voice will discover the forests. And remember, there will be a day with some of you when you will hide yourselves, or seek to do it, under rocks and mountains, or in the deepest parts of the forests—but when He sits upon His Throne, the voice of the Lord will discover the forests! You may stand under the old oak, or creep within its trunk and feel that there you are hidden—but His eyes, like balls of fire, shall see you through and through—and His voice, like a voice of thunder, shall say, “Come forth, culprit; come forth, man! I can see you—

*‘My eyes can pierce the shades and find your soul as soon*

*In midnight’s darkness as in blazing noon.’*  
Come forth, come forth!” And vain, then, will be your disguises, vain your subterfuges—“The voice of the Lord discovers the forests.” Oh, I would to God that He would speak to some of you this morning and reveal your souls! I wish He would reveal to you, your lost and hopeless condition— that you are damned without Christ—every one of you! Oh that He would show you how horrible is your position considered apart from the Savior! Show to you the fallacy of all your legal hope and of all your experiences, if they are not experiences allied to Christ! I pray that He would reveal to you that all your good works will come tumbling on your head, at last, if you build them for a house and that you must stand surrounded by no covering, but unveiled before the God who discovers the forests!

I would have preached to you this morning, but I cannot. Yet, perhaps, amidst the multitude of my words there may be some still small voice of God which shall reach your heart. And if the rest of you should despise it, what of that? The voice of God will be as full of majesty in the reprobate as in the elect! If you are cast away into Hell, God shall get as much glory from the voice which you heard and which you despised, as He does from His voice which the elect heard and at which they trembled and fled to God! Do not think that your damnation will rob God of any of His honor! Why, Sirs, He can be as much glorified in your destruction as in your salvation! You are but little creatures in the account of His Glory. He can magnify Himself anyhow! Oh, humble yourselves, therefore, before God! Bow down before His love and His mercy and hear, now, what the plan of salvation is, whereby God brings out His elect. It is this—“he that believes,” in that Voice, that Word, that Son of His, “he that believes,”—not he that hears—“he that believes”—not he that talks—“he that believes”—not he that reads—“he that believes”—not merely he that hopes—“he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.”

Ah, Hearers, if I could leap out of my body and could lay aside the infirmities of my spirit, I think that then I might preach to you! But I know right well that even then it must be God who speaks—and therefore I leave the words—My God! My God! Save these, my people, for Jesus’ precious name’s sake. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2489 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SINGING SAINTS  
NO. 2489

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1896.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 3, 1886.

**“Sing to the LORD, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”  
Psalm 30:4.**

DAVID had been seriously ill and the Lord had graciously restored him to health. He says, “O Lord my God, I cried to You and You have healed me. O Lord, You have brought up my soul from the grave: You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.” As soon as he has recovered his health and strength, the holy instincts of the man lead him to praise the Lord. The first thing to do, when the throat is clear after an illness, is to sing praises to God! The first thing to do, when the eyes are brightened again, is to look up to the Lord with thankfulness and gratitude. Some people need to be told this, but the Psalmist did not—it came to him as a matter of course. Now that he was restored, he would take his place among the heavenly choristers and sing to Jehovah. He was not satisfied to sing alone, what child of God is? Among the birds in the springtime, when the first one wakes in the morning and begins to sing, does he not call up his fellows? Is not his song an invitation to all the feathered songsters of the grove to join with him and pour out their united harmony? In like manner, it is characteristic of a praiseful heart that it naturally desires society in praise. We do not like to praise God alone—we can do it and we will do it if we must—but our heart often cries aloud to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, “Praise to the Lord.” Our very, “Hallelujah,” is intended to stir up others to this holy exercise, for it means, “Praise you the Lord.”

My one desire, just now, is that those of us who have received special mercy from God should praise His name and then that all the rest, if there are any who have not received such remarkable mercies as others of us have, should also feel exhorted to join in the sacred song of thankfulness to our God!

This is a duty which is pleasant—there is nothing more delightful than to sing praises to the Lord. It is also a duty that is profitable—it will be as blessed to yourself as it will be pleasing to God. Singing has a curative effect upon many of the maladies of the soul. I am sure that it lightens the burdens of life and I was about to say that it shortens the weary way of duty if we can but sing as we travel along it. This holy employment is pleasant and profitable and it is preparatory for another world and a higher state! I like to sing with Dr. Watts—

*“I would begin the music here,  
And so my soul should rise:  
Oh for some heavenly notes to bear  
My passions to the skies!”*

We are on the way to Glory, so let us sing as we journey there and, as the lark, ascending up to Heaven’s gate sings as she soars, her wings keeping time with her music and mounting in her song as she rises through the air, so let it be with us—every day a Psalm, every night a day’s march nearer Home, a little nearer to Heaven’s music and a little better imitation of it! Let us sing, now, in our hearts if not with our lips, and when the time comes, let us join our lips with our hearts and sing to the Lord! That is our text, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”

It strikes me that our text is very suitable for a communion Sabbath evening. We are about to gather at this table whereon are spread the memorials of our Savior’s death. And there are three things about the text which make me think it a very proper one for such an occasion. They are, first, the peculiar fitness of the exhortation to our present engagement—“Sing to the Lord.” Secondly, the special suitability of the subject for our meditation—“The remembrance of His holiness.” Then, thirdly, the admirable suitability of the company invited to join in the song for they are the same people who are invited to sit down at the table—“Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”

I. So, first, let us consider THE PECULIAR FITNESS OF THE EXHORTATION TO OUR PRESENT ENGAGEMENT—“Sing to the Lord.”  
You are to come to the table where you remember your Savior’s death, where you are to feed upon the memorials of His passion. Come there with a heart prepared for song. “Oh,” says one, “I thought I had better come with tears.” Yes, come with tears—they will be very sweet to Christ if you let them fall upon His feet to wash them with your penitential streams. “Oh, Sir,” says another, “I thought that surely I must come with deep solemnity.” So you must. Woe be to you if you come in any other way, but do you know of any divorce between solemnity and joy? I do not. Levity is akin to sorrow and soon curdles into it—the laugh is but superficial—and just below the surface lies the sigh. But he who is calmly, quietly, soberly thoughtful, is the man in whom there may be deeps of joy which can never be fathomed. There is a little shallow joy that goes prattling over the pebbles of the brook and is soon gone. I invite you not to that sort of mirth, but to that deep solemn joy which godly men feel and which can be fittingly expressed in holy song. “Sing to the Lord.” That is no frivolous music! “Sing to the Lord.” That is no ballad or ditty—it is a Psalm—deep, solemn, profound. And the joy of it is great. “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His.”  
“Still,” you say to me, “we do not quite see the suitability of singing at this Communion Table.” Well, then, if you do not, I think you soon will, for I remind you that at this table, we celebrate a work accomplished. Solomon said, “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof.” The joy is not in the sowing, but in the reaping! Our Lord bids us put bread and wine upon the table to show that His work is finished by His death. There is the bread and there is the wine—they are distinct and separate. They indicate the flesh and the blood, but the blood separate from the flesh—a sure mark that death has taken place. It is Christ’s death that we celebrate by this communion and that death has written across it these words, “It is finished!” He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do and, therefore, He gave up the ghost. I rejoice that Christ’s death is an accomplished fact! We have sung, in plaintive tones, with an almost bleeding heart, the sad story of the Cross, and nails, and spear, and crown of thorns. And it has been a sweet relief to us when the poet has led us to sing—

*“No more the bloody spear,  
The Cross and nails no more,  
For Hell itself shakes at His name  
And all the heavens adore.”*

It is an infinite satisfaction to us that—  
*“The head that once was crowned with thorns, Is crowned with glory now.”*

All the shame and sorrow are done with. All that is over and we come to this table to eat this bread and to drink of this cup in memory of a glorious work, an unrivalled work, a work which cost the Savior His life, but a work that is complete and perfect and accepted of God! Talk of the labors of Hercules? What are those compared with the toil of the Christ of God? Talk of the conquests of Caesar? What are those beside the victories of Christ who has led captivity captive and received gifts for men? Beloved, I think that no music can be too loud, too pleasant, too joyous, as we gather about this table and say, one to another, “We are celebrating the full accomplishment of that which Jesus undertook to do when He was born at Bethlehem, when He lived at Nazareth, when He sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane and died on the Cross at Calvary.” Therefore, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His!”

I think I see another reason also why we should come to this table with holy song and that is not only because of a work accomplished but because of a result realized, at least in a measure. Look, Sirs. Instead of flesh, I see bread. Instead of blood, I see wine. I know that the bread and the wine are symbols of the flesh and the blood, but I also know that they are something more—they are not only symbols of the things, themselves—but also of that which comes out of those things. This is what I mean. This day, because Christ has died, a table is spread for the starving souls of men. God keeps open house. Like a great king, He sets His table in the street, sends out His servants and bids them invite the hungry, the poor, the needy, the thirsty, to come and eat and drink and be satisfied. And, inasmuch as maddened and besotted by their sin, they will not come, He adds this command, “Compel them to come in, that My house may be filled.”

And, Brothers and Sisters, when you and I gather around this table, if we have, indeed, come to Christ spiritually, He sees in us a part of the reward of His sufferings! The festival has been going on these 1800 years. Relays of guests have been continually feasting at the Table of the great King who says, “My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed,” and His guests are still coming, myriads of them, who would all have died if they had not lived by feeding upon Christ! They would have all been lost if they had not been saved by the precious blood of Jesus! They are still coming and our prophetic eyes see, in the companies that are gathering together this Sabbath all over the world, the vanguard of a mightier host that no man can number, out of every nation, kindred, tribe, people and tongue! Therefore, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His.” The very setting up of the Communion Table and the gathering of men and women to it that they may spiritually feast upon their dying Lord is a reason for thankfulness!

There is, in the third place, this reason why some of us should sing to the Lord, for here is a blessing enjoyed. Not only are many coming in various parts of the world and feeding spiritually upon the flesh and blood of the Crucified, but it is a special joy that you and I are also here. I am glad, dear Brothers and Sisters, that you are here. It is a great joy to me that my brother in the flesh should be here and it is a great delight that many of you with whom I have lived so long in happy fellowship should be here. But I could not afford not to be here myself! If I had to go away at the close of the service and leave you to commune with the Lord—and I had no part nor lot in the matter—I should have to miss an exceedingly great joy! You who love the Lord, will you look back to the days when you did not know Him, but when you longed to know Him? There was a time when you sighed and cried for Him and if anybody had said to you, “You will sit with the great company at the Communion in the Tabernacle on such a night, and the Lord Jesus will be very precious to you, and your heart will be brimming over with delight,” you would have said, “I am afraid that is too good to be true! I cannot expect it ever to be

 my case.” There was a time with me when, if I might but have been the least dog under Christ’s Table and have picked up the crumbs and the stale crusts, and the bones that others despised, I would have licked His feet for very joy! Yet now, lo, here I sit among His children and am one of them! And I have the pleasure of passing to you, my Brothers and Sisters, the sweet dainties which He put on the Table—and if you do not sing, I must! If none of you will sing, I shall have to sing alone! I cannot help it. But I believe that each one of you feels the same wonder, delight and gratitude to think that you, also, are here.

There is yet another matter to sing about in coming to this table, for this Communion reminds us of a hope revived. What said the Apostle Paul concerning this ordinance? “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” This is one of the tokens which our Lord has given us that He will come again! In effect, He says, “Eat that bread, drink of that cup, and I will be coming nearer and nearer every time that you thus assemble around My Table.” Well now, if you did not sing last time, you ought to sing at the thought that Jesus is coming again! He has not gone away forever. According to the Scriptures He has not gone for long. Every hour brings Him nearer and it cannot, now, be very long before He will be back again. Remember what the two men in white apparel said to the disciples, “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come”—literally and personally—“in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” As surely as Jesus lives, His feet will stand in the latter day upon Mount Olivet and He will come to gloriously reign among His ancients! This Second Coming of our Lord, not as a Sin-Offering, not in shame and humiliation, but in all the Glory of His Father and of His holy angels, makes us strike together with a joyous clash the high-sounding cymbals! We already anticipate the final triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ when all His enemies shall bow before Him. It will be, it shall be, and this supper is the memorial that it certainly shall be! Therefore, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His!”

I think I have given good proof that this exhortation well befits our present engagement.  
II. Now, secondly, dear Friends, notice THE SPECIAL SUITABILITY OF THE SUBJECT FOR OUR MEDITATION—“Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”  
It needs a holy man to give thanks at the remembrance of a holy God. Sinners hate holiness because they dread holiness, but the saints love holiness because they have no cause to dread it and because, on the other hand, it has become a fountain of comfort and joy to them.  
I want you, at this Table, to think, first, of Divine holiness vindicated. God loved us, Brothers and Sisters, and He wished to save us, but even to save us He would not be unjust. His great heart was full of love, but even to indulge that heart of love He would not suffer His righteous Law to be dishonored, nor His moral government to be impaired. Men sometimes talk of God’s punishing sin as if it were a freak with Him. It is a necessity! It is imprinted upon the very existence of moral beings that holiness must bring happiness, and unholiness must bring sorrow—and God will not reverse what He has so properly ordained to be the everlasting order of things! God must be just and He could not, therefore, wink at human guilt and pass it by. What, then, must be done? He, Himself, in the Person of His dear Son—for never forget that God the Father gave His only-begotten and well-beloved Son—He, Himself, in the Person of His dear Son, came into this world, assumed our nature and in that nature became the Representative of His people. And as their Representative He took upon Himself their sins. And being found with their sins imputed to Him, God dealt with our sin as laid upon Him! He found it there and He smote it there—and because of our sin Jesus bled and Jesus died! And now, when we come into a state of peace with God, it is not over the ruins of a broken Law. It is not over the shattered tablets which Moses broke at the foot of the mountain!  
We come to the holy God in a holy way! Sinners are forgiven in a righteous way, the unjust are reckoned as just in a just fashion! There is not, in the salvation of a sinner, any keeping back or veiling of the Justice of God. He is just, yet He is the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. I love this glorious Truth of God—it seems to me to be the charm of mercy in Christ that it is righteous mercy. This is the quintessence of delight that, when the saint gets to Heaven, he will be as rightly there as the sinner in Hell will be rightly there. There will be as much of the Divine holiness seen in the salvation of the dying thief as in the damnation of that other thief who perished in his sin! So let us, as we come to the Lord’s Table, “give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” We are going to commune with a God who, so that He might commune with us and indulge His love to His chosen, would not break His own Law, or do that which, on the strictest judgment, could be regarded as unjust! I rejoice in that unquestionable fact—and my heart is glad as I remind you of it! And, next, let us give thanks at the remembrance of Christ’s holiness declared. It is a happy occupation to look upon the perfect Character of our dear Redeemer. If there could have been found a fault or flaw in Him, He would not have been a suitable Substitute for us. If He had committed a single sin, He could not have taken our sins upon Himself, nor could He have put them away. Think, then, as you sit at this table, what a pure Christ He was! What a perfect Man as well as perfect God, what a spotless Character He possessed! And then, inasmuch as this was absolutely necessary to the completeness of the Atonement which you celebrate at this table, “give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” I think I see Him coming in before us in His snow-white garments, girt with the golden girdle, with a face that for purity and brightness looks like the sun when it shines in its strength. And I fall down and admire and adore, not only His mercy and His meekness, and His charity, but the perfect holiness of my Redeemer and Lord! As you come to the table, Beloved, give thanks at the remembrance of the holiness of Him who sits at the head of the feast—the Lord Jesus, Himself, who passes you the cup and says to you, “Drink you all of it.” And who breaks the bread and says, “Take, eat. This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.” “Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”  
I think, also, that it will be quite congruous with our present engagement if we think of God’s holiness as the guarantee of our salvation. This may seem a striking thing to say, but it is assuredly true. Blessed be the righteous God! It is, after all, upon the righteousness of God that we rest our hope! If God can lie, then not one promise of His is to be trusted. If God can do an unrighteous thing, then His Covenant may be flung to the winds! But God is not unrighteous to forget the work of His dear Son and, “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love.” He who has pledged His word to you, saying, “They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels,” will keep that pledge and you shall be there! He who has said, “They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me,” will keep His promise and you shall never be ashamed! You, poor sinners, when you first come to Christ, look to God’s mercy and trust to it—and you do quite rightly. But after you have been a little while with Christ and begin to know the Father through knowing the Son, you come to “give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” You see that, at the back of His mercy, as the very foundation and pillar of His Grace, there stands His righteousness! Beloved, as we come to the Communion Table, we give thanks at the remembrance of a hope that is grounded upon the righteousness of God! And we therefore sing praises to His holy name.  
Once more. I think that, at this table, we may give thanks that the holiness of God is our mark, the objective for us to aim at, yes, and that to which we shall one day attain. “Be you holy, for I am holy.” “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” I sometimes ask our young friends, when they come to join the Church, whether they are perfect. And they open their eyes and look at me and say, “Oh, no; far from it!” Then, when I ask, “Would you like to be perfect?” their eyes sparkle with delight, as much as to say, “Why, that is the Heaven we are looking for, to be absolutely free from sin! We would not mind sorrow, sickness, pain, persecution, or anything of that sort, so long as we could but get rid of sin.”  
“If sin is pardoned, I’m secure. And if sin is conquered, I am perfectly happy.” This will be the case with all Believers one of these days, but not here. Of all the people whom I have ever met with—who have told me that they were perfect—I can say that I was morally certain they were not! They had only to talk for about five minutes and they proved their own imperfection. But, Beloved, we shall be perfect one day. “He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” He has you now like an unfinished vessel on the potter’s wheel— you are in the clay state and the great Potter is putting His finger on you and molding you. You are not half-fashioned yet, but He will never throw you away! He does not begin to make a vessel to honor and then cease His work, but He perfects that which He begins. And, one of these days you and I shall stand together as a part of the perfected work of God of which even He shall say, “It is very good.” Therefore, when we come to this Table, though we come sighing over our own imperfections, let us come singing because of the holiness of God—that holiness which we shall yet share!—

*“O glorious hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God.”*  
The children shall yet bear the image of their Father, the brethren shall yet be conformed to the glories of the First-Born! Therefore, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.”  
III. Lastly, the text is very appropriate for the Communion because of THE SUITABILITY OF THE PEOPLE of whom it speaks, for they are the same people who ought to come to this table—“Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His.”  
First, then, those who come to this table should be “saints.” “Ah,” says one, “that is what I called a person this afternoon—‘one of your saints.’” I suppose you thought it was an ugly name, did you not? Well, you are perfectly welcome to call me by that name if you like, only I wish that you would prove the title to be true. “There,” said one to a Christian man, as he shoved him into the gutter, “take that, John Bunyan!” What did the other man say? Why, he picked up his hat and said, “You may fling me into the gutter again if you call me by that name! I am perfectly satisfied to take the compliment.” You call a man a, “saint,” and then think you have done him an ill turn? Why do you not call him a nobleman? Why do you not call him a peer of the realm? For many of your noblemen, your peers of the realm are poor stuff compared with the “saints!” I would sooner be a saint than be an emperor, or all the emperors rolled into one! A “saint”—why, it is a glorious title!  
“Oh,” says one, “I mean Cromwell’s saints.” Do you? Well, they were not a bad sort of saints, after all, whether you try them by the strength of their arms in the day of battle, or by the strength of their lungs when they sang, “Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered,” and shouted in Jehovah’s name in the midst of the battle! Or when they went back to their tents and knelt in prayer and communed with the Most High. But I do not mean Cromwell’s saints and I am not going to talk more about them! I say that this is what every Christian ought to be—a “saint.” It means a holy person, one who aims at being holy, one who is set apart for the service and glory of God. These are the people who are to give thanks at the remembrance of God’s holiness because God has made them holy, too! They are partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, and so they are saints. And they are the people who ought to come to the Table of the Lord.  
But notice that they are not only saints, they are “saints of His.” That is to say, they are God’s saints—not Rome’s saints, but God’s saints! They might be Cromwell’s saints, but, better than that, they are God’s saints! “O you saints of His.” That is to say, they are saints of His making, for they were great sinners till He made saints of them. And they are saints of His keeping, for they would soon be sinners, again, if He did not keep them! They are saints enlisted in His service, sworn to serve under His banner, to be faithful to Him to death. They are “saints of His,” that is, they are saints whom He purchased with His precious blood and whom He means to have as His forever because He has bought them with so great a price! They are saints who shall be with Him in that day when He shall appear with all His holy ones. Then, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His.” If God has made you holy. If you belong to Christ and so are holy, let your heart sing! Fling away your doubts, cast away your fears, forget your sorrows! “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His.”  
Further, these people who are spoken of in the text, the kind of people who ought to come to the Communion Table, are God’s thankful saints. They “give thanks at this remembrance of His holiness.” The man who has no thanks to give ought not to be at the Table of the Lord, for it is called the Eucharist, which signifies the giving of thanks. It is intended to be a giving of thanks from beginning to end. Jesus took the bread and gave thanks. After the same manner, also, He took the cup and gave thanks. So, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His and give thanks.” If we would come aright to the Table of the Lord, we must be thankful saints.  
Then, lastly, they who come to the Lord’s Table should be singing saints. “May not mourning saints come?” Oh, yes! Come and welcome, but learn to sing! “May not weak and feeble saints come?” Oh, yes! But let them not remain weak and feeble. “May not groaning saints come?” Yes, they may come if they like, but groaning is out of place when you have your head on Christ’s bosom and have His flesh and His blood to feed upon! It should stop all your groans and moans when you once begin to feast on Him. I wish that more of God’s people would take to singing. I have known some few who were truly singing saints. I remember an old gentleman in my very young days. The first thing he did, when he rose in the morning, was to sing a hymn while he was washing and dressing. When he came downstairs, the family knew by his singing that he was about. When he went into the street, he used to hum some little bit of a ditty and the people laughed, and said that old Father So-and-So was always singing. You could never put the good old man out, for as soon as he finished one hymn, he began another, and if anybody stopped him, so that he could not sing, he only waited till he could begin again and, all the while, he kept going over it silently in his heart.  
We have not enough singing saints! The other Sunday morning I noticed that there was a lifeboat crew over at the farther end of the Tabernacle, and one Brother began saying, “Amen!” as soon as ever I commenced to pray. Somebody stopped him and I cannot say that I felt very sorry for my own sake and the congregation, generally, but after the service was over he and his mates said that they enjoyed the preaching, but what a dead lot of people we were! He was a red-hot Methodist, accustomed to cry out, “Glory!” and, “Hallelujah!” He said he could not make us people out. One of our friends said to me, “If I had not said, ‘Hallelujah!’ the other Sunday morning, I must have burst altogether.” I like people to get into that condition and if, sometimes, they should break the silence and cry, “Glory!” why, it is better than that they should burst, at any rate! It is a great mercy that they feel their hearts so full that they are ready to burst. People express their praise and delight spontaneously concerning far less things than the joys of God and the privileges of His people, therefore, “Sing to the Lord, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” Now you must finish my sermon for me by standing up and singing—  
*“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall.  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**LUKE 22:39-65.**  
In anticipation of the Communion service that is to follow this service,  
[The Scripture exposition always took place before the sermon was preached.—EOD] let us

read once more the story of our Lord’s agony and arrest, as recorded in the 22nd Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. Probably we are all familiar with the narrative of the event which happened on that dreadful night. May the Holy Spirit teach us what He meant!

Verse 39. And Jesus came out and went, as He was known, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. The garden of Gethsemane had often been the place of our Lord’s private prayer and it was, therefore, well selected as the scene of His fierce struggle with the foe. Where we get strength from God in private, it may often happen that we shall have to endure our greatest conflicts. Singularly enough, it is said that the Jews had a custom of taking the red heifer to the Mount of Olives before it was sacrificed, as if they set forth in that very act, the leading of Christ Jesus into Gethsemane and the bringing Him back again with His raiment all red with His own blood. We might alter the Prophet’s words a little and ask, “Who is this that comes from Olivet, with dyed garments from Gethsemane?” and the Divine Sufferer, Himself, might answer, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

40. And when He was at the place, He said to them, Pray that you enter not into temptation. He knew what sore temptation meant and He was about to feel it at its utmost. And He, therefore, exhorted His disciples to pray even as He had formerly taught them in the model prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.”

41-43. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done. And there appeared an angel to Him from Heaven, strengthening Him. This is so plain a proof of Christ’s condescension as a Man that it has overwhelmed some persons. They can hardly understand how it could be true. Therefore, I believe this 43rd verse is omitted in some versions of the Scriptures and there have been several learned men who, while they could not disprove the existence of the verse in the most ancient manuscripts, have yet labored hard to cut it out, since they thought it too great a stoop for Christ to take. But, my dear Friends, in this condescension of our Lord we learn how truly He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. Doubtless, we receive much strengthening from angels—“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” And why should not Christ, who was in all things made like His brethren, also be strengthened by an angel?

44. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The Greek has the idea of the stretching of the sinews—Christ prayed to the very stretching of His nerves and sinews. As when men wrestle for their lives, so did Christ in prayer strain every power of mind and body that He might prevail. Luke alone describes this dread scene of Christ’s agonizing even to blood, but there is no doubt whatever, from this passage, that our Lord Jesus did actually sweat blood—not something

 like blood, but blood itself—and that in great drops and in such quantities that it did not only adhere to His flesh and stain His garments, but there was such an abundance of it that in great drops it fell down to the ground.

45, 46. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said to them, Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Our Lord was Himself so smarting under the pain of fierce temptation that He would have His disciples pray even to an agony that they might not be led into it. And oh, if you and I have to pray that we be not led into temptation, how much more should we be instant in supplication when we are in the furnace of temptation! Then, indeed, if we restrain prayer before God, we shall be in an evil case.

47. And while He yet spoke, behold a multitude, and He that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. It is a remarkable fact that we do not read in Scripture that any other of our Lord’s Apostles—not even John—ever kissed the Savior! It seems as if the most impudent familiarity was very near akin to dastardly treachery. The eleven would have thought it a high honor to be allowed even to kiss Christ’s feet, but Judas, having lost respect for his Master, it was no very great descent for him, first to sell his Lord, and then to betray Him with a kiss. Mark you, Brothers and Sisters, our Lord Jesus Christ is generally betrayed thus. How, for instance, do men usually begin their books when they mean to undermine the Inspiration of Scripture? Why, with a declaration that they wish to promote the truth of Christ! There is the Judas-kiss and the betrayal comes quickly afterwards. How is it that Christ’s name is often most grossly slandered among men? Why, by those who make a loud profession of love to Him and then sin foully as the chief of transgressors!

48. But Jesus said to Him, Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? Christ might put that question to many of His nominal followers in the present day—“Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”

49. When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said to Him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? There is always that tendency, even among Christian people, to get their hands on a sword, but a good man’s hand is never more out of place than there! When he has his hands clasped in prayer, or placed upon the promises of God, then it is well. But a Christian with his hand upon his sword is something like an angel putting forth his hand to iniquity.

50-53. And one of them smote the servant of the High Priest, and cut of his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer you thus far. And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and the elders, which were come to Him, Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the Temple, you stretched forth no hands against Me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness. “This is the time when I am given up, on the one hand to the temptations of Satan—the power of darkness—and, on the other hand, to you. ‘This is your hour.’” And, as beasts that prowl in the darkness are generally the most ravenous and fierce, so were these chief priests and captains and elders most determined in seeking the blood of Christ! Paul afterwards wrote that none of the princes of this world knew the hidden Wisdom of God, “for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.” It was the darkness of their minds that led them thus to hunt the only Savior of sinners to His death. Satan himself would scarcely have had a hand in crucifying Christ had he understood that by that very Crucifixion, Christ would break the old serpent’s head forever!

54. Then they took Him and led Him, and brought Him to the High Priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off. For which he is not to be altogether blamed. I do not find that any other disciple followed Christ so near as Peter did. John was, probably, even farther off at first. Yet, dear Friends, you and I may rest assured that if we follow Christ afar off, it will not be long before we deny Him! Those disciples who are ashamed of their Master, who never come out and openly confess their faith in Him, have the seeds of treachery already sown within them. O Brothers and Sisters, be bold and cleave close to Christ, for this is the way to walk securely!

55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” Get up, Peter, and run away! What business have you sitting there? Better be in the cold, far off from evil company, than in the warm in the midst of sinners.

56, 57. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him. And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not! See how the most courageous are often cast down by the very slightest means? The tongue of a poor feeble woman is too much for this valiant Peter who said that he never would deny his Master, even though he should die with Him.

58-60. And after a little while another saw him, and said, You are also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what you say. Matthew and Mark tell us that to prove this statement, and to make it quite clear that he was not a follower of Christ, he began to curse and to swear, as if the best evidence that he was not a Christian would be afforded by his cursing and swearing.

60, 61. And immediately, while he yet spoke, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. How that look must have pierced Peter through and through!

61-64. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, Before the cock crows, you shall deny Me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that struck You? Upon this passage a good man well observes that one of these days Christ will answer this taunt. With His unerring finger, the Judge of All shall point them out and say to each one, “You are the man.” There are many of you, perhaps, who are committing sin in private and you think it is not known. You are almost ready to ask the question of Him whom you look upon as a blindfolded God, “Who is it that struck You?” Ah, but He sees you all the while! He reads the secret thoughts of your hearts and the day will come when He will let you know that nothing has escaped His all-seeing eyes!

65. And many other things blasphemously spoke they against Him. The Lord bless to us all the reading of this sad, sad story! Amen. HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—713, 938, 287.  
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Sermon #2205 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND”  
NO. 2205

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My times are in Your hand.”  
Psalm 31:15.**

DAVID was sad—his life was spent with grief and his years with sighing. His sorrow had wasted his strength and even his bones were consumed within him. Cruel enemies pursued him with malicious craft, even seeking his life. At such a time he used the best resource of grief, for he says in verse 14, “But I trusted in You, O Lord.” He had no other refuge but that which he found in faith in the Lord, his God. If enemies slandered him, he did not render railing for railing. If they devised to take away his life, he did not meet violence with violence, but he calmly trusted in the Lord. They ran here and there, using all kinds of nets and traps to make the man of God their victim, but he met all their inventions with the one simple defense of trust in God. Many are the fiery darts of the Wicked One, but our shield is one. The shield of faith not only quenches fiery darts, but it breaks arrows of steel. Though the javelins of the foe were dipped in the venom of Hell, yet our one shield of faith would hold us harmless, casting them off from us!

Thus David had the grand resource of faith in the hour of danger. Note well that he uttered a glorious claim, the greatest claim that man has ever made—“I said, You are my God.” He that can say, “This kingdom is mine,” makes a royal claim! He that can say, “This mountain of silver is mine,” makes a wealthy claim. But he that can say to the Lord, “You are my God,” has said more than all monarchs and millionaires can reach! If this God is your God by His gift of Himself to you, what more can you have? If Jehovah has been made your own by an act of appropriating faith, what more can be conceived of? You have not the world, but you have the Maker of the world—and that is far more! There is no measuring the greatness of his treasure who has God to be his All in All!

Having thus taken to the best resource by trusting in Jehovah and having made the grandest claim possible by saying, “You are my God,” the Psalmist now stays himself upon a grand old doctrine, one of the most wonderful that was ever revealed to men. He sings, “My times are in Your hand.” This to him was a most cheering fact—he had no fear as to his circumstances, since all things were in the Divine hands. He was not shut up unto the hands of the enemy, but his feet stood in a large room, for he was in a space large enough for the ocean, seeing the Lord had placed him in the hollow of His hand! To be entirely at the disposal of God is life and liberty for us.

The great Truth of God is this—all that concerns the Believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. “My times”—these change and shift—but they change only in accordance with unchanging love and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variableness nor shadow of a turning! “My times,” that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth—all those are in the hands of the Lord who arranges and appoints according to His holy will, the length of my days and the darkness of my nights! Storms and calms vary the seasons at the Divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with Him who is Lord both of time and of eternity—and we are glad it is so!

We assent to the statement, “My times are in Your hand,” as to their result. Whatever is to come out of our life is in our heavenly Father’s hands. He guards the vine of life and He also protects the clusters which shall be produced thereby. If life is as a field, the field is under the hand of the great Husbandman and the harvest of that field is also with Him! The ultimate results of His works of Grace upon us and of His education of us in this life are in the highest hands! We are not in our own hands, nor in the hands of earthly teachers, but we are under the skillful operation of hands which make nothing in vain! The close of life is not decided by the sharp knife of the fates, but by the hands of Love. We shall not die before our time, neither shall we be forgotten and left upon the stage too long!

Not only are we, ourselves, in the hand of the Lord, but all that surrounds us. Our times make up a kind of atmosphere of existence—and all this is under Divine arrangement. We dwell within the palm of God’s hand. We are absolutely at His disposal and all our circumstances are arranged by Him in all their details. We are comforted to have it so.

How came the Psalmist’s times to be thus in God’s hands? I should answer, first, that they were there in the order of nature, according to the eternal purpose and decree of God. All things are ordained of God and are settled by Him, according to His wise and holy predestination. Whatever happens here happens not by chance, but according to the counsel of the Most High! The acts and deeds of men below, though left wholly to their own wills, are the counterpart of that which is written in the purpose of Heaven. The open acts of Providence, here below, tally exactly with that which is written in the secret Book which no eye of man or angel as yet has scanned. This eternal purpose superintended our birth. “In your Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” In your Book, every footstep of every creature is recorded before the creature is made! God has mapped out the pathway of every man who traverses the plains of life. Some may doubt this, but all agree that God foresees all things—and how can they be certainly foreseen unless they are certain to be? It is no mean comfort to a man of God that he feels that, by Divine arrangement and sacred predestination, his times are in the hands of God!

But David’s times were in God’s hand in another sense, namely, that he had, by faith, committed them all to God. Observe carefully the 5th verse— “Into Your hand I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” In life we use the words which our Lord so patiently used in death—we hand over our spirits to the hands of God. If our lives were not appointed of Heaven, we would wish they were. If there were no overruling Providence, we would crave for one. We would merge our own wills in the will of the great God and cry, “Not as we will, but as You will.” It would be a hideous thought to us if any one point of our life story were left to chance, or to the frivolities of our own fancy. But with joyful hope we fall back upon the eternal foresight and the Infallible Wisdom of God and cry, “You shall choose our inheritance for us.” We would beg Him to take our times into His hands, even if they were not there.

Moreover, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, our times are in the Lord’s hands because we are one with Christ Jesus. “We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” Everything that concerns Christ touches the great Father’s heart. He thinks more of Jesus than of all the world! Therefore it follows that when we become one with Jesus, we become conspicuous objects of the Father’s care! He takes us in hand for the sake of His dear Son! He that loves the Head, loves all the members of the mystical body! We cannot conceive of the dear Redeemer as ever being out of the Father’s mind—neither can any of us who are in Christ be away from the Father’s active, loving care—our times are always in His hands. All His eternal purposes work towards the glorifying of the Son and quite as surely they work together for the good of those who are in His Son. The purposes which concern our Lord and ourselves are so intertwisted as never to be separated!

To have our times in God’s hands must mean not only that they are at God’s disposal, but that they are arranged by the highest wisdom. God’s hand never errs and if our times are in His hand, those times are ordered rightly. We need not puzzle our brains to understand the dispensations of Providence—a much easier and wiser course is open to us, namely—to believe the hands of the Lord work all things for the best. Sit still, O child, at your great Father’s feet, and let Him do as seems Him good! When you cannot comprehend Him, know that a babe cannot understand the wisdom of its parent. Your Father comprehends all things, though you do not—let His wisdom be enough for you! Everything in the hand of God is where it may be left without anxiety and it is where it will be carried through to a prosperous issue. Things prosper which are in His hands.

“My times are in Your hand,” is an assurance that none can disturb, or pervert, or poison. In that hand we rest as securely as rests a babe upon its mother’s breast. Where could our interests be so well secured as in the eternal hands? What a blessing it is to see, by the eye of faith, all things that concern you grasped in the hands of God! What peace as to every matter which could cause anxiety flows into the soul when we see all our hopes built upon so stable a foundation and preserved by such supreme power! “My times are in your hand!”

Before I go into this subject, to show the sweetness of this confidence, I pray every Christian here to read the text and take it in the singular, and not as we sang it just now—

*“Our times are in Your hand,  
Whatever they may be,  
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,  
As best may seem to Thee.”*

We find it in the Psalm, “ My times are in Your hand.” This does not exclude the whole body of the saints enjoying this safety together, but, after all, the Truth of God is sweetest when each man tastes the flavor of it for himself. Come, let each man take to himself this Doctrine of the Supreme Appointment of God and believe that it stands true as to his own case, “My times are in Your hand.” The wings of the cherubim cover me. The Lord Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me—and my times are in those hands which were nailed to the Cross for my redemption! What will be the effect of such a faith, if it is clear, personal and enduring? This shall be our subject at this season. May the Holy Spirit help us!

I. A clear conviction that our times are in the hand of God WILL CREATE WITHIN US A SENSE OF THE NEARNESS OF GOD. If the hand of God is laid upon all our surroundings, God, Himself, is near us. Our Puritan fathers walked with God the more readily because they believed in God as arranging everything in their daily business and domestic life. They saw Him in the history of the nation and in all the events which transpired. The tendency of this age is to get further and further from God. Men will scarcely tolerate a Creator, now, but everything must be evolved. To get God one stage further back is the ambition of modern philosophy, whereas, if we were wise—we would labor to clear out all obstacles and leave a clear channel for drawing near to God—and for God to draw near to us. When we see that in His hands are all our ways, we feel that God is real and near.

“My times are in Your hand.” Then there is nothing left to chance. Events happen not to man by a fortune which has no order or purpose in it. “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” Chance is a heathenish idea which the teaching of the Word has cast down, even as the Ark threw down Dagon and broke him in pieces. Blessed is that man who has done with chance, who never speaks of luck, but believes that from the least, even to the greatest, all things are ordained of the Lord. We dare not leave out the least event! The creeping of an aphid upon a rosebud is as surely arranged by the decree of Providence as the march of a pestilence through a nation. Believe this, for if the least is omitted from the supreme government, so may the next be, and the next, till nothing is left in the Divine hands. There is no place for chance, since God fills all things.

“My times are in Your hand” is an assurance which also puts an end to the grim idea of an iron fate compelling all things. Have you the notion that fate grinds on like an enormous wheel, ruthlessly crushing everything that lies in its way, not pausing for pity, nor turning aside for mercy? Remember, if you liken Providence to a wheel, it must be a wheel which is full of eyes! Its every revolution is in wisdom and goodness! God’s eyes leave nothing blind in Providence, but fill all things with sight. God works all things according to His purpose, but then He Himself works them. There is all the difference between the lone machinery of fixed fate and the Presence of a gracious, loving Spirit ruling all things. Things happen as He plans them, but He Himself is there to make them happen, to moderate, guide and secure results! Our great joy is not, “My times are in the wheel of destiny,” but, “My times are in Your hand.” With a living, loving God to superintend all things, we feel ourselves at home, resting near our Father’s heart.

“My times are in Your hand.” Does not this reveal the condescension of the Lord? He has all Heaven to worship Him and all worlds to govern, and yet, “my times”—the times of such an inconsiderable and unworthy person as I am—are in His hands! Now, what is man that it should be so? Wonder of wonders, that God should not only think of me, but should make my concerns His concerns and take my matters into His hands! He has the stars in His hands and yet He puts us there. He deigns to take in hand the passing interests of obscure men and lowly women!

Beloved, God is near His people with all His attributes, His wisdom, His power, His faithfulness, His immutability and these are, under oath, to work for the good of those who put their trust in Him. “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Yes, God considers our times and thinks them over, with His heart and soul planning to do us good. That august mind, out of which all things spring, bows itself to us and those eternal wings, which cover the universe, also brood over us and our household, and our daily needs and woes! Our God sits not still as a listless spectator of our griefs, suffering us to be drifted like waifs upon the waters of circumstance, but is busily occupying Himself at all times for the defense and perfecting of His children. He leads us that He may bring us home to the place where His flock shall rest forever.

What a bliss this is! Our times, in all their needs and aspects, are in God’s hands and, therefore, God is always caring for us! How near it brings God to us and us to God! Child of God, go not tomorrow into the field, lamenting that God is not there! He will bless your going out. Come not home to your chamber, crying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” He will bless your coming in! Go not to your bed, dreaming that you are left an orphan—neither wake up in the morning with a sense of loneliness upon you—you are not alone, for the Father is with you!

Will you not feel how good it is that God should come so close to you and handle your bread and your water, and bless your bed and your board? Are you not happy to be allowed to come so close to God, as to say, “My times are in Your hand”? There is a great deal in this first point as to the nearness of the Lord—and if you will turn it over—you will see more and more that a conviction that our times are in God’s hand tends to create a happy and holy sense of the nearness of God to us.

II. THIS TRUTH IS A COMPLETE ANSWER TO MANY A TEMPTATION. You know how craftily Satan will urge a temptation. He says, “Now you have a large family and your chief duty is to provide for them. Your position brings with it many needs. Here is a plan of making money—others follow it. It may not be quite straight, but you must not be particular in such a world as this, for nobody else is.” How will you meet this? Can you say to Satan, “It is not my business to provide for myself or for my family—my times are in God’s hand and His name is Jehovah-Jireh—The Lord Will Provide. And I will not do a questionable thing, though it would fill my house with silver and gold from the cellar to the chimney pot. I shall not meddle with my Lord’s business. It is His to provide for me—it is mine to walk uprightly and obey His Word”?

This is a noble answer to the arch-enemy! But supposing he says, “Well, but you are already in difficulties and you cannot extricate yourself if you are too precise. A poor man cannot afford to have a conscience—it is an expensive luxury in these days. Give your conscience a holiday and you can soon get out of your trouble.” Let your reply be, “O Prince of Darkness, it is no business of mine to extricate myself! My times are in God’s hand. I have taken my case to Him and He will work for me in this matter better than I can do for myself! He does not wish me to do a wrong thing, that I may do for myself what He has promised to do for me.” We are not called upon to eke out God’s wisdom with a bit of our own wickedness. God forbid! Do the right, even if the heavens should fall. The Lord who has taken your business into His hands will bear you through.

“Well,” says one, “we may use a little discreet policy in religious matters and keep the peace by wise compromise. We may accomplish our end all the sooner by going a little roundabout. If you can just let the Truth of God wait for a little until the fine weather comes, and the silver slippers are in season, then she will be saved a good deal of annoyance!” Brothers and Sisters, it is not for us to pick and plan times in this fashion. God’s cause is in God’s hands and God would not have us help His cause by a compromising hand being laid on His Ark. Remember what the hand of Uzzah brought on him, though he meant well. Let us continue steadfast in the integrity of our walk and we shall find our times are in God’s hand— and that they are well ordered and need no hasty and unholy interposition on our part.

Brethren, is it not a delightful thing for us to know that though we are on a stormy voyage, the Lord, Himself, is at the helm? The course we do not know, nor even our present latitude and longitude. But the Pilot knows all about us and also about the sea. It will be our wisdom not to interfere with our Captain’s orders. They put up a notice on the steamboats, “Do not speak to the man at the wheel.” We are very apt, in our unbelief, to dispute with Him to whom the steering of our vessel is entrusted. We shall not confuse Him, thank God, but we often confound and confuse ourselves by our idle complaining against the living Lord! No, when you are tempted to presume, or to act in a despairing haste, or to hide your principles, or to do something which is not defensible in order that you may arrange your times more comfortably, answer with a decided “No,” and say, “My times are in God’s hand”—and there, by His Grace, I will leave them!”

When the devil comes with His subtle questions and insinuations, refer Him to your Lord, in whose hands your times are placed. When you have a lawsuit, the opposite side will likely come and talk with you, to see if they can get something out of you. It will be your wisdom to reply, “If you have anything to say, say it to my solicitor.” If the devil comes to you and you get into an argument with him, he will beat you, for he is a very ancient lawyer and he has been at the business for so many ages that you cannot match him. Send him to your Advocate! Refer him to the Wonderful, the Counselor! Always shelter beneath this fact, “My times are in His hand. I have left the whole business to Another and I cannot dishonor Him by meddling.” Satan knows the Christ too well to go to Him—he knows the taste of His broadsword, of, “It is written.” He will not contest with Jesus if we leave Him to plead the causes of our soul!

III. In the third place, THIS CONVICTION IS A SUFFICIENT SUPPORT AGAINST THE FEAR OF MEN. We may say to ourselves, when our enemies bear very hard upon us, “I am not in their hands. My times are in Your hand.” Here are gentlemen judging and condemning us with great rapidity. They say, “He has made a great mistake. He is an old bigot. He has snuffed himself out.” This is easier said than done. The candle still shines. They say of you, “He is foolish and headstrong and, on religious matters, he is as obstinate as a mule! But he will come to grief.” You have not come to grief, yet, in the way they predict, and they had better not prophesy till they know! The godly are not in the hands of those who mock them! The wicked may gnash their teeth at Believers, but they cannot destroy them! Here is their comfort—they have committed their spirit to the hands of God—and He will sacredly preserve the precious deposit. Fear not the judgments of men! Appeal to a higher court. Take the case to the King’s Bench. Go to God, Himself, with the matter, and He will bring forth your judgment as the light and your righteousness as the noonday.

Do the malicious resolve to crush you? They will use to the utmost their little power, but there is a higher power which will hold them back. Rejoicingly say, “My times are in Your hand.” Do they treat you with contempt? Do they sneer at you? What does that matter? Your honor comes not from men! Their contempt is the highest compliment the wicked can pay you.

Alas, many professors place their times in the hands of the world! If they prosper and grow rich, they see an opportunity of social advantage and they quit their humbler friends to join a more respectable sect. How many are lost to fidelity because their prosperous times are not in God’s hands, but in their own? Some, on the other hand, when they are in adversity, get away from the Lord. The excuse is, “I cannot go to the House of God any more, for my clothes are not so respectable as they used to be.” Is your poverty to take you out of your Lord’s hands? Never let it be so! But say, “My times are in Your hand.” Cleave to the Lord in losses as well as in gains and so let all your times be with Him.

How often we meet with people who are staggered by slander! It is impossible to stop malicious tongues. They wound and even slay the characters of the godly. The tried one cries, “I cannot bear it! I shall give all up.” Why? Why yield to mere talk? Even these cruel tongues are in God’s hands! Can you not brave their attacks? They cannot utter a single whisper more than God permits! Go on your way, O righteous man, and let false tongues pour forth their poison as they will. “Every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.” If my times are in God’s hands, no man can do me harm unless God permits it. Though my soul is among lions, yet no lion can bite me while Jehovah’s angel is my guard!

This feeling, that our interests are safe in the highest keeping, breeds an independent spirit. It prevents our cringing before the great and our flattering the strong. At the same time, it removes all tendency to envy, so that you do not wish for the prosperity of the wicked, nor fret yourself because of evildoers. When one knows that his times are in God’s hands, he would not change places with a king! No, nor even with an angel!

IV. A full belief in the statement of our text is A CURE FOR PRESENT WORRY. O Lord, if my times are in Your hands, I have cast my care on You, and I trust and am not afraid! Why is it, my Sister—for this habit of worrying abounds among the gracious sisterhood—why do you vex yourself about a matter which is in the hands of God? If He has undertaken for you, what cause have you for anxiety? And you, my Brother—for there are plenty of men who are nervous and fretful—why do you want to interfere with the Lord’s business? If the case is in His hands, what need can there be for you to be prying and crying? You were worrying this morning and fretting last night—and you are distressed, now, and will be worse tomorrow morning. May I ask you a question? Did you ever get any good by fretting? When there was not rain enough for your farm, did you ever fret a shower down? When there was too much rain, or you thought so, did you ever worry the clouds away? Tell me, did you ever make a sixpence by worrying? It is a very unprofitable business!

Do you answer, “What, then, are we to do in troublous times?” Why, go to Him into whose hand you have committed yourself and your times! Consult with Infinite Wisdom by prayer. Console yourself with Infinite Love by fellowship with God. Tell the Lord what you feel and what you fear. Ten minutes’ praying is better than a year’s murmuring! He that waits upon God and casts his burden upon Him may lead a royal life— indeed, he will be far happier than a king!

To leave our times with God is to live as free from care as the birds upon the bough. If we fret, we shall not glorify God, and we shall not constrain others to see what true religion can do for us in the hour of tribulation. Fret and worry put it out of our power to act wisely. But if we can leave everything with God because everything really is in His hands, we shall be peaceful and our action will be deliberate. And for that very reason it will be more likely to be wise. He that rolls his burden upon the Lord will be strong to do or to suffer—and his days shall be as the days of Heaven upon the earth. I admire the serenity of Abraham. He never seems to be in a fluster, but he moves grandly, like a prince among men. He is much more than the equal of the greatest man he meets—we can hardly see Lot with a microscope when we have once seen Abraham! Why was that? Because he believed in God and staggered not.

Half the joy of life lies in expectation. Our children get greater pleasure out of expecting a holiday than they do out of the day, itself. It is much the same with ourselves. If we believe that all our times are in God’s hands, we shall be expecting great things from our heavenly Father. When we get into a difficulty we shall say, “I am now going to see the wonders of God and to learn, again, how surely He delivers them that trust in Him!” I thank God I have learned at times to glory in necessities, as opening a window into Heaven for me, out of which the Lord would abundantly pour forth His supplies. It has been to me so unspeakable a delight to see how the Lord has supplied my needs for the Orphanage, the College and other works, that I have half wished to be in straits, that I might see how the Lord would appear for me!

I remember, some time ago, when, year after year, all the money came in for the various enterprises, I began to look back with regret upon those grand days when the Lord permitted the brook Cherith to dry up and called off the ravens, with their bread and meat, and then found some other way of supplying the orphans’ needs! In those days, the Lord used to come to me, as it were, walking on the tops of the mountains, stepping from peak to peak and, by marvelous deeds, supplying all my needs, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus!

Do you know, I almost wished that the Lord would stop the streams and then let me see how He can fetch water out of the Rock! He did so, not very long ago. Funds ran very low and then I cried to Him and He heard me out of His holy hill. How glad was I to hear the footsteps of the ever-present Lord, answering to His child’s prayer and letting him know that his times were still in his Father’s hands! Surely it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man! It is a joy worth worlds to be driven where none but the Lord can help you—and then to see His mighty hand pulling you out of the net! The joy lies mainly in the fact that you are sure it is the Lord and sure that He is near you. This blessed realization of the Lord’s interposition causes us to glory in tribulation! Is not that a cure for worry, a blessed cure for anxiety?

V. Fifthly, a firm conviction of this truth is A QUIETUS AS TO FUTURE DREAD. “My times are in Your hand.” Do you wish to know what is going to happen to you in a short time? Would you look between the folded leaves of the future? You can buy a penny newspaper which will tell you the fate of nations this very year. But you may be well-near sure that nothing will happen which is thus predicted—and thus it may be of little use to you! Be content with the prophecies of Scripture, but follow not every interpreter of them. Many people would pay great sums to have the future made known to them. If they were wise, they would rather desire to have it concealed! Do not want to know—such knowledge would answer no useful purpose. The future is intended to be a sealed book. The present is all we need to have before us. Do your day’s work in its day and leave tomorrow with your God. If there were ways of reading the future, it would be wise to decline to use them. The knowledge would create responsibility, arouse fear and diminish present enjoyment—why seek after it? Famish idle curiosity and give your strength to believing obedience! Of this you may be quite sure, that there is nothing in the book of the future which should cause distrust to a Believer! Your times are in God’s hands—and this secures them.

The very word, “times,” supposes change for you. But as there are no changes with God, all is well. Things will happen which you cannot foresee, but your Lord has foreseen all and provided for all! Nothing can occur without His Divine allowance and He will not permit that which would be for your real or permanent injury. “I should like to know,” says one, “whether I shall die soon.” Have no desire in that direction—your time will come when it should. The best way to live above all fear of death is to die every morning before you leave your bedroom. The Apostle Paul said, “I die daily.” When you have got into the holy habit of daily dying, it will come easy to you to die for the last time!

It is greatly wise to be familiar with our last hours. As you take off your garments at night, rehearse the solemn scene when you shall lay aside your robe of flesh. When you put on your garments in the morning, anticipate the being clothed upon with your house which is from Heaven in the day of Resurrection. To be fearful of death is often the height of folly. A great Prophet once ran away many miles to escape from death by an imperious queen. He was one of the bravest of the brave and yet He hurried into solitude to escape a woman’s threat! When he had finished his weary walk, he sat down and actually prayed, “Let me die.” It was a singular thing to do, to run for his life, and then to cry, “Let me die.” That man never did die, for we speak of Elijah who rode to Heaven in a chariot of fire! God does not answer all His people’s prayers, for He has better things for them than they ask. Do not tremble about what may never happen. Even we may never die, for it is written, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” Some of us may be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord. Who knows? Behold, He comes quickly! At any rate, do not let us worry about death, for it is in His hands.

VI. Again, a full conviction that our times are in His hands will be A REASON FOR CONSECRATED SERVICE. If God has undertaken my business for me, then I may most fitly undertake such business for Him as He may appoint. Queen Elizabeth wished one of the leading merchants of London to go to Holland to watch her interests there. The honest man told Her Majesty that he would obey her commands, but he begged her to remember that it would involve the ruin of his own trade, for him to be absent. To this the Queen replied, “If you will see to my business, I will see to your business.” With such a royal promise he might willingly let his own business go, for a queen should have it in her power to do more for a subject than he can do for himself.

The Lord, in effect, says to the Believer, “I will take your affairs in hand and see them through for you.” Will you not at once feel that now it is your joy, your delight, to live to glorify your gracious Lord? To be set free to serve the Lord is the highest freedom! How beautiful it is to read in the book of Isaiah, “And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers”! Outsiders shall do the drudgery for you and set you free for higher service! Read on and see—“But you shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.” Faith sets us free from the wear and tear of carking care that we may give ourselves up wholly to the service of the Lord our God! Faith causes us to live exempt from fret, to serve only the blessed God. Set free from the burden of earthly things by God’s kind care of us, we present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord our God. He has not made us slaves and drudges, but priests and kings unto God!

I am sure, dear Friends, if we get this Truth of God fully saturating our souls, that our times are in God’s hand, it will make life a grander thing than it has ever seemed to be. Do you believe that God’s hand is working with you and for you? Then are you lifted above the dumb-driven cattle that surround you, for the God of Heaven thinks of you and puts His hand to your affairs. This connection with the Divine puts heart into a man and rises him to high endeavor and great belief. We feel we are immortal till our work is done! We feel that God is with us and that we are bound to be victorious through the blood of Jesus! We shall not be defeated in the campaign of life, for the Lord of Hosts is with us and we shall tread down our enemies! God will strengthen us, for our times are in His hands and, therefore, we will serve Him with all our heart and with all our soul, being fully convinced that, “our labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

VII. Lastly, if our times are in God’s hands, here is A GRAND ARGUMENT FOR FUTURE BLESSEDNESS. He that takes care of our times will take care of our eternity. He that has brought us so far and worked so graciously for us will see us safely over the rest of the road. I marvel at some of you older folks, when you begin to doubt. You will say, “Look at yourself.” Well, so I do, and I am heartily ashamed that ever a grain of mistrust should get into the eye of my faith. I would weep it out and keep it out for the future.

Still, some of you are older than I am, for you are 70 or 80 years of age. How much longer do you expect to travel in this wilderness? Do you think you have you another 10 years? God has been gracious to you for 70 years and will you fret about the last 10, which, indeed, may never come? That will never do! God has delivered some of you out of such great trials that your present ones are mere fleabites. Sir Francis Drake, after he had sailed around the world, came up the Thames. And when he had passed Gravesend there came a storm which threatened the ship. The brave commander said, “What? Go around the world safely and then get drowned in a ditch? Never!” So we ought to say! God has upheld us in great tribulations and we are not going to be cast down about trials which are common to men!

A man of energy, if he takes a work in hand, will push it through and the Lord our God never undertakes what he will not complete. “My times are in Your hand” and, therefore, the end will be glorious! My Lord, if my times were in my own hands, they would prove a failure, but since they are in Your hands, You will not fail, nor shall I! The hands of God ensures success all along the line. In that day when we shall see the tapestry which records our lives, we shall see all the scenes therein with wondering eyes. We shall see what wisdom, what love, what tenderness, what care was lavished upon them! When once a matter is in God’s hands, it is never neglected or forgotten, but it is carried out to the end. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

I have not been able to preach on this text as I hoped to do, for I am full of pain and have a heavy headache. But, thank God, I have no heartache with such a glorious Truth of God before me! Sweet to my soul are these words—“My times are in Your hand.” Take the golden sentence home with you! Keep this Truth in your mind. Let it lie on your tongue like a wafer made with honey. Let it dissolve until your whole nature is sweetened by it. Yes, dear old lady, you that have come out of the workhouse this morning to hear this sermon, say to yourself, “My times are in Your hand.” Yes, you, dear Friend, who cannot find employment and have been walking your shoes off your feet in the vain endeavor to seek one—you, also, may say, “My times are in Your hand.” Yes, my dear Sister, pining away with consumption, this may be your song—”My times are in Your hand.” Yes, young man, you that have just started in business and have met with a crushing loss, it will be for your benefit, after all! Therefore say, “My times are in Your hand.” This little sentence, to my mind, swells into a hymn—it buds and blossoms into a Psalm! Few are the words, but mighty is the sense, and full of rest.

Now, remember, it is not everybody that can find honey in this hive. O Sinners, you are in the hands of an angry God and this is terrible! The God against whom you continually sin and whom you provoke by refusing His Grace, has absolute power over you! Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces! You have provoked, offended and grieved Him, but there is yet hope, for His mercy endures forever. Though you have vexed His Holy Spirit, yet return unto Him and He will have mercy upon you and abundantly pardon you! It is certain that you are in His hands and that you cannot escape from Him. If you should climb to Heaven, or dive to Hell, you would not be out of His reach! No strength of yours can resist Him, no speed can outrun Him. Yield yourselves to God and then this great power of God, which now surrounds you, shall become your comfort!

At present it ought to be your terror. The eyes of God are fixed upon you. The hands of God are against you and if you are unsaved, one touch of that hand will mean death and everlasting destruction! That hand which the Believer devoutly kisses, is the hand which you may well dread. Oh, that you would flee to Christ Jesus and find shelter from wrath beneath the crimson canopy of His precious blood! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 31.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—910, 701, 703.  
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“MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND”  
NO. 2205

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My times are in Your hand.”  
Psalm 31:15.**

DAVID was sad—his life was spent with grief and his years with sighing. His sorrow had wasted his strength and even his bones were consumed within him. Cruel enemies pursued him with malicious craft, even seeking his life. At such a time he used the best resource of grief, for he says in verse 14, “But I trusted in You, O Lord.” He had no other refuge but that which he found in faith in the Lord, his God. If enemies slandered him, he did not render railing for railing. If they devised to take away his life, he did not meet violence with violence, but he calmly trusted in the Lord. They ran here and there, using all kinds of nets and traps to make the man of God their victim, but he met all their inventions with the one simple defense of trust in God. Many are the fiery darts of the Wicked One, but our shield is one. The shield of faith not only quenches fiery darts, but it breaks arrows of steel. Though the javelins of the foe were dipped in the venom of Hell, yet our one shield of faith would hold us harmless, casting them off from us!

Thus David had the grand resource of faith in the hour of danger. Note well that he uttered a glorious claim, the greatest claim that man has ever made—“I said, You are my God.” He that can say, “This kingdom is mine,” makes a royal claim! He that can say, “This mountain of silver is mine,” makes a wealthy claim. But he that can say to the Lord, “You are my God,” has said more than all monarchs and millionaires can reach! If this God is your God by His gift of Himself to you, what more can you have? If Jehovah has been made your own by an act of appropriating faith, what more can be conceived of? You have not the world, but you have the Maker of the world—and that is far more! There is no measuring the greatness of his treasure who has God to be his All in All!

Having thus taken to the best resource by trusting in Jehovah and having made the grandest claim possible by saying, “You are my God,” the Psalmist now stays himself upon a grand old doctrine, one of the most wonderful that was ever revealed to men. He sings, “My times are in Your hand.” This to him was a most cheering fact—he had no fear as to his circumstances, since all things were in the Divine hands. He was not shut up unto the hands of the enemy, but his feet stood in a large room, for he was in a space large enough for the ocean, seeing the Lord had placed him in the hollow of His hand! To be entirely at the disposal of God is life and liberty for us.

The great Truth of God is this—all that concerns the Believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. “My times”—these change and shift—but they change only in accordance with unchanging love and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variableness nor shadow of a turning! “My times,” that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth—all those are in the hands of the Lord who arranges and appoints according to His holy will, the length of my days and the darkness of my nights! Storms and calms vary the seasons at the Divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with Him who is Lord both of time and of eternity—and we are glad it is so!

We assent to the statement, “My times are in Your hand,” as to their result. Whatever is to come out of our life is in our heavenly Father’s hands. He guards the vine of life and He also protects the clusters which shall be produced thereby. If life is as a field, the field is under the hand of the great Husbandman and the harvest of that field is also with Him! The ultimate results of His works of Grace upon us and of His education of us in this life are in the highest hands! We are not in our own hands, nor in the hands of earthly teachers, but we are under the skillful operation of hands which make nothing in vain! The close of life is not decided by the sharp knife of the fates, but by the hands of Love. We shall not die before our time, neither shall we be forgotten and left upon the stage too long!

Not only are we, ourselves, in the hand of the Lord, but all that surrounds us. Our times make up a kind of atmosphere of existence—and all this is under Divine arrangement. We dwell within the palm of God’s hand. We are absolutely at His disposal and all our circumstances are arranged by Him in all their details. We are comforted to have it so.

How came the Psalmist’s times to be thus in God’s hands? I should answer, first, that they were there in the order of nature, according to the eternal purpose and decree of God. All things are ordained of God and are settled by Him, according to His wise and holy predestination. Whatever happens here happens not by chance, but according to the counsel of the Most High! The acts and deeds of men below, though left wholly to their own wills, are the counterpart of that which is written in the purpose of Heaven. The open acts of Providence, here below, tally exactly with that which is written in the secret Book which no eye of man or angel as yet has scanned. This eternal purpose superintended our birth. “In your Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” In your Book, every footstep of every creature is recorded before the creature is made! God has mapped out the pathway of every man who traverses the plains of life. Some may doubt this, but all agree that God foresees all things—and how can they be certainly foreseen unless they are certain

 to be? It is no mean comfort to a man of God that he feels that, by Divine arrangement and sacred predestination, his times are in the hands of God!

But David’s times were in God’s hand in another sense, namely, that he had, by faith, committed them all to God. Observe carefully the 5th verse— “Into Your hand I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” In life we use the words which our Lord so patiently used in death—we hand over our spirits to the hands of God. If our lives were not appointed of Heaven, we would wish they were. If there were no overruling Providence, we would crave for one. We would merge our own wills in the will of the great God and cry, “Not as we will, but as You will.” It would be a hideous thought to us if any one point of our life story were left to chance, or to the frivolities of our own fancy. But with joyful hope we fall back upon the eternal foresight and the Infallible Wisdom of God and cry, “You shall choose our inheritance for us.” We would beg Him to take our times into His hands, even if they were not there.

Moreover, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, our times are in the Lord’s hands because we are one with Christ Jesus. “We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” Everything that concerns Christ touches the great Father’s heart. He thinks more of Jesus than of all the world! Therefore it follows that when we become one with Jesus, we become conspicuous objects of the Father’s care! He takes us in hand for the sake of His dear Son! He that loves the Head, loves all the members of the mystical body! We cannot conceive of the dear Redeemer as ever being out of the Father’s mind—neither can any of us who are in Christ be away from the Father’s active, loving care—our tines are always in His hands. All His eternal purposes work towards the glorifying of the Son and quite as surely they work together for the good of those who are in His Son. The purposes which concern our Lord and ourselves are so intertwisted as never to be separated!

To have our times in God’s hands must mean not only that they are at God’s disposal, but that they are arranged by the highest wisdom. God’s hand never errs and if our times are in His hand, those times are ordered rightly. We need not puzzle our brains to understand the dispensations of Providence—a much easier and wiser course is open to us, namely—to believe the hands of the Lord work all things for the best. Sit still, O child, at your great Father’s feet, and let Him do as seems Him good! When you cannot comprehend Him, know that a babe cannot understand the wisdom of its parent. Your Father comprehends all things, though you do not—let His wisdom be enough for you! Everything in the hand of God is where it may be left without anxiety and it is where it will be carried through to a prosperous issue. Things prosper which are in His hands.

“My times are in Your hand,” is an assurance that none can disturb, or pervert, or poison. In that hand we rest as securely as rests a babe upon its mother’s breast. Where could our interests be so well secured as in the eternal hands? What a blessing it is to see, by the eye of faith, all things that concern you grasped in the hands of God! What peace as to every matter which could cause anxiety flows into the soul when we see all our hopes built upon so stable a foundation and preserved by such supreme power! “My times are in your hand!”

Before I go into this subject, to show the sweetness of this confidence, I pray every Christian here to read the text and take it in the singular, and not as we sang it just now—

*“Our times are in Your hand,  
Whatever they may be,  
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,  
As best may seem to Thee.”*

We find it in the Psalm, “ My times are in Your hand.” This does not exclude the whole body of the saints enjoying this safety together, but, after all, the Truth of God is sweetest when each man tastes the flavor of it for himself. Come, let each man take to himself this Doctrine of the Supreme Appointment of God and believe that it stands true as to his own case, “My times are in Your hand.” The wings of the cherubim cover me. The Lord Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me—and my times are in those hands which were nailed to the Cross for my redemption! What will be the effect of such a faith, if it is clear, personal and enduring? This shall be our subject at this season. May the Holy Spirit help us!

I. A clear conviction that our times are in the hand of God WILL CREATE WITHIN US A SENSE OF THE NEARNESS OF GOD. If the hand of God is laid upon all our surroundings, God, Himself, is near us. Our Puritan fathers walked with God the more readily because they believed in God as arranging everything in their daily business and domestic life. They saw Him in the history of the nation and in all the events which transpired. The tendency of this age is to get further and further from God. Men will scarcely tolerate a Creator, now, but everything must be evolved. To get God one stage further back is the ambition of modern philosophy, whereas, if we were wise—we would labor to clear out all obstacles and leave a clear channel for drawing near to God—and for God to draw near to us. When we see that in His hands are all our ways, we feel that God is real and near.

“My times are in Your hand.” Then there is nothing left to chance. Events happen not to man by a fortune which has no order or purpose in it. “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” Chance is a heathenish idea which the teaching of the Word has cast down, even as the Ark threw down Dagon and broke him in pieces. Blessed is that man who has done with chance, who never speaks of luck, but believes that from the least, even to the greatest, all things are ordained of the Lord. We dare not leave out the least event! The creeping of an aphid upon a rosebud is as surely arranged by the decree of Providence as the march of a pestilence through a nation. Believe this, for if the least is omitted from the supreme government, so may the next be, and the next, till nothing is left in the Divine hands. There is no place for chance, since God fills all things.

“My times are in Your hand” is an assurance which also puts an end to the grim idea of an iron fate compelling all things. Have you the notion that fate grinds on like an enormous wheel, ruthlessly crushing everything that lies in its way, not pausing for pity, nor turning aside for mercy? Remember, if you liken Providence to a wheel, it must be a wheel which is full of eyes! Its every revolution is in wisdom and goodness! God’s eyes leave nothing blind in Providence, but fill all things with sight. God works all things according to His purpose, but then He Himself works them. There is all the difference between the lone machinery of fixed fate and the Presence of a gracious, loving Spirit ruling all things. Things happen as He plans them, but He Himself is there to make them happen, to moderate, guide and secure results! Our great joy is not, “My times are in the wheel of destiny,” but, “My times are in Your hand.” With a living, loving God to superintend all things, we feel ourselves at home, resting near our Father’s heart.

“My times are in Your hand.” Does not this reveal the condescension of the Lord? He has all Heaven to worship Him and all worlds to govern, and yet, “my times”—the times of such an inconsiderable and unworthy person as I am—are in His hands! Now, what is man that it should be so? Wonder of wonders, that God should not only think of me, but should make my concerns His concerns and take my matters into His hands! He has the stars in His hands and yet He puts us there. He deigns to take in hand the passing interests of obscure men and lowly women!

Beloved, God is near His people with all His attributes, His wisdom, His power, His faithfulness, His immutability and these are, under oath, to work for the good of those who put their trust in Him. “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Yes, God considers our times and thinks them over, with His heart and soul planning to do us good. That august mind, out of which all things spring, bows itself to us and those eternal wings, which cover the universe, also brood over us and our household, and our daily needs and woes! Our God sits not still as a listless spectator of our griefs, suffering us to be drifted like waifs upon the waters of circumstance, but is busily occupying Himself at all times for the defense and perfecting of His children. He leads us that He may bring us home to the place where His flock shall rest forever.

What a bliss this is! Our times, in all their needs and aspects, are in God’s hands and, therefore, God is always caring for us! How near it brings God to us and us to God! Child of God, go not tomorrow into the field, lamenting that God is not there! He will bless your going out. Come not home to your chamber, crying, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” He will bless your coming in! Go not to your bed, dreaming that you are left an orphan—neither wake up in the morning with a sense of loneliness upon you—you are not alone, for the Father is with you!

Will you not feel how good it is that God should come so close to you and handle your bread and your water, and bless your bed and your board? Are you not happy to be allowed to come so close to God, as to say, “My times are in Your hand”? There is a great deal in this first point as to the nearness of the Lord—and if you will turn it over—you will see more and more that a conviction that our times are in God’s hand tends to create a happy and holy sense of the nearness of God to us.

II. THIS TRUTH IS A COMPLETE ANSWER TO MANY A TEMPTATION. You know how craftily Satan will urge a temptation. He says, “Now you have a large family and your chief duty is to provide for them. Your position brings with it many needs. Here is a plan of making money—others follow it. It may not be quite straight, but you must not be particular in such a world as this, for nobody else is.” How will you meet this? Can you say to Satan, “It is not my business to provide for myself or for my family—my times are in God’s hand and His name is Jehovah-Jireh—The Lord Will Provide. And I will not do a questionable thing, though it would fill my house with silver and gold from the cellar to the chimney pot. I shall not meddle with my Lord’s business. It is His to provide for me—it is mine to walk uprightly and obey His Word”?

This is a noble answer to the arch-enemy! But supposing he says, “Well, but you are already in difficulties and you cannot extricate yourself if you are too precise. A poor man cannot afford to have a conscience—it is an expensive luxury in these days. Give your conscience a holiday and you can soon get out of your trouble.” Let your reply be, “O Prince of Darkness, it is no business of mine to extricate myself! My times are in God’s hand. I have taken my case to Him and He will work for me in this matter better than I can do for myself! He does not wish me to do a wrong thing, that I may do for myself what He has promised to do for me.” We are not called upon to eke out God’s wisdom with a bit of our own wickedness. God forbid! Do the right, even if the heavens should fall. The Lord who has taken your business into His hands will bear you through.

“Well,” says one, “we may use a little discreet policy in religious matters and keep the peace by wise compromise. We may accomplish our end all the sooner by going a little roundabout. If you can just let the Truth of God wait for a little until the fine weather comes, and the silver slippers are in season, then she will be saved a good deal of annoyance!” Brothers and Sisters, it is not for us to pick and plan times in this fashion. God’s cause is in God’s hands and God would not have us help His cause by a compromising hand being laid on His Ark. Remember what the hand of Uzzah brought on him, though he meant well. Let us continue steadfast in the integrity of our walk and we shall find our times are in God’s hand— and that they are well ordered and need no hasty and unholy interposition on our part.

Brethren, is it not a delightful thing for us to know that though we are on a stormy voyage, the Lord, Himself, is at the helm? The course we do not know, nor even our present latitude and longitude. But the Pilot knows all about us and also about the sea. It will be our wisdom not to interfere with our Captain’s orders. They put up a notice on the steamboats, “Do not speak to the man at the wheel.” We are very apt, in our unbelief, to dispute with Him to whom the steering of our vessel is entrusted. We shall not confuse Him, thank God, but we often confound and confuse ourselves by our idle complaining against the living Lord! No, when you are tempted to presume, or to act in a despairing haste, or to hide your principles, or to do something which is not defensible in order that you may arrange your times more comfortably, answer with a decided “No,” and say, “My times are in God’s hand”—and there, by His Grace, I will leave them!”

When the devil comes with His subtle questions and insinuations, refer Him to your Lord, in whose hands your times are placed. When you have a lawsuit, the opposite side will likely come and talk with you, to see if they can get something out of you. It will be your wisdom to reply, “If you have anything to say, say it to my solicitor.” If the devil comes to you and you get into an argument with him, he will beat you, for he is a very ancient lawyer and he has been at the business for so many ages that you cannot match him. Send him to your Advocate! Refer him to the Wonderful, the Counselor! Always shelter beneath this fact, “My times are in His hand. I have left the whole business to Another and I cannot dishonor Him by meddling.” Satan knows the Christ too well to go to Him—he knows the taste of His broadsword, of, “It is written.” He will not contest with Jesus if we leave Him to plead the causes of our soul!

III. In the third place, THIS CONVICTION IS A SUFFICIENT SUPPORT AGAINST THE FEAR OF MEN. We may say to ourselves, when our enemies bear very hard upon us, “I am not in their hands. My times are in Your hand.” Here are gentlemen judging and condemning us with great rapidity. They say, “He has made a great mistake. He is an old bigot. He has snuffed himself out.” This is easier said than done. The candle still shines. They say of you, “He is foolish and headstrong and, on religious matters, he is as obstinate as a mule! But he will come to grief.” You have not come to grief, yet, in the way they predict, and they had better not prophesy till they know! The godly are not in the hands of those who mock them! The wicked may gnash their teeth at Believers, but they cannot destroy them! Here is their comfort—they have committed their spirit to the hands of God—and He will sacredly preserve the precious deposit. Fear not the judgments of men! Appeal to a higher court. Take the case to the King’s Bench. Go to God, Himself, with the matter, and He will bring forth your judgment as the light and your righteousness as the noonday.

Do the malicious resolve to crush you? They will use to the utmost their little power, but there is a higher power which will hold them back. Rejoicingly say, “My times are in Your hand.” Do they treat you with contempt? Do they sneer at you? What does that matter? Your honor comes not from men! Their contempt is the highest compliment the wicked can pay you.

Alas, many professors place their times in the hands of the world! If they prosper and grow rich, they see an opportunity of social advantage and they quit their humbler friends to join a more respectable sect. How many are lost to fidelity because their prosperous times are not in God’s hands, but in their own? Some, on the other hand, when they are in adversity, get away from the Lord. The excuse is, “I cannot go to the House of God any more, for my clothes are not so respectable as they used to be.” Is your poverty to take you out of your Lord’s hands? Never let it be so! But say, “My times are in Your hand.” Cleave to the Lord in losses as well as in gains and so let all your times be with Him.

How often we meet with people who are staggered by slander! It is impossible to stop malicious tongues. They wound and even slay the characters of the godly. The tried one cries, “I cannot bear it! I shall give all up.” Why? Why yield to mere talk? Even these cruel tongues are in God’s hands! Can you not brave their attacks? They cannot utter a single whisper more than God permits! Go on your way, O righteous man, and let false tongues pour forth their poison as they will. “Every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.” If my times are in God’s hands, no man can do me harm unless God permits it. Though my soul is among lions, yet no lion can bite me while Jehovah’s angel is my guard!

This feeling, that our interests are safe in the highest keeping, breeds an independent spirit. It prevents our cringing before the great and our flattering the strong. At the same time, it removes all tendency to envy, so that you do not wish for the prosperity of the wicked, nor fret yourself because of evildoers. When one knows that his times are in God’s hands, he would not change places with a king! No, nor even with an angel!

IV. A full belief in the statement of our text is A CURE FOR PRESENT WORRY. O Lord, if my times are in Your hands, I have cast my care on You, and I trust and am not afraid! Why is it, my Sister—for this habit of worrying abounds among the gracious sisterhood—why do you vex yourself about a matter which is in the hands of God? If He has undertaken for you, what cause have you for anxiety? And you, my Brother—for there are plenty of men who are nervous and fretful—why do you want to interfere with the Lord’s business? If the case is in His hands, what need can there be for you to be prying and crying? You were worrying this morning and fretting last night—and you are distressed, now, and will be worse tomorrow morning. May I ask you a question? Did you ever get any good by fretting? When there was not rain enough for your farm, did you ever fret a shower down? When there was too much rain, or you thought so, did you ever worry the clouds away? Tell me, did you ever make a sixpence by worrying? It is a very unprofitable business!

Do you answer, “What, then, are we to do in troublous times?” Why, go to Him into whose hand you have committed yourself and your times! Consult with Infinite Wisdom by prayer. Console yourself with Infinite Love by fellowship with God. Tell the Lord what you feel and what you fear. Ten minutes’ praying is better than a year’s murmuring! He that waits upon God and casts his burden upon Him may lead a royal life— indeed, he will be far happier than a king!

To leave our times with God is to live as free from care as the birds upon the bough. If we fret, we shall not glorify God, and we shall not constrain others to see what true religion can do for us in the hour of tribulation. Fret and worry put it out of our power to act wisely. But if we can leave everything with God because everything really is in His hands, we shall be peaceful and our action will be deliberate. And for that very reason it will be more likely to be wise. He that rolls his burden upon the Lord will be strong to do or to suffer—and his days shall be as the days of Heaven upon the earth. I admire the serenity of Abraham. He never seems to be in a fluster, but he moves grandly, like a prince among men. He is much more than the equal of the greatest man he meets—we can hardly see Lot with a microscope when we have once seen Abraham! Why was that? Because he believed in God and staggered not.

Half the joy of life lies in expectation. Our children get greater pleasure out of expecting a holiday than they do out of the day, itself. It is much the same with ourselves. If we believe that all our times are in God’s hands, we shall be expecting great things from our heavenly Father. When we get into a difficulty we shall say, “I am now going to see the wonders of God and to learn, again, how surely He delivers them that trust in Him!” I thank God I have learned at times to glory in necessities, as opening a window into Heaven for me, out of which the Lord would abundantly pour forth His supplies. It has been to me so unspeakable a delight to see how the Lord has supplied my needs for the Orphanage, the College and other works, that I have half wished to be in straits, that I might see how the Lord would appear for me!

I remember, some time ago, when, year after year, all the money came in for the various enterprises, I began to look back with regret upon those grand days when the Lord permitted the brook Cherith to dry up and called off the ravens, with their bread and meat, and then found some other way of supplying the orphans’ needs! In those days, the Lord used to come to me, as it were, walking on the tops of the mountains, stepping from peak to peak and, by marvelous deeds, supplying all my needs, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus!

Do you know, I almost wished that the Lord would stop the streams and then let me see how He can fetch water out of the Rock! He did so, not very long ago. Funds ran very low and then I cried to Him and He heard me out of His holy hill. How glad was I to hear the footsteps of the ever-present Lord, answering to His child’s prayer and letting him know that his times were still in his Father’s hands! Surely it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man! It is a joy worth worlds to be driven where none but the Lord can help you—and then to see His mighty hand pulling you out of the net! The joy lies mainly in the fact that you are sure it is the Lord and sure that He is near you. This blessed realization of the Lord’s interposition causes us to glory in tribulation! Is not that a cure for worry, a blessed cure for anxiety?

V. Fifthly, a firm conviction of this truth is A QUIETUS AS TO FUTURE DREAD. “My times are in Your hand.” Do you wish to know what is going to happen to you in a short time? Would you look between the folded leaves of the future? You can buy a penny newspaper which will tell you the fate of nations this very year. But you may be well-near sure that nothing will happen which is thus predicted—and thus it may be of little use to you! Be content with the prophecies of Scripture, but follow not every interpreter of them. Many people would pay great sums to have the future made known to them. If they were wise, they would rather desire to have it concealed! Do not want to know—such knowledge would answer no useful purpose. The future is intended to be a sealed book. The present is all we need to have before us. Do your day’s work in its day and leave tomorrow with your God. If there were ways of reading the future, it would be wise to decline to use them. The knowledge would create responsibility, arouse fear and diminish present enjoyment—why seek after it? Famish idle curiosity and give your strength to believing obedience! Of this you may be quite sure, that there is nothing in the book of the future which should cause distrust to a Believer! Your times are in God’s hands—and this secures them.

The very word, “times,” supposes change for you. But as there are no changes with God, all is well. Things will happen which you cannot foresee, but your Lord has foreseen all and provided for all! Nothing can occur without His Divine allowance and He will not permit that which would be for your real or permanent injury. “I should like to know,” says one, “whether I shall die soon.” Have no desire in that direction—your time will come when it should. The best way to live above all fear of death is to die every morning before you leave your bedroom. The Apostle Paul said, “I die daily.” When you have got into the holy habit of daily dying, it will come easy to you to die for the last time!

It is greatly wise to be familiar with our last hours. As you take off your garments at night, rehearse the solemn scene when you shall lay aside your robe of flesh. When you put on your garments in the morning, anticipate the being clothed upon with your house which is from Heaven in the day of Resurrection. To be fearful of death is often the height of folly. A great Prophet once ran away many miles to escape from death by an imperious queen. He was one of the bravest of the brave and yet He hurried into solitude to escape a woman’s threat! When he had finished his weary walk, he sat down and actually prayed, “Let me die.” It was a singular thing to do, to run for his life, and then to cry, “Let me die.” That man never did die, for we speak of Elijah who rode to Heaven in a chariot of fire! God does not answer all His people’s prayers, for He has better things for them than they ask. Do not tremble about what may never happen. Even we may never die, for it is written, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” Some of us may be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord. Who knows? Behold, He comes quickly! At any rate, do not let us worry about death, for it is in His hands.

VI. Again, a full conviction that our times are in His hands will be A REASON FOR CONSECRATED SERVICE. If God has undertaken my business for me, then I may most fitly undertake such business for Him as He may appoint. Queen Elizabeth wished one of the leading merchants of London to go to Holland to watch her interests there. The honest man told Her Majesty that he would obey her commands, but he begged her to remember that it would involve the ruin of his own trade, for him to be absent. To this the Queen replied, “If you will see to my business, I will see to your business.” With such a royal promise he might willingly let his own business go, for a queen should have it in her power to do more for a subject than he can do for himself.

The Lord, in effect, says to the Believer, “I will take your affairs in hand and see them through for you.” Will you not at once feel that now it is your joy, your delight, to live to glorify your gracious Lord? To be set free to serve the Lord is the highest freedom! How beautiful it is to read in the book of Isaiah, “And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers”! Outsiders shall do the drudgery for you and set you free for higher service! Read on and see—“But you shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.” Faith sets us free from the wear and tear of carking care that we may give ourselves up wholly to the service of the Lord our God! Faith causes us to live exempt from fret, to serve only the blessed God. Set free from the burden of earthly things by God’s kind care of us, we present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord our God. He has not made us slaves and drudges, but priests and kings unto God!

I am sure, dear Friends, if we get this Truth of God fully saturating our souls, that our times are in God’s hand, it will make life a grander thing than it has ever seemed to be. Do you believe that God’s hand is working with you and for you? Then are you lifted above the dumb-driven cattle that surround you, for the God of Heaven thinks of you and puts His hand to your affairs. This connection with the Divine puts heart into a man and rises him to high endeavor and great belief. We feel we are immortal till our work is done! We feel that God is with us and that we are bound to be victorious through the blood of Jesus! We shall not be defeated in the campaign of life, for the Lord of Hosts is with us and we shall tread down our enemies! God will strengthen us, for our times are in His hands and, therefore, we will serve Him with all our heart and with all our soul, being fully convinced that, “our labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

VII. Lastly, if our times are in God’s hands, here is A GRAND ARGUMENT FOR FUTURE BLESSEDNESS. He that takes care of our times will take care of our eternity. He that has brought us so far and worked so graciously for us will see us safely over the rest of the road. I marvel at some of you older folks, when you begin to doubt. You will say, “Look at yourself.” Well, so I do, and I am heartily ashamed that ever a grain of mistrust should get into the eye of my faith. I would weep it out and keep it out for the future.

Still, some of you are older than I am, for you are 70 or 80 years of age. How much longer do you expect to travel in this wilderness? Do you think you have you another 10 years? God has been gracious to you for 70 years and will you fret about the last 10, which, indeed, may never come? That will never do! God has delivered some of you out of such great trials that your present ones are mere fleabites. Sir Francis Drake, after he had sailed around the world, came up the Thames. And when he had passed Gravesend there came a storm which threatened the ship. The brave commander said, “What? Go around the world safely and then get drowned in a ditch? Never!” So we ought to say! God has upheld us in great tribulations and we are not going to be cast down about trials which are common to men!

A man of energy, if he takes a work in hand, will push it through and the Lord our God never undertakes what he will not complete. “My times are in Your hand” and, therefore, the end will be glorious! My Lord, if my times were in my own hands, they would prove a failure, but since they are in Your hands, You will not fail, nor shall I! The hands of God ensures success all along the line. In that day when we shall see the tapestry which records our lives, we shall see all the scenes therein with wondering eyes. We shall see what wisdom, what love, what tenderness, what care was lavished upon them! When once a matter is in God’s hands, it is never neglected or forgotten, but it is carried out to the end. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

I have not been able to preach on this text as I hoped to do, for I am full of pain and have a heavy headache. But, thank God, I have no heartache with such a glorious Truth of God before me! Sweet to my soul are these words—“My times are in Your hand.” Take the golden sentence home with you! Keep this Truth in your mind. Let it lie on your tongue like a wafer made with honey. Let it dissolve until your whole nature is sweetened by it. Yes, dear old lady, you that have come out of the workhouse this morning to hear this sermon, say to yourself, “My times are in Your hand.” Yes, you, dear Friend, who cannot find employment and have been walking your shoes off your feet in the vain endeavor to seek one—

you, also, may say, “My times are in Your hand.” Yes, my dear Sister, pining away with consumption, this may be your song—”My times are in Your hand.” Yes, young man, you that have just started in business and have met with a crushing loss, it will be for your benefit, after all! Therefore say, “My times are in Your hand.” This little sentence, to my mind, swells into a hymn—it buds and blossoms into a Psalm! Few are the words, but mighty is the sense, and full of rest.

Now, remember, it is not everybody that can find honey in this hive. O Sinners, you are in the hands of an angry God and this is terrible! The God against whom you continually sin and whom you provoke by refusing His Grace, has absolute power over you! Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces! You have provoked, offended and grieved Him, but there is yet hope, for His mercy endures forever. Though you have vexed His Holy Spirit, yet return unto Him and He will have mercy upon you and abundantly pardon you! It is certain that you are in His hands and that you cannot escape from Him. If you should climb to Heaven, or dive to Hell, you would not be out of His reach! No strength of yours can resist Him, no speed can outrun Him. Yield yourselves to God and then this great power of God, which now surrounds you, shall become your comfort!

At present it ought to be your terror. The eyes of God are fixed upon you. The hands of God are against you and if you are unsaved, one touch of that hand will mean death and everlasting destruction! That hand which the Believer devoutly kisses, is the hand which you may well dread. Oh, that you would flee to Christ Jesus and find shelter from wrath beneath the crimson canopy of His precious blood! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 31.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—910, 701, 703. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #773 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DAVID’S HOLY WONDER AT THE LORD’S GREAT GOODNESS

NO. 773

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 19, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Oh how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You, which You have worked for them that trust in You before the sons of men!”  
Psalm 31:19.**

YOU will observe in reading this Psalm that David was in deep distress. These are the words of his lamentation: “My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to my acquaintances: they that did see me outside fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.”

In this forlorn condition he found consolation by turning his contemplations away from his present trouble to the goodness of his God, even as a mariner turns the helm and so escapes the rock. Herein he was wise and instructed us to be wise, also. To ruminate upon our sorrows is but to increase them. To turn them over, and over, and over again is but to squeeze from them the most bitter drops which they contain. The more the turbid pool is stirred, the blacker will it become. Relieve your thoughts, then! Trade in another market! Let your minds exchange the pressing sorrow for sustaining consolation.

And what can be better, what nobler as a theme for inspiring hope, what mightier as a lever for uplifting the mind than reflection upon the amazing goodness of God? It has been said by a great physician that when persons find much difficulty in sleeping they have sometimes been able to win the embrace of “tired nature’s sweet restorer,” by fixing their minds upon a single sublime subject, a grand absorbing topic, a master theme or thought. As soon as the mind has been thoroughly absorbed in contemplation it has been at rest, and the body has rested, too. I know not how that may be, but certainly, when God would give “His beloved sleep” in times of distraction, and would lull their souls into a calm repose, there is no better sleeping pill which His hand can administer to the troubled spirit than a meditation upon the amazing goodness of the Lord our God.

Or, to change the metaphor, we know that when young lads first go to sea, if they have before been unaccustomed to climb to elevated places they are apt to grow dizzy when called to perform their duties on the mast. Then the experienced captain instructs them to “look up,” for if they look down, and measure timidly the height of the mast, and count the waves as they roll against the sides of the vessel, and terrify their minds with thoughts upon the heaving of the ship, and the terrors of falling from their hold, they are most likely to fall! But, looking to the motionless stars, and the calm, blue sky, the brain grows calm and the foot maintains its standing.

We would say, then, to any who are tossed upon the sea of trouble tonight—imitate the example of David and “look up.” Turn away your minds from the slanderer and the persecutor. Forget awhile the fever and the need, and remember the loving kindness of Jehovah. You may find it almost impossible to keep your minds always tending upwards, but at any rate, while you are here, “look up” with eyes uplifted to the hills from where your help comes. Happy will it be for you if, by the good Spirit of God, you can but get your eyes so fixed upon the goodness of God that you shall become so fascinated that your attention cannot be taken off that glorious object! It will be a blessing to you, a great blessing which will bear you through all your trials and make you suck honey from the rock and oil out of the flinty rock.

Now note the text carefully. David thought of the goodness of God till he was lost in wonder, and being quite unable to express his feelings he uttered an exclamation, “Oh, how great is Your goodness!” We will consider, first, the subject of holy wonder mentioned in the text. Secondly we will consider the partakers of this Divine goodness. Then, thirdly, we shall note some general matters which tend to enhance our admiration of the goodness of God. And fourthly, we will notice sundry teachings which flow from the whole subject.

I. In the first place, observe in the text THE SUBJECT OF HOLY WONDER—“Your goodness.” We here perceive God’s goodness in a twofold aspect, as laid up in store and already displayed in a measure, “Oh how great is Your goodness which You have laid up!” And secondly, “Oh how great is Your goodness which You have worked before the sons of men!”

1. We shall devoutly take the first of these. David is astonished at the great goodness of God which is laid up—the goodness of God which David had not as yet tasted, had not actually received—but which his faith realized and looked upon as its fixed and settled heritage. The spirit of our text is that of Miss Waring’s delightful hymn in which she exclaims*—*

*“And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set;  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.”*

We magnify the Lord for the Grace which is yet to come—the laid up goodness, the corn that is in the granary, which the good Joseph is keeping till the time of famine comes—the water which is but just bubbling from the spring and has not yet come streaming down to the plain— where our thirst will by-and-by require it.

Now think, Christian, of what God has laid up for them that fear Him! First, how much He laid up in His eternal purpose when He chose His people, and laid up for them the grand intention, “They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up My jewels.” Think of electing love, and of all the consequences which well up from that eternal fountainhead. Here you have a subject for a life-long wonder*—*

*“Father, ‘twas Your love that knew us  
Earth’s foundation long before:  
That same love to Jesus drew us  
By its sweet constraining power,  
And will keep us  
Safely now, and evermore.  
God of love, our souls adore You!  
We would still Your Grace proclaim,  
Till we cast our crowns before You,  
And in Glory praise Your name  
Hallelujah, be to God and to the Lamb!”*

Oh, how great is Your goodness which Your eternal purpose ordained and settled upon Your saints by an everlasting decree that it should be theirs—for so You had decreed it according to the counsel of Your own most wise and sovereign will. How great is Your goodness that You should choose us and predestinate us to be conformed into the image of Your Son, that He might be the First-Born among many Brethren, and we the happy Brethren who should be transformed into His likeness! How great is the goodness of God which He laid up in the Covenant of Grace! He determined to bless us in a way of Covenant relationship into which He entered on our behalf with our federal Head, the Lord Jesus.

To attempt, my dear Brothers and Sisters, to read to you the treasures which God has made over to us in the Covenant of Grace were to attempt an impossibility. The catalog is far too comprehensive. Behold, He has given all things to you in the Covenant of His eternal love, for all things are yours, whether things present or things to come—life and death, time and eternity—no, more, God Himself is yours! “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” The Father is your Father! The Son of God is your Brother! The Spirit of God is your Comforter who abides with you forever! In that golden case of the Covenant of Grace all the wealth of the Eternal is stored up for the chosen!

David laid up in store for the temple, but Jesus has treasured up far more for His Church. Jacob gave to Joseph one portion above his brothers, but our heavenly Father has given to all the family an inheritance surpassing all conception. Angels, nor principalities, nor powers can fully estimate the infinite wealth of blessedness laid up in the Everlasting Covenant. Think, too, of what God has laid up in the Person of His Son— the same treasure, only now more clearly revealed to us and brought forth in the Person of the Well-Beloved so that we may the more readily partake of it. In the ark of old there were laid up the golden pot of manna and sundry other marvelous things—but what is there laid up in the ark of

 our Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Beloved, there is laid up in Him all things that are necessary for you! Pardon for all your sins! Justification through faith in His Sacrifice! Life through His death! Sanctifying power is in the blood of Jesus! Your preservation is in Christ’s hands! Your acceptance depends upon Him—a daily intercession goes up from the heart of your Lord Jesus on your behalf and He constantly represents you before the golden throne! All that you can want for the whole journey from the place where you now are, right up to the right hand of the Most High—all this is laid up for you! You are complete in Him. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”

If you fear Him and trust Him, though meanest of all His people, yet all needful Grace and promised glory is laid up for you in the Person, work, offices and relationships of the Lord Jesus Christ. And think, Beloved, of what is laid up for you in the work, office and mission of the Holy Spirit! You have not yet realized what the Holy Spirit can do. You have been regenerated by Him! You have been made to pass from death unto life. You have been taught somewhat of the Truth of God—He has revealed some of the things of God to you. You have been somewhat illuminated, somewhat strengthened, somewhat comforted, somewhat assisted in prayer—but none of you are aware of all that the Holy Spirit can do!

When we see some men who have become eminent in Divine Grace. When we read their heavenly biographies and observe how they walked with God, and seemed to live a life above the common lot of earth-born mortals, we should remember that they enjoyed no monopoly of Grace! The bread on which they fed is common to all the household—whatever Grace the best of men have had, you may have as much and more! When we measure the abundance of Divine power in the Holy Spirit by what we see in eminent martyrs, confessors, Apostles, and saints—we may cry with the Psalmist, “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You!”

How happy, how blessed, how holy might Believers be if they would but come and receive of the fullness of the Spirit’s power! Do not imagine, my beloved Friends, that the standard of your attainment is the maximum of a Christian! Do not consider that you have obtained all that God is willing to bestow! “You are not straitened in Him, but you are straitened in your own heart.” There are loftier degrees of sanctification! There is a more eminent nearness of communion than the most of us are aware!

The laid-up treasures in the Holy Spirit are probably vastly greater than any of us have ever been enabled to conceive. I shall pause but a moment to observe that the greatest goodness of all, we sometimes think, but perhaps improperly, is that goodness which is to be revealed when this life is over which God has laid up for them that fear Him. I am not sure that this is the greatest since eternal love, itself, as a cause already given, is greater than the effect which is to follow. Courage, my Brothers and Sisters! The night lasts not forever—the morning comes. See you not the day star? Do you not see the hind of the morning leaping over the hills of darkness? The Lord Jesus Christ has said, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”

Now whatever may be the splendor of the millennial reign, we shall share in them. And I confess that the Word of God seems to me to reveal much of coming glory—but to reveal it in such a manner that it is not possible for any of us to cast it into a mold and to say, with decisive certainty—“That is just what the prophecy means.” The glory that comes is too excessive for us to point to details. It is a blaze that might well blind those who seek to look upon it and count the flashing beams. But there is a glory coming such as the world never saw, and a kingdom which will swallow up all other kingdoms as Aaron’s rod swallowed up the rods of the pretenders.

There is a glory to come that shall be brighter than the glory of the sun, though that sun should flash forth with the light of seven days. A glory comes which excels and endures and in this Believers shall, all of them, have their share. I am inclined to think that they do err from the truth and pierce themselves through with many sorrows who teach that some of God’s people will be shut out from this glory. There is nothing which God will give to some of His people, which He will not give to all His people. They shall all be with Christ where He is, that they may behold His glory. They shall all have a share, and I think an equal share, too, in all the excellent things which God has laid up for them that fear Him.

Whatever those things may be—and surely the most glowing language fails to picture them for they are all too rich and rare for words—we can say of them without fear, “Oh, how great is Your goodness!” Then ponder well the glories of the eternal state. Think of—

*“Jerusalem the golden  
With milk and honey blest.”*

Let your faith bear you on its wings to the bejeweled city where— *“They stand, those halls of Zion,  
Jubilant with song,  
And bright with many an angel,  
And all the martyr throng.”*

Those many mansions, the haven of rest, the shrine of holiness, the home of happiness, the summit of perfection, the abode of love, the royal palace, the Throne of the great King. Long you not to soar? Pant you not for the better country? Do not heart and voice feel the sweet oppression of too much anticipated joy? Is it not a relief to cry, “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You”?

Let us, dear Friends, before we leave this subject, rejoice in what God has laid up! It is a pity that we should rejoice in nothing but our own experience for this will sadly narrow the sphere of our praise. Our experience may be very slender as yet but we should rejoice in what is laid up! If I cannot rejoice in what I am, I will rejoice in what I shall be, remembering the precious thought, that, “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” If I cannot rejoice in what I have in the hand of experience, yet will I glory in that which I can grasp with the hand of faith, for even now it is mine, though it is laid up till I reach my majority, and have come to years when I shall be fit to receive it!

2. Now we must note that it is not all laid up. It is not all light that is sown for the righteous. We have some wheat that has grown up and yielded sheaves. There are some treasures which we enjoy now, and therefore we find David saying, “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have worked for them that trust in You before the sons of men!” The last few words look in our translation as if they belonged to the words, “Them that trust you,” but this is not the correct reading. There are certain reasons which render it necessary to read the sentence thus— “Which You have worked before the sons of men for them that trust you.”

Now God has worked out many marvelous things for us before the sons of men. I will not stay long, for your thoughts are often there upon that which Christ worked out before the sons of men in Gethsemane’s sweat and blood, in Gabbatha’s scourging, in Golgotha’s death. Worked out! Ah, indeed, He worked out and brought in an everlasting righteousness! He has perfected forever them that are set apart. That one sacrifice of His secured the perfect salvation of all for whom He died as a Surety. What did He not work out then? “It is finished!” He said, and He knew what He said. He knew that he had worked out, then and there, the perfect redemption of every one of His people.

But we may remind you tonight of what God has worked out for you in your own experience in the work of the Holy Spirit upon your soul. Do not forget, doubting Christian, that there was a time when you had not enough Grace to doubt. Do not forget, poor trembling one, that there was a time when you had not enough life to tremble. Be thankful, then, for the little Grace which you can perceive in yourself. Do not hide from your eyes what God has done. Be grateful for what you have! Remember what I have often said to you—be thankful for the starlight, and you will get moonlight. Be thankful for the moonlight and your God will send you sunlight.

We must prize the smallest degree of Divine Grace. We often neglect what we have and bemoan ourselves much because we are not perfect— though there is a measure in which we are to do that. But it were well not to do this too much or too exclusively. We must think of what God has done and be grateful and bless His name, and then be encouraged in faith to ask for more. Blessed be God, with a thousand imperfections and faults I still find in my soul some inkling of love towards His name. I feel some desire for the promotion of His glory. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see—I see my sinfulness, see my weakness, see that Christ is just such a Savior as I need and I do with my whole heart rely upon Him!

Shall I not be thankful for this? Is not this far more than nature could have given me? If you can honestly use such language as I have just uttered in your hearing, be thankful and in deepest humility rejoice! Be grateful for Grace within, and say, “Oh, how great a thing is this—for a dead soul to be made to live! For a filthy soul to be washed in the blood! For a naked soul to be clothed with heavenly righteousness! For a lost sheep to be brought into the fold! For a prodigal to be made to sit at his father’s table! Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have worked out for me, which has taken me away from my evil companions—turned me away from haunts of vice and iniquity, and made me to love what once I hated—and to delight in that which was once dreary and dull to my soul.”

But, Brethren, we have also another instance of what God has worked out for us in the shape of Providential mercies. How great is the goodness of God as shown in what He has worked out for us in Providence! We have all some Providence to remember which seems very special to us. But all Providence is special if we look at it from the right point of view. A certain father had agreed to meet his son at a spot halfway between their residences which were far removed from each other. When the son reached the halfway spot, he said, “Father, I have great reason to bless God, for I have met with a very special Providence. My horse stumbled and threw me three times, and yet I was not injured.”

“Thanks be to God,” said the father, “and I have met with a very special Providence, too, for which I thank God, and that is that my horse never stumbled once, but brought me safely all the way.” If you happen to meet with an accident and are almost killed, you say it is a special Providence if you are preserved. But is it not a Providence that you go many and many a journey and no harm befalls you whatever? Let us bless God for the mercies we do not see—the innumerable dangers from which we are preserved—the great needs which are supplied before we know them to be needs! From childhood up to youth and on to manhood what flowers of mercy have bloomed in our pathway! What tender hands have led us! What mighty arms have upheld us! What a watchful eye has been fixed upon us! “How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.”

Perhaps you do not perceive any great goodness of God in your particular position at this present crisis. You are very poor and very lonely. Well, there will be a day, if you are the Lord’s child, when you will see superlative love in the lot marked out for you. For the present believe it, and, believing it, you have an opportunity of honoring God in your distress which would not be yours if you were in another condition. When you shall know the end as well as the beginning, you will see that it was better for you to have been poor and needy than to have been rich and increased in goods. Meanwhile count it enough reason for perpetual song that you possess*—*

*“What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,*

*The soul’s calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy.”*There are other aspects in which I might have brought out the text, but I prefer to leave each one among you to tune his own harp and give to his Lord the sweet spontaneous music of a soul aglow with gratitude.

II. I shall now, very briefly, take you on to the second point, which is THE FAVORED PERSONS WHO ENJOY THE LORD’S GREAT GOODNESS. “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You, which You have worked for them that trust in You.” As you know, the phrase, “the fear of God,” is used especially in the Old Testament for the whole of piety. It does not signify merely the one virtue of fear—it does not signify that feeling at all in the sense of slavish fear— but it takes a wide sweep.

The man who had the fear of God before his eyes was one who believed in God, worshipped God, loved God, was kept back from evil by the thought of God and moved to good by the desire to please God. The ungodly were the wicked ones—those who had no God. Those who had a godly fear were found diligently walking in holiness. The fear of God, I say, was the expression used for the whole of religion!

Still, fear itself is a very important element in the Christian’s character if it is the right kind of fear. We have nothing to do with the terror of the bond slave, for we are free and “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” Blessed be God, we have no fear of Hell. It is not possible for a Believer to be there! Talk of casting a Believer into Hell? As well talk of casting the Redeemer Himself there! It is impossible. We have no fear, even, of losing our standing before God, for we do not stand before Him in ourselves, but in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot fall, finally and fatally, unless Jesus can fall. “Because I live,” He says, “you shall live also.”

But this is our fear—the fear which a dear child has of a tender father. It is not afraid that its father will kill it, or cease to love it, or banish it and turn it out of his house. It knows better! It trusts its father too well to indulge in such mischievous suspicions. Because it loves him, it fears to offend him. This is the very atmosphere in which a Christian breathes. He fears God and consequently desires to keep His commandments. But you notice that the synonym used in the text is “trust,” and therefore it is plain that trust in God is the sum and total of religion.

Why is it put so—“Laid up for them that fear You. Worked for them that trust in You”—unless it is true that he who trusts God fears God? The whole compass of the fear of God is gathered up into a center in that point of trust. Why so? Why, my Brethren, because trust is the root of true fear! To trust God is the root of all genuine religion. “Without faith, it is impossible to please God.” Faith is the foundation of all the other Graces. Faith unites us vitally to the Lord Jesus Christ and then from Him, as from the trunk, the sap of Divine Grace flows into the branch and the fruit is produced. But take away faith and we are separated from Christ, and then there can be no fruit. Therefore, because faith is the root, the seed containing the whole of the substance and essence of piety—it is put for the entire fear of God.

Then again, faith, or trust is the test of the genuineness of religion. He whose religion is everything else but trust in God has no true religion. He may be very precise in ceremonies. He may be exceedingly exact in morality, but if he is relying upon these things, then he has no true trust and he has no right fear of God. But he who observes the Lord’s will and at the same time rests upon God, and upon Him, alone—depending upon the precious blood of Jesus as his only confidence—he is the man whose fear of God is such as God can accept. So you see, because trust is thus the touchstone of true religion, therefore it is put for the whole thing.

Moreover, trust is the flower of the fear of God. After all, the grandest thing that a man can do is trust God! I should be prepared to prove, if there were time tonight, that there is in trust in God the whole compass of all the other virtues. Or, to put it in other words, if you will put trust under the necessary conditions, it will educe out of its own loins all the other attributes of the perfect man. Only let a man trust in Christ, and he has done the grandest thing that can be done! The highest morality is to trust Christ. What did the Master, Himself, say? The Jews asked Him, “What is the work of God?” They wanted to know what was that highest work which man could do that was worthy to be called God’s work, the work of God, the highest work and the best. And Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.”

When you have trusted God you have done more than they who have kept the ceremonies of the Law to the letter. When you have trusted God you have done more than they who cringe at Moses’ feet, and shake and quake before the mountain that was altogether on a smoke. They crawl like slaves, abjectly, at their Master’s feet—but you stand up like freeborn sons! You do the Lord far higher homage when you trust His love, His power, His Truth than legalists do with all their toiling and their striving and their works! The grandest virtue, the very highest point of all excellence is to trust in God as He reveals Himself in His Word.

Now, it appears that the goodness of God is laid up for them that fear Him, and worked for them that trust Him. Dear Hearer, will you ask yourself anxiously whether you fear God, and further, whether you fear Him in such a way as to have trust in Him? Have you these two indispensable spiritual gifts? Are you believers in Jesus Christ, dear Hearers? Some of you are, I know. I rejoice with you that God has brought you into the ark of salvation by the door of faith. But are you all such as shall be saved? There is no salvation except by faith, remember—all other methods are delusions. It is faith in Jesus Christ which brings eternal salvation to you! Without this, despair is your portion.

If you have not this precious Grace, may the Lord bestow upon you the faith which works by love and purifies the soul, that you, believing in Him, may have the power given you to become the sons of God, which power He gives to as many as believe on His name.

III. And now, only two or three words upon the third point, and that is coming back to the first reflection—the greatness of God’s goodness to the people who have been described. There are ONE OR TWO THINGS WHICH MAKE US SEE THAT GREATNESS. First, observe the multitude of these people. God’s people have been 10,000s times 10,000s in number. They are a “little flock” in comparison with the outside world, but no doubt they shall be, at the end, “a multitude that no man can number.” Now, the goodness of God to any one of them is quite unsearchable and not to be estimated. But what must be the great goodness which He has laid up for all His people, for all them that fear and trust Him?—

*“Great God, the treasures of Your love  
Are everlasting mines!”*

It is no small task to water one garden in the heat of the summer so that every flower shall be refreshed, and no plant overlooked. How great is the might of Him who, from the salt sea, extracts the precious clouds of sweet rain to fall not only on gardens, but the pastures of the wilderness and the wild forest trees till all nature laughs for joy, the mountains and the hills break forth into singing and the trees of the field clap their hands! Brethren, it is a great thing to put a cup of cold water to the lips of a disciple—it shall not lose its reward. To refresh the heart of one of God’s saints is no mean thing. But think how great is God’s goodness which puts a cup of salvation to every Christian’s lips! Which waters every plant of His right-hand planting so that everyone can have his leaf continually green and his fruit ever brought forth in due season!

Think again, dear Friends, of the undeservingness of each one of these! There is not one of those who feared and trusted Him that was worthy of the least grain of His mercy. They were many of them the chief of sinners—some of them peculiarly so—and yet this goodness, this great goodness, came to them exemplifying its greatness because of the greatness of their transgressions. Was there anything of worthiness about the prodigal who had devoured his substance with harlots in his riotous living? Was not his prodigality a fire to set off the brightness of the father’s love, who said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it. And let us eat and be merry: for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found”?

When God saved Jonah by the whale which was prepared for him, did He do it because Jonah was deserving of it? Very far from it! He was fleeing from God’s Presence and the path of duty, and God’s goodness to him is thrown out in bold relief by the dark unworthiness of that unfaithful and timid Prophet. Well may we say, as we notice our own waywardness and folly, and contrast it with Divine mercy, “Oh, how great is Your goodness!”

Remember, too, the need they were in. You can measure the greatness of the goodness of God by the distance from the place where Adam left his fallen posterity, broken by the Fall, to the position at the right hand of Christ where God’s eternal mercy shall place them forever! Picture to yourself a place full of all manner of vile and loathsome diseases, where the deadly fever and the living-death called leprosy, are found. See yon man who enters, braving all the dangers of infection that he may heal the sick and restore the wretched ones to health and life! How great his goodness!

But is even that to be compared to the goodness of God’s Son who not only ran the risk with no chance of escape, but deliberately “was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”? “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree” willingly, deliberately, and came of set purpose to die for us—

*“This was compassion like a God,  
That when the Savior knew  
The price of pardon was His blood,  
His pity never withdrew.”*

Think, Brothers and Sisters, of the great goodness of God to His saints— and this will help to make it greater—in contrast to the great evil of man to them. Some of these saints have died cruel deaths. The most of them have had to pass through disgrace and scorn, but oh, how great is Your goodness which You have worked in them, sustaining them all, and making them more than conquerors through Him that loved them!

David speaks in one of his Psalms of his enemies as besetting him “like bees.” And in another place he says of his God, “You have beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.” Now, how great the Divine goodness must have appeared to him in contrast with the stinging malice of his foes! Or, when the Master said to Peter, “Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.” The love of his Lord must have appeared to him, if not at that time, yet afterwards, in brighter colors, because of Satan’s dark designs against him.

If Daniel mused in the lions’ den, or the three holy children in the fiery furnace, they must have thought, all of them, as we should, amidst all our trials and conflicts, “How great is the goodness of God in opposition to the cruelty of man.” There was a great purpose. There was a great Covenant. There was a great Sacrifice. There is a great Providence. There is a great Heaven, and there is a great Spirit to bring them there. Oh, how great is Your goodness to Your people!

I shall not further preach on that topic. I put you at the river’s edge and bid you wade in, hoping that you may proceed as far as the Apostle, when he said, “Oh, the depths!”

IV. And now, lastly, WHAT SHOULD THIS TEACH US? Should not this make us grateful to God for such wondrous kindness? The Lord has not given His people to drink of a twinkling rivulet, but He has been pleased to give the river of Himself to them that they may drink to the full! Did you ever get the meaning of that passage, “That you may be filled with all the fullness of God”? Oh, that is a text that one would like to preach from in Heaven! If there are pulpits there, and congregations, give me that for a text above all others, except that best of all, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, to Him be glory.”

“Filled with all the fullness of God!” Beloved, have you learned this wonder? Will you now bless the Lord that there is such a marvel of love for you to learn? You have already had as much as you could bear of God’s goodness! You have had Providential goodness and spiritual mercies. Is there no spark of gratitude in your soul? Can you not afford a song—at least a stanza? O you who think yourselves banished tonight, and are in the dark—lift up your heads! Sing of the light you once had and of the light that is yet to be revealed—that is laid up for them that fear Him, and which shall yet bless your eyes. Be grateful.

In the next place, when you think of the great goodness of God, be humble. I know of no consideration which tends more to humble us than the great mercy of God—like Peter’s boat, which floated high in the water when there was nothing in it, but when it was filled with fish it began to sink—our minds are humbled by a sense of undeserved love—

*“The more your mercies strike my eye,*

*The more humble I shall be.”*  
A sense of Divine goodness will never puff us up but will mightily pull us down. It tends to make the Believer say, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the Truth which You have showed unto Your servant!”

And, lastly, let this inspire us with confidence. If tonight we are bowed down and distressed, let us think of the laid-up goodness of God and go to Him for it. He will surely give, for He has laid it up! He will not deny, for He has prepared it. God seems to say to His people tonight, as of old He said to the multitudes outside His banqueting hall, “My oxen and fatlings are killed, come to the supper!” All that you can want is provided in Christ. Come in, come in! “Eat, eat,” says the spouse in the song, “drink, yes, drink abundantly.”

O Beloved, you cannot diminish the fullness of Christ! Come, now, and put your mouths down to the wellhead and drink a draught such as old behemoth drank when he said he would drink the Jordan dry at a draught. You may have all you can take, Believer! There is no stint or limit here! “Open your mouth wide,” says the Lord, “and I will fill it.” Be not slack concerning the promise, in receiving it, for God will not be slack in keeping it. Only be strong, and full of trust, and you shall live to bless the Lord your Rock, in whom is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness, but who keeps truth unto His people forevermore.

I would to God that all of you had experienced this great goodness of God, but if you have not, and I know some of you have not, there are three thoughts, at least, I would leave upon your minds which should make you feel that He is great and good—“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” Trust the Master, and you are saved! May boundless goodness magnify itself in us all, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1146 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CONSOLATION FOR THE DESPAIRING  
NO. 1146

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 7, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes, nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.” Psalm 31:22.**

I DESIRE at this time to speak to those who are much depressed in spirit, the sons of despondency and daughters of mourning who dwell upon the dreary confines of despair. It may seem objectionable among so large an audience to address my discourse to a class so comparatively small, but I must leave it to your compassion to excuse me. No, I think I hardly need do that, but may urge as my apology the nature of my calling. When the shepherd comes in the early morning to his flock, do not his eyes single out the sick, and does he need forgiveness if, for a while, he devotes all his skill and his care to those sheep which need it?

He does not reason with himself that because of the largeness of the flock and his anxious care that all should be fed, renders it impossible for him to bind up that which is broken and heal that which is diseased, but, on the contrary, his attention to all is proved by his special interest in the particular cases which most require his tenderness. Or take another parable—the watcher on the beach, with his telescope in his hand, paces to and fro and keeps guard for his appointed time. He looks through the glass again and again, but a glance contents him so far as most of yonder gallant vessels are concerned, which are now in the offing.

But by-and-by his glass remains steadily at his eye—his gaze is fixed and in a few moments he gives a signal to his fellows and they haul the boat to the sea and launch her. What has there been so peculiar about this craft that it has gained the watcher’s attention and stirred him to action? He saw signals of distress, or by some other token he knew the ship’s need, and therefore he bestirred himself and engaged every willing hand to lend her help. I, too, remain upon the lookout, and surely it is right that my eyes should rest most anxiously where the distress signals are visible, and where souls bound for eternity are floundering in doubt and ready to perish in despair!

I feel deeply for the mourners in Zion and I pray the Lord to cause His Word, through my ministry, to be as the oil of joy to them. Surely we may expect the Divine help of the Holy Spirit in our endeavor to console them, for the special office of the Holy Spirit under the present dispensation is to be “the Comforter,” who is to abide with us forever. While we bring forth the oil and wine from His own stores, we may hope that He will pour them into the wounds of the afflicted, for this is His office and it would be blasphemy to imagine that He will neglect it. He comforts effectually in an allsufficient and Omnipotent manner.

I feel, too, that I have a Scriptural warrant for introducing such a subject as this into the midst of a congregation where there are many joyous hearts, because this Psalm, which is, to a large extent, sorrowful, was, nevertheless, intended for public worship, for it bears the inscription, “To the chief Musician,” as do several others which are even more full of grief. As, for instance, the 22

nd which is the Psalm of the Passion, and, nevertheless, is committed to the chief leader of sacred song in the house of the Lord. If, therefore, griefs which to the fullest could only be known by a few, were nevertheless to be made the subject of public psalmody, I am quite sure they ought not to be passed over in public ministry, but we ought to consider the cases of the ones and twos whose garments are sackcloth and whose drink is wormwood.

It is our bounden duty to sympathize with them and speak with them for their good. Nor need we fear that the rest of the assembly will suffer, for the 99 sheep in the wilderness never come to any ill because the shepherd is seeking the one lone wanderer. I do not intend considering the text strictly in its connection, but shall use it as a suitable expression of the mental grief of those I would benefit. Notice that it indicates an inward sorrow, it speaks of a rash expression—“I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes.” It mentions a pleading cry and it bears witness to a cheering result to that cry— “nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.”

I. At the outset, note that there is implied in the text a deep, bitter, INWARD SORROW. The man who wrote the verse before us was pained in his heart. There are many in like case at this moment. Their soul faints with heaviness and their life is a burden. How came they are so? Verily, there are many causes for melancholy. Some have their spirit pitched upon a low key constitutionally—their music may never reach the highest notes till they are taught to sing the new song in another world. The windows of their house are very narrow and do not open towards Jerusalem but towards the desert. Something is wrong with their bodily frame—the tacklings are loosed, they cannot strengthen the mast—and the vessel labors terribly. When there is a leak in the vessel, it is little wonder that the waters come in even unto the soul.

With other mournful ones depression began through a great trial. As we have heard of some that their hair turned gray in a single night through grief, so doubtless many souls have aged into sorrow in a single trying hour. One blow has bruised the lily’s stalk and made it wither. One touch of a rude hand has broken the crystal vase. Suns have been shaded in the midst of the brightest summer days and a morning of delight has been followed by an evening of lamentation. In some cases, God knows how many a secret sin, unconfessed to the Father, has festered into misery. There may have been wanton presumption, or pride of heart, or discontent, or inward rebellion against the will of God. There may have been willful negligence of the means of Grace, or despising of the value of the fellowship and joy of the Holy Spirit—and therefore the Lord may have hidden Himself for a while in chastisement.

Or it may be that there has been a gradual fretting of the spirit with minor vexations, long-continued and wearisome, which have worn the heart, even as constant dripping wears away stones. Incessant opposition or neglect from those we love may, at last, cause the spirit to yield. And when that takes place, life becomes bondage. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” I have also known an unwise ministry add to the sorrower’s woe. A legal ministry will do it and so, also, will that teaching which bids men look within for comfort—and sets up one uniform experience as the standard for all the people of God.

The causes are various but the case is always painful. O you who are walking in the light, deal gently with your Brothers and Sisters whose bones are broken, for you may also suffer from the same! Lay yourselves out to comfort the Lord’s mourners. They are not good company and they are very apt to make you unhappy as well as themselves, but for all that, be very tender towards them, for the Lord Jesus would have you so. Remember what woes Ezekiel pronounces upon the strong who roughly push the weaker sort. God is very jealous over His little children, and if the more vigorous members of the family are not kind to them, He may take away their strength and make them, even, to envy the little ones whom once they despised.

You can never err in being tender to the downcast. Lay yourself out as much as may be in you to bind up the broken-hearted and cheer the faint—and you will be blessed in the deed. When the natural spirits sink in those men who have no God to go to, their depression takes its own particular shape. Any physician can tell you of instances of mental distress in which persons have surrounded themselves with imaginary ills and made themselves martyrs to fancied disorders. We have seen cases which might almost compel an observer to laugh if they had not been so terribly serious to the patients, themselves.

If a man is a Christian, it is very natural that his troubles should assume a spiritual form. The only shades which can effectually darken his day are those which arise from sacred things. The fears which haunt him are not fears about his daily bread, but fears about the Bread of Life and fears as to his entrance into the Eternal Kingdom. The disease, from the physical side, is at bottom probably the same in the Christian as in the ungodly man, but, as his main thoughts are set upon Divine things, he, in his depression, naturally dwells most upon his soul’s affairs.

At such times the spiritually afflicted are filled with horrible apprehensions. What, let me ask you, is the most horrible apprehension that a Christian man can have? Is it not that of the text, “I am cut off from before Your eyes”? Nothing distresses a Christian so much as the fear of being a castaway of God. You shall find no real Christian in despair because he is becoming poor. You shall not find him utterly cast down because worldly

comforts are taken away. But let his Lord hide His face and he is troubled. Let him doubt his sonship and he is overwhelmed. Let him question his interest in Christ and his joy has fled. Let him fear that the life of God never was in his soul and you shall hear him mourn like a dove.

How can he live without his God? Yet this bitter sorrow has been endured by not a few of the best of men. If it could be said that only those Christians who walk at a distance from Christ, or those who are inconsistent in life, or those who are but little in prayer have felt in this way, then, indeed, there would be cause for the gravest disquietude. But it is a matter of fact that some of the choicest spirits among the Lord’s elect have passed through the Valley of Humiliation and even sojourned there by the months together. Saints who are now among the brightest in Heaven, have yet, in their day, sat weeping at the gates of despair and asked for the crumbs which the dogs eat under the Master’s table.

Read the life of Martin Luther. You would suppose, from what is commonly known of the brave Reformer, that he was a man of iron, immovable and invulnerable. So he was when he had to fight his Master’s battles against Rome. But at home, on his bed, and in his quiet chamber, he was frequently the subject of spiritual conflicts—such as few have ever known! He had so much joy in believing that at times he was carried away with a tumult of boisterous exultation. But on other occasions he sank to the very deeps and was hard put to it to bear up at all. And that happened, too, even in his last moments, so that the worst battle of his life was fought upon that mysterious country which stretches towards the gates of the Celestial City.

Do not condemn yourself, my dear Sister. Do not cast yourself away, my dear Brother, because your faith endures many conflicts and your spirits sink very low. David, himself, said in his haste, “I am cut off from before Your eyes,” yet there sits David in the blessed choir in Heaven! And even here on earth he was a man after God’s own heart. There are great benefits to come out of these severe trials and depressions. There is a need that for a season we should be in heaviness. You cannot make great soldiers without war, or train skillful seamen upon shore. It appears necessary that if a man is to become a great Believer, he must be greatly tried. If he is to be a great helper of others, he must pass through the temptations of others. If he is to be greatly instructed in the things of the Kingdom, he must learn by experience. And if he is to be a loud singer to the tune of Sovereign Grace, he must hear deep calling unto deep at the noise of God’s waterspouts.

The uncut diamond has but little brilliance. The unthreshed corn feeds none and so the untried professor is of small practical use or beauty. Many have a comparatively smooth pathway through life, but their position in the Church is not that which the experienced Believer occupies, neither could they do his work among the afflicted. The man who is much worked and often harrowed may thank God if the result of it is a larger harvest to the praise and glory of God by Jesus Christ. The time shall come with you, whose faces are covered with sorrow, when you shall bless God for your sorrows! The day will come when you shall set much store by your losses and your crosses, your troubles and your afflictions, counting them happy which endure—

*“From all your afflictions His Glory shall spring, And the deeper your sorrows the louder you’ll sing.”*

II. I will speak no more upon this inward sorrow, a handful of bitter herbs is enough. I shall now pass on to notice THE RASH EXPRESSION of the Psalmist’s aching heart, “I said in my haste.” We have in the Psalms other instances in which David spoke hastily. He had better have bitten his tongue. We may speak, in a moment, words which we would give the world to recall. Oh, if some rash speeches could be unsaid! The price would be too dear to purchase their unsaying—unkind, provoking, cutting things towards men—and unbelieving, fretful, petulant, injurious words towards God. Better count to 10 before we speak, when we are in an agitated state of mind.

It is a common sin for persons whose hearts are in bondage to allow their tongues too great a liberty. David said, “I am cut off from before Your eyes.” And many have not only said this in haste, but they have continued to repeat it for a long time, which is much worse. Some have spoken in this fashion by the months together—yes, and some for years! Sorrowful is it that they should have done so, but so it has been. Now this rash speech rests altogether on insufficient grounds. Why does a man in despondency argue that God has cast him away? He reasons, first, that his circumstances show it. He is surrounded with much difficulty and tribulation and therefore he infers that God is angry with him.

But is there any force in that argument? You might as well say that God had cast away His own dear Son when He allowed Him to say, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man have not where to lay My head.” You might as well say that God had cast away the martyrs when He left them to lie in prison, or suffered them to be burned. Many of the Lord’s dearest children have a rough passage to Glory. After all, your circumstances are not so bad as those of far better men. It would be most unfair to argue that you are, therefore, a castaway. Is it not written, “In the world you shall have tribulation”? Do you not know that affliction is a Covenant blessing? Therefore no argument derived from circumstances is worth listening to.

But others argue from their feelings. They feel as if God had cast them away. Can there be anything more uncertain to argue from than our feelings? I might be quite sure that I am safe for Heaven today if I judged by my feelings. Tomorrow I might be equally as certain that I am a reprobate if I judged by the same rule. Judged by changeful feelings, one might be lost and saved a dozen times a day! The wind does not veer more fitfully than does the current of our emotions. Draw inferences from the waves before you reason from your feelings! Do you not know that many persons who are full of very confident feelings are nevertheless deluded and deceived? “Peace, peace, where there is no peace” is a very common cry. These persons judge themselves by feelings, and consider that they are safe for Heaven, but their lives show the contrary. And, on the other hand, others judge themselves to be castaways, who are true Christians.

Apply these facts to your own case. Feelings are a very uncertain and erroneous gauge, indeed, and are not to be relied upon. And to build such a terrible inference as that of your being lost upon a few gloomy feelings, or even a great many of them, is absurd to the last degree! Have you ever heard the story of the man who, traveling in the dark over a new country, suddenly came to a place where the earth crumbled under his feet and he felt sure that he was slipping over an awful precipice? Clutching at the roots of a tree which grew out of the bank, he maintained his hold in desperation, feeling that if he let go he should be dashed into a thousand pieces.

There he hung till his hands were unable to bear the strain any longer, and, giving all up for lost, he fell but alighted upon a soft couch of green sward which was just an inch or two beneath his feet! So do great dreads frequently arise from nothing at all! Fancy, with her magic wand, is busy at creating sorrows. In many and many a case, if the patient would believe the truth, or at least would cease to believe in his own unreasonable surmises, he might drop into perfect peace at once. The foundation of the mental troubles of very many lies nowhere but in their own settled determination to be miserable. They have resolved to believe that everything is wrong with them and that obstinate resolution stands to them instead of reason.

They are deaf as adders to all comfort but are not silent as to their woes. They ask to see the minister, but they will not give him opportunity to do them good. Did you ever have an interview with a despairing woman? If you have been able to get in six words edgeways between her incessant talk, you must have been a very clever person, for it is by no means an easy thing. They ask for advice, but do not mean to listen to it or to follow it, for they know better than their advisers—they only want the opportunity of pouring out their lamentations—they are not prepared to receive consolation. Their soul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near to the gates of death. In vain do you argue! They cannot be reasoned with—it would be as wise to try and argue away a typhus fever, or reason a broken bone into soundness.

Instead of reasoning, their stand is solemn decision not to be comforted. If they saw such a resolve in other people, they would call it absurd and perhaps be vexed with them. Oh, that they would see their conduct in the same light! But while they remain in their present mind, what can we do for them? We quote a promise and they tell us it does not apply to their case, though it is as plain as the nose on their face that it is for them. You shall next remind them of a doctrine which contains a general principle applicable to themselves. They cannot deny the Truth of God, but by dexterous devices they escape from its cheering influences. It is amazing how exceedingly learned and profound, despairing people are in their own esteem!

I met, the other day, with a person who insists upon it that he has committed the unpardonable sin. Now, I know as much about the Scriptures as he does, yet upon the subject of the unpardonable sin he is fully informed and I am in the dark. I can prove that, according to the Scriptures, my desponding friend has not committed the unpardonable sin. But he knows he has and is as sure of it as if he could prove it rationally. Scriptural proof he cares little about, but says over and over again that he knows, and is quite sure, and nobody shall ever convince him to the contrary. You might as well argue with a bottle of vinegar, in the hope of turning it into wine.

It is nothing to him that all the divines in Christendom who have ever written about this sin have regarded it as a dark subject—he is wiser than seven men that can render a reason. In neatly instances the cause of their distress is impalpable, ghost-like, misty—they cannot describe it—and you cannot deal with it. It is unreasonable and preposterous, else might a little calm conversation be a means of Grace to them. As I have already remarked, instead of reason stands this declaration of theirs—they will not be comforted, but prefer to nestle down in hopeless melancholy. Poor souls—poor souls! What a choice they make!

Here let us say that the declaration that God has forsaken us, or forsaken any man who seeks him, is diametrically opposed to Scripture. There is not, in all the pages of Inspiration, one single text which advises any man to despair of the mercy of God. I challenge the most diligent reader to find one solitary passage in which any seeking soul is bid to believe that there is no mercy for him. I shall even go further and say that there is not one solitary passage of Scripture which warrants any soul to give itself up in despair, no matter though it may be a strong passage upon election, or a terrible threat of Divine wrath against sin! There is no text, nor anything like a text, which would warrant a soul in saying that there is no mercy in God for him.

Further than that, there is not a text in Scripture which gives an excuse to any man to despair. If God Himself were to appear and say to the despairing, “You have dared to doubt My mercy, and to declare yourself to be finally given up—bring me a solitary Word out of my Book which can excuse you for saying this”—no such text could be brought. Indeed, the whole of Scripture condemns unbelief. Faith is the Grace which Scripture commends—it never urges men to despair. It is full of promises to the most sinful. It reaches to the greatest extremity of our need and cries in generous love, “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” The Lord Jesus declares, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” And in summing up the testimony of Scripture it is fair to say with Dr. Watts—

*“No mortal has a just pretense  
To perish in despair.”*

“Oh, but still I know there is no hope for me.” My dear Friend, you know nothing of the kind! It is a dream, a horrible nightmare and there is no truth in it. This blessed Scripture sounds from the Cross to you, like sweet music, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” As long as you breathe, the blessed lamp of Grace still burns to light your joy! “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” And remember, O my despairing Friend, that your belief that God has cast you away is very derogatory to God, Himself. Do you know how merciful He is? Will you think harshly of Him? Did He not save Manasseh? Did He not blot out the sins of Saul of Tarsus?

Has He not declared, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live”? Will you snatch the pen out of the hand of Mercy and write your own death warrant with it? Why be so ill-advised? Will you dishonor God rather than receive salvation through Jesus Christ? Why do you madly yield to despair? Do you not know how much you grieve the Spirit of God, and how sadly you dishonor Jesus? None of all the pangs He bore on Calvary grieve Him like that unkind, ungenerous thought that He is unwilling to forgive.

What? Your hating your sin and yet Jesus hating you? Impossible! What? You with a strong desire after eternal life, yet left to perish? Impossible! What? Your casting yourself upon His mercy, hoping to touch the silver scepter of His Grace, and yet driven from His Presence? Impossible! Among the damned in Hell there is not a soul that ever came and rested upon the blood of Christ, and there never shall be such! Heaven and earth shall pass away, but it never shall be said that seeking ones were cast off, or that those who gave themselves up to the Covenant mercy of God were rejected. Do not, then, I pray you, dishonor the love and glory of the Lord of Mercy!

One thing I would like to put in here by way of interjection—this giving of one’s self up to despair is so very unlike what we generally do in other things that it appears all the less defensible. Yonder vessel has been broken in a collision. She will soon sink to the bottom. The sea rushes in most furiously. Let us take to one of the boats. This boat cannot be stirred, what then? We will fly to another. We will seize a lifebelt, or clasp a spar. At any rate, we will leave no means unused, if, by any possible way we may escape. A sensible man does not fling himself down on the deck and give all up for lost. His fears awaken him and he bestirs all his faculties with the utmost energy. He seizes anything which promises deliverance.

Look at a person sick with a deadly disease. He has tried his family physician and he is no better. But he hears of another practitioner and he goes straight to him. Yes, and if 50 quacks were recommended to him, he would sooner try them than die! Even a forlorn hope he will pursue sooner than utterly perish. Yet here are persons who know and cannot deny that they know it—that Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto Him—and yet, because they unreasonably conclude that their case is hopeless, they will not go to Jesus, but prefer to die in their sins! Oh, madness, madness, to doubt the infinitely loving One! Insanity reaching its very height to dare to think that He who died on Calvary will repulse a coming sinner!

I should like an artist to attempt to draw a picture of Jesus Christ scorning a sinner who asks mercy at His hands. How would the man proceed? He must cover the face of the Lord, for that lovely visage could not look unkindly. He must leave out the scars from the hands and the nail prints from the feet, for these could not repel a sinner. There is not a part of Jesus’ body or soul which could be made to reject a lost sinner—His whole Nature would revolt against being so represented! Oh, if you could but know Him as some of us know Him, you would fly into His arms! Poor guilty one, if He had two swords, one in each hand, you would sooner fly on the points of His swords than not come to Him, for you would perceive that He is such a gracious Redeemer, and so mighty to save that you must rely upon Him, and cry with the patriarch of Uz, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

I am bound to add that this despair, to a very large extent, involves sinful unbelief—and of all sins this is the most damning. It amounts to this— that Jesus says, “I can save”—and the sinner says, “You cannot.” And so he makes Christ a liar! God says, “Jesus is able to save to the uttermost.” But the sinner denies it, point blank. Now if the sinner will make God a liar, what can he expect? When the Lord comes to judge the quick and dead, what will be the portion of the unbelieving? God save us from it! May that rash expression be withdrawn and may we say no longer, “I am cut off from before Your eyes.”

III. Thirdly and briefly, we have before us the interesting topic of A PLEADING CRY. When David feared that he was cut off from God, he was wise enough to take to crying. He calls prayer, crying, and it is a very significant word. Crying is the language of pain—pain cannot cumber itself with letters and syllables and words—and so it takes its own way and adopts a piercing mode of utterance, very telling and expressive. Crying yields great relief to suffering. Everyone knows the benefit of having a hearty good cry—you cannot help calling it, “a good cry,” for, though one would think crying could never be especially good, it affords a desirable relief.

Red eyes often relieve breaking hearts. Madness has been prevented by the soul’s finding vent. Prayer is the surest and most blessed vent for the soul. In prayer the heart runs over, as the eyes do in crying. To pray is just as simple a matter as to cry. Do not get down that book—bishops and other prayer-makers can write good prayers for people who have no particular trouble upon them—but when you really need to pray, no readymade prayers will suit your case! You never heard of a form of common crying. I never remember seeing in my life a form of crying for a bereaved woman, a form for a babe to cry when it is hungry, and another form for

a child to cry when it is put to bed in the dark.

No, no! Forms are out of the question when we cry. Men and women, and children—when in trouble—cry without a book. And so when a man really needs the Savior, he does not require book-prayers. Never say, “Oh, I cannot pray!” My dear Friend, can you cry? You need to be saved—tell the Lord that. If you cannot say it in words, tell it with your tears, your groans, your sighs, your sobs. Prayer, like crying, is a natural utterance and an utterance available on all occasions. As sure as a child is in trouble, it can cry without putting on its best frock—and so can we without gowns and capes and surplices.

No child needs to be educated in Greek and Latin in order to know how to cry. Neither is learning needed in order to effectual prayer. God teaches all His little ones to pray as soon as they are born. They have but to confess their sins and plead their needs and they do really pray. Never is a child in such a bad plight that it cannot cry. It never says, “Mother, it is so dark I cannot see to cry.” No, no, the child cries in the dark! And are you in the dark and in terrible doubt and trouble? Then cry away, my dear Friend, cry away, cry away! Your Father will hear and deliver you!

Now, crying is by no means a pleasant sound to hear. There is no music in it, except, I suppose, it is the crying of the very little ones in their mothers’ ears. A cry is a kind of music one would be glad to have ended and yet our poor prayers—which might be thought to grate in the ears of God, for He must note their imperfections—are, nevertheless, regarded by Him. Though a cry is an unpleasant sound, it is very powerful. If you were walking the streets and heard or saw a poor child crying, you would be far more affected by it than by the oration of the pretended beggar who is eloquently stating his needs to the dwellers on both sides of the way. A poor child crying in the dark, under your window, in mid-winter, in the snow— would move your pity and obtain your help. Even if it were a foreigner and knew not a single word of English, you would fully feel its pleading.

The eloquence of a cry is overwhelming—Pity owns its power and lends her aid. There is a chord in human nature which responds to a child’s cry and there is something in the Divine Nature which is equally touched by prayer. The Lord will not suffer a young raven to cry in vain and much less will He suffer men who are made in His own image to cry to Him in the bitterness of their hearts and find Him deaf to their entreaties! According to our text this cry was addressed to the Lord. David thought the Lord had cast him away, and he did not cry to anyone else. He felt that if God did not help him, nobody else could. To whom or where should I go if I should turn from You? It is important to observe that he cried to the Lord, even though he thought himself cut off from hope. “I am cut off from before Your eyes,” says he, yet he cries to God!

Ah, Soul, if you are in despair, yet resolve to pour out your heart before your God. Do you fear He will refuse you? Cry on. Has He been angry with you long? Cry on! Has He, up to now, shut out your prayers? Cry on! Do you think He has reprobated you altogether? Nevertheless cry on! Have you said, “His mercy is clean gone forever, and He will be favorable no more”? Yet cry on! For David felt in his soul that he was cut off from before God’s eyes, yet still he cried. Do so, poor Heart! Yes, the more sad you are, cry the more, for if a little child’s mother were to say, “Now go along with you, I will never love you again. I will put you out of doors and you shall never be my child again,” what would the little one do? Would she say, “Therefore I will not cry”? Oh no, but she would sob her little heart out and the more she believed the severe words of her parent, the more she would cry!

O despairing Soul, the more you despair, the more you should pray— and then it will be well with you. The Psalmist cried to a God concerning whom he entertained unbelieving thoughts. You, poor Mourner, do not believe as you should believe. Your faith, if you have any, is like a spark smoldering in the smoking flax. Yet pray on! I was about to say, when your faith seems dead, cry, “Lord enable me to believe. I am a poor, dead, lost, ruined, sinner, but do have pity upon my misery.” That is good crying, and good will come of it.

IV. This is my last point, THE CHEERFUL RESULT. This poor soul in despair continued to cry and the Lord heard him. “You heard the voice of my supplication when I cried unto You.” This blessing went beyond the promise. The promise is that God will hear believing prayer, but the Lord in mercy goes beyond His promises—such is the Infinite Sovereignty of His Grace that He meets, even, with unbelieving ones—and when they are crying in their unbelief He gives them faith and saves their souls.

Now, if this is not guaranteed in the promise, yet the action is quite consistent with the Divine Character. Indeed, it is like the God whose name is Love to listen to the cries of the wretched! We are like lost children in the forest, all scratched by the briers, weary with having lost our way and ready to die from cold and hunger. All we can do is cry—and will God leave us to die in the dark? Oh, do not believe it! Do not let the devil make you believe it—that God will hear you cry and yet not come to your help! I will never believe of God what I would not believe of man! I cannot dishonor Him so!

Do but cry, dear Heart, out of your soul’s despair, and the Lord’s infinite goodness will constrain Him to come to you! He has taught you to cry and He will assuredly answer your prayers. Inasmuch as David says that God heard him, how encouraged you ought to be, for He who has heard one will hear another. Let me tell you one thing—you are in a position, poor, despairing Soul—to be made the means of honoring Christ more than anybody else. Are you the vilest sinner that ever existed? Do you think that your case is the most desperate that ever was on the face of the earth? Are you just the one person who is least likely ever to be saved? Do you think so?

Oh, what a splendid specimen you will make for Christ’s Grace to triumph in! There is no honor to Him in washing those sinners who have only a few pale spots upon them if there are such people. But, O you foul

and altogether polluted Sinner— your washing and cleansing will bring Him Immortal renown! The angels tune their harps for new songs when an unusual sinner is reclaimed. You cannot conceive your own salvation to be possible, you say? Oh that you would believe it possible! Oh that you would come, now, to the foot of the Cross and say, “Dear Savior, You have never saved such a soul as I am! This day You shall have greater glory than You have ever had before, for I cast myself at Your dear feet, believing that you will save even me, for You have said, ‘Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.’ ”

Do you not see that the badness of your case gives you a glorious opportunity to glorify Christ by greater faith than other men, and by putting it in His way to do a more splendid act of Grace than, to your apprehension, He has ever done before? I hope to be most importunate in prayer with God the Holy Spirit that He may bring just such cases as yours under the power of mighty Grace. One Truth of God remember and take away with you. If you are in the dark, the only light for you is in the Sun of Righteousness. If you are lost, the only help for you is in Jesus, the Lord. If you want to see the Savior where His light is brightest and His salvation clearest, think of His Cross! Look at those dear hands and feet, and bleeding side—those wounds are windows of hope for the prisoners of despair!

There is no hope for you, whoever you may be, except in Jesus! Look at His thorn-crowned head and His face more marred than that of any man! Look at His emaciated body, and at the spear gash in His side! Look at Him in the agonies of death, with shame and scorn waiting upon Him! Gaze till you hear Him cry, “It is finished!” before He gives up the ghost— and I pray you believe it to be finished, so that there is nothing for you to do, since everything is done. All that is needed to render you acceptable with God is fully accomplished—there is nothing for you to do but to accept what Christ has completed.

Weave no more garments, there is the robe! Fill no more cisterns, there is the Fountain! Lay no more foundations, there is the precious Cornerstone! Come, you despairing! The Lord help you to come and find peace, at this hour, through Jesus Christ your Lord. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 31.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1589 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A HASTY EXPRESSION PENITENTLY RETRACTED  
NO. 1589

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes: nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.” Psalm 31:22.**

THAT is a bit of genuine experience, honestly told, in the most natural manner. How glad we ought to be that David never fell into the hands of an ordinary biographer, for such a piece of weakness as this text records would have been carefully repressed lest the good man’s reputation should suffer. It was only a hasty expression and every friendly biographer would have felt that it ought to be taken as unspoken. Here, however, stands this piece of human weakness upon David’s life and we are right glad of it—it is a comfort to us little folks to perceive the champions were men of like passions with ourselves! As a bee sucks honey out of nettles, so does faith find comfort even in the failings of David. But we must mind that we do not turn his errors into excuses, for that were to extract poison instead of wholesome juices.

The experience of a good man, of a great man, of a tried man like David, is exceedingly instructive and impressive. The children of God delight in doctrinal preaching and in practical preaching—but I believe that nothing is so sweet to them as experimental preaching by which we are not only taught the Truth of God in the head and in the hand, but something is said of Truth in the heart! This it is which endears the Book of Psalms to the whole Church and makes the explanation of that volume so important. Nothing more sweetly cheers the straggler after better things than to hear of the life-struggles of godly men.

Behold, then, a written confession, dictated by the penitent heart of David who withdraws the curtain from his own innermost life! I should not wonder if his experience should turn out to be very like your own for, as in water, face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man and this is the reason why the experience of one man is his best means of interpreting the feelings of another. Take heed, however, when you are reading the histories of the saints, that you use them with prudence, for it is not all the experience of a Christian that is Christian experience! A Believer may experience much which he does not experience as a Believer, but because his believing is failing him! Sometimes we are rather to regard the experience of good men as beacons to warn us from rocks than as lighthouses to show us where the harbor may be.

Rheumatism is certainly a human disease, but I would, by no means recommend a person to seek after it in order to prove his manhood! We can well do without some things which were characteristic of certain eminent men, since they did not adorn or strengthen them, but rather disfigured and weakened them. In David’s case, it is well to follow David—but it is better to follow David’s son—for David, sometimes, went astray like a lost sheep—but David’s son was that great Shepherd of the sheep whose every step it is safe for the flock to follow! Do not let us imitate David in his speaking in haste, or in his saying, “I am cut off from before Your eyes.” But, at the same time, let us take care that we closely copy him in confessing conscious fault, as he does here, in crying to God in the hour of trouble as he tells us he did—and also in bearing witness to the exceeding goodness of God, notwithstanding our faults—as he here bears witness when he says, “Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.”

For our edification we will consider the text thus—here is, first, an utterance of unbelief—“I am cut off from before Your eyes.” Secondly, here is incidentally mentioned an effort of struggling faith—David says, “You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.” And, thirdly, here is a testimony of gratitude, for David joyfully declares that notwithstanding his unbelief, the Lord heard and answered his cries. O for the touch of the Holy Spirit to make this outline into a living sermon! Here are the altar and the wood—O Holy Spirit, You be the fire!

I. Let us begin by listening to AN UTTERANCE OF UNBELIEF—“I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes.” Note here, first, that unbelief is generally talkative—“I said.” It had been better for him not to have thought it, even, but when he did think thus wrongly, it was most unwise to speak the thought. I have heard it said, “If it is in the mind it may as well come out,” but this is not true. If I had a rattlesnake in a box on this platform, I think you would, none of you, vote for the creature’s being let loose! Poison in a vial is deadly, but it will hurt no one until the cork is drawn and then we cannot tell how far the mischief may go. Lions and tigers and vipers are best shut up—the wider range you give them, the more you empower them to do mischief. If you have an ill thought, repent of it, but do not repeat it—it may harm you—but it will not harm others if you let it die within doors.

Do as David did in another case, when he had a very ugly thought. He said, “If I shall speak thus I shall offend against the generation of Your people,” and he would not, therefore, put his thought into words lest he should offend the godly. If you have a harsh thought of God, utter it not in the presence of His own children. Would you grieve your Brethren? Utter it not in the presence of His enemies. Would you open their mouths to speak against Him? Where will you utter it? Speak it not upon earth, for it is His footstool. Say it not in prayer, for you are bowing at His Throne. Say it nowhere, for God will hear it if no one else should. Bury in silence that offspring of your soul of which it has good cause to be ashamed. Let it be cast over the wall as the untimely figs and consumed upon the rubbish heap of forgotten things.

Alas, unbelief does not understand holding its tongue! We read that the children of Israel murmured in their tents. They could not be quiet at home. They complained of God in their families and very soon the murmuring in the tents became a murmuring throughout all the camp till they gathered together in crowds against God and His servant Moses! Yes, unbelief will prattle. I have known believing men slow of speech, but when a man has anything to complain of, he is fluent even to overflowing! He will go from one neighbor to another and lament the badness of trade; how the crops are failing; how ill he is; what a sickly family he has and a legion of other grief! The gazette of sorrow has long columns and is generally crowded with items! It is published every hour of the day and you can get a new edition at almost any house, for unbelief must publish its inventions. The strife of the many tongues of unbelief causes much mischief in the world. Its quiver is full and its arrows are death. It would have been wiser for David to have bit his tongue than to have said what he ought not to have said. However, this much is clear—unbelief is generally talkative.

Our next observation shall be that the utterances of unbelief are generally hasty—“I said in my haste.” There was no reason for saying such a thing at all and certainly not for being in a hurry to say it, for he said to God, “I am cut off from before Your eyes.” Look at this statement! It is a very solemn thing to make such a declaration. See if it is founded on fact. Do you think it is true? Search a little more. Set your supposed condition in another light and see whether, after all, you may not have made a mistake. But no. Unbelief blunders it out, right or wrong—“I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes.” I suppose the reason for the hot haste was this—when a man’s mind is much distracted and driven to and fro, he needs to come to some sort of conclusion and, though that conclusion may be totally false and may be as far from right as possible, still, his troubled thoughts require some sort of a conclusion.

John Bunyan says of the pilgrim that he was much tumbled up and down in his thoughts. It is a forcible Saxon expression and most of you know what it means. You do not know whether you are on your head or your heels, as the old saying is—you are in a horrible confusion and countless difficulties surround you—and so it is that you blunder at a conclusion and say in your haste what should not be said. But why in such haste to write bitter things against yourself? Why in such haste to write your own condemnation? Why in such haste to misjudge your God? Stop a bit, Brothers and Sisters. Stop a bit! There is time enough for this when the worst has come to the worst. Wait awhile, for when the brain is heated, waiting will cool the brow and prepare a place for wisdom. Why are you so desperately eager to play the fool?

Don’t you know that the utterances of unbelief are hasty and hasty things are raw and sour and cannot display the maturity of prudence? What a man says in his haste he generally has to repent in his leisure. If it is a good thing, say it at once! But if it is a doubtful thing, stop! Then stop again. Then stop again and if the stopping should end in your not speaking, there will be a little more of golden silence in the world! I have heard say that one of the greatest points in good speaking is to know when to pause. I do not know about that, but I am sure that one of the wisest things in good living is to know when to pause, to stop, to question and to deliberate! To go blindly on as though it were neck or nothing with you is to make sure shipwreck some day or other. Do nothing till you are sure that it is right to do it and say nothing till you know that what you say is true.

Hasty deeds and hasty words make up the most horrible parts of human history—the warnings of the past forbid all recklessness. Nevertheless, when once we grow despondent, this is our temptation and it will be well to bit and bridle both mind and tongue lest we fall into the evil. Frequently when a man speaks in haste, his expressions are the result of his temper. “We are quick-tempered,” some will say. If you are quicktempered, it is very likely that you are also quick tongued and this is a great pity. You speak in a moment what you cannot unsay in a century! Now, it is very evil when we are in a temper with God. Is that always the case? Oh yes. I fear that professing Christians are often out of temper with God. A good woman was wearing deep mourning years after the loss of him whom she mourned and a Quaker said to her, “Friend, I perceive you have not yet forgiven God.”

There he hit the nail on the head! Many have not yet forgiven God— they have taken umbrage against Him either because of bereavement, or loss of property, or sickness, or disappointment, or trial and they keep on sulking because they cannot have their own way. Surely they have never heard the question, “Should it be according to your mind? “Will you sit on the throne and judge your God? Will you—

*“Snatch from His hands the balance and the rod,*

*Re-judge His judgment, be the God of God”?*This is blasphemy! And yet too often such blasphemy enters into the human heart. Who is to be master? Are we to be lords over all? Who is to order Providence? In whose hands should be the issues of death? Is God to wait on us and ask our will and do our bidding? That is, indeed, the turning of things upside down and it cannot, must not be! It is because we get into wayward, foolish, rebellious tempers with God that we speak in our haste what we ought not even to think! Thus David penitently confesses, “I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes.”

Again, it is very clear from the text that the utterances of unbelief are frequently exaggerated. “I am cut off from before Your eyes.” No, David. No, no! It is not so—you are cut off from the esteem of men through slander and you are cut off from the friendship of those who once professed to love you—whose minds have been soured by an evil report—but you are not cut off from God! It is true you are cut off from the public services of God’s House and obliged to hide away in the rocks and caves of the earth. That is true, but you are not cut off from before God’s eyes! You know you are not, so why do you say you are?

Oh, but some people always talk big about everything! It is a great pity because it is so near to lying that I do not know whether it is not the same thing! There must be a very narrow line, fine as a razor’s edge, between a lie and the unguarded expressions of exaggeration. Some people talk about their trials on a scale which allows a mile for every inch! Their afflictions are awful. They are dreadful. They are without parallel. There were never any like them and there never will be again! They endure the most extraordinary pains and the most amazing afflictions and they are altogether quite equal to Job and Jeremiah rolled into one. Never did any persons undergo sufferings comparable to theirs. You cannot sit down by their side to comfort them but they will tell you at once that you do not know anything about the great deeps where they are doing business! You are only knee-deep in the waters of trouble, while all God’s waves and billows have gone over them.

I meet with some who are almost impossibly afflicted—their tribulations exceed that which is common to man and that which is uncommon, too! But this may be accounted for by the large organ of imagination with which they are endowed. By using this imagination to paint their spectacles, they are soon able to see all manner of dreadful visions and they talk accordingly. That is the way of our unbelief—it will talk at random about trials and troubles. This is not pretty. God does not love His children to talk in that fashion. The lips that speak truth are His delight and if our unbelief will not speak truth, (and it very seldom does)—perhaps never does—then it is a great pity that it cannot hold its tongue. May I ask if any friend here has been exaggerating his trouble? Is there any sister here who is fretting out of all reason—making a great deal out of what may be much, but is not everything? Then stand rebuked at this hour! Your cup is not all gall. Your bread is not all turned to ashes. All your comforts have not fled—many a mercy is left you. Come, come, Friend, we are not quite cut off from before the Lord! Let us leave off exaggeration lest we be guilty of falsehood.

Once more, the utterances of unbelief dishonor God. “I am cut off,” says David, “from before Your eyes.” He does, as it were, blame the Lord! Before Your very eyes I have suffered this! You have so forsaken me and given me over to the enemy that I am cut off from before Your eyes. Why do You not deliver me? He spoke in his haste as if God, at the very least, had been forgetful, even if He had not been untender and unfaithful! “I am cut off from before Your eyes.” It would greatly dishonor God if He did suffer one that could say, “In You, O Lord, have I put my trust,” to be cut off from before His eyes. It would be contrary to His promise, for He has said that He will not suffer the righteous to perish. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry”—there never was a godly man cut off from God, yet, and there never will be till time shall be no more!

All the attributes of God forbid the destruction of a soul that is resting on the Almighty arm! And yet the unbelieving heart declares that such a destruction has taken place in its own case. Oh, wondrous unbelief, to think the Lord to be so unrighteous as to forget our work of faith and labor of love—to forget His children, to cast away His own, His covenanted one—with whom He has entered into solemn league by oath, saying, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” He puts His promise very strongly in that passage, using many negatives in the original tongue. “I will not, not, not—never, never leave you. I will not, not forsake you”—many times over negating the idea that He could possibly forsake one of His own.

Brothers and Sisters, let us consider whether you and I may not have given utterance to words of unbelief. If we have, let us cut up those words tonight—let us call them back and drown them in our tears! Those cruel charges were, none of them, true! They were spoken in haste. They were the offspring of petulance and folly. Lord, have mercy upon Your servants and cast these grievous words of ours behind Your back! Let them be as though they were never spoken, for we never had any reason to speak so and what we have said, we do thoroughly repent of and pray that You would blot it out forever!

II. So much, then, upon the first head—an utterance of unbelief. We are now ready to look within the sorrowing heart and mark the signs that Grace is still living there. We have not far to search, for, secondly, in the text there is mentioned AN EFFORT OF STRUGGLING FAITH. Though David said, “I am cut off from before Your eyes,” yet he prayed and prayed directly to God. He says, “You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.” O child of God, cry to a smiting God! Cry to God even when He seems to cast you off, for where else can you go? What remains for you but to cry to Him, even if He shuts His ears to your plea? What if He frowns upon you? Still cling to Him! Where else can you get a glimpse of hope?

To whom, or where could you go if you should turn from God? What if His Providences seems harsh? What if He uses the rod upon you till your whole head is sick and your whole heart faint? What if He even appears to put His hand to His scabbard to draw out the sword to slay you? Even then there remains no resort for you so hopeful as believing prayer! Say with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Cling to Him still! Sink or swim, live or die, do not doubt your God—but pray! What did Jonah do when the weeds were wrapped about His head and He went down to the bottoms of the mountains? He still made supplication to the Lord God of salvation and trusted his spirit in the Divine hands. He tells us, “Out of the belly of Hell I cried.”

Wherever you may be drifted and however desperate your case, yet still pray—still pray! If you can do nothing else—if your hands are bound as to any form of effort, still pray. Never cease from crying, though you cannot rise a note above the most pitiful wailing. When Bunyan’s pilgrim went through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he found that he had no weapon with which he could smite the fiends that surrounded him except the weapon of all-prayer. The adversaries were too impalpable for sword or spear, too mysterious for battle-axe or bow—but PRAYER could find them out and smite them to the heart!

Believer, this is the most convenient and useful of all the weapons in our heavenly panoply. All-prayer will help you against man or devil! It will help you to bear up under trials that come from God and tribulations that mysteriously approach you from earth or Hell. As long as you live, you should pray, for while you can pray you cannot perish. You must, under no pressure, cease from prayer, my Brothers and Sisters. It is your last resort. “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Please notice that David prayed in downright earnest, for he says, “You heard the voice of my supplications,” so that he offered many prayers—prayers with voices to them—and he describes them under the term, “I cried.” His was a crying prayer! Those are the very best prayers.

Our eyes, sometimes, light upon, “prayers to be said or sung”—we have no wish to depreciate such compositions for others, but they are of no possible use to us who delight to tell our desires to our heavenly Father in our own broken speech. That is the prayer which is neither said nor sung, but CRIED—it drops from the eyes in tears, it breaks forth from the lips in moans—and from the breast in groans that cannot be uttered! Those prayers of ours which we could not endure for any human ear to hear are among the best of prayers. A little child may begin to speak and call to its mother in words and, perhaps, Mother will not come to it. But let it give up words and try crying and you will see if Mother does not come! Let it cry again and again, and Mother’s ears will be caught by the child’s cry. There is no prayer to God like the crying of a childlike spirit.

A cry is not a very pleasant sound. No—but it is a very prevalent sound! A cry is not even articulate. No—but it’s expressive! Crying is the language of pain. It is the eloquence of grief. It is the utterance of intense longing. When you use crying prayer—when you must have the blessing and, therefore, cry for it—you shall have it! We do not always give our children what they cry for, but this is the rule of our heavenly Father, “The righteous cry and the Lord hears.” Well did Isaiah say, “He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer you.” The rule is invariable and many are the cases which go to prove it. We know who said, “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.” Even in his despair, I say, David prayed—and that praying took the form of an earnest and passionate cry.

Note well that God heard his prayer! We sometimes fancy that God will not hear us if any measure of unbelief is mixed with our prayers. If that were the case, I am afraid that the Lord would not often hear us, for there is a measure of unbelief even in our strongest faith! It is a great mercy that even when we are lamenting, “I am cut off from before Your eyes,” yet, if at the same time we can pray, our petition is accepted of the Lord. The Scripture says, “According to your faith be it unto you.” Suppose that text had run like this, “According to your unbelief be it unto you.” Ah, me, where would you and I have been? Our unbelief would have involved us in the curse and condemnation which rest upon all who believe not in the Lord Jesus! Unbelief would sour and spoil all.

God did not deal with David according to his unbelief, but He dealt with him according to his faith. We are a sorrowful mixture of natures and if we were reckoned with according to our evil side, who among us could stand? David’s faith was small, but still it was true. It was an infant faith that could cry—a struggling faith that could plead. It was a patient faith that could wait and so it was an accepted faith which obtained favor of the Lord! It was a faith which, if it had not an arm to fight with, had a voice to cry with and, therefore, it prevailed with God. My Friend, you who are in trouble, whoever you may be, let me urge, persuade, entreat you not to listen to the voice of Satan who tempts you to cease from prayer! Do not say, “God will not hear me because I am in this wretched condition.” Remember the words, “Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord.” Cry to Him wherever you may be, or whoever you may be!

However desperate your plight, you shall survive it if you pray! However dire your danger, a way of escape shall be made for you if you cry unto the Lord! Cannons have been styled, “the last arguments of kings”—but I may better call PRAYERS the last arguments of needy sinners! Cling to the Mercy Seat when you can cling nowhere else! Cling to the Mercy Seat when Justice lifts her sword to slay you! Increase your earnestness in proportion as you are tempted to cease from prayer and may God the Holy Spirit, who is the God of Grace and of supplications, intensify your desires, help your infirmities and teach you how to pray and what to pray for as you ought.

III. Our text next supplies us with A TESTIMONY OF GRATITUDE. The Psalmist says, “Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications.” Notice that God acted in directly the opposite manner from that in which the Psalmist’s unbelief acted, for, first, his unbelief spoke and said this and that, but God did not speak. He was a listener—“You heard.” Not a word came from God—there had been too many words in the business already. When we begin to grumble with anybody it takes two to make a quarrel and if number two answers to our murmuring, we soon stir up a fierce quarrel.

If God were as man is, if His thoughts were as our thoughts, He would say, “Murmur, do you, when I am dealing with you so kindly? Then you shall have cause for complaining. Is My little finger heavy? You shall feel My hand! Is My hand heavy? You shall know the weight of My loins.” Well might God say to us, “What? Do you find fault while you are surrounded with so many blessings? Tell Me I have forsaken you? Say to Me that you are cut off from before My eyes when I am dealing graciously with you all day long? Do you dare talk to Me so? Then I will do as you have said. I will take you at your word and make your complaints true.”

But oh, the marvelous patience of God! He says nothing. There was the strength of Christ—as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth in the midst of His accusers—and here is a part of the marvelous power of God—the Omnipotence which restrains Omnipotence so that He is not provoked, or, being provoked, speaks not in anger and deals not with His servants in wrath—otherwise we had long ago been consumed. Oh, how sweet to look back and think He did not answer me according to my folly, or walk stubbornly with me because I walked stubbornly with Him! His Word says, “With the froward You will show Yourself forward,” but He did not fulfill that threat to me, nor walk contrary to me though I walked contrary to Him! In gentleness and patience He regarded not my evil words and answered me not according to my folly! You see, then, the difference between the quiet of God and the clamor of our unbelief. David bears cheerful testimony to the fact that he was in error when He spoke so hastily and that God was exceedingly gracious in taking so little notice of His foolish complaint.

The next contrast is seen in the fact that though David spoke in a hurry, there was no haste in God. “I said in my haste.” Yes, but God did not reply in haste. Notice the glorious leisure of infinite love, for it is written, “You heard the voice of my supplications.” God was quietly hearing while His petulant servant was fiercely complaining. We had a meeting of ministers a short time ago at which it was agreed that for five minutes each one should relate an experience with our congregations. One of the Brothers gave us this thought which I shall not soon forget. He said, “It is a great thing for a minister who visits his people to be a good listener. The afflicted value this faculty above gold. Perhaps the pastor calls upon a poor woman who is in great trouble and he sits down and she tells him her mournful tale. Bless her heart! He has heard that tale a dozen times before, but he sits quite still and takes it all in, listening most earnestly. He has not, perhaps, the power to help her at all, but she feels very thankful to him because he has heard her case and it has comforted her to tell it.”

It is a great thing to be willing to sit and listen and hear a story which, perhaps, is very badly told and is not at all pleasant to hear—which even creates sorrow in your own mind as you listen to it. Such hearing displays tender sympathy. Hence the Scriptures say of God, “O You that hears prayer.” Mark, it is not “answers,” but “hears.” Those Brothers who need to be exceedingly correct tell us, “God is the hearer and answerer of prayer.” Yes, that is very proper. But the Scripture is content to write, “O You that hears prayer.” It is a wonderful thing that God should sit down, as it were, and listen to the prayers of His people and put up with their nonsense—their complaining and their crying. David does not cease to wonder that in his unhappy condition he had yet been regarded of the Lord—“You heard the voice of my supplication.”

How beautiful that is! “I spoke in haste.” All the Lord did was He heard it all, took it all in, considered the case David’s fevered brain meant and how far that out of it and, therefore, forgave the sad unbelief which spoke out so audaciously in words of repining. Oh, it is beautiful, that gentleness of God which led Him to give no answer to the hurried, passionate speech of David, but just to hear it and no more! Well did David say in another place, “Your gentleness has made me great.” It is delightful to see how the Lord always notes the good and ignores the evil when dealing with His saints. In David’s case He would not hear the foolish and false charges of his unbelief, but He heard the cries of his struggling faith! Remember the instance of Sarah? She doubted as to her bringing forth a child when she was old and asked, “How shall it be, my Lord being old, also?” The Holy Spirit says nothing in the New Testament about Sarah’s unbelieving speech except that He commends that one good word in it and notes that she, “obeyed her husband, calling him, Lord.” If the Lord can spy a beauty in His people, He fixes His eyes on it—and as for all their defilements, He washes them away, saying, “They shall not be remembered against them any more forever.”

Let us go a little farther in our contrast between David and his Lord. There was no exaggeration with God. Unbelief exaggerates—He diminishes the evil of His servants till it comes to nothing, putting it all away. He heard the feeble cry of faith in David’s heart and did not allow the voice of his unbelief to drown it. He did not look upon His servant’s fault till it hid His Grace—but He smiled upon the work of Grace, little as it was. And though, as we have said, unbelief dishonored God, yet God did not dishonor His servant’s prayer for all that! No. He might have said to David’s prayer, “Go your way, I will not hear you. Does the same fountain send forth sweet water and bitter? I heard David say, just now, ‘I am cut off from before Your eyes.’ Am I going to hear out of the same mouth, a charge against My faithfulness and a cry for help? If He thinks I have forsaken Him, let it be so.”

But not so our God! He will not dishonor prayer, even though prayer is very feeble and though there is an unbelief in it which is grievous in His sight. It never shall be said that faith and prayer came back from the Throne of God with blushing faces! He will maintain His memorial untouched and the motto of that memorial is—“The God that hears prayer.” “You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You.” We dare not make much out of our English version by way of dogmatic teaching and yet, somehow, I feel inclined to pull each little word of the text in pieces just for a minute. Look at it. “Nevertheless You heard the voice.” “Never-the-less,” as much as to say, Though I had spoken as I ought not to do, yet You did not lessen Your attention to me, but You did just as much hear my prayer as if I had never sinned with my tongue. Not one jot the less was Your pity or Your bounty—Your ears did not, in any measure, lose their readiness to hear my prayer, nor Your heart its willingness to feel for me. Not one particle the less for all my transgressing, “You heard the voice of my supplications.”

O gracious God, never-the-less do you deal out Your mercies though it seems as if ever-the-more we sin! Nevertheless do You love though ever the more do we err. Oh grant that ever the more we may be grateful to You and never, oh never, may we again grieve You by our unbelief!

The time has come for me to wind up with SUNDRY LESSONS IN A FEW WORDS. The first is, let us repent heartily of every harsh thought we have ever had of our God and Father. I am forced to look back upon some such sins of thought with much distress of mind. They have come from me in serious pain and depression of spirit and now I pray the Lord, in His great mercy, to look at them as though I had never thought them, for I do heartily abhor them and I loathe myself in His sight that I should ever have questioned His tender love and gracious care. If you have similarly transgressed, dear Friends, in your dark nights of trouble, come, now, and bow your heads and pray the Lord to forgive His servants concerning this thing, for He is so good, so gracious, that it is a wanton cruelty to think of Him as otherwise than overflowing with love.

There is none like unto Him among the sons of men! The kindest of mortals have not His heart of compassion! There is none like unto You, Jehovah, even among the gods—no fabled deity, however painted in glowing colors can be compared to You! Let us take back our words if at any time we have said anything against Him and make the utmost amends by magnifying His holy name! In the next place, let us earnestly pray that if ever we shall be tempted again to harsh, mistrusting thoughts, we may be able to put a check upon our language and to keep our mouth as with a bridle. Oh that our tongue, which is given us to praise our God, may never be perverted into an instrument of complaint against our greatest Benefactor! O you vile tongue, how could you ever, in your hottest haste, let slip an angry word against the Lord? Better far to be dumb than to dishonor a name so dear!

The next lesson is this—let us always continue to pray, come what may. Brothers and Sisters, never cease praying! What I have said before, I say again—continue in prayer. Call upon your God! Cry to Him! Cry to Him! While breath lasts and life gives power to feel a desire, never cease to supplicate the Lord. Last of all, let us always speak well of His mercy. If we have bitterly complained, let us, with equal vigor, declare His goodness! I wish that you who are given to grumble would make up your minds that the time past will suffice you to have grumbled and now you are going to growl backwards—to recall all your harsh speeches—and to praise God as much as you have formerly complained against Him. I should like farmers to break into a wonderful excitement of gratitude so that all the nation would ring with it and all men would confess— “Whenever you meet a farmer, you meet with a man who is always praising God for the weather.” It will be a wonderful change if that should ever come to be the general remark!

I wish you tradesmen would suddenly put a new leaf into your books and become the most thankful set of men alive so that it would be universally said, “Whenever we meet a tradesman, we always find him praising God for His goodness to him in his business.” For many years most traders have done the other thing and it is time they should pitch a new tune and sing another song! There have been “very bad times—dreadfully bad times,” quite long enough! Are there no better times coming? Bad as times are, these grumblers live and live in comfort, too! Do they live on their losses? They cannot well do that and so we may suppose that they are living on the savings of former years—so it is clear that they must have had some wonderfully good times, once, when we did not hear much about them!

They ought to praise God, now, for those wonderful seasons four, five, or six years ago when things were so marvelously good that they were able to lay up stores for the years of famine! It will be a blessed thing for us when all times are good because our minds are good and our hearts are content. May we grow like the shepherd who was asked, “Will there be good weather today?” And he answered that there would be good weather. “Don’t you think it will rain?” “Very likely, or perhaps it will snow.” “But you said that it would be good weather.” “Yes,” he answered, “if God sends it, it cannot be anything else but good.” “But I mean, do you think there will be such weather as pleases you.” “Yes, that there will,” he said —

*“for whatever pleases God pleases me.”*

May God give us a happy, childlike, rejoicing spirit! We have done enough murmuring to last a lifetime! Let us change the tune. Suppose that you were to say, “I will make up my mind that just as much as I have ever disbelieved, mistrusted, murmured, so much will I do in the way of trusting and praising the Lord”? But suppose you were actually to do as much—that would be a poor life of which you could merely say, “There was as much praise of God in that man’s life as there was of murmuring.” Shall we be content with such a summary? No, no, no! We must rise to something better than that! We must praise God a thousand times to every complaint! No—we must even get above that—we must have done with all complaining! God deliver us from it and lift us right out of unbelief—and when we do speak in our haste, again, may it only be to exclaim, “Bless the Lord, hallelujah!”

If somebody sincerely remarks, “That was a bit of bold sincere remarks. That was a bit of enthusiasm,” you may reply, “Oh yes, but as I am a hasty man and rather quick-tempered, that is the way in which I show my hastiness—I bless the Lord while my heart is hot and then keep on doing so till I have cooled down.” Lift up a hallelujah when nobody is prepared for such a word of praise! Startle your friends by crying, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!” The Lord lift you all up to this and keep you there, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE SAINTS’ LOVE TO GOD  
NO. 2958

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 27, 1875.

**“Oh love the LORD, all you His saints.”  
Psalm 31:23.**

DO we, if we are called the saints of the Lord, need to be exhorted to love Him? If we do, shame upon us! And we do, I am quite sure, so let us be ashamed and confounded that it should ever be necessary to urge us to love our Lord! Why, after He has done so much for us and manifested such wondrous love to such unworthy ones as we are, we ought to love Him as naturally as sparks of fire ascend towards the sun, or as the waters of the river run towards the sea. It should be our second and higher nature to always love the Lord without the slightest prompting. What the Law of God required, the Gospel should have worked in us, namely, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength! But, Brothers and Sisters, we need this exhortation—we feel that we do. Well, then, let us take it home to ourselves and let us hear it as though it had been spoken personally to each one of us who are the Lord’s saints—“O love the Lord.” Do nothing else just now. Bid every other thought be gone and every other emotion, too. Let your affections be graciously melted and let them all run in this one blessed channel—towards God—“O love the Lord, all you His saints.”

Remember that the man who here exhorts the saints to love their Lord was one who had been enduring very sharp trials. This Psalm is, in many respects, a very sad one. If you will read it through, you will see that David had been afflicted by slanderous and other cruel enemies. And yet, while he was still suffering from their attacks and also fearing that he was cut off from the Lord’s Presence, he still said, “O love the Lord, all you His saints,” for my Lord is so good that I will speak well of Him even when He smites me. He is such a gracious God that I can truly say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Though He may smite me ever so hard, yet will I still adore Him. I will still bless and magnify His name as long as I have any being.”

If a tried child of God could talk like that, how ought we, who have comparatively few trials, to love the Lord? If your pathway has been smooth of late—if temporal mercies have abounded—if spiritual comforts have been continued to you, then, O you happy saints, love the Lord! If David, when so sorely tried, could do so, how fervently should you do it, who stand upon the mountaintops of full assurance and walk in the bright sunlight of confidence in God! I address myself to all here who have really been set apart unto God and who realize that they are among the Lord’s saints. And I repeat to them this exhortation of David, “O love the Lord, all you His saints.”

I. So first, let us remember that THIS EXHORTATION REFERS TO EACH PERSON OF THE DIVINE TRINITY.  
We can never understand how Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be Three and yet One. For my part, I have long ago given up any desire to understand this great mystery, for I am perfectly satisfied that if I could understand it, it would not be true, because God, from the very nature of things, must be incomprehensible! He can no more be contained within the narrow bounds of our finite understanding than the Atlantic Ocean could be held in the hollow of a child’s hand. We bless Him that He is one. As Moses said, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord,” yet we also bless Him that Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each in His separate Personality, should be worshipped as God.  
O then, you saints, love God the Father! We sometimes meet with Christians who are so ignorant as scarcely to give the same degree of love to the Father as they give to the Son. They foolishly suppose that the Son has done something to make the Father love us. That is not the belief of any Spirit-taught children of God, for we say, with good John Kent— *“‘Twas not to make Jehovah’s love  
Towards the sinner flame,  
That Jesus, from His Throne above  
A suffering Man became.  
‘Twas not the death which He endured  
Nor all the pangs He bore,  
That God’s eternal love procured,  
For God was Love before.”*  
It was because of His love that the Father gave His Son! It was not the Son who came to make that love possible! O Christians, love the Father, for He chose you! Before the earth was, the Father concentrated His love upon you and gave you to Christ to be His portion and His reward. Why did He choose you? He might well enough have passed you by, as He passed by so many others—but, inasmuch as He has chosen you in Christ before the foundation of the world, love Him, I pray you! In choosing you, the Father adopted you into His family and gave you a name and a place among His sons and daughters. If you are this day children of the great Father, it is because He has taken you out from among the rest of mankind and has made you “heirs of God and jointheirs with Christ.” It is the Father, too, who has given you the nature as well as the name and the position of children, for He “has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away.” And He “has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” For your election unto everlasting life, for your salvation by Christ Jesus, for your regeneration by the Holy Spirit, for your adoption into the family of God, “O love the Lord, all you His saints!” I know that you do, but I want you to realize it afresh just now. Let your soul swim as in a sea of love and each one say, “My Father, my God, my own God, I love You! My soul exults at the very thought of Your great love to me which has made my love to You possible!”  
And then, O you saints, love God the Son! I know that you do this, also, for there is not a Peter among us who, if Christ said to Him, “Do you love Me?” would not reply, “Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You.” How shall I speak of what God the Son has done for us? Think of the Glory that He left and of the shame that He endured for our sakes! Picture Him hanging at a woman’s breast at Bethlehem and afterwards hanging on a Cross at Calvary! Let your eyes lovingly gaze upon Him in the weakness of His Infancy and then in the greater weakness of His death-agony—and remember that He suffered all this for you! For you the crown of thorns! For you the spittle on His cheeks! For you the plucking of His hair! For you the accursed lash that scourged His sacred shoulders! For you the nails, the sponge, the vinegar, the gall, the spear, the tomb—all for you! “O love the Lord, all you His saints,” as you think of His amazing love to you! I would almost ask you to come to those dear feet of His and to do as the woman who was a sinner did—to wash His feet with your tears and to wipe them with the hairs of your head, while you might softly sing—  
*“Love and grief my heart dividing,  
With my tears His feet I’ll bathe,  
Constant still in faith abiding  
Life deriving from His death.”*  
And then, O you saints, I must not forget to dwell upon the thought that you must love God the Holy Spirit! Never let us forget Him, or speak of Him, as some do, as, “It,” for the Holy Spirit is not, “It,” or talk of Him as though He were a mere influence, for the Holy Spirit is Divine and is to be reverenced and loved equally with the Father and the Son! It was that blessed Spirit who quickened us when we were dead in trespasses and sins! It was He who illuminated us and removed our darkness and, since that time, it has been He who has taken of the things of Christ and revealed them to us. He has been our Comforter to cheer us and our Instructor to teach us and, most wonderful of all, He dwells in us! I have often said that I do not know which mystery to admire the more—the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit! For Christ to take our nature upon Him was, doubtless, marvelous condescension, but that only lasted for a little other 30 years. But the Holy Spirit comes and dwells, century after century, in successive generations of His people, abiding and working in the hearts of men. O you saints, love the Lord the Spirit!  
So, gathering up all that I have said, let us adore the mystic Three in One and, more than that, let us love the Lord, let us give our highest affection to Him who was, and is, and is to come, the almighty God, Father, Son, and Spirit!  
II. Then, in the second place, note that THIS EXHORTATION MAY BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE FULLEST CONCEIVABLE SENSE—“O love the Lord, all you His saints.”  
You may pull up the sluices of your being and let all your life-floods flow forth in this sacred stream, for you cannot love God too much. Some passions of our nature may be exaggerated and, towards certain objects, they may be carried too far—but the heart, when it is turned towards God—can never be too warm, nor too excited, nor too firmly fixed on the Divine Object! “O love the Lord, all you His saints.”  
Put the emphasis upon that sweet word, love—love the Lord as you cannot love anyone or anything else. Husband, you love your wife. Parent, you love your children. Children, you love your parents. And all of you love your friends and it is well that you do. But you must spell all other love in little letters, but spell LOVE to God in the largest capitals you can find! Love Him intensely, love the Lord, all you His saints, without any limit to your love!  
Next, love Him with a deep, abiding principle of love. There is a certain kind of human love which burns very quickly, like brushwood, and then dies out. So, there are some Christians who seem to love the Lord by fits and starts, when they get excited, or at certain special seasons. But I pray you, Beloved, to let your love be a deep-seated and lasting fire. What if I compare it to the burning in the very heart of a volcano? It may not always be in eruption, but there is always a vehement heat within—and when it does burst forth, oh, what heaves there are, what seething, what boiling, what flaming and what torrents of lava all around! There must always be the fire in the heart, even when it is somewhat still and quiet. Love the Lord with a deep, calm, thoughtful, well-grounded affection, for, if you do not, excitements may go as easily as they come, frames and feelings may change—and your love will turn out to be evanescent and anything but intense.  
Then, after that, love the Lord with an overwhelming emotion. You will not always feel like that and you need not wish to do so—the human mind is not capable of continually feeling, to an overwhelming degree, the emotion of love to God. There may be a slackening of conscious emotion, for we have to go to our business and to be occupied with many cares and with thoughts that, necessarily, claim our attention. But we do not love the Lord any less because we are not so conscious of our love as at others times. Still, you must have your times when you are conscious of the emotion of love to God. Set apart special seasons when you may pray the Lord to come to you in an unusual manner. On such occasions you do not want to do anything but just love Him and give your soul full liberty to gaze upon the unspeakable beauties of your God. Oh, it is delightful to be utterly carried away with this emotion! There are some of the saints of God who have found that this emotion has been too strong for them and they have had to cry to the Lord, “Hold! Hold! For I am but an earthen vessel and if more of this amazing love is poured into me, I shall be unable to bear it!”  
There have been very remarkable experiences with some of the saints when this sacred passion has completely overpowered them. They have been forgetful of all other things and have seemed absent-minded and abstracted—whether in the body, or out of the body, they could not tell. Well, Beloved, indulge that emotion all you can! If you cannot get the highest degree of it, get as much of it as you can. Have the principle of love and then ask the Lord to give you the emotion which arises from it. Yes, dear Friends, I would go still further and join you in praying that our love to our God might come to be a very passion of the soul—a passion that can never be satisfied until we get to Him and are with Him forever! That is the true love which grows so eager and impatient that it counts life a banishment so long as it is spent down here. It is well with your soul when it sometimes cries out, “Why is His chariot so long in coming?”—when you can truly sing that blessed verse—

*“My heart is with Him on His Throne,  
And ill can brook delay!  
Each moment listening for the voice,  
‘Rise up, and come away.’”*  
For, surely, the spouse desires the return of her Husband! Does not the boy at school long for the holidays when he may get back to his parents’ embrace?  
And if we really love the Lord, we shall feel that passionate longing to be with Him and, in the strength of it, if we must tarry here for a while, we shall feel that we can do anything for Him “till the day breaks and the shadows flee away.”  
III. Having thus shown you that this exhortation is applicable to each Person of the Divine Trinity and that it may be understood in the most emphatic sense, now let me say, in the third place, that IT HAS A THOUSAND ARGUMENTS TO ENFORCE IT.  
Brothers and Sisters, the short time we have for this service will not allow me to mention many of these reasons; but this is my comfort—that a soul that truly loves God does not need any reasons for loving Him. We have an old proverb which says that “love is blind.” And certainly, love is never very argumentative. It overcomes a man so that he is completely carried away by it and he who really loves God, will feel that this supreme passion puts aside the necessity for cold reasoning. Hear could you, by logic, produce love even between two human beings? You may prove that you ought to love, but “ought to love” and love, itself, are two very different things! Where true love is, however, it finds a thousand arguments for its own increase.  
This love, to which God’s saints are exhorted, is in every way deserved. Think of the excellence of His Character whom you are bid to love. God is such a perfect Being that I feel now that, altogether apart from anything He has done for me, I love Him because He is so good, so just, so holy, so faithful, so true. There is no one of His attributes that is not exactly what it ought to be. If I look at His dear Son, I see that His Character is so gloriously balanced that I wonder why even those who deny His Godhead do not worship such a Character as His, for it is absolutely unique. When I think of the Character of the ever-blessed Spirit—His patience and His wisdom—His tenderness and His love to us—I cannot help loving Him. Yes, Beloved, we must love Father, Son and Spirit, for never had human hearts such an Object to love as the Divine Trinity in Unity.  
If you will let your mind specially dwell upon God’s great goodness, surely you must feel the throbs of strong affection towards Him. What is God? “God is Love.” That short word comprehends all! He is a great God, but He is as gracious as He is great. We might conceive of a god who was a great tyrant, but it was impossible that our God should be one. “The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.” He is as full of goodness as the sun is full of light and as full of Divine Grace as the sea is full of water. And all that He has, He delights to give out to others. It is His happiness and glory to make His creatures happy—and even when He is stern and terrible, it is only of necessity that He is so because it cannot be for the good of the universe which He governs that sin should be lightly treated or allowed to go unpunished. God, my God, You are altogether lovely! And where the heart is in a right condition, it must love You! I should think that the anatomist, taking each bone to pieces and observing the singular adaptation of every joint to promote the comfort of the creature—I should think that the naturalist, observing all the habits of birds and beasts and fishes, and seeing what wonderful delight, upon the whole, is enjoyed by such creatures—must often feel that God is a blessed God!  
Certainly, I cannot walk the glades beneath the forest and listen to the singing of the birds, and observe how even the insects in the grass leap up for very joy, without saying, “He is a blessed God, indeed, who has made such a beautiful world as this!” Some men and women seem to think that this world was made for them and they talk about flowers wasting their sweetness upon the desert air, but let them gaze upon the marvels of beauty in the fair woods and let them look at the myriad ants which build their cities there. They appear to be happy enough, in their way, and to be bringing some honor and glory to the God that made them and this beautiful world in which they dwell. With all the stain of sin there is upon it, you may find many places where—  
*“Every prospect pleases,  
And only man is vile.”*  
Standing on the brow of some high hill and beholding the lovely scenery all around you, you might well burst forth in the lofty language attributed by Milton to our first father, Adam, but if you do not speak thus to His praise, “O love the Lord, all you His saints,” for He is a blessed Creator!  
Then think of the Providence of God— especially His Providence to you. I cannot tell the various ways in which the Lord has led each one of you, but I can speak for myself. If there is any man under Heaven who has reason to love the Lord for every step of the way in which he has been led, I am that man! But I hope there are many others here who could say just the same if I gave them the opportunity. Notwithstanding all your trials and troubles, dear Brothers and Sisters, has not the Lord been a good God to you? I have heard many strange things in the course of my life, but I have never heard one of the Lord’s servants, when he came to die, regret that he had taken Him for a Master. Nor have I ever heard one of them rail at Him because of even the heaviest blows of His hand, but, like Job, they have said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Yes, as much blessed when He takes away as when He gives!  
But, my Brothers and Sisters, if I call to your remembrance the great mystery of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ—if I only utter these words— “Incarnation”—“Substitution”—“Justification”—“Sanctification”—without dwelling upon the great Truths of God that they represent, surely they must awaken responsive echoes in your spirit and, as far as your faith has grasped these precious things, you must feel that you have many weighty reasons why you should love the Lord!  
I must pass on to remark that another reason for loving the Lord is that it is such a pleasant and profitable exercise. If David had said, “Dread the Lord’s anger, fear the Lord as a slave fears the lash,” that would have been a crushing, weakening, sorrowful message. That is not what you are bid to do, but, “O love the Lord, all you His saints.” If it had merely been said, “Obey the Lord, whether you do it cheerfully or not; just do what you are told to do”—well, that is a poor sort of religion that consists in a formal round of performances and nothing more! If it had then said, “Submit to the Lord: you cannot do otherwise, for He is your Master”—well, we should have been obliged to do it, but it would have been cold work and there would have been no comfort to be derived from it. If it had been written, “Understand the Lord,” we might have given up the task in despair, for how can the finite comprehend the Infinite? But when it is written, “O love the Lord”—why, one of the most delightful exercises of the human heart is to love! Many who have had no other sources of happiness, have found great joy in domestic love. And those who have been denied domestic love have found a sweet relief of their grief in the love of benevolence towards the poor. That heart may well be wretched that has no one to love!  
I have heard of a rich nobleman who had large estates, but whose life was a constant misery to him, and who, in sheer despair, was about to drown himself in a canal. But, as he was going, a little boy plucked his coat and asked him for a few pence. He looked in the face of the little fellow and noticed that his face was pinched with poverty and hunger. And the nobleman said to him, “Where do you live?” and the boy led him into a dreary place where his mother lay stretched upon the bed, dying of starvation, and his father, looking like a ghost, was scarcely able to move. The nobleman went off to various shops, made several purchases and returned and fed these poor people! And, as he saw how great was their joy as he supplied their needs, he said to himself, “There is something worth living for, after all!” That benevolent love which had led him to feed the hungry, had given him back some joy in his life! If this is the result of love to our fellow creatures, how much more must it be the effect of our love to our God! If you want to be happy and to do the best thing that is possible in your whole life, love your God! When you want to have a season of ecstatic bliss, this is the way to it—by the road of love to God you will get to the purest, highest joys that can be known even in Heaven itself! Now that you have this blessed secret communicated to you, make use of it and love your God because it is such a pleasant and profitable exercise!  
Let us love the Lord, next, because it is so beneficial to do so. The man who loves God is delivered from the tyranny of idols—and idols are great tyrants. Suppose you make an idol of your child—you directly have a tyrant. Suppose you make an idol of your money—there is not a more grim tyrant even in Hell than Mammon is! Do you make an idol of other people’s opinion of you? The poor galley slave who is flogged at every stroke of the laborious oar, is free in comparison with the man who lives upon the breath of popularity, who craves the esteem of his fellow men and is afraid and trembles if they censure him. Whatever idol you have, you will be the slave of that idol, but, dear Friend, if you love God, you are free! The love of God makes men true and, making them true, it also makes them bold—and making them bold, it makes them truly free!  
Moreover, to love God is the way to be cleansed from sin. I mean that the love of God always drives out the love of sin. The one who really loves the Lord, when tempted to sin, cries with Joseph, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Every act of sin arises out of the absence or the decline of the love of God, but perfect love to God leads to the perfect life with God.

Love to God will also strengthen you in the time of trial. Love will bear His will without repining, will endure bereavements and the loss of worldly substance and, even when the suffering saint lies panting on the bed of sickness, or on the bed of death, love will enable Him to sing— *“You, at all times, will I bless!  
Having You, I all possess.  
How can I bereaved be  
Since I cannot part with Thee?”*  
And, then, love to God will also strengthen you for service. A man is strong to serve his God, spiritually, just in proportion as he loves God. Love laughs at what men call impossibilities! Perhaps someone here says, “I could never go abroad as a missionary, leaving my native land and living among heathens.” Brother, you could do it if you had love enough. Another says, “I could never spend my whole life in the back slums of London among the filthy and the ragged, trying to raise them up! I recoil from such work.” Brother, you would not recoil from it, but you would rejoice in it if you had more love. There is a power in love to God, which makes that pleasant which, without love, would have been irksome and painful—a power which makes a man bow down his shoulders to carry the Cross and then finds the Cross grow into a seraph’s wings enabling him to mount up toward his God! Only love God more, Brother, and you can do anything! You know that if a thing is very hard, you only need to get something that is harder and it will go through it, so, if the work is hard, get more love to Christ and you will be able to accomplish it, whatever it may be!  
I might continue to give you reasons for loving the Lord, but I will only give you one more and that is, it is most ennobling. He who loves God is certainly akin to the holy angels, for this is what they do. He is also akin to glorified saints, for this is what they do. He is also akin to the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, for this is what He does. The three Persons of the Divine Trinity delight in one Another and when we delight in Them, we have fellowship with Them as well as with one another. “God is love and He that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him.” The less love you have to God, the lower is your rank among His saints—and the more love you have to Him, the higher is your rank! May we all know, to the fullest extent possible, what it is to be ennobled by being filled with love to our Lord!  
Now, having given you all these reasons why we should love the Lord— and really I have only skimmed the surface of the subject as the swallow touches the brook and is up and away again—I want to propose to my Brothers and Sisters in Christ something which I hope will be congenial to them. It is this—O LOVE THE LORD, ALL YOU HIS SAINTS!  
Sit there and feel that He loves you! Sit there, and love Him and then say to yourself, “Now, if I really do love the Lord, I must do something to prove it.” Every now and then I like to do something for the Lord which I would not have anybody else know, for that would spoil it—something which I do not do for you, nor for my wife and children, nor for myself, but purely and wholly for God. I think we ought to have something in our purse which is not to be given even for the winning of souls, or the relief of the poor, or the comfort of the sick—though these are most important things which must not be neglected—but something which shall be for God alone. I like to think of that woman breaking the alabaster box and pouring out the precious ointment upon the Lord Jesus Christ. There was Judas, the traitor, who shook his head and said that it might have been sold for much and given to the poor—he being the representative of the poor and intending to see that a portion of the money should remain adhering to his own palms! But the woman had no thought of pleasing Judas, on Peter, or anybody but the Lord Jesus Christ whom she loved so intensely!  
Cannot you, Beloved, select something which you can do out of love to Him? What can I suggest to you? Is there some sin that still lurks within your heart? If so, hunt it out and destroy it for Christ’s sake! Fling down the gage of battle and say that you will contend against the evil thing, in the name of God, with this as your war cry, “For the love of Christ!” You will get the mastery over it in that way. And when you have done that, is there not something that you could give distinctly to the Lord? Have you ever done that? If not, you have missed a very pure form of happiness and I think that love to God suggests that we should sometimes do this— telling nobody about it, but keeping it entirely to ourselves. Cannot you also think of some service which you could render distinctly to God? It is a very wonderful thing that God should ever accept any service at our hands! It is thought to be a great act of condescension when a king or queen accepts a little wild flower from some country child, yet these is not much cause for wonder in that! But it is a marvelous condescension when God accepts the services even of cherubim and seraphim—and it is truly amazing that He should be willing to accept anything from us! Is there not something, my Sister, that you can do over and above what you have been doing—something, perhaps, which you do not quite like the thought of doing? Yet you mean to do it and you will like to do it because you will do it out of love to your Lord. Do not neglect anything that has now become a part of your duty, but I want you to do something more than that—not that we can ever do more than our duty, for when we have done all, we shall still be only unprofitable servants to our great Lord and Master—and, in all that we do, let this be our highest motive, “We want to do something altogether and especially for our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
Shall I suggest something else? You know that there is nothing which pleases our Lord more than when we try to be like Him. Have not you, father, been greatly pleased when you have seen your little ones imitating your way of walking and your way of talking? Yes, and our Lord loves to see Himself reproduced in us, even though it is in a very childlike way and more like a caricature than a true image. For instance, He is very great at forgiving those who have offended Him. Is there somebody with whom you have been out at elbows for a while? Then, for love of your Lord, seek out that somebody—I do not know who it may be—a former friend, perhaps—possibly a child, or a brother. Seek him out. Go and find him. “Oh, no,” you say, “he must come half-way to meet me!” No, you go all the way, dear Brother, for the love of Christ. You would not do it for anybody else, but you can go all the way for Christ’s sake! I remember two Christian men who had been greatly at variance one day, but they both happened to remember the text, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” So each of them started off to go to his friend’s house and they did meet half-way. That is how it ought to be, but still, if the other one does not come to meet you—that is the very reason why, for the Lord’s sake, you should go all the way to find him!  
Then is there somebody who has never quarreled with you, but who is a very objectionable person and a very ungodly person about whom you have always felt, “I should not like to have anything to do with that person”? Yet, perhaps, God means to bless a word from you to that man’s salvation—will you not try to bring him to Christ? You know that there are many others who will look after the very pleasant people. We are always glad to bring them with us to hear the sermon and we can talk to them about Christ because if they do not like it, they will not say so, for they are so gentlemanly or so ladylike. There are always plenty of people willing to go after them, so will you not try to take up one of those hedgehog sort of people that nobody else cares to handle? If he pricks your hands, you can say, “Ah, my Lord was pierced far deeper than this for my sake! I am glad to bear the sharp cuts and hard words for His sake—the more there are of them, the better I like it, for I feel that I am bearing all for His sake.” You know that when you have something to do for a friend, you like it to be something big. If you love him very much and he says, “I want you to promise to do such-and-such a thing for me,” you hardly like it when it turns out to be some insignificant thing scarcely worth mentioning. You say, “No, no, no, I have such ardent affection for you that if you had asked some very hard thing, I would have been only too pleased to do it!” Well now, try to do for your Lord Jesus Christ something which will cost you much—perhaps a good deal of pain, or the overcoming of strong natural tendencies—and do it for His sake.  
Perhaps you are called to suffer persecution for Christ’s sake. Well, I have told you this story before, but I will tell it again. There was once a king’s son who came down to a country which ought to have been his home, but it was full of traitors and rebels against him who would not receive him. They saw that he was their Prince, but they hated him and, therefore, they heaped all sorts of insults upon him. They set him in the pillory and pelted him with filth and finally put him in prison. Now there was, in that country, one loyal subject. And when he saw the Prince, he knew him and went and stood by his side. He was close by him when the mob surged around him and they hooted him as well as the Prince. When the Prince was put into prison, they pushed this man in with him to keep him company. And when they put the Prince in the pillory, this man also stood there, putting his own face, whenever he could, in front of the Prince’s face, so as to catch the filth that was thrown at him. When a stain came upon the royal visage, he wiped it off with his handkerchief, and stood there in tears, entreating the wicked man to leave their Prince alone—and always interposing himself to receive any filthy garbage or stone that was aimed at the Prince.  
Years went by and the Prince came to his throne, his enemies having been trod underfoot. He alone reigned supreme and his courtiers thronged around him. You know that Prince and who His courtiers are— angels, cherubim, and seraphim! And the Prince, looking among the throng, cried out, “Make way, angels! Clear the road, cherubim! Stand back, seraphim! Bring here the man who was My companion in the prison and in the pillory. Come here, My Friend,” said He and He set him upon His own throne and honored him that day in the sight of the whole universe! Brother, is that man, you? I charge you to let it be so, for the day shall come when you will be rewarded ten thousand times over for any little jests, and jeers, and sarcasms, and lies that men may have poured upon you because you were loyal to Christ! As for me, this is my declaration to my Lord and Savior—

*“If on my face for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproaches be,  
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If You remember me!”*  
Perhaps I am addressing some whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, but who have no knowledge of that blessed fact. They are strangers to themselves and strangers to God, yet in His eternal purpose He has ordained that they shall be saved. It is possible that this very hour is to be the time in which they shall be brought out of Nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous light! Let me ask them—have you not lived long enough in sin? Will not the time past suffice you to have worked the will of the flesh? What profit have you had in all your sinning? And you self-righteous people who have tried to save yourselves, how much nearer to God are you now than when you began that task which you will never finish? Have you not put your money into a bag that is full of holes? “Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” Surely you have lived long enough at enmity against God and you have had time enough to prove whether this world is true or false—and whether her joys are real or delusive! How far has your experience in this matter gone and, as far as it has gone, what has been the result? Will you not trust the Lord Jesus Christ?  
If you can do nothing else, come and wash His feet with the tears of your repentance! If you can do nothing else, come and lean on His bosom! If you cannot give Him anything else, give Him yourself! Give Him your whole heart, or give Him your broken heart. After all, Sinner, you are the man who can really honor Christ. I do not read that our Lord Jesus ever said to one of His disciples, “Give me to drink.”But He did say that to the woman at the well who had had five husbands, and the man with whom she was then living was not her husband! Jesus did say to her, “Give me to drink,” for a sinner is capable of satisfying the innermost thirst of Christ when that sinner comes and believes in Christ! Oh, that some of you might do that this very moment! That would be the best result of this service. I pray the Lord that it may be so and then, Father, Son, and Spirit—the one true God—we, who believe in Jesus, will love You forever and ever! Amen.

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CONSTRAINING LOVE  
NO. 325

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 3, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.”  
Psalm 31:23.**

LOVE Jehovah—so the text goes. God the Father demands your love and He deserves the warmest affection of your hearts. He has chosen you from before the foundation of the world. He has given His Son that He might redeem you with His precious blood. He has taken you into His family by Divine adoption. He has “begotten you again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is to Him that you address your prayers. It is He who grants you your requests. It is He who glorified His Son Jesus, receiving Him into the heavens as your representative. And He will glorify Him yet again by gathering you together with all His people into the mansions provided for the blessed.

“Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.” Love the Son! It is He whose delights were with the sons of men of old, He who entered into suretyship and covenant engagement on the behalf of His elect. It is He who with His precious blood has ransomed our souls and delivered them “from going down into the pit.” He is our Mediator through whom we pray and our intercessor who prays for us. He is our Head, our Husband, our King. He it is, even Jesus, who took our nature and wears a body like our own. It is He who imparts to us His mind now and promises that hereafter we shall bear His likeness in glory.

“Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.” Love the Holy Spirit! He has been revealed to us and is known by us as “the Comforter.” How endearing!— *“He in our hearts of sin and woe*

*Has bid streams of grace arise,  
Which unto endless glory flow.”*  
He has quickened us when we were dead in sins. He has given us the grace of repentance and of faith. He has sanctified us and kept and preserved us up till now. He has taken of the things of Christ and has showed them unto us. He has dwelt in our poor hearts, He has been our Comforter, our Instructor and our daily Teacher. It is He who convicted us of sin when as yet we perceived not its malignity and it is He inspires our hearts and souls with the supernatural will and disposition of living to God.  
It is of the Holy Spirit we are born again and made partakers of the new creation. It is by the same Spirit we are ultimately to be changed into the image of our Lord from glory to glory. “Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.” If a blind world sees no beauty in its God and therefore does not love Him, yet oh you saints, love your God. If the enemies of the Most High set up other gods and bow down before them—if they turn aside into crooked ways and go a whoring after their false gods—yet, oh you saints of His, stand fast and turn to your Jehovah and love Him ever more. Do not merely serve Him, but love Him.  
O house of Israel be not His slaves—serve not your God as the heathen serve their gods—out of terror and fear, but “love the Lord all you saints.” Be not as the subjects of Pharaoh, flogged to their work with the whip, but be you the dutiful children of your loving Father. Serve Him, I say and rejoice before Him. Let love sweeten all your services. Give Him all your hearts. Make Him the object supreme of all your heart’s desire. Ever live to Him as you live by Him.  
I shall have to ask your patience this evening, while I take a liberty with my text. It is this. I mean to confine its exhortation to one Person of the Divine Trinity. I have already accepted it in its comprehensiveness, “Oh love Jehovah, all you His saints.” Tonight I propose to use it as consonant with such an occasion as the present, when we shall celebrate the Supper of our Lord—“Oh love the Lord Jesus, all you His saints.” And I shall endeavor, as the Holy Spirit shall enable me, first of all to stir you up to love Jesus, by showing how meet and befitting it is that you should do so. And then I shall seek to show the excellencies of loving Jesus—how profitable it will be to your spirit, if your heart is wholly inflamed with love to Him.  
I. First, then, my Beloved, let one sentiment animate every mind and one emotion fill every heart. “Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.” I feel in beginning to exhort you to love Christ. That love is a stream which must flow spontaneously, a fountain that must bubble up of its own accord. When grace makes a man love Christ, it does not do it by force, for love is a wine that cannot be trod out of the grapes with pressure. It must freely distil. The heart cannot be forced to love. It is true it can be constrained by love, but by no other constraint. Moses, with all the thunders that gave extraordinary sanction to his mission, never could make a heart love God. There is nothing but love that can create love and love itself comes like droppings from the honeycomb. The only pressure it will deign to endure is the pressure of love. “Draw me,” says love, “I will run after you—drive me and I cannot but resist—my desire cannot even stir, much less can I run after you with fervent attachment. My heart melted while my Beloved spoke, because He was my Beloved. Because He loved me and spoke right lovingly, my heart melted. Had He been angry with me, had He spoken with coarse words my soul might have melted with fear, but it never could have been dissolved with love.”  
Love, I say, is the only pressure which may be used to produce love and yet, methinks, I may “stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.” It may so happen that while I strike some fear sparks, they may touch the inflammable passion of your new-born spirits. The breath of the Spirit may fan them and nurture them, till the love of your heart will seem as if it had received new fire. Oh Love! Let me bring forth some of your delicious sweets. Let me reason with the most tender logic of the heart. “Love the Lord Jesus all you His saints,” because His Father loves Him. It must always be right for us to love whom God loves. Now the Father has much love, but His pre-eminent love is for His only begotten Son. One with the Father from before all worlds, one in essence, as well as in dwelling-place and attribute, our Jesus was ever so dear to His Father’s heart, that no tongue can tell, nor ever heart conceive, how deep the wellspring from where love flowed from the Father to the Son. “The Father has loved the Son and given all things into His hands.” He has loved Him, not only because of the unity of their nature and because of their being one God, but the Father’s love has flowed out to Christ as the Mediator. He has loved Him for His obedience which He perfected, for the sufferings which He endured, for the ransom which He paid, for the battle which He fought, for the victory which He won. There was one eye that always followed Christ more closely than any other. There was one heart that always understood His pains and one face that was always filled with celestial delight, when Jesus Christ overcame His enemies. “He who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.” When He had delivered Him up, methinks His heart yearned for Him, His heart followed Him and His soul loved Him, as He saw Him rising superior to every enemy He stooped to meet, victorious in every conflict He deigned to wage, bearing every Cross He condescended to undergo and casting every load away from Him when He had borne it the predestined time.  
The Father, I say, has loved the Son because of the great things He has done. And therefore has He delivered all things into His hands. And, oh heavenly Father! Do You love the Lord Jesus and shall my heart refuse to love Him? Am I Your child and shall not the Object of my Father’s love be the darling of my heart? What You delight in shall be my delight. Where You see beauty, my eyes shall gaze with rapture. And where Your heart finds solace, there shall my heart find unceasing repose and ineffable joy. Does Christ lie in Your bosom?—He shall lie in mine. Is His name engraved on Your heart?—Oh let it be engraved on mine also. Do you love Him? Do You love Him so that You could not love Him more?—Be it my privilege to love Him thus with all the force and vehemence of my ransomed renovated nature, giving up all my spirit to be devoured by that consecrated fire of love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again—may I not stir you up my Brethren, to love Jesus Christ, by reminding you how the angels love Him? They have ever loved Him since they have known Him. It is true they are but the creatures of yesterday compared with Him. He is the Everlasting Father. He is the Eternal One and they, excellent in strength though they are, are but created ones. But, oh how they have loved Him! It was their greatest pleasure to fly at His will before He descended from Heaven to earth. He had but to speak and it was done. His angels were spirits and His ministers were flames of fire to do His will. Whatever had been the sacrifice He demanded of them, they would have thought it their highest deed to have performed His will. And when He left the shrine of the blessed to come to earth and to suffer, you know, my Brethren, how they followed Him along His starry road. How they would not leave Him till the last parting moment and then their songs pursued Him down to earth, while they chanted, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.” You know how ever afterwards they watched over Him, how they came to Him in the desert—His great battle with the enemy—and ministered to Him. You know how He was seen of angels all along His pilgrimage, how in the garden there appeared unto Him an angel strengthening Him. You understand how around the bloody tree they pressed in strong desire to see God in agonies. They wondered what it all could mean, until He said—“It is finished.” They visited His tomb. An angel descended from Heaven to roll the stone away from the door of the sepulcher. Yes, more, angels formed His escort when He ascended up to the realms of Heaven. Well have we been taught to sing—  
*“They brought His chariot from on high,  
To bear Him to His Throne,  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,  
The glorious work is done.”*  
You know how they bow before Him, casting their crowns at His feet and how they join the everlasting song of “Glory and honor and majesty, and power and dominion and might be unto Him that sits upon the Throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” Do the angels love Him—the angels that have never tasted of His flesh, that never needed to be washed in His blood and shall not my heart love Him? Spirits, spirits, spotless ones! Do you cry, “Worthy the Lamb”? My heart shall echo back your notes in louder strains—  
*“Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry,  
“To be exalted thus.”*  
“Worthy the Lamb,” our lips reply—  
*“For He was slain for us.”*  
Stand back Angels! Give to man the first place in love. You may adore, but you cannot love as we love, for He is our Brother, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. “He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” He is ours more then He is yours. He is Man, He was never angel. He is our Brother and kinsman, our next in blood. Jesus, our souls must love You. We cannot permit even angels to be our rivals here. We will be jealous even of them. We press nearer to Your Throne than even they can do.  
On each of these themes I am compelled to be short, though there were indeed room enough for expansion, “Oh love the Lord all you His saints,” because your brothers that are caught up to the third heavens love Him. And here let us just seek to bring this theme home to each one of us. How many dear friends and kinsfolk according to the flesh we have up yonder—where the clouds float not and winters are not known? Where tears trickle from no eyes and furrows mar no brows! Up yonder we have friends. How often do we speak of them as lost, but how foolish we are. They were never more truly found. Is that mariner lost who has escaped from a shipwrecked vessel and stands upon the Rock? No, no. They need not our pity. They might rather commiserate us, if there could be such a thing.  
We are struggling in the surf to reach the shore as they have done. And oh, my Brethren, methinks that whatever they do above should be sufficient example for us to do the like here below. And now, hark, hark how they sing before the Throne! Methinks among those glad voices I can distinguish some friends, of fellow-laborers here below, of parents, of husbands, of wives, of children, that here worshipped with us, but have now gone up yonder to the higher seats of the Divine synagogue, to sing in nobler strains than we can do. Hark how they sing and what their theme—  
*“Jesus, the Lord their hearts employ  
Jesus, my love, they sing;  
Jesus, the life of both our joys,  
Sounds loud from every string.”*  
And oh, how they love Him! Methinks I see them. They have no tears, but joy may moisten their eyes as they look at that dear face and as they talk to one another with their hearts burning—burning with fiercer fire and clearer flame than those favored disciples who went to Emmaus with their Lord. They say to one another, “How glorious He is and we are like He.” Methinks I hear their sweet conversation as they count the crowns upon His brow. As they bow down and adore. As they stand up and admire and then, transported with delight, fly into His arms again. With Him in Paradise continually, in sweet communion with Him—oh, how they love! We are such cold creatures. Like icebergs are our hearts—but theirs are like flames of fire. Oh, shall it not be enough to stir us up to love the Savior, when we think how they love Him who have crossed the Jordan and have gone before?  
But, come, we will take another argument. Surely I need not say to you, let us love the Lord Jesus, because everything that could possibly honor our souls and constrain our love is to be found in Him. There is a thing called beauty which wins upon the hearts of men. Strong Samson is weak as a child before its enchantment. Mighty men, not a few, have bowed before it and paid it homage. But if you want beauty, look into the face of Jesus. That marred visage has more loveliness in it than in all the smiles of Cleopatra or of the fabled maiden of days of yore. There is no beauty anywhere but in Christ. O sun, you are not fair, when once compared with Him. You stars, you are not bright, if you are set side by side with His eyes, that burn like lamps of fire.  
O fair world and grand creation of a glorious God, you are but a dim and dusky blot compared with the splendors of His face. When you shall see Christ, my Brethren, you will be compelled to say that you never knew what loveliness was before. When the clouds are swept away, when the curtains that hide Him from your view are drawn aside, you will find that not anything you have seen will stand a moment’s comparison with Him. You will be ready to break out, “O, black sun, black moon, dark stars, as compared with my lovely Lord Jesus.”  
I say, my Brethren, if you want one to love fairer than the children of men—One who shall always be worthy of your love and always show to the eyes of others that there was a sufficient reason for your giving up your heart to Him—love Jesus, for there never was such beauty in the world as there is in him.  
Does wisdom still the love of men? Can he who is into martial triumphs, prowess and renown, subdue the hearty Daughters of Jerusalem—would you love a hero? Go forth and meet King Jesus as He returns red from the battlefield, glorious in triumph.  
Do men sometimes give their love because they at first are led to reverence the character and then afterwards to esteem the person? Oh, think of the matchless character of Christ Jesus! Were there ever such perfections as meet in Him? He has not the excellency of one man, but of all men without the faults of any. He is not merely the Rose of Sharon, but He is the Lilly of the Valley. He may not only be compared at one time to the citron among the trees of the wood, but later He is as the goodly cedar. All types of beauty fail and “apples of gold in pictures of silver,” lose their force when we come to treat of Him.  
We must coin new words before we can describe the excellencies of Christ. In fact, we must have done with tongues and go into that land where spirits utter their thoughts without the motion of lip or the expiration of breath, before we shall be able to express the surpassing beauty, the unuttered excellency of the glorious character of Christ. Oh, love Him, then, you people of God! Love Him! Look into His face and see if you can help it. Look, I say, at His character and see if you can resist it. But I tell you, if you love Him not, it is because you do not know Him—  
*“His worth if all the nations knew  
Sure the whole earth must love Him, too.”*  
It were impossible to know Christ and yet not to have the heart affected by Him. You must be overpowered by His charms. One look of His eyes, one touch of His hand shall ravish your heart. Once see His face and let Him but dart a glance at you, your two hearts must be united. Is your soul to you like a river rippling in its bed alone? And is Christ yonder, like another river gloriously flowing towards the sea? Pray the Lord to bend the stream of your love till it falls into the river of His love and then you shall be as two streams, whose banks were once divisions, but both are now melted into one. You can then say with the Apostle, “For me to live is Christ.” Run in the same channel—“and for me to die were gain.” You shall be lost in the ocean, swallowed up in boundless and eternal love. “Oh love the Lord, all you His saints.”  
Yet once more—and this perhaps shall be the best argument I can give. The one which, after all, has the most effect upon us. We love Him—why? Because the Father loved Him? Oh no. We are too gross for that. Do we love Him because the angels love Him? We are not wise enough for that. Do we love Him because the redeemed love Him? I fear, my Brethren, we are still too carnal for that. Do we love Him because of His own excellencies? I know not at first that is an after attainment of grace. We love Him, because He first loved us. Come, then, love Him, Oh you saints, because He first loved you.  
Here is a theme before me which almost imposes silence on my tongue. There are some themes which make one wish that some teacher more able would accept the responsibility of explaining them, because we are afraid of marring their symmetry while we grapple with their details. The picture stretches out as it were before my mind’s eye with dazzling glory, but I cannot sketch it so that others can see all its grandeur. Christ’s love to us we sometimes guess at, but, ah, it is so far beyond our thoughts, our reasoning, our praises and our apprehension too, in the sweetest moments of our most spiritual ecstasy—who can tell it? “Oh, how He loved us!”

When Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus the Jews exclaimed with surprise—“Behold how He loved Him.” Verily you might say the like with deeper emphasis. There was nothing in you to make Him love you, but He left Heaven’s Throne for you. As He came down the celestial hills, methinks the angels said “Oh, how He loved them.” When He lay in the manger an infant, they gathered round and said, “Oh how He loves.” But when they saw Him sweating in the garden, when He was put into the crucible and began to be melted in the furnace—then indeed, the spirits above began to know how much He loved us.  
Oh Jesus! When I see You mocked and spit upon—when I see Your dear cheeks become a reservoir for all the filth and spittle of unholy mouths—when I see Your back rent with knotted whips—when I behold Your honor and Your life both trailing in the dust—when I see You charged with madness, with treason, with blasphemy—when I behold Your hands and Your feet pierced, Your body stripped naked and exposed—when I see You hanging on the Cross between earth and Heaven in torments dire and excruciating—when I hear You cry, “I thirst,” and see the vinegar thrust to Your lips—when I hear Your direful cry, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” my spirit is compelled to say, “Oh how He loves!”  
He could die, but He could not cease to love. He could be rent in pieces, but He could not be rent away from His people. He could be buried in the grave, but His love could not be buried. It must live. It must exist. It cannot be taken from His chosen. Think, too, my Brethren, how much He must have loved you when you were going on in sin. You used to call His ministers hypocrites—His people fools. His Sabbaths were idle days with you. His Book, His precious Book, was unread. You never sought His Grace. Sometimes, perhaps, you used to curse Him, perhaps persecute Him in His children and yet He loved you.  
And when His Spirit came after you, you tried to quench it. You would not attend the place where the arrow had first stuck in your conscience. You went to the theater, you tried to quench the Spirit, but His love would not be mastered by you. He had resolved to have you and the bridegroom would still your heart. Oh how He loved you when He received you all black and filthy to His bosom—gave you the kiss of His lips and saluted you as His own fair spouse. Since then, remember, how He has watched over you in sickness, how He has carried you in His bosom when the road was rough, how He has covered you with His wings and nurtured you with His feathers.  
Think, I beseech you, how He seems to have Heaven and earth to bless you. How He has always had a ready ear to hear your prayer and a swift foot to run to your immediate help. Remember this, above all things—how ill you have requited all His love. You have served Him but little. You have given Him the little ends—you have brought Him no sweet cane—neither have you filled Him with the fat of your sacrifices. You have given Him no bullocks out of your fold, no goats out of your flock. You have offered to Him the blind and the maimed. You have given Him sacrifice, but have you requited Him according to His kindness to you? He bled for you—have you resisted unto blood—striving against sin?  
He gave His whole self for you—have you given your whole being up to Him? There was not a single nerve in His body which did not thrill with love to you. There was not a drop of blood which had not in its red fluid your name. Surely His body and soul was all yours—His humanity and His Godhead, too. And are you all His, and can you say—no, I will not ask you, you cannot say—that you have made a dedication to Him, as truly as He made for you?  
Oh, love Him then, because of His love to you. I am sure you don’t know how much He loved, because if you did it would break your heart to think you love Him so little. Sweet Master, if You were here tonight to tell Your people how You love them, how would it break their hearts! I am a poor spokesman for You, Jesus! Would that You would speak Yourself. Come here—no, You are here. You are wherever two or three are met together. Come here to Your people, then, and wrap them in Your crimson vest and tell them all Your name! Speak unto them and say, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” Shed Your love in their hearts. May they have an infinite consciousness of Your infinite, Your boundless, Your fathomless, Your endless love to them—and then Your work is done. There will be no need for Your poor servant to cry, “Oh love the Lord, all you His saints,” for they will love You to the full.  
II. In the second part of my subject I am now to show you some of THE EXCELLENCIES OF LOVING JESUS.  
“Oh love the Lord all you His saints.” There are many excellencies which come from love. Love is an ointment that gives forth a sweet smell— but better than that—it is an ointment which heals wounds, that gives health unto the marrow of the bones. Love has a wondrous power. It may seem but little in itself, but it makes men giants. He who bathes in the stream of love becomes invulnerable. No, he becomes omnipotent. Wherein he does not love he is weak.  
But so far as he loves is he strong beyond all thought of weakness. Brethren, one of the first things which love to Christ will do for you is it will make you bear suffering for Christ with joyousness. Remember the martyr Lambert, one of the earliest of the martyrs burnt for Christ’s sake by the papists? He was treated as badly as any could have been—for when tied to the stake, the firewood was green and the fire exceeding slow and he burnt away by slow degrees. His feet and legs were consumed while yet life was in the body. And that poor soul, when the fire was just about to take away life, though he had been hours burning, was seen to lift up such poor hands as be had—black and charred things—and clap them as best he could and say, out of that poor black face that looked like a cinder in the flame, “None but Jesus. None but Jesus.”  
With that he rode in his chariot of fire up to Christ. Perhaps you have to endure some cruel mockings at times. It may be that to serve Christ becomes arduous work for you. Love Him and you cannot tell how easy it will be to suffer for Him. In fact, the more you have to suffer for Him the more happy you will be. You will count it all joy. No, you will rejoice in that day and leap for joy when you are allowed to suffer for the name of Him who suffered so much for you.  
As sure as ever you flinch at the little fire which these mild and gentle days can afford you, as sure as ever you start back at the faint rebukes which the world gives you now—you may infer that you don’t love your Master as you ought. When you love Him, then will you feel that anything and everything that the world can do, can never move you from Him—  
*“The cords that bind around my heart,  
Tortures and racks may rend them off,  
But they can never, never part  
The hold I have on Christ my Lord.”*  
Love will not only make suffering easy, but further, it will make service joyous. Oh, don’t you know in the Church how much shrinking there is from labor for Christ? Why is it in any Church that there are found Brethren who are always for getting others to work and not wishing to do it themselves?  
It is lack of love, my Brethren. For as soon as ever we love, we shall be wanting to do something for Christ. When we love each other, what things we think of in order to give pleasure. With what solicitude does the wife think what she could do to bring the smile upon the husband’s face. And how will the loving husband think of some means by which he can show his love to his wife! It is so with parents and with children. Have not you seen the mother sitting up night after night without any sleep and yet she was not weary? Oh, she was very, very weary, but she did not know it— her love would not let her feel it.  
Have you ever seen the tender spouse watching over her husband at the brink of death, never taking her eyes from him, forgetting to eat bread, thinking of nothing but him? She sleeps as she sits in that chair. It is hardly for a moment. Did he start? She wakes. Was not the fever heavy on him? She is ever awake. All the while she holds, though her eyes are red with sleeplessness. She says she could do it and she certainly could do it, too, night after night and never fly. And so, do but get your heart full of love to Christ and it is wondrous what you can do for Him! Nothing you can do for Him will be too much.  
See how the Moravians served their Master. There was an island in the West Indies upon which some of the Moravians came to land and they wanted to preach the Gospel to the blacks. They asked what would be the condition upon which they would be allowed to land. The cruel terms were these—that they must themselves become slaves. Two of those Moravian Brethren became slaves. They bent their back to the lash that they might toil by day, in order to have the opportunity by night of preaching the Gospel to their poor black companions in captivity.  
You will remember, too, that when there was found somewhere in Africa a place where there were lepers confined, persons whose limbs had rotted away with foul disease, two Moravians were found to go in there. And though they knew they could not come out alive and that they must soon be the subjects of leprosy themselves and die by slow degree—they were ready enough and willing enough to do it all. The love of the Moravians, Brethren, seemed to me to be one of the chief examples of what the love of every Christian should be. There should never be any choice nor stopping.  
Does Jesus want me here? Can He make better use of me dead than alive? Let me die. Will He be more honored in my poverty than in my wealth? Let me be poor. Will He be more glorified by my toil than by my rest, or by my sickness than by my health? Then be it so. As He surrendered all to the Father, so will I surrender all to Him. As the Father gave all into His hands, so will I give all into His hands to be His forever and ever. Love to Jesus will make all service for Him to be joyous. Again—love to Christ will make obedience sweet. “Love makes our willing feet in swift obedience move.” What things we will do for those we love that we would not do for anybody else! So for Christ we will do many things, because we love Him, without consulting our feelings, or considering whether any benefit is to accrue, or whether, as some say, it will be of any use. Be it absolutely a command, or more gently, a counsel—“whatever He says unto you, do it.”

Sometimes when I think of many good Brothers and Sisters here that know it to be their duty to be baptized in His name, and come to His Table and celebrate His ordinance in remembrance of Him—and they don’t do it, though Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep my Commandments”—I don’t know what to say for them. I must let them speak for themselves. I sometimes think, surely if they loved their Master better, they would count obedience a pleasure. I think they would say, “I made haste and delayed not to keep Your Commandments,” and they would be ready at once to run in the Lord’s way, without making exceptions to any of His Commandments.  
Still more, my Brethren, love for Christ will make communion very sweet. How pleasant it is to talk to those in love. Give us a good friend and you have given us a very great blessing. A rainy day in doors with a good companion is very happy. But the best landscape on a sunny day in the society of those for whom we have no affection is but a poor thing. Let me be with Christ in the meanest place, rather than with the sinner in his high places. Luther used to say “I would rather fall with Christ than stand with Caesar.” And might you not say you would rather be with Christ in poverty than with anybody else in all the glory and grandeur of this world?  
Once love Christ and you will never be content to be far away from Him. You will say with the spouse, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet unto my taste.” Friend, how long is it since you had fellowship with Christ? Ask the question round, Brethren. Each man and each woman answer it. You are a Believer. Your faith is in Christ. How long is it since you have seen your Master? How long since you have talked with Him? How long since He has spoken to you? Pass that question round again, I say, and let every man answer it. I am afraid there are some Christians who have not communion with Christ by the months together. No, I fear by years together. Oh, what Christians must you be! Where is that wife’s love who never wishes for a husband’s smile all through the year? Were there much affection between two friends who could live in the same house and not speak? Oh, Brothers and Sisters let us examine ourselves and begin to doubt if we can be happy without fellowship with Christ!  
Christ is so precious to a Believer, that the Believer and Christ should be like two turtle doves, that cannot fly unless they are in each other’s company. Of the turtle dove it is said that when its mate is gone you can nearer make the turtle consort with another, brings all the doves you will. It is a lonely dove and will not be consoled. There it sits and pines and coos itself to death, mourning for its mate The only way to kill a Christian would be to take Christ from him. You might bring him other things and yet never find another name, never another to whom his heart would be knit. No, if you took up all the saints that have been buried, you could never find one that the Believer could consort with as he has consorted with Christ and held fellowship with Him. Let us all be like the dove, then, and cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.  
I think there is no need to say any more on this point, or add another syllable, except it be just this one—love to Christ will make trust easy. I say love to Christ will make trust easy. You have heard that often-told story of the wife on board ship who saw her husband cool and calm when the wind was blowing hurricanes and the masts were creaking. She asked how it was and the husband, reaching a sword, ran upon her, put it to her very breast and the wife didn’t start for a minute. “Wife,” said he, “how is it you are not afraid?—this sword is sharp.” “Oh,” says she, “but it is in my husband’s hand.” “Well,” said he, “and though that wind is terrible, it is in my Father’s hands.”  
Love can trust under any circumstances. It is wonderful how some men have bean betrayed into trust. You could not excuse them at first. They have put their hand and become security for another, because they really loved the person so much that they could not think it possible he could deceive them. And we must not be too severe, because we don’t know the circumstances between the two in these cases. We love because we cannot help it. We trust where we love. How the child trusts the mother. The mother has lost her way. She is on a bleak hill. The snow is falling and she cannot find the track. The path is covered and there may be a wolf in the distance and the mother may hear it, but the infant does not start. It sleeps on her breast and if it wakes it toys with the mother’s cheek and while she is full of alarm, it knows no fear because it loves.  
And see how the child will spring into your arms, though he is on some height—and if he should fall he would hurt himself. “I will catch you child,” and it is done. He springs. And so, where there is love there will be trust. Do you find it hard to believe Christ? Love Him better and it will be easy. Do you find it hard to think that all things will work together for your good? Love Him and you will be sure of it. You will be quite sure of it. “It cannot be,” says you, “that my sweet Lord Jesus will ever do me an ill turn. I love Him so well and He loves me so well. Let Him smite me and I will kiss His hand. I am sure that He means it in love. It is but a love pat upon a child. Even when He frowns at me I will still believe that He has a smiling face, only He conceals it to make better known the purpose of His Grace. Yes, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. I will say, He did it, I will trust in Him.  
Thus, Brethren, I think I have given you ample reasons for loving Christ. As for those of you who have never trusted Him, I cannot say to you, love Him. Trust Him first and you shall love Him afterwards. Give your soul up into His hands. I charge you by the living God, have done with your selfrighteousness and flee to Christ who has bled on the Cross and when you have been washed in His blood and robed in His righteousness, then shall you love Him. O Jesus, O Jesus, come forth and will men’s hearts tonight! You heavenly Lover, our sweet Master, come we beseech You! When I tell Your story, men will not love You. No, should I tell it with tears in my eyes they would not believe me.  
Come, tell it Yourself to them. On their way home break their hearts in love to you. May they tonight fulfill the verse we have often sung in Your honor—  
*“Dissolved by Your goodness, I fall to the ground  
And weep to the praise of the mercy I’ve found.”*Jesus! Bring the wanderers home. Reclaim Your lost sheep! May there be joy on earth and joy in Heaven, over sinners whom You have found, sinners whom You did come to seek and to save. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your house.” The Lord add His blessing for Jesus’ sake.

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A CURE FOR A WEAK HEART  
NO. 2455

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MARCH 8, 1896. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 4, 1886.

**“Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the LORD.”  
Psalm 31:24.**

THERE is no preaching like that which grows out of our own experience. You perceive, dear Friends, that David had trusted in the Lord. In very sore and singular trouble God had delivered him and, at the close of that deliverance, he wrote this Psalm, to be sung by the faithful of all times and every clime, and then he gave this exhortation which grew out of his own experience. O my Brothers, we shall never speak to the heart of our hearers unless what we say has been first engraved on our own hearts! The best notes of a sermon are those that are written on our own inner consciousness. If we speak of the things which we have tasted, and handled, and made our own, we speak with a certainty and with an authority which God is pleased to use for the comfort of His people. Think, then, that you can hear David, who has long since fallen asleep, speaking out of his royal tomb and saying, as the result of his own happy experience, “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the Lord.”

I. In considering this text, I would first of all bid you notice AN APPROVED COMPANY to whom the Psalmist is speaking—“all you that hope in the Lord.”

We must not regard all parts of the Bible as addressed alike to every individual. It has many messages to all the sons of Adam, but there are certain portions of it which are enclosed and belong only to that seed according to promise which is distinguished by faith, whereby it is known to be in Covenant with God. Holy Scripture discriminates—it makes some general promises, but its choicer words are given to persons of a special character. Judge for yourselves how far you come under the description of the text, “all you that hope in the Lord.”

You perceive, first, that they are men of hope. They have not yet all they expect to have—they have not yet entered into possession of their full inheritance. They have a hope which is looking out for something better than before. They have a living hope which peers into the future beyond even the dark river of death, a hope with eyes so bright that it sees things invisible to others, and gazes upon glories which the unaided human eye has never beheld! Have you this good hope? Do all your measures lie about you or behind you? If so, the text speaks not to you— this arrow flies beyond you. If you are, indeed, a child of God, your hope lies where as yet your eyes do not see, nor your hands grasp. God’s people are a hoping people and, therefore, hoping for the fulfillment of the promises God has made to them.

Next, they hope for good things. This is implied when the Psalmist speaks of those that hope in the Lord, for no man hopes for evil things whose hope is in the Lord! We are not led, by hoping in the Lord, to hope even for temporal things beyond a certain limit. We hope not for riches! We hope not for a long continuance here, for we have heard a voice saying unto us, “This is not your rest, for it is polluted.” Our hope could not, even if it would, content itself with the things which are seen and temporal—we are hoping for a city whose Builder and Maker is God! We are hoping for joys which eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man. We are hoping for things so good that they can only come from God, Himself! Our hope about them, therefore, is entirely in Him. Are you a man with this good hope? Are you a man with a hope that you would not exchange for ten thousand worlds? Perhaps, out of your box, like Pandora’s, everything that seemed solid has gone—but at the bottom there lies a hope which does not fly away. This is the bird which sits and sings both day and night within your soul, even though you are shut up from going into the common haunts of men. You have a hope, a good hope, a hope of good things to come in the hereafter, in the islands of the blessed, where you shall be forever at home with your God!

If you are the persons spoken of in the text, this hope of yours is rooted, grounded and established in the Lord—“all you that hope in the Lord.” You have not a hope apart from the ever-blessed Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To the Father you look with the expectation of a child who is an heir. To the Son of God you look, waiting for that wedding feast which shall be kept with Him to whom you are affianced by a betrothal that never can be contravened. To the Holy Spirit you look, for He is with you even now as the earnest of your inheritance, and you expect your inheritance to be of the same nature as the earnest which you already enjoy— and that you will be filled with His light, love, purity and blessedness. For this you are looking, “My Soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Can you say that? We are men of great expectations, but our expectations are not in men that die, or men that live—our expectations are in Him who never dies, never fails and never disappoints those who put their trust in Him. Say, dear Hearer—I cannot come round and put the question to all of you individually—but say, Do you belong to this approved company of men that hope in the Lord?

I may further say that some of them do not get much beyond hope. I would not condemn them because of this—I must not judge those whom God has not condemned. I like to hear a child of God speak of the full assurance of faith, for full assurance is the proper tone of an educated faith. He that believes ought to be assured of the thing which he believes—otherwise, why does he believe it? And it is good when the milk of faith has stood so long that you can see the cream of full assurance floating upon the surface of it. Yet I know that if you do not have full assurance and if the most you say is, “I hope,” you are included in the blessed company to whom the Psalmist speaks—“all you that hope in the Lord.” O Little-Faith, Miss Much-Afraid, Mr. Feeble-Mind and Mr. Fearing—all of you who belong to that very numerous family, all of you who are like Pharaoh’s lean cattle—God loves you! These feeble ones are carried in the Savior’s bosom, or gently led by His loving hand. Do not exclude yourself, I pray you, from any sweetness which lies in the text, “all you that hope in the Lord.” Indeed, my text seems to me to have an arm like that of the Good Shepherd. “He shall gather the lambs with His arm,” as if He would put His arm around them to draw them close up to His heart.

“All you that hope in the Lord”—you who are so little, you who are so useless, you who are so trembling, you who are not what you want to be, you who can see your own imperfections rather than anything else, you who groan rather than sing because you cannot as yet overcome your besetting sins—do you hope in the Lord? My text speaks to all that hope in the Lord and I should like so to preach from it that if I should omit any of you who are strong, I should, at any rate, apply the text to those who are very weak and trembling! “All you that hope in the Lord.” This passage picks up the undermost. It seems to come like the men with the ambulance, to look after the wounded and carry them on at the same pace as those who march in the fullness of their strength!

This, then, is the approved company—“all you that hope in the Lord.” Not, “you that hope in yourselves.” Not, “you that hope in your priests.” Not, “you that have any confidences anywhere else”—but you who hope in God alone!

II. Well now, secondly, my text seems to intimate that there is AN OCCASIONAL WEAKNESS—I might say, A FREQUENT WEAKNESS which is apparent in many of those that hope in the Lord.

It is a dangerous weakness, for it is a weakness of the heart. The text says, “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.” Wherein it is implied that sometimes the heart of them that hope in the Lord grows weak. As you well know, heart disease is a very dangerous disease—even if a very little is wrong with the heart, it is a serious matter— for every other part of the body will be affected. Some of God’s own people are occasionally and, many of them very often, subject to a weakness of the heart. They lose their courage, their joy departs from them and they become timorous and fearful.

This weakness occurs on many occasions. Sometimes we have seen those who hope in the Lord very weak in heart under great suffering. Pain follows pain—it seems as if every cut of the knife went deeper than the last and that the knife was sharper every time. Oh, let me tell you who are in vigorous health, have no bodily pain and do not always sympathize as you might with those who are the subjects of acute suffering— it is not as easy as you think to bear such pain as some of us have to endure! Let a man have an intolerable headache by the week, together, or it may be a sharp attack of rheumatism. Let sciatica come upon him or some of those terrible nerve pains that touch us to the very quick and you will see whether he who boasted of his strength finds that he has any strength to spare! At such times the spirits sink and the heart’s action grows feebler and feebler.

So is it, also, in the battle of life. A man is struggling hard to gain a livelihood. Perhaps he has not any means of earning even bread for his wife and children. It is very trying for a man when the cupboard is bare and the children’s clothes scarcely cover them from the cold. In such circumstances his heart sometimes fails him and then it is that God bids him be of good courage and strengthens his heart.

This weakness of heart is particularly felt in times of temptation. I have known Christian men who have had to work among ungodly companions and their spirits have been vexed every day with the filthy conversation of the wicked—and their taunts, and jeers, and blasphemies! And in such cases the heart has oftentimes grown very heavy, sick and faint. Those of us who love the old-fashioned Gospel cannot look abroad, today, and see so many pulpits turned against our God and many socalled “thinkers” deserting the old faith, without feeling that this is a burden which presses upon us very sorely. And our heart grows heavy and, perhaps, becomes weak.

I have also seen some Christians troubled with this complaint in the midst of great labor for the Lord. They are doing all they can do and yet they do not see the success they expected. They are not weary of the work, but they are weary in it. They see very clearly the imperfections in their service and they are further troubled because some who should help them, do not. They meet with cold hearts where they reckoned on enthusiasm! Instead of generosity, it may be that there is stinginess and, instead of prayerfulness burning like coals of juniper, there is lukewarmness or spiritual death. At such times the man of God puts his hand on his bosom and he says, “My heart, my heart fails me.” Then the message of the text comes in, “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the Lord.” Most men are subject to fainting fits at times. Even David became weak and faint. And Samson, after he had cried exultingly, “With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass, have I slain a thousand men,” yet, for lack of a drink of water, was ready to lie down and faint and die! The best of men are but men at the best and, therefore, who wonders if their heart sometimes fails them in the day of suffering, in the hour of battle, or under the broiling sun when they are laboring for their Lord?

If this weakness of the heart should continue, it will be very injurious. At the present time, I believe that it restricts enterprise. That young man would go as a missionary to China, but his heart fails him. There is another who would be found in the Congo, seeking to preach Christ, but he has not the needed courage. There is a Sister who would be taking a Bible class, or visiting in the district where she lives, but she cannot summon the resolution to begin. Oh, how many good resolves and holy projects never come to anything! We see the bud and blossom, but they do not knit into fruit as they ought to! I hardly dare to think of the vast quantity of talent in the Redeemer’s Kingdom that lies unused, often for lack of moral courage and confidence in God! I do not think that we are at all lacking in confidence in ourselves—at any rate, some of us are not—but it is confidence in God which is needed—and that is quite another thing. This confidence makes the feeble strong and the timid brave—may we all have a large share of it! God deliver us from faintness of heart lest we injure the Kingdom of our Lord by withholding our service!

And, dear Friends, this weakness of heart endangers the success of the best worker. He who fights most valiantly may be on the verge of victory and yet be defeated if his heart should then fail him. I have no doubt, in reading the records of many campaigns, you, too, must have noticed that men have gone on from victory to victory and suddenly there has been a pause because their hearts failed them just when, had they followed up their previous successes, they would have swept all before them! Beware, you who have served God with courage, lest fear should take hold upon you and you should flinch in the day of battle and miss that which you might have won for your Lord!

This feeble heart pleads many excuses. I do not marvel that it does— how can I, when I know myself? O Brothers, Sisters, if you look within, well may your hearts fail you! And if you look without, upon the temptations that waylay you, upon the powers of darkness so strongly entrenched within their fortresses, well may you faint! What a task we undertake in trying to win a single soul, much more in seeking to win a city or the world for Christ! Well may our hearts fail if we begin to look away from God. The fable is told of Hercules, that he fought with a famous giant whom he could not, for a while, overcome because he was born of the earth and every time he was hurled to his mother, earth, he rose renewed in strength. Hercules tugged and strove with his gigantic foe and felt that the struggle was hopeless, till he discovered his adversary’s secret—then he took him in his arms and hugged the monster to death!

You and I are invincible though a thousand stronger than Hercules should be against us—as long as we can fall back on our God! And the only hope of the enemy’s victory is if he can keep us away from God. But even if he should throw us down and seem to break us in pieces, yet in that fall we fall upon our God and rest on Him, alone. We may lie prone upon the earth and cry, “Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.” Come into contact with your God, fall upon Divine power and you will rise with new force and new strength! But, if you should once be separated from Him, then it would be all over with you. Yet, blessed be His name, nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

III. Now, thirdly, I call your most earnest heed to the trumpet voice of the exhortation in the text, A SEASONABLE EXHORTATION—“Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.”

I like the way this is put. It is not alone, “Be of good courage.” There is an, “and” with it—“and He shall strengthen your heart.” At the same time, the exhortation is not omitted. It does not say, “He shall comfort your heart, therefore you need do nothing.” They err from the Scriptures who make the Grace of God a reason for doing nothing—it is the reason for doing everything! They who say that predestination and the working of a living God put man out of the field, make a gross mistake—it is these facts that bring man into the field. The most stern predestination is not the least in conflict with the most perfect freedom of the human will. I may not be able to explain how it is so to you, but I know that it is so as a matter of fact—and that God requires us to be of good courage at the same moment that He says that He will strengthen our heart.

Dear Friends, if you want to get out of diffidence, timidity and despondency, you must wake yourselves up. This is incumbent upon you, for the text puts it so—“Be of good courage.” Do not sit still, rub your eyes and say, “I cannot help it, I must always be dull like this.” You must not be so! In the name of God, you are commanded in the text to “be of good courage.” If you are indolent like that, you must not expect the Grace of God to operate upon you as though you were a block of wood and could be made into something against your will. Oh, no! You must determine to be of good courage. Therefore, arise, and shake yourself from the dust. Believe, dear Friend! Put your trust in God. “Give to the winds your fears.” Take down your harp from the willows. “I cannot play it,” you say. Get it down, all the same—even if you cannot play it, lay your fingers upon the strings—it is wonderful how, when once those accustomed fingers touch the well-beloved strings, it seems as if they were charmed into music. Do what you can and God will do for you what you can by no means do for yourself!

I know that a great many who are very sad and low in spirit come in here on a Thursday night—and their friends say to them, “We wish that we could cheer you up.” I do not say that, but I do say this, “Be of good courage. Be of good courage!” It is the Lord’s command to you. Do you not think that your God deserves to be trusted? What has He ever done that you should doubt Him? Does He not deserve your most confident faith? And what do you expect to get out of your timidity? He that is afraid of the weather—can he change it? He says that there will be a long frost—can he shorten it a single day by fretting over it? There is great depression in business and he will be ruined—will he be less likely to be ruined by worrying? Don’t you see, then, that your God deserves your trust and that common wisdom bids you be of good courage?

If you are not of good courage, what will happen to you? I will not say that you will be a coward, but I will say that you will look very much like one. I have heard of one who said that he was of a very retiring disposition—he could not take a Sunday school class, or speak a word to anybody for the Master, he was so retiring! I have also heard of a soldier who, in the day of battle, was so very retiring that they shot him as a deserter! I would not have you deserve the coward’s doom and speak of it as, “retiring.” No, get not into that class—be you rather like that soldier of Alexander who was always to the front—and the reason was that he bore about with him what was thought to be an incurable disease and he suffered so much pain that he did not care whether he lived or died! Alexander took great pains to have him healed and when he was quite well, he never exposed his precious life to any risk, again! Oh, I would rather that you should be stung into courage by excessive pain than that you should be healed into cowardice! Christ ought not to be served by feather-bed soldiers! He deserves that we trust Him and bring ourselves into His service with a courage that cannot be daunted. Though it is upon the pikes of His adversaries, let us find Paradise there, for we shall find it if we follow Christ faithfully to the death! God grant us, then, to be of good courage!

Why are you afraid? Is God with you and yet are you afraid? What ails you? Has God forsaken you? Has He forgotten to be gracious? Has Omnipotence grown weak? Has He been a wilderness to you? Has the manna ceased to fall, or the waters to flow? Go, yield yourself up to Him! Ask Him, by His Grace, to make you heroic instead of being numbered among the fearful and the unbelieving who turn their backs in the day of battle and seek their own selfish ease and comfort.

IV. I finish up with A CHEERING PROMISE—“He shall strengthen your heart.”  
God, alone, can strengthen the heart. I suppose that physicians can do something for weak hearts, though I do not know. As a general rule, when a man dies suddenly and they do not know what it is that killed him, they say, “It is disease of the heart.” The heart is a mysterious portion of our being and needs great care. Spiritually, the mercy is that God, who made the heart, understands the heart and He who sees its weakness, knows how to strengthen it!  
How does God strengthen men’s hearts? Well, sometimes, by gracious Providences. Something very unexpected happens. I have, myself, learned to expect the unexpected. I have known what it is to almost wish on purpose to get into a situation in which there was no way of escape, that I might see the Lord cleave the hills asunder, or divide even the sea to make a way for His people! It is a grand thing to get into such deep water that you cannot touch the bottom and must swim—and then to feel the eternal buoyancy of God’s Providence bearing you up! It is grand swimming when there are ten thousand fathoms of ocean below you—there is no fear of knocking your foot against a rock, then, and when you get right out into a simple dependence upon the living God and feel the waves of His eternal influences round about you—then will you be happy and blessed!  
The Lord also has a way of strengthening men’s hearts by the kindly fellowship of friends. Paul was often much refreshed by Christian associates. The Lord can send someone who, “as iron sharpens iron,” may sharpen you and make you ready for service. “A word fitly spoken”—“a word upon wheels,” as the Hebrew has it—how good it is when it comes in just at the right time! It “is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.” Such are goodly words brought to us by men of faith and experience whom God sends to us.  
So, too, have I known a man’s heart to be mightily strengthened by a precious promise. Who knows the wonderful power of a text of Scripture? We used to have, 30 years ago—I do not know whether you have them now—“poor men’s plasters” which we used when we felt weak in the back—but a promise out of the Scripture is a poor man’s plaster, indeed! What strength it gives to the loins! How we seem to be braced up when we truly lay hold of a promise of God and it really gets a grip upon our spirit!  
Beside all that, God the Holy Spirit has a secret way of strengthening the courage of God’s people which none of us can explain. Have you ever felt it? You may have gone to your bed, sick at heart, “weary, and worn, and sad,” and you wake in the morning ready for anything! Perhaps in the middle of the night you awake and the visitations of God are manifested to you—and you feel as happy as if everything went the way you would like it to go. No, you shall be more happy that everything should cross you than that everything should please you if it is God’s sweet will! You feel a sudden strengthening of your spirit, so that you are perfectly resigned, satisfied, prepared and ready. I have known a man of God in a tight spot. Everything has seemed to be going wrong and he has got worried and troubled till he has stepped aside and retired for a little prayer to his God. He has not been absent five minutes yet he has come back feeling, “Now I am ready for you.” All the flurry has gone, all the worry has gone—God has revived his spirit and strengthened his heart!  
I have seen a good woman when her husband has just died and all her hope has seemed withered. The first burst of grief has passed and she has bowed by the side of that bed, lifted up her heart to God and then has brushed her tears away and given herself up to fight the battle of life for her children—and God has strengthened her heart as in a moment! Oh, do not give up! You need not be cowards! Do not give up. Do not say, “I am beaten. I will always be despondent. My life is crushed.” You need not be so! “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.” Get to your chambers, fall upon your knees, pour out your heart before God! Tell your trouble to the Most High and, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, He must and will help those who put their trust in Him! Has he ever failed any who trusted in Him? Who has ever stopped His hand, or withdrawn Him from His designs? Who has ever made Him deny His promise, or retract His word? If you will trust Him, He will be better to you than your fears! No, better to you than your

 beliefs, or your largest hopes! Stay yourselves upon Him! Lean upon the bosom of eternal Love! Lean hard, lean all your weight there and leave that weight there, and the Lord be with you and bless you! Blessed are all they that trust in the Lord.  
How I wish that all here had trusted in the Lord, or that they would seek Him, even now, if they have never yet found Him! The Lord be gracious to each of you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 31.**

Verse 1. In You, O LORD, do I put my trust. Can we say as much as that? However else this Psalm of David may end, it strikes a grand keynote, that which should be the first indication of our spiritual life— confidence in God. Here is an ancient weather-beaten saint who, in the very midst of the storm, can say, “In You, O Jehovah, do I put my trust.” There will the anchor of his soul find a sure hold!

1. Let me never be ashamed. “How can You let me be put to shame after having trusted in You, O my God? I shall be ashamed if You forsake me, if Your promises are not kept to me, O my Lord! Therefore, ‘let me never be ashamed.’”

1. Deliver me in Your righteousness. David dares to appeal even to the faithfulness, truth and justice of Jehovah, that He should keep the promise upon which His servant had placed his trust.

2. Bow down Your ear to me. “I am very weak, I am also very unworthy—it will be a great instance of Your Divine condescension if You hear me—yet I cry unto You, ‘Bow down Your ear to me.’”

2. Deliver me speedily. We may not set the time for God to answer our petitions, yet may we expect that His sure mercies will be swift mercies when our necessities are very urgent. So the Psalmist pleads, “Lord, come not late to me, lest You come too late to me, for I am in sore distress! My case is urgent, therefore help me now, ‘deliver me speedily.’”

2. Be You my strong rock, an house of defense to save me. He remembered Adullam and Engedi and he worked these places into his supplication. A man’s prayer should be the index of his life’s history. The scenes to which he has been most accustomed should rise up vividly before his spirit when he is at the Throne of Grace. It was so with David—“My God, be You an immutable, immovable, impregnable rock to me and let me dwell in You. Be not merely a refuge for the moment, but be ‘a house of defense to save me.’”

3. For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore for Your name’s sake lead me, and guide me. David is of a logical turn of mind. Notice the, “therefore,” in this verse. What an amazing, “for,” there is here! “Be You my strong rock,” “for You are my rock.” What God is already, we may ask Him to be! What we believe Him to be by faith, we may ask Him to be in our experience. Observe that David’s appeal is not in any degree to his own merit, but. “for Your name’s sake”—“because I trust in Your name, and if You do not do as You have said, Your great name will suffer dishonor. How can I believe in Your veracity if You do not do for me according to Your promise and Covenant? ‘Therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me.’ ‘Guide me,’ too, even when I do not think of Your Presence. Lead me like a child and guide me like a traveler.” There are shades of meaning, here, so that there is no redundancy of expression in the words, “Lead me, and guide me.” But even if the two words meant the same, it would be quite lawful for the Psalmist to repeat the prayer, since he felt his need of leading and guiding to be so great. “Lord, I am so foolish, and the way is so difficult, ‘therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me, and guide me.’”

4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for You are my strength. “Lord, my enemies have entangled me! Before I was aware of it, I was taken in the meshes of their net—will You not pull me out, O Lord? It will need a strong pull, but then, ‘You are my strength.’ ‘Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for You are my strength.’” Sometimes our strength is crippled and we are baffled by the net in which we are enclosed. We feel ourselves hampered. We cannot use the strength we have, but God’s strength is always available. There seems to me to be a very blessed turn in the expression here used—“Pull me out of the net: for You are my strength.”

5. Into Your hands I commit my spirit. You notice that this Psalm [31] is dedicated to the chief musician. I have studied these Psalms, not only by the hour, and by the day, but sometimes by the month, together. Some of these Psalms have been the pillow for my head at night. Others of them, like wafers made of honey, have lain in my mouth till I have sucked out of them their Divine sweetness. I have often noticed that when one of these sacred songs is dedicated to the chief musician, The Chief Musician generally appears somewhere in the Psalm—He from whom comes all the music that ever makes bleeding hearts, glad, usually shows some traces of Himself within the Psalm itself! In this instance, the living words of David were the dying words of David’s Lord—“Into Your hands I commend My spirit.” What David did and what the Lord Jesus Christ did, let us do, and do it every day—let us commit our spirit into the hands of our God.

5, 6. You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth, I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD. Men are sure to have some kind of trust or other on which they rely. In David’s day some trusted to false gods, others relied upon their own strength. The Psalmist does not speak in soft tones concerning these people, but he says, “I could not bear them. ‘I have hated them that regard lying vanities.’ I would not come into their secret, or have any connection with them. I was astonished at them, that they should turn away from God! But as for myself, ‘I trust in Jehovah.’” Look how he comes back to the note with which he started—“In You, O Jehovah, do I put my trust”—and now he repeats it, “I trust in Jehovah.” It is an unfashionable thing—many will not do it—yet David says, “I trust in Jehovah,” as if he dared to stand alone and did not mind how singular he seemed to be.

7. I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy. What a grand faith! Should there not, sometimes, be the sounding of the cymbals even in the midst of our supplications? Though we must often put on sackcloth, yet we must lift up our song of praise whenever we can—“‘I will be glad and rejoice’—there shall be a reduplication of my delight—‘I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy.’”

7. For You have considered my trouble. “You did not send it without due consideration. You weighed it and now You look upon me and You study my trouble, You know all about it.” You know what is meant by human consideration, but how wonderful must Divine consideration be! When a single glance suffices for Jehovah to know all that is transpiring in the whole universe, what must His consideration be! “You have considered my trouble.”

7. You have known my soul in adversities. “When others did not know me, You did. You were familiar with me and sympathetic towards me, especially in the day of adversity. ‘You have known my soul.’” God knows His own children even when they are in rags and when their faces are stained with tears, and their spirits are depressed almost to despair— “You have known my soul in adversities.”

8. And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy. “No. I may get into the enemy’s prison, but there is no bar to it. ‘You have not shut me up.’ I may seem to get into my enemy’s hand, but he cannot shut that hand.” Truly, it must be so because David had already put his soul into the hands of God—“Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” How, then, could he be shut up in the hands of the enemy?

8. You have set my feet in a large room—  
*“Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.”*

Wherever the child of God is when his faith is in active exercise, his feet are in a large room—by faith he walks at liberty!

9. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble. In this short sentence of four words—“I am in trouble”—David gives the text of which the next few verses are a kind of sermon with divisions and subdivisions.

9. My eyes are consumed with grief. “My eyes seem burnt up with scalding tears.” The salt of our tears wears out the very strength of our life. “My eyes are consumed with grief.”—

9. Yes, my soul and my belly. Or, “body.” The inward part of my being seems washed away with the deluge of my tears.”  
10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. Better spend them in sighing than in sinning! Yet it is a sad case when we seem to measure our days by the bars of our grief.  
10. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones are consumed. Now he sees to the bottom of his sorrow—“My strength fails because of my iniquity.” We can bear those sorrows which have no connection with our sins, but, alas, where are they to be found? It may be that David’s great sin seemed to him to lie at the very root of all his grief.  
11. I was a reproach among all my enemies. They had found something to fling at him and they were delighted to throw it with all their malicious force! “I was a reproach among all my enemies”—  
11. But especially among my neighbors. Those that are nearest can stab the sharpest. Those who knew David the best endeavored to find some silly tale to use against him.  
11. And a fear to my acquaintance: they that did see me outside, fled from me. This Psalm may have been written after Absalom’s rebellion, when Shimei cursed the king, and when everybody seemed to be forsaking him. Then was David brought into a low estate, indeed.  
12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. This was the same David who slew the Philistine giant! This was the great deliverer of his country, yet the people had forgotten all that. Earthly popularity is the most fleeting thing under Heaven. The world is a hard and cruel master—it forgets its servants when they grow old—it has nothing good to say of them when there is nothing further to be got out of them. So David laments, “I am like a broken vessel”—a potsherd that can hold nothing and is flung away upon a dunghill.

13. For I have heard the slander of many. To have one slanderer attacking your character is bad enough, but to have many such cruel enemies about you—to have a whole brood of Hell’s hornets, as it were, stinging you—oh, what misery is this! You who, happily, have never experienced this torture, cannot imagine what agony it causes. I hope you may never know it.  
13, 14. Fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in You, O

LORD. Here he is back on the old Rock, and rejoicing as his feet stand once more on this firm foundation—“I trusted in you, O Jehovah.”

14, 16. I said, You are my God. My times are in Your hand. “My enemies cannot do anything against me without Your permission.” Divine Providence is a downy pillow for an aching head, a blessed salve for the sharpest pain. He who can feel that his times are in the hand of God need not tremble at anything that is in the hand of man!

15, 16. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant: save me for Your mercies’ sake. “If Your face shines upon me, Lord, they may look as black as they please. If You will but deliver me, I care not how cruelly they persecute me. If You will save me, who can destroy me?” O you who are in trouble at this time, hasten to your God! Where should the little bird fly when pursued by the hawk, but to its shelter in the rock? Where can you go, O sheep of Christ’s flock, but to your Shepherd?

17. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon You: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. There is something of the harshness of the old dispensation about that prayer, so we will turn it into a prophecy and say, “The wicked shall be ashamed—they shall be silent in the grave.”

18, 19. Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. Oh how great is Your goodness which You have laid up for them that fear You. Is not that a blessed expression to be used by the man who said that his life was spent with grief and his years with sighing?

19. Which You have worked for them that trust in You before the sons of men! Not only has the Lord abundant goodness stored up for His children, but His goodness is brought out for others to see and for His people to feed upon even in the presence of their enemies!

20. You shall hide them in the secret of Your Presence from the pride of man: You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. They shall not be wounded by all the malice of their adversaries—they shall be preserved in the King’s royal pavilion.

21-23. Blessed be the LORD for He has showed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes: nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You. O love the LORD, all you His saints. See what a fountain of happiness there is in the Psalmist’s heart? He longs for all the saints to love the Lord!

23, 24. For the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the LORD. In this Psalm we have heard the wail of the sackbut and the clashing of the cymbals—but we finish with the blast of the silver trumpets!

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THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

NO. 2644

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 15, 1899.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 25, 1882.

**“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit: and having said this, He gave up the ghost.” Luke 23:46.**

**“Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth.”  
Psalm 31:5.**

**“And they stoned Stephen, as he was calling upon God and asking, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”  
Acts 7:59.**

THIS morning, dear Friends, I spoke upon the first recorded words of  
our Lord Jesus [Sermon #1666, Volume 28—The First Recorded Words of Jesus— read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org ] when

He said to His mother and to Joseph, “How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Now, by the help of the blessed Spirit, we will consider the last words of our Lord Jesus before He gave up the ghost. And with them we will examine two other passages in which similar expressions are used.

The words, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit,” if we judge them to be the last which our Savior uttered before His death, ought to be coupled with those other words, “It is finished,” which some have thought were actually the last He used. I think it was not so, but, anyway, these utterances must have followed each other very quickly and we may blend them together. And then we shall see how very similar they are to His first words as we explained them this morning. There is the cry, “It is finished,” which you may read in connection with our Authorized Version—“Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” That business was all finished—He had been about it all His life and now that He had come to the end of His days, there was nothing left undone—and He could say to His Father, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.”

Then if you take the other utterance of our Lord on the Cross, “Father, into your hands I commend My spirit,” see how well it agrees with the other reading of our morning text, “Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?” Jesus is putting Himself into the Father’s hands because He had always desired to be there, in the Father’s house with the Father. And now He is committing His spirit, as a sacred trust, into the Father’s hands that He may depart to be with the Father, to abide in His house, and go no more out forever.

Christ’s life is all of a piece, just as the alpha and the omega are letters of the same alphabet. You do not find Him one thing at the first, another thing afterwards, and a third thing still later—He is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” There is a wondrous similarity about everything that Christ said and did. You never need write the name, “Jesus,” under any of His sayings as you have to put the names of human writers under their sayings, for there is no mistaking any sentence that He has uttered!

If there is anything recorded as having been done by Christ, a believing child can judge whether it is authentic or not. Those miserable false gospels that were brought out did very little, if any mischief, because nobody with any true spiritual discernment was ever duped into believing them to be genuine! It is possible to manufacture a spurious coin which will, for a time, pass for a good one, but it is not possible to make even a passable imitation of what Jesus Christ has said and done! Everything about Christ is like Himself—there is a Christ-likeness about it which cannot be mistaken! This morning, for instance, when I preached about the Holy Child Jesus, I am sure you must have felt that there was never another child as He was. And in His death He was as unique as in His birth, childhood and life. There was never another who died as He did and there was never another who lived altogether as He did. Our Lord Jesus Christ stands by Himself! Some of us try to imitate Him, but how feebly do we follow in His steps! The Christ of God still stands by Himself and He has no rival!

I have already intimated to you that I am going to have three texts for my sermon, but when I have spoken upon all three of them, you will see that they are so much alike that I might have been content with one of them.

I. I invite you first to consider OUR SAVIOR’S WORDS JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH. “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.”  
Here observe, first, how Christ lives and passes away in the atmosphere of the Word of God. Christ was a grand original thinker and He might always have given us words of His own. He never lacked suitable language, for, “never man spoke like this Man.” Yet you must have noticed how continually He quoted Scripture—the great majority of His expressions may be traced to the Old Testament. Even where they are not exact quotations, His words drop into Scriptural shape and form! You can see that the Bible has been His one Book. He is evidently familiar with it from the first page to the last and not with its letter, only, but with the innermost soul of its most secret sense and, therefore, when dying, it seemed but natural for Him to use a passage from a Psalm of David as His expiring words. In His death, He was not driven beyond the power of quiet thought—He was not unconscious, He did not die of weakness—He was strong even while He was dying! It is true that He said, “I thirst,” but, after He had been a little refreshed, He cried with a loud voice, as only a strong man could, “It is finished!” And now, before He bows His head in the silence of death, He utters His final words, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” Our Lord might, I say again, have made an original speech as His dying declaration. His mind was clear, calm, and undisturbed—in fact, He was perfectly happy, for He had said, “It is finished!” So His sufferings were over and He was already beginning to enjoy a taste of the sweets of victory. Yet, with all that clearness of mind, freshness of intellect and fluency of words that might have been possible to Him, He did not invent a new sentence, but He went to the Book of Psalms and took from the Holy Spirit this expression,” Into Your hands I commend My spirit.”  
How instructive to us is this great Truth of God that the Incarnate Word lived on the Inspired Word! It was food to Him, as it is to us and, Brothers and Sisters, if Christ thus lived upon the Word of God, should not you and I do the same? He, in some respects, did not need this Book as much as we do. The Spirit of God rested upon Him without measure, yet He loved the Scripture and He went to it, studied it and used its expressions continually. Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lord—not crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts! It is idle to merely let the eyes glance over the Words, or to remember the poetical expressions, or the historic facts—but it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models—and, what is still better, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord!

I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself. He had studied our Authorized Version, which will never be bettered, as I judge, till Christ shall come. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture and though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his Pilgrim’s Progress—that sweetest of all prose poems—without continually making us feel and say, “Why, this man is a living Bible!” Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline—the very essence of the Bible flows from him! He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend His example to you, Beloved and, still more, the example of our Lord Jesus! If the Spirit of God is in you, He will make you love the Word of God and, if any of you imagine that the Spirit of God will lead you to dispense with the Bible, you are under the influence of another spirit which is not the Spirit of God at all! I trust that the Holy Spirit will endear to you every page of this Divine Record so that you will feed upon it and, afterwards, speak it out to others. I think it is well worthy of your constant remembrance that, even in death, our blessed Master showed the ruling passion of His spirit so that His last words were a quotation from Scripture.  
Now notice, secondly, that our Lord, in the moment of His death, recognized a personal God. “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” God is to some men an unknown God. “There may be a God,” so they say, but they get no nearer the truth than that. “All things are God,” says another. “We cannot be sure that there is a God,” say others, “and, therefore, it is no use our pretending to believe in Him and so to be, possibly, influenced by a supposition.” Some people say, “Oh, certainly, there is a God, but He is very far off! He does not come near to us and we cannot imagine that He will interfere in our affairs.” Ah, but our blessed Lord Jesus Christ believed in no such impersonal, pantheistic, dreamy, far-off God, but in One to whom He said, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” His language shows that He realized the Personality of God as much as I would recognize the personality of a banker if I said to him, “Sir, I commit that money into your hands.” I know that I should not say such a thing as that to a mere dummy, or to an abstract something or nothing—but I would say it to a living man and I would say it only to a living man.  
So, Beloved, men do not commit their souls into the keeping of impalpable nothings! They do not, in death, smile as they resign themselves to the infinite unknown, the cloudy “Father of everything,” who may be nothing or everything. No, no, we only trust what we know! And so Jesus knew the Father, and knew Him to be a real Person having hands—and into those hands He commended His departing spirit. I am not now speaking materially, mark you, as though God had hands like ours, but He is an actual Being, who has powers of action, who is able to deal with men as He pleases and who is willing to take possession of their spirits and to protect them forever and ever. Jesus speaks like one who believed that and I pray that, both in life and in death, you and I may always deal with God in the same way. We have far too much fiction in religion—and a religion of fiction will bring only fictitious comfort in the dying hour. Come to solid facts! Is God as real to you as you are to yourself? Come now, do you speak with Him, “as a man speaks unto his friend”? Can you trust Him and rely upon Him as you trust and rely upon the partner of your bosom? If your God is unreal, your religion is unreal! If your God is a dream, your hope will be a dream and woe be unto you when you shall wake up out of it!  
It was not so that Jesus trusted. “Father,” He said, “into Your hands I commend My spirit.”  
But, thirdly, here is a still better point. Observe how Jesus Christ here brings out the Fatherhood of God. The Psalm from which He quoted did not say, “Father.” David did not get as far as that in words, though in spirit he often did. But Jesus had the right to alter the Psalmist’s words. He can improve on Scripture, though you and I cannot. He did not say, “O God, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” He said, “Father.” Oh, that sweet word! That was the gem of our thought, this morning, that Jesus said, “Did you not know that I must be at My Father’s—that I must be in My Father’s house!” Oh, yes, the Holy Child knew that He was especially and, in a peculiar sense, the Son of the Highest, and therefore He said, “My Father.” And, in dying, His expiring heart was buoyed up and comforted with the thought that God was His Father. It was because He said that God was His Father that they put Him to death, yet He still stood to it even in His dying hour and said, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit”!  
What a blessed thing it is for us, also, my Brothers and Sisters, to die conscious that we are children of God! Oh, how sweet, in life and in death, to feel in our soul the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, “Abba, Father”! In such a case as that—  
*“It is not death to die.”*  
Quoting the Savior’s words, “It is finished,” and relying upon His Father and our Father, we may go even into the jaws of death without the “quivering lips” of which we sang just now. Joyful, with all the strength we have, our lips may confidently sing, challenging death and the grave to silence our ever-rising and swelling music! O my Father, my Father, if I am in your hands, I may die without fear!  
There is another thought, however, which is perhaps the best one of all. From this passage we learn that our Divine Lord cheerfully rendered up His soul to His Father when the time had come for Him to die. “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” None of us can, with strict propriety, use these words. When we come to die, we may perhaps utter them and God will accept them—these were the very death-words of Polycarp, Bernard, Luther, Melanchthon, Jerome of Prague, John Huss and an almost endless list of saints—“Into Your hands I commend my spirit.” The Old Testament rendering of the passage, or else our Lord’s version of it, has been turned into a Latin prayer and commonly used among Romanists almost as a charm—they have repeated the Latin words when dying, or, if they were unable to do so, the priest repeated the words for them, attaching a sort of magical power to that particular formula! But, in the sense in which our Savior uttered these words, we cannot, any of us, fully use them. We can commit or commend our spirit to God, but yet, Brothers and Sisters, remember that unless the Lord comes first, we must die—and dying is not an act on our part. We have to be passive in the process because it is no longer in our power to retain our life. I suppose that if a man could have such control of his life, it might be questionable when he would surrender it because suicide is a crime and no man can be required to kill himself. God does not demand such action as that at any man’s hands and, in a certain sense, that is what would happen whenever a man yielded himself to death.  
But there was no necessity for our blessed Lord and Master to die except the necessity which He had taken upon Himself in becoming the Substitute for His people! There was no necessity for His death even at the last moment upon the Cross, for, as I have reminded you, He cried with a loud voice when natural weakness would have compelled Him to whisper or to sigh. But His life was strong within Him—if He had willed to do so, He could have unloosed the nails and come down into the midst of the crowd that stood mocking Him! He died of His own free will, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” A man may righteously surrender his life for the good of his country and for the safety of others. There have frequently been opportunities for men to do this and there have been brave fellows who have worthily done it. But all those men would have had to die at some time or other. They were only slightly anticipating the payment of the debt of nature. But, in our Lord’s case, He was rendering up to the Father the sprit which He might have kept if He had chosen to do so. “No man takes it from Me,” He said concerning His life. “I lay it down of Myself.”  
And there is here a cheerful willingness to yield up His spirit into His Father’s hands! It is rather remarkable that none of the Evangelists describe our Lord as dying. He did die, but they all speak of Him as giving up the ghost—surrendering to God His spirit. You and I passively die, but He actively yielded up His spirit to His Father. In His case, death was an act and He performed that act from the glorious motive of redeeming us from death and Hell! So, in this sense, Christ stands alone in His death.  
But, oh, dear Brothers and Sisters, if we cannot render up our spirit as He did, yet, when our life is taken from us, let us be perfectly ready to give it up! May God bring us into such a state of mind and heart that there shall be no struggling to keep our life, but a sweet willingness to let it be just as God would have it—a yielding up of everything into His hands, feeling sure that, in the world of spirits, our soul shall be quite safe in the Father’s hands and that, until the Resurrection Day, the lifegerm of the body will be securely in His keeping, and certain that when the trumpet shall sound, spirit, soul and body—that trinity of our manhood—shall be reunited in the absolute perfection of our being to behold the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off! When God calls us to die, it will be a sweet way of dying if we can, like our Lord, pass away with a text of Scripture upon our lips, with a personal God ready to receive us, with that God recognized distinctly as our Father and so die joyously, resigning our will entirely to the sweet will of the ever-blessed One, and saying, “It is the Lord.” “My Father.” “Let Him do as seems good to Him.”

II. My second text is in the 31st Psalm, at the 5th verse. And it is evidently the passage which our Savior had in His mind just then “Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” It seems to me that THESE ARE WORDS TO BE USED IN LIFE, for this Psalm is not so much concerning the Believer’s death as concerning his life.  
Is it not very amazing, dear Friends, that the words which Jesus uttered on the Cross you may still continue to use? You may catch up their echo and not only when you come to die, but tonight, tomorrow morning and as long as you are alive, you may still repeat the text the Master quoted, and say, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.”  
That is to say, first, let us cheerfully entrust our souls to God and feel that they are quite safe in His hands. Our spirit is the noblest part of our being; our body is only the husk, our spirit is the living kernel, so let us put it into God’s keeping. Some of you have never yet done that, so I invite you to do it now. It is the act of faith which saves the soul, that act which a man performs when he says, “I trust myself to God as He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus. I cannot keep myself, but He can keep me and, by the precious blood of Christ He can cleanse me. So I just take my spirit and give it over into the great Father’s hands.” You never really live till you do that! All that comes before that act of full surrender is death! But when you have once trusted Christ, then you have truly begun to live. And every day, as long as you live, take care that you repeat this process and cheerfully leave yourselves in God’s hands without any reserve. That is to say, give yourself up to God—your body, to be healthy or to be sick, to be long-lived or to be suddenly cut off. Your soul and spirit, give them, also, up to God, to be made happy or to be made sad, just as He pleases. Give Your whole self up to Him and say to Him, “My Father, make me rich or make me poor, give me sight or make me blind. Let me have all my senses or take them away. Make me famous or leave me to be obscure. I give myself up to You—into Your hands I commit my spirit. I will no longer exercise my own choice, but You shall choose My inheritance for me. My times are in Your hands.”  
Now, dear children of God, are you always doing this? Have you ever done it? I am afraid that there are some, even among Christ’s professing followers, who kick against God’s will and even when they say to God, “Your will be done,” they spoil it by adding, in their own mind, “and my will, too.” They pray, “Lord, make my will Your will,” instead of saying, “Make Your will my will.” Let us each one pray this prayer every day, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” I like, at family prayer, to put myself and all that I have into God’s hands in the morning—and then, at night, to just look between His hands and see how safe I have been. And then to say to Him, “Lord, shut me up again tonight! Take care of me all through the night watches. ‘Into Your hands I commit my spirit.’”  
Notice, dear Friends, that our second text has these words at the end of it—“You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” Is not that a good reason for giving yourself up entirely to God? Christ has redeemed you and, therefore, you belong to Him. If I am a redeemed man and I ask God to take care of me, I am but asking the King to take care of one of His own jewels—a jewel that cost Him the blood of His heart!  
And I may still more especially expect that He will do so, because of the title which is here given to Him—“You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.” Would He be the God of Truth if He began with redemption and ended with destruction—if He began by giving His Son to die for us and then kept back other mercies which we daily need to bring us to Heaven? No, the gift of His Son is the pledge that He will save His people from their sins and bring them home to Glory—and He will do it. So, every day, go to Him with this declaration, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” No, not only every day, but all through the day! Does a horse run away with you? Then you cannot do better than say, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” And if the horse does not run away with you, you cannot do better than say the same words! Have you to go into a house where there is fever? I mean, is it your duty to go there? Then go saying, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” I would advise you to do this every time you walk down the street, or even while you sit in your own house.  
Dr. Gill, my famous predecessor, spent very much time in his study and, one day, somebody said to him, “Well, at any rate, the studious man is safe from most of the accidents of life.” It so happened that one morning, when the good man left his familiar armchair for a little while, there came a gale of wind that blew down a stack of chimneys which crashed through the roof and fell right into the place where he would have been sitting if the Providence of God had not just then drawn him away! And he said, “I see that we need Divine Providence to care for us in our studies just as much as in the streets.” “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” I have often noticed that if any of our friends get into accidents and troubles, it is usually when they are away for a holiday. It is a curious thing, but I have often remarked about it. They go out for their health and come home sick! They leave us with all their limbs whole and return to us crippled! Therefore we must pray God to take special care of friends in the country or by the sea—and we must commit ourselves to His hands wherever we may be. If we had to go into a leper colony, we would certainly ask God to protect us from the deadly leprosy. But we ought to equally seek the Lord’s protection while dwelling in the healthiest place or in our own homes!  
David said to the Lord, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” But let me beg you to add that word which our Lord inserted—“Father.” David is often a good guide for us, but David’s Lord is far better. And if we follow Him, we shall improve upon David. So, let us each say, “Father, Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.” That is a sweet way of living every day—committing everything to our Heavenly Father’s hands, for those hands can do His child no unkindness. “Father, I might not be able to trust Your angels, but I can trust You.” The Psalmist does not say, “Into the hand of Providence I commit my spirit.” Do you notice how men try to get rid of God by saying, “Providence did this,” and, “Providence did that,” and, “Providence did the other”? If you ask them, “What is Providence?”—they will probably reply, “Well, Providence is Providence.” That is all they can say.  
There is many a man who talks very confidently about reverencing nature, obeying the laws of nature, noting the powers of nature and so on. Step up to that eloquent lecturer and say to him, “Will you kindly explain to me what nature is?” He answers, “Why, nature—well, it is—nature.” Just so, Sir, but, what is nature? And he says, “Well—well—it is nature.” And that is all you will get out of him. Now, I believe in nature and I believe in Providence, but at the back of everything, I believe in God, and in the God who has hands—not in an idol that has no hands and can do nothing—but in the God to whom I can say, “‘Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.’ I rejoice that I am able to put myself there, for I feel absolutely safe in trusting myself to Your keeping.” So live, Beloved, and you shall live safely, happily and you shall have hope in your life, and hope in your death!  
III. My third text will not detain us many minutes. It is intended to explain to us THE USE OF OUR SAVIOR’S DYING WORDS FOR OURSELVES. Turn to the account of the death of Stephen, in the 7th chapter of Acts, at the 59th verse, and you will see, there, how far a man of God may dare to go in his last moments in quoting from David and from the Lord Jesus Christ. “And they stoned Stephen, as he was calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” So here is a text for us to use when we come to die—“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” I have explained to you that, strictly, we can hardly talk of yielding up our spirit, but we may speak of Christ receiving it and say with Stephen, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”  
What does this prayer mean? I must just hurriedly give you two or three thoughts concerning it and so close my discourse. I think this prayer means that, if we can die as Stephen did, we shall die with a certainty of immortality. Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” He did not say, “I am afraid my poor spirit is going to die.” No, the spirit is something which still exists after death, something which Christ can receive and, therefore, Stephen asks Him to receive it! You and I are not going upstairs to die as if we were only like cats and dogs—we go up there to die like immortal beings who fall asleep on earth and open our eyes in Heaven! Then, at the sound of the archangel’s trumpet, our very body is to rise to dwell, again, with our spirit—we have not any question about this matter! I think I have told you what an infidel once said to a Christian man, “Some of you Christians have great fear in dying because you believe that there is another state to follow this one. I have not the slightest fear, for I believe that I shall be annihilated and, therefore, all fear of death is gone from me.” “Yes,” said the Christian, “and in that respect you seem to me to be on equal terms with that bull grazing over there, which, like yourself, is free from any fear of death. Pray, Sir, let me ask you a simple question. Have you any hope?” “Hope, Sir? Hope, Sir? No, I have no hope! Of course I have no hope, Sir.” “Ah, then!” replied the other, “despite the fears that sometimes come over feeble Believers, they have a hope which they would not and could not give up.” And that hope is that our spirit—even that spirit which we commit into Jesus Christ’s hands—shall be “forever with the Lord.”

The next thought is that, to a man who can die as Stephen did, there is a certainty that Christ is near—so near that the man speaks to Him and says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” In Stephen’s case, the Lord Jesus was so near that the martyr could see Him, for he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” Many dying saints have borne a similar testimony. It is no strange thing for us to hear them say, before they die, that they could see within the pearly gates and they have told us this with such evident truthfulness, and with such rapture, or sometimes so calmly—in such a businesslike tone of voice—we were sure that they were neither deceived nor speaking falsehood. They spoke what they knew to be true, for Jesus was there with them! Yes, Beloved, before you can call your children around your deathbed, Jesus will already be there! And into His hands you may commit your spirit.  
Moreover, there is a certainty that we are quite safe in His hands. Wherever else we are insecure, if we ask Him to receive our spirit, and He receives it, who can hurt us? Who can pluck us out of His hands? Awaken, Death and hail! Come forth, all you powers of darkness! What can you do when once a spirit is in the hands of the Omnipotent Redeemer? We will be safe there!  
Then there is the other certainty, that He is quite willing to take us into His hands. Let us put ourselves into His hands now—and then we need not be ashamed to repeat the operation every day and we may be sure that we shall not be rejected at the last. I have often told you of the good old woman who was dying and to whom someone said, “Are you not afraid to die?” “Oh, no,” she replied, “there is nothing at all to fear. I have dipped my foot in the river of death every morning before I have had my breakfast, and I am not afraid to die now.” You remember that dear saint who died in the night, and who had left written on a piece of paper by her bedside these lines which, before she fell asleep, she felt strong enough to pencil down?—  
*“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing, But gladly put off these garments of clay— To die in the Lord, is a Covenant blessing, Since Jesus to Glory thro’ death led the way.”*It was well that she could say it—and may we be able to say the same whenever the Master calls us to go up higher! I want, dear Friends, that we should, all of us, have as much willingness to depart as if it were a matter of will with us! Blessed be God it is not left to our choice—it is not left to our will when we shall die. God has appointed that day and ten thousand devils cannot consign us to the grave before our time! We shall not die till God decrees it—  
*“Plagues and deaths around me fly,  
Till He please I cannot die!  
Not a single shaft can hit  
Till the God of love sees fit.”*  
But let us be just as willing to depart as if it were really a matter of choice, for, wisely, carefully, coolly consider that if it were left to us, we should none of us be wise if we did not choose to go! Apart from the coming of our Lord, the most miserable thing that I know of would be a suspicion that we might not die. Do you know what quaint old Rowland Hill used to say when he found himself getting very old? He said, “Surely they must be forgetting me up there.” And every now and then, when some dear old saint was dying, he would say, “When you get to Heaven, give my love to John Berridge, and John Bunyan and ever so many more of the good Johns, and tell them I hope they will see poor old Rowley up there before long.” Well, there was common sense in that wishing to get Home, longing to be with God. To be with Christ is far better than to be here!  
Sobriety itself would make us choose to die! Well, then, do not let us run back and become utterly unwilling and struggle and strive and fret and fume over it. When I hear of Believers who do not like to talk about death, I am afraid concerning them. It is greatly wise to be familiar with our resting place. When I went, recently, to the cemetery at Norwood, to lay the body of our dear Brother Perkins there for a little while, I felt that it was a healthy thing for me to stand at the grave’s brink and to walk amid that forest of memorials of the dead, for this is where I, too, must go. You living men, come and view the ground where you must shortly lie and, as it must be so, let us who are Believers welcome it!  
But, what if you are not Believers? Ah, that is another matter altogether! If you have not believed in Christ, you may well be afraid even to rest on the seat where you are sitting! I wonder that the earth itself does not say, “O God, I will not hold this wretched sinner up any longer! Let me open my mouth and swallow him!” All nature must hate the man who hates God! Surely, all things must loathe to minister to the life of a man who does not live unto God. Oh that you would seek the Lord and trust Christ and find eternal life! If you have done so, do not be afraid to go forth to live, or to die, just as God pleases.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**JOHN 15:1-8.**

Verse 1. I am the true vine. Now we know where to find the true Church. It is to be found only in Christ and in those who are joined to Him in mystical but real union. “I am the true vine.”

1. And My Father is the vinedresser. Now we know who is the true Guardian of the Church. Not the so-called “holy father” at Rome, but that Father above, who is the true Guardian, Ruler, Keeper, Preserver, Purifier, Vinedresser of the one Church, the vine!

2. Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away. There are many such branches, in Christ’s visible Church which are not fruitbearing branches and, consequently, are not partakers of the sap of life and Grace which flows into the branches that are vitally joined to the central stem. These fruitless branches are to be taken away.

2. And every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. There is some work, then, for the knife upon all the branches—cutting off for those that are fruitless—cutting for those that are bearing some fruit that they may bring forth yet more.

3. Now you are clean [purged] through the word which I have spoken unto you. The Word is often the knife with which the great Vinedresser prunes the vine. And, Brothers and Sisters, if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us, we would not need so much pruning by affliction. It is because that first knife does not always produce the desired result that another sharp tool is used by which we are effectually pruned.

4. Abide in Me, and I in you. “Do not merely find a temporary shelter in Me, as a ship runs into harbor in stormy weather and then comes out again when the gale is over, but cast anchor in Me, as the vessel does when it reaches its desired haven. Be not as branches that are tied on and so can be taken off, but be livingly joined to Me. ‘Abide in Me.’”

4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abides in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in Me. You must bear fruit, or else be cast away, but you cannot bear any fruit except by real union and constant communion with Jesus Christ your Lord!

5. I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. Not merely will you do very little, but you can do nothing at all if you are severed from Christ! You are absolutely and entirely dependent upon Christ, both for your life and for your fruit-bearing. Do we not wish to have it so, Beloved? It is the incipient principle of apostasy when a man wishes to be independent of Christ in any degree—when he says, “Give me the portion of goods that falls to me that I may have something in hand, some spending money of my own.” No, you must, from day to day, from hour to hour and even from moment to moment, derive life, light, love, everything that is good from Christ! What a blessing that it is so!

6. If a man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. There is a sad future in store for tares, according to another parable, but, somehow, there is a much sadder lot reserved for those that were, in some sense, branches of the vine—those who made a profession of faith in Christ, though they were never vitally united to Him. Those who, for a while, did rum well, yet were hindered. What was it that hindered them that they should not obey the Truth of God? Oh, it is sad, indeed, that any should have had any sort of connection with that Divine Stem and yet should be cast into the fire!

7. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Do not think that all men can pray alike effectually, for it is not so. There are some whom God will hear and some whom God will not hear. And there are some even of His own children whom He will hear in things absolutely vital and essential, to whom He never gave carte blanche after this fashion. “You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” No, if you will not hear God’s words, He will not hear yours! And if His words do not abide in you, your words shall not have power with Him. They may be directed to Heaven, but the Lord will not listen to them so as to have regard to them. Oh, it needs very tender walking for one who would be mighty in prayer! You shall find that those who have had their will at the Throne of Grace are men who have done God’s will in other places—it mast be so. The greatest favorite at court will have a double portion of the jealousy of his monarch, and he must be especially careful that he orders his steps aright, or else the king will not continue to favor him as he was known to do. There is a sacred discipline in Christ’s house, a part of which consists in this, that, as our obedience to our God declines, so will our power in prayer decrease at the same time.

8. Herein is My Father glorified, that he bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. If we are His true disciples, we also shall bring forth much fruit.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3054 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PARDON AND JUSTIFICATION  
NO. 3054

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1907. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.  
“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Psalm 32:1.

FEW men judge things correctly. Most people measure by appearances—few know the test of reality. We pronounce the man blessed who grasps the scepter or wears the crown, whereas perhaps no peasant in his dominion enjoys less happiness than he does. We pronounce that man blessed who has uninterrupted and perpetual health, but we know not the secret gnawing of the heart devoured by its own anguish and embittered by a sorrow that a stranger cannot perceive. We call the wise man happy because he understands all things—from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar of Lebanon—but he says, “Of making many books there is no end and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” We are all for pronouncing our neighbor’s lot happier than our own. As Young says of mortality, “All men think all men mortal but themselves.” And we are apt to think all men happy but ourselves. But oh, if we could see things as they are. If we were not deceived by the masquerade of this poor life. If we were not so easily taken in by the masks and dresses of those who act in this great drama, be it comedy or tragedy—if we could but see what the men are behind the scenes, penetrate their hearts, watch their inner motions and discern their secret feelings—we should find but few who could bear the name of “blessed”! Indeed, there are none except those who come under the description of my text, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” He is blessed, thrice blessed, blessed forevermore, blessed of Heaven, blessed of earth, blessed for time, blessed for eternity! And the man whose sin is not forgiven is not blessed—the mouth of Jehovah has said it and God shall manifest that cursed is every man whose transgression is not forgiven, whose sin is not covered!

Dearly Beloved, we come to the consideration of that most excellent and choice blessing of God which bespeaks our pardon and justification—and we trust that we shall be able to show you its extreme value.

The blessedness of the person enjoying this mercy will appear if we consider, first, the exceeding value of it in its nature and its characteristics. Then, if we notice the things that accompany it. And, afterwards, if we muse upon the state of heart which a sense of forgiveness would engender, we shall see that a man whose sin is covered and whose transgression is forgiven, must indeed be blessed!

I. Let us first look at THE BLESSING AS IT IS.  
It is an unpurchasable blessing. No one could purchase the pardon of his sin. What though we should each offer a hecatomb to our God, the sacrifice would smoke in vain, for “Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” If we could make rivers of oil as wide as the Amazon and as long as the Mississippi, we could not offer them to God as an acceptable present, for He would laugh at its value. We might bring money to Him in vain, for He says, “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine.” No oblation can add to His wealth, for He says, “Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills…If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” These are all God’s own creatures, so we could only offer to Him what is already His! Nothing that man can present to God by way of sacrifice can ever purchase the blessing of forgiveness.  
Next, consider the utter difficulty of procuring the blessing in any human way. Since it is not to be purchased, how can it be procured? Here is a man who has sinned against God and he makes the inquiry, “How can I be pardoned?” The first thought which starts up in his mind is this, “I will seek to amend my ways. In the virtue of the future I will endeavor to atone for the follies of the past—and I trust a merciful God will be disposed to forgive my sins and spare my guilty but penitent soul.” He then turns to Scripture to see if his hopes are warranted and he reads there, “By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” He fancies that if he should reform and amend his life, he will be accepted, but there comes from the Throne of God a voice which says, “Having sinned, O man, I must inflict punishment for your sin.” God is so inflexibly just that He has never forgiven and will never forgive the sinner without having exacted the punishment for his sin! He is so strictly true to His threats and so inexorably severe in His justice, that His holy Law never relaxes its hold upon the sinner till the penalty is paid to the utmost farthing.  
“Well,” says the sinner, “if I amend for the future, there is the dark catalog of past offenses still pursuing me. Even if I run up no other debts, there are the old accounts—how can I get them paid? How can I get my past sins forgiven? How can I find my way to Heaven.” Then he thinks, “I will seek to humble myself before God. I will cry and lament and I hope, by deep penitence, heart-felt contrition and by perpetual floods of tears, God may be induced to pardon me.” O man, your tears will not blot out a single sin! Your sins are engraved as in brass and your tears are not a liquid strong enough to burn out what God has thus inscribed—  
You might weep till your very eyes were wept away and until your heart was all distilled in drops and yet not remove one single stain from the bronze tablet of the memory of Jehovah! There is no atonement in tears or repentance! God has not said, “I will forgive you for the sake of your penitence.” What is there in your penitence that can make you deserve forgiveness? If you did deserve forgiveness, you would have a set-off against your guilt. This were to suppose some claim upon God and there would be no mercy in giving you what you could claim as a right. Repentance is not an atonement for sin!  
What, then, can be done? Justice says, “Blood for blood, a stroke for every sin, punishment for every crime, for the Lord will by no means clear the guilty.” The sinner feels within his heart that this judgment is just. Like the man to whom I talked some time ago, who said, “If God does not damn me, He ought to. I have been so great a sinner against His Laws that His equity would be sullied by my escape.” The sinner, when convicted in his own conscience, must acknowledge the righteousness of God in His condemnation. He knows that he has been so wicked, he has sinned so much against Heaven, that God in justice must punish him. He feels that God cannot pass by his sin and his transgression. Then there must be an atonement in order to obtain pardon, he thinks, and he asks, “Who shall effect it?” Speed your way up to Heaven, for it is vain to seek it on earth! Go up there where cherubs fly around the Throne of God and ask those flaming spirits, “Can you offer an atonement? God has said that man must die and the sentence cannot be altered. God Himself cannot revise it, for it is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable! Punishment must follow sin and damnation must be the effect of iniquity. But O you blazing seraphs, no satisfaction would be yielded to Infinite Justice even if you all should die! You angels, I have no hope from you! I must turn my eyes in another direction. Where shall I find help? Where shall I obtain deliverance?”  
Man cannot help us. Angels cannot help us—the greatest archangel can do nothing for us. Where shall we find forgiveness? Where is the priceless prize? The mine has it not in its depths. Stars have it not in their brilliance. The floods cannot tell me as they lift up their voice—nor can the hurricane’s blast discover to me the profound mystery! It is hidden in the sacred counsels of the Most High. Where it is I know not until, from the very Throne of God, I hear it said, “I am the Substitute.” And looking up there, I see, sitting on the Throne, a God and yet a Man— a Man who once was slain! I see His scarred hands and His pierced side. But He is also God and, smiling benignantly, He says, “I have forgiveness, I have pardon—I purchased it with My heart’s blood. This precious casket of Divinity was broken open for your souls. I had to die— ‘the Just for the unjust.’ I had to suffer for your sake, excruciating agony, unutterable pains and woes such as you cannot comprehend.” And can I say that this amazing Grace is mine? Has he enrolled my worthless name in the Covenant of His Grace? Do I see the blood-mark on the writ of my pardon? Do I know that He purchased it with such a price? And shall I refuse to say, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered”? No! I must and will exult, for I have found this jewel before which earth’s diadems do pale and lose their luster! I have found this “pearl of great price” and I must and will esteem all things but loss for Jesus’ sake, for having found this indescribable blessing which could not be bought except with the precious blood of Jesus, I must shout again, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.”—  
*“Happy the man to whom his God  
No more imputes his sin  
But, washed in the Redeemer’s blood,  
Has made his garments clean!”*  
It would be well for you, Christian, if you would often review this mercy and see how it was purchased for you. If you would go to Gethsemane and see where the bloody clots lie thick upon the ground. If you would then take your journey across that bitter brook of Kedron and go to Gabbatha and see your Savior with His hair plucked by the persecutors, with His cheeks made moist with the spittle of His enemies, with His back lacerated by the deep furrows of knotted whips and Himself in agony, emaciated, tormented—then if you would stand at Calvary and watch Him dying, “the Just for the unjust”—and having seen these bitter torments, remember that these were but little compared with His inward soul-anguish, then you would come away and say, “Blessed, yes,

 thrice blessed is the man who has thus been loved of Jesus and purchased with His blood! ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.’”  
Another thing concerning this blessing of justification is not only its immense value and its unpurchasableness, but its coming to us instantaneously. You know it is a Doctrine that has been taught by Divines long enough and taught in Scripture that justification is an instantaneous act. The moment God gives me faith, I become justified and, being justified by faith, I have peace with God! It takes no time to accomplish this miracle of mercy. Sanctification is a lifelong work, continuously effected by the Holy Spirit, but justification is done in an instant! It is as complete the moment a sinner believes as when he stands before the Eternal! Is it not a marvelous thing that one moment should make you clean? We love the physician who speedily heals. If you find a skillful physician who can heal you of a sad disease even in years, you go to him and are thankful. But suppose you hear of some wondrous man who, with a touch, could heal you—who, with the very glance of his eyes, could stanch that flow of blood, or cure that deadly disease and make you well at once? Would you not go to him and feel that he was, indeed, a great physician? So is it with Christ. There may be a man standing over there with all his sins upon his head, yet he may be justified—complete in Christ, without a sin—freed from its damning power, delivered from all his guilt and iniquity in one single instant! It is a marvelous thing beyond our power of comprehension! God pardons the man and he goes away that same instant perfectly justified—as the publican did when he prayed, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and received the mercy for which he prayed.  
But one of the greatest blessings about this mercy is that it is irreversible. The irreversible nature of justification is that which makes it so lovely in the eyes of God’s people. We are justified and pardoned, but then the mercy is that we can never be unpardoned—we can never again be condemned! Those who are opponents of this glorious Doctrine may say what they please, but we know better than to suppose that God ever pardons a man and then punishes him afterwards. We would not think the Queen would give a criminal a free and full pardon and then, in the course of a few years, have him executed. Oh, no! I thank God that I can say and that each of the Lord’s believing people can say—  
*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black their cast!  
And, O my Soul! With wonder view,  
For sins to come here’s pardon too!”*  
It is complete pardon that Jesus gives—for that which is to come, as well as for that which is past—  
*“The moment a sinner believes,  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives,  
Redemption in full through His blood!”*  
God never did anything by halves. He speaks a man into a justified condition and He will never speak him out of it again! Nor can that man ever be cast away. O God, do any persons teach that men can be quickened by the Spirit and yet that the quickening Spirit has not power enough to keep them alive? Do they teach that You first forgive and then condemn? Do they teach that Christ stands Surety for a man and yet that the man may afterwards be damned? Let them teach so if they will, but we “have not so learned Christ.” We cannot use words so dishonorable to the blessed Savior, so derogatory to His Deity! We believe that if He stood as our Substitute, it was an actual, real, effectual deed and that we are positively delivered thereby. We believe that if He did pay the penalty for our sin, God cannot by any means exact it twice! We believe and teach that if He did discharge our debt, it is discharged! That if our sin was imputed to Christ, it cannot also be imputed to us. We say, before all men, that Heaven itself cannot accuse the sons of God of any sin! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect,” if God has justified and Christ has died? Ah, Christian! You may well stand and wonder at this mighty justification—to think that you are so pardoned that you never can be condemned! That all the powers in Hell cannot condemn you! That nothing which can happen can destroy you! That you have a pardon that you can plead in the Day of Judgment and that will stand as valid, then, as now! Oh, it is a glorious and gracious thing! Go, you who believe in another gospel and seek comfort in it if you will, but yours is not the justification of the blessed God! When He justifies, He justifies forever and nothing can separate us from His love!  
II. This is the mercy itself. Now I turn to the second point. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,” BECAUSE THAT MERCY BRINGS EVERYTHING ELSE WITH IT.  
When I know that I am pardoned, then I can say that all things are mine! I can look back to the dark past and all things there are mine. I can look at the present and all things here are mine. I can look into the deep future and all things there are mine. Back in eternity, I see God unrolling the mighty scroll of the Book of Life and lo, in that volume I read my name! It must be there, for I am pardoned—and whom He calls, He had first predestinated. And whom He pardons, He had first elected. When I see that Covenant roll, I say, “It is mine.” And all the great books of God’s eternal purposes and infinite decrees are mine. And what Christ did upon the Cross is mine. The past is mine! The revolutions of all past ages have worked for the good of myself and my Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Standing in the present, I see Divine Providence and that is mine. Its various circumstances are working together for the good of all the chosen people of God. Its very wheels—though high and wonderful—are working, wheel within wheel, to produce some great and grand effect which shall be for the general good of the Church of Christ! Afflictions are mine to sanctify me—a hot furnace where my dross is taken away. Prosperity is mine to comfort me—a sweet garden where I lie down to be refreshed in this weary journey. All the promises of God are mine. What though this Bible is the prince of books—what though each letter is a drop of honey and it is filled with sweetness—there is not a precious text here which is not mine if I am a Believer in Christ! There is not a promise which I may not say is my own, for all is mine! All these present things I may take without fear, for they are my Father’s gift to me, a portion of my heritage.  
I rejoice also to know that all the future is mine, whatever that future may be. I know that in the future there shall come an hour when, at God’s command, the long pent-up fires of earth shall start up from between her brazen ribs—her mountains shall be dissolved and the earth shall pass away. But even this last great conflagration is mine! I know that on a certain day I shall stand before the judgment bar of Christ—but that Judgment Day is mine! I fear it not, I dread it not. I know that soon I must die, but the River of Death is mine! It is mine to wash me, that I may leave the dust of earth behind. It is a glorious river though its waters may be tinged with blackness, for it takes its rise in the mountains of love, hard by the Throne of God! And then after death there will come the resurrection and that resurrection is mine! In a perfect body, clear as the sun and fair as the moon, I shall live in Paradise! And then whatever there is in Heaven is mine! If there is a city with azure light and with jasper walls—it is mine. What though there are palaces there of crystal and of gold that sparkle so as to dim poor mortal eyes. What though there are delights above even the dream of the voluptuary. What though there are pleasures which heart and flesh cannot conceive and which even spirit itself cannot fully enjoy—the very intoxication of bliss! What though there are sublimities unlawful for us to utter and wonders which mortal men cannot grasp. What though God in Heaven does unravel His Glory to make His people blessed—all is mine! The crown is bright and glorious, but it is mine, for I am pardoned! Though I may have been the chief of sinners and the vilest of the vile, if God shall justify me tonight, all things in Heaven are mine, however glorious, bright, majestic and sublime! Oh, is not this a wondrous mercy? Verily, as we consider what comes with the mercy, we must say, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”  
III. We would that time and bodily strength permitted us to dilate upon this wide subject, but we must pass on to the last point. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” BECAUSE IT MAKES HIM BLESSED BY THE EFFECTS IT HAS UPON HIS MIND.  
What glorious peace it brings to a man when he first knows himself to be justified! The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Some of you in this chapel do not know what peace means. You never had any real, satisfactory peace. “What?” you say, “never had any peace when we have been happy and merry and joyous?” Let me ask you, when the morning has appeared after your evening of mirth, could you look back upon it with joy? Could any one of you look back upon it and say, “I rejoice in these unbridled revellings. I always find such laughter productive of a sweet calm to my heart”? No, you could not unless you are utterly hardened in heart. I challenge you to tell me what fruit you have ever gathered from those things of which you are now ashamed. You know that you have not had any true peace. When alone in your chamber and a leaf fell, or some little insect buzzed in the furtherest corner, you trembled like the leaves of the aspen and thought perhaps the angel of death was there with a dreary omen! Or, passing from the haunts of fashion, you have walked along some lonely road in solitude and your disordered fancy has conjured up all sorts of demons. You had no peace and you have no peace now, for you are at war with the Omnipotent, you are lifting your puny hands against the Most High God, you are warring against the King of Heaven, rebels against His government and guilty of high treason against the Eternal Majesty! Oh, that you did but know what true peace is—“the peace of God which passes all understanding”!

I compare not the peaceful mind to a lake without a ripple—such a figure would be quite inadequate. The only comparison I can find is in that unbroken tranquility which seems to reign in the deep caverns and grottoes of the sea—far down where the sailor’s body lies, where the seashells rest undisturbed, where there is nothing but darkness and where nothing can break the spell—for there are no currents there and all is still—that is somewhat like the Christian’s soul when God speaks peace to him. There may be billows on the surface and by these he may be sometimes ruffled, but inside his heart there will be no ebb or flow. He will have a peace that is too deep to fathom, too perfect for the ungodly to conceive—for none but they who prove it know what it is. Such peace that tonight you could lay your head down to sleep with the knowledge that you would never wake again in this world as calmly as you could if you knew your days were to be, like Hezekiah’s, lengthened out for 15 years! When we have peace with God we can lie down and if an angel visited us to say, “Soul, your Master calls you,” we could reply, “Tell my Master that I am ready.” And if grim Death were to come stalking to our bedside and were to say, “The pitcher is about to be broken at the fountain, and the wheel to be broken at the cistern,” we might answer, “We are quite prepared. We are not afraid. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace here and we are glad to go and have that peace consummated up yonder in the better world.” Could you all say that? Some of you know that you could not. If I were to go round this building and ask you, you would have to say, “No. I am not at peace with God. I am afraid to die, for I do not know that my sins are blotted out.” Well, poor Soul, at any rate you will say, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” You know that he is blessed, though you are not yourself blessed—and you feel that you would be blessed indeed if you could once get your sin covered and your transgression forgiven.  
Justification not only gives peace, it also gives joy. And this is something even more blessed. Peace is the flowing of the brook, but joy is the dashing of the waterfall when the brook is filled, bursts its banks and rushes down the rocks! Joy is something that we can know and esteem— and justification brings us joy. Oh, have you ever seen the justified man when he is first justified? I have often told you what I myself felt when first I realized that I was pardoned through the blood of Christ. I had been sad and miserable for months and even years—but when I once received the message, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” verily I could have leapt for joy of heart, for I felt then that I understood the meaning of that text, “The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”  
I remember hearing Dr. Alexander Fletcher, when speaking to children, tell them a simple anecdote in order to illustrate the joy of a man when he gets delivered from sin. He said, “I saw on the pavement three or four little chimney-sweeps jumping about and throwing up their heels in great delight. And I asked them, ‘My boys, why are you making all this demonstration?’ ‘Ah,’ they said, ‘if you had been locked up for three months, you would do the same when you once got out of prison.’” I thought it a good illustration and we cannot wonder that people are joyous and glad when, after being long shut up in the prison of the law, all sad and miserable, they have felt their bonds broken, seen the door of the jail opened and obtained a legal discharge! What cared they, then, about trials and troubles, or anything else? The heart seems scarcely big enough to hold their joy and it bursts out so that they hardly know what to do or to say! Thus it is at that wondrous hour which comes but once in a Christian’s life—when he first feels himself delivered, when God for the first time says to him, “I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.” I verily think that hour is a fragment of eternity cut off and given us here! I am sure it is a foretaste of the happiness at God’s right hand! It is a day of Heaven upon earth, that blessed day when God first gives us a knowledge of our own justification! Heaven’s bliss itself can scarcely exceed it! We seem to drink of the very wine that saints in Glory quaff. We need nothing else—what more can we desire? “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered”—it gives him joy and it gives him peace.  
Have you ever noticed one thing that I must mention here? If you have ever had a great trouble, you have found that it has swallowed up all little troubles. Suppose the captain of a ship finds something on deck that is not quite right? He fidgets and worries himself about this, that and the other. And soon a great storm arises. Big clouds appear and the winds begin to whistle through the cordage. The sails are torn and now the ship is driving before the wind over mountains and into valleys of water. He fears the ship will be wrecked and that he will be lost. What cares he now for the little things on deck, or the furniture of the cabin, or such things as those? “Never mind about those things,” he says, “the ship is in danger of being lost.” Suppose the cook should run up and say, “I am afraid, Sir, the dinner will be spoiled.” What does he say? “The ship,” he says, “may be lost, and that is of much more consequence than the dinner.” So is it with you! If you once get into real trouble on account of your souls, you will not fret much about the little troubles you have here, for they will all be swallowed up by the one giant alarm. And if you get this everlasting joy into your souls, it will be much the same—it will consume all your smaller joys and griefs. That joy will be like Moses’ rod which ate up all the serpents that the magicians produced before Pharaoh—it will eat up all other joys! It will be enough for you if you can say—  
*“I’m forgiven! I’m forgiven!  
I’m a miracle of Grace!”*  
That is a nice little house of yours. Well, be thankful for it, but yet you can say, “If I had not got it, I should be a happy man.” You have a certain property. Thank God for it, but yet you can say, “If I had not got it, I should be happy in my poverty.” You remember what the poor slave said, “Ah, it’s all very well for you freemen to find fault with your lot. Give me freedom and I would need nothing more! Give me freedom and I will gladly live on crusts and drink water—only let me know that I am free— that is all that I desire. Let me stand on God’s free soil and feel that no man can say, from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet that I am his, and I will be happy.” The slave says so, and so may you. If you can but feel yourself justified. If you know that you are delivered, that you are, indeed, pardoned, that you are beyond the clutches of the Law of God, you can rejoice that you know and feel the truth of the saying, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

*“Could your tears forever flow, Could your zeal no respite know, All for sin could not atone.  
Christ must save, and Christ alone.”*

Now let me ask, in conclusion, How many such blessed men and women are there here tonight? How long shall I give you to answer the question? I wish formal preaching were done away with and that we had a little more talking to one another. I wish to lay the formalities of the pulpit aside and talk to you as if you were in your own houses. That, I believe, is the true kind of preaching. Let me inquire, then, how many of you, my Friends, can claim the title of “blessed” because you are justified? Well, I think I can see one Brother who puts his hands together, and says—

*“‘A debtor to mercy alone,*

*Of covenant mercy I sing.’*  
“I know I am forgiven.” My Brother, I rejoice to hear you speak thus confidently. But I come to another and I ask—What about you, my Friend? “Ah, Sir! I cannot say as much as that Brother did, but I hope I am justified.” What ground have you for your hope? You know that we cannot properly hope unless we have some grounds for our hope—what are your grounds? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? “Yes,” you say, “I do believe on Him.” Why, then, do you say, “I hope I am justified”? Dear Brother or Sister, you know, if you really believe on Christ! You have no need to talk about hope where you may be certain! And it is always better to use words of confidence when you can. Keep your head as high as you may, for you will find troubles enough to drag it down.

The next one replies—  
*“‘Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought—  
‘Do I love the Lord or no?  
Am I His, or am I not?’”*

I have heard a great deal said against that hymn, but I have myself had occasion to sing it sometimes, so I cannot find much fault with it. That state of mind is all very well if it lasts a little while, though not if it lasts a long time and a man is always saying, “I long to know,” or, “I am afraid.” Paul says, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” You would not always have this anxiety if you were brought to realize your justification in the sight of God. You may have it sometimes, “when the eye of faith is dim,” but I do not like to see people contenting themselves with any measure of faith short of that which apprehends full redemption! Do not let me distress the weak ones of the flock, for I often say—

*“Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment can never boast—  
To His name eternal praises,  
None of them shall ever be lost.”*

Their names were written in the Lamb’s Book of Life before the world was made! But if any of you are always in distress and doubt, if you never did at any time feel confident, you should begin to be apprehensive, for I think you should now and then get a little higher. You may pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death sometimes but, surely, sometimes the Spirit of God will also carry you up to the top of the mountain that is called, “Clear.” Yet, if you are still dwelling on this point, “I long to know,” are you not anxious to settle the question? Suppose you do not belong to Christ? Put it in that way—for, in a doubtful case, it is best to look at the worst side—suppose you do not love the Lord? Nevertheless you are a sinner. You feel that you are a sinner, do you not? God has convinced you that you are a sinner. Well, as long as you can claim sinnership, you can go to His feet! If you cannot go as a saint, you can go as a sinner! What a mercy this is! It is enough to save us from despair. Even if our evidence of

 saintship seems clean gone, we have not lost our sinnership! And the Scripture still says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And while it says that, we will hang on it!

Another one says, “I don’t know whether I am justified and I don’t care much about it.” Let me tell you, Sir, when you will care. When you come near your end, young man, you will care then! You may think you can live very well without Christ, but you cannot afford to die without Him! You can stand very securely at present, but death will shake your confidence. Your tree may be fair to look at now, but when the great testing wind comes, if it has not its roots in the Rock of Ages, down it must come! You may think your worldly pleasures good, but they will then turn bitter as wormwood to your taste—worse than gall shall be the daintiest of your drinks when you shall come to the bottom of your poisoned bowl!

But there is another who says, “I wish I were justified, but I feel that I am too great a sinner.” Now I like to hear the first part of your speech, but the last is very bad. To say that you are bad is right—I know you are. You say you are vile and that is true enough and I hope you mean it. Do not be like some men of whom I have read. There was a monk who on a certain occasion described himself as being as great a hypocrite as Judas. And a gentleman at once said, “I knew it long ago! You are just the fellow I always thought you were.” But up jumped the monk and said, “Don’t you be saying such things as those about me.” His humility was feigned, not felt. Thus people may make such a general confession as this, “We are all sinners,” who would resist any special charge brought home to their consciences, however true it might be. Say to such an one, “You are a rogue,” and he replies, “No, I’m not a rogue.” “What are you, then? Are you a liar?” “Oh, no!” “Are you a Sabbath-breaker?” “No, nothing of the kind.” And so, when you come to sift the matter, you find them sheltering themselves under the general term, sinner, not to make confession, but to evade it! This is very different from a real conviction of sin.

But if you feel yourself to be a real, actual sinner, remember that you are not too bad to be saved, because it is written in Scripture that Christ came to save sinners and that means that He came to save you, because you are a sinner! And I will preach it everywhere, without limitation, that if a man knows himself to be a sinner, Jesus Christ died for him, for that is the evidence that Christ came to save him! Let the sinner, then, believe on Jesus as his Savior! Let the “outcasts” come to Jesus, for the Psalmist says, “He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.” There is an outcast here tonight. There is a backslider over there who has been cut off from the Church years ago. Behold his sad plight. As Achish said of David, “He has made his people Israel utterly to abhor him: therefore he shall be my servant forever.” But he escaped and you shall yet escape! The prey shall not be taken from the Mighty! The lawful captive shall not be taken from Jesus Christ! The Captain of our salvation conquered his soul once, and He will yet save it.

But another says, “I never was a member of a church and I am afraid I never shall be. I am a hardened sinner, a reprobate.” Well, do you confess it? Then hear the word of the Lord—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” “He that believes”—that is, he that believes on Jesus and in Jesus. He that casts himself on Christ. Our hymn bids us “venture” on Christ, but that is not right—there is no venturing, it is all safe—he who trusts himself on Christ—throws himself flat on Sovereign Mercy—“He that believes”— notice what follows, “and is baptized.” Baptism is to come afterwards, not for salvation, but as a profession of his faith—he that with his heart believes and with his mouth confesses—“He that believes and is baptized—shall be saved! And he that believes not shall be damned.” I dare not leave any word out, whatever any of my Brothers may do. Whether a man is baptized or not, if he does not believe, he shall be damned. But the word, “baptized,” is not put into the last sentence because the Holy Spirit saw there was no necessity for it, for He knew if the ordinance were correctly administered, no person who did not believe would be baptized! So it was the same thing as saying, “He that believes not shall be damned.”

Oh, may God grant that you may never know the meaning of that last dreadful word, but may you know what it is to be saved by Divine Grace!  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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A CHEERING CONGRATULATION  
NO. 3563

**A SERMON  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Blessed is he who transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.” Psalm 32:1.**

MEN have, all of them, their own ideals of blessedness. Those ideals are often altogether contrary to the sayings which our Savior uttered in His Sermon on the Mount. They count those to be blessed who are strong in health, who are abundant in riches, who are honored with fame, who are entrusted with command, who exercise power—those, in fact, who are distinguished in the eyes of their fellow creatures! Yet I find not such persons called, “blessed,” in God’s Word, but oftentimes humble souls who might excite pity rather than envy, are congratulated upon the blessings which they are heirs to and which they shall soon enjoy. To the penitent there is no voice so pleasant as that of pardon! God, who cannot lie—who cannot err—tells us what it is to be blessed. Here He declares that, “blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.” This is an oracle not to be disputed. Forgiven sin is better than accumulated wealth. The remission of sin is infinitely to be preferred before all the glitter and the glare of this world’s prosperity. The gratification of creature passions and earthly desires is illusive—a shadow and a fiction—but the blessedness of the justified, the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness is substantial and true! How apt we are to say in our hearts, “Would God Adam had never fallen, for blessed must be the man who never sinned!” Could any man have attained to a perfect life which deserved commendation at God’s hands, blessedness would surely glow around him like a halo! At his feet the earth would blossom! In his nostrils the air would breathe sweet odors and his ears would be regaled with the sweet singing of birds—“content, indeed, to sojourn while he must, below the skies, but having there his home.” Such a man would feel and find the beams of brightness playing over the entire expanse of life and the thrill of gladness filling his heart with unbroken peace! The mountains and hills would break forth into singing and all the trees of the field would clap their hands, to multiply his inlets to happiness. But it is not of such imaginary bliss that our sacred Psalmist loves to sing, because, however true, it would be a mere mockery to tell us, who are so deeply fallen, of sweet delights that those, alone, could know who never fell! Our time of probation is over. We of mortal race were proved, tried and condemned long ago. It is not possible, now, for us to have the blessedness of uncorrupted innocence. And yet, thank God, blessedness is still possible to us, sinners though we are! We may hear the voice of the Ever Blessed of God pronouncing us to be blessed! His mercy can secure to us what our merit could never have earned, for so it is written, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.” May everyone of us partake of this blessedness and know and rejoice in the full assurance of it!

Now the observations I address to you shall be very simple. But if they come home to us as true, and we can grasp them with a lively faith, they will be none the less gratifying to us because they seem common.

I. EVIDENTLY THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH GOD— TRANSGRESSION MAY BE FORGIVEN.  
It is spoken of here, not as a flight of fancy, or a poetic dream. It is not an imaginary or a possible circumstance, but it is described as a fact that does occur, and has been the happy lot of some who knew its sweet relief and felt its strange felicity—“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.” Do take the words with all their weight of meaning, for though taught in our catechisms, embodied in our creeds, and admitted in our ordinary conversation on religious subjects, the belief in the forgiveness of sins is not always sincere and hearty. When the guilt of sin is felt and the burden of sin grows heavy—and when the wound stinks and is corrupt, as the Psalmist says—we are very apt to doubt the possibility of pardon, or, at least, of our own pardon. Under deep conviction of sin and a sense of the peculiar heinousness of our own guilt, there is a haze and more than a haze—a thick fog which hides the light of this Doctrine from our view! We think all men pardonable except ourselves. We can believe in the Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sin for blasphemers, for thieves, for drunkards, even for murderers—but there is some particular aggravation in the sins which we have committed that appear to us to admit of no place of repentance, to find no promise of absolution. So, writing bitter things against ourselves, we become our own accusers and our own judges—and seem as if we would even become our own executioners! In our distraction we are thus prone to doubt that our transgression can be forgiven.  
And, Beloved, I am not sure that those of us who are saved do not, sometimes, have misgivings about this grand Truth of God. Although I know that I am saved in Christ, yet at times when I look back upon my life, and especially dwell upon some dark blots which God has forgiven, but for which I can never forgive myself—the question comes across me, “Is it so?

 Is that really blotted out? It was so, crimson, So scarlet—can it be that the spot is entirely gone?” We know that being washed in the blood of Christ, we are whiter than snow, but it is not always that our faith can realize the forgiveness of sins while our heart and conscience are revolving the flagrancy of their guilt. It should not be so! We ought to be able to bear, at one and the same time, a vision of sin in all its horror and a full view of the Sacrifice for sin in all its holiness and acceptance to God! We ought to be able to feel that we are guilty, weak, lost and ruined, yet to believe that Christ is not only able to save to the very uttermost, but that He has saved us—we ought to be able to confess our crimes while we cast ourselves without a question into His blessed arms! I trust that we can do this, but, alas, a fly may find its way into the sweetest pot of ointment! A little folly may taint a good reputation and an unworthy doubt may tarnish the purest faith—so it may be profitable to remind even the forgiven man that forgiveness of sin is possible, that forgiveness of sin is presented in the Gospel as a Covenant Blessing, that forgiveness of sin is the possession of every Believer in Jesus, that his sin has gone entirely and irreversibly and that for him all manner of sin has been forgiven, blotted out and put away through the precious blood of Jesus, seeing that he has believed in God’s great propitiatory Sacrifice!  
Perhaps there has strolled into this sanctuary tonight some professing Christian who, though a true child of God, has foully stained his profession. It may be, my dear Friend, that in your weakness, and to your shame—and to your confusion of face—you have forsaken God and have fallen into sin. You knew better, you who have instructed others, you who would have denounced such conduct with great severity in your fellow creatures, have fallen into the transgression, yourself, and now you are conscious that both the sin and its results are very bitter. You are smarting under the rod, your bones have been sorely broken and, perhaps, while I am speaking, it seems as if my words were putting them out of joint again where there had been a little healing! Beloved Brother or Sister in Christ, if your sin is a public sin, a grievous sin, a black and foul sin—if it is a sin which conscience cannot for a moment tolerate, a sin which God’s people must detest, even though it is in you who are dear to them, let me entreat you not to suffer the deceitfulness of sin to drive you to despair! In the anguish of remorse, do not shun the Mercy Seat! Doubt not that the Lord is still ready to pardon you. Let not Satan persuade you that you have sinned a sin which is unto death! No, come to the Cross of Christ! The blood of Jesus was real and it was really shed to wash away real sin, not sin in the abstract, as we talk of it here, but sin in the concrete as you have committed it—such sin as yours—no, your sin, that special sin, that degrading sin, that sin which you are ashamed to mention! That sin which makes you now, even at the very thought of it, hang your head and blush. Know of a truth that your sin is pardonable! Do you ask me why I draw this inference from my text? I answer that it was penned by David when his crimes were complicated, his character corrupted and his case seemed beyond the possibility of a cure! “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God!” Whatever your sin may have been, it can scarcely have exceeded his in atrocity! You know how he added sin to sin—you know how high he stood and how low he sunk—and you know how sweetly he could sing, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.” It shines forth more clearly, now, than ever it shone before! Sin is pardonable! The Lord God is merciful and gracious! Hear the heavenly invitation, “Come, now, let us reason together; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” Hear Jehovah’s voice out of Heaven, “I, even I, am He that blots out your iniquities for My name’s sake: I will not remember your sins.”  
With such a peerless proclamation of perfect pardon we leave this point. We trust, however, that you will not leave it till you have proved its preciousness and its power.  
Observe now that the pardon being proved, the—  
II. BLESSEDNESS MAY BE ENJOYED.  
So much sadness comes from a sense of sin that it is not easy for a penitent to regard pleasure as within his reach, or for a criminal to imagine that cheerfulness can become his habitual condition. How have I heard a man say, “Were God to forgive me, I do not think I could be happy, such is my sin that though it should be put away, the memory would haunt me, the disgrace would distract me—my own conscience would confound me, I never could blend with the blessed ones.” Is not this just what the prodigal said, “I am not worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants”? He could not think so well of his father as to suppose that he could receive him again into his affections as his child and, therefore, he would be content to take the yoke of service, and to be a hired servant of his father’s. Not a servant born in the house, though these were common enough among the Jews—but a hired servant, willing to be even with the lowest class of servants—so that he might but live in his father’s house! I know that this is often the feeling of humble souls, but look at the text and observe the blessed Truth of God which it teaches. You may not only be forgiven, my dear Friends, but you may enjoy, notwithstanding your past sin, blessedness on earth! Oh, look up through those tears! They can all be wiped away! Or should they continue to flow in a long life of penitence, if they do but fall upon the Savior’s feet, which you would gladly wash with the tears of your affection and wipe with the hairs of your head, you shall find those tears to be precious drops! Though evangelical repentance may be compared to bitter herbs in one respect, to be eaten lamenting, yet in another respect there is no Grace as sweet as repentance! In Heaven, it is true, they do not repent, but here on earth it well becomes the saints. It is sweet here below to sit and weep one’s heart away in sorrow for sin at the foot of the Cross of Christ, saying, “with my tears, His feet I bathe.” And although we shall have done with it when we reach those blissful shores, until then, repentance shall be the occupation of our lives!  
But, dear Friends, you may suppose that as sincere repentance always leads to great searching of heart, it cannot be blessed—yet it really is so. Repentance, as we have already said, is a sweet Grace. You remember that the prodigal shed his tears, his best tears, in his father’s bosom, when he put his face, as it were, close to his father’s heart, and sobbed out, “Father, I have sinned!” Oh, what a place for repentance is the bosom of God, with His love shed abroad in the heart, making you contrite and moving you to say, “How could I have sinned against so good a God? How could I be an enemy to One who is so full of Grace? How could I run away and spend my substance with harlots, when here was my Father’s deep care for my welfare? How could I choose their base love, when a love so pure, so true, so constant, was waiting for me?” Oh, it is a holy sorrow that has a clear life ensuing and I tell you that, however deep your repentance may be, it shall not stand in the way of your being blessed, but shall even prove to be one contributory stream to the blessedness of your experience!  
Does the memory of your sins haunt you, and do you feel that you shall always hang your head as one whom pardon could not purge? Not thus did the Apostle Paul reflect on his many sins. Though he bewailed the wickedness of his heart, and was ashamed of the evil he had done, yet his humility after he was converted took the form of gratitude, cheering his very soul with the most lively impulse! While confessing that he was the very chief of sinners, at the same time and in the same breath he said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Conscious of his own infirmities, he could exclaim, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Yet, confident of his full redemption, he could add, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Moreover, hurling defiance at all his accusers, he asks, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” No bolder or more triumphant champion of Divine Grace than that Apostle who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious—but now rejoices to bear record, “I obtained mercy that, in me, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.” What? Though your past offenses are ever so rank, and your present shame should sting you with ever so much poignant sorrow, yet with thrills of bliss you shall prove the full blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!  
I think I hear one say, “Few men have fallen more deeply into sin than I have. If converted, I might be pointed out as an illustrious monument of Divine Grace. Yet, what with vanities which have matured into vices, and passing follies which have grown into positive evil habits, it is not likely I should ever attain the same eminence in Grace as those who were trained from childhood in the sanctuary and never lived a dissolute life, or risked a desperate death, as I have done.” Let me assure you that this is a great fallacy! The heights of Glory are now open to those who once plunged into the depths of sin. Say not, slave of Satan, that you cannot be a soldier of the Cross! You can be a heroic soldier! You may win a crown of victory. Why need you be weak in faith? You cannot be languid in love. Great sinner as you are, you have in this, a sort of advantage— you will love much because you have had much forgiven you. Surely, if your love is warmer than that of others, you have the mainspring of zeal, the mightiest force within to mold your future course! Instead of being less than others, you should seek to outdo them all, not out of carnal emulation, but out of holy strife. I counsel you, poor Sinner, when you come to Christ, do not try to hide yourself in some obscure corner, but come to the light, that you may have near and intimate fellowship with your Lord. For the love you have to Him, show kindness to His lambs. By your generosity to His disciples, show your gratitude to the Master. Grudge no service. Be ready to spend and to be spent—yield yourself a living sacrifice to Him who redeemed you from your sins and restored you to His favor.

I liked what one said to me today when I was seeing enquirers who are seeking membership with us. “By God’s Grace,” he said, “I will try to make up for lost time.” Let this be your resolve, dear Friends! If you are called by Grace when the day is far spent and the time in which you can hope to serve your Lord is getting brief, do not waste an opportunity, but engage with all your heart and soul in the work of faith and labor of love for the Lord Jesus! Some of us were called at the first or second hour of the day and while we were yet children, we found some employment in the vineyard. Still, we cannot serve Christ as we would. Oh I wish I had a thousand tongues that I might proclaim His love, and could live a thousand lives to proclaim His Grace among the sons of men! But as for you, whose time must, in the course of nature, be so short—you who have given so much of your lives to Satan—do not let Christ now be put off with the little end, but give him the very best of your love, the fat of your sacrifice, the strength and soul of your being!  
And as to the matter of enjoyment, I cannot believe for a moment that when a great sinner is blessed with a great pardon, he should fail to have the fullness of joy which so Divine a benefit must properly excite. My observation has been that the joy of those who have been graciously forgiven after having greatly transgressed, rather exceeds than falls short of the joy of such as are more gradually brought into Gospel liberty! Oh, no, my Master will not adjudge you to take a second rank!  
He who was by birth an alien, and in open rebellion an enemy to God, shall have all the rights of citizenship and partake of all the privileges of the saints! Not he who, like Samuel, was lighted on his couch in childhood by the lamps of the sanctuary, is more welcome at the Father’s board than the returning prodigal! Such blessedness is in store for some of you. You have fallen. You have lost your character. You have stifled the voice of your own conscience. You have forfeited all title to selfrespect. But by Christ, redeemed, in Christ, restored, this infinite blessedness shall be your portion! Have you been put out of the Church? Have your Brothers and Sisters been compelled to withdraw from fellowship with you because of your flagrant sin? Have you been convicted of a crime and suffered a term of imprisonment? There is yet a blessedness possible to you! There may have strayed in here one who from the fold has wandered very far. Though you have forfeited your good name, I simply and sincerely point out to you the means whereby you may yet transform your blighted life into a blessed life! Glory to God and peace to your own soul shall immediately follow your trust in the Sacrifice of Christ! “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Seems it not to you that this is the very fountain of all blessings? You come here to the stream head, to the source of the great wide river of mercies! Those of you, therefore, who believe in the forgiveness of sins should not be satisfied till you have the title deeds, enjoy the possession, and revel in the blessedness of this reconciliation to God! “If I am a Christian,” said a Sister to me hesitantly. “But I do not like that ugly ,‘if,’” she added—“I must get rid of it.” So she prayed the Lord, “Let there be no ‘if’ between me and You.” I would have you pray in like manner. Oh, those horrible, “ifs”! They are spiritual mosquitoes that sting and harass us—they are like stones in our shoes—you cannot travel with them. Hear what David says—“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”  
Still enlarging upon our last point, rather than venturing on to anything fresh, observe—  
III. THAT THE STATE OF FORGIVENESS IS EVIDENTLY A STATE OF BLESSEDNESS IF WE REMEMBER THE CONTRAST IT INVOLVES.  
Ask the sinner, conscious of his guilt and its penalty, who is bemoaning himself and crying out—“God, be merciful to me a sinner!”—what would you think if your condition could be changed and your conscience cleansed by one line of the pen, or by one word of the lips that can pronounce a pardon? Would not that be blessed beyond wishful thought or wakeful dream? “Oh,” you say, “I would count no penance too severe, no sacrifice too costly, if I might but get my sins cancelled, forgiven and completely obliterated!” Look at poor Christian, wringing his hands, sighing and crying. Why was it? He needed to have his burden taken off. Had you spoken to him, he would have told you he was willing to go through floods and flames if he could get relief from his burden and be clean rid of it. Seeing how every anxious soul longs for forgiveness, clearly it must be a state to be greatly desired, and those who do attain it find it to be full of gladness, delight and rejoicing! It is, indeed, blessed to have sin forgiven, but, oh, how wretched to face its infamy, to feel its malignity, to fear its terrible penalty! Witness a soul in despair—that is a dreadful sight! I think I would sooner walk 50 miles than see a despairing soul! I have seen several such shut up in the iron cage. You may talk, talk, talk and try to give some cheer, but it is of no use. No promises can comfort. The Gospel, itself, seems to have no charm. Were you to put the question to a despairing soul, “Would it be a blessed thing to have sin forgiven?” sharp, quick, and decided would the answer be. Not the lips only—the heart would express itself in every muscle of the face, in every limb of the body—the nerves all tingling with joy, the eyes shining with gleams of Heaven!  
Ask dying sinners, stung with remorse at the memory of their lives, and filled with dread at the prospect of the future, whether it is not a blessed thing to have sins forgiven. Through they may have trifled up to now, the hour of death forbids dissembling. Now the vanities of time pass like a shadow and the realities of eternity come up like a spectra. “Too late!” they cry. “Too late! Had we but fled to Christ before! Had we but turned our eyes to Him in years gone by, then hope would have cheered us in this extremity!” But it is not death they dread so much as the afterdeath—not present dissolution, but (shall I say it?) the damnation that may follow. Unforgiven sin! Who can paint the sentence it must meet? Could we peer into that world where wicked spirits are tormented always and forever, and there ask the question, “Would it be a blessed thing to be forgiven?” Ah, you can guess the answer. I pray you, Friend, tempt not the terror for yourself. Trifle not with kind entreaty—know that ‘tis treason to do so! The pardon spurned will recoil on your own head. You will bewail in everlasting misery the mercy that, through your willfulness, was unavailing. Blessed must he be whose sins are forgiven, for it enables him to escape from the horrible doom of the impenitent!  
But you shall have a witness nearer at hand. You know, as a fact recorded in the Gospels, that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins. You know, too, from the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles, that His Name—by faith in His Name—is invested with the same power. By the ministry of the Holy Spirit, one may hear now, as in days of yore, a voice of Divine Authority saying, “Your sins are forgiven you; go in peace.” It was only last week I met with one who had been forgiven on the previous Sunday. The sweet relief, the calm belief and the true blessedness of that man was such that you could see it flashing from his eyes and animating every faculty of his being! The whole man was so full of joy that he did not know how to contain himself! The drift of all his conversation was, “I have found Christ! I have laid hold on eternal life! I have trusted in Jesus! I am saved!” His joy, though uttered in part, was unutterable! I sympathized in his ecstasy, remembering that it was so with me. I wanted to tell everybody that Christ was precious—and was able to save! Oh, yes, the young convert is a good witness, though the old Christian is quite as good! It is a blessed thing to have had 50 years’ enjoyment of the forgiveness of sin! I have half a mind to call some of our venerable friends up here to bear their witness. I am sure they would not stammer—or had they lost the power of ready speech through infirmity of this flesh, their testimony would be sound and vigorous—for they would tell you unhesitatingly how blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! I wish I had time to show you that forgiveness of sin is not only blessed of itself, but—  
IV. ALL THE FORGIVEN HELP TO SWELL THE TIDE OF BLESSING.  
A thousand felicities follow in its train! He who is forgiven is justified, acquitted, vindicated, sent forth without a stain or blemish on his reputation. He is regenerated, quickened, invigorated and brought into newness of life! More still, he is adopted, initiated into a Divine Family, invested with a new relationship and made heir of a heritage entailed by promise. The work of sanctification begun in him, here, will one day be completely perfected. He who is forgiven was elected from before the foundations of the world. He was redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus. For him, Christ stood as his Sponsor, Surety and Substitute at the bar of Justice. To the forgiven man all things have become new. Our Lord Jesus Christ has raised him up and made him sit in heavenly places with Him. He is even now a son and heir, a child of God, a prince of the blood imperial, a priest and a king who shall reign with Christ forever and ever! He who is washed in the precious blood is favored beyond any words that I can find to express. Ten thousand blessings are his portion. “How precious!” such a pardoned one may exclaim. “How precious are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”  
But the—  
V. BLESSEDNESS OF THE MAN WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN, WHOSE SIN IS COVERED, WILL BE MAINLY SEEN IN THE NEXT STATE.

That disembodied spirit, clear of spot or blemish, washed and whitened in the blood of the Lamb, passes without fear into the invisible world. It trembles not, though it appears before the eyes of Justice. No award can come to the forgiven soul except this, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.” We commit the body of the forgiven sinner to the grave in “sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection.” We give his flesh to be the food of the worms and his skin may rot to dust—but though worms destroy his body—yet in his flesh shall he see God, whom his eyes shall see for himself and not another! I was astonished some little time ago when I heard a good pastor, standing by the coffin of an honored minister, say, “There lies nothing of our Brother.” Not so, I thought! The bodies of the saints were purchased by Christ—though flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption, yet there will be such a marvelous change pass over the body of the forgiven sinner that the same body changed, but still the same body—shall be reunited with the disembodied spirit to dwell at God’s right hand! Listen! Listen! The trumpet sounds! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, we can but speak in prose. These great scenes we shall, all of us, see! We shall then think after another fashion. The trumpet sounds! The echo reaches Heaven. Hell startles at the sound to its nethermost domains. This trembling earth is all attention. The sea yields up her dead. A great white cloud comes sailing forth in awful majesty. Upon it there is a Throne, where Jesus sits in state! But his heart has no cause to quake whose sins are all forgiven! Well may the ransomed soul be calm amidst the pomp and pageantry of that tremendous day, for He who sits upon the Throne is the Son of Man, in whose blood we have been washed. Lo! This is the same Jesus who said, “I have forgiven you.” He cannot condemn us! We shall find to be our Friend whom others find to be their Judge. Blessed is that man who is forgiven! See him, as with ten thousand times ten thousand others pure as himself and like to himself, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! He ascends to the Celestial City, a perfect man in body and in soul, to dwell forever there! Hark to the acclamations of the ten thousand times ten thousand, the sound of the harpers harping with their harps, and the song that is like great waters. Write yes, write now, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” But doubly blessed are they, then, that they rise from the dead! Once they were sinners washed in blood, but then, in body and in soul they shall have come, through the precious blood, to see Jesus face to face!  
Oh, how I wish that all of us knew this blessedness! Seek it, Friends, seek it! It is to be found. “Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near.” I am especially encouraged in preaching the Gospel this evening, because I have just been seeing some who have been recently converted. There are hearers of the Gospel among you who have been listening to me for many years. Often have I feared that, in your case, I had labored in vain. But I have great hope, now, concerning some of you. The Lord keeps bringing in the old hearers of eight, nine, and ten years’ standing. Oh, I pray the Lord to save every one of you and bring you into the fold! I do long and pant that I may present you all before my Master’s face with joy! Even should you go and join other churches, and serve the Lord elsewhere, that will cause me no sorrow or regret. But God forbid that any of you should despise mercy, reject the Gospel and die in your sins! May you prove the blessedness of pardon, and then shall we meet, an unbroken congregation, before the Throne of God.  
The Lord grant it, for His Name’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 10:37-42.**

37. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. Christ must be first. He herein claims the highest place in every human breast. Could He have done so had He not been Divine? No mere Prophet would talk in this fashion! Yet we are not sensible of the slightest egotism in His speech, neither does it occur to us that He goes beyond His line. We are conscious that the Son of God has a right to speak thus, and only He.

We must earnestly beware of making idols of our dearest ones by loving them more than Jesus. We must never set them near the Throne of our King. We are not worthy to dwell with Christ, above, or even to be associated with Him here, if any earthly object is judged by us to be worthy to rival the Lord Jesus.

Father and mother, son and daughter—we would do anything to please them—but, as opposed to Jesus, they stand nowhere and cannot, for an instant, be allowed to come in the way of our supreme loyalty to our Lord.

38. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. Here our Lord, for the second time in this Gospel brings in His death. At first He spoke of being taken from them—but now of the Cross. There is a cross for each one which he may regards as “his cross.” It may be that the cross will not take us up, but we must take it up, by being willing to endure anything or everything for Christ’s sake. We are not to drag the cross after us, but to take it up! “Dragged crosses are heavy; carried crosses grow light.” Bearing the cross, we are to follow after Jesus—to bear a cross without following Christ is a poor affair. A Christian who shuns the cross is not Christian—but a cross-bearer who does not follow Jesus equally misses the mark! Is it not singular that nothing is so essential to make a man worthy of Christ as bearing his cross in His tracks? Yet it is assuredly so. Lord, You have laid a cross upon me—do not permit me to shirk it, or shrink from it!

39. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it. If to escape from death, he gives up Christ, and so finds a continuance of this poor mortal life—by that very act he loses true life. He gains the temporal at the expense of the eternal! On the other hand, he who loses life for Christ’s sake does in the highest sense find life, life eternal, life infinitely blessed! He makes the wisest choice who lays down his life for Jesus and finds life in Jesus!

40. He that receives you receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him who sent Me. What blessed union and hallowed communion exist between the King and His servants! The words before us are especially true of the Apostles to whom they were first addressed. Apostolic teaching is Christ’s teaching. To receive the 12 is to receive their Lord Jesus, and to receive the Lord Jesus is to receive God, Himself. In these days certain teachers despise the Epistles which were written by Apostles, and they are, themselves, worthy to be despised for so doing! This is one of the sure tests of soundness in the faith. “He that is of God hears us,” says John. This bears hard on modern critics who in a hypocritical manner pretend to receive Christ and then reject His Inspired Apostles!

Lord, teach me to receive Your people into my heart, that thus I may receive You. And as to the Doctrine which I hold, be pleased to establish me in the Apostolic faith.

41. He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet’s reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. Men may receive a Prophet as a patriot, or a poet—that is not the point in hand. The Prophet must be received in his highest character, “in the name of a Prophet,” and for the sake of his Lord! And then the Lord, Himself, is received, and He will reward the receiver in the same way in which His Prophet is rewarded. If we cannot do all the good deeds of a righteous man, we can yet partake in his happiness by having fellowship with him, and by uniting with him in vindicating the faith and comforting his heart. To receive into our homes and our hearts God’s persecuted servants is to share their reward. To maintain the cause and character of good men is to be numbered with them in God’s account. This is all of Grace, since the deed is so little and the recompense so large!

1917  
ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE SUSPENSION OF PUBLICATION:

It is with sincere regret that the Publishers announce the suspension of publication of C. H. Spurgeon’s Sermons. This step is rendered necessary by the present shortage of paper and other difficulties due to war conditions. There are still a number of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon’s Sermons which have never been issued in printed form, and it is hoped that when peace returns, it will be possible to publish these in some attractive form. The last issue of these Sermons, for the present, will be that of May 10th.

It is hoped that the suspension of publication will not in any way tend to lessen the world-wide ministry of these Sermons. Practically all the back numbers may still be obtained, so that those who know and appreciate the blessing which has been forthcoming from these weekly messages may still provide for their needs by selecting from the earlier issues. A Textual Index\* will be found useful in making a choice of subjects and texts, free on application from Marshall Brothers, Ltd., 47, Paternoster Row, London, E. C. 4.

\* http://www.spurgeongems.org/sindex\_ot.pdf (Old Testament Scripture index) http://www.spurgeongems.org/sindex\_nt.pdf (New Testament Scripture index)  
END VOLUME 63 AND SERIES! PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1346 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GUILE FORSAKEN WHEN GUILT IS FORGIVEN  
NO. 1346

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”  
Psalm 32:2.**

THE only blessing the Law can give, it bestows on those who do no iniquity and walk perfectly in God’s ways—the Gospel, alone, has a blessing for the guilty. Upon their believing in Jesus, it pronounces the benediction, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.” To be “blessed” is to be in the most desirable state—at peace with God, happy in yourself and full of Divine favor. A man cannot be more than blessed, or, what if I say, doubly blessed since the benediction is pronounced twice? Nor is it a stinted blessing, for no limiting word is put before it or after it to mark an inferior benediction.

When our Lord opened His mouth in the Sermon on the Mount, He poured forth a stream of blessings, and even so does the Gospel, when it speaks to the soul—rivers of blessing flow from its every word! The language of the text is very emphatic in the original and implies a multiplication of blessings. There cannot be a more true, real and assured blessedness than that which belongs to the forgiven sinner. All the blessedness which could have come to a perfect man comes to the man whose transgression is forgiven.

O you who have sinned against God and are conscious of it, rejoice that you are not shut out from blessedness! If, by faith, you can believe in the sin-forgiving God and accept the matchless Atonement which covers all your guilt and if you will exercise faith upon that blessed system by which sin is no longer imputed, then you are even now among the blessed! God Himself has blessed you and neither men nor devils can reverse the benediction. Now, mark that at the very same time that the guilt of sin is taken away and blessedness is bestowed, it happens unto the forgiven man that he undergoes a change of nature.

The work of the Spirit is linked with the work of the Son—when the Son removes guilt, the Spirit removes guile. He who takes away our offenses, also cures our deceit. When we begin to be Believers, we cease to be liars. He who was, before, crafty as Jacob no sooner receives the blessing of the Lord in answer to prayer than he becomes “an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile.” It is to this fact that I am going to draw your attention at this time. As I desire to use it as a means for self-examination and awakening, I pray the Holy Spirit to apply it with power to many souls.

You must all have noticed in David’s case, that after he had fallen into his foul sin with Bathsheba, he ceased to exhibit that transparent truthspeaking character which had charmed us so much before. Until he had obtained a sense of pardon for his great crime, David was as crooked and perverse as he could be. Guile was as abundant in him as guilt, for he made no confession of his sin and would not allow himself to see the heinousness of it. He must have put a fearful strain upon his conscience to have hushed its protests against his grievous offense. Perhaps even months passed without any honest acknowledgment to his own conscience and to God that he had so foully sinned. His entire endeavors were concentrated upon the concealment of his crime and, to that end, all his wits were set to work with horrible cunning.

What crafty devices he practiced in seeking to hide his sin—such as bringing Uriah back and making him drunk! Could this be David—the honest and conscientious David of former days? Could he have become so mean, so full of low scheming? Could he be the Psalmist who sung so sweetly? Could he deliberately plan the death of the man whom he had so fearfully wronged? Yes, and worse, when Uriah, being willfully exposed to danger, fell in battle, David manifested no compunction, nor uttered a word by way of confession. He put it off with apparent indifference, saying, “the sword devours one as well as another.”

He knew right well how Uriah came to die, and Joab knew, also, and yet he trumped up a message, as if nothing had been arranged between them beforehand. Ah, David, what a deceitful heart you had and how you did practice guile upon guile! Yes, so blind had his mental vision become, as to his own sinfulness, that when Nathan outlined a picture which was the very photograph of his own case, he did not see it, but pronounced a fierce sentence against the supposed culprit! It needed the Prophet to come forward and say, “You are the man,” before that guileful heart of David was able to perceive that Nathan spoke of him!

Yes, sin gives a twist to our entire manhood and makes us play a thousand tricks both with our conscience and with God. But notice, as soon as Nathan said, “The Lord has put away your sin: you shall not die,” David became another man! He wrote the 51st Psalm, which is one of the most honest pieces of writing that ever fell from human pen. How plain-spoken it is all through! How bare is the penitent’s bosom! In it you do not so much hear the sound of vibrating harp-strings as of throbbing, breaking heart-strings! All through it, the man’s soul is running over at his lips and at his eyes—concealment and trickery are quite out of the field. Pardoned sin makes an honest heart, but while sin is unconfessed and unforgiven the serpent rules within and men twist, wriggle, wind and turn in a thousand deceitful ways.

My first head tonight is this—many men play tricks with God and their consciences. Secondly, the forgiven man gives evidence of having ceased from this evil habit—“In His spirit there is no guile.”

I. While I speak upon my first head—that MANY MEN PLAY TRICKS WITH GOD AND THEIR CONSCIENCES, I shall be very glad if you will each carefully notice how much of what is said belongs to you personally. I want to be very honest with you, but I should be sorry to be unjust. Do not take home what does not apply to you, but anything which is really yours, I pray you to lay to heart. Court the entrance of the Truth of God, even though it should cut you to the quick. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” Avail yourselves of the opportunity which the Lord is now affording us to search our hearts, as in the presence of the Lord who weighs the spirits. May the Holy Spirit aid us in this business.

The guile of the human heart shows itself in a refusal to come to serious consideration. Men cannot be induced to examine themselves and to look to the state of affairs between God and their souls. We press them to it and plead with them, even to tears, but they refuse to do themselves this necessary service. They are more or less conscious that something is very wrong, but they have no mind to enquire. Is this truthful? Is it reasonable? If their house were reported to be on fire, would they not see to it? But no, they could not enjoy the fool’s paradise of false peace if they were seriously to think and enquire and, therefore, they prefer to take matters easily and ignore as much as possible all that is unsatisfactory about their condition and prospects.

From week to week there is no calling of conscience to account. Sabbaths follow one another and though there may be a little occasional awakening, there is no resolute determination to cast up accounts and find out the soul’s actual condition. They prefer to shut their eyes and stop their ears rather than see signs and hear tidings which would distress them. What childishness is this! It is worse—it is dishonesty to their souls and God. When a steward declines to render an account, you may easily guess the reason. When a shipmaster refuses to have his vessel surveyed, you shrewdly suspect the sea-worthiness of the ship. When a merchant does not care to look into his books, you judge on which side the balance has turned.

Honest men are prepared to go into matters and are willing to see the naked truth, but men who are not brave enough to face uncomfortable facts play the foolish game of bandaging their eyes. Putting the telescope to the blind eye and declaring that you see nothing is an old trick, and commonly practiced even now. May we never be suffered to persevere in the self-deception which is supported by a heedless disregard of warnings. Most men will do anything sooner than think about eternal things. The most frivolous amusements, the most stupid songs, the most carking cares and even the most weary ceremonial fashions are adopted as a happy release from the labor of reflection. Death, judgment, eternity, Heaven and Hell—they dare not think of these—and why? Because they know that all is wrong with them and so they practice a crafty carelessness and a cunning indifference.

Others who do think a little are partial in their judgments of themselves. They present accounts, but these are cooked and made to appear other than they should be by a sort of spiritual financing. Ungodly men color all that they do with a rosy tint and endeavor to be gratified with the appearance of their lives. Is it not very usual for business men, when their financial position is becoming more and more unsound, to make a show

of prosperity in order to keep up their credit? Doubtful investments are reckoned as available assets and heavy liabilities are toned down by clever adjustments. Public companies often show us fine specimens of the art of coloring. Alas, that reasonable beings should practice this art upon themselves in relation to their most vital interests—yet they do so year after year!

They put darkness for light and light for darkness, and reckon themselves to be rich and increased with goods while they are naked and poor and miserable. Well-skilled are many in the method of “making the worse appear the better reason.” They exaggerate any little excellence which they think they possess and greatly underestimate their faults. They deny, or extenuate, or altogether excuse their sin—they blame their nature, or their circumstances, or the Tempter—but they, themselves, must be excused. How could they help sinning? Others would have done the same had they been in their shoes—why, then, should they be blamed?

Moreover, what they did was not so very bad, after all, and there are all their good deeds as a set off against the bad! Men use false weights and deceitful balances when they are dealing with their souls. They will not endure honest handling. They cry, “peace, peace,” where there is no peace and prophesy smooth things for themselves. Like the unjust steward, they permit false statements to be made of what is due to their Lord and when they come up to their false standard they congratulate themselves as if they were the pink of honesty! Again, many are evidently tricking themselves willfully because they rest on such frivolous grounds of confidence. Could any man depend on his own good works unless he had juggled with his judgment?

What do you think? Do you believe that any man would build his hope for eternity upon his being christened when he was a baby and his having taken the communion at certain seasons since if he were not anxious to be deceived? Do you think that any man, unless willingly duped, could believe that he was made a child of God by an outward ceremony? Do you think any man would rely upon sacraments unless he desired to be misled? A mortal man believes in absolution given to him by a fellow sinner who calls himself a priest—is he not willingly deceived? If any man relies upon outward performances as a means for the putting away of sin, do you think he has not sense enough in him, if he chooses to use it, to know that this is utter absurdity?

True, many are duped by the teachings of others, but if they possess even so much as a trace of brain, might they not see through such false teaching if they chose? If a man would sit down and only think, would he not see that confidences based upon such frail foundations are as sure to fall as houses built upon the sand? But, alas, multitudes of men play such tricks with themselves so that they are led by the nose by the servants of Antichrist! They see that others yield their assent to the pretensions of priests and they conclude that they will go with the many. It is inconvenient to be too particular and so they leap with the majority!

But what a wretched way of doing business and how hollow the peace which comes of it! Men will trust their souls upon statements so flimsy that they would not risk a half-crown upon them. There is guile at the bottom of this and those who profess to be easy in these confidences are not so. Sirs, there is no man honest in his peace but the man who gained it through the blood of Jesus Christ! If you come to testing and trying, all other confidences fail you except confidence in the Christ of God! But the sinner is full of guile and does not want to test and try. Like the simple, he believes every word because it would be tedious to discriminate and troublesome to doubt a good report.

Some practice guile in another way. They avoid all home truths and keep clear of searching doctrines. If they hear a faithful sermon and it comes home to them, do you know what they say? “The preacher was so very harsh. I could not hear a man like that. I want more love.” Of course they cannot abide a ministry which reveals their true state, for, “he that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light lest his deeds should be reproved.” Only honest hearts ask to hear that searching Word of God which lays bare the thoughts and intents of the heart—gracious men know that to be turned inside out by a searching discourse is the very thing they need—and they are grateful to the honest man of God who will not spare them.

Those persons must be very foolish who prefer a doctor who, when they are dreadfully diseased and near to death, nevertheless flatteringly says, “Oh, this is but a small matter! I shall soon set you right. Here is my wonderful pill—take a certain quantity of boxes and you will be perfectly restored. I have seen many cases worse than yours completely cured.” The poor wretch is almost in his grave and yet he promises him long life! Sensible men hate such a deceiver. Rational men choose a trustworthy physician who will, so far as he knows, tell them what ails them and not bolster them up in falsehood. So, if men would but let their senses exercise themselves on the best things, they would prefer an honest teacher and prize his faithful warnings. And they would be glad that things should be put plainly, even if harshly, lest haply they should perish in self-deception.

Very commonly we meet with people foolish enough to endeavor to turn the edge of an unpalatable home truth by finding fault with the preacher. He is too censorious and that is your excuse for remaining in spiritual apathy. He blundered in pronunciation, or grammar, or style—and that is tacitly placed as an excuse for your rejecting the Gospel which he preached. Even books come in for the same censures! The plain-speaking volume is not “conceived in a gentle spirit,” or is too narrow, bigoted and one-sided. The witness is hated because he prophecies only evil. If the sinner cannot escape the censure of his conscience, he will raise a deal of dust and throw handfuls of it upon those who seek his good, so that in the fog he may effect a retreat. Ah, foolish trickery!

Beyond this, many are clever at parrying home thrusts by introducing other themes. Many imitate the Samaritan woman at the well. When our Lord began to unveil her character and touch her conscience about those five husbands of hers, she sought to change the subject by the remark, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and You say that in Jerusalem men ought to worship.” Thus with questions about rites or ceremonies, or doctrines, or types, or prophecies, men shield themselves from the blows of the Spirit’s sword! A brother minister told me, some time ago, that he visited a woman whose husband had died very suddenly, and he found that she had at one time been an attendant upon his ministry.

She was sitting with her brother, who was an elder of the Scot Church, who began at once, somewhat harshly, to remind her of her negligence of Christian ordinances. The woman evidently feared that the minister would follow in the same strain and so she cleverly warded off the expected attack by stating that she had a great difficulty which she could by no means get over. The minister had no idea of rebuking her while just newly made a widow, but her conscience was evidently putting her into a state of alarm. And so she again interrupted the minister’s kindly earnest remarks by saying, “But still, you see, Sir, I cannot get my mind easy about this one thing. In the Shorter Catechism it says that God is without beginning and I cannot understand how that can be. That He should be without end I can understand, but that He should be without beginning is quite beyond me.”

“Well,” said the pastor, “my good Soul, I do not think that this is quite the time to talk about such a mysterious matter. You see the Lord has removed your husband from you and it is well for us to hear the voice of the rod.” It was of no use, for the woman held to her shield and repeated that still she could not understand how God could be without a beginning. At last her brother, the elder, silenced her objection, by saying, “Woman, what are you doing? Why make such a fuss about a plain subject? Of course the Lord never had a beginning and He never needed any, for He was always there.”

This, for awhile, silenced that particular form of caviling, but before long the woman was at the same mode of defense. You know how the lapwing pretends to have a broken wing and flies as if it must be taken and all with the view of leading the passenger from her nest—so do our hearers try to lead us away from the main matter. When comparing notes about the way in which the unconverted meet us when we try to deal personally with them, ministers can all bear witness to the cleverness of many in the art of turning the switch and shunting the conversation. You know how it has been with some of you when you have been hard pressed, you have crept under the Doctrine of Election! You have hidden in the dark corner of Predestination, or dodged the Gospel behind some theory of free agency.

This is sheer trickery, a display of evil subtlety, exceedingly mischievous! What would it help you if you could understand all mysteries? As long as you are unreconciled to God, what does it matter about what you understand or do not understand? Is it not your business to confess your sin and go and seek mercy at the hands of the Most High? What degree of knowledge will excuse you if you neglect this chief duty? Those points which are worth your knowing, God will teach you in due time by His Spirit. I beseech you, attend to the main business which is that you should be saved from sin by faith in the Lord Jesus!

Another very cunning trick which is often practiced by sinners who are full of guile is this—they pass on to other people anything which is uncomfortably applicable to themselves. It seemed as if the preacher had made a cap specially to fit that head, but the result was that the person who watched the making exclaimed, “Dear me! How well he has taken my neighbor’s measure.” The letter is meant for him, but he puts it in another envelope, drops it into his friend’s mailbox and runs away! If there is a solemn warning for unregenerate men, he does not see its bearing on himself. He perceives somebody in the crowd who needs just such a serious word and he hopes that it will be useful to him.

You will hear him sometimes say after a sermon in which almost every point has been put personally to himself, “I cannot think how our friend Smith could keep his seat while the pastor was dealing so faithfully with him.” “You are the man” is an application as much needed now as ever, for it is one of the common tricks of sinners to get another to wear their robes that they, themselves, may pass unwounded through the battle. Alas for such wretched deceit!

One sorry piece of craft which Satan teaches to many is to make them doubt, or pretend to doubt, anything in Scripture which frowns upon them. If they find that, dying as they are, they will be driven from the Presence of God forever, they comfort themselves by recollecting that a wise man has discovered that everlasting does not mean forever! And they hear that a clever Divine has found out that there is to be a general jail release in Hell and everybody is to be admitted into Heaven in due time. They hear this and they hear that—and as drowning men catch at straws, so do they cling to any new inventions which promise them ease in their sins. They lay the flattering unction of false doctrine to their souls as if it were the balm of Gilead.

“Perhaps it may be so,” they say, and thus they risk their future happiness upon so poor a chance as the hope that, perhaps, these modern thinkers may turn out to be right and the plain teaching of Scripture prove to be a mistake! It is a wonderfully easy thing to make yourself out to be an honest skeptic and from this earthwork to assail your assailants. And yet all the while you may have no doubt at all, but in the core of your heart you may, like the devil, believe and tremble! Ah, you pretended doubters! If you were stretched on a dying bed, you would believe the old Revelation, fast enough, and begin to cry out for mercy in the fear which the approach of death would bring upon you!

Half the men who talk so much about their not believing, believe a great deal more than they would like to admit—but they dare not test their own imaginary infidelity by spending an hour alone in their chamber at eventide and looking into their own hearts. There are many hypocritical Believers, but are there not quite as many pretended unbelievers to whom doubting is a mere sop to quiet the cerberus of their conscience? Guile plays its part with the human intellect and conjures up an army of ghosts in the form of doubts—but when the sun of the Truth of God arises, they

immediately disappear.  
Let us examine another product of the deceit of the natural heart.  
While yet they are far from God, many calm and quiet themselves with  
outward religion. They never pray in sincerity—neither does their heart  
speak at any time with God—and yet they dare not go to bed at night  
without kneeling down at their bedside and repeating a form of prayer!  
They have never repented of sin and yet they will repeat words of confession most humbly. They do not praise the Lord in sincerity and yet their  
voices may be heard in Psalm and hymn. On the Lord’s Day they go up to  
the House of God and sit there and do as God’s people do—and they  
would not be easy if they did not do so—but their heart is in none of the  
worship.  
Far be it from me to discourage even outward reverence, but it is a  
strange cheat that a man puts upon himself when he supposes that mere  
formal, heartless worship can be a reason for peace of mind! To have  
mocked God with solemn sounds upon a thoughtless tongue ought not to  
be a ground of comfort! Repeating words of prayer without life and feeling  
should rather move us to self-condemnation than to self-congratulation!  
How can men feel content with rending their garments when the Lord bids  
them rend their hearts? O Sirs, if you do not pray with your hearts, what  
are all your forms worth? What are bended knees without broken hearts?  
If you do not, indeed, repent of sin and lay hold on Christ, what are all  
your Church goings, or your Chapel goings, however constant they may  
be? Of what good can external religion be to you while you deny to God  
the homage of your minds? And yet too many wrap themselves up in this  
garment of guile.  
There are others who conceal in the secret of their hearts a blasphemous notion which they hardly dare to put into words, but it amounts to  
this—the reason why they are not saved is not by any means due to themselves. They reject the Savior and refuse to leave their sins, but they are  
not to blame for it! In fact, they dare not actually say so, but they insinuate that the blame of their condition lies with God, Himself! They have  
been waiting, but Grace has not come! They are quite ready, but God is  
not! They are poor victims of adverse fate and rather to be pitied than  
condemned! Or so they endeavor to make out for themselves. Distorted  
truth is used to support their lies and conscience is drugged into a dangerous slumber. Thus do men trick themselves out of their souls with sophistical arguments forged by him who from the beginning is a murderer  
and a liar!  
Be not hoodwinked by this slanderous falsehood, but read God’s Word  
where He declares, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the  
death of him that dies, but that he turn unto Me and live.” He testifies  
that He waits to be gracious and all day long stretches out His hands to a  
disobedient and gainsaying generation! What a strong delusion is this,  
when men dare to lay their blood at God’s door and make Him to be the  
Author of their sin! In their consciences they know better, but their inward crookedness delights in lies.  
Perhaps the most numerous victims of this guile are those who flatter  
themselves that they will be right some day. They have been hearers of the  
Gospel for 20 years and are not saved—but they have a full persuasion  
that they shall not die as they are now. They nurse the fond idea that one  
of these days it will be convenient for them to seek the Lord. The convenient day has never come, yet, but still they think it will. There will be a favored hour and a peculiar time—and they half promise that it shall not be  
very much longer. O you who play at procrastination! You are knaves to  
your own souls! Think about it—if you resolve that you will repent in a  
year’s time, what is that but a daring defiance of God by declaring that  
you will continue in sin for 12 more months, at least? Have you ever  
looked at it in that light?  
Even if a man knew that he would live a year and that on this day 12  
months from now he would carry out his resolution to become a Christian, yet if he should make such a resolution, what would it amount to  
but this—“I mean for 12 months to refuse the Savior’s claims and remain  
an enemy to God”? Do you think that he who thus resolves is in a hopeful  
condition? If he is determined to rebel against his Lord for 12 months, do  
you not conclude that at the end of the year he will be a worse man and  
be even less likely to yield himself to God?  
Thus have I exposed a few of the many “knavish tricks” by which our  
unrenewed hearts manifest their deceit. May God the eternal Spirit bless  
the searching word to all who are deceiving themselves.  
II. But now, secondly, THE PARDONED MAN GIVES EVIDENCE OF  
CEASING FROM THIS GUILE, for, in the first place, he makes an open  
confession of his sin to God. Here he stands before the Most High and  
cries, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” for he feels his guiltiness. He  
takes his fault and criminality to himself and does not cloak his iniquity.  
He admits that he has sinned against Heaven and in the Presence of the  
Most High. This he does all the more freely because he has no motive to  
do otherwise. Why should he hide his sin? There is full forgiveness for  
him! Why should he deny it when the precious blood of Christ is ready to  
put it all away?  
I think the most honest confession is that which falls from the Believer’s lips when he gazes upon the—  
*“Fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.”*  
“There,” says a creditor to his debtor, “you owe me a great deal of money,  
but if you will bring me the account, I will receipt it all.” My Friend, would  
you not willingly put down all you owed in such a case? Ah, I think you  
would rather put down too much than too little when such a promise was  
before you! You would be afraid lest you should overlook anything and  
would be eager to make a clean breast of all your liabilities. And so when  
the Lord Jesus gives a full pardon to the soul that believes in Him, it is  
sure to be met with a full confession. How could it be otherwise? The pardoned man has, also, done with all sorts of excuses. He does  
not try to set his virtues in a brighter light than that of Truth of God or to  
make his sins appear less heinous than they are. He confesses all their guilt and heartily humbles himself in the sight of God. The lowly words in the language he loves best. The lowest place in the synagogue is his choice. Once he boasted that he was almost a saint, but now he admits that he is altogether a sinner. You shall hear no extenuations, excuses, or  
denials. The man beholds the pardon of God and it makes him honest. Now he desires to know the worst of his case and longs to be searched  
and probed. He who has found peace through Jesus Christ surrenders the  
keys of the most secret chambers of his soul and asks for inspection. “O  
Lord,” he says, “I pray You make sure work with my case. I beseech You  
cut from my heart this dreadful cancer of sin, even though the painful  
knife must follow every root of the hideous evil, for I desire Truth in the  
inward parts and the complete eradication of the love of sin.” He is not  
content to make the outside of the cup and platter clean and leave the inward part filthy, but he cries for inward cleansing and for renewal in the  
hidden fountains of thought and action.  
Now he courts Divine investigation and begs his Redeemer to let the  
winnowing fan discover and remove his chaff. Now would he put himself  
in the full blaze of Jehovah’s light and desire the consuming fire to burn  
up his dross. He cultivates heart-searching and practices daily repentance. He continually desires a lowly estimate of himself because he feels  
that self-abhorrence endears Christ to his heart as the great Savior of unworthy ones. He would rather have a little true Grace than abound in  
great pretensions and he considers the lowest place among the children of  
God to be better than he deserves.  
Sincerity has, also, entered into the sinner’s belief in the terrible things  
of God’s Word. He now sees their certainty and their justice and does not  
pretend to question them. He is one who trembles at the Word of the Lord  
and he leaves the cavilers to do their daring work alone. He knows in his  
own conscience that there is a Hell. He confesses, also, that it is just that  
there should be such a place of punishment and he only marvels that he  
has not been driven there, himself. Such a man now wishes to be dealt  
with personally and impartially whenever he reads a book or hears a sermon. He does not want the preacher to speak to others and leave him out.  
No, but he has come hungering and thirsting after the Word and he opens  
his mouth and pants for his portion.  
And if, instead of getting comfort, he is to receive rebuke, he is reverently ready to receive it so long as it shall be for his real good. He is ready

to take bitter medicine, for he is anxious to be healed. He lays bare his  
breast, for he desires the heavenly Surgeon to inflict any wound rather  
than leave the heart of stone within his flesh. He delights in the searching  
Word, and the more closely it tries and tests him the more thankful he is  
for it. The pardoned man, also, desires everything that he does to be true.  
He is often afraid to pray in public lest he should say more than he feels.  
When he rises from his knees in private, he frequently questions himself—  
“Has it been real devotion? Did I really mean all that I said?” He catechizes himself lest he should be a hypocrite!  
And I have known a man, whose sins have been pardoned, when he  
has dared to preach a sermon, sit down afterwards and take all his sentences to pieces lest he should have said more than he altogether knew  
and actually felt, for he was exceedingly afraid of going beyond the line of  
his actual knowledge. The saved soul hates paste gems and mimic jewels.  
He desires to have true precious stones or none at all. He is afraid of  
shams. He wants to be real in all things and, therefore, he sometimes  
doubts his own safety because he is in the habit of pulling himself to  
pieces—to dissect his heart and to see whether it is sound all through.  
This habit may be carried to excess, but, in itself, it is an exceedingly good  
one. It is infinitely better than the dishonesty of setting down all our gilt  
as gold.  
The really pardoned man, also, desires to be rid of all sin. I know some  
who can never hope to obtain forgiveness, for they continue in their iniquity. Can a woman expect to find peace with God while she goes on taking  
her sly drop and becoming intoxicated in private? Can a man find joy in  
God who still clings to the drunk’s vice? Will God receive into His favor  
those who continue to practice dishonesty in trade? Shall sin be fondled  
and yet pardoned? No one dares to expect it and yet deceitful hearts attempt to think so. They will condemn other people’s pet sins and yet excuse their own! They pretend much sorrow for sin in general, but hold to  
one favorite sin in particular.  
Their delicate Agag must live! Kill all the rest, but surely, as to this one,  
the bitterness of death has passed! O Sirs, be not deceived—you must be  
willing for all sin to go! If you desire one sin to live, you will not live yourself! The honest-hearted sinner—he whom the Lord absolves of iniquity—  
desires to see all his sins brought forth and hung up like the kings whom  
Joshua found in the cave at Makkedah—hung up in the face of the sun  
that they might die the death—  
*“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Your Throne,  
And worship only Thee.”*  
We are not perfect, but every really pardoned man wishes that he were  
so. Though there are sins into which we fall, there are no sins which we  
love. Though we come short of the Glory of God, yet we do not rest happy  
in falling short, and we can never be wholly content till it is no longer so  
with us.  
Beloved, the pardoned man is cleansed from the guile which would ask  
for quarter for darling sins. He seeks after perfect purity of life and he has  
heartily ceased from guile, for now, as an heir of Heaven, he lives in the  
Presence of God and delights to remember the all-seeing eye. Now he does  
not say to God, “Depart from me: I desire not the knowledge of Your  
ways,” but he looks upon every action of every day as done before his Father’s face. He needs nothing but the Truth of God and that which will  
bear the test of the Judgment Day. Beloved, I can well understand why a  
pardoned man becomes a man without deceit—because his pardon is a  
real pardon—there is no fiction in it. God justifies him, but He does not  
justify him by a deception, as some have blasphemously ventured to say. No, but there is my sin. Christ took it and was punished for it and,  
therefore, my sin was honestly put away without any violation of justice, for Christ has made a full Atonement for it—and so my sin has justly ceased to be! Why, with such an honest foundation as that, an honest pardon may well make an honest man! God makes the Believer righteous—righteous beyond dispute. His faith is counted to him for righteousness, seeing he has believed in Jesus Christ, and that is a righteousness which, at the Last Great Day, will stand the test of the most searching enquiry! The man is saved on honest principles and, therefore, from now on there are no tricks for him. He stands erect and fears no accuser while he cries, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who, also,  
makes intercession for us.”  
The lesson from the whole is this—be honest. Sinner, may God make  
you honest. Do not deceive yourself! Make a clean breast of it before God.  
Have an honest religion, or have none at all. Have a religion of the heart,  
or else have none. Put aside the mere vestment and garment of piety and  
let your soul be right within. Be honest. And you who are Christians, remember that your blessedness will never be enjoyed by yourselves unless  
you continue to be without guile. Some Christians live rather by policy  
than by honesty—I hope they are Christians, but I am not sure—for their  
life is full of scheming. They never go straight. They would not care to go  
straight—they like going a little round about just to show that they can  
dodge in and out. There are men of this sort in business and you need not  
go out of your road to meet them. Even their thinking seems to revolve on  
a wheel—all round about and round about.  
Now, Friends, you will never be happy while you act craftily. The only  
life in which a man can enjoy the blessedness of pardoned sin is a downright straightforward life. Be like clear glass so that all who choose to do  
so may see right through you. There is a way of living guardedly in which  
you never speak your mind, but are diplomatic and reserved. You take  
your words out of your mouth and look at them—and judge what other  
people will think of them. And then you put the best of them back again.  
There is a system of living, as it were, in armor, buckled up, with your visor down—you never dare show your real self, but maintain great prudence and reserve. What is this but to live in fetters? I would sooner die at  
once—  
*“I would rather not be, as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.”*  
To speak his heart and to act honestly is, to a true Believer, the path of  
peace and happiness. If any man chooses another path and tries diplomacy and policy, so he may, but as sure as he lives he will come to a sorrowful ending and find that such a course is not a way which God approves, nor will He let His servants have peace in it. May God, in His infinite mercy, bring us all to follow Jesus, trusting in His blood and treading  
in His footsteps! And to Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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THE DANGER OF UNCONFESSED SIN  
NO. 1366

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE NEWINGTON.

**“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.”  
Psalm 32:3.**

IT is well known that in ordinary cases grief which is kept within the bosom grows more and more intense. It is a very great relief to shed tears—it gives a vent to the heart. We sometimes pity those who weep, but there is a grief too deep for tears which is far more worthy of compassion—we ought most to pity those who cannot weep. A dry sorrow is a terrible one, but clear shining often follows the rain of tears. Tears are hopeful things. They are the dewdrops of the morning foretelling the coming day. So is it, also, a very great consolation to tell your story to a friend. I do not know whether it would not be a comfort, even, to speak it to a little child, even if the child could not understand you.

There is something in telling your sorrow and letting it out, otherwise it is like a mountain lake which has no outlet, into which the rains descend and the torrents rush and, at last, the banks are broken and a flood is caused. It is well for you to let your soul flow forth in words as to your common griefs! A festering wound is dangerous. Many have lost their reason because they had good reason to tell their sorrows, but had not reason enough to do so. Much talk has in it much of sin, but a heart full of agony must speak or burst. Therefore let it talk on and even repeat itself, for in so doing it will spend itself—

*“Sorrow weeps!  
And spends its bitterness in tears.  
My child of sorrow,  
Weep out the fullness of  
Your passionate grief,  
And drown in tears  
The bitterness of lonely years.”*

We shall now, however, think of spiritual sorrows and to these the same rule applies. “When I kept silence,” and did not pour out my sorrow when I ought to have confessed it, “my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.” Is it not a great mercy for us that we have the Book of Psalms and the life of such a man as David? Biographies of most people, nowadays, are like the portraits of a past generation when the art of flattery in oils was at its height. There is no greater cheat than a modem biography! It is not the man, at all, but what he might have been if he had not been something else! They give you a lock of his hair, or his wig, or his old coat, but seldom the man.

They make huge volumes out of a heap of his letters which ought to have been burned. And they copy little scraps of pictures which he used to draw for friends—and neither the letters nor the sketches ought ever to have been published. Like burglars, they break into a man’s chamber and steal his hidden things. They hold up to the public eye what was meant for privacy, only, and expose the secrets of the man’s heart and hearth. Things which the man would never have drawn or written if he had thought that they would meet the public eye are dragged forth and brought out as precious things, and so they are, but precious nonsense!

We have no biographers nowadays. When Boswell died, the greatest of all biographers died, and he was not far removed from a fool. If a man lives a noble life, he may well shrink from dying, because he knows what will become of him, nowadays, when writers of his memoirs unearth him and tear him to pieces! David’s Psalms are his best memorial. There you have not the man’s exterior, but his inward soul. They do not reveal the outward manifestations of the man, but you see the man’s heart—the inner David, the David that groaned and the David that wept! You see the David that sighed and the David that sinned—the David that yearned after God, and the David that was eaten up with the zeal of God’s house— the man who was born in sin and groaned over sin and was yet the man after God’s own heart. What a wonderful autobiography of a wonderful life that Book of Psalms is!

David was a many-sided man and his life was like the life of our Lord in this respect—that it seemed to comprehend the lives of all other men within itself. There is no man, I suppose, who has known the Lord in any age since David wrote but has seen himself in David’s Psalms as in a mirror and has said to himself, “This man knows all about me. He has been into every room of my soul—into its lowest cellar and into its loftiest tower. He has been with me in the dens of my inbred sin and in the palaces of my fellowship with Christ, from which I have looked upon the Glory of God.” Here is a man who “seems to be, not one, but all mankind’s epitome.”

Though we mourn over David’s sin, yet we thank God that it was permitted, for if he had not so fallen, he had not been able to help us when we are conscious of transgression. He could not have so minutely described our griefs if he had not felt the same. David lived, in this respect, for others as well as for himself. I am thankful that David was permitted to try the experiment of silence after his great sin, for he will now tell us what came of it—“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.”

We shall apply this first, as it should be, to the erring child of God convicted of his sin. Secondly, we shall remind you that the same rule holds good with the awakened sinner in whom the Spirit of God has begun to work a sense of guilt.

I. First, LET US THINK OF THE CHILD OF GOD. Children of God sin! Some of them have claimed to be well-near free from it but—I will say no more—but I think they sinned when they talked in such a lofty strain. God’s children sin, for they are still in the body. If they are in a right state of heart they will mourn over this and it will be the burden of their lives. Oh that they could live without sin! It is this that they sigh after and they can never be fully content until they obtain it. They do not excuse themselves by saying, “I cannot be perfect,” but they feel that their inability is their sin. They regard every transgression and tendency to sin as a grievous fault and they mourn over it from day to day. They would be holy as Christ is holy. To will is present with them, but how to perform that which they would, they find not.

Now, when the child of God sins, the proper thing for him to do is at once to go and tell his heavenly Father. As soon as ever we are conscious of sin, the right thing is not to begin to reason with the sin, or to wait until we have brought ourselves into a proper state of heart about it, but to go at once and confess the transgression unto the Lord, then and there. Sin will not come to any very great head in a man’s heart who does this continually. God will never have great chastisements in store for those who are quick confessors of sin.

You know how it is with your child. There has been something broken, perhaps, by carelessness. There has been some violation of a rule of the house. But if he comes and catches you by the sleeve and says, “Father,” or, “Mother, I am very sorry that I have been doing wrong”—why, you know, while you are sorry that he should transgress, you are glad to think that his heart is so right that without being questioned he comes of his own accord and tells you so frankly that he was wrong. Whatever grief you may feel about his fault, you feel a greater joy in the frankness of his confession and the tenderness of his conscience! And you have forgiven him, I am sure, before he has got half way through his open-hearted acknowledgment. You feel that you cannot be angry with so frank and penitent a child.

Though sometimes you may have to put on a sour look, shake your head and reprimand and scold a little, yet if the little eyes fill with tears and the confession becomes still more open and the sorrow still more evident—it is not hard to move you to give the child a kiss and send him away with, “Go and sin no more. I have forgiven you.” Our heavenly Father is a much more tender Father than any of us and, therefore, if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses? “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him” and, therefore, He has compassion upon the children of men when they acknowledge their offenses. We are not more ready to forgive our children than our heavenly Father is ready to forgive us! We may be quite sure of that.

And so, if it is our habit—and I trust it is—never to suffer guilt to lie upon our consciences, but to go as soon as we are sensible of a fault and admit it before the Lord, asking pardon from Him for Jesus’ sake, there will be no great amount of damage done to ourselves and the Lord’s anger will not wax hot against us and neither will severe chastisements happen to us. We may endure sharp afflictions, because they are often sent for another purpose, but we shall not have visitations of paternal wrath.

Many trials are not sent for chastisements at all, but as preparations for higher usefulness—for every branch that bears fruit He purges, evidently not because of any offense in the branch, but even because the branch is good and bears fruit and, therefore, it is allowed the special privilege of the pruning knife that it may bring forth more fruit.

Speedy and full confession will not prevent tribulations which are meant merely for instruction, but it will avert trials which are intended as severe chastisements—and this will be no small benefit. Did not David pray, “O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure”? Now, it sometimes happens that God’s children, when they have done wrong—especially if they have done very, very wrong—do not go and confess it. When there is the most necessity for confession, there is often the greatest tardiness in making it. It was so in David’s case. Alas, how foully had he fallen! It is never to any purpose to try and excuse David’s sin.

There are certain extenuating circumstances, but he never mentioned them and, therefore, we need not. Indeed, if David were here, tonight, and we were to begin excusing his sin, he would rise with tears in his eyes and say, “For God’s sake do not attempt it! Let it stand in all its deformity, that the power of God’s mercy may be the more clearly seen in washing me and making me whiter than snow.” But David’s heart, sometimes, was very evil. It was sound towards God as a rule. There was deep love to God always there, but it had become overlaid and crusted with what was always David’s great besetment—the strong passions of his impulsive nature.

He had followed, in some measure, the ill example of neighboring kings in taking a number of wives to himself and this had fed, rather than checked, his natural tendencies. And at last, in an evil hour, he fell into a crime of deepest dye. He knew that he was doing wrong. He sinned against light and knowledge but, alas, he did not hasten to his God and confess the grievous crime. I think I can see why he could not have gone straight away from the sin to confession, for the sin prevented the confession—the sin blinded the eyes, stultified the conscience and stupefied the entire spiritual nature of David. Hence He did not confess at once, but surely he felt as if he must admit the fault when the time came for prayer.

I have no doubt that David prayed after a sort, but he must have presented very formal and mutilated prayers so long as he refused to acknowledge his transgression. When the time came for David to finger his harp, perhaps he did so and went through a song or a Psalm. But he could never reach to the essence of true praise by pouring out his heart before God while the foul sin was hidden in his bosom. How could he? His Psalms and his prayers were silence before God, whatever sound he made—for his heart did not speak and God would not hear him.

However sweet the tone or the tune, his songs were nothing to the Most High, for his heart was silent. And why was he silent when he knew that he was wrong? Why did he not go to God at once? Well, it was partly because he was stupefied by his sin. He was fascinated, captivated and held in bondage by it. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, beware of the serpent eye of sin! It is dangerous to even look at sin, for looking leads to longing. A look at sin often leads to a lusting after sin and that soon ripens into the actual indulgence. No man even thinks of sin without damage!

I saw a magnificent photograph in Rome, one of the finest I had ever seen, and right across the middle there was the specter mark of a cart and two oxen repeated many times. The artist had tried to get it out, but the trace remained. While his plate was exposed to take the view, the cart and the oxen had gone across the scene and they were indelible! Often in the photograph of a fine building you will see the shade of a man who passed by who is represented by a sort of ghostly figure. Upon our soul every sinful thought leaves a mark and a stain that calls for us to weep it out—no, it needs Christ’s blood to wash it away!

We begin with thinking of sin and then we somewhat desire the sin. Next we enter into communion with the sin and then we get into the sin— and the sin gets into us and we lie as oak in it. So David did. He did not feel it at first, but there he was, plunged into the evil deeps. In such a state sin does not appear burdensome. A man with a pail of water on his head feels it to be heavy, but if he dives, he does not feel the weight of the water above him because he is actually in it and surrounded by it. When a man plunges into sin, he does not feel the weight of the sin as he does when he is out of that dreadful element—but then, by God’s Grace, he is burdened by it. So David did not feel His guilt at first. He knew that he had done wrong, but he did not perceive the exceeding heinousness of his evil deed and, therefore, he did not confess it.

Next, there was much pride in David’s heart. Have you a child who, when he has offended, knows he is wrong, but will not admit it? If so, you talk to him, but he will not speak. He is quite silent, or, if he does speak, it is not in the right way. He makes some naughty, obstinate, strongheaded speech. You cannot bring him to say, “Father, I have done wrong.” He tries to excuse himself in this way and that. Perhaps he partly denies the fault and only mentions certain things that other people did, by way of excuse for himself.

Now, what our children do to us we have often done to God! We have sullenly stood it out before Him. I remember well a story of a reputable Christian man who, on a certain occasion, was betrayed into drinking. He was a long time in distress of mind about his sin. He had been drunk, but when he was spoken to about it, as he was, by some of the officers of the Church, he said that he was, “overtaken” and added that, “a very little affected him.” I think that is what he said. And he pleaded that some others had been overtaken, too, and he did not see why such notice should be taken of a little slip. All this he said to leave a loophole for himself. When he had done saying that, he would add—Well, he did not know. He did not believe that he was drunk. He was sure that nobody could prove that he was, though he might have taken a little more than was good for him.

His tongue talked in that way, but his heart knew better! He was a child of God and he knew he was wrong. He never got peace by making these shocking self-defenses. He was, indeed, terribly tortured in his soul, till, at last he went down on his knees and said, “Lord, I have been drunk. There is no use in denying it. I, who am Your servant, have been drunk. Forgive me, for Your mercy’s sake, and keep me, from now on, from even tasting of the intoxicating cup.” He honestly confessed his transgression and a sweet sense of pardon followed at once! It takes some professors a long time to get up to that point. We call our sin by some other name and fancy that it is not quite so bad in us as it would be in others.

Oh, the ways we have got of trying to extenuate! And, oh, the sullenness which has sometimes been put on and carried out for days and days together before the living God by God’s children when they have fallen into an ill-temper. I have no doubt that some have been silent before God for a time as to the confession of their wrong because of fear. They could not believe that, after all, their Father loved them! They thought that if they did confess they would receive a heavy sentence and be overwhelmed with wrath. David had often looked up into the face of God and known His love—but now that he had thrown dust into his own eyes, he could not see God’s face.

He only felt God’s chastening hand, for He says, “Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” The sun burned him up, but afforded him none of the sunshine of the face of God. Unbelief is sure to follow sin of the kind committed by David. When it has brought on sullenness of temper, then we begin to think that God deals harshly with us, whereas it is we that are dealing harshly with Him. If we would confess, all would be well—but there is the tough part! It is not, if He would forgive, for He is ready to blot out the transgressions of His people—the difficulty lies in if we would believe in His love!

There is a great deal of the Pharisee in many Christians. You may question the statement, but I should not wonder if there is a good deal of the Pharisee in you, or else you would not have doubted the assertion. You are so much of a Pharisee that you do not think yourself a Pharisee! But we are prone to begin thinking, “Surely, surely, I, at such a time was a worthy object of God’s love, but now I am not.” Oh, then, you were once a wonder of goodness and marvelously worthy and excellent? Do not believe it! My dear Brother, perhaps you were as bad when you had not openly transgressed as you are now, for then your disease may have taken the form of pride, and though it has now taken another shape, it may be no worse, for pride is as damnable as any other form of sin. He who says to Himself, “I am righteous. I can stand before God and deserve His love,” is as surely lost as though he had fallen into gross sin. Take heed of the Pharisee that lurks within you!

Anyway, whatever was the reason, David was silent about his sin for a long time. The result of it was that his sorrow became worse and worse. He could not pray. He tried to pray, but as he would not confess his sin, it stuck in his throat. And till that was out, he could not pray. But still he must pray. So he took to roaring. That is to say, it was such inarticulate, indistinct prayer and there was so much of his soul in it that he calls it the roaring of a beast instead of the praying of a man! His inward grief over his unconfessed sin was such that his bones began to wax old. They are the pillars of the house, the strongest part of the entire system—but even they seemed as if they would decay.

He was brought into ill health of body through the torment of his mind. He could find no peace and yet he would not go and confess the sin! He was still sullenly looking up to God, not as a sinner, but as a saved one and talking to God as if he were righteous—while at the same time his sin was crushing him. All this while, I say, his grief gathered and there was only one cure for it—he ought to have confessed it to the Lord. As soon as it was confessed he was forgiven. How quick was that act of amnesty and oblivion! David said, “I have sinned,” and Nathan said, “The Lord has put away your sin. You shall not die.”

If pardon is so near at hand, who would linger a moment? Who among us would not, at once, repair to our heavenly Father and, with our head in his bosom sob out the confession of our sin? Because He is so ready to forgive we ought to be ready to confess! I may be addressing a child of God, or one who thought that he was a child of God, who has grievously fallen. My Brothers and Sisters, go with haste to your Lord and acknowledge your iniquity! He bids you come. Only confess your iniquity in which you have transgressed against the Lord and He will have mercy upon you now! And oh, what a relief it is when you have discharged the load and when the voice of mercy has said, “You are forgiven. Go in peace.”

“What would I give for that,” says one. Well, you need not give anything. Do but confess and if you confess into the ear of God, with faith in His dear Son, for Jesus’ sake He will accept you and seal your pardon home to your soul! Come and unburden your spirit at the bleeding feet of the Redeemer—and leap for joy! Thus have I tried to encourage the Lord’s own children to confess their sins. I do not know for whom these words are particularly meant, but I am driven to say them, for I labor under the strong impression that there is some child of God here who is almost despairing of the Lord’s mercy and who is well near ready to renounce his profession of religion because he fears that the Lord’s mercy is clean gone forever.

My dear Friend, judge not so harshly of Him who still loves you! Did He not love us when we were dead in trespasses and sins? And will He not love us if now our sin has wounded us again? He never loved us because we were good and, therefore, as He knew all that we should be, He will not change in His affection. He “commends His love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly”—died for us as SINNERS! If you never did come to Him—if all your religion has been a mistake—do not begin to argue upon that matter, but come to Jesus now, for the first time! Many and many a score of times have I done that! When the devil has said, “Your faith has been mere delusion and your experience has been all a fiction,” I have replied, “I will not dispute with you, Sir Devil,

but I will just go to Christ as a sinner, for I know He came to seek and to save sinners, even lost ones, such as I am. And I will humbly ask Him anew to be my Savior.”

That is a short cut to comfort! May the Spirit lead you into it! Be not baffled by Satanic suggestions, but come to Jesus again, and again, and again, “to whom coming as unto a living stone”—looking unto Jesus—not having looked once, but continually looking and trusting in Him!

II. But now I must have a few minutes, while we use this same subject in reference TO THE AWAKENED SINNER. Some in this place, perhaps, have lately been awakened to a consciousness of guilt before God. But one thing they have not done—they have never made confession of their sin. They feel the burden of it, in a measure, and they will feel it more, but as yet they have kept their grief to themselves. Neither to God nor man have they poured out their souls. To speak to our fellow men about our heart troubles is comparatively of little use and yet, I would not recommend persons under conviction of sin always to hide their souls’ sorrows from their Christian friends.

They might often be much helped if they would communicate their thoughts to those who have gone further on the road to Heaven and know more about Christ and the way of salvation. Yet, for the most part, a wounded conscience, like a wounded stag, delights to be alone that it may bleed in secret. It is very hard to get at a man under conviction of sin. He retires so far into himself that it is impossible to follow him. Ah, you poor mourners, I know how you try to conceal your pains! I will tell you one reason why you do not like to tell your mother, your sister, your brother. It is because you think your feelings are so strange—you suppose that nobody ever felt like you—you have the notion that you must be the worst person that ever lived and, therefore, you are ashamed to tell what you feel for fear your friends should kick you out of their society.

Ah, poor Soul. You do not know! You do not know! We have all been on your road. When you tell of your sin, you put us in memory of the way in which we talked, perhaps 25 years ago, or more, when we, too, felt sin a burden as you feel it now. When you tell us of the greatness of your sin and think that we shall surely despise you and never speak to you again, tears of joy are in our eyes to think that you feel as we did! We are glad to discover your tender and contrite spirit—we only wish that thousands felt as you do! Do you not remember what George Whitefield said when his brother at the dinner able said that he was a lost soul? Mr. Whitefield said, “Thank God,” and his brother wondered why.

“Why?” said Whitefield, “Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.” The more black you think yourself to be, the brighter is our hope of you! When you poor tremblers give yourselves an awful character, we know it is correct and we do not wish to contradict you, but we are glad to hear you say it and to know that you feel it, because now we see in you that which will prepare you to value a precious Christ! A man who says, “I am well clothed,” is not likely to accept Christ’s righteousness. But when he cries, “How naked I am, how useless are these fig leaves,” He is the man for Christ’s robes!

When you meet with a man who says, “I am full. I feast on my own righteousness,” what is the good of inviting him to the Gospel banquet? You must invite him, for you are commanded to do so, but he will refuse to come. But when you meet with another who is hungry, faint and ready to die—ah, there is the man for your money! Bid him come where the oxen and the fatlings are killed and all things are ready! His mouth is watering while you speak to him and he will come with you and sit down at the banquet of the King! We are glad, poor Sinner, to hear your tale and, therefore, the next time you meet with a Christian, I would advise you to tell him a little of it.

But still, that is not what you most need. You need to lay bare your deep sorrow before your God and, oh, if you do it, there stands the promise, “He that confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy.” Confession before God was never sincerely offered but absolution from the Most High was sure to follow! Remember, even though you do not go and tell the Lord, He knows already and, therefore, concealment is in vain! He needs not your confession for His information, but for your benefit. And if you do not confess to Him, you certainly will never obtain pardon, for there is not between the covers of the holy Bible a single intimation that God will ever pardon unconfessed sin! If you cover and cloak it—and feel no repentance about it and do not bring it to Christ—you cannot expect to receive mercy from the offended Lord.

Now, it happens with some, that, though they are conscious of sin, they do not confess it. And what is the result? Why, it increases their misery! It is impossible that you should find peace while sin continues to gather in your soul. It is a festering wound—the surgeon’s knife must be let in, there cannot be rest until it is so. I have known a sinner, before confession of sin, feel as if he could lay violent hands upon himself, so intense was his anguish. Well do I remember repeating to myself the words of the Prophet, “My soul chooses strangling rather than life,” for of all the tortures in this world, an awakened conscience, pressed down with a sense of guilt, is the worst!

The Spanish Inquisition invented cruel racks and thumbscrews, but there is no inquisitor like a man’s own conscience, for it can put the screw upon the soul to the uttermost degree. Let a man’s conscience loose upon him and at once the worm commences to gnaw and the fire begins to burn. They used, in olden times, to ascribe the torment of Hell to the devil—but we do not need any devil for that—conscience can measure out an infinite misery. Let but remorse lay its thongs of wire upon a man and it will scar him and gash him to the very soul! So long as a man continues silent before God and does not admit his sin—if the Lord has really begun to deal with him—he will have to suffer more and more from the pangs of conscience.

But then, increase of sorrow accompanied by this silence is a very dangerous piece of business. I spoke cheeringly just now of those of you who are under a sense of sin, but it was only in the hope that you would go to

God, through Jesus Christ, and confess your sin. But if you refuse to do so, your position is one of very great danger. “What danger?” you ask. Why, if sin remains festering within you and your sorrow increases, you will come to despair altogether—and that is an awful prospect, indeed. You remember John Bunyan’s picture of the man in the iron cage? There is not, in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” an incident more terrible!

Now, you are forging the bars of a cage for yourself as long as you refuse to acknowledge your guilt before God. Those who are in the iron cage of despair will tell you that they delayed to acknowledge sin, that they refused to accept Christ, that they suppressed their feelings and so brought themselves into bondage. They were pleased to hear ministers preach about conviction of sin and speak of deep sorrow and the like—but they did not care to be told that it was their duty, then and there, to believe in Jesus! They could not endure that doctrine! They liked to be comforted in the notion that there was something good in feeling a sense of sin, apart from believing—whereas, if a soul will not believe in Christ, its sense of sin may be an evil instead of a benefit to it!

Nothing can be good that is unsalted with faith. “With all your sacrifices you shall offer salt.” And if the salt of faith is absent, the sacrifice is unacceptable. We have known some who, through getting into despair, have afterwards fallen into utter hardness of heart. They used to be malleable. They used to feel the strokes of the Divine hammer. Now they feel nothing and are as hard as the blacksmith’s anvil. They have got into such a condition that they wickedly say, if God will save them they will be saved, but they have nothing to do with it. They once were tender—now they are presumptuous. They say, “there is no hope” and, therefore, on the theory of the old proverb that they may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, in all probability they will go on to commit worse sins than ever.

Some of the biggest sinners that have ever disgraced the name of humanity have been persons who were once tender of conscience and were on the point of conversion—but they did violence to conviction, came to despair of ever entering Heaven—and in the end determined that as they must go to Hell, they would go there with a high hand and an outstretched arm! He who has seen Heaven’s gate open before him, but has not stepped in, is the man who, above all others, is likely to find the hottest place in Hell!

You may think it strange for me to say so, but I know it is so, for such persons go by the way of despair into hardness of heart and then into the grossest transgression. Yes, and this is the back door to atheism, for when a man feels that God and he can never be at peace—when he has made up his mind that he never will confess his sin—what is the first thing that he does to comfort himself? He says—“There is no God.” And what does the declaration, “There is no God,” mean? It means this—that the man feels that he would be much more happy if there were no God! That is what it means and nothing more. It is the man’s wish, rather than his creed, and he wishes it because he despairs and his heart has grown hard.

Oh, when God makes your heart soft as wax, mind who puts the seal upon it! If the Spirit of the living God sets not the seal of deep repentance and holy faith upon the softened soul, there is another that will put the seal of despair and perhaps of atheism and of defiant sin upon it! And then woe was the day to you that you ever were born! Refusal to confess is a perilous thing for your soul! I am sure that when a man begins to be awakened to a sense of sin, if he tarries long in that condition, he is being entangled, moment by moment, in the Satanic web. The devil cares little about careless sinners. “Let them alone,” he says, “they will come to me by-and-by!” And as for very religious people who possess no true godliness, the devil does not bother them, either. He says, “No, let the hypocrites be in peace. They are going my way as nicely as possible. Why should I awaken them by causing them mistrust as to their state?”

But the moment that souls are startled into a sense of sin, the devil says to himself, “I shall lose them,” and so he plies all his arts and uses all his craft, if by any means he may prevent their escape. Man, now is your time to flee away to the City of Refuge without tarrying even for an hour, for even now all the devils in Hell are after you! They did not trouble about you before, but they are after you now with sevenfold energy! Close in with Christ, then, and at once escape them all! Oh, may the Spirit of God enable you to find eternal mercy through the confession of your sin to God and looking to Christ for mercy—the mercy which He is so willing to give now!

This is the last point. There is no hope, then, of any comfort to a bruised heart except by its confessing its guilt. I would earnestly urge upon every one conscious of sin to go with troubled heart and heaving bosom and confess his transgression to the Lord at once. I would do it in detail if I were you. I find it sometimes profitable to myself to read the Ten Commandments and to think over my sins against each one of them. What a list it is—and how it humbles you in the dust to read it over! When you come to that Commandment—“You shall not commit adultery,” “Ah,” you say, “I have never been guilty there.” But when you are told by the Savior that a lustful glance breaks that command, how it alters all!

Then you perceive that fleshly desires and imaginations are all sins and you humble yourself in the dust. You read, also, “You shall not kill.”— “Well,” you say, “I never killed anyone.” But you change your tune when you hear that, “He that is angry with his brother without a cause is a murderer.” When you see the spirituality of the Law and the way in which you have broken all the Commandments 10,000 times over, be sure to confess it all right sorrowfully! I find it good to look all round, sometimes, and think, “I am a father. There are my sins against my children. Have I trained them up for God as I should? I am a husband. There are sins in that relationship. I am an employer. There are sins in that position. How have I acted towards my servants? I am a pastor. How many sins occur in that relationship?”

Why, you will not look around you, if God opens your eyes, without being helped to see what you ought to confess! Take the very limbs of your body and they will accuse you—sins of the brain in evil thoughts! Sins of the eyes in idle glances! Sins of this little naughty member, the tongue, which does more mischief than all the rest! There is no member without its own special sins. There are sins of the ear—how often have we heard the Gospel, but heard it in vain? On the other hand, have we not too often lent a willing ear to unholy words and to wicked stories against our neighbors? I need not read over the calendar of our offenses from this pulpit—go and write it out in your closet—and pour out a flood of tears over it.

If yon are willing to confess, everything will help you to confession, and there is good reason for doing it at once. May the Holy Spirit work with His most tender influences to melt your heart into contrition! Remember, while you are confessing, that each one of your sins has a world of evil in it. There is a mine of sin in every little sin. You have taken up a spider’s nest sometimes—one of those little money-spinner’s nests—and you have opened it. What thousands of spiders you find hanging down and hastening away in many directions! What a myriad of them! So in every sin there is a host of sins. There is a conglomeration of many kinds of evil in every transgression, therefore be humbled on account of each one. Confess your iniquities before God and accept the consequences as being your righteous due.

There stands the block and there is the place for your neck—put it down, and say, “Lord, I submit to my sentence and if You bid the headsman strike, I cannot complain.” Go before God as the citizens of Calais came before the English king, with ropes about their necks! Submit yourselves to the chastisement due to your offense and then make an appeal ad misericordiam, to the mercy of God alone, and say, “For Christ’s sake— for His blood’s sake—have mercy upon me!”

There is no man, woman, or child in this Tabernacle who shall do that tonight who shall be rejected, for, “Him that comes to Me,” says Christ, “I will in nowise cast out.” And this is the right way of coming—the way of confessing your sin and acknowledging the evil of it—and turning to the great Substitute for deliverance! Say that you deserve to be sent to Hell and cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, trusting in the great Surety and Sacrifice, and you shall be accepted in and through Him! This is the way of life and he who runs therein shall find salvation! May the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, lead every one of you without exception to mourn your sin and rest in Jesus. Amen.

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TERRIBLE CONVICTIONS AND GENTLE DRAWINGS  
NO. 313

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 6, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

**“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” Psalm 32:3, 4.**

David here describes a very common experience among convicted sinners. He was subjected to extreme terrors and pangs of conscience. These terrors were continual. They scared him at night with visions—they terrified him all day with dark and gloomy forebodings. “Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me.” His pain was so extreme that when he resorted to prayer he could scarcely utter an articulate word. There were groans that could not be uttered within his spirit. And hence he calls his prayer roaring—a “roaring all the day long.” Wherever he was, his spirit seemed to be always sighing, sending a full torrent of melancholy groans upwards towards God. A “roaring all the day long.”

So far did this groaning proceed, that at last his bodily frame began to show evidences of it. He grew old and that not merely in the lines of the countenance and the falling in of the cheeks, but his very bones seemed as if they partook of the suffering. He became like an old man before his time. We have heard of some who through severe trouble have had their hair bleached in a single night. But here was a man who did not show merely externally, but even internally, the heavy pressure of grief, on account of sin. His bones grew old and the sap of his life, the animal spirits, were all dried up—his “moisture was turned into the drought of summer.”

So intimate is the connection between the body and the soul, that when the soul suffers extremely, the body must be called to endure its part of grief. Verily, in this case it was but simple justice, for David had sinned with his body and with his soul, too. By fornication he had defiled his members. He had looked out from his eyes with lustful desires and had committed iniquity with his body. Now the frame which had become the instrument of unrighteousness becomes a vehicle of punishment and his body bears its share of misery—“my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.”

We gather from what David says in this Psalm and indeed in all these seven penitential Psalms that his convictions on account of his sin with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of Uriah, were of the deepest and most poignant character and that the terrors he experienced were indescribable, filling his soul with horror and dismay.

Now, this morning, I propose to deal with this case, so common among those who are under conviction of sin. There are many, who, when the Lord is bringing them to Himself, are alarmed by reason of the hardness of the stroke with which He smites them and the sternness of the sentence which He pronounces against them. After having dealt very solemnly with that character, I shall then turn and spend a fear moments in trying to comfort another class of persons, who, strange to say, are without comfort because they do not have these terrors and are unhappy because they have never experienced this unhappiness. Strange perversity of human nature—that when God sends the terrors we doubt—and when he withholds them we doubt none the less. May God the Spirit bless my discourse doubly to these two different conditions of men.

I. First, then, let me address myself with loving kindness to those who are now THE SUBJECTS OF GOD’S REBUKE AND THE TERRORS OF GOD’S LAW. To you I would speak on this wise—first, detect the causes of your terror. And secondly, tell you God’s design in subjecting you there, and then point you to the great remedy.

1. As for the causes of your terror they are many and perhaps in your case the cause may be so peculiar that the wit of man may not be able to discover it. Nevertheless, the remedy which I have to propound at the end will most assuredly be adapted to your case, for it is a remedy which reaches all diseases and is a panacea for all ills. You tell me you are sore troubled by reason of conviction and that your convictions of sin are attended by the most terrible and gloomy thoughts. I am not at a loss to tell you why it is.

I shall this morning borrow my divisions from quaint old Thomas Fuller, whose book happened to be thrown in my way this week by Providence. As I cannot say better things than he said, I shall borrow much of his description of the causes of the terrors of conviction. First, those wounds must be deep which are given by so strong a hand as that of God. Remember, Sinner, it is God that is dealing with you. When you lay dead in your sins He looked on you and now he has begun not only to look, but to smite. He is now wounding you with the design of afterwards making you whole. He is killing you that He may afterwards make you spiritually alive.

You have now entered the battle with no other than the Almighty God. Do you wonder, then, that when He smites, His blows fell you to the ground? Are you astonished that when He wounds, His wounds are deep and hard to heal? Besides, remember it is an angry God that you have to deal with—One who has had patience with you in your sins these thirty, forty, or fifty years, and now He has come forth Himself, to compel you to throw down the weapons of your rebellion and to take you captive by His justice, that He may afterwards set you free by His Grace. Is it any marvel, then, that when an angry God—a God who has restrained His anger these many years—comes out in battle against you, you find it hard to resist Him and that His blows bruise you and break your bones and make your spirit feel as if it must verily die, crushed beneath the mighty hand of a cruel one?

Be not astonished at all your terrors. God on Sinai, when He came to give the Law, was terrible. But God on Sinai, when He comes to bring the Law into the conscience and to strike it home, must be more terrible. When God did but stretch out His hand with the two tables of stone, Moses did exceedingly fear and quake. But when He throws those tables of stone upon you and makes you feel the weight of that Law which you have broken, it is but little marvel that your spirit is bruised and mangled and dashed into a thousand slivers.

Again—it is no wonder that you are sore troubled when you remember the place where God has wounded you. He has not wounded you in your hand, or in your head, or in your foot. He is striking at your conscience— the eye of your soul. He wounds you in your heart—in your inmost soul. Every wound that God gives to the convicted man is a wound in the very heart—in the very vitals. He cuts into the core of the liver and makes His darts cut through the gall and parches your inward parts with agony. It is not now a disease that has laid hold merely on your skin or flesh, but it is something which makes the lifeblood boil with hot anguish. He has now shot His arrows into your inmost spirit, thrust His fingers into your eyes and put out their light.

Oh, you need not wonder that your pains are fearful, when God thus smites you on the most tender part of a conscience which He has made tender by His Grace. He may well smart, that has salt rubbed into his wounds. You have been lashed with the ten-thronged whip of the Law till your heart is all bare and bleeding. Now God is scattering, as it were, the salt and making all those wounds to tingle and smart. Oh, you might wonder, if you did

 not feel, when God is thus casting bitterness into the fountain of your life!

Besides these, there is a third cause for your pain, namely, that Satan is now busy upon you. He sees that God is wounding you and he does not wish that those wounds shall heal. He therefore thrusts in his fangs and tears open the flesh and tries to pour his poison into that very flesh which

God has been wounding with the sword. “Now,” says he, “that God is against him will I be against him, too. God is driving him to sadness. I will drive him farther still and urge him to despair. God has brought him to the precipice, to the edge of his self-righteousness and bid him look down and see the yawning gulf. Now,” says Satan, “one push more and over he will go.”

He has come forth, therefore, with all his strength, hoping that the hour of your conviction shall be also the hour of your condemnation. He will tempt you, perhaps, as he did Job, till you cry, “My soul chooses strangling rather than life.” He will seek to bring you low, like Jeremiah, until you are ready to wish you had never been born, rather than that you should suffer like this. You can well understand, if a man had been wounded, that it were hard work for the most skillful surgeon to heal him if some vile wretch should tear away the liniments and rend open the wounds as fast as they began to close.

Oh, pray against Satan! Cry aloud to your God to deliver you from this Fiend, for he is the cause of much of your distress. And if you were rid of him, it may be that your wound would soon heal and you would find peace. But, remember, the remedy that I shall have to propound to you is a remedy against devils. It is the Fiend’s confusion as well as sin’s destruction. Let them come against you as they may. The remedy I shall have to propound can heal the wounds of Satan and the tearing of his fangs, as well as those sorrows of soul which God has brought upon you.

You may discover a yet further reason why you are so sore wounded when you consider the terrible nature of that weapon with which God has wounded you. He has not made a little gash with some slender instrument, but if I understand your case rightly, He has brought against you the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Its Word condemns you. Its threats strike you like barbed arrows. You turn to the Law as it is here revealed and it is altogether on a smoke against you. You turn to the promises and even they wound you, because you feel you have no right to them. You look at the most precious passages, but they do not relieve your grief, but they rather increase it, because you cannot realize them and lay hold upon them for yourself.

Now this is God using His Word against you and you know what a weapon that is—“the sword of the Spirit, which is quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” They are cut deep that are wounded by the Word of God. If it were my words which had brought you into this fear, you might soon get rid of it. But these are God’s Words. Were it a father’s curse, it might be hard to give you comfort. But it is God’s curse that has gone out against you—the curse of the God who made you.

He Himself has told you that the sinner shall not stand in His sight and that He hates the workers of iniquity. He has Himself brought home to your conscience some of those awful passages—“God is angry with the wicked every day.” “He will by no means clear the guilty.” “Our God is a consuming fire.” “The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.” With such weapons as these—with red-hot shot fired against you with all the power of the Spirit—it remains no longer a wonder that your soul should be sharply racked and your very bones should wax old through your roaring all the day long.

Furthermore, there is another cause for this deep disease of conviction, namely, the foolishness of the patient. Physicians will tell you that they can heal one man vastly more quickly than another, even though the disease be precisely the same and the same remedies be used. There are some men who help the physician by the quietude of their spirits—by the ease and resignation of their minds, their heart—and this gives “health to the navel and marrow to the bones.” But other men are fretful, disturbed, vexed, anxious, questioning this and questioning that. And then the remedies themselves cease to have their proper effect.

It is even so with you. You are a foolish patient. You will not do that which would cure you, but you do that which aggravates your woe. You know that if you would cast yourselves upon Christ Jesus you would have peace of conscience at once. But instead of that, you are meddling with doctrines too high for you—trying to pry into mysteries which the angels have not known. And so you turn your dizzy brain and thus help to make your heart yet more singularly sad. You know that you are trying still to work out a righteousness of your own and this is making your wounds stinking and corrupt.

You know, too, that you are looking more to your faith than you are to the Object of your faith. You are looking more to what you feel than to what Christ felt. You spend more time in looking at your convictions than you do at Christ’s vicarious sacrifice upon the Cross. You are a foolish patient. You are doing that which aggravates your complaint. Oh, that you were wiser and these terrors and these pangs might be over! You would not tarry so long in the prison if you would but use the means of escape, instead of seeking to dash your head against its strong walls—walls that will not move with all your ravings, but which will only break and bruise and wound you the more.

You seek to file your fetters and you rivet them. You seek to unbind them, yourself, and you thrust them the deeper into your flesh. You grasp the hammer and here is the fetter about your wrist. You think to snap it, but you send the iron through the flesh and make it bleed. You make yourself worse by all your attempts to make yourself better—so that much of your sorrowful conviction is due to your own absurdity—your own ignorance and folly.

And, once more, I must give you another reason. There is no wonder that you are under great and terrible pain when under conviction, for it is a disease in which nothing can ever help you but that one remedy. All the joys of nature will never give you relief. I have heard of some vain man who once wore the gown of a clergyman, who was “visited by a poor creature under distress of mind, in the days of Whitfield.” He said to the penitent, “You have been among the Methodists.” “I know I have,” said he. “Then don’t go among those fellows. They have made you mad.” “But what am I to do to get rid of the distress of mind I now feel?” “Attend the theater,” said he. “Go off to balls. Take to gaming and the like. And in that way you will soon dissipate your woe.”

But as he that pours vinegar upon niter, so is he that sings songs to a sad heart. It is taking away a man’s garment to make him warm. It is heaping snow upon his head to dissolve the frostbite, sending him back to the hog sty that he may stay his hunger, thrusting him into the kennel that he may get rid of the stench that offends his nostrils. No, if these wounds be truly from God, sinful pleasures will make you worse instead of better. And even the usual comforts of life will lose all power to console you. The words of the most tender wife, the most loving husband, the mercies of Providence, the blessings of home—all these will be of no avail to you to cure this disease. There is one remedy for it. But none of these will so much as touch it.

Quaint old Fuller uses language to this effect—when Adam had sinned, he became suddenly plunged in misery. The birds sang as sweetly, the flowers bloomed as brightly and the air was as balmy and Eden quite as blissful. But Adam was in misery. He had un-paradised Paradise. God had not said a word against him and yet he went and hid himself under the trees of the garden to find a shelter there. There was nothing in the whole garden that could give Adam a moment’s delight, because he was under a sense of sin. And so will it be with you. If you could be put in Paradise, you would not be happier. Now that God has convicted you of sin, there is only one cure for you and that one cure you must have. For you may ramble the world round and you will never find another. You may try your best with all the pleasures and mercies of this life, but you would be in torment, even though you could be taken to Heaven, unless this one remedy should appease your aching heart.

2. I have thus, I think, given you sufficient reasons for the great poignancy of your grief. But now, secondly, what are God’s designs in thus plunging you deeply in the mire? He does not deal so with all His people. Some He brings in a very gentle way to Himself. Why, then, does He deal harshly with you? The answers to this question are these—there are some questions best unanswered. There are some dealings of God about which we have no right to ask a question. If He draws you to Heaven, though it were through Hell itself, you ought to be content. So long as you are but saved, however fearful the process, you ought not to murmur. But I may give you some reasons, after all.

In the first place, it is because you were such a stony-hearted sinner, so dead, so careless—that nothing else ever would have awakened you but this trumpet. It would have been of no use to bring out the Gospel with its melodious notes. It would have been of little service for David to play on his harp before you. You needed to be aroused, and therefore it is that God has hurled his thunderbolts at you one after another and has been pleased to make Heaven and earth shake before you that you might be made to tremble. You were so desperately set on mischief, so stolid, so indifferent, that if saved, God must save you in such a way, or else not at all.

And then again—the Lord knows that there is that in your heart which would take you back to your old sins and so He is making them bitter to you. He is burning you, that you may be like the burnt child that dreads the fire. He is letting you see the disease in its full climax, that you may from henceforth avoid the company in which that disease was found. He has taught you the full evil of’ your heart, the full obnoxiousness of sin, in order that from this day forth you may become a more careful walker and may the more zealously hate every false way.

Besides, it may possibly happen that He designs this out of love to your soul, to make you the more happy afterwards. He is filling your mouth with wormwood and breaking your teeth with gravel, that you may have a richer appreciation of the luscious flavor of pardon when He pours it into your heart. He is making you feed on ashes—the serpent’s meat—that when you come to eat children’s meat—the bread of Heaven—your joy may be multiplied sevenfold. I am one of those poor souls who for five years led a life of misery and was almost driven to distraction. But I can heartily say that one day of pardoned sin was a sufficient recompense for the whole five years of conviction.

I have to bless God for every terror that ever seared me by night and for every foreboding that alarmed me by day. It has made me happier ever since. For now, if there be a trouble weighing upon my soul, I thank God it is not such a trouble as that which bowed me to the very earth and made me creep like a very beast upon the ground by reason of heavy distress and affliction. I know I never can again suffer what I have suffered. I never can, except I be sent to Hell, know more of agony than I have known. And now, that ease, that joy and peace in believing, that “no condemnation” which belongs to me as a child of God, is made doubly sweet

and inexpressibly precious, by the recollection of my past days of sorrow and grief.

Blessed are You, O God, forever! You have, by those black days, like a dreary wind made these summer days all the fairer and the sweeter! The shore is never so welcome as when you mount it with the foot of a shipwrecked mariner just escaped from the sea—food never so sweet as when you sit at the table after days of hunger. Water is never so refreshing as when you arrive at the end of a parched desert and have known what it is to thirst.

And yet one other reason let me give you and I need not keep you longer on this point. Possibly, God is bringing you thus, my dear Friends, because He means to make great use of you. We are all God’s weapons against the enemy. All His saints are used as instruments in the Holy War. But there are some whom God uses in the thickest part of the battle. They are His swords whom He wields in His hands and strikes innumerable blows with them. These He anneals again and again and again. He is annealing you. He is making you meet to be a mighty one in His Israel byand-by. Oh, How sweetly you will able to talk to others like yourself, when you once get comfort. And oh, how much you will love Him when He once puts away your sin! Will you not?

Oh, I think I see you the first day after your sins are forgiven. Why you will be wanting to preach—I should not wonder if you will be going out into the streets, or hurrying to your old companions and saying to them, “My sins are washed away.” Why there will be nothing too hard for you. The Lord gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction. These are Highlanders that carry everything before them. They know the rivers of sin, they know the glens of grief and now that all their sins are washed away, they know the heights of self-consecration and of pure devotion. They can do all things through Christ, who strengthens them—the Christ who has forgiven them.

Do you not think I have just driven the nail home here? Do you not feel in your spirit, that if Jesus would forgive you, you would do everything for Him? Oh, I know if I should give out that hymn—

*“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,  
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring With shouts of Sovereign Grace,”*

you would say, “Ah, that I will. If ever He forgives such a wretch as I am and takes such a poor worm as me to His bosom, nothing shall be too hard for me. I will give Him all in this life and I will give an eternity of praise in the life to come.”  
3. But now I am impatient to come to the word of comfort which I have

for you great sinners. Sinners distressed on account of sin and bowed down with terror —there is a way of salvation for you, a way open and accessible—accessible now! You may now have all your griefs relieved and all your sorrows may flee away. Listen to the remedy! And hear it as from the lip of God and take care that you avail yourself of it now, for the longer you tarry, the harder will it be to avail yourself of it.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Do you understand me? Trust Christ and you are saved. Trust Him now and all your sins are gone. There is not one left. Past, present and to come—all gone. “Am I to feel nothing?” No, not as a preparation for Christ. Trust Jesus and you are saved. “Are there no good works required of me?” None, none—good works shall follow afterwards. The remedy is a simple one. Not a compound mixture of your things and Christ. It is just this—the blood of Jesus Christ.

There is Jesus on His Cross. His hands are bleeding. His heart is bursting. His limbs are tortured. The powers of His soul are full of agony. Those sufferings were offered to God in the place of our sufferings and, “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” Believe on Him now. “But I may not,” says one. You may, no, not only you may, but you are condemned if you do not believe Him now. “I cannot,” says one. Can not believe your Lord? Is He a liar? Can you not believe His power to save? The Son of God in agony and yet no power to save!! “I cannot think He shed His blood for me,” says such an one. You are commanded to trust Him. You shall read your title clear in Him afterwards. Your business now is simply with Him, not with your interest in Him. That shall be known afterwards.

Trust Him now and you are saved. Faith is believing that Christ died for me. If Christ died for every man, then every Arminian, saved or unsaved, has the true faith—for he believes Christ died for every man. We as Calvinists do not believe this—but we believe faith consists in trusting Christ and whoever trusts Christ shall know the effect of that Truth of God—that Jesus died for him and he is saved. Trust Jesus now. Just as you are, fall flat on your face before Him. Away with that last dirty rag of yours—that last good work. Away with that last filthiness—that last good thought. Your good thoughts and your good works are rags and filthiness.

Come just as you are. Naked, lost, ruined, helpless, poor. If you are so bad that I cannot describe you and you can not describe yourself, yet come. Mercy’s free, mercy’s free! I am never afraid of preaching grace too free, or a Christ too willing to save. You do want a Mediator to come to God with, but you want none to come to Christ with. You do need some preparation if you are going to the Father. You want none if you are coming to the Son. Come as you are. And God Himself must be untrue, His

Throne must have foundations apart from righteousness, Christ must be false and this Bible a lie, before one soul that trusts Jesus can ever perish. There is the remedy! By the power of the Holy Spirit avail yourself of it. Now God help you and you are fully saved.

II. I shall now want your patient attention for another five or ten minutes, while I take upon myself what was a double duty. Because I was afraid to shout the last part of the sermon, the first part might do hurt. In the last part of the sermon I have to deal with some who have NEVER FELT THESE TERRORS AT ALL and WHO, STRANGE TO SAY IT, WISH THEY HAD FELT THEM.

I suppose I may have conversed now with somewhere verging upon two thousand souls who have been brought to know the Lord under my instrumentality and I have very often noticed that a considerable proportion of these and of the best members of our Church, too, were brought to know the Lord not by legal terrors, but by gentler means. Sitting one day last week, I saw some twenty-three and I should think that there might be as many as twelve out of the twenty-three whose convictions of sin were not distinctly marked with the terrors of the Law.

An excellent young woman comes before me—“What was the first thought that set you really seeking the Savior?” “Sir, it was Christ’s lovely character that first made me long to be His disciple. I saw how kind, how good, how disinterested, how self-sacrificing He was and that made me feel how different I was to what He was. I thought, Oh, I am not like Jesus! And that sent me up to my chamber and I began to pray!” I often have cases like this—I preach a terrible sermon upon the Law and I find sinners get comfort under it. I preach another sermon upon Election and I find poor sinners get awakened under it. God blesses the Word in the very opposite manner to which I thought it would be blessed and He brings very, very many to know their natural state by things which we should have thought would rather have comforted than alarmed them.

“The first religious impression I ever had,” said another, “that set me seeking the Savior, was this. A young companion of mine fell into sin and I knew that I was likely to do the same if I was not kept by someone stronger than myself. I therefore sought the Lord, not on account of past sin at first, but because I was afraid of some great future sin. God visited me and I then felt conviction of sin and was brought to Christ.” Singularly enough, too, I have met with at least a score of persons who found Christ and then mourned their sins more afterwards than they did before. Their convictions have been more terrible after they have known their interest in Christ than they were at first. They have seen the evil after they have escaped from it. They had been plucked out of the miry clay and their feet set on a rock, and then afterwards, they have seen more fully the depth of that horrible pit out of which they have been snatched.

But it is not true that all who are saved suffer these convictions and terrors. There are a considerable number who are drawn by the cords of love and the hands of a man. There are some who, like Lydia. have their hearts opened not by the crowbar of conviction, but by the pick-lock of Divine Grace. Sweetly drawn, almost silently enchanted by the loveliness of Jesus, they say, “Draw me and I will run after you.”

And now you ask me the question—“Why has God brought me to Himself in this gentle manner?” Again I say—there are some questions better unanswered than answered. God knows best the reason why He does not give you these terrors. Leave that question with Him. But I may tell you an anecdote. There was a man once who had never felt these terrors and he thought within himself—“I never can believe I am a Christian unless I do.” So he prayed to God that he might feel them and he did feel them and what do you think is his testimony? He says, “Never, never do that, for the result was fearful in the extreme.” If he had but known what he was asking for, he would not have asked for anything so foolish.

I knew a Christian man once who prayed for trouble. He was afraid he was not a Christian, because he had no trouble. But when the trouble came, he soon discovered how foolish he was to be asking for a thing which God, in mercy, had kept back from him. O be not foolish enough to sigh for misery. Thank God that you go to Heaven along the walls of salvation. Bless the Master that He does not call you in the cloudy and dark day, but brings you gently to Himself. And be content, I pray, to be called by the music of the voice of love.

May it not happen that Jesus Christ has thus brought you for another reason? He knew that you were very weak and your mind was very frail and if you had felt these terrors you might have gone mad. And you might have been in a lunatic asylum now, if you had passed through them. It is true His Grace could have kept you, but God always tempers the willed to the shorn lamb and he will not treat the weak ones as He does the strong ones.

And I think again, it may be that if God had given you these feelings you would have grown self-righteous. You would have trusted in them, so He has not given you them. You have not got them to build on, thank God for that, for now you must build on Christ. You say—“If I had felt these things, I think I should have been saved.” Yes, then you would have trusted in your feelings. The Lord knew that, and therefore He has not given you them. He has given you nothing at all, therefore you must now rest on Christ and nowhere else but there. Oh, do so now!

It may be, again, that He has kept you there because He means to make you useful—useful to some who, like yourself, have come gradually to Him. You can say to them when you find them in distress, “Why Jesus Christ brought me gently and therefore be of good cheer, He is bringing you, too.” I always like to see in my Church some of all sorts. Now there is a brother I could point out this morning who has never known in his life and I think never will know, about the plague of his own heart to such an extent as some of us have learnt. He has never gone through fire and through water, but on the contrary is a loving-hearted spirit. A man who spends and is spent in his Master’s service—he knows more of the heights of communion than some of us. For my part—though I do not want to change places with anybody—I think I could trust my Master if I had his experience, as well as I can trust Him with my own. For what has experience to do with it after all? We do not rest on experiences and frames and doings—

*“Our hopes are fixed on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”*

Now to you then, in conclusion, I preach the same remedy. Poor Soul, you long to be troubled. Yes, but I’d rather have you long to get relief. Jesus Christ hangs on the Cross and if you will trust Him, you shall be saved. Just as you are, as I said to my other friend just now—just as you are, take Christ as He is. Now never think about getting ready for Christ. He does not want anything of yours. You need not trim and dress yourselves to come to Christ. Even your frames and feelings are not the wedding garment. Come naked. “But Sir, I am so careless”—come careless, then. “But I am so hard-hearted”—come hard-hearted, then. “But I am so thoughtless”—come thoughtless, then, and trust Christ now.

If you trust Him, you will not trust a deceiver. You will not have put your soul into the hand of one who will let it fall and perish. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” whether convicted by terror or by love, for “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not—feel what he may, and be in terror though he may—“shall be damned.”

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CONFESSION OF SIN ILLUSTRATED BY THE CASES OF DR. PRITCHARD AND CONSTANCE KENT

NO. 641

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 23, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I acknowledged my sin unto You and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess  
my transgressions unto the Lord. And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”  
Psalm 32:5.**

DAVID’S grief for sin was long and terrible. Its effects were visible upon his outward frame—“his bones waxed old.” “His moisture was turned into the drought of summer.” No remedy could he find until he made a full confession before the Throne of heavenly Grace. He tells us that for a time he kept silent and then his heart became more and more filled with grief— like some mountain lake whose outlet is blocked up—his soul was swollen with torrents of sorrow.

He dreaded to confront his sin. He fashioned excuses. He endeavored to divert his thoughts by giving his mind to the cares of his kingdom or the pleasures of his court—but it was all to no purpose. The rankling arrow made the wound bleed anew and made the gash more wide and deep every day. Like a festering sore his anguish gathered and increased and as he would not use the lancet of confession, his spirits became more and more full of torment and there was no rest in his bones because of sin.

At last it came to this—he must return unto his God in humble penitence or he must die outright. So he hastened to the Mercy Seat and there unrolled the volume of his iniquities before the eyes of the all-seeing One, acknowledging all the evil of his ways in language such as you read in the fifty-first and other penitential Psalms. Having done this, a work so simple and yet so difficult to pride, he received at once the token of Divine forgiveness. The bones which had been broken were made to rejoice and he came forth from his closet to sing the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. See, dear Friends, the value of a truthful Grace-worked confession of sin is to be prized above all price, for he that confesses his sin and forsakes it shall find mercy!

Now it is a well known fact that when God is pleased to bestow upon men any choice gift, Satan, who is the god of counterfeits, is sure very soon to produce a base imitation. It will be true in appearance, but worthless in reality—his object is deception and full often he succeeds. How many there are who have made a worthless confession and yet are relying upon it as though it were a work of Divine Grace! They have come before God as a matter of form and have said, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.” And having done so, they imagine that they have received

Divine absolution! But alas, alas—it is easy to be deceived and difficult to cultivate within one’s heart that genuine repentance which is the work of God the Holy Spirit!

May God grant us His gracious assistance while we describe two widely different sorts of confession which have been very vividly brought before us during the past week. And then we will have a few words upon the exercise of the royal prerogative of mercy which is vested in God—who gives forgiveness to those whose confession is sincere.

I. Let me set before you TWO SORTS OF CONFESSIONS. At this present moment, unhappily, two persons are lying under sentence of death for murders of the most atrocious character. Without wishing to say a single word with regard to the state of the soul of either of these persons— for into that it is no business of mine to pry—it seems to me that the published reports of their cases may very properly furnish us with types of two sorts of persons.

It is remarkable that two such cases as those of Dr. Pritchard and Constance Kent should be before the public eye at the same moment and that the points of contrast in their confessions should be so exceedingly clear. I cannot but hope and pray that we may gather some few lessons of warning from crimes which have, no doubt, exercised a great influence for evil upon the masses of our country.

The confession which has been made by Dr. PRITCHARD may be taken as a specimen of those which are full often made by impenitent sinners and which can never be regarded as acceptable before the Throne of the Most High. Here is a man who is accused of the atrocious crime of murdering his wife and his mother-in-law. And when he answers to the indictment, we are not astonished to hear him plead, “Not Guilty!” I am far from being severe upon him for so pleading—but viewing him as a type, I would remind you that thousands of those who call themselves “miserable sinners” in our public services—if they were called to plead before the bar of God, would have the effrontery to say, “Not Guilty.”

They might not use the exact words. Very probably they would use terms having the opposite meaning, but their heart-plea would be, “not guilty.” If they had the Law of God explained to them and they were questioned upon each Commandment—“Have you broken this? Have you broken that?”—though ready enough to confess in the gross that they have sinned, when it came to

 details they would be for denying all.

We have heard of a woman who readily allowed that she was a sinner. “O yes, Sir, we are all sinners. Just so, Sir.” But when the visitor sat down and opened the Bible, and pointing to the Commandment, said, “Have you ever had any other God save the Lord?”—she did not know that she ever had. “Had she ever taken God’s name in vain?” “O dear no, Sir, I never did anything so wicked.” Each precept was explained and she very positively claimed that she had not broken it. She had not violated the Sabbath. She had not killed anybody. She had not committed adultery. She had not borne false witness, or coveted anything.

She was altogether, in every detail, innocent—though on the whole she was quite willing to say as other people, “Oh, yes! I am a sinner! Of course, Sir, we are all sinners!” which, being interpreted, means, “I am ready to say anything you may like to put into my mouth, but I do not believe a syllable of it.” The inward speech of the unconverted man is, “I am not guilty.” Ask the unhumbled transgressor, “Are you worthy of God’s wrath?” and his proud heart replies, “I am not.” “Are you worthy to be cast away forever from God’s Presence on account of sin?” and the unbroken, uncontrite soul replies. “I am not. I am no thief, nor adulterer, nor extortioner. I have not sinned as yonder publican has done. I thank God that I am not as other men are.”

Man pleads, “Not Guilty,” and yet all the while, within his heart, so proud and boastful, there may readily be discerned abundant evidence of abounding sin. The leprosy is white upon his unclean brow and yet the man claims to be sound and whole. If there were no other evidence against us, the very pride which boasts of innocence would be sufficient to convict us of sin and will be so when we are taught right reason by the Holy Spirit! The guilty man whose case we are now looking upon as an illustration, endeavored, as a means of defense for himself, to involve another in the dreadful guilt and punishment of his atrocious sin.

There were very distinct signs that he would have been perfectly satisfied if the woman who had ministered to his sinful pleasures had been accused and condemned of the crime for which he alone was guilty! Certainly this is the case with the great mass of those who are compelled to acknowledge their sins. Our first parent could not deny that he had taken of the forbidden fruit, but he laid the blame upon Eve—“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.” Ah Adam! Where is your manliness? Where is your love to your spouse, that you would involve in the ruin her who was bone of your bone so as to escape yourself?

And she! She will not take the blame for a moment, but it is the serpent! She casts all the sin on him! In this first case of sin the attempt was less atrocious than in that of the prisoner before us, because there was real guilt both in the woman and in the serpent—while it does not appear that the servant girl in Pritchard’s family had any share in the poisoning. However, the human heart is such that if we could really throw all the shame and blame of sin upon another who was perfectly innocent, there would be a strong temptation to do so if we might by such means be considered innocent.

No, let me show that Adam virtually did that, for he said, “The woman whom you gave me,” thus virtually laying the blame of his rebellious deed upon God Himself. And God, what hand had He in Adam’s eating of the fruit of the accursed tree? It was an act of Adam’s free will—he did as he pleased concerning it, and the most holy God could in no sense be made partaker of his transgression. Yet, think of it! He would sooner that the great God, who is hymned of angels as the thrice Holy One, should bear the fault of his iniquity than he would bear it himself!

Such are we naturally. We may bend the knee and say we are miserable sinners, but unless the Grace of God has taught us to make a true confession we are always for shifting the burden to some other shoulder. We are always making it out that, after all, though nominally miserable sinners, we are not so bad as a great many other people! And we, naturally, have a deal saddled upon us which really is no fault of ours, but belongs to Providence—to fate, to our fellow men, to the devil, to the weather—and I know not what besides!

The convicted criminal who stands before us in our picture made no confession whatever until the case was proved and sentence pronounced. The case was clear enough, but he did his best to make it difficult. Had he been completely free from the crime, his bearing and tone could have been scarcely more confident when asserting his innocence. I admit that it was very natural that he should not aid to convict himself—it is because it is so natural that the man serves so admirably as a representative of human nature when it makes its impenitent confessions! When it could not avail the wretch to withhold the truth. When facts were brought out so clearly— when the jury had decided, when the judge had pronounced sentence— then, and not till then, he yielded to tears and entreaties and proffered a confession, such as it was.

So is it always with unregenerate humanity! Though cognizant of sin, we only acknowledge before the Lord that which is too glaring to be denied. Sin may be held up before the eyes of the man who is guilty of it and often he will disown his own offspring or assert that it is not what God’s Word declares it to be. Holy Scripture accuses us of a thousand sins which we practically claim to be innocent of, for we flatter ourselves that the Bible puts too harsh a construction upon our actions and that we are not what it declares us to be.

When our fellow men concur in censuring our fault, we are compelled to blush, but of what value is a repentance which owes its existence to the overwhelming testimony of our fellow offenders against us? This force work is far removed from the free and ready acknowledgments of a man whose heart is touched by Divine Grace and melted by the love of Jesus. When men are upon their dying beds. When the ghosts of their iniquities haunt them. When the red hand of guilt draws the curtain. When they can almost hear the sentence of the last judgment—then they will make a confession—but may we not fear that it is of little value since it is wrung and extorted from them by fear of Hell and horror of the wrath to come?

True repentance, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, drops as freely as honey drops from the comb, but merely natural confessions are like the worst of the wine squeezed by force from the dregs. O dear Friends, God deliver you from ungracious confessions of sin and enable you sincerely to repent at the foot of Jesus’ Cross! When the confession came in the case before us, it was very partial. He had killed one, but he professed himself guiltless of the other’s death. Villain as he was on his own showing, he could go the length of owning half his crime! But then be started back and acted the liar. No, she died by accident and he, to avoid being charged unjustly—innocent creature as he was—had put the poison in the bottle afterwards!

He had the wickedness to fake wonderment that his tale was not believed and likened those who doubted him to those who would not believe the Lord of Glory! Now the confessions of unregenerate men are precisely of this sort. They will go the length of owning, if they have been drinking, or if they have broken the laws of the State, “yes, we have offended here.” But the great mass of sins against God are not confessed, nor allowed to be sins at all! Men will often lay a stress upon sins of which they are not conspicuously guilty and omit those which are the most glaring. What unrenewed man thinks it a sin to forget God, to forsake the Creator’s fountain of living waters for the cisterns of the creature, or to live without God in the world?

And yet these are the most crying of all iniquities! To rob God of His Glory, to despise His Son, to disbelieve the Gospel, to live for self, to be self-righteous—all these are heinous evils! But what carnal man admits as much? Covetousness! Again, who ever confesses that? Thousands are guilty of it, but few will admit it even in private before the Lord. No confession will be acceptable before God unless you are willing to make a clean breast of the whole of your evil ways, words and thoughts, before the Searcher of hearts! I do not wonder if you should fail to tell others your offenses—it were not meet you should do so except when you have offended them and may make retribution by the confession.

But before God you must open all! You must roll away the stone from the mouth of that sepulcher even though your iniquity, like Lazarus, should stink! There must be no mincing the matter! Things must be called by their right names. You must be willing to feel the horrible sinfulness of sin, and, as far as you can, you must descend to the very bottom of its terrible guiltiness and acknowledge its blackness, its heinousness, its devilry, its abomination. No confession will be acceptable before God if you knowingly and willfully gloss over any sin—if you make any exceptions, or are partial with respect to any form of iniquity.

That confession which hides some sins and only confesses certain others stops one leak in the soul and opens another. Nor ought it to be forgotten that when the criminal had confessed his sin, yet still in the last confession—which we may suppose to have been true—there are words of extenuation and nothing to indicate any deep and suitable sensibility of his great transgression. He hints at reasons why he was scarcely accountable—a sort of madness and the influence of strong drink must be blamed for the crime and not the man himself. O God, You know how often in our natural confessions, before Your Grace met with us, we made wretched and mean excuses for ourselves!

We said that a strong temptation overcame us. It was an unguarded moment! It was our constitution and our besetting sins! It was our friend who led us astray! It was God’s Providence which tried us—it was anything rather than ourselves! We were to blame, no doubt, but still there were extenuating circumstances. Beloved Friends! A man can never make a true confession till he feels that sin is his own sin and is willing to confess it as such! He must cease to apologize and must just stand forth before the Lord and cry, “I have sinned willfully and infamously, and here, standing in Your Presence, I acknowledge it—and if a word of apology could save my soul I dare not utter it—for I should again be guilty of a lie.”

May this teach us to seek out, rather, the aggravations of our sin than fancied extenuations of it. Try to see the worst of your case, Sinner, more than to gloss it or gild it over and make it seem better than it is. All this, remember, was committed by this miserable murderer who is soon to appear before his God, not through ignorance, but in spite of a clear consciousness of the wrong of his deed. Had he been some person of a low mental organization, or of neglected intellect, there might be some plea. If, for instance, he had never been able to read and had received his only education amid thieves and vagabonds, there might have been some excuse and we might have said, “It is the sin of the community which fails

to provide moral and religions instruction for the people.”

But here is a man who knows better! He, I suppose, had listened to thousands of sermons. He had a knowledge of the Bible—had pretended to pray—was well taught as to the matter of right and wrong. And yet still, in defiance of all this, he sins. And to make matters worse he shows no signs of softening of heart. No tenderness, no melting—nothing of deep regret, shame, contrition, or humbleness of heart. But, he is, apparently (I say no more) as obdurate in confessing his guilt as when he was denying

it. Ah, but there are too many who make confession, having no broken

hearts, no streaming eyes, no flowing tears, no humbled spirits. Know this, that ten thousand confessions, if they are made by hardened hearts—if they do not spring from really contrite spirits—shall be only additions to your guilt as they are mockeries before the Most High. Let these suffice as remarks upon an unacceptable confession. Oh Lord, let Your Holy Spirit give to the guilty one, of whom we have been speaking and to us all, that broken and contrite heart which You will accept through Jesus Christ!

The second case must now come before us. And here again I do not desire to speak anything about the state of the heart of CONSTANCE KENT. I only speak of her outward act and only of that as a symbol of true confession. Here is one avowedly guilty of a most atrocious murder, a very great and terrible crime. But when she appears in court she is brought there upon her own confession. Her life was in no danger from the witness of other people. She surrendered herself voluntarily. And when she stood before the judge, she pleaded guilty.

No doubt her anxious friends had suggested to her the desirableness of pleading, “Not guilty,” hoping to save her life by failure in the evidence, or plea of insanity, or some other legal method of saving criminals from the gallows. Mark, however, how distinctly she says, “Guilty.” And though the question is repeated and time is given her to retract, her reply is still the one self-condemning word, “GUILTY!”

Even so before the Lord, whenever we come to confess, we must approach Him with this cry, “Guilty, Guilty! Lord, I cannot say anything else. If Hell is my eternal portion for it, I dare say no other. The stones in the streets would cry out against me if I denied my guilt. When my memory shows me the record of my days, its truthful witness is that I have broken Your Law. And when my conscience looks at the way in which I have transgressed, it cannot say anything but this, ‘You have willfully broken God’s Law and you deserve His wrath.’ ”

Now Sinner, you shall never be at peace with God until you are willing unreservedly to plead, “Guilty.” That self-righteous spirit of yours must be cast out as though it were the very devil—for it is next akin to the devil and is quite as evil—and you must be brought down humbly to lie at the foot of Jehovah’s Throne and confess that you do richly deserve His wrath. You have defied His righteous Law and sinned against Him with a high hand. You must plead “Guilty,” or remain guilty forever!

You shall never find pardon through Jesus Christ till you are willing, truly and really, to admit yourself a sinner. Constance Kent was anxious to free all others from the blame of her sin. Her counsel says, in open court, “Solemnly, in the presence of Almighty God, as a person who values her own soul, she wishes me to say that the guilt is her own alone, and that her father and others who have so long suffered most unjust and cruel suspicions, are wholly and absolutely innocent.”

This is well spoken. I know nothing of this young woman’s heart, but using her as an illustration rather than an example, we are safe in saying that it is a very blessed sign of true repentance when the sinner cries out with David, “I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.” There will be, in a gracious penitent, no attempt to lay the blame upon the tempter, or upon Providence—no dwelling upon circumstances, the suddenness of the temptation—or the hastiness of one’s temper.

“Oh God,” says the sinner, “I myself have sinned. I have nothing in the world that is so my own as my own sin. For this, my sin, I alone am accountable and I feel it. And I cannot, I dare not impeach anyone else with being guilty of my sin. I must stand in my own place before You, O God, even if that involves my eternal ruin.” It will never do for you to lay the blame on your mothers and fathers because they did not teach you better—upon the minister for not being earnest enough—or upon your master for telling you to do wrong.

It is true that we may be partakers of your sins in a measure, but if you are sincerely penitent, the guilt which will strike you will not be another man’s guilt, nor another man’s share in your sin, but your own guilt. A sinner has not been brought truly before the Lord in humble contrition unless his cry is, “Lord! I have sinned! I have sinned so as to be guilty myself, in my own person. Have mercy upon me!” The unhappy young woman now condemned to die needed no witness to come forward to prove her guilt and ensure her conviction.

No one saw the deed. It was done so secretly that the most expert detectives were not able to find a satisfactory clue to the mystery. There may be collateral evidence to support her confession. It may, or it may not be true that her conviction would now have been certain had her confession been retracted. But she did not need that, for without any voice of man to witness, she witnessed against herself! It will never suffice for us merely to confess to the Lord what other people have seen and to feel guilty because we know that the case is reported in the neighborhood. Many people who have fallen into sin have felt very penitent because they knew they would damage their names, or lose their situations.

But to have your private sin brought before you by conscience and voluntarily, without any pressure but the burden of sin itself and the work of the Holy Spirit, to come before God and say, “Lord, You know in this matter I have offended. And though none saw me except Your eyes and mine, yet Your eyes might well flash with anger at me, while mine shall be wet with many a tear of penitence on account of it.” That is what you need, Sinner! You must come before God now and let out your heart without any external pressure.

Spontaneously must your soul flow out, poured out like water before the Lord, or you must not hope that He will pardon you. She confessed all. It was a solemn moment when the judge said, “I must repeat to you, that you are charged with having willfully, intentionally and with malice killed and murdered your brother. Are you guilty or not guilty?” Yes, she was guilty, just as the judge had put it. She did not object to those words

which made the case come out so black. The willfulness?—yes, she acknowledged that. The intention, the malice?—yes, all that. The killing, the murdering—was it just murder?—was it nothing less?

No, nothing else. Not a word of extenuation. She acknowledges all, just as the judge puts it. She is guilty in very deed of the whole charge. Sinner, will you confess sin as God puts it? Many will confess sin after their own fashion, but will you confess it as God puts it? Are you brought to see sin as God sees it? As far as mortal eye could bear that dreadful sight and do you confess now just what God lays at your door—that you have been His enemy, a traitor, full of evil, covered with iniquity? Will you confess that you have crucified His dear Son and have in all ways deserved His hottest wrath and displeasure—will you plead guilty to that?

If not, you shall have no pardon! But if you will do this, He is merciful and just to forgive you your sins through Jesus the great Atoning Sacrifice. She had not, nor had her counsel for her, a single word to say by way of excuse. In fact, at her request, one supposed excuse was utterly discarded—“She wishes me to say that she was not driven to this act, as has been asserted, by unkind treatment at home. She met with nothing there but tender and forbearing love.” Her counsel might have said she was very young—it was hoped that her youth might plead for her. Being young, she might be readily led astray by an evil passion—might not that excuse her?

It was long ago and her confession was her own! She had brought herself there into that dock—might not this be a reason for mercy? Nothing of the kind! The judge might think so if he pleased, but there was nothing said for her about that, nor did she desire that it should be suggested. She might secretly hope, but her confession was so thorough that there was not a single word to sully its clear stream. So, Sinner, if you come before God you must not say, “Lord, I am to be excused because of my position—I was in poverty and I was tempted to steal.” Or, “I had been in bad company and so I learned to blaspheme.” Or, “I had a hard master and so I was driven to sin to find some pleasure there.”

No. If you are really penitent you will find no reason whatever why you should have sinned, except the evil of your own heart—and that you will plead as an aggravation, not as an excuse. “Guilty! Guilty! Guilty! I am, O God, before Your face, guilty! I offer no excuse, no extenuation. You must deal with me upon pure mercy if You do save me, for justice can only award me my well-deserved doom.”

Notice that when she was asked whether she had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon her, there was still a solemn silence. Was there no reason to be given why the dreadful sentence of being hanged by the neck until dead should not be passed upon a young and weeping girl? She did not so much as hint at one. I remember well the time when I thought there was no reason why the flames of Hell should not consume me and why the crushing weight of God’s wrath should not roll over me forever and forever!

I think every sinner who has really come to Christ has been made to feel that however angry God may be with sin, He is not one whit too angry. Until we know the power of Divine Grace we read in the Bible concerning eternal punishment and we think it is too heavy and too hard. And we are apt to kick against it and look for some heretic or other who will teach us another doctrine. But when the soul is really quickened by Divine Grace and made to feel the weight of sin, it thinks the bottomless pit none too deep and the punishment of Hell none too severe for sin such as it has committed.

This is not the emotion of a mind rendered morbid by sickness—these are the genuine workings of God the Holy Spirit in the soul—bringing the man to stand guilty before the Lord, with his mouth closed, not able to say a word against the sentence of Divine Justice. May God bring such who have never been there yet, there! In the confession, as we read the story, there was much tenderness. I do not wonder that the judge exhibited deep emotion—who could help it?

Remember, I am not pretending to know her heart, I am only judging the externals. As far as externals went there seemed to be a great brokenness of spirit. She appeared really to know what guilt meant and to stand there with this resolve upon her soul—that though she could not make any atonement for her crime she would acknowledge it honestly and accordingly she confessed it as one who felt within her own soul the terrible weight of her guilt.

This is the manner in which we must stand before God if we would find mercy. It is all very well for us to use fine language but words alone are worthless. Those words which come fresh from your lips dictated by your own heart, because the Holy Spirit is there, will suffice if the heart is in them. It is to the contrite that the promise is given. Look to Jesus for contrition, for without it there is no pardon!

II. Thus we have tried, as far as we could, to bring out the distinctions which pertain to confessions and now let us have a word or two upon THE EXERCISE OF THE PREROGATIVE OF MERCY ON GOD’S PART. “You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” In every case where there is a genuine, gracious confession, mercy is freely given. There is a notion abroad that confession deserves mercy. We read in the papers such remarks as these, “expiating sin by confession.” Or, “made such atonement as he could by confessing his sin.”

Confession makes no atonement in any shape whatever. There is not one single word in that Law which I read to you this morning, in the twentieth of Exodus, about the possibility of taking away sin by mere confession. Justice has but one rule—and that is sin must be punished. If the sinner violates law, law in the case of man may excuse the penalty, but in the case of God, never. The attributes of God are not like the qualities of man—they never come into collision with one another—nor do they abridge the sphere of each other. The justice of God is as awful and allreaching as if He had not a grain of mercy! While the mercy of God is as unrestrained and almighty as if He were utterly unjust!

The reason why sin can be forgiven in the case of a penitent sinner is because for that sinner Jesus Christ has borne the full weight of all the wrath which his sin deserves. The fire cloud of Jehovah’s wrath was waiting for the sinner—the sinner must receive the whole of its dread discharge. But for every sinner that repents and believes in Him Christ stood beneath that terrible cloud and all the lightning was discharged on Him.

Christ suffered, as Incarnate God, all the chastisement which was due to His people. The grief of our Savior we can never tell—the woes of Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha are not to be expressed—but they were accepted by God in the place of all the suffering and grief which the

Law most righteously claimed on every law-breaker. And now, through what Christ Jesus has done, the eternal mercy of God comes streaming forth in perfect consistency with Justice. Mercy provided the great Substitute and now Mercy, with loving heart, calls upon repenting and believing sinners, and assures them that all sin is put away through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

Let every sinner know, then, that although his repentance does not deserve mercy, the God of Love has been pleased to promise free pardon to all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, because Christ deserves it! Pardon is given to penitent sinners as a matter of justice, as well as mercy, because of the throes and grief and agonies of the Divine Redeemer. How consistent it is with the nature of things that penitent sinners, and penitent sinners only, should obtain mercy through Jesus Christ!

When you read the story of the man who made no confession till it was forced out of him—although you can respond to his wish, “Fellow creatures, pray for me”—you cannot feel much sympathy, if any, with him. His conduct seems to harden one’s heart against him, not merely because of his guilt, but because of the lie of his confession! But, when you read the other story—although it contains no request to pray, you find you do not need one, for your heart cries at once—“Father, forgive her!” And you think within yourself, “If the prerogative of mercy can be exercised in this case, let it be.”

If it were put to a show of hands of all our country whether the law should be executed on Constance Kent, I think we should all say, “Let the penitent sinner live.” Great was her offense and no excuse is to be offered for her, as she offers none for herself. It was a great and dreadful crime which must be a blight upon her all her days. Yet, let her be spared, for she has confessed most fully—not on the ground of justice, but on the ground that this seems to be a case in which, if the prerogative of mercy is to be sovereignly exercised at all, it should now have free scope.

I think when the eternal God sees a poor sinner standing before Himself and hears him cry, “I am guilty, Lord! I am guilty through and through! I alone am guilty! I have broken Your Law! If You destroy me You are just! My heart is broken because I have sinned. I cannot be more wretched than I am now, for sin is my plague and my misery. And while I confess it, I do not think that my confession has any merit in it. Save me for Jesus’ sake!” “Why, I think,” the mighty God says, “I have brought that soul, through My Grace, into a state in which it is ready to receive the precious gift of justification and pardon through the blood of My dear Son.”

See how one Grace gives a fitness for another. The sinner is brought to Jesus. His heart is broken and then it is ready to be bound up. The penitent sinner has paid honor to the prerogative of the Law-Giver. He has, as far as he could do so, dethroned the Law-Giver by his sin—but now, by his confession—he restores Him to His Throne. Such a sinner knows the bitterness of sin, and knowing its bitterness, he will hate it for the future. If he is pardoned he will not go back as the dog to his vomit, or the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire.

This pardoned sinner will not take to himself the credit of having been pardoned by his confessions. He will not go abroad and talk lightly of his sin. He will be sure to speak much of the leniency of the Law-Giver and the power of Jesus’ precious blood. He will admire forevermore, even in eternity, the mighty Grace which pardoned such as he is. On the other hand, if man were forgiven and no true penitence worked in him, what would be the result? Why, it would be turning wolves loose upon society! I think if God gave forgiveness to men without working a work of Divine Grace in them by which they are brought to repentance it would be offering a premium for sin!

It would be breaking down the floodgates which restrain vice. It would be destroying all the excellent fruits which free Grace is intended to produce. What? Is the man to be pardoned for all the past and to remain without repentance for his evil ways? Then will he make the future just as the past has been—no, he will sin with a higher hand and with a stronger arm—because he sees with what impunity he may rebel!

What? Shall a proud, unhumbled sinner rejoice in the forgiving love of the Father? Then will he arrogantly boast that there was not much evil in his sin after all! He will be no singer to the praise of Sovereign Grace, but rather, with the boastful lips of the legalist he will render unto himself praise for the dexterous manner in which he has escaped from the condemnation due to sin! God will give pardon to those only to whom He gives repentance—for it were unsafe to give it elsewhere. God brings us down and lays us in the dust, for then, and then only are we prepared to hear Him say, “Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you.”

I take it for granted that there are some here who will say, “I wish I could repent. I know that it would not merit eternal life. I understand that faith—faith in Jesus Christ is the way by which I must be saved—but I desire to be humbled on account of sin.” My dear Friend, your desire to be humbled may, perhaps, be an indication that you are already in that condition! But, if you are lamenting your hardness of heart, I will suggest two or three things. Remember your past sins. I do not want you to write out a list of them—there is not paper enough in this world for that—but let some of them stand out before your memory. And if they do not make you blush, they ought to do so.

Next, think over all the aggravations of those sins. Recollect the training you had as a child. You were blessed with godly parents. Remember the providential warnings you received. Think of the light and knowledge against which you have offended—that tenderness of conscience against which you kicked. Then I beg you to consider against what a God you have offended—so great, so good, so kind—who has never done you a displeasure, but has been all generosity and kindness to you till this day. Your offenses have been insults against the King of Heaven!

Your transgressions have been undermining, as far as they could, the throne of the Eternal Majesty! Look at sin in the light of God to be humbled. And if this will not do it, let me pray that God the Holy Spirit may take you to the foot of the Cross. Remember, that in order that sin might be put away, it was necessary that God should be veiled in human flesh. No one else could bear the load of sin but God—and He only could bear it by becoming Man. See the suffering of the Savior when “despised and rejected.” Mark the spitting, the shame, the smiting. Look at His wounds—

*“Count the purple drops and say,  
‘Thus must sin be washed away.’ ”*

And surely, if God the Holy Spirit blesses it, such a meditation will make you see the blackness and vileness of sin! John Bradford said that when he was in prayer he never liked to rise from his knees till he began to feel something of brokenness of heart. Get up to your chamber, then, poor Sinner, if you desire to have a broken and contrite spirit and come not out until you have it! Remember that you will never feel so broken in heart as when you can see Jesus bearing all your sins! Faith and repentance are born together and aid the health of each other—

*“Law and terrors do but harden,  
All the while they work alone.  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,  
Will dissolve a heart of stone.”*

Go as you are to Christ and ask Him to give that tenderness of heart which shall be to you the indication that pardon has come—for pardon cannot and will not come unattended by a melting of soul and a hatred of sin.

Wrestle with the Lord! Say, “I will not let You go except You bless me.” Get a fast hold upon the Savior by a vigorous faith in His great Atonement. Oh, may His Spirit enable you to do this! Say in your soul, “Here I will abide, at the horns of the altar. If I perish I will perish at the foot of the Cross. From my hope in Jesus I will not depart, but I will look up and say, ‘Savior, Your heart was broken for me, break my heart! You were wounded, wound me! Your blood was freely poured forth for me! Lord, let me pour forth my tears that I should have nailed You to the tree. O Lord, dissolve my soul—melt it in tenderness and You shall be forever praised for making Your enemy Your friend.’ ”

May God bless you and make you truly repent if you have not repented! And if you have, may He enable you to continue in it all your days, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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PRAYER, THE PROOF OF GODLINESS  
NO. 2437

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 27, 1837.

**“For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found.”  
Psalm 32:6.**

ALL men are not godly. Alas, the ungodly are the great majority of the human race! And all men who are, to some extent, godly, are not equally godly. The man who fears God and desires to truly know Him has some little measure of godliness. The man who has begun to trust the Savior whom God has set forth as the great Propitiation for sin has a blessed measure of godliness. The man whose communion with God is constant, whose earnest prayers and penitential tears are often observed of the great Father, and who sighs after fuller and deeper acquaintance with the Lord—this man is godly in a still higher sense. And he who, by continual fellowship with God has become like He, upon whom the image of Christ has been photographed, for he has looked on Him so long and rejoiced in Him so intensely—he is the godly man! The man who finds his God everywhere, who sees Him in all the works of his hands. The man who traces everything to God—whether it is joyful or calamitous—this is the godly man. The man who looks to God for everything, takes every suit to the Throne of Grace and every petition to the Mercy Seat—the man who could not live without his God, to whom God is his exceeding joy, the help and the health of his countenance, the man who dwells in God— this is the godly man. This is the man who shall dwell forever with God, for he has a Godlike-ness given to him and, in the Lord’s good time, he shall be called away to that blessed place where he shall see God and shall rejoice before Him forever and ever!

Judge yourself, dear Hearers, by these tests, whether you are godly or not. Let conscience make sure work about this matter. Possibly, while I am preaching, you may be helped to perform this very necessary work of self-examination. The text, itself, is a test by which we may tell whether we are among the godly—“For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found.”

In these words we have, first, the universal mark of godly men. They pray unto God. Then we have, secondly, a potent motive for praying—“For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You.” And then, thirdly, we have the special occasion when prayer is most useful, the occasion of which the godly avail themselves abundantly—they shall “pray unto You in a time when You may be found.” All these points are well worthy of our earnest consideration.

I. The first is, THE UNIVERSAL MARK OF GODLINESS—“For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You.”  
When a man is beginning to be godly, this is the first sign of the change that is being worked in him, “Behold, he prays.” Prayer is the mark of godliness in its infancy. Until he has come to pleading and petitioning, we cannot be sure that the Divine life is in him at all. There may be desires, but if they never turn to prayers, we may fear that they are as the morning cloud and as the early dew—which soon pass away. There may be some signs of holy thought about the man, but if that thought never deepens into prayer, we may be afraid that the thought will be like the seed sown upon the hard highway which the birds of the air will soon devour. But when the man comes to real pleading terms with God—when he cannot rest without pouring out his heart at the Mercy Seat—you begin to hope that now he is, indeed, a godly man! Prayer is the breath of life in the newborn Believer! Prayer is the first cry by which it is known that the newborn child truly lives! If he does not pray, you may suspect that he has only a name to live—and that he lacks true spiritual life.  
And as prayer is the mark of godliness in its infancy, it is equally the mark of godliness in all stages of its growth. The man who has most Grace will pray most. Take my word for it as certain that when you and I have most Grace, we may judge of it by the fact that there is more of prayer and praise in us than there was before. If you pray less than you once did, then judge yourself to be less devout, to be less in fellowship with God, to be, in fact, less godly! I know of no better thermometer to your spiritual temperature than this—the measure of the intensity of your prayer. I am not speaking about the quantity of it, for there are some who, for a pretense, make long prayers. I am speaking about the reality of it, the intensity of it. Prayer is best measured by weight rather than by length and breadth and, in proportion as you grow in Grace, you will grow in prayerfulness, depend upon it! When the child of God reaches the measure of the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus, then he becomes like Elijah, a man mighty in prayer. One such man in a Church may save it from ruin! I go further and say that one such man in a nation may bring down upon it untold blessings! He is the godliest man who has most power with God in his secret pleadings—and he who has most power with God in his secret pleadings has it because he abounds in godliness! Everyone that is godly shall pray unto the Lord, whether he is but the babe in Grace who lisps his few broken sentences, or the strong man in Christ who lays hold upon the Covenant Angel with Jacob’s mighty resolve, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.” The prayers may vary as the degree of godliness differs, but every godly man has, from the beginning to the end of his spiritual life, this distinguishing mark, “Behold, he prays.”  
Further, dear Friends, true prayer is an infallible mark of godliness. If you do not pray, remember that old true saying, “A prayerless soul is a Christless soul.” You know how often it has been the case that the highest professions of holiness have been sometimes accompanied by the practice of the deadliest vices. For instance, wherever the doctrine of human perfection has been much held, it has almost always engendered some horrible licentiousness, some desperate filthiness of the flesh which is unknown to anything but that doctrine! In like manner, I have known persons to become, as they say, so conformed to the mind of God, so perfectly in accord with the Divine Will that they have not felt it necessary to pray. This is the devil in white—nothing else—and the devil in white is more of a devil than when he is dressed in black! If anything leads you to decline in prayerfulness, or to abstain altogether from prayer, it is an evil thing, disguise it as you may!  
But wherever there is real prayer in the soul, take it as certain that the lingering of holy desire in the spirit proves that there is still life in the spirit. If the Lord enables you to pray, I beseech you, do not despair. If you have to pray with many a groan, and sigh, and tear, think none the less of you prayers for that reason! Or, if you think less of them, the day may come when you will think better of your broken prayers than of any others. I have known what it is to come away from the Throne of Grace feeling that I have not prayed at all! I have despised my prayer and wept over it, yet, some time after, in looking back, I have thought, “I wish I could pray as I did in the time when I thought that I did not pray at all.” We are usually poor judges of our own prayers! But this judgment we may make—if the heart sighs, and cries, and longs, and pleads with God, such signs and tokens were never in an unregenerate heart! These flowers are exotics—the seed from which they grew must have come from Heaven! If you pray a truly spiritual prayer, this shall be, indeed, a sure mark that the Spirit of God is striving within you and that you are already a child of God!

Once more, beloved Friends, prayer is natural to the godly man. I do think that it is a good thing to have set times for prayer, but I am sure that it would be a dreadful thing to confine prayer to any time or season, for to the godly man prayer comes to be like breathing, like sighing, like crying. You have, perhaps, heard of the preacher who used to put in the margin of his manuscript sermon, “Cry here.” That is a very poor sort of crying that can be done to order, so, you cannot make the intensity of prayer to order—it must be a natural emanation from the renewed heart! Jacob could not always go and spend a night in prayer. It is possible he never spent another whole night in prayer in all his life after that memorable one! But when he spent that one by the brook Jabbok, he could “do no other,” as Luther said. Pumped-up prayer is little better then the bilge water that flows away from a ship! What you need is the prayer that rises from you freely, like the fountain that leaped from the smitten rock. Prayer should be the natural outflow of the soul—you should pray because you must pray, not because the set time for praying has arrived— but because your heart must cry unto your Lord.  
“But,” says one, “sometimes I do not feel that I can pray.” Ah, then, indeed, you need most to pray! That is the time when you must insist upon it that there is something sadly wrong with you. If, when the time has come for you to draw near to God—you have the opportunity and the leisure for it, but you feel no inclination for the holy exercise—depend upon it that there is something radically wrong with you! There is a deadly disease in your system and you should, at once, call in the heavenly Physician. You have need to cry, “Lord, I cannot pray. There is some strange mischief and mystery about me. There is something that ails me! Come, O Lord, and set me right, for I cannot continue to abide in a prayerless condition!”  
A prayerless condition should be a miserable and unhappy condition to a child of God—and he should have no rest until he finds that once more his spirit can truly pour itself out before the living God! When you are in a right state of heart, praying is as simple as breathing. I remember being in Mr. Rowland Hill’s chapel at Wotton-Under-Edge, and stopping at the house where he used to live. I said to a friend who knew the good man, “Where did Mr. Hill use to pray?” He replied, “Well, my dear Sir, I do not know that I can tell you that. And if you were to ask, ‘Where did he not pray?’ or, ‘When did he not pray?’ I should be unable to tell you. The dear old gentleman used to walk up and down by that laurel hedge and if anybody was outside the hedge, he would hear him praying as he went along. Then he would go up the street and keep on praying all the time. After he had done that, he would come back, again, praying all the while. And if he went indoors and sat down in his study, he was not much of a man to read, but you would find that he was repeating some verse of a hymn, or he was praying for Sarah Jones who was ill, or he would plead for Tom Brown who had been backsliding.”  
When the old man was in London, he would go up and down the Blackfriars Road and stand and look in a shop window. And if anybody went to his side, it would be found that he was still praying, for he could not live without prayer! That is how godly men come to be, at last—it gets to be as natural to them to pray as to breathe! You do not notice all day long how many times you breathe. When you come home at night, you do not say, “ I have breathed so many times today.” No, of course you do not notice your breathing unless you happen to have asthma! And when a man gets asthma in prayer, he begins to notice his praying! But he who is in good sound spiritual health breathes freely, like a living soul before the living God—and his life becomes one continual season of prayer.  
To such a man, prayer is a very happy and consoling exercise. It is no task, no effort. His prayer, when he is truly godly and living near to God, is an intense delight! When he can get away from business for a few quiet minutes of communion with God, when he can steal away from the noise of the world and get a little time alone—these are the joys of his life! These are the delights that help us to wait with patience through the long days of our exile till the King shall come and take us home to dwell with Him forever!  
Those prayers of the godly, however, may be presented in a great many forms. Some praying takes the good form of action—and an act may be a prayer. To love our fellow men and to desire their good is a kind of consolidated practical prayer. There is some truth in that oft-quoted couplet by Coleridge—  
*“He prays best, who loves best  
All things, both great and small.”*  
There comes to be a prayer to God in giving alms, or in preaching the Gospel, or in trying to win a wanderer, or in taking a child upon your knee and talking to it about the Savior. Such acts are often most acceptable prayers, but when you cannot act thus, it is well to pour out your heart before the Lord in words. And when you cannot do that, it is sweet to sit quite still and look up to Him and, even as the lilies pour out their fragrance before Him who made them, so do you, even without speaking—worship God in that deep adoration which is too eloquent for language—that holy nearness which, because it is so near, dares not utter a sound lest it should break the spell of the Divine silence which envelopes it! Frost of the mouth, but flow of the soul, is often a good combination in prayer. It is blessed prayer to lie on your face before God in silence, or to sigh and cry, or moan and wail, as the Holy Spirit moves you. All this is prayer, whatever shape it assumes, and it is the sign and token of a true Believer’s life.  
I think that I have said enough upon that first point—the universal mark of godliness is prayer.  
II. Secondly, there is, in the text, A POTENT MOTIVE FOR PRAYING— “For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found.”  
The motive seems to be, first, because God heard such a great sinner as David was. Possibly you know that this passage is very difficult to interpret. It appears to be simple enough, yet there are a great many interpretations of it. In the Revised Version you will find the marginal reading, “In the time of finding out sin.” Let me read the context—“I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. For this let everyone that is godly pray unto You in the time of finding out sin.” It runs all right and the context seems to warrant it. I am not sure that it is the correct translation, but the sense harmonizes with it, so let us learn from it this lesson, that God has heard the prayer of a great sinner!  
There may be, in this House of Prayer, someone who has gone into gross and grievous sin—and this reading of the passage may be a message from the Lord to that person. David had sinned very foully and he had added deceit to his sin. His evil deeds have made the ungodly to rail at godliness even until the present day, so that infidels ask in contempt, “Is this the man after God’s own heart?” It was an awful sin which he committed, but there came to him a time of finding out his sin. His heart was broken in penitence and then he went to God and found mercy and he said, in effect, that it was so wonderful that such a wretch as he should be forgiven, that every godly man, as long as the world stood, would believe in the confession of sin to the Lord and in the power of prayer to obtain pardon for the guilty! I like that meaning of the text, for it is sometimes necessary to us, when we are under a sense of sin, to think of such sinners as Manasseh, Magdalene, the dying thief and Saul of Tarsus. There are times, even with those whom God has greatly blessed, when nothing but the sinner’s Savior will do for them. And when they feel that if there were not salvation for the vilest of the vile, there would be no salvation for them!  
So God gives us a case like that of David, that everyone that is godly may pray unto Him in the time of finding out his sin. We might have been afraid to come if David had not led the way! “Come,” he says of the broken heart, he who wrote the 51st Psalm, “God forgave me and He did it that He might show forth in me all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter repent and believe.”  
Another motive for prayer which I think the text brings before us is this, we all need daily pardon—“For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You.” “For this”—for this covering of sin, for this blotting out of iniquity. Dear Friends, I hope that all of you pray unto God daily for the forgiveness of sins. I am sure that all the godly among you do so. If you commit no sins, then the Savior made a great mistake when He left us the prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses.” What is the need of that petition if we have no trespasses to be forgiven? But for this, that is, for the pardon of his sin, everyone who is godly will pray unto the Lord.  
And everyone who is godly will pray unto God for this reason, also, namely, because he has received the pardon of sin. You remember when you made your confession to the Judge of All and received absolution from Him? You remember when, with broken heart and downcast eye, you acknowledged your sin unto Him and He put away your transgression? Well then, that is the reason why you should always be praying! He who heard you, then, will still hear you! He who put away your sin, then, by that one great washing in the Fountain filled with blood, will continue to put away your sin by that foot-washing which He continually gives to us, of which Jesus said, “He that is washed needs not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” Blessed be God, we shall not cease to pray for pardon although we have received pardon! We will crave the daily renewal of the Divine token of reconciliation. If we received it when we were sinners, much more shall we receive it, now that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son! If we received it when we were outcasts, much more shall we receive it, now that we are His dear children!

Again, “For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You,” that is to say, because troubles come, for the context teaches us this lesson. “Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble.” Brethren, the Lord takes care to keep us praying, does He not, by giving us constant needs? Suppose that I had a friend upon whom I was dependent and whose society I greatly loved, and that he said to me, “I will give you, in a lump sum, as much money as will last you till this time next year, and then you can come and see me and receive another year’s portion. Or, as you like to come to my house, would you prefer to have the amount quarterly?” I would reply, “I will choose the latter plan, for then I should come to you four times in the year and have four dinners with you.”  
“Well, then, would you like it monthly?” “Oh, yes! I would like to come monthly and spend a day with you every month.” “Perhaps,” he says, “you would like to come daily?” “Oh, yes! I would prefer that! I would like to have a daily portion at your table.” “Perhaps you would like to stay with me always, as Dr. Watts did when he went to Sir Thomas Abney’s, to stay for a week, and I think that ‘week’ lasted for 28 years, for he never went away till he died. Perhaps you would like to receive everything from my hand and have nothing but what I give you.” “Oh, yes, my Friend, this continual indebtedness, this constant dependence would give me so many opportunities of better knowing you whom I love so much that I would like to have it so.”  
You have heard of “a hand-basket portion.” There is a maid to be married and her father says to her, “There, my girl, I will give you so many hundred pounds. Do your best with it, for it is all I shall have for you.” Another girl is married and her father says, “I shall send you down a basketful of things on such a day” and so, every week, a present goes to her. It is a hand-basket portion, and it is always coming! It never comes to an end and she gets a great deal more from the old man than the other does, who has her fortune all at once. At any rate, it comes, every time, “with father’s love.” If it is given only once and is done with, perhaps, an ill feeling, animosity springs up. But if it comes, “with father’s love,” 50 or a 100 times a year, see how affection is increased between father and daughter! Give me a hand-basket portion!  
You who like may go and gather a week’s manna—it will stink before the end of the week! I like to have mine fresh every day, just as it comes warm from the ovens of Heaven and ready for the heavenly appetite of the man who learns to live upon the daily gift of God! For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto God. He shall have trouble to drive him, he shall have Grace to draw him, he shall have weights to lift him and they shall be so adjusted that though they threaten to hold him down, they shall really raise him up!  
Once more, I think that, broadly speaking, the word, “this,” here means, “Because God hears prayer, for this reason shall everyone that is godly pray unto Him.” Now, dear Friends, it always will be a dispute between the true Believer and the mere professor whether God hears prayer. Of course the outside world will always sneer at the idea of God hearing prayer! A man said to me, one day, “You say that God hears your prayers?” “Yes, I do say it.” Said he, “I do not believe it.” “No,” I said, “I never thought you did. And if you had believed it, I might have thought that it had been a mistake! I did not expect a carnal mind to receive the Truth of God.” “Oh,” said he, “there is nothing in it!” Then I asked him, “Did you ever pray, my Friend? Did you ever pray God?” No, he never did. “Very well, then,” I said, “do not say anything about what you do not know! If you know nothing about what it is, hold your tongue till you do—and let those of us who have tried it speak of what we know.”  
If I were put in a witness box tomorrow, any lawyer in London would like to have me for a witness. So, when I stand here and declare solemnly that hundreds and even thousands of times God has answered my prayers, I claim to be as much accepted as an honest witness as I should be in the High Court of Justice. And I can bring forward, not myself, only, but scores and hundreds of you! Brethren, tell me, does not God hear prayer? [Voices—“Yes! Yes! Yes!”] I know He does and you godly folk can all bear witness that it is so! Calmly and deliberately, you could tell of many instances in which you called upon the Lord and He answered you. I am loath to argue this point, for it is not a point to be argued. If a man said that I had not any eyes, he might say it and my eyes would twinkle as I heard him say it. And when anyone says, “God does not hear prayer,” I am sorry for the poor soul that dares to make an assertion about a thing which he has never tested and tried!  
God does hear prayer and because He hears it we will call upon Him as long as we live! “For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You”—because there is reality in it and there is a blessed result from it! Prayer moves the arm that moves the world, though nothing is put out of gear by our praying. The God who ordained the effects that are to follow prayer ordained the prayer, itself—it is a part of the grand machinery by which the world swings upon its hinges!  
III. I have not time to say more on that part of my subject, though so much more might be said. The last point is one to which I want to call your earnest attention—that is, THE SPECIAL OCCASION WHEN PRAYER IS MOST USEFUL. “For this cause shall everyone that is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found,” or, “in a time of finding,” as the margin of our Bibles has it. Is there any set time when God is to be found?  
Well, in general, it is the time of this mortal life. So long as you live, here, and pray to God, He has promised to answer. Though it is the 11th hour, do not hesitate to pray! Christ’s word is, “He that seeks, finds.” There is a special promise to those who seek the Lord early, but this does not exclude those who seek Him late. If you truly seek Him, He will be found of you.  
I think, too, that the time of finding is under this Gospel dispensation. God has always heard prayer, but there seems to be a larger liberty allowed us in prayer, now. The Mercy Seat is unveiled and the veil is torn away that we may come with boldness. But besides that, there are special times of finding God, namely, in visitations of His Spirit. Revival times are grand times for prayer! How many there are who put in their suit with God because they feel moved thereto by a heavenly impulse! There is “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” as there was with David, and they begin to bestir themselves.  
In closing, I will dwell only upon this one point—there are special times of finding for individua1s and one of these is the time of the finding out of sin. Come back to the translation which I gave you before. The time when you will find out sin is the time when you will find God. “Why,” you say, “it is a horrible thing for me to find out my sin.” It is, in itself, but it is the best time to find out God! When your eyes are blinded with tears of penitence, you can best see the Savior. Do not say, “I find myself to be so guilty and, therefore, I have no hope.” No, rather, because you find yourself to be guilty, therefore have hope, for the Savior came to seek and to save such guilty ones as you are! The time, I say, when sin finds us out, and we are humbled and ashamed, is the time when we may find our God through Jesus Christ.  
So, too, a time of decision is a time for finding God. Some remain shilly-shallying—they have not decided whether they will live for the world and perish, or seek Christ and live eternally. But when the Spirit of God comes upon you and you say to yourself, “I must find Jesus Christ, I must get forgiveness and lay hold of eternal life. Give me Christ, or else I die,” you shall have Him! God has promised that if we seek Him with our whole heart, He will be found of us. When you are decided for God thoroughly and intensely, it will be with you a time of finding.  
So will it be when you come to God in full submission. Some of you have not laid down your weapons of rebellion yet. You cannot be reconciled to God while your sword is in your hand—down with it, Man! Some of you have fine feathers on your helmets and you come before God as great captains—off with those feathers! He will accept you in rags, but not in ribbons! He will receive you if you come confessing your sin, but not boasting of your supposed merits. Down with you into the very dust! Yield to God! Oh, that His mercy might make us all pliant as the willow before His mighty power! Then shall we find peace through Christ.  
I believe that it is a time of finding when you come to concentration. I have known men, sometimes, say with a holy determination, “I am resolved that I will find Christ. I will find salvation and everything else shall go till I do. I shall go upstairs to my room, shut the door and not come out, again, till I have found the Lord.” When the whole soul is bent on seeking Christ, then will the Lord speedily appear, and it shall be a time of finding!  
But especially is it a time of finding when the heart, at last, trusts wholly and implicitly to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. You shall find that God has found you when you have done with yourself and taken the blood and righteousness of Christ to be the sole hope of your soul! God lead you to this, dear Hearers, this very hour!  
I know that there are some here who are seeking the Lord. There are some who have lately begun to come under great anxiety. I hope that you will not be long in that anxious state, but that you will come right out of it by trusting yourselves with Christ. It is a wonderful end to anxiety when you have somebody to trust and when you trust that somebody. Now, trust Jesus! He will save you. Yes, He saves you the moment that you trust Him, and He will never let you go, but will bring you to His Glory above!

May God send His blessing on these words, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 33.**

Verse 1. Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Notice the context between the words, “rejoice,” and, “praise.” Joy is the soul of praise. God is not extolled by our misery, but by our holy mirth! Be glad in the Lord, for so can you make Him glorious. “Rejoice” and “praise,” “for praise is comely for the upright.” Praise is the beauty of a Christian. What wings are to a bird, what fruit is to the tree, what the rose is to the thorn, that is praise to a child of God!

2. Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto Him with the Psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. In the old days of forms, ceremonies and outward worship, musical instruments were abundantly used. But in the early Christian Church there was no such thing as a musical instrument because the Believers were afraid of going back to Judaism. It is curious that as men get further away from Christ, they get fonder and fonder of such things as these! Still, under certain conditions, they are lawful, though, we think, not expedient. God was acceptably worshipped in the olden time with harp and with Psaltery—and He may be so now—yet we worship Him, so we judge for our own selves, better without them.

3. Sing unto Him a new song. For, you see, that all the music had singing with it. “Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto Him.” “Sing unto Him a new song.” “Unto the Lord, unto the Lord, Oh, sing a new and joyful song!” It was only as it guided and strengthened the singing that the instrumental music was tolerated even in those early days.

3. Play skillfully with a loud noise. God ought to be worshipped with our best—“Play skillfully.” God ought to be earnestly worshipped—“with a loud noise.” Hearty worship is what the Lord desires and what He deserves. Let us render it to Him.

4. For the Word of the LORD is right. Let us praise Him for His Word. Men are depreciating it—let us appreciate it. “The Word of the Lord is right”—from the first page to the last it is right, emphatically right—let us praise Him for it!

4. And all His works are done in truth. The book of Providence is full of the Truth of God! Oh, for Grace to read it with thankful hearts! Let us praise God and sing unto Him as every page passes under our eyes.

5. He loves righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. You would think, from the way in which most people talk, that the world was full of misery and full of the anger of the Lord, but it is not! Notwithstanding all the evil that is in it, it is still true that “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.”

6. By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. They did not grow out of something that was there before—they were made out of nothing—“by the Word of the Lord.” All the hosts of innumerable stars were created “by the breath of His mouth.”

7. He gathers the waters of the sea together as an heap: He lays up the depth in storehouses. We know not how much God has in store, out of sight, in the vast abysses, but we know that He drowned the world when He broke up the fountains of the great deep.

8. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. He is so great a God that all the oceans are in His sight but as a heap! Let us worship, and adore, and bow down before Him.

9. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. With God it is no sooner said than it is done! “He spoke, and it was done.” All that He has to do is but to bid it be so and so it is. And, as it was for creation, so is it for confirmation—“He commanded, and it stood fast.”

10. The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen to nothing: He makes the devices of the people of no effect. If the folly of man yields to God’s wisdom, so, also, shall the wisdom of man. No matter though men take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, God will certainly carry out His purposes.

11. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations. What the Lord intends to do, He will do—there is no turning Him from His purpose—and His dispensations stand fast forever.

12. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. If you have chosen God, God has chosen you! It is a happy thing when it is so. When these two elections meet—your election of God and God’s election of you—then you are happy, indeed!

13, 14. The LORD looks from Heaven; He beholds all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. Just as in a glass hive you can see all the bees and all they do, so can God see us—and He can see all that we think and read—and He knows us through and through.

15, 16. He fashions their hearts alike; He considers all their works. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host. Look at Napoleon who marched more than half a million men into Russia—but they nearly all melted away and, after a time—he, himself, became a captive on the lone rock of St. Helena! “There is no king saved by the multitude of an host.”

16. A mighty man is not delivered by much strength. Look at Goliath, stronger than all his fellows, yet how soon he lay prone upon the earth when a single stone from the sling of David smote him in the forehead.

17-19. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eyes of the LORD are upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Whatever becomes of kings and princes in the day of need, the Lord will take care of those who fear Him and put their trust in Him! There have been vast numbers of cases of amazing Providences—so many that they have ceased to be amazing—in which God has provided for those who have trusted in Him.

20. Our soul waits for the LORD: He is our help and our shield. Dear Friends, notice those three, “ours”—three firm clasps, three strong holdfasts—“Our soul waits for the Lord: He is our help and our shield.” Why did He not say, “Our souls wait,” for there are many of us? Ah, but we are so alike in this one thing that it is as if we had only one soul in all these many bodies, so the Psalmist says, “our soul.” You remember when the disciples went to Emmaus and Christ talked with them, they said, “Did not our heart burn within us?” There were two of them—why did they not say, “Did not our hearts burn?” Well, their hearts were so one that he who spoke, called them, “heart,” rather than, “hearts.” And it is so here—“Our soul waits for the Lord: He is our help and our shield.”

21, 22. For our heart shall rejoice in Him because we have trusted in His holy name. Let your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in You. That is a good prayer with which to close our reading! Let us all present it at the Throne of heavenly Grace!

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BIT AND BRIDLE—HOW TO ESCAPE THEM  
NO. 2190

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 15, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes. Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding:  
whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near to you.”  
Psalm 32:8, 9.**

THE joy of full forgiveness is described in the first two verses of this Psalm—“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Oh, the blessedness of sitting at Jesus’ feet, a sinner washed in His blood! Outside of Heaven there is no greater joy—and even there they sing of blood-washed robes!

After a man is pardoned, anxiety is awakened as to how he shall be kept from sin in the future. The burnt child dreads the fire and, although his burns have all been healed, he dreads the fire none the less, but all the more. These who have been scorched by sin tremble at even a distant approach to the flame. You will always know whether you are delivered from the guilt of sin by answering this question—Am I delivered from the love of sin? He who lost his way yesterday feels his need of a guide today and tomorrow. How can the pardoned one endure the thought of sinning, again, against the Lord? David’s great anxiety on this score is met by the gracious answer of the Lord—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go.”

Another thing is noteworthy—David was now rid of guile as well as guilt. Orientals pride themselves on their cunning and David, by nature, had a considerable share of craft about him. But he now drives it from his spirit—he will not, from now on, tolerate himself in deceit. When he had thrown away this false wisdom, this carnal prudence, he felt that he must look elsewhere for guidance. If he is no longer to plot and plan with the cunning which he had shown in the matter of Uriah, he will need other direction—and he looks up for it. See how our gracious God comes in with the promise of guidance. “The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.” “The Lord preserves the simple.” The upright, who can no longer trust their own deceitful hearts, shall find the Lord an all-sufficient Guide. Happy is it for them that He has spoken such a word as this—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go.”

One other observation. We find David, in this Psalm, reaching to a high state of joy on account of his being forgiven. He exclaims, in the seventh verse, “You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance.” A very proper state of mind to be in! It is meet that the pardoned sinner should leap for joy. But, at the same time, the wisdom of God comes in, not to check the joy, but to render it more deep, more sure—and to prevent its coming to an untimely end. David is in ecstasies of delight, but he is to be reminded that he is not yet in Heaven, and that he is compassed about with other things besides songs. The voice of God commends his joy, but also reminds him that there lies before him a future full of perils and a life strewn with temptations. He is, from then on, to be a disciple as well as a singer! He needs to be instructed and taught in the way, for he is still a pilgrim and not yet at his journey’s end. Sound the timbrel, if you will, and shout for joy and sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! But remember that on the other side of the Red Sea there is a wilderness and you will require much Divine Grace to traverse it—such Grace as only the Shepherd of Israel can give you. You will be wise to address yourselves to your journey and resolve to follow Him whose eyes discern the way, and whose hands can help you in it. A pilgrim’s life is not all feasting. He has something else to do besides praising God upon the high-sounding cymbals. We must sit at Jesus’ feet, as well as look to His Cross. We are to bear His yoke and learn of Him, that we may find rest for our souls.

This may stand as an introduction, for now I need to conduct you further into this grave business of the saved man. You are pardoned, my Friend, you know you are, and you feel the joy of that knowledge. God grant that your joy may abound yet more and more! Sitting in your seat this morning, you are saying, “Oh, the heaped-up blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered!” Yes, but you are not yet in Heaven! Something more is needed—not to secure the love of God, not to complete the work of Sovereign Grace—but to educate you for the skies, to make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light! About that matter we are going to talk as the Holy Spirit shall enable us.

That I may set before you, to the fullest, the teaching of the text, I would have you note, first, a privilege to be sought—Divine instruction, practical teaching and tender guidance. Secondly, a character to be avoided—“Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.” This will bring us to consider, thirdly, an infliction to be escaped—“Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.” If you do not wish to be bitted and bridled, be readily obedient to the direction of your Lord! We will come to a close by reflecting that there is a freedom to be attained. You may be free from bit and bridle and guided by the eyes of God. You may find your way to Heaven without the need of these rough chastisements which compel obedience. Oh, for the help of the great Teacher in this matter!

I. First, here is A PRIVILEGE TO BE SOUGHT. I will proceed at once to set it forth from the words before us.  
This guidance is very full in its nature. Three words are used to describe it—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes.”  
The first word is, “I will instruct you”—a promise more full of meaning than would appear upon its surface. God is prepared to give you an inward understanding of spiritual things, for His instruction is intensely effectual upon the mind. The Lord is prepared to teach you in His Truths— to make you wise in heavenly matters. Though saved, you are, as yet, a mere child, and unfamiliar with great Truths of God. You know but little of Divine things—you know little of yourself, little of your danger, little of holiness and little of God—but the Lord promises, here, to take you for His pupil and to be, Himself, your Instructor! He instructs so effectually as really to build up the mind and, therefore, the Psalmist says, “Through Your precepts I get understanding.” Other instructors can awaken that measure of understanding which is already ours, but God gives understanding to the simple. A good understanding is one of the gifts of His Grace and blessed are they who receive it!  
The second word is, “I will teach you.” And this teaching is most practical, for the promise is—“I will teach you in the way which you shall go.” God adds the precept to the doctrine and instructs us in both. Eminently precious is that practical teaching by which you are made to know what to do and how to do it. Theoretical teaching is of small importance compared with this practical learning. The Lord will teach us the art and mystery of holiness. He will apprentice us to the Lord Jesus as the Master of Righteousness—he will make us journeymen, one of these days, and turn us into full-blown “workmen that need not to be ashamed.” Our great Teacher sends forth fine workmen, whose good works are seen of men and cause them to glorify the Father in Heaven.  
The promise of the Lord, in the third word of the verse, goes even further than doctrinal and practical instruction, for we read, “I will guide you with My eyes.” Herein is fellowship as well as instruction, for the guide goes with the traveler, and thus will God, in the process of our instruction, give us fellowship with Himself. Blessed are they who follow the Lamb wherever He goes—they have both the privilege of holy walk and heavenly company. It is our high privilege that, while our Shepherd goes before us, He calls us by name and we follow closely in His footsteps, as His well-beloved sheep. We are not only to be told the way and led into the way, but to be accompanied in it by our Teacher and Friend. The education which the Lord provides is complete in all its branches—mind, life and heart are all under the Divine tuition! This is no pauper school, or merely preparatory seminary—the text describes a high school of holiness, a grammar school of Grace, a University of holiness! In this place of sacred instruction, you may take high degrees, if you will, and also become teachers of others! He who forgave you provides everything for you that you can need to make you a disciple, indeed, a learner who in the ages to come shall make known to angels and principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God! Who would not be a scholar in such a University as this?  
Note, next, that this teaching is Divine in its source. See how it runs—“I will instruct you.” How delightful! “I will instruct you: I will guide you with My eyes.” The Lord will not put us in a low class, where some halfinstructed usher or pupil-teacher shall look after us. No, we shall, all of us, be taught by the Lord Jesus, Himself, and His Holy Spirit! It is written, “I will instruct you: I will guide you.” Our Lord may instruct us by men who are taught of Himself, but, after all, the best of His servants cannot teach us anything profitably except the Lord, Himself, teaches by them and through them! He alone teaches us to profit. What a wonderful condescension it is that the Lord should become a Teacher! Sunday school teachers, adore the Head of your sacred college, even God Himself! “I will teach you, I will instruct you.” They are well taught that are taught of God and this privilege is common to all the family of love, for the Scripture says, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” It is not said that a portion of them shall be left to be trained by angels or archangels, but they shall all be taught of the Lord! Jehovah, Himself, will be the Instructor of every soul that comes to Him through Jesus Christ!  
Observe how wonderfully personal is this promised guidance. While the address in the ninth verse is in the plural, “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule,” the promise is in the singular to each individual—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go; I will guide you with My eyes.” Wonder of wonders, the Infinite focuses Himself upon the insignificant! We who are less than the motes in the sunbeam, are, nevertheless, individually considered by Him who fills all in all, who is greater than all that He fills! “I will instruct you.” Yes, Jehovah will condescend to instruct that Believer who is feeblest of all the company. Rejoice, my Brothers and Sisters, that though your understanding is a commonplace one, and though your position is very obscure, yet the Lord does not say, “I will send you to a preparatory school kept by some inferior teacher.” But He does say, “I will instruct you.” God instructs each Believer as truly as if He were His only child. It is delightful to reflect that while Christ’s death has a sufficient efficacy in it to save a believing world, yet if His design had been to save only me, He would have to have offered the same Sacrifice as He has done. His death would have been necessary to prove that “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” So, while our Lord’s teaching would suffice to instruct myriads of men who are willing to learn, yet does He condescend to bring all His teaching to bear upon each single person— “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go.” I note with comfort, in the text, what the French call tu-toi-age. Speaking to one another very familiarly, they say, “you” and, “you.” How sweetly is this seen in this passage—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go. I will guide you with My eyes”! Hear you not the great Father talking to His dear child? Yes, I hear Him speaking to you and to me! Blessed be His name for such familiar love! Let us profit by its promise even to the fullest.  
Furthermore, this teaching is delightfully tender—“I will guide you with My eyes.” That is to say, if you are willing to be so directed, the Lord will guide you, not by the rough means of bit and bridle, muzzle and cord, but with His eyes—a way which implies understanding on your part and love on His part. It is a recognition of confidence in us when He promises, thus, to guide us. The mistress at the head of the table gives a nod to Sarah. She knows what it means and the will of the lady is done at once. The master has not to enter into details with old John, who has been with him for so many years. John knows his wishes and a wink or a look will speak volumes! Well-trained children of God have their faces toward Him and soon perceive His mind—and this secures their prompt obedience. They see much in little and they make great account of every Word of the Lord. When we are what we ought to be, the guidance of the Lord is not sent us in thunder, but in a still small voice! And His instruction comes, not in tempests and hailstones, but in sunbeams and dewdrops. Some saints can be effectually led with a thread of hair. Cords of love and bands of a man are at once the most tender and the strongest bonds for a sanctified soul. “I will guide you with My eyes” is a charming promise, but it is of no use to the blind, the stubborn, the careless, or the self-willed. What a pity that any should debar themselves from so choice a privilege!  
See, dear Friends, you that have been lately pardoned, and you, of older years, who have long been forgiven, see what guidance there is for you all the way from your starting point to the gate of pearl at the end of the road! I say this because I mean to wind up this point with the remark—This teaching is constant. “I will instruct you and teach you; I

 will guide you.” He that has begun to guide will not suddenly desert! He that has commenced to teach you will never dismiss you from His class! He that has, in a measure, instructed you and given you an understanding, will continue to teach you until He has perfected you in the knowledge of Himself and conformed you to the image of His Son! I feel most happy to think that such a privilege is promised and provided. I have heard of some who dream that, once forgiven, they may live as they wish—but to such I would say, “You know nothing about the matter. You are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.” The man who believes in Jesus for salvation, believes in Him so as to be set free from his sins—and his great anxiety is to be saved from all iniquity and to be led in the ways of righteousness to the glory of God! Here is comfort for you that are really seeking a holy life—God has made provision for your being led in it! He who has made you His child will put you in school and teach you until you shall know the Lord Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life! You shall soon know your Father’s name and Character and sing unto His praise among the bright intelligences that surround His Throne!  
II. I now ask your attention while I show you A CHARACTER TO BE AVOIDED. We are told that since the Lord is ready to instruct us, we are not to be stubborn and wayward. It is ours to be docile and obedient. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near to you.”  
We are not to imitate creatures of which we are the superiors. Man is made to have dominion over the horse, the mule and the whole animal creation—let him not seek his models among his servants. I have sometimes heard speeches which have looked in that unwise direction. One said, in my hearing, as an excuse for a passionate speech, “I could not help it. If you tread on a worm it will turn.” Is a worm to be the example for a saint? By a worm in that case, I suppose, is meant a serpent—and are you to follow serpents in their malice and venom? I have heard the same thing turned the other way—and it has been made to appear as if an animal might be all the worse for copying a man. The driver of an omnibus was using his whip pretty freely upon one of his horses, and a gentleman sitting on the box-seat observed, “You never strike the horse on this side.” “Bless you!” said the driver, “if I were to touch that mare, when I went near her in the stable at night, she would kick me like a Christian!” What a remarkable simile, was it not? “Like a Christian!” Is that so, that Christians kick? That Christians are found taking revenge? Here is a matter about which we would urgently cry, “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule.” Never render evil for evil, railing for railing, for that is to copy the beasts of the field! Let us look upward to the highest for our model and never go down to the beasts of the field for models.  
We must mind that we do not imitate creatures to whom we are so near akin. The mule has a touch of the ass in it and I fear it is not the only creature of which this may be said. Is not man, as unredeemed, likened to the ass in the types of the Mosaic Law? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, we are likened in Scripture to many strange beasts, and not without reason! St. Augustine and other ancient writers discuss, at length, the likeness which exists between men and mules. I am not going to follow them in their observations, but would simply say with Dr. Donne, “They have gone far in these illusions and applications. And they might have gone as far further as it had pleased them—they have sea-room enough that will compare a beast and a sinner together—and they shall find many times, in the way, the beast the better man.” I am afraid that it is so. David himself says, “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You”—and yet he was so good a man that he could add, “Nevertheless I am continually with You.” A large part of us is animal and its tendency is to drag down that part which is more than angelic. How abject and yet how august is man! Brother to the worm and yet akin to Deity! Immortal and yet a child of dust! Be not the prey of your lower natures—as children of God, yield not yourselves to that which it is your duty to subdue! Have the horse and mule in subjection—keep under your body—do not bear the burden of the animal but make the animal your burden-bearer. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule,” but rise superior to flesh and blood. May the Spirit of the Lord help your infirmities in this matter!  
I believe the Psalmist here alludes to the horse and mule as creatures naturally wild and needing to be broken and trained. We are by nature as the wild ass that inhales the wind of the wilderness—“he scorns the multitude of the city, neither regards he the crying of the driver.” These wild creatures we can make nothing of till we break them in—be not like they—useless, untrained, unbroken. Yet this is how we begin life naturally and spiritually. It is good to get broken in early in life—“it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” It is an ill thing for a man to have no restraint in youth and no trouble in manhood. When men and women follow out their own sweet wills, the end is seven-fold bitterness. A mind uncorrected is a vine unpruned, which yields no fruit, but trails along the ground and rots as it trails. It is a grand thing to learn the meaning of the word, “obey.” It is ill with these who remain unsubdued. They are of little worth to themselves or to others. The Holy Spirit would not have any of the Lord’s people to be of that wild, untamable character, for which there is neither use nor hope.  
Furthermore, we are not to imitate creatures devoid of reason. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.” He especially lays stress on this—that they are without understanding. What does he mean by that? Horses and mules have been so trained that they have needed neither bit nor bridle and have performed marvelous feats at a word. It is possible for these animals to be brought to so high a training that they obey the word of command without the use of force. They come to have an understanding of their owner’s intent and act as if they really entered into their master’s designs. With the horses and mules of our streets—and of David’s day—this is not the case. These display little understanding and we are not to be like they. You are a reasoning man—act reasonably! You have understanding—do not act under mere impulse, blind willfulness, or ignorant folly. Here is the point, Brothers and Sisters—what we need is to come to an understanding with God and to stay in that condition. The horse does not understand his driver’s wishes, except as he intimates them through the bit and bridle. When he is to turn, when he is to quicken his pace and when he is to stand still, he must be told through the rein, for, apart from the bit in his mouth, he has no understanding of the man’s mind.  
That thought which works in the mind of his driver is not working in the mule’s mind and, therefore, he has to feel a pull at his mouth to make him know his master’s desire. We need to come to an understanding with God. “Be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Be sensitive to the Spirit of God! So dwell in God that He shall dwell in you and His indwelling shall cause you to feel at once what it is that He would have you to do. May your will be so in accord with the Lord’s will that you will only what He wills! This is the highest form of understanding that I know of—may we never rest till we have it. “Give me understanding and I shall keep Your Law.” You know how we say, “I should like to come to some understanding with that man,” for you feel that without it your relations are unsatisfactory. When two friends really understand each other’s purpose and enter into each other’s design, then they act as if they were one. Be you so near to God in heart that you can be guided with His eyes because you understand the mind of your heavenly Father and are in full sympathy with Him!  
But the Psalmist also adds, concerning the horse and the mule, that having no understanding, they are creatures with much self-will and waywardness. “Their mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near to you.” If you look at the Revised Version, you will find it is, “else they will not come near to you.” And Calvin has it, “lest they kick at you.” This is a very obscure passage as to the words, but it is not at all doubtful as to its sense, for the point is that the animal will not do what it should do, but it will obstinately do what it ought not to do—until it gets the bit in its mouth to compel it to do its master’s will. So is it with ourselves, but so it should not be! At one time we find men rashly rushing near to God—they have no reverence, no holy trembling and awe. Some appear to be as familiar with God as if He were one of them. Thus the Lord complains in the Psalm, “You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself.” Such vain people need a bit, lest they come near to God. They need to hear the voice which cries, “Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet.” Oh, for more holy reverence!  
Others will not come near to God at all and need a bit because they run off from the Lord into infidelity, blasphemy, or open vice. These endeavor to carry out their own wild wills, throwing up their heels as they please, and prancing over hill and plain with a defiant contempt of rule and order. We know that kind of people—let us not in any measure grow like they. There are horses and mules that will kick, bite, and do grievous harm to these round about them unless they are restrained with straps and harness. I am afraid I know some kicking saints as well as kicking sinners and I am more afraid of these kicking professors than of the outwardly wicked. I would sooner be bitten by a wolf than by a sheep, that is to say, I could more readily bear injury from an ungodly man than from a professed Believer. A kick from a Christian causes very serious wounding to a gracious heart. “It was not an enemy: then I could have borne it.” Remember the question and answer—“What are these wounds in your hands? Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” These are wounds, indeed, which our Lord receives from a traitorous disciple. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they kick at you.” Kick not at the will of your Lord! Kick not at the doctrines of His Word. Kick not at the precepts of His house. Kick not at His servants. Kick not at His Providences. Kick not at His Cross. Surely, I need not further urge you to avoid this unlovely character. None of you would wish to be as the horse, or as the mule.

III. I will now dwell for a few minutes upon AN INFLICTION TO BE ESCAPED. If you mean to be like the horse or the mule, you may readily be so, but you will have to pay the penalty. If the Lord means to save you, He will use a bit and a bridle upon you, if you render them necessary by your willfulness. If you will be guided by His eyes, there will be no need for such stern work—but if you are stubborn, He will not spare you.  
I may say of this bit and bridle, that such trappings are a curb upon freedom. A man would not endure to go about wearing a bit and a bridle, yet many a child of God is in that condition spiritually because he is not subdued to the will of the Lord. Because he is not tender of conscience, because he is frequently disobedient, because he does not carry out his Lord’s will, he has to suffer severe discipline and labor under serious disadvantage. If the man were willingly obedient to the Divine will, things would go more happily with him.  
The bit is not applied unless it is found necessary, but it will be applied if necessary. My text says, “Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle. Mark that, “must.” That must arises out of the nature of the creature dealt with. Some men, if they are to go to Heaven, must be poor on the road, or must be sick, or must be defeated, or must be misunderstood—not because there is any real necessity, apart from their obstinate, cross-grained nature—but because they, themselves, render it necessary. God is resolved to save them and, therefore, he will drive them to salvation with bit and bridle rather than leave them free to rush downward to Hell through the indulgence of their own passions and ambitions!  
Dear Friends, what a wretched descent is this from being guided by God’s eyes! In the first case we have an intelligent servant so in accord with his Lord that a look suffices to set him running in the way of obedience. And in the second case we have an avowedly Christian man so out of accord with God that he has to be treated like a mule which will only yield under compulsion and only obey as it is made to smart! I do not know, dear Brothers and Sisters, if this description applies to any of you, but if it does, kindly take it home—and if I seem to be personal to you— well, I intend to be personal and, therefore, I dare not apologize. I am afraid that many of us ought to make it more personal to ourselves than we are likely to do. There is a hair of the mule’s tail in every one of us!  
“Be you not as the horse, or as the mule,” or you shall have your mouth held in with bit and bridle. That is always a very unpleasant matter. It is not comfortable, even to a mule, to wear bit and bridle, and it certainly must be very unpleasant to a man. I have known Brothers and Sisters whom God could not use in the conversion of many souls, for they could not bear prosperity. The Lord did bless the preacher, once, and he grew so great in his own esteem that he was not bearable to these around him. For the man’s own sake the good Lord saw that it was not safe to let him be useful. Here is a man who formerly succeeded in business, but he grew so worldly, so purse-proud, so forgetful of God, that it was necessary to take his wealth away from him! And it has been done—and now he is devout and lowly.  
Another man, when he is in health and strength, is so full of levity and carelessness that he plays the fool. And, in order to keep him right, it is necessary to let him have a sluggish liver, or an aching head, or a sick home, or something else which may sober him. My Friend, if God means to get you to Heaven, He will lead you there gently if you will freely go. But if you are obstinate and hard, He will thrust the bit between your jaws and drive you there. The less willfulness the less harness, but if need be, you shall wear all the paraphernalia of an unquiet horse, for the great Trainer will have the upper hand of you and thus He will save you! The Lord would be glad for you to go without these disagreeable things, but if you will have them, you shall have them.  
I know a person who is always grumbling and I do not wonder that he always seems to have cause for it. It is like the child that I heard crying and its mother said to it, “Hold your tongue! If you cry for nothing, I will soon give you something to cry for.” Many a child of God has found something to cry for as the result of wanton murmuring. Some Hearers even go to the House of God and complain that the preacher says this, and does not say that, and omits the other. Before long the Lord removes the preacher they complained of and they have nobody to feed their souls— and then they begin to wish they had the old preacher back again! Well, well, if you make rods for your backs, God will use them upon you! It is His custom not to let anything lie idle in His House. So, if you are busy making a rod, He will be busy in putting it to its proper use.  
But all this is unnatural to the child of God. Your children do not go about your house with bits in their mouths and bridles on their heads. God would not have his own regenerated ones going up and down in the world all bitted and bridled—but it shall be so sooner than they shall be lost! Disobedience is ruin—from that He must deliver His people. If we take delight in holiness, we shall not need rough usage. Here is the sweet alternative—“I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go: I will guide you with My eyes.” This is God’s way! Oh that it may be our way! May the good Spirit lead us into it! Do not drive your Savior to be stern with you. Do not choose the way of hardness—the brutish way, the mulish way. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding,” for then you will become sad, gloomy, dull, stupid and full of disquietude. It is essential that your iniquities should be subdued and they shall be. He will save you—save you from rebellion, save you from self-seeking and self-will. He will bend you to His holy will. And if it cannot come to pass anyway else—then the bit and the bridle shall conquer you! O Souls, submit yourselves to God. Vex not His Holy Spirit by hardness of heart.  
IV. Now I close by noticing A FREEDOM TO BE ATTAINED. There are children of God who wear no bit or bridle—the Lord has loosed their bonds. To them, obedience is delight—they keep His commands with their whole heart. The Son has made them free and they are free, indeed!  
They are free, first, because they are in touch with God. God’s will is their will. They answer to the Lord as the echo to the voice. Happy is he who can say, “Whatever You desire, O my Lord, I would desire it because You desire it.” Then is it safe for the Lord to leave the man free from compulsion. It is written, “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” This large liberty can only be promised to these whose desires are in accordance with their heavenly delight. When the desires run towards God with delight, they shall surely be granted. When you and God have come to a good, clear understanding with each other, so that you yield to Him in all things. Then He will hear your prayers and give you the blessing which makes rich and adds no sorrow. When you rejoice in Christ Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased, then will the Lord be pleased with you! When you cry to Him in the day of trouble, coming to the Mercy Seat, where He delights to dwell, then He will meet with you and lift up the light of His Countenance upon you.  
You shall be free, next, because you are tutored. The Lord cannot trust our wild nature—He gives freedom where He gives His Spirit—“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” How does our Lord put it?—“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” He gives rest through His blood. He makes you find rest through learning of Him and bearing His yoke. It is only a horse that has been long taught and trained by great skill that can be trusted to go through a performance without bit or bridle. I sometimes hope there will come a day when these who drive horses will not need to carry whips, because the noble animals have been so trained by kindness as to answer to a word. I fear that time is a long way off but I have greater hope of you, beloved Brothers and Sisters, that you will be so trained that no constraint but that of the love of Christ will be needed to be put upon you. The Law was not made for a righteous man. I hope we shall not need Church discipline, or Providential discipline, because we have been trained to joyful, watchful, exact obedience. Oh, that it were so! Teach me, O Lord! Teach me Your way. Show me what You would have me to do. Make me to know the perfect love which casts out fear. When we are thus instructed, the Lord will leave us by His sweet Grace to be encompassed about by mercy and to be guided by His eyes.  
We shall be free, again, because always trusting. Look at the 10th verse—“He that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.” Faith gives life and more faith gives light and liberty. When we completely trust in God, we shall do His will completely. When we raise no questions with God—when our reliance upon Him is without reserve; when we know by faith that His will and way for us are perfect—then we shall run in the way of His Commandments because He has enlarged our steps. When we have received life more abundantly through a growing faith, it will be safe for our Lord to take away all bits and bridles—but not till then. When, through Grace, faith has triumphantly mastered our whole being, we shall be victorious over the law of sin and death which dwells in our members and tends to unrighteousness. And then shall the yoke be taken away and the burden be removed. Blessed freedom this!  
Especially free because tender. “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule”—these are thick of skin, tough of mouth—and so they are mastered by hard means. If we become as tender as the apple of an eye, God will guide us with His eyes. If we avoid even the

 appearance of evil and shun every false way with delicate sensitiveness of mind, we shall hear little about bits and bridles and the many other sorrows which shall be to the wicked. Ah, dear Brothers and Sisters, what a difference there is between one man and another even in the same Church, holding the same faith! One Christian man needs repeated and urgent warnings, while another is distressed with half a word of admonition! It is hard to stir one to generosity, or to any exertion in the Lord’s cause, while another is earnest at once. Love works more in some than fear can produce in others. We have to use strong arguments and sharp cuts of the whip with certain sluggish minds, while others are all sensitiveness and take to themselves censures which were never meant for them.  
Oh for a tender heart! May the heart of stone be taken away and a heart of flesh be granted! May we be to the Lord’s will as sensitive as the mercury to air and heat! The wave is flowing and a cork upon the water is carried wherever the current moves. That same wave merely ripples at the side of a man-of-war—it does not stir in the least degree. Saintly souls feel the ripples of the Holy Spirit, while self-sufficient professors know nothing of anything less than a tornado! Crave as a choice gift the renewal of a right spirit within you and that right spirit will be eminently tender and pliant to the will of the Lord. My Brothers and Sisters, my longing is that you and I may stand with our faces towards the Lord, watching for the faintest indications of the Divine will. May we be humble, teachable and mild! May our soul be even as a weaned child!  
All this will lead to high joy. See how the Psalm ends, “Shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart”! When the bit is taken from the mouth, the tongue will show forth the praises of the Lord! When the bridle is gone, the mouth is free to sing to the Most High! If the heart is well adjusted, there will be music in the life. When we follow the Lord’s guidance with alacrity, peace shall be our companion—and joy shall hover over us like a guardian angel! This world will be the vestibule of Heaven when we begin, even now, to rehearse that perfect obedience which is the essential condition of bliss. Beloved, all this the Holy Spirit must work in our hearts, or it will never be there. Cry to Him for it in the name of Jesus, and the Lord will give you an answer of peace!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 32.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—30, 651, 649.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3460 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAISE COMELY TO THE UPRIGHT  
NO. 3460

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING JUNE 18, 1868.

**“Praise is comely for the upright.”  
Psalm 33:1.**

THE Psalmist was full of praise and, therefore, felt that he could not fully express the Glory of God, but desired to enlist others in the sacred service. You hear him often calling upon sea and land, upon earth and Heaven, upon mountain and valley, upon plants and creeping things, upon living creatures, upon the heavens and the heavens that are above the heavens, to assist him in magnifying the name of the Infinite Jehovah, whose praise still exceeds all the honor that can be given to Him by all His creatures. Praise has a blessed contagion in it. It is like fire—if it burns its way in one place, it will be spreading itself if it can. A man cannot praise God alone. There will always be within him a high ambition to teach others to take up the strain. He will always be longing and desiring to lead others in the same sweet employ. Now let us seem to hear across these ages the voices of those who are with their God as they cry to us, “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, for praise is comely to the upright.”

I have taken for a text that one sentence—and I will speak of it under four short words which may serve as headings—four words of question. The first is—

I. WHAT?  
What is it which is so comely, so comely to the upright? It is praise, the praise Of God! And this praise of God, though it is always the same thing, the same spiritual thing produced by the Spirit of God, yet takes different forms, and in each form it is still comely to the upright. It is so in that delightful form of music in which we express with accord, hearts and voices keeping tune together, in the great congregation our sense of united adoration. I think there is nothing more comely than the sweet songs of the sanctuary, and what our friends of the Society of Friends do without singing I scarcely know! I think they will have to recant that one thing at least when they enter Heaven, for surely they cannot be silent there, where all shall join in songs like unto great thunder, and like the mighty rolling of the sea in praise of the Infinite Majesty of Him who was slain, but who always lives! I think we could not, anyhow, give up our song. We would feel as if the Sabbath were shorn of its bloom, as if you had plucked the flowers out of the garden of the soul! Our soul must sing, yes, she will sing praises unto the Lord! So natural does it seem to the renewed heart to join in praise with others, that even when lying in the dungeon, after having been beaten sore with stripes, and with their feet fast in the stocks, Paul and Silas did not only pray, but they sang praises unto God, and praise was comely there! It has been comely in many a prison where no one has heard the sound but God. It has been comely among the glens of Scotland when the Covenanters lifted up the Psalm. It has been comely in nooks and corners of England when Puritans, in fear of their lives, nevertheless magnified the name of the Lord. It has been comely at the stakes at Smithfield! Comely from Anne Askew’s lips, when she was on the rack, stretched to the utmost! It has been comely anywhere when the voice has poured out itself with musical rhythm in the praise of the Most High!  
But there is a second form of vocal praise which is equally comely to the upright—the spoken praise of God. I allude to those praises which consist of commendation of the name, and Person, and service, and goodness of the Lord by private Christians to their fellow men. Think not that all praise is gathered up in singing! It is the praise of God when the mother tells her child of the goodness of Him who made the stars, and who spread the world with flowers. It is praise when the young convert tells of the joy of his heart to his companion and bids him fly to the Fountain where he has washed and been made clean. It is praise, praise of a high order, too, when the advanced Believer in his old age tells of the faithfulness of God, and how not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised! And while praise seems to sit in such a comely manner upon the young convert, so that it seems to be the most natural thing in all the world for him to praise, it is equally comely in the aged Christian, for he seems to feel that if such a man as he, preserved so long, did not praise God, the very stones in the street would cry out against him!  
That praise which consists in living, loving, personal testimony to the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord is always comely to the upright. I wish that some Christians would remember that murmuring is not comely. That envying others, that finding fault, that ambition, that desiring greater things—that all these are not comely, but the speaking well of His name, the testimony to His faithfulness in Providence and to His goodness in Grace—this is comely to the upright.  
But the truest praise, perhaps, is that which is not expressed in language, because it could not be—meditative praise. I fear there is but little of this in London. I am not sure that there is any more of it in the country, though there ought to be a great deal more of it in both. I mean such praise as this—when, like David, we sit before the Lord and think of His exceeding bounty and then say, “What am I, and what is my Father’s house that You have brought me here?” I mean the praise that makes the tear unbidden come to the eyes—not the tear of sorrow, but the tear of overwhelming gratitude for the goodness of God, so that the soul, without making use of words, seems to say—  
*“When all Your mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view,  
I’m lost In wonder, love, and praise.”*  
When thoughts become too heavy for words to carry them—when they break the backs of words, as it were. When “expressive silence,” as the poet calls it, has to come to the rescue and the man is compelled rather to fall prostrate before the Infinite Majesty and goodness than to venture on a sonnet that would fall flat in the presence of such emotions!— *“Words are but air, and tongues but clay, But Your compassions are Divine.”*  
Where, then, shall it be found possible for words and for tongues to worthily express our praise? I am sure it would be a very refreshing thing to us all—acceptable to God and very blessed to ourselves—if we had more of this quiet praise! It would be refreshing if we could get to some of those cool retreats, those silent shades that with prayer and praise agree, and seem, by God’s kind bounty, made for those who would worship Him. Such praise is comely to the upright. I like to think of George Herbert and those other holy men who led meditative lives walking through the Parsonage Garden and up and down by the banks of the brook, singing within themselves of their God. It seems to fit them as a beautiful vest that is comely upon their shoulders when they are engaged in the meditative praise of God!  
But one more remark. Sometimes praise does not even fall into the form of meditation, much less of conversation or of song. It becomes— what shall I call it?—habitual praise—the spirit of praise. I will indicate one or two Brothers and Sisters in this congregation who, if it were the depth of winter, would create a smile in my vestry if they would but enter it—who, whenever I meet them, their eyes sparkle like stars, their lips drop pearls, they never seem to be unhappy, never doubting, never distrustful. They are sure to speak every Sabbath morning, “We shall have a good day today. There has been much prayer about it and God always answers prayer. You will be graciously helped through it. Be of good courage.” And on Sunday night it is, “This has been a good Sunday.” In fact, they say they never have anything but good Sabbaths! They always seem to be fed and they are always rejoicing. And if you talk to them, they are not the youngest people in the congregation, perhaps—they may not be the richest, they may not be in the best circumstances, but they are always the most cheerful, always the most happy and they can say—

*“We would not change our blest estate  
For all the world calls good and great.”*  
Now, believe me, I think this is most comely to the upright when men or women shall get into the spirit of praise so that they shall always be blessing God. Why, it is such a beautiful dress to wear that they shine in the family, they shine in business, they shine in the church, they shine in the eyes of angels who think that they must be angels, too, they have got into such an angelic frame of mind! Such a man was Bernard Gilpin, who always said “it was all for the best.” If it was fair, it was all for the best. Or if there had been any rain, it was all for the best. Were it hot or were it cold, it was all for the best! Bernard was arrested by the Queen’s order to be brought to London to be burned, but he said it was all for the best. The soldiers, knowing of this expression of his, jeered him all along the journey with blasphemies, and when his horse fell and he broke his leg, they laughed, but he said it was all for the best. He was laid upon the road for a surgeon to set his bones, but he said it was all for the best, and so it proved to be, for this delayed them—and when they got just within sight of London they could hear the bells ringing and, on enquiry, they learned that Queen Mary was dead and Queen Elizabeth had succeeded—so that Mr. Bernard Gilpin had arrived in London just three days too late to be burned—and he was quite correct in saying that it was all for the best! But I have no doubt that if he had gone to the stake he would have said it was all for the beat, and certainly his emancipated spirit, as it left its charred ashes behind, would have sung, “Yes, it is all for the best.” Now that state of heart, not the act of praise, but the spirit of praise, in which the soul seems to swim in praise as the fish swims in the river, and to bathe and perfume itself with thanksgiving, as Esther perfumed herself in Ahasuerus’s palace. Such a state of heart as this is extremely comely to the upright! That is the answer to the question— What? The next question is—  
II. WHY?  
Why is praise so befitting and becoming to the upright? We answer that it is so, and you will soon see it, from the nature of things. Wings are most becoming to an angel. You would not think of drawing one of those spirits that are like flames of fire without giving it wings. What for? Why, to mount with, to make him ethereal, to quicken his motions. Well, and the Christian without praise would be without his wings! What is he to mount with? He does not wish to grovel here below, fond of these earthly toys, but how is he to mount? Prayer gives him one wing, but praise must give him the other—and when he gets prayer and praise, oh, how he seems to leave sublunary things behind and away he flies, borne by the strong help of the eternal Spirit up to—  
*“Where eternal ages roll,  
Where solid pleasures never die,  
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”*

Take away the Christian’s power of praising God and you make him a poor earthworm, bound here with doubts, fears and cares. But let him but kindle in his soul the flame that burns in Heaven of seraphic love to God and away he mounts!

Praise is comely to the upright, in the next place, from the office of the Believer. When Aaron put on his breast-plate, his belt, his ephod and his bells, everyone said that the garment was comely to Aaron. It would not have been comely to us because we would have no right to wear it, but the office of Aaron made it comely to him. You would not think it comely if I were to come here to preach to you tonight with a red coat on. You would have said, “No, that red coat is exceedingly comely to the soldier— it suits him—but it does not suit the minister.” Now the Christian is a priest and praise is a part of the garment of a priest that he must wear. Praise is the employment of a priest. Inasmuch as we are kings and priests unto God, it becomes us that we should swing that golden censor that is full of thanksgiving, and that we should stand before the golden altar and continually offer sacrifice and praise acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. It suits our nature and suits our office and, therefore, it is comely to the upright.

Praise is comely to the upright as flowers and fruits are comely to a plant. There never was a plant but what the fruit it bore suited it and the greatest comeliness to the apple tree in the garden is to see it loaded with its wondrous blossoms, the most beautiful things in all the world—and then afterwards to see the boughs hanging down with luscious fruit! The comeliness of a plant lies in its coming to perfection and bearing its fruit. So with Christians. The barren Christian has no comeliness, but the comeliness of the Christian, his spiritual comeliness, lies in his bringing forth fruit unto God—and what is this but praise? “Whoever offers praise, glorifies Me,” says the Lord. Man is made on purpose to glorify God. It is his chief end. Then his chief end is comely to him. If he answers his end, he is comely to Him who made him, and inasmuch as our chief end is to glorify God, praise becomes comely to the upright.

Once again, praise is comely to the upright as a crown is comely to a king. It is his highest honor, his chief dignity. It is one of our highest honors to praise God—praise Him that we are His elected, His begotten— that we are His redeemed, His sanctified, His preserved people. When we get to this, we occupy as high a stand as we well can do short of Heaven! And in Heaven I know not if we shall ever seem more comely than when we are, with all the hosts of angels, praising and magnifying the name of the Lord! When we praise God, we do, as it were, put on our crowns, as when they, before the Throne of God, praise God. They also come with their crowns, but make it part of their praise to take them off, again, with, “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Your name be glory!”

Now, Christian, just treasure up this thought, that praise is comely to the upright. There are a great many people in the world who think a great deal of their personal appearance. How they will look in that mirror! How they will turn that hair again! How they arrange that dress! There must not be a pin awry. What does it really matter? After you have dressed yourselves as best you may, flies, bees, and insects of all kinds still excel you! When you have glorified yourselves to the pitch of Solomon, yet you cannot match the lilies—they still excel you! But that idea of comeliness ought to be turned into a better channel. If I want to make myself comely, why should I not desire to be comely in the esteem of those whose opinion is worth the having, and comely in the eyes of God? How can this be, then? Well, if I have, first of all, been covered with the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, which are the true beauty of the Christian, then the next thing to make me comely is to praise God, to keep His praises continually on my lips! If I begin complaining and mourning when I am harshly treated, I am, as it were, but scratching my own face! It is not comely to me—I am putting on rags! I am soiling my garments. I am pulling off my gold rings. I am stripping myself of my ornaments. But if I praise God, then I am acting according to my better nature, according to my office—I am acting in the most honorable capacity possible and I am answering the end for which God made me. Do, therefore, you who want to be thought comely, be continually praising God!

And now, in the third place, another little word to help your memories, and that shall be—  
III. WHEN?  
“Praise is comely to the upright.” But when? Now-a-days that which is comely one day is not comely the next, for the fashions change so continually. But let me tell you that the spiritual fashions never change, and that which God declares to be comely, today, will be comely next year, and comely forever! Praise is never out of fashion, never out of season, never out of date. You may praise God and utter even the same sentiments as came from the lips of Enoch and there shall be nothing stale therein—it shall still be comely. When is it comely for Christians to praise God? My answer is always. I must comprehend all seasons and all places. It is never uncomely to praise God. When the congregation has met and the service has commenced, it is the time to lift up the voice unanimously! Oh, it is then comely to the Believer to praise the Most High God! If there are but two or three who are met together in some lowly schoolroom, or a shed, or a barn, or under the forest trees—or half a dozen on the deck of a vessel, or down in the cabin or the forecastle—it matters not where, let us pitch our tent and sing one of the songs of Zion! Praise is comely to the upright from half a dozen in some backwood settlement, or out in the bush at a settler’s log hut. Sweet everywhere, it is unacceptable nowhere! Praise is comely in all such places when the saints come together. And, Brothers and Sisters, praise is comely from the Christian at any season. If he wakes in the morning, he sings—  
*“Awake! Lift up yourself, my heart  
And with the angels bear your part,  
Who all night long unwearied sing  
High praises to the Eternal King.”*  
His morning praise, glistening with dew, is comely. And if in the night watches he tosses restlessly on his bed, why, praise at night again is sweet—and so will it be from the Believer if he can then sing the praises of the Lord. When you are cracking your whip, you that drive a cart in the streets, why, you can sing one of the songs of Zion there! There is many a light and frothy song sung there—why should not ours be sung, too? It will be comely to the upright. When you are in the field digging, plowing, hay making, harvesting. When you good girls are at work at the needle, or the sewing machine, or book folding, or whatever it is! You mothers, rocking your cradles, or whatever it may be—praise will not seem out of place if you are upright in heart. Praise will be comely to you on all occasions!

But there are certain occasions when praise has a peculiar beauty. For instance, praise is comely to the upright when you are in poverty. It is easy to praise God when you have all you need. Who would not? A dog will follow you when you feed him. But to praise God when He takes away those gifts that you prize the most—oh, this is comely praise, indeed! To say, with Job, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him. Shall we receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?”—that is praise! Let me just say that when we lie upon the bed and pain shoots through us, some of us men who are a great deal more impatient than women are, do not find it very easy to praise God, then, and yet oh, it is blessed when we can tighten the heartstrings at last and get them right, and bless the Lord that lives, who will yet bring us up from languishing and restore us from the gates of the grave. Praise in the midst of bodily pain—headache, heartache, or any form of disease, is very comely to the upright! And to praise God when some beloved one on whom your heart is set is sickening—that is difficult, but it is very comely. To see him on whom all your earthly dependence is fixed, sickening and pining, and yet to say, “The Lord’s will be done, and blessed be His name,” oh, ‘tis so comely that I do not know that the angels in Heaven have, any of them, such a piece of praise, so rich and rare as that of the song of resignation when Beloved ones are going! And when the earth rattles on the coffin lid of a dear child, or a friend, or a beloved wife, then to be able to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord”—such praise as that is very comely to the upright. And when these things meet—when deaths, sicknesses and poverty come like many seas meeting at one place—let me tell you that the harder it is to sing, the more comely it is to do it! There is no music, perhaps, that we relish so much as the song of the nightingale, and that is because it sings in the night. And there is no praise more acceptable to God than the songs of His people in the night when they can praise Him under distress. I have read a saying by an old writer that God’s birds sing best in cages, and so they do when the cages have in them some affliction and trial. Then do they pour out their notes sweetly, magnifying the name of the Lord! If I am asked, then, when should the Believer praise God, I say, especially in the time of trial!  
I may say yet again, that we never praise God, I think, so acceptably as when others are blaspheming and profaning His name. For the Believer then to venture his testimony in the teeth of all defiance, to thrust himself in the way of jeers and sneers for Christ’s sake, to bless God when others curse Him—this is very comely to a cross-bearer, to a servant of Him who laid down His life for His Father’s Glory. And in times when you come to be slandered and your name is evilly spoken of, and your religion is said to be worthless, and your actions misrepresented, and your motives misconstrued—it is a grand thing, then, to praise God, and say— *“If on my face, for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame,  
If You remember me.”*  
At such times, again, praise is sweet.  
But, Beloved, there is an hour coming when praise will be comeliest of all—I mean when this mortal frame shall dissolve and our spirits shall be entering upon an unseen world. It is not every Believer that dies singing. It is not necessary to his safety that he should do so, but oh, it is so comely if he can do it! As it is said to sound very sweetly over the water, so certainly over the billows of death the song of the triumphant Christian comes with special sweetness! I shall always remember with great delight one verse of a hymn which I heard from a dying Christian who had become blind just before his death—and which has always since been invested in my memory with a melody I never heard in it before— *“And when you see my eye strings break, How sweet my minutes roll!  
Mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But glory in my soul!”*  
Ah! it is comely to the upright to be praising God when heart and flesh are failing!  
But I must leave that. I shall finish with another little word, and that is—  
IV. WHOM?  
Praise is comely—not to everybody—but to the upright. It is a very sad reflection that during this week some of the most glorious music that ever was composed—some of the noblest words that have ever been written, has been sung—and I do not altogether disapprove of it—but sung, I fear, by some who have no part nor lot in what they are singing! I refer to Handel’s glorious music—the noblest sounds, I think, next to the songs of angels, and one of the highest and holiest enjoyments of earth to listen to! But there are singers there who know nothing of God, or of His praise. It is very sad to think of it, but then it is just the same here on Sundays—just the same. You sing, but you do not sing. The sound is there, but not the heart in the song. As for your professional singing on Sabbath—I believe that that is earthly, sensual, outright devilish! We have heard say of our friends in America that in some of their churches the choir is so much esteemed and so highly esteemed by itself, that if the congregation were to sing, they would almost frown upon them to put them out of tune, and that there is very little sound of the congregation’s singing heard compared with those half a dozen perhaps as wicked singers as the music halls could find, stuck up there to glorify God by insulting Him! There has been a good deal of that done in England, too. Some of our churches have gone and picked up people according to their sweet voices and have said, “Now you praise God at so much per week.” But the thing won’t do—every conscience is convinced that it is wrong and the text utterly condemns it, for praise is comely to the upright—it is not comely to anybody else!  
The upright. Did you notice that word? It is a grand word, that word, upright. It is not the man who goes out of his way here and there. It is not the crooked man. It is the upright man. Nobody praises God like the man that stands upright. God will have a straight musical instrument— He will not have it crooked. If we are to praise Him, we must be upright. And mark, being upright consists in perfect independence of all, except God. The upright man does not lean on anything else, but stands right straight up. Now when a man says, “I would like to be a Christian, but\_\_\_”—he is not upright. “I would be honest, but\_\_”—he is not upright. “I would make a profession of religion, but\_\_”—he is not upright. He who has two objectives, two ends—who holds with the world and holds with God—is not upright and he cannot praise God! But when a man has been created anew in Christ Jesus. When he has been taught what the right path is and Grace given him to follow it, and who says, “Now, come fair or come foul, my trust is in the living God. I would not lie, though it were to gain a world. Nor would I cheat, though it were to win Heaven itself. I am independent of these things, seeing that God has promised that He will never leave me, nor forsake me”—when a man thus stands upright, he makes very blessed music—and such us God can accept! But your crooked tradesmen, your merchants who can cheat, your sneaks, your fraudulent bankrupts and I know not what besides—God wants no music out of them! It is no credit to a man to be praised by a rogue, and it is no credit to God to be praised by a man who has no character. When a man has character and lives up to it as a Christian, then it becomes honorable to God to be praised by him. If I heard a bad man speak well of God, I would say, “Ah, I do not like that! As a jewel of gold set in a swine’s snout, so is a good word from such a man as that.” I am sure, if I lived near any of you, and esteemed your character very highly and I heard all the blacklegs in London say what a good soul you were, I would begin to ask if you had not done something amiss, if you had not done something wrong. Said one of the philosophers when he was praised by a bad man, “What have I done wrong that I should deserve to be praised by such a man as this?” And when ungodly men praise God, we might almost say, “What has God done that such an one as this should praise Him?” Praise is not comely to such—it does not seem right at all. It is either a mere form without life and, consequently, a dead thing that God cannot accept, or else it is hypocritical, and God will not accept that. Or else it is a downright insult and that is to be avoided above all things! Praise is only comely to the upright.  
Then, my dear Friends, are you upright? Have you, first of all, been laid flat and brought to the horizontal? If so, then you will soon come to the perpendicular! A man must be brought to lie flat before the Throne of Grace, confessing his own nothingness. And he must look up to the Cross of Christ and rest there, or else he has not yet learned what it is to stand upright, for this, alone, can produce stability of principle—faith in the living God—and the believing man stands where all others fall! Oh, to have this uprightness of heart. If you have it, then go and praise God. It is comely to you. Cease not from it, but say, in the words of our hymn— *“I’ll praise Him in life, I’ll praise Him in death! I’ll praise Him as long as He lends me breath; And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow, ‘If ever I loved You, my Jesus, ‘tis now.’”*  
Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 130; 1 JOHN 1:4-7.**

**PSALM 130.**  
Verse 1. Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O LORD. The most eminent of God’s saints have been in the depths. Therefore, then, should I murmur if I have to endure trials? What am I that I should be exempt from warfare? How can I expect to win the crown without first carrying the Cross? David saw the depths—and so must you and I. But David learned to cry to God out of the depths. Learn, therefore, that there is no place so deep but prayer can reach from the bottom of it up to God and then God’s long arm can reach to the bottom and bring us up out of the depth! “Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O Lord.” Do not say, “Out of the depths have I talked to my neighbors and sought consolation from my friends.”—

*“Were half the breath thus vainly spent, To Heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would often be,  
‘Hear what the Lord has done for me!’”*

2. Lord, hear my voice: let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. Now a main part of prayer must be occupied by confession and the Psalmist proceeds, therefore—

3. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? That is to say, apart from Christ, if God exercises His justice to its utmost severity, the best of men must fall, for the best of man, being men at the best, are sinners even at their best estate.

4. But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. If there were no mercy, there would be no love in any human heart—and there would be an end to religion if there were an end to forgiveness! Here let us observe that the best of men dare not stand before an absolute God, that the holiest of God’s saints need to be accepted on the footing of a Mediator, to receive forgiveness of sins.

5. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope. There is a waiting of expectancy—we believe that He is about to give us the mercy, and so we hold out our hand for it. There is a waiting of resignation. We know not what God may do, nor when He may appear, but we wait. Aaron held his peace—‘tis a great virtue to wait for God when we know not what He does, but to wait for His explanations and be content to go without explanations if He does not choose to give them!

6. My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. And many a mariner has watched for the morning with an awful anxiety, for he could not know where his vessel was until the day should break. Many a weary patient, tossed upon the bed of pain, has waited for the morning, saying, “Would God it were morning, for then, perhaps, I might find ease.” And you know that sometimes the watchers upon the castle top, who have to be guarding the ramparts against the adversary by night, watch for the morning. So does David’s soul watch. Lord, if I may not have You, permit me to watch for You. Oh, there is some happiness even in waiting for an absent God! I recollect that Rutherford said, “I do not see how I can be unhappy, for if Christ will not love me, if He will but permit me to love Him, and I feel I cannot help doing that, the loving of Him will be Heaven enough for me.” Waiting for God is sweet, inexpressibly delightful—

*“To those who call, how kind You are, how good to those who seek. But what to those who find? Ah, this, nor tongue nor pen can show The love of Jesus, what it is, none but His loved ones know.”*

Happy are they who, having waited patiently, at last behold their God! 7, 8. Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and  
with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his  
iniquities. He shall do this in a double and perfect way—He shall redeem us from the effect of all our iniquities through the atoning Sacrifice—and from the presence of all iniquity by His sanctifying Spirit. They are without fault before the Throne of God. I will purge their blood that I have not cleansed, says the Lord that dwells in Zion. May my soul have a part and lot in this precious promise!

**1 JOHN 1:4-7.**  
4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. Some Christians have joy, but there are only a few drops in the bottom of their cup. But the Scriptures were written, and more especially the Doctrine of an Incarnate God is revealed to us that our joy may be full! Why, if you have nothing else to make you glad, the fact that Jesus has become a Brother to you, arrayed in your flesh, should make your joy full.

5. This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Not a light, nor the light, though He is both, but that He is Light. Scripture uses the term, light, for knowledge, for purity, for prosperity, for happiness, and for truth. God is Light, and then in his usual style John, who not only tells you a Truth of God, but always guards it, adds, “in whom is no darkness at all.”

6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not speak the truth. Mark here, this does not mean walking in the darkness of sorrow, for there are many of God’s people that walk in the darkness of doubts and fears, and yet they have fellowship with God. No, they sometimes have fellowship with Christ all the better for the darkness of the path along which they walk. But the darkness here meant is the darkness of sin, the darkness of lies. If I walk in a lie, or walk in sin, and then profess to have fellowship with God, I have lied and do not speak the truth.

7. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light—Not to the same degree, but in the same manner.  
7. We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. So you see that when we walk the best—when we walk in the light as He is in the light, when our fellowship is of the highest order—we still need daily cleansing. It does not say— mark this, O my Soul—it does not say, The blood of Jesus Christ “cleansed,” but, “cleanses.” If guilt returns, His power may be proved again and again! There is no fear—all my daily slips and shortcomings shall be graciously removed by this precious blood. But there are some who think they are perfectly sanctified and have no sin.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3390 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HOPING IN GOD’S MERCY  
NO. 3390

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 16, 1868.

**“Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy.”  
Psalm 33:18.**

By the term, “the fear of God,” we understand in Holy Scripture the whole of true religion. We do not mean by the fear of God, the slavish fear which trembles in God’s Presence, as the poor slave trembles under his master’s lash, but that child-like fear which fears to offend, which fears to be led into error—a reverential fear such as the angels have when they veil their faces with their wings and cast their crowns before the glorious Throne of God—to have such a fear of God before our eyes as to restrain our wandering passions, to keep our hands from doing evil and our tongues from speaking the thing which is not right—to have such a fear of God that we feel as though we were in God’s Presence and act, and speak, and think as though we fully recognized the eye that reads the secrets of the heart. When we read, therefore, that the eye of the Lord is upon “them that fear Him,” we are to understand that He has gracious regard towards those who delight in Him, who worship Him and are His children.

But the part of the text to which I call your special attention now is that expression, “Those who hope in His mercy.” This is intended to be of the same reach and compass as the first. Those who fear God are the same persons as those who hope in His mercy and this is very consoling, for to hope in God’s mercy seems to be but a very small evidence of Divine Grace and yet it seems to be a very sure sign, for those who hope in God’s mercy are the same persons who are said to fear Him. They are the same persons as are described as being His saved ones, His children— the truly godly ones.

I hope there are many here who can say, “Well, I do hope in His mercy. If I cannot get farther, yet I can get as far as that—my hope is fixed in the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.” Then, dear Friend, may the words we shall speak be comforting to you! And may you rejoice that the Lord considers you and has an eye of favor towards you, now, and will have forever!

I am always very anxious about those who have the beginnings of Grace in them. I think I would go a long way out of my way to carry one of the lambs in my bosom and to try to cherish one that was ready to die with doubt. But, on the other hand, I am always fearful of giving any encouragement to those who are on a wrong foundation. Like the ancient mariner who was afraid of the whirlpool on the one hand and the rocks on the other, and found it difficult to steer along the middle of the channel, so may I find it tonight. I would not grieve a trembling soul. I would not bolster up a self-deceived one. Far be it from these lips to ever become a rod for the backs of God’s weak ones! And equally far be it from this tongue to speak so as to put pillows under men’s arms and under their heads wherewith they may go to sleep and sleep themselves into Hell!

In trying, therefore, to avoid two evils, I shall begin by speaking about a hope in God’s mercy which is false—and then I shall say a little about a sound hope in God’s mercy. To begin, then, at the beginning—

I. THERE IS A FALSE HOPE IN GOD’S MERCY AGAINST WHICH WE EARNESTLY WARN YOU.  
“I do not believe,” says a man, “that God will ever cast me into Hell, for God Almighty is very merciful.” “What will become of you when you die?” said one man to another. “I do not know,” was the answer, “and I do not think much about it because I know that God is a very good God—and I do not think that He will cast the souls of men into Hell, as bigots say, and cause them to be forever banished from His Presence.” Now, Friend, if this is your hope, I beseech you to be rid of it, for it is a deadly viper and though you nurse and cherish it in your bosom, it will sting you to your destruction, for do you not know that the God of the Bible is a God of Justice, as well as a God of Mercy? Though He is infinitely good, yet He Himself has said, “I will by no means spare the guilty.”  
What do you think of this text, “The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God”? Does that seem as if God would not punish sin? “The soul that sins, it shall die.” What do you think of that? “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Does that seem like an effeminate and sentimental kindness that will wink at sin? If you are to be saved by the general mercy of God, then let me tell you that this blessed Book of God is all a mistake and deception, for there are no such teachings here, as those of which you dream. Besides, you know better than this—I appeal to your own conscience,

 you know better than this!  
We tell people that if they allow filth to accumulate and sewage to become stagnant. If they deprive themselves of fresh air and neglect ventilation and cleanliness, when the fever comes it will be sure to make them its prey! And they might say, “Oh, we don’t believe that! God is merciful and we do not believe that He will ever let the fever take people off by scores—we shall not think of clearing away the dung heaps, or cleaning out the sewers, or getting the windows made to open! We tell you it is all bigoted trash! God will not let the people die of fever!” But they do die of fever and the very people who neglect the laws of health are taken away, God’s mercy notwithstanding! And so it will be with you. Sin is like a dung heap—your iniquities are like those fever-breeding drains and your soul will die of the disease which springs from the sin which you so much love. And all your talk about God’s mercy you will find to be a dream! If a man shall go to sea tomorrow in a leaky ship which takes in the water while she is going down the Thames, they may keep the pumps always going, but yet the water gets ahead of the men. You say to the man, “Sir, if you go out into the sea—it is only a matter of time—your ship will go down. She is not seaworthy—she will never get down the Channel.” “Oh,” he says, “don’t tell me that—God Almighty is merciful and He will never let a poor fellow drown! I believe that my ship will float and I mean to run the risk of it, for I believe in God’s mercy.” Down the vessel goes—and the wretch on board of her and all her passengers are drowned! And what do we say? Do we say that God is not merciful? No! But we say that some men are insane—and so say we of you! If you trust in that general mercy of God, but will not obey the Gospel and put from you the way of salvation which God has ordained, you will perish! And on your own head will be your blood since you have foolishly perverted the goodness of God to your own destruction!  
In other persons, this belief in the mercy of God takes the shape of saying, “Well, I have always done my best. I have been a respectable person ever since I can recall—I bring up my children as well as I can—I send them to the Sunday school. I always pay my debts. I don’t swear and I am not a gin drinker—I don’t know that I have any particular vice. On the contrary, I am always ready and happy to help the poor and to say a good word for religion and so on. It is true that I am not all I ought to be—no doubt we are all sinners and there is a great deal that is wrong and imperfect about us—though I don’t know what it is in particular. But anyhow, God is merciful and what with what I have done and what I have not done—and God’s mercy to make up for all the shortcomings—I do not doubt but what it will be all right with me at the last.” Now this, again, is a deceit and a refuge of lies—a bowing wall and a tottering fence which will fall on those who take shelter behind it!  
You have read of Nebuchadnezzar’s image which was part iron and part clay. Had it been all iron, it might have stood, but being part clay, by-and-by, the whole image was broken in pieces! Such is your religion! You trust in part to the mercy of God—I will call that the iron. But you trust in part to your own so-called good works—that is the clay and down your image will fall before long! Why, you are like the man in the proverb who tries to sit on two stools—and you know what becomes of him! Besides, how foolish you are to try to yoke yourselves to God to help Him! Go and yoke a gnat with an archangel, or find a worm and put it side by side with leviathan—and hope that they will plow the stormy deep together! Then think of Christ helping you and of you helping Christ. Absurd! If you are to be saved by works, then it must be all of works! But if by Grace, it must be all of Grace, for the two will no more mix than fire and water. They are two contrary principles! Therefore, give up the delusion! A hope in God’s mercy which is twisted and inter-twisted with a hope in your own works is certainly vain!  
But we know others who say, “Well said, Mr. Preacher! I know better than that—I shall never fall into that snare. I trust in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ and in Him, alone! I expect the mercy of God to come to me through Christ and I depend upon only Him.” Well, you talk very well. You talk very well. I must go home with you! But the man does not want me to go home with him. I do not know where he means to turn in—perhaps once or twice on the road before he gets to his house! When he gets home, we shall ask his wife what sort of a man he is. She will then be compelled to say, “Well, Sir, he is a great saint on Sunday, but he is a great devil all the rest of the week! He can talk a horse’s head off about religion, but, Sir, there is no genuine living in the matter—no real, righteous, godly action in him.”  
Did you never read of Mr. Talkative in The Pilgrim’s Progress? How he could tell out all the Doctrines! How he could prate about them! He had them all at his fingertips and at his tongue’s tip, too, but they never operated on his life. They never affected and sweetened his character. He was just as big a rogue as though Christ had never lived—and just as graceless a villain as though he had never heard of the Savior at all! Now, Sirs—any kind of faith in Christ which does not change your life is the faith of devils! And it will take you where devils are, but will never take you to Heaven! Men are not saved by their works—we declare that plainly enough—but if faith does not produce good works, it is a dead faith and it leaves you a dead soul to become corrupt and to be cast out from the sight of the Most High. A genuine hope in God’s mercy, according to the teaching of Scripture, purifies a man. “He that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.” If you have a hope in the mercy of God which lets you do as the ungodly do with impunity, then, Sir, you have about your neck a millstone that will sink you lower than the lowest Hell! God deliver you from such a delusion!  
I fear there are still others who have a bad hope—a hope which will not save them—because they trust in the mercy of God that they shall be all right at the last, though they have neglected all those things which make men right. For instance, the Word of God says, “You must be bornagain.” These men have never been born-again, but yet they trust in the mercy of God! Sir, what right have you to expect any mercy when God has no mercy, except that which He shows to men by giving them new hearts and right spirits? You say you trust in the mercy of God and yet you have no repentance—and do you think God will forgive the man who not only does not love, but refuses and despises His Son, the only Savior? I tell you there will have to be a new Bible written before this can be true! And there will have to be a new Gospel—yes—and a new God, too, for the God of the Bible never will, nor can wink at sin! Unless He makes you sick of sin, He must be sick of you! And until you hate your iniquities with a perfect hatred, there cannot be mercy in God’s heart to you, for you go on in your iniquities!  
You tell me you trust in God, and yet there has been no change of life in you! Oh, Sirs! Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven! The first thing God’s mercy will do for you will be to turn your face in the opposite direction.  
If mercy shall ever come to you, it will make you a new creation, give you new loves, new hates. But if you have not conversion, what have you to do with mercy? The mercy of God, wherever it comes, makes men pray. You never bend your knees and yet you say you trust in God’s mercy? Oh, Sir, you are deceiving your own soul!  
The mercy of God makes a man love Christ and makes him seek to be like Christ. You have no love to Christ and no desire to be like He. Then, Sir, I pray you give up that falsehood, which has been, up to now, as a soft pillow for your head, and believe me that the mercy of God cannot come in the way in which you expect it!  
I wish I might have torn away, from some now present, their false dependences, but I am afraid they are too dear to them for my hands to do it! May God’s Holy Spirit deliver men from all false confidences in God’s mercy! But now a much more pleasant part of my work comes before me, namely—  
II. TO DESCRIBE A SOUND HOPE IN THE MERCY OF GOD.  
I shall say of it, first, that a soundly hopeful soul feels its need of mercy. It does not talk about sin, but it feels it. It does not talk about mercy, but it groans after it. Beware of superficial religion! I think if I might only say two things before I die, one out of the two would be—beware of surface godliness. Take care of the paint, the tinsel, the varnish, the oil! There must be in us a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness! There must be in us the broken heart and the contrite spirit. I like revivals—far be it from me to ever say a word against them—but I have seen scores of men jump into religion just as men jump into a bath—and then jump out, again, just as quickly because they have not felt their deep need of Christ.  
You may depend upon it, there is no sound bottom to a man’s religion unless he begins with a broken heart. And that religion that does not begin with a deep sense of sin, and a thorough heartbreaking conviction, is a repentance that will have to be repented of before long. God save us from it! If you are to have a hope in mercy, you must know that it is mercy! You must know that you need it as mercy! You must be clean divorced from every confidence except in mercy! You must come to this, that it must be Grace first, last, and midst—Grace everywhere— otherwise it will never serve or save such a poor helpless castaway as you are. A sound hope, then, is one in which a man knows that he needs mercy!  
Another mark of a sound hope is that he clearly perceives that mercy can only come to him through the Mediator—Christ Jesus. The Word of God tells us that there is but one door of Grace, and that is Christ! But one foundation for a genuine hope—and that foundation is Christ1 God’s mercy is Infinite, but it always flows to men through the golden channel of Jesus Christ, His Son! Soul, it will be a good thing for you when you have done with the idea of hunting after mercy here, there and everywhere, and when you come to Christ, and Christ alone, for it! God swears by Himself that there shall be no hope for man out of Christ, but that there shall be hope for them there. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.” Against all other confidences God thunders out that famous sentence, “He that believes not, in condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” When you are tied up to Christ. When every other door is shut and barred, and fastened up with iron padlocks. When every cistern is broken. When every hope is shipwrecked and the last broken board has been swallowed up in the whirlpool of despair—if your soul then clings to Christ—you have a sound hope, a hope that can never let you go!

Yet again. That hope which leads a man to desire to be conformed to God’s plan of mercy is a sound hope. I mean this. There may be someone here who says, “I fear I am not regenerated. You condemned me just now, Sir, but oh, I wish I were! I am afraid I am not converted, but oh, that God in His Grace would convert me! You spoke of repentance—I fear I do not repent as I should, but oh, I wish that I could repent! Oh, that my heart would break! I feel because I do not feel and I sigh because I cannot sigh!” Ah, poor Soul, if you are willing to be what God would make you to be, then is your hope, though not yet a perfect one, yet good so far as it goes! If you will now come and cast yourself on Christ, though you have no regeneration apparent to yourself, yet you shall be saved! If you will come as you are, with all your iniquities about you, without any repentance that you can discern. If you will come empty-handed and cast yourself on what Jesus did upon the Cross and is still doing in pleading before the Throne of God, you shall never perish, but you shall be saved!  
Oh, it is a precious Gospel which we have to preach to needy sinners! A full Christ for empty sinners! A free Christ for sinners that are enslaved! But you must be willing to be this—you must be willing to be renewed in the spirit of your mind—and if you can honestly say that you are so willing and that you will now close in with Christ, then yours is the hope upon which God looks with the kindest regard!  
I might thus continue to describe this hope, but I shall not detain you longer upon that point. I do hope and trust that I have many here who are beginning to have a little hope in Christ. Oh, it is a mercy to see the first streaks of daylight, for the sun is rising. It is pleasing to see that first dewdrop, the first tear that comes from a troubled heart. I think the Lord is about to bring water out of the flinty rock! I feel so grateful when I meet with some in distress. Sometimes after the service there is somebody that wants to see us. They are so distracted and depressed—and they think they are giving us so much trouble, but oh, it is blessed trouble! There is not one of us but would be glad to sit up all night, I am sure, to see many such troubled ones, if we might but speak a word to them by which they might find joy and peace!  
Now, I want to take the text like a very sweet and dainty morsel and just drop it into the mouths of you who are ready to faint for it—“The eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him, upon those who hope in His mercy.” Though you have got no further than that, yet you have God’s eye upon you and you may be greatly comforted! But we must go to another point with great brevity. We have in this house of worship, here and now—  
III. SOME WHO ARE AFRAID TO HOPE IN GOD.  
They unconsciously desire to trust Him in His own appointed way. They understand it, but they are afraid to do it. Now, my beloved fellow sinner, I beseech you to cast yourself upon Christ and to trust in Him! And remember that God cannot lie. It is blasphemy to suppose that God can say a thing that is not true. Now, He has promised, over and over again, to save everyone that trusts in Christ. And if He does not save you, well, then\_\_\_\_\_. You know what I mean. Oh, but God cannot lie! Therefore, come and cast yourself upon His faithful promise! Well do I remember when that text, “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” stayed my fainting soul for months together, before I actually had joy and peace. Do you call upon God in prayer? Do you trust in God, however little it may be? Then you shall be saved! Believe it. If any soul here feels himself to be as black as night—imagines himself to be out of the list of the hopeful—yet if he can but come and cast himself upon what Christ did when He died upon the Cross for sinners, God must cease to be God before that soul can perish! Hope then, hope then, Sinner, for God cannot lie!  
Then hope, again, because God has saved and is still saving others! We have not ceased to have conversions in this Church. I am sometimes afraid that they are not as many as they once were, but they do come and come frequently, too, to the praise of God’s Grace! Now, if others are saved when they trust Christ, why should not you be? Who has clambered up into the secret chambers of Heaven and found that your name is not written in the roll of election? Who? Why, no one has done so! Then, since Christ bids you come and trust Him—come and trust Him! Oh, that you might come, tonight, and as He has accepted others, He will accept you, for He says, “He that comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.”  
I beseech you have hope, again, because it is to God’s honor to save sinners. If it were dishonoring to Christ to receive the ungodly, you might stand in doubt. But since it is one of the jewels in His crown which gladdens His heart and brings Him honor in the sight of glorified saints in Heaven, depend upon it, He is not hard to be persuaded! Christ is quite as willing to save as ever the most longing sinner can be to be saved! It is His delight to give of His liberality, to dispense of His bounty to those who need! Have hope then. The generous Character of Christ should encourage you!  
Have hope, I say, once more, because of what Christ endured upon the Cross. See Him dying in unutterable pains and pangs! See His hands and feet distilling founts of blood! See His body racked with agonies that cannot be described! His soul, meanwhile, ground and crushed beneath the wheels of Divine Wrath against the sin He bore for our sakes! His whole Being is a mass of suffering in our place! Now, why all this miraculous and sacrificial endurance? Surely that bearing all this, we might be spared and never know its anguish! Oh, when my soul looks to Christ, it seems to see that nothing is impossible with such an Atonement! No sin is too black for that blood to wash and cleanse away! It cannot be that beneath Heaven there can be a sinner so abominable that the blood of Christ cannot make a full atonement for all his sins! Come, then! Come, then—‘tis the voice of Jesus that calls you! Come, you chief of sinners! Come now, before yet another sun shall dawn! Come and find in Jesus’ wounds a refuge from the stormy blast that shall soon come to sweep the unconverted into condemnation!  
Yet must we still pass on and, only for a moment, linger upon—  
IV. THE COMFORT WHICH THE TEXT AFFORDS TO THOSE WHO HAVE A HOPE IN GOD’S MERCY.  
It says that the eye of the Lord is upon them. There is a blessing for you. Nobody else’s eye is upon you. You have got up to London, away from parents and friends, and nobody looks after you now. You have come into this big Tabernacle and I am sorry to find that there are still some of our members who do not look after strangers—do not look after souls as they ought to do—and you have been coming here and nobody has spoken to you. Now, let me read the text, and I need not say any more, “The eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him, upon those who hope in His mercy.” God sees you and you do not need anybody else! Be content that God knows all about it. You are up in the top gallery there, somewhere behind where my eye cannot reach you—and hardly my voice—but “the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear Him, upon those who hope in His mercy.” And mark that eye, as well as being an eye of observation, is also an eye of pity! God has compassion on you! He stands side by side with you—that bleeding Son of God—and in your groans He groans, and in your griefs He takes a share. He has compassion on you—yes, and He will help you—and even now He loves you. The eye with which He looks upon you is a Father’s eye and when a father sees his child broken-hearted, he says to himself, “I can stand anything but this. My child’s tears overcome me, overmaster me. I cannot see him sick and sad and sobbing, without pitying him.”  
Oh, some of you have sons and daughters of your own! And when you see that sick child of yours crying with pain, why, you would spend all you have, if you could but get some doctor that would make him well again.“Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” And that means all those who hope in His mercy, for they are put, as I told you, in the text in the same category as those who fear Him. Your Father’s eye is upon you and He pities those tears, sighs and cries of yours—He loves you and He means to bless you!  
Now, I want to say to you Believers here, something similar to what I said at this morning’s service. I wish that all the members of this Church were more on the alert after those who are beginning to hope in God’s mercy. Some are. I cannot find much fault with you. You are my joy and crown—and sometimes I boast—I hope in no wrong way, of the earnestness of many in this Church! But make me not ashamed of this, my boasting, as some might well do, who are cold and careless about the souls of men. Do you know there are lost ones round about you, lost ones about whom you seem to have no concern, though, according to Christ’s Law, they are your brethren, your neighbors? What a sad, sad story it is that we have lately been seeing in the newspapers every day—a gentleman lost, rewards offered, the police searching—but he is lost! A hat found. Some sort of clue given. But he is lost! How must the parent hearts break! How must friends, day by day, feel life a burden till they know what has become of him! He is lost! He is lost! Ah, but the loss of a man for this life, though it is a very heavy blow, is nothing compared with the loss of a soul! Ah, Mother, you have got a child who is lost. Ah, Husband, you have got a wife who is lost! Ah, Wife, your husband is lost! And have you never advertised for him? Have you never sought him? God knows where he is! Have you never gone to God and said, “Seek him and find him”? Have you never enlisted the Great Soul-Finder’s aid, who came into the world, “to seek and to save that which was lost”?

Are you quite careless about it, whether your servants, your neighbors, your husbands, your wives, your children shall be lost forever or not? Then am I ashamed of you! And angels are ashamed of you! And God’s living people are ashamed of you! And Christ Himself may well be ashamed of you, that you have no care for those whom you ought to love!  
I do trust that this is not the case with us, but that we do anxiously desire that lost ones should be saved. Come, then, I want you to look up those who are beginning to seek Christ! And when you have done that, and have found them out, then I want you to seek after those who are not seeking Christ. I do not think there ought to be a person come within these four walls, into these galleries, or on the area, but shall be attacked, for his good, by someone or other, before the whole assembly is scattered! Surely you might find a way of putting some question, kindly and affectionately—not rudely—but respectfully, so that if I have been the means in any way of making a little impression on their souls, you may follow it up by personal dealing! If I have put in the nail of the Truth of God a little way, you may give it a heavy blow and drive it in deeper— and God grant that the Holy Spirit may clinch the nail so that it may never be drawn out!  
Oh, my Hearers, we must have you saved! We cannot go on much longer with some of you as you are because you yourselves will not go on much longer as you are! We have been rather free for the last few weeks from deaths and departures, but do not think that we shall be free from them long! In the ordinary course of nature, as those who calculate the averages of human life will tell you, a certain proportion of a great multitude like this—some 6,000 and more—must soon die. There is no chance about whether we shall or not—we must. Now, who shall it be? Who shall stand before his God? To whose ears will the ringing trumpet of the archangel sound? For whom shall the funeral bell be tolled? Over whom shall it be said, “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust”? Since we know not to whom the summons may come, may this be the command to all, “Consider your ways and prepare to meet your God.” Oh, that you might prepare this very night, and seek unto the Lord with full purpose of heart! And this is the promise, “He that seeks, finds; he that asks, receives and to him that knocks, it shall be opened.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 139.**

This is a Psalm we can never read too often. It will be to us one of the greatest safeguards against sin if we have its teaching constantly before our mind’s eyes. The teaching of this Psalm is simply this, “You, God, see me.”

Verse 1. O Lord, You have searched me, and known me. You have looked into my most secret part. The most intricate labyrinths of my spirit are all observed by You. You have not searched and yet been unable to discover the secret of my nature, but You have searched me and known me. Your search has been an efficient one. You have read the secrets of my soul.

2. You know my sitting down and my rising up, You understand my thoughts afar off. It is a common enough thing to sit down and to rise up and I, myself, oftentimes scarcely know why I do the one or the other, but You know and understand all. “You understand my thoughts afar off.” My heart forms a thought that never comes to a word or an act, but You not only perceive it, but You translate it! You understand my thoughts.

3. You compass my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. I am surrounded by You as by a ring of observers.  
4. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether. Not only the words on my tongue, but those that slumber in my tongue, the unspoken words, You know them perfectly and altogether!  
5. You have beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Your Presence amounts to actual contact. You not only see, but touch, like the physician who does not merely look at the wound, but by-and-by comes to probe it. So do You probe my wounds and see the deeps of my sins.  
6, 7. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me! It is high, I cannot attain unto it. Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence? It seems as if the first impulse was to fly away from a God whose attributes were so lofty. ‘Twas but a transient impression, yet David words it so.  
8, 10. If I ascend up into Heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. How swift he supposes his flight to be, as swift as the light, for he borrows the wings of the morning—and yet the hand of God was controlling his destiny even then! As Watts rhymes it— **“If mounted on the morning ray,  
I fly beyond the western sea,  
Your swifter hand should first arrive,  
And there arrest Your fugitive.”**  
11, 12. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yes, the darkness hides not from You, but the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to You. For, mystery of mysteries, and more wondrous still, You not only observe, but You always have observed! And You have not only observed my well-formed being and my visible life, but before I had a being, You did observe what I should be, and when I was yet in embryo, Your allobserving eyes watched me.  
13-16. For You have possessed my reins: You have covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Your works: and that my soul knows right well. My substance was not hid from You when I was made in secret and curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes did see my substance, yet being not perfect, and in Your Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. In so vivid a manner does our holy poet sing of the Omniscience of God with regard to our creation. Before we had breath He formed and fashioned us.  
17. How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! How many thoughts has God towards us! We cannot count them! And how kind are those thoughts—we cannot estimate them—how precious, how great!  
18. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand. When I awake, I am still with You. I suppose I had finished the tale, had counted up all Your thoughts to me and then fell asleep. I should then but begin to count again, for You continue to thrust out mercies from Your hands. My God, my numeration shall never overtake You, much less my gratitude, and the service that is Your due!  
19. Surely You will slay the wicked, O God: depart from me, therefore, you bloody men. “Surely”—here is a solemn inference from the Omniscience of God—“surely You will slay the wicked, O God.” You have seen their wickedness. They have committed their wickedness in Your Presence. You will need no witnesses, no jury! You are all in one! Are You not the Judge of all the earth, and shall You not do right? “Surely You will destroy the wicked, O God.” Then I desire not to have those in my company who are condemned criminals and are soon to be executed. “Depart from me, therefore, you bloody men.” See how this sets David upon purging his company and keeping himself clean in his associations, since God, who sees all, and will surely punish, would hold it to be evil on the part of His servant to be found associating with rebellious men?  
20-22. For they speak against You wickedly, and Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate You? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies. We are bound to love our own enemies, but not God’s enemies, since they are haters of all that is good and all that is true—and the essentially Good One, Himself. We love them as our fellow beings, but we hate them as haters of God.  
23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there are any wicked ways in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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SEEKING RICHLY REWARDED  
NO. 3409

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1869.

**“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”  
Psalm 34:10.**

THE young lions are very strong. They are as yet in the freshness of their youth and yet their strength does not always suffice to keep them supplied. The young lions are very crafty—they understand how to waylay their game and leap upon them with a sudden spring at unawares, and yet, with all their craftiness, they howl for hunger in the woods. The young lions are very bold and furious, very unscrupulous. They are not stayed from any deed of depredation and yet for all that, freebooters as they are, they sometimes lack and suffer hunger. These are just the type of many men in the world—they are strong men, they are cunning men, they are thoroughly up to the times—smart, sharp men. If anybody could be well supplied, one would think they should be. But how many of them go to bankruptcy and ruin and, with all their cunning, they are too cunning! And with all their unscrupulousness, they manage, at last, full often, to come to an ill end. They do lack and suffer hunger. But here are the people of God—they are regarded as simpletons, such simpletons as to seek the Lord instead of adopting the maxims of universal worldly wisdom, namely, “Seek yourself!” They have given up what is called the first law of human nature—namely, self-seeking, self-pleasing, selfserving—and have come to seek the Lord, to seek to magnify Him. And what comes of their simplicity? “They shall not want any good thing.” Notwithstanding their lack of power, their want of cunning and the check which conscience often puts upon them, so that they cannot do what others can to enrich themselves—yet for all that, they have a fortune ensured to them! They “shall not want any good thing.”

Let us look at this text, now, and together consider it thus—first, the seeking of the Lord which is here intended. And then following upon that, the promise that is given upon such seeking.

I. THE SEEKING OF THE LORD HERE INTENDED.  
We must be particular and very precise about this. The promise is so rich that we wish to win it fully, but we do not wish to be dishonest. We would not take a Word of God that does not belong to us, lest we should deceive ourselves and be guilty of robbing God. We must go carefully and jealously, here, and must search ourselves to see if in very deed and truth we are such as really seek the Lord.  
Now, the term to “seek the Lord,” I may say, is the description of the life of the Christian. When he lives as he should, his whole life is seeking the Lord! It is with this he begins. “Behold, he prays,” that is, he seeks the Lord. He has begun to be conscious of his sin. He is seeking pardon of the Lord. He has begun to be aware of his danger—he is seeking salvation in the Lord. He is now aware of his powerlessness and he is looking for strength to the Lord. Those deep convictions, those cries and tears, that repenting and humbling and, above all, those acts of simple confidence in which he casts himself upon the great Atonement made upon Calvary’s bloody tree—those are all acts of seeking the Lord! Now, perhaps some of you have got no farther than this. Well, you shall have your proportion of blessing, according to your strength. You shall have your share in it, little as you are. He will give to His children at the table their portion, as well as to those who have grown to manhood.  
After a man has attained unto eternal life by confiding in the Lord Jesus, he then goes on to seek the Lord in quite another way. No wonder! Since he has found the Lord, or rather has been found of Him, and yet he still presses on to apprehend Him of whom he has been already apprehended! He still presses forward, seeking the Lord, and he seeks the Lord thus. He seeks, now, to know the Lord’s mind, the Lord’s Law and will. “Show me what You would have me to do,” he says. “Lord, I went by my own wit, once, and I brought myself into a dark forest—I lost myself—I was at Hell’s brink and You did save me. Now, Lord, guide and direct me. Be pleased to teach me. Open my lips when I speak. Guide my hands when I act. I wait at Your feet, feeling that—  
*“For holiness no strength have I,  
My strength is at Your feet to lie.”*  
The man now seeks the Lord by daily and constant prayer, seeking that he may be upheld, guided, constrained in paths of righteousness and restrained from the ways of sin. He becomes a seeker of the Lord after sanctification, as once he was after justification. And then he becomes a seeker of the Lord in a further sense. He seeks to enjoy the Lord’s love and His gracious fellowship and communion. He seeks to get near in reverent friendship to his Lord. He now longs to grow up in the likeness of Christ, that his conversation with the Father and the Son may be more close, more sweet, more continuous. He feels that God is his Father and that he is no longer at a distance from Him in one sense, for He is made near by the blood of the Cross. Yet sometimes he is oppressed with a sense of his old evil heart of unbelief and in departure from the living God—and he cries out, “Draw me nearer to Yourself!” In fact, his prayer is always—

*“Nearer my God to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee—  
Even though it is a Cross that raises me, Still all my cry shall be,*

*Nearer to Thee, nearer to Thee.”*  
He seeks the Lord’s company. He delights to be in God’s house and at God’s Mercy Seat, and at the foot of the Cross, where God reveals Himself in all His Glory! He is constantly crying for a larger capacity to receive more of God. And the longing of his soul is, “When shall I come and appear before God?” He feels that he never shall be satisfied till he awakes in the Lord’s likeness. Now, all this, which may be private within him and scarcely known to any, operates practically in an outward seeking of the Lord which makes the man’s life to be sublime. The genuine Christian lives for God. He makes the first objective of all that he does, the Glory of God, the extension of the Redeemer’s Kingdom, the showing forth of His praise who has brought him out of darkness into marvelous light. He is a young man, an apprentice—he has been converted and he says, “Now, what can I do while I am in this house to make it better, to make it happier and holier, that men may see what the religion of Jesus is? How can I recommend my Lord and Master to those among whom I dwell—to my master and my mistress and my fellow servants?” He becomes a tradesman on his own account, and when he opens that shop door he says, “I do not mean to trade for myself. I will make this to be my objective, that this shall be God’s shop. God has got to keep me—He has promised that He will—therefore, I may take what I need for the daily subsistence of myself and my children, but I will keep the shop for God, for all that, and if He prospers me, I will give Him of my substance, but whatever comes of it, I will so trade across my counter, so keep those books and manage those bills that I will let the world see what a Christian trader is! And I will seek thus to recommend my Lord and my God— and my objective shall be to make Him famous.”

He seeks the Lord on Sundays. He desires at the Sunday school, or the preaching station, or anywhere he may serve, to be glorifying God. But he equally seeks Him on Mondays and other weekdays, for he believes there is a way of turning over calicoes, weighing pounds of tea, plowing acres of land, driving a cart, or whatever else he may be called to do, by which he can honor God and cause others to honor Him.

Now, I say very solemnly—I hope I am mistaken in what I say, but I fear I am not—I am afraid there are many professors who would tell a lie if they said that they sought God always in their business, for though they are the members of a Church and you would not find them out in anything seriously inconsistent, yet their whole life is inconsistent because for a Christian to live for anything but the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent! It is inconsistent to the very root and core, to the tenor and aim, the supreme objective of life, altogether inconsistent! A man has a right to live, to bring up his family, to educate them and see them comfortably settled in life—but that ought to be only for God’s Glory! His acting as a father is expected, for if a man cares not for his own household, he is worse than a heathen and a publican—that God may be glorified by his doing is his duty! But when I see some people putting by their thousands and getting rich for no sort of reason that I know of, except that people may say, “How much did he leave behind him?” how can I believe that those professors, as they take the sacramental cup, are doing anything but drinking condemnation unto themselves? When I see some Christians who profess to be living for nothing but to be respectable and to be known, and honored and noticed, but never seem to care about the souls of men, nor about Christ’s Glory—never shedding a tear over a dying sinner nor heaving a sigh over this huge and wicked city, which is like a millstone upon the neck of some of us, like a nightmare perpetually upon our hearts—when I see these men so cold, so indifferent, so wrapped up in themselves, what can I think but that their religion is but a cloak, a painted pageantry for them to go to Hell in, which shall be discovered at the last and be a theme for the laughter of the fiends? Oh, may God grant that we may all be able truly to say, “I seek the Lord. I am sure, I am certain that I seek Him,” for if we can feel that that is true, then we can take the promise of the text. If not, we may not touch it. If we, as professing Christians, are not at top and bottom in heart, and soul, and spirit—and in all that we do—really seeking the Glory of God, the promise does not belong to us! But if we can, from our very souls, declare, “Notwithstanding a thousand infirmities, yet, Lord, You know all things: You know that I love You and that I seek Your honor,” then this is true of us, and no one of us shall need any good thing!

Just a word or two more about this, for we must discriminate thoroughly well before we come to the promise. It is too rich and precious to be bestowed upon the wrong persons and there are some who hope to get this promise, who feel that they must not take it. We must be among those who seek the Lord heartily, not merely saying that we do, or wishing that we did but, filled with the Holy Spirit, and in the power of His blessed residence in our souls, we must be heartily panting after God’s Glory! Otherwise I do not see that we can put our hands on the promise without presumption. We must be seeking it honestly, too, for there is a way of seeking God’s good and your own at the same time—I mean having a sinister and selfish motive. We may preach and not be preaching only for God at all. A man may live in the Sanctuary, in holy engagements from morning until night and yet may never ardently, intensely, seek the Lord. A man may be a great giver to charities, a great attendee at Prayer Meetings, a great doer of all kinds of Christian work and yet he may never seek the Lord, but may yet be seeking to have his name known, to be noted as a generous man, or be merely seeking to get merit to himself, or self-complacency to his own conscience. It is a downright honest desire to serve and glorify God while we are here that is meant in the text. If we have got it and I think we may readily see whether we have or not—then is the word of the Psalmist true to us.

We must seek God’s Glory heartily, honestly, and we must seek it most obediently. A man cannot say, “I am seeking God’s Glory,” when he knows he is disobeying God’s command in what he is doing. How can I say that I am desiring to glorify God by following a pursuit which is sinful, by giving loose to my anger and speaking rashly? By giving rein to my passions, by indulging my own desires, by being proud and domineering over my fellow Christians, or by being pliant, fearful, timid after an unholy sort and not being bold for God and for His Truth? No, we must watch ourselves very narrowly and cautiously. We must be very careful of our own spirits. We soon get off the line. Even when we are keeping correct outwardly, we may be getting very inconsistent inwardly by forgetting that the first, last, midst and sole objective of a bloodbought spirit is to live for Christ—and that if saints on earth were what they should be, they would be as constantly God’s servants as the angels are in Heaven—they would be as much messengers of God in their daily calling as the seraphs are before the eternal Throne of God! Oh, when will the Spirit of God lift us up to anything like this? The most of us are still hunting after things that will melt beneath the sun, or rot beneath the moon! We are gathering up shadows to ourselves, things which have no abiding substance—we are seeking self, seeking anything rather than the blessed God! Lord, forgive us this sin wherein we have fallen into it, and make us truly such as truly seek the Lord! Now, let us be prepared to behold—

II. THE PROMISE OF THE REWARD OF SUCH SEEKING. “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” That is, not one of them. They that first stepped into Bethesda’s pool were healed— but no others. But here everybody that steps into this pool is healed! That is to say, everyone that seeks the Lord has this promise—the least as well as the greatest—the Little-Faiths and the Much-Afraids as much as the Great-Hearts and the Standfasts. They that seek the Lord, whether they are chimneysweeps or princes, whether they are tender children or seasoned veterans in the Master’s great army—they shall want no good thing. “Well, but,” somebody says, “there are some of them that are in need.” They are in need? Yes, that may be, but they are not in need of any good thing. They cannot be. God’s Word against anything you say, or I say. If they seek the Lord, they shall not, they cannot, they will not need any good thing! “Well, at any rate, they need what appears to be a good thing.” That is very likely—the text does not say they shall not be. “Well, but they need what they once found to be a good thing! They need health—is not that a good thing? It was a good thing to them when they had it before, yet they need health. Does not that go against the text?” No, it does not in any way whatever! The text means this—that anything which is absolutely good for him, all circumstances being considered, no child of God shall ever need. I met with this statement in a work by that good old Puritan, Mr. Clarkson, which stuck by me when I read it some time ago. I think the words were these, “If it were a good thing for God’s people for sin, Satan, sorrow and affliction to be abolished, Christ would blot them out within five minutes! And if it were a good thing for the seeker of the Lord to have all the kingdoms of this world put at his feet, and for him to be made a prince, Jesus would make him a prince before the sun rose again!” If it were absolutely to him, all things being considered, a good thing, he would have it, for Christ would be sure to keep His Word. He has said he shall not want it, and He would not let His child want it, whatever it might be, if it were really, absolutely, and in itself, all things considered, a good thing! Now, taking God’s Word and walking by faith towards it, what a light it sheds on your history and mine! There are many things for which I wish, and which I sincerely think to be good, but I say at once, “If I have not got them, they are not good, for if they were good, good for me, and I am truly seeking God, I would have them—if they were good things, my heavenly Father would not deny them to me—He has said He would not, and I believe His pledged Word.” I think sometimes it would be a good thing for me if I had more talents, but if it were a good thing I would have more, I would have them. You think it were a good thing if you were to have more money. Well, if He saw it to be good, you would have it. “Oh,” you say “ but it would have been a good thing if my poor mother had been spared to me—if she were alive, now, it would have been a good thing and it would certainly be a good thing for us to be in the position I was five years ago before these terrible panic times came.” Well, if it had been a good thing for you to have been there, you would have been there. “I don’t see it,” says one. Well, do not expect to see it, but believe it! We walk by faith, not by sight. But the text says so. It says not that every man shall have every good thing, but it does say that every man that seeks the Lord shall have every good thing. He shall not want any good thing, be it what it may. “Well, I doubt it,” says one. Very well. I do not wonder that you do, for your father, Adam, doubted it, and that is how the whole race fell! Adam and Eve were in the Garden, and they might have felt quite sure that their heavenly Father would not deny them any good thing, but the devil came and whispered and said to them, “God knows that in the day you eat of the fruit of that tree, you will be as gods! That fruit is very good for you—a wonderfully good thing—never anything like it—and that one good thing God has kept away from you.” “Oh,” said Eve, “then I will get it,” and down we all fell! The race was ruined through their doubting the promise! If they had continued to seek the Lord, they would not have needed any good thing. That fruit was not a good thing to them—it might have been good in itself, but it was not good for them or else God would have given it to them—and their doubting it brought all this terrible sorrow on us. So it will upon you, for let me show you—you say, perhaps, “It would be a very good thing for me to be rich.” God has stopped you up many times. You have never prospered when you thought you were going to. You will put out your hand, perhaps, to do a wrong thing to be rich, but if you say, “No, I will work, and toil, and do what I can, but if I am not prospered, it is not a good thing for me to be prospered, and I would not do a wrong thing if it would bring me all the prosperity that heart could desire.” Then you will walk uprightly and God will bless you. But if you begin to doubt it and say, “That is a good thing and my heavenly Father does not give it to me,” you will, first of all, get hard and bitter thoughts against your heavenly Father. And then you will get wicked thoughts and wrong desires—and these will lead you to do wrong things, and God’s name will be greatly dishonored thereby. How do you know what is a good thing for you? “Oh, I know,” says one. That is just what your child said last Christmas. He was sure it was a good thing for him to have all those sweets! He thought you very hard that you denied them to him, and yet you knew better. You had seen him before made so ill through those very things he now longed for. And your heavenly Father knows, perhaps, that you could not bear to be strong in body—you would never be holy if you had too robust health. He knows you could not endure to be wealthy—you would be proud, vain, perhaps wicked—you do not know how bad you might be if you had this! He has put you in the best place for you. He has given you not only some of the things that are good for you, but all that is good for you! And there is nothing in the world that is really, solidly, abidingly good for you, but you either have it now, or you shall have it before long. God your Father is dealing with you in perfect wisdom and perfect love, and though your reason may begin to cavil and question, yet your faith should sit still at His feet and say, “I believe it. I believe it, even though my heart is wrung with sorrow. I am a seeker of God. I seek His Glory and I shall not need any good thing.”  
I think someone in the congregation might say to me, “Look at the martyrs. Did not they seek the Lord above all men?” Truly so, but what were you about to object? “Why, that they needed many good things. They were in prison, sometimes in cold, and nakedness, and hunger. They were tormented on the rack. Many of them went to Heaven from the fiery stake.” Yes, but they never needed any good thing. It would not have been a good thing to them, as God’s martyrs, to have suffered less, for now read their history. The more they suffered, the brighter they shine. Rob them of their sufferings and you strip their crowns of their gems! Who are the brightest before the eternal Throne of God? Those who suffered most below! If they could speak to you now, they would tell you that that noisome dungeon was, because it enabled them to glorify God, a good thing to them! They would tell you that the rack whereon they did sing sweet hymns of praise was a good thing for them because it enabled them to show forth the patience of the saints and to have their names written in the book of the peerage of the skies! They would tell you that the fiery stake was a good thing because from that pulpit they preached Christ after such a fashion as men could never have heard it from cold lips and stammering tongues! Did not the world perceive that the suffering of the saints were good things, for they were the seed of the Church? They helped to spread the Truth of God and, because God would not deny them any good thing, He gave them their dungeons, He gave them their racks, He gave them their stakes—and these were the best things they could have had, and with enlarged reason, and with their mental faculties purged, those blessed spirits would now choose again, could they live over again, to have suffered those things! They would choose, were it possible, to have lived the very life and to have endured all they braved to have received so glorious a reward as they now enjoy!  
“Ah, well, then,” says one, “I see I really have not understood a great deal that has happened to me. I have been in obscurity, lost my friends, been despised, felt quite broken down—do you mean to tell me that that has been a good thing?” I do. God has blessed it to you. He will enable you to say, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Your Law.” And if you get more Grace, you will say it is a good thing, for is it not a good thing for you to be conformed to the likeness of Christ? How can you be, if you have no suffering? If you never suffered with Him, how can you expect to reign with Him? How are you to be made like Him in His humiliation, if you are never humbled? Why, I think every pain that shoots through the frame and thrills the sensitive soul helps us to understand what Christ suffered. And being sanctified, gives us the power to pass through the torn veil, and to be baptized with His baptism, and in our measure to drink of His cup and, therefore, it becomes a good thing! And our Father gives it to us because His promise is that He will not deny or withhold any good thing from those that walk uprightly.  
I feel, Brothers and Sisters, as though my text were too full for me to go on with it! There is such a mass in it, and if you will take it home and turn it over at your leisure, you may do with it better than I can, if I attempt wire-drawing and word-spinning. There is the text. It seems to me to speak as plainly as the English tongue can speak. Give yourselves wholly up to God and live for Him, and you shall never want anything that is really good for you! Your life shall be the best life for you, all things considered in the light of eternity, that a life could have been! Only mind you keep to this—the seeking of the Lord. There is the point of it! Get out of that, and there may be some promise for you, but certainly not this one! You have got out of the line of the promise—but keep to that and seek the Lord—and your life shall be, even if it is a poverty-stricken one, such a life that if you could have the Infinite intelligence of your heavenly Father, you would ordain it to be precisely as it now is! “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Why, how rich this makes the poor! How content this makes the suffering! How grateful this makes the afflicted! How does it make our present state to glow with an unearthly glory! But, Brothers and Sisters, we shall never understand this text fully, this side of Heaven. There we shall see it in splendor. They that seek the Lord here shall have up yonder all that imagination can picture, all that fancy could conceive, all that desire could create. You shall have more than eye has seen, or ear has ever heard! You shall have capacities to receive of the Divine fullness, and the fullness of the pleasures that are with God shall be yours forevermore!  
But, again I come back to that, are you seeking the Lord? That is a question I have asked my own heart many and many a time—Do I seek the Lord’s Glory in all things? I ask it of you, you young men who are starting in business. Now, you know you can, if you like, go into business for yourselves. I mean you can make your trade tell for yourselves, and live to yourselves, and the end will be miserable and the way to it will not be happy. But if God’s Spirit shall help you young men and women early in life to give your hearts to Jesus, and to say, “Now, God has made us so we will serve Him that made us. Christ has bought us, so we will serve Him that bought us. The Spirit of God has given us a new life, so we will live for this new and quickening Spirit”—then I do not stand here to promise you ease and comfort, for in the world you shall have tribulation, but I do say, in God’s name, that He will not withhold one good thing from you, and that when you come to be with Him forever and ever, you will bless Him that He did for you the best that could be done even by Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Love. You shall have the best life that could be lived, the best mercies that could be given and the best of all good things shall be yours here and hereafter.  
There may be some here, however, who have long passed the days of youth and up till now have never had a thought of their Maker. The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib, but they have not known God. If you keep a dog, he fawns on you and follows at your heels. There is scarcely any creature so ignorant but what it knows its keeper. Go to the Zoological Gardens and see if those animals that are most deficient in brains are not still obedient to those that feed them! Yet here is God, good and kind to a man like you, and you have lived to be 40 and have never had an idea of loving and serving Him! Have you sunk lower than the brutes? Think of that! But Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners such as you. Repent! May God’s Eternal Spirit lead you to repentance of this great sin of having lived in neglect of God, and from henceforth, seeking pardon for the past through the Atoning Sacrifice, and strength for the future through the Divine Spirit, seek the Lord and you shall find that you shall not need any good thing. The Lord bring you there and save and bless you eternally! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 34.*  
“A Psalm of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.”

It was a very painful exhibition and one in which David does not shine, but in which, nevertheless, the Providence and Grace of God are very conspicuous. And it is very pleasant to find a man of God penning such words as these after his escape.

Verse 1. I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. After any very great deliverance, we feel prompted to special gratitude. And it appears to us as if we never should leave off praising God. I wish that perpetuity were real, but, alas, it often happens that the next cloud that sweeps the skies brings back our doubt and our fears—and our song is over. It ought not to be. Our heart’s resolve should be, “I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD. What else is there to boast about? But what a proper subject for boasting, the Lord is, because it is legitimate boasting! We can never exaggerate—we can never speak too well or think too well of God! He is high above our thoughts when they are at the best, so that we may make them as big as we may and we shall never be guilty of extravagance!

2. The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. Humble souls cannot, generally, endure boasting, but boasting in God is very sweet to them. He that will make God great will always be a choice favorite with a broken spirit. Those that are little in themselves delight to hear of the Glory of God.

3. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. It is too grand a theme for one! One little heart can scarcely feel it all! One feeble tongue cannot tell it out. Come, then, you saints that know His name—magnify the Lord with me!

4. I sought the LORD and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. Blessed be His name for this. Are there not many of you, dear Friends, who can bear the same testimony—personal proof of a prayerhearing God? You tried Him, for you sought Him. You tried Him and you found Him true, for He delivered you from all your fears.

5. They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. Only a look—and their burden was gone. Only a look! What great things hang on little things! Faith is but a look, yet it brings life, pardon, salvation! Heaven comes that way. Only a look!

6, 7. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps round about them who fear Him, and delivers them. The angel of the Lord does not merely come to help His people, but he stays with them. He encamps. He has pitched his tent, for he means to tarry. The guardians of God forsake not their charge. They encamp about them who fear Him, for their deliverance.

8. O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man that trusts in Him. It is the grandest of benedictions! It is the sum and substance of the Gospel! “Blessed is the man that trusts in Him.” By the way of works we are cursed, but by the way of believing we are blessed. Are you trusting? Dear Heart, are you trusting? Is it a feeble trust? Are you often much tried and distressed? Yet if you are trusting, you are blessed! God pronounces you so—do not let your faith waver about it, or suffer the devil to tell you that you are accursed, for you cannot be! You are blessed.

9. O fear the LORD, you His saints: for there is no need to them that fear Him. Sometimes their wishes are not granted, but there is no real need. They shall have all necessaries, if they do not have all luxuries.

10. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger. Strong as they are, and crafty as they are, they sometimes howl because of their hunger.  
10. But they who seek the LORD—Though they have no craft, no courage, no strength and no foresight.  
10. Shall not need any good thing. Plead that, tried child of God! Plead it! Plead it if you are in need tonight—if you are in any form of need— plead this gracious Word of God!  
11. Come, you children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
A Sunday School teacher’s text! Gather the children close to you. Say, “Come near me. I would be familiar with you.” It was a king who spoke these words, and yet he delighted to say, “Come, you children.” Win their attention. “Hearken unto me.” If they do not hear, how shall they understand? “And I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” That is your subject— pure religion—heart religion—spiritual religion! I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”  
12. What man is he that desires life? What man is he that does not desire life? Love of it is innate in us all.  
12, 13. And loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. He begins with one of the hardest practical duties of the fear of God, for he that bridles his tongue is also able to bridle the whole body! The tongue is such an unruly member that if that is kept—and only through Divine Grace can it be so—then we may be quite certain that all the other organs and faculties will be kept, too.  
14. Depart from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. A great deal packed away into a small compass there. There is the negative, “Depart from evil,” and the positive which must go with it, “Do good.” And if you do not do good, you will soon do evil. And then there is that blessed precept—“Seek peace.” Hunt after it if you cannot find it. And if it runs away from you, follow it—pursue it—hunt after it till you gain it! A peaceable life is a happy life.  
15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous. He watches them. He loves them too well to let them ever be out of His sight. He views them with complacency. He regards them with affection. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.  
15. And His ears are open unto their cry. Ready to hear their feeblest prayer—the cry of their pain—their distress. His ears are always open.  
16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil. Sets His face against them.

16-17. To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. Here is an explanation of the experience of the Believer—first, prayer— then God’s hearing and then deliverance. Who would not pray who has found prayer to be so effectual with God?

18, 19. The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivers him out of them all. The first line seemed to have something terrible in it—“Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” But there is a blessed, “but,” that comes in—thrown like the tree into Marah’s bitter stream to sweeten it all!

20, 21. He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked. Their own evil shall be their destruction! They need nothing more than to be allowed to go on in sin! Sin is Hell. The fire of corruption is the fire of perdition. Evil shall slay the wicked!

21, 23. And they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants: and none of them who trust in Him shall be desolate. How grandly does David preach the Gospel! We need not look to Paul to learn salvation by faith! The Psalms are full of it. We have had it just before. “Blessed is the man that trusts in Him.” And now, again, “None of them who trust in Him shall be desolate.” They are sinful, but they shall not be desolate. They often feel as if they were utterly unworthy, but they shall not be desolate. They are, sometimes downcast, but they shall not be desolate. They may be hunted by trials, afflictions and temptations of the Devil, but they shall not be desolate! They may come to the bed of pain and to the chamber of death, but they shall not be desolate! They shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, but they shall not be desolate—not one of them—for it is written, “None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.”

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #65 New Park Street Pulpit 1

LIONS LACKING—BUT THE CHILDREN SATISFIED  
NO. 65

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST FUND FOR THE RELIEF OF POOR MINISTERS.

**“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”  
Psalm 34:10.**

RIGHT truly did Paul say, “Whereby He has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,” for surely this promise is exceedingly great, indeed! In the entire compass of God’s Holy Word, there is not to be found a precious declaration which can excel this in sweetness, for how could God promise to us more than all things? How could even His Infinite Benevolence stretch the line of His Divine Grace farther than it has gone in this verse of the Psalm?—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” There is here no reserve, nothing is kept back, there is no solitary word of exception. There is no codicil in this will striking out, even, the smallest portion of the estate. There is no caveat put in to warn us that there are domains upon which we must not intrude. A large field is laid before the children of God. A wide door is open and no man can shut it! “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Now, we shall notice, first of all, the Christian character beautifully delineated. “They who seek the Lord.” Secondly, we shall notice a promise set in a glorious light by a contrast, “they shall not want any good thing,” although the young lions do lack and suffer hunger.” And thirdly, we shall consider whether we cannot bring some evidence to prove the fulfillment of the promise.

I. First, we have here a very short, but very beautiful DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN—he is said to “seek the Lord.” “They who seek the Lord, (or Jehovah, as the original has it), shall not want any good thing.” Ah, Beloved, if some of us had the drawing up of this description, we would have made it too narrow. Possibly some of you might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the established Church, within the pale of the State religion, shall not lack any good thing.” Others might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the orthodox Calvinistic manner shall not lack any good thing.” Others might have said, “They who seek the Lord in the Baptist fashion, or the Methodist fashion, or some other, shall not lack any good thing.” But it is not written so! It is written, “They who seek the Lord,” in order that it may take in the Lord’s people of all classes and denominations and all shades of character! It is a very brief description, yet full and comprehensive, including Christians in all stages and positions. Now let me show you that the Christian, in whatever portion of his spiritual history he may be, is one who seeks the Lord.

We commence with conviction of sin. That is where God begins with us and no man is a Christian unless the Holy Spirit has revealed to him his own entire helplessness, his lack of merit and absence of power to ever accumulate merit in the sight of God! Well, then, the man who is under a conviction of sin and feels his need of a Savior—what is he doing? What is his occupation, now that he is hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Why, he is seeking the Lord! Ask him what is his one need and he will say, “Christ is all my desire—I rise early in the morning and the first thought I have is, ‘O that I knew where I might find Him!’ I am in my business and my prayers go up to Heaven like hands searching for Jesus. And when I lie down upon my bed, my heart says, ‘I seek Him whom my soul loves—I seek Him, but I find Him not.’” Such a man will offer prayer. Why? Not because there is any merit in it, not because he will be praised for it, but to seek the Lord! He turns the pages of Scripture, not as he would a book of philosophy, from curiosity, or for mere instruction, but to seek the Lord! He has one passion, one desire—to seek the Lord. For that he would barter his life and be content to have his name cancelled from the register of men below, if he might but find the Lord Jesus. He desires above everything to have his name recorded in some humble place in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Are you thus in the dim morn of spiritual life seeking the Lord? Is He your one objective of pursuit? Rejoice, then, and tremble not, for the promise is to you in this earlier stage of your calling, when you are only just struggling into being, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But let us go a stage further on, when the Christian has found the Savior and is justified—when he can say, in those sweet words I so often repeat—  
You will find that he has not left off seeking the Lord. No, he now seeks to know more of Him. He seeks to understand more of the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. I ask anyone here who has an assurance that he is a pardoned man, thoroughly justified and complete in Christ—are you not seeking the Lord? “Oh,” you say, “I thirst, I long to know more of Him, I feel that all I have ever known of Him is like the whispering of the sea in the shell, while the awful roar of the sea, itself, has not yet reached my ears! “I have heard the whisperings of Christ in some little mercy and I have heard His bounties sing of bottomless, eternal, unchangeable love— but oh, I long to plunge into the sea, itself, to bathe myself in the broad ocean of His Infinite generosity and love to me!” No Christian ever fancies that he knows enough of his Master. There is no Christian who has found the Lord who does not desire to be better acquainted with Him. “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go,” is the cry of the man who has had his sins forgiven! He sits down at the feet of Jesus and looks up to Him and says, “Master, teach me more, I am a little child. You are a great Instructor. Oh, I long to love and learn more of You.” He is always seeking the Lord—and in this more advanced stage, the promise to him is, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good things.”

*“Now, freed from sin I walk at large, My Jesus’ blood’s my full discharge.”*

But go a little further on, when the Christian has scarcely ever a shadow of a doubt of his acceptance. He has progressed so far in spiritual life that he has attained to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. His faith has become so confident, that—

*“His steady soul does fear no more*

*Than solid rocks when billows roar.”*  
He can read his “title clear to mansions in the skies.” He has climbed the Delectable Mountain. His feet are standing fast upon a rock and his goings are established. But even then he is seeking the Lord—in the highest flights of his assurance, on the topmost pinnacle of his faith— there is something yet beyond! When he had sailed farthest into the Sea of Acceptance, there are Fortunate Isles that he has not reached. There is an ultima thule, a distant land, that he has not yet seen. He is still seeking the Lord. He feels that he has “not yet attained,” he is still “pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” But then he seeks the Lord in a different fashion—he seeks Him that he may put a crown on His Head. He is not seeking him for mercy, but to give Him praise! Oh, that my heart could find You! That all its strings might sing sweet music to You! Oh that my mouth could find Your ear and that I might bid it open and listen to the whisper of my song! Oh that I knew where You did dwell, that I might sing hard by the eaves of Your habitation and that You might hear me forever—that I might perpetually send the songs of my gratitude up to Your sacred courts. I seek You that I may break the alabaster box of praise on Your dear sacred head! I seek You that I may put my soul upon the altar and sacrifice my living self to You! I seek You that I may go where cherubim are singing, whom I envy, because they—

*“All night long unwearied sing  
High praises to the Eternal King!”*  
I will seek You in business, that there I may adorn the Doctrine of God, my Savior, in all things! I will seek You in my songs that I may hymn Your praise! I will seek You in my musings, that I may magnify the Lord in my thoughts! I will seek You in my words, that my conversation may show forth Your praise! I will seek You in my gifts of benevolence, that I

may be like my Savior—I will seek You forever, for I have attained enough to know that I am Yours and You are mine!  
Though I have nothing else to ask of You, seeing you have given me Yourself—though You are—

*“Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,*

*My Kinsman near allied by blood,”*  
though now my soul stands perfect in You and—  
*“Not a shadow of a spot  
Can on my soul be found,”*

yet still I will seek You—seek to honor You—seek to kiss those blessed feet that bled for me—seek to worship that dear “Man who once on Calvary died,” and put crowns of eternal unfading honor upon His blessed, thorn-crowned, but now exalted brow!

Then bring the Christian to the last period of life, to the brink of death. Set him on those hoary rocks that skirt the edge of Jordan. Let him sit there, looking down at the dark stream rolling rapidly below, not afraid to wade in, but rather wishing to die that he may be with Jesus. Ask the old man what he is doing and he will answer, “Seeking the Lord.” But I thought you had found Him many a year ago, Old Man. “So I have, but when I found Him, I sought Him more. And I am seeking Him now— seeking Him that I may be complete in Him at His appearing. That I may be like Him when I shall see Him as He is. I have sought to understand more of His love to me and now I do not know it all. I know as much as mortal can know—I am living in the land of Beulah. See this bunch of spices? Angel hands have brought it to me—a present from my King— here are tokens of His Love, His Mercy and His Grace! And do you see yonder the golden light of the Celestial City? And did you hear, just now, the sweet singing of the angels?” “No, no,” says the young man, “I hear them not.” “But,” the old man replies, “I am on the edge of Jordan and my ears are open, whereas yours are dull. Still I am doing what I have done all my lifelong—seeking the Lord. And till this pulse shall cease its perpetual beating, I will still seek Him, that dying, I may clasp Him in my arms, the antidote of death!”

You will readily confess that this description of a Christian is invariably correct. You may take the youngest child of God—yon little boy, ten years old, who has just been baptized and received into the Church. Ask what he is doing? “Seeking the Lord.” Follow him till he becomes a middle-aged man with all the cares of life about him. Ask what he is doing then? Still he answers, “Seeking the Lord.” Put a few gray hairs upon his head and let him know that half a century has gone. Again, ask what he is doing? “Seeking the Lord.” Then make his head all frosty with the winters of old age and ask him the same question. And he will still reply, “Seeking the Lord.” Take away those hairs until the head is entirely bald and the man is trembling on the grave. What is he doing then? “Seeking the Lord.” Yes, as long as we are in this body, whatever our position, or condition, this will always apply to us—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But let us not leave this one point without asking you one solemn question. Will you answer it? I beseech you to answer it to yourselves. Are you seeking the Lord? No, some of you, here, if you only can have your bottle of wine and your fowl, that will satisfy you better than seeking the Lord. There is another—give you health and strength and let you enjoy the pleasures of this world and that will be better to you than seeking the Lord. There is another flying in the face of the Almighty, cursing and swearing—you are not seeking the Lord. Another is here this morning who once thought that he did seek the Lord but he has left off doing it now. He went away from us because he was not of us, for, “if he had been of us, he doubtless would have continued with us.” There is a young woman who once thought she sought the Lord but she has gone astray—she has backslidden—proving, after all, that it was mere excitement. Would to God I could include you all in this promise this morning, but can I, dare I, must I? No, I must not. As the Lord lives, if you are not seeking the Lord, the devil is seeking you—if you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels! Even now, the swift-winged angel of Justice is holding the torch before the fierce messenger of vengeance who, with his naked dagger, is about to execute the wrath of God upon your spirit. Ah, take no lease of your lives—fancy not that you are to live forever. If you have not sought the Lord, as Jonathan Edwards said, “you stand over the mouth of Hell upon a single plank—and that plank is rotten.” You are hanging over Hell by a single rope and all the strands of the rope are creaking, snapping, breaking. Remember, after death, judgment! And after judgment, woe. And after woe, torment. For woe, woe, woe, must be forever! “The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!” It needs a damned spirit to start from the grave to preach to you and let you know something of it. But though one should rise from the grave with all the scars of all his torments upon him, with his hair all crisp by the hot fire of vengeance—though his body were scorched in the flames which know no abatement, though he should tell you with a tear at every word and a groan as a stop at every sentence and a deep sigh on every syllable, how horribly he feels, how damnably he is tormented—still you would not repent! Therefore we will say little of it. May God the Holy Spirit seek you and then you will seek Him and you shall be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God!

II. Now we come to THE PROMISE SET FORTH BY WAY OF CONTRAST. “They shall not want any good thing.” That is the jewel! “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger,” that is the foil to set off the jewel and make it shine more brightly! “They shall not want any good thing.” I can hardly speak of that, for there is too much to say. Did you ever see a horse let into a wide field where the grass grew so thickly that he scarcely knew where to begin to eat? If not, you have seen children taken into the field where wild flowers grow. It is so full of them in their liveries of white and yellow that the children know not where to pluck, first, they have so wide a choice! That is how I feel when I have such a text as this—“They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” We have heard of the celebrated check for a million pounds which has been preserved—here is one for millions of millions! Here is a promise wide as our needs, large as our necessities, deep as our distresses! There are some persons whose ambitious desires are very much like the Slough of Despond, which, though the king’s laborers cast in thousands of tons of good material, never could be filled up. But the Lord can fill them! However bottomless our desires, however deep our wishes, however high our aspirations, all things meet in this promise, “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

We take it concerning things spiritual. Are we wanting a sense of pardon? We shall not want it long. Are we desiring stronger faith? We shall not want it long. Do you wish to have more love to your Savior, to understand more concerning inward communion with Jesus? You shall have it! “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Do you desire to renounce you sins, to be able to overcome this corruption or that? To attain this virtue, or that excellency? “They who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Is it adoption, justification, sanctification, that you want? “You shall not lack any good thing.”

But are your wants temporal? Do you want bread and water? No, I know you do not, for it is said, “Bread shall be given you and your water shall be sure.” Or, if you do want it somewhat, it shall come before long. It shall not be to starvation. David said, “I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” Do you want clothes? You shall have them. “He that clothes the lilies of the valley, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” Do you need temporary supplies. You shall receive them, for “your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things.” Whatever your desire, there is the promise, only go and plead it at the Throne and God will fulfill it! We have no right to look for the fulfillment of the promises unless we put the Promiser in mind of them, although truly, at times, He exceeds our desires or wishes. He gives us these promises as His notes of hand, His bills of exchange and if we do not take our notes to get them cashed at the Throne, it is our fault, for the promise is just as good—“they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But there is a contrast and we will proceed to that at once. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” The old Psalter has it—“The rich had need and they hungered. But seekers of the Lord shall not be deprived of all good.” It appears that there is only the difference of a very little mark in the Hebrew between the words, “mighty men,” and, “young lions.” But it is of very little consequence, for, doubtless “the young lions” are put by way of figure to denominate certain characters of men who do “lack and suffer hunger.”

There are certain men in the world who, like the lions, are kings over others. The lion is lord of the forest and at his roar others tremble. So are there men who walk about among us—noblemen, respectable, great, honorable—persons who are had in reverence and esteem and they suppose, sometimes, because they are lions, they are surely never to have any spiritual hunger! They are great and mighty men. They have no need of a Savior. Are they not the elders of the city? Are they not mighty men of valor? Are they not noble and great? They are, moreover, so excellent in their own esteem that their proper language seems to be when they come before their Maker’s bar—“Lord, I had not a very bad nature and wherein it was a little bad, I made the best of it! And wherein I did not do quite as well as I ought, Jesus Christ will make it up.” Talk to these men about being depraved—they say, “Rubbish!” They know better—their heart is pure enough! They have no need of the Holy Spirit. They are young lions—you small mice may need it, but not they! They have no need of another’s righteousness to cover them—their old shaggy mane is glory enough to them! But do you know these young lions “lack and suffer hunger”? Yes, even when we do not know anything about it. They can play bombast before men, but they “lack and suffer hunger” when they are alone! A suspicion often crosses their minds that their righteousness is not good for much. They know very well that while they can make a long prayer, the poor widow’s house sticks in their throat. They know that while they boast of their good works, they are no better than they should be. You may think, perhaps, like David, that, “they are not plagued like other men.” But you don’t know that. They are very often plagued when they do not tell you—when they roar so loudly their mane scarcely covers their bare ribs! “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger,” but, blessed be God, “they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Poor and helpless though they are, having no works of righteousness of their own, confessing their sin and depravity, they shall want no good thing! Is it not amazing? There is a poor sinner who has sinned against God and in every way dishonored His name. Yet he cannot lack any good thing—

*“Poor, helpless worms in Christ possess  
Grace, wisdom, peace and righteousness.”*

Again—by young lions, we may understand men of cunning and men of wisdom. The lion goes out at night and prowls silently through the jungle. It has a keen scent and knows where to find its prey. It smells the fountain and knows that the antelope will go there to drink. When he comes, the lion crouches down, with wild eyes, looks upon him and in a moment, before the antelope is aware, he is in the fangs of the lion! Men of cunning and wisdom—have you not seen such? Have you not heard their boastful exclamation, “Submit myself to a dogmatic preacher! No, Sir, I will not! Believe in the plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures? I cannot believe in any such absurdity! Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him in the Scriptures! No, Sir, I cannot! I like something to discuss. I like an intellectual religion. I cannot believe everything simply because God says it. I want to be allowed to judge for myself! Am I not wise and learned?” And when he sees us in distress, he sometimes says, “Nonsense! You have no brains! You poor Calvinists must be bereft of your senses.” And yet we can show as many men of sense as they can and we are not afraid of them, however much they glory in their wisdom! But sometimes the poor Christian is frightened by them. He cannot answer their sophisms. He does not see his way through their labyrinths and cannot escape from their nets. Well, don’t try to escape from them! Let them talk on. The best answer is often silence. But do you know that these young lions, so gloriously self-sufficient, when in argument with you, in secrecy often “lack and suffer hunger”? There was never an infidel in the world that did not suffer spiritual hunger, though he might not confess it. His creed did not satisfy him. There was a hollow place, an aching void somewhere, which the world could never fill. But “they who seek the Lord,” who take the Scriptures for their guide, who bow implicitly to the words of Jehovah, “do not lack any good thing.” They feel no hollow unoccupied—Christ has filled their hearts—and they are satisfied with His Presence and His Love. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

Again—the young lions denote those who are very strong, so that they hope to save themselves and very swift in their course of profession. Some are very fierce in the matter of religion, very anxious to obtain salvation. And they are very strong, so that they think it scorn to borrow strength of another. Like the Jews, they follow after righteousness, but they do not attain it because they seek it by the works of the Law. Have you ever seen what they will do? There is a goodly chapel they have built. They are engaged at six o’clock in the morning at prayers and repeat so many Ave Marias and Pater Nosters. Then comes the daily service, the “mass,” and all that rubbish—the messe—as they call it in France and, verily, a mess it is! Then they whip themselves, fetch blood from their bodies and perform all kinds of penances. Even among Protestants, merit-mongers have not quite disappeared. For there are many who are full of holy works in which they are trusting for salvation. The poor Christian says, “I cannot perform all these works. I wish it were in my power to serve the Lord more devoutly.” But do you not know that these “young lions do lack and suffer hunger”? The formalist is never satisfied with all his forms. The hypocrite is never contented. There is always something he misses that makes his heart ache.

Then we may take it in a temporal sense. Young lions may mean deep cunning schemers. Have you ever seen men with their thousand schemes and plans to make themselves rich—men who can overreach others— who are so subtle that you cannot see through them? Their instinct seems to be cunning. They are always lying in wait to take advantage of others. They prowl the world to seize on the helpless widow and the defenseless orphan. Or, perhaps they may be following more legitimate schemes—such as are full of speculation and will involve the exercise of all their wits. Surely such can live if others stand. But no, they are just the men who “lack and suffer hunger.” Their schemes all prove futile— the arrow which they shoot, returns on their own head and wounds them! But they who lie gently down in passive faith, singing—

*“Father, I wait Your daily will.  
You shall divide my portion still.  
Give me on earth what seems toYou best,  
‘Till death and Heaven reveal the rest,”*

do not lack any good thing!

Again—by “young lions” we may understand “rich men”—men who have abundance. We have known persons who have ridden in fine carriages and dwelt in noble mansions brought to the depths of poverty. Every now and then we hear of men, almost millionaires, who are turned out into the very streets. Kings have walked our soil without their crowns and nobles, even now, are living on our charity. Daughters of men in high positions have to work as menials and long, sometimes, to be allowed to do that. The rich sometimes “lack and suffer hunger. But they who wait on the Lord,” poor as they may be, “do not lack any good thing.”

Again—this may apply to you who earn your living by bodily labor. Perhaps you are a weak and sickly man. You are not one of the “young lions,” like your neighbor, a strong big fellow, who can earn his day’s wages without the least difficultly. He says to you, perhaps, “I shouldn’t like to be such a poor lean thing as you are. If you should be ill, what would become of you? You trust in Providence, but I trust in my big arms! The best Providence is to take care of yourself—to go and eat a good dinner and keep yourself trim.” No, no! Have you not seen those young lions, “lack and suffer hunger”? Our missionary can tell of strong men whom he visits who cannot find employment but are brought almost to starvation. While he finds that they who wait on the Lord lack no good thing. Don’t be afraid because you have a sick and weakly frame—labor as hard as you can—and be sure—if you wait on the Lord you will not lack any good thing!

Once more—the lion is a creature that overcomes and devours all others. We have some such in our society. You find them everywhere. They put their hand upon you and you feel you are in a vice. They understand law better than you do—and woe be to you if you make a mistake! Won’t they take advantage of you? So in business they can always overreach you. Like sharks, if they do not devour you, altogether, they leave you minus a leg or an arm. Yes, but you have seen these men, too, “lack and suffer hunger.” And among all the miserable miscreants that walk the earth, there is none so destitute as the young lion that lacks and suffers hunger! He puts his money into a bag full of holes. And I think Hell laughs at the covetous man—at him who grasps his neighbor’s wealth. “Ha! Ha!” says the devil, “damn your soul to win nothing! Send your soul to Hell to win a dream! A thing which you had, but it is gone! You did grasp it—it was a shadow! You sold your immortal spirit to win a bubble which burst in your grasp.” Christian, do not be concerned about temporal things—trust in God—for while, “young lions do lack and suffer hunger, they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

III. And now, I come to the third part, which is THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE. Time fails me and I shall not try to prove to you that God can, in the ordinary course of His Providence, make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked. That would be an easy task. While God has the hearts of all men under His control, He can make the rich give where He pleases. And He can influence the Church and those who love the Lord, always to take care of the Lord’s poor. But I am going to state one or two facts by way of stimulating you to assist me in the noble enterprise of endeavoring to support the poor disabled ministers of the everlasting Gospel. Amongst the Particular Baptists, we have a fund called the Baptists’ Fund. It was instituted in 1717 in order to afford assistance to ministers in England and Wales who were in poverty and distress—in consequence of the inability of their Churches and congregations to furnish them with a competent maintenance for themselves and their families. During nearly a century and a half, it has carried out, as far as its funds were sufficient, the benevolent purposes for which it was established. It publishes its accounts yearly. And from the last printed statement for 1854-5, it appears that in that year, one hundred and sixty-five cases were relieved in England and sixty-five in the Principality, by grants in money to the amount of £1,560, no one receiving a larger sum than £10 and no grant being in any case made where the minister’s income from every source exceeded £80. In addition to the money grants, books, also, of the value together of £155 have been presented to 35 poor ministers unable to purchase them. Towards raising the necessary funds to meet these cases, collections are annually made in this and in eight or nine other Baptist Churches in and about the metropolis. And when the number, character and circumstances of the objects to be relieved and the purpose for which the relief is afforded are considered, it will be well understood that this is no ordinary collection. We have the right of four votes, one for the pastor and three messengers sent by us, owing to our fathers having in olden times deposited £150 by way of starting the fund, the interest of which sum and of that given by other Churches, is spent every year. Different legacies having been left by other persons, a considerable sum has accumulated and I believe the yearly income is somewhere about £2,000 at the present time. We need, however, much more. I am not going to detain you long by telling you about the fund, but I will read you one or two letters from the recipients. The first is from an old minister aged eighty.

[It is thought best not to print these, lest the worthy men who wrote them should feel embarrassed.]

I think I need add nothing more to move you. There are many poor ministers now, who, when they go up the pulpit stairs, are obliged to hold their arms pretty close to their bodies lest they should tear their coats to pieces. And I have seen them with such coats on—as you would not like to put on if you were going into the meanest Chapel in London! I have, myself, found livery for some of these holy men, year by year, but one person cannot supply the necessities of all. I know the case of a preacher who walked to a Chapel within ten miles of this spot and preached in the morning and walked back again. He also preached in the evening and had to walk back to his house. And what do you think the deacons gave him? The poor man had nothing else to live upon and he was nearly 80 years of age. When he had finished (oh, don’t hear it, you angels! Pray shut up your ears) they gave him—a shilling! That was for his day’s work. Another Brother told me some time ago that he preached three sermons, walking eight miles and back again and going dinnerless all the while. And the deacons gave him the munificent sum of—half-acrown! Oh, if you knew all the circumstances connected with the fund, you would not long restrain your benevolence! The funds are mostly given to those who preach the Gospel—Gospel ministers of the best sort— men who preach what we consider to be Gospel—Calvinistic sentiments. And the funds must always be given in that way, for so the deed directs it. I bless God for this Society and I ask you, under God, to take care of it, that while “the young lions do lack and suffer hunger,” the ministers of the Lord shall “not want any good thing.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #195 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

LOOKING UNTO JESUS  
NO. 195

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 23, 1858 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” Psalm 34:5.**

FROM the connection we are to understand the pronoun “Him” as referring to the word “Lord” in the preceding verse. “They looked unto the Lord Jehovah and were lightened.” But no man ever yet looked to Jehovah God, as He is in Himself, and found any comfort in Him, for “our God is a consuming fire.” An absolute God, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, can afford no comfort whatever to a troubled heart. We may look to Him and we shall be blinded, for the light of Godhead is insufferable and as mortal eye cannot fix its gaze upon the sun, no human intellect could ever look unto God and find light, for the brightness of God would strike the eye of the mind with eternal blindness. The only way in which any can see God is through the Mediator Jesus Christ—

*“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find.”*

God shrouded and veiled in the manhood—there we can with steady gaze behold Him, for so He comes down to us and our poor finite intelligence can understand and lay hold upon Him. I shall therefore use my text this morning and I think very legitimately, in reference to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—“They looked unto Him and were lightened.” For when we look at God, as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and behold the Godhead as it is apparent in the Incarnate Man who was born of the Virgin Mary and was crucified by Pontius Pilate, we do see that which enlightens the mind and casts rays of comfort into our awakened heart.

And now this morning, I shall first invite you, in order to illustrate my text, to look to Jesus Christ in His life on earth and I hope there are some of you who will be lightened by that. We shall then look to Him on His Cross. Afterwards we shall look to Him in His resurrection. We shall look to Him in His intercession. And lastly, we shall look to Him in His second coming. And it may be, as with faithful eye we look upon Him the verse shall be fulfilled in our experience, which is the best proof of a Truth of God, when we prove it to be true in our own hearts. We shall “look unto Him” and we shall “be lightened.”

I. First, then, we shall LOOK TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN HIS LIFE. And here the troubled saint will find the most to enlighten him in the example, in the patience, in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. These are stars of glory to cheer the midnight darkness of the sky of your tribulation. Come here, you children of God and whatever now are your distresses, whether they be temporal or spiritual, you shall, in the life of Jesus Christ and His sufferings, find sufficient to cheer and comfort you—if the Holy Spirit shall now open your eyes to look unto Him.

Perhaps I have among my congregation, indeed I am sure I have, some who are plunged in the depths of poverty. You are the children of toil. With much sweat of your brow you eat your bread. The heavy yoke of oppression galls your neck. Perhaps at this time you are suffering the very extremity of hunger. You are pinched with famine and though in the House of God, your body complains, for you feel that you are brought very low. Look unto Him, you poor distressed Brother in Jesus—look unto Him and be lightened—

*“Why do you complain of want or distress, Temptation or pain?—He told you no less;  
The heirs of salvation, we know from His Word, Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”*

See Him there! Forty days He fasts and He hungers. See Him again, He treads the weary way and at last all athirst He sits upon the curb of the well of Sychar and He, the Lord of Glory, He who holds the clouds in the hollow of His hand, said to a woman, “Give me to drink.” And shall the servant be above his Master and the disciple above his Lord? If He suffered hunger and thirst and nakedness, O heir of poverty, be of good cheer! In all these you have fellowship with Jesus. Therefore be comforted and look unto Him and be lightened.

Perhaps your trouble is of another caste. You have come here today smarting from the forked tongue of that adder—slander. Your character, though pure and spotless before God, seems to be lost before man. For that foul slanderous thing has sought to take away that which is dearer to you than life itself, your character, your good fame. And you are this day filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, because you have been accused of crimes which your soul loathes. Come, you child of mourning, this indeed is a heavy blow—poverty is like Solomon’s whip, but slander is like the scorpion of Rehoboam. To fall into the depths of poverty is to have it on your little finger, but to be slandered is to have it on your loins.

But in all this you may have comfort from Christ. Come and look unto Him and be lightened. The King of kings was called a Samaritan. They said of Him that He had a devil and was mad. And yet infinite wisdom dwelt in Him, though He was charged with madness. And was He not ever pure and holy? And did they not call Him a drunken man and a winebibber? He was His father’s glorious Son and yet they said He did cast out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

Come! Poor slandered one, wipe that tear away! “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call they of His household?” If they had honored Him, then might you have expected that they would honor you. But as they mocked Him and took away His glory and His character He blushed not to bear the reproach and the shame, for He is with you, carrying His Cross before you. And that Cross was heavier than yours. Look, then, unto Him and be lightened.

But I hear another say, “Ah, but my trouble is worse than either of those. I am not today smarting from slander, nor am I burdened with penury. But, Sir, the hand of God lies heavy upon me. He has brought my sins to my remembrance. He has taken away the bright shining of His countenance. Once I did believe in Him and could ‘read my title clear to mansions in the skies.’ But today I am brought very low. He has lifted me up and cast me down like a wrestler. He has elevated me that He might dash me to the ground with the greater force. My bones are sore vexed and my spirit within me is melted with anguish.”

Come, my tried Brother, “look unto Him and be lightened.” No longer groan over your own miseries, but come with me and look unto Him, if you can. See the garden of Olives? It is a cold night and the ground is crisp beneath your feet for the frost is hard. And there in the gloom of the olive garden, kneels your Lord. Listen to Him. Can you understand the music of His groans, the meaning of His sighs? Surely your griefs are not so heavy as His were, when drops of blood were forced through His skin and a bloody sweat did stain the ground! Say, are your trials greater than His?

If, then, He had to combat with the powers of darkness, expect to do so also. And look to Him in the last solemn hour of His extremity and hear Him say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” And when you have heard that, murmur not, as though some strange thing had happened to you. As if you have to join in His “lama Sabachthani,” and have to sweat some few drops of His bloody sweat. “They looked unto Him and were lightened.”

But, possibly I may have here someone who is much persecuted by man. “Ah,” says one, “I cannot practice my religion with comfort. My friends have turned against me. I am mocked and jeered and reviled, for Christ’s sake.” Come, Christian, be not afraid of all this, but, “look unto Him and be lightened.” Remember how they persecuted Him? Oh, think of the shame and spitting, the plucking off the hair, the reviling of the soldiers. Think of that fearful march through the streets, when every man did hoot Him and when even they that were crucified with Him did revile Him. Have you been treated worse than He?

Methinks this is enough to make you gird your armor on once more. Why need you blush to be as much dishonored as your Master? It was this thought that cheered the martyrs of old. They that fought the bloody fight knew they should win the blood-red crown—that ruby crown of martyrdom. Therefore they did endure, as seeing Him who is invisible. For this ever cheered and comforted them. They remembered Him who had “endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, that they might not be weary or faint in their minds.” They “resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” For they knew their Master had done the same and His example did comfort them.

I am persuaded, beloved Brothers and Sisters, that if we looked more to Christ, our troubles would not become anything like so black in the dark night. Looking to Christ will clear the ebony sky. When the darkness seems thick, like that of Egypt, darkness that might be felt, like solid pillars of ebony, even then, like a bright lightning flash, as bright but not as transient, will a look to Jesus prove. One glimpse at Him may well suffice for all our toils while on the road.

Cheered by His voice, nerved by His strength, we are prepared to do and suffer, even as He did, to the death, if He will be with us, even unto the end. This, then, is our first point. We trust that those of you who are weary Christians, will not forget to “look unto Him and be lightened.”

II. And now I have to invite you to a more dreary sight. But, strange it is just as the sight becomes more black, so to us does it grow more bright. The more deeply the Savior dived into the depths of misery, the brighter were the pearls which He brought up—the greater His griefs, the greater our joys and the deeper His dishonor, the brighter our glories. Come, then—and this time I shall ask poor, doubting, trembling sinners and saints to come with me—come now to Calvary’s Cross. There, on the summit of that little hill, outside the gates of Jerusalem, where common criminals were ordinarily put to death—the Tyburn of Jerusalem, the Old Bailey of that city, where criminals were executed—there stand three crosses. The center one is reserved for One who is reputed to be the greatest of criminals.

See there! They have nailed Him to the Cross. It is the Lord of Life and Glory, before whose feet angels delight to pour full vials of glory. They have nailed Him to the Cross—He hangs there in mid-Heaven, dying, bleeding—He is thirsty and He cries. They bring Him vinegar and thrust it into His mouth. He is in suffering and He needs sympathy but they mock Him and they say, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save.” They misquote His words, they challenge Him now to destroy the temple and build it in three days.

While the very thing was being fulfilled, they taunt Him with His powerlessness to accomplish it. Now see Him, before the veil is drawn over agonies too black for eye to behold. See Him now! Was ever face marred like that face? Was ever heart so big with agony? And did eyes ever seem so pregnant with the fire of suffering as those great wells of fiery agony? Come and behold Him, come and look to Him now. The sun is eclipsed, refusing to behold Him! Earth quakes. The dead rise. The horrors of His sufferings have startled earth itself—

*“He dies! The Friend of sinners dies.”*

And we invite you to look to this scene that you may be lightened. What are your doubts this morning? Whatever they are, they can find a kind and fond solution here, by looking at Christ on the Cross. You have come here, perhaps, doubting God’s mercy. Look to Christ upon the Cross and can you doubt it then? If God were not full of mercy and plenteous in His compassion, would He have given His Son to bleed and die? Do you think that a Father would rend His darling from His heart and nail Him to a tree, that He might suffer an ignominious death for our sakes and yet be hard, merciless and without pity? God forbid the impious thought! There must be mercy in the heart of God or else there had never been a Cross on Calvary.

But do you doubt God’s power to save! Are you saying to yourself this morning, “How can He forgive so great a sinner as I am?” Oh, look there, Sinner, look there, to the great atonement made, to the utmost ransom paid. Do you think that that blood has not an efficacy to pardon and to justify? True, without that Cross it had been an unanswerable question— “How can God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly?” But see there the bleeding Substitute! And know that God has accepted His sufferings as an equivalent for the woes of all Believers. And then let your spirit dare to think, if it can, that the blood of Christ is not sufficient to enable God to vindicate His justice and yet to have mercy upon sinners.

But I know you say, “My doubt is not of His general mercy, nor of His power to forgive, but of His willingness to forgive me.” Now I beseech you, by Him that lives and was dead, do not this morning look into your own heart in order to find an answer to that difficulty. Do not sit down and look at your sins. They have brought you into the danger—they cannot bring you out of it. The best answer you will ever get is at the foot of the Cross.

Sit down, when you get home this morning, for half-an-hour in quiet contemplation. Sit at the foot of the Cross and contemplate the dying Savior and I will defy you then to say, “I doubt His love to me.” Looking at Christ begets faith. You cannot believe on Christ except as you see Him and if you look to Him you will learn that He is able to save. You will learn his loving kindness. And you cannot doubt Him after having once beheld Him. Dr. Watts says—

*“His worth, if all the nations knew,*

*Sure the whole world would love Him, too,”*and I am sure it is quite true if I read it another way—  
*“His worth, if all the nations knew  
Sure the whole world would trust Him, too.”*Oh, that you would look to Him now and your doubts would soon be removed. For there is nothing that so speedily kills all doubt and fear as a look into the loving eyes of the bleeding, dying Lord. “Ah,” says one, “but my doubts are concerning my own salvation in this respect. I cannot be so holy as I want to be.” “I have tried very much,” says one, “to get rid of all my sins and I cannot. I have labored to live without wicked thoughts and without unholy acts and I still find that my heart is ‘deceitful above all things.’ And I wander from God. Surely I cannot be saved, while I am like this?”  
Stop! Look to Him and be lightened. What business have you to be looking to yourself? The first business of a sinner is not with himself, but with Christ. Your business is to come to Christ—sick, weary and souldiseased—and ask Christ to cure you. You are not to be your own physician and then go to Christ—but just as you are. The only salvation for you is to trust implicitly, simply, nakedly, on Christ. As I sometimes put it— make Christ the only pillar of your hope and never seek to buttress or prop Him up. “He is able, He is willing.” All He asks of you is just to trust Him.  
As for your good works, they shall come afterwards. They are afterfruits of the Spirit. Your first business is not to do, but to believe. Look to Jesus and put your trust only in Him. “Oh,” another cries, “Sir, I am afraid I do not feel my need of a Savior as I ought.” Looking to yourselves again! All looking to yourselves you see! This is all wrong. Our doubts and fears all arise from this cause—we will turn our eyes the wrong way. Just look to the Cross again, just as the poor thief did when he was dying. He said, “Lord, remember me when you come into Your kingdom.” Do the same. You may tell Him, if you please, that you do not feel your need of Him as you ought. You may put this among your other sins, that you fear you have not a right sense of your great and enormous guilt. You may add to all your confessions, this cry “Lord help me to confess my sins better. Help me to feel them more penitently.” But remember, it is not your repentance that saves you. It is the blood of Christ, streaming from His hands and feet and side. Oh, I beseech you by Him whose servant I am! This morning turn your eyes to the Cross of Christ. There He hangs this day. He is lifted up in your midst. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is the Son of Man lifted up today in your eyes that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life. And you children of God, I turn to you, for you have your doubts, too. Would you get rid of them? Would you rejoice in the Lord with faith unmoved and confidence unshaken? Then look to Jesus. Look again to Him and you shall be lightened. I know not how it is with you, my beloved Friends, but I very often find myself in a doubting frame of mind. And it seems to be a question whether I have any love to Christ or not. And despite the fact that some laugh at the hymn, It is a hymn that I am forced to sing—  
*“‘Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought!  
Do I love the Lord or not  
Am I His, or am I not?”*  
And I am convinced that every Christian has his doubts at times and that the people who do not doubt are just the people that ought to doubt. For he who never doubts about his state perhaps may do so when it is too late. I knew a man who said he never had a doubt for thirty years. I told him that I knew a person who never had a doubt about him for thirty years. “How is that?” said he, “that is strange.” He thought it a compliment. I said, “I knew a man who never had a doubt about you for thirty years. He knew you were always the most confounded hypocrite he ever met. He had no doubt about you.”  
But this man had no doubt about himself—he was a chosen child of God, a great favorite of the Most High. He loved the doctrine of Election, wrote it on his very brow. And yet he was the hardest driver and the most cruel oppressor of the poor I ever met with and when brought to poverty himself, he might very frequently be seen rolling through the streets. And this man had not a doubt for thirty years. And yet the best people are always doubting.

Some of those who are just living outside the gates of Heaven are afraid of being cast into Hell after all—while those people who are on the high road to the pit are not the least afraid. However, if you would get rid of your doubts once more, turn to Christ. You know what Dr. Carey had put on his tombstone—just these words, for they were his comfort—  
*“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,  
Into Christ’s arms I fall.  
He is my strength and righteousness,  
My Jesus and my All.”*  
Remember what that eminent Scot divine said when he was dying? Someone said to him, “What, are you dying now?” Said He, “I am just gathering all my good works up together and I am throwing them all overboard. And I am lashing myself to the plank of free grace and I hope to swim to glory on it.” So do you. Every day keep your eye only on Christ. And so long as your eye is single, your whole body must and shall be full of light. But if you once look cross-eyed, first to yourself and then to Christ, your whole body shall be full of darkness. Remember, then, Christian, to fly to the Cross. When that great black dog of Hell is after you, away to the Cross! Go where the sheep goes when he is molested by the dog—go to the shepherd.  
The dog is afraid of the shepherd’s crook. You need not be afraid of it, it is one of the things that shall comfort you. “Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.” Away to the Cross, my Brothers and Sisters! Away to the Cross, if you would get rid of your doubts. I am certain that if we lived more with Jesus, were more like Jesus and trusted Jesus more, doubts and fears would be very scarce and rare things. And we should have as little to complain of them as the first emigrants in Australia had to complain of thistles. For they found none there and none would have been there if they had not been carried there. If we live simply by faith on the Cross of Christ, we live in a land where there are no thistles. But if we will live on self, we shall have plenty of thistles and thorns and briers and nettles growing there. “They looked unto Him and were lightened.”  
III. And now I invite you to a glorious scene—CHRIST’S RESURRECTION. Come here and look at Him, as the old serpent bruises His heel!—  
*“He dies! the Friend of sinners dies,  
And Salem’s daughters weep around.”*

He was wrapped in His grave clothes and put into His grave and there He slept three days and nights. And on the first day of the week, He, who could not be held by the bands of death and whose flesh did not see corruption, neither did His soul abide in Hades—He arose from the dead.

In vain the bands that swaddled Him. He unfolded them by Himself and by His own living power wrapped them in perfect order and laid them in their place. In vain the stone and the seal. The angel appeared and rolled away the stone and the Savior came forth. In vain the guards and watchmen. For in terror they fled far away and He rose the conqueror over death—the first fruits of them that slept. By His own power and might He came again to life.

I see among my congregation not a few wearing the black weeds of sorrow. You have lost, some of you, the dearest of your earthly relatives There are others here, who, I doubt not, are under the constant fear of death. You are all your lifetime subject to bondage because you are thinking upon the groans and dying strife which fall upon men when they near the river Jordan. Come, come, I beseech you, you weeping and timid spirits, behold Jesus Christ risen! For remember, this is a great Truth—“Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept.” And the verse of our song just embodies it—

*“What? Though our inbred sins require  
Our flesh to see the dust,  
Yet as the Lord our Savior rose,  
So all His followers must.”*

There, widow—weep no longer for your husband, if He died in Jesus. See the Master? He is risen from the dead—no specter is He. In the presence of His disciples He eats a piece of broiled fish and part of an honeycomb. No spirit is He. For He says, “Handle Me and see. A spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” That was a real resurrection. And learn then, Beloved, when you weep, to restrain your sorrows. For your loved ones shall live again. Not only shall their spirits live, but their bodies, too—

*“Corruption, earth and worms,  
Do but refine this flesh.  
At the archangel’s sounding trump,  
We put it on afresh.”*

Oh, think not that the worm has eaten up your children, your friends, your husband, your father, your aged parents—true, the worms seem to have devoured them. Oh, what is the worm after all, but the filter through which our poor filthy flesh must go? For in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, we shall be raised incorruptible and the living shall be changed. You shall see the eye that just now has been closed and you shall look on it again. You shall again grasp the hand that just now fell motionless at the side. You shall kiss the lips that just now were clay-cold and white and you shall hear again the voice that is silent in the tomb. They shall live again. And you that fear death—why fear to die? Jesus died before you and He passed through the iron gates and as He passed through them before you, He will come and meet you. Jesus who lives can—

*“Make the dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”*

Why should you weep? Jesus rose from the dead—so shall you. Be of good cheer and confidence. You are not lost when you are put into the tomb. You are but seed sown to ripen against the eternal harvest. Your spirit mounts to God. Your body slumbers for awhile to be quickened into eternal life. It cannot be quickened except it die. But when it dies it shall receive a new life. It shall not be destroyed. “They looked to Him and were lightened.” Oh, this is a precious thing to look to—a risen Savior. I know of nothing that can lift our spirits higher than a true view of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We have not lost any friends then. They have gone before us. We shall not die ourselves. We shall seem to die, but we shall begin to live. For it is written—

*“He lives to die. He dies to live;  
He lives to die no more.”*

May that be the lot of each one of us!  
IV. And with the greatest possible brevity, I invite you to LOOK AT JE  
SUS CHRIST ASCENDING INTO HEAVEN. After forty days He takes His  
disciples to the hill and while He discourses with them, on a sudden He  
mounts upward. And He is separated from them and a cloud receives Him  
into Glory. Perhaps I may be allowed a little poetical license if I try to picture that which occurred after He ascended into the clouds. The angels  
came from Heaven—  
*“They brought His chariot from on high,  
To bear Him to His Throne  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, The glorious work is done.”*  
I doubt not, that with matchless triumph He ascended the hill of light  
and went to the celestial city and when He neared the portals of that great  
metropolis of the universe, the angels shouted, “Lift up your heads, O you  
gates. And be you lift up you everlasting doors.” And the bright spirits  
from burning battlements, cried out, “Who is this King of Glory—who?”  
And the answer came, “the Lord mighty in battle and the Lord of Hosts.  
He is the King of Glory.”  
And then both they upon the walls and they who walk with the chariots  
join the song once more and with one mighty sea of music, beating its melodious waves against the gates of Heaven and forcing them open, the  
strain is heard, “Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lift up you  
everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in”—and in He went.  
And at His feet the angelic hosts all cast their crowns and forth came the  
blood-washed and met Him, not casting roses at His feet, as we do at the  
feet of conquerors in our streets, but casting immortal flowers, imperishable wreaths of honor that never can decay. While again, again, again, the heavens did ring with this melody, “Unto Him that has loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father—unto Him be glory forever and ever. And all the  
saints and all the angels said, Amen.”  
Now look here, Christians, here is your comfort—Jesus Christ won  
wrestling with spiritual enemies, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. You are at war today and maybe the enemy has  
thrust sore at you and you have been ready to fall. It is a marvel to you  
that you have not turned your back in the day of battle, for you have often  
feared lest you should be made to fly like a coward from the field. But  
tremble not, your Master was more than conqueror and so shall you be. The day is coming when with splendor less than His, but yet the same  
in its measure, you, too, shall pass the gates of bliss. When you are dying,  
angels shall meet you in mid-stream and when your blood is cooling with  
the cold current, then shall your heart be warming with another stream—  
a stream of light and heat from the great fountain of all joy and you shall  
stand on the other side of Jordan and angels shall meet you clothed in  
their immaculate garments. They shall attend you up the hill of light and  
they shall chant the praise of Jesus and hail you as another trophy of His  
power.  
And when you enter the gates of Heaven, you shall be met by Christ,  
your Master, who will say to you—“Well done, good and faithful servant,  
enter into the joy of your Lord.” Then will you feel that you are sharing in  
His victory, as once you shared in His struggles and His war. Fight on,  
Christian—your glorious Captain has won a great victory and has secured  
for you in one and the same victory a standard that never yet was stained  
with defeat—though often dipped in the blood of the slain.  
V. And now once more “Look unto Him and be lightened.” See, there He  
sits in Heaven. He has led captivity captive and now sits at the right hand  
of God, forever making intercession for us. Can your faith picture Him today? Like a great high priest of old, He stands with outstretched arms—

there is majesty in his manner—for He is no mean cringing suppliant. He  
does not beat His breast, nor cast His eyes upon the ground—but with authority He pleads enthroned in glory now.  
There on His head is the bright shining miter of His priesthood. And  
look—on His breast are glittering the precious stones whereon the names  
of His elect are everlastingly engraved. Hear Him as He pleads, hear you  
not what it is?—is that your prayer that He is mentioning before the  
Throne? The prayer that this morning you offered before you came to the  
House of God, Christ is now offering before His Father’s Throne. The vow  
which just now you uttered when you said, “Have pity and have mercy”—  
He is now uttering there.  
He is the Altar and the Priest and with His own sacrifice He perfumes  
our prayers. And yet, maybe, you have been at prayer many a day and  
had no answer. Poor weeping Suppliant, you have sought the Lord and He has not heard you, or at least not answered you to your soul’s delight. You have cried unto Him, but the heavens have been as brass and He has shut out your prayer. You are full of darkness and heaviness on account  
of this, “Look to Him and be lightened.”  
If you do not succeed, He will. If your intercession is unnoticed, His  
cannot be passed away. If your prayers can be like water spilt on a rock  
which cannot be gathered up, yet His prayers are not like that—He is  
God’s Son—He pleads and must prevail. God cannot refuse His own Son  
what He now asks—He who once bought mercies with His blood. Oh, be of  
good cheer, continue still your supplication. “Look unto Him and be lightened.”  
VI. In the last place, there are some of you here weary with this world’s  
din and clamor and with this world’s iniquity and vice. You have been  
striving all your life long to put an end to the reign of sin and it seems as  
if your efforts have been fruitless. The pillars of Hell stand as fast as ever  
and the black palace of evil is not laid in ruins. You have brought against  
it all the battering rams of prayer and the might of God, you have  
thought—and yet the world still sins, its rivers still roll with blood, its  
plains are still defiled with the lascivious dance and its ear is still polluted  
with the filthy song and profane oath.  
God is not honored. Man is still vile. And perhaps you are saying, “It is  
vain for us to fight on, we have undertaken a task which cannot be accomplished. The kingdoms of this world never can become the kingdoms  
of our Lord and of His Christ.” But, Christian, “Look unto Him and be  
lightened.” Lo, He comes, He comes, He comes quickly. And what we cannot do in six thousand years, He can do in an instant. Lo, He comes, He  
comes to reign. We may try to build His Throne, but we shall not accomplish it.  
But when He comes, He shall build His Throne Himself, on solid pillars  
of light, and sit and judge in Jerusalem, amidst His saints gloriously. Perhaps today, the hour we are assembled, Christ may come—“For of that  
day and hour knows no man. No, not the angels in Heaven.” Christ Jesus  
may, while I yet speak, appear in the clouds of glory. We have no reason  
to be guessing at the time of His appearing. He will come as a thief in the  
night. And whether it shall be at cock-crowing, or broad day, or at midnight, we are not allowed to guess.  
It is left entirely in the dark, and vain are the prophecies of men, vain  
your “Apocalyptic Sketches,” or nonsense like that. No man knows anything of it, except that it is certain He will come. But when He comes, no  
spirit in Heaven or on earth should pretend to know. Oh, it is my joyous  
hope that He may come while yet I live. Perhaps there may be some of us  
here who shall be alive and remain at the coming of the Son of Man. Oh,  
glorious hope! We shall have to sleep, but we shall all be changed. He may  
come now and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up together  
with the Lord in the air and so shall be forever with Him.  
But if you die, Christian, this is your hope—“I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” And this is to be your duty, “Watch, therefore, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.” Oh, will I not work on, for Christ is at the door! Oh, I will not give up toiling ever so hard, for my Master comes and His reward is with Him and His work before Him, giving unto every man according as his work shall be. Oh, I will not lie down in despair, for the trump is sounding now. Methinks I hear the trampling of the conquering legion, the last of God’s mighty heroes are even now, perhaps, born into  
the world.  
The hour of this revival is the hour of the turning of the battle. Thick  
has been the fight and hot and furious the struggle, but the trump of the  
Conqueror is beginning to sound, the angel is lifting it now to his lips. The  
first blast has been heard across the sea and we shall hear it yet again. Or  
if we hear it not in these our days, yet still it is our hope. He comes, He  
comes and every eye shall see Him and they that have crucified Him shall  
weep and wail before Him, but the righteous shall rejoice and shall magnify Him exceedingly. “They looked unto Him and were lightened.” I remember I concluded preaching at Exeter Hall with these three  
words, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!” and I think I will conclude my sermon of  
this morning with the same words, but not till I have spoken to one poor  
forlorn soul who is standing over there, wondering whether there is mercy  
for him. He says, “It is well enough, Sir, to say, ‘Look to Jesus,’ but suppose you cannot look? If your eyes are blind—what then?” Oh, my poor  
Brother, turn your restless eyeballs to the Cross and that light which  
gives light to them that see, shall give eyesight to them that are blind. Oh,  
if you can not believe this morning, look and consider and weigh the matter and in weighing and reflecting you shall be helped to believe. He asks nothing of you. He bids you now believe that He died for you. If  
today you feel yourself a lost, guilty sinner, all He asks is that you would  
believe on Him. That is to say, trust Him, confide in Him. Is it not little He  
asks? And yet it is more than any of us are prepared to give, except the  
Spirit has made us willing. Come, cast yourselves upon Him. Fall flat on  
His Promise. Sink or swim, confide in Him and you cannot guess the joy  
that you shall feel in that one instant that you believe on Him. Were there not some of you impressed last Sabbath Day and you have  
been anxious all the week? Oh, I hope I have brought a good message to  
you this morning for your comfort. “Look unto Me and be you saved, all  
the ends of the earth,” says Christ, “for I am God and beside Me there is  
none else.” Look now and looking you shall live. May every blessing rest  
upon you and may each go away to think of that one Person whom we  
love, even Jesus—Jesus—Jesus!

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A POOR MAN’S CRY—AND WHAT CAME OF IT  
NO. 2193

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MARCH 8, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,  
and saved him out of all his troubles.”  
Psalm 34:6**

ON the morning of last Lord’s-Day [Sermon #2192, *The Joyous Return*] we labored to bring sinners to their God and the Lord graciously made the Word effectual. We gave voice to the invitation to return and we entreated men to take with them words and turn to the Lord. God’s people found it a happy time. It is a very amazing fact, but an undoubted one, that the simple Gospel which saves sinners also feeds saints! Saints are never better pleased than when they hear those first Truths of God which instruct sinners in the way to God. The Lord be thanked that it is so!

On this occasion I want to speak of what happens to those who do return to God—because many have newly been brought through mighty Grace. Some of them I have seen and I have rejoiced over them with exceedingly great joy. They tell me that they did distinctly lay hold on eternal life last Sunday—and they are clear about what it means. They came out of darkness into His marvelous Light! They knew it and could not resist the impulse to tell at once those with whom they sat in the pews—that God had brought them up out of the horrible pit—and had set their feet upon the Rock of Salvation!

For this joyful reason I think we will go a step further and talk of the happiness of those who have come back to their Father, have confessed sin, have accepted the great Sacrifice and have found peace with God. It is my heart’s desire that those sheep who have come into the fold may be the means of inducing others to enter. You know how one sheep leads another and, perhaps, when some come to Christ, many others will follow. When one of our professional beggars knocks at a door and gets well received, he is very apt to send another. I have heard that vagrants make certain marks near the door by way of telling others of the confraternity which are good houses to call at. If you want many beggars at your house, feed one and another of them well, and birds of the same feather will flock to you! Perhaps while I am telling how Christ has received poor needy ones, others may pluck up courage and say, “We will go, also.” If they try it, they may be sure of receiving the same generous welcome as others have done, for our Lord keeps open house for coming sinners!

He has distinctly said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” That does not refer merely to those who have come, but to those who are coming—and to you, dear Hearers, who will come at this hour! Jesus bids every hungry and thirsty soul come to Him at once and be satisfied from His fullness. Our text tells how they have sped who have cried to God. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

I. The first lesson we shall learn, this morning, is upon THE NATURE AND THE EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER—This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him.”—

*“Prayer is appointed to convey  
The blessings God ordains to give.”*  
He gives us prayer as a basket and then He pours the blessings of His

Grace into it! We shall learn from the text much about prayer.

Evidently it is a dealing with the Lord. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” He cried to the Lord that the Lord might hear him. His prayer was not intended for men, nor was it mainly meant to be a relief to his own mind—it was intended for the ear of God and it went where it was intended to go! The arrow of desire was shot towards Heaven. It reached the mark it was designed to reach. This poor man cried to the Lord and the Lord is the right Person to whom to appeal in prayer. I am afraid that many public prayers are a performance to please the congregation. And when they are mixed with music, it is hoped that they will influence men of taste.

Even private prayer is not always directed to God as it should be. I have heard ignorant people, sometimes, use the expression, “The minister came and prayed to me.” That is a great mistake! We do not pray to you—we pray to God. We pray for you, but not to you. Yet I am afraid that the blunder reveals a mournfully dark state of mind as to what prayer is and does. I fear that many prayers are meant for the ears of men, or have no meaning at all beyond being regarded as a sort of incantation which may mysteriously benefit the utterer of them. Believe me, to repeat good words is a small matter—to go over the best composed forms of devotion will be useless, except the heart rises into real dealings with God! You must speak with God and plead with Him. I often question those who come to join the Church in this fashion—“You say there is a great difference in you: is there a difference in your prayers?” I very frequently get such an answer as this, “Yes, Sir, I now pray to God. I hope that He hears me. I know that He is near and I speak to Him, whereas before I did not seem to care whether God was there or not. I said my prayers by rote and it did not seem like speaking to anybody.”

Prayer is dealing with God. The best prayer is that which comes to closest grips with the God of Mercy. Prayer is to ask of God, as a child asks of its father, or as a friend makes request to his friend. O my Hearer, you have forgotten God! You have lived without speaking to Him—this has been the case for years. Is not this a wrong state of things? You are now in need—come and spread your case before your God—ask Him to help you. You need to be saved! Beg Him to save you. Let your prayer reach from your heart to the Throne of God, otherwise, however long it may be, it will not reach far enough to bless you.

From this Psalm we learn that prayer takes various shapes. Notice, in the fourth verse, David writes, “I sought the Lord and He heard me.” Seeking is prayer. When you cannot get to God, when you feel as if you had lost sight of Him and could not find Him, your seeking is prayer. “I sought the Lord and He heard me”—He heard me seeking Him—heard me feeling after Him in the dark. He heard me running up and down if haply I might find Him. To search after the Lord is prayer such as God hears. If your prayer is no better than a seeking after one you cannot as yet find, the Lord will hear it. In the next verse David puts it, “They looked unto Him.” Then a looking unto God is a prayer! Often the very best prayer is a look towards God—a look which says, “Lord, I believe You. I trust You. Be pleased to show Yourself to me.” If there is “life in a look,” then there is the breath of life in a look and prayer is that breath! If you cannot find words, it is often a very blessed thing to sit still and look towards the hills from where our help comes. I sometimes feel that I cannot express my desires and, at other seasons, I do not know my desires, except that I long for God—in such a case I sit still and look up. “In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You, and will look up.” A look is a choice prayer—if it is the look of tearful eyes towards a bleeding Savior!

We might describe prayer in many other ways, as, for instance, in this one—“O taste and see that the Lord is good,” which you meet with in verse eight. Tasting is a high kind of prayer, for it ventures to take what it asks for. When we come boldly to the Throne of Grace, we have a taste of Divine Grace in the act of coming! That is a very acceptable prayer which boldly ventures to believe that it has the petition which it has asked of God. Believe that God has heard you and you are heard! Take the good your God provides you—take it to yourself boldly and fear not! Come boldly to the Throne of the heavenly Grace, that you may find and receive. Lay hold upon the blessing which you need so much and it will be neither robbery nor presumption.

But frequently, according to our text, prayer is best described as a cry. What does this mean? “This poor man cried.” This poor man did not make a grand oration—he took to crying! He was short—it was only a cry. In great pain a man will cry out. He cannot help it, even if he could. A cry is short, but it is not sweet. It is intense and painful, and it cannot be silenced. We cry because we must cry. This poor man cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” That is not a long prayer, but it prays a great deal of meaning into a few words. That was a short cry, “Lord, save, or I perish!” And that other, “Lord, help me.” “Save, Lord,” is a notable cry. And so is, “Lord remember me.” Many prevailing prayers are like cries because they are brief, sharp and uncontrollable. A cry is not only brief, but bitter. A cry is a sorrowful thing—it is the language of pain. It would be hard for me to stand here and imitate a cry. No, a cry is not artificial, but a natural production—it is not from the lips, but from the soul, that a man cries. A cry, attended with a flood of tears, a bitter wail, a deep-fetched sigh—these are prayers that enter into the ears of the Host High. O Penitent, the more you sorrow in your prayer, the more wings your prayer has towards God! A cry is a brief thing and a bitter thing. A cry has in it much meaning and no music. You cannot set a cry to music. The sound grates on the ears. It rasps the heart. It startles and it grieves the minds of those who hear it. Cries are not for musicians, but for mourners.

Can you expound a child’s cry? It is pain felt, a desire for relief naturally expressed, a longing forcing itself into sound! It is a plea, a prayer, a complaint, a demand. It cannot wait, it brooks no delay, it never puts off its request till to-morrow. A cry seems to say, “Help me now! I cannot bear it any longer. Come, O come, to my relief!” When a man cries, he never thinks of the pitch of his voice, but he cries out as he can, out of the depths of his soul. Oh, for more of such praying!

A cry is a simple thing. The first thing a new-born child does is cry— and he usually does plenty of it for years after! You do not need to teach children to cry! Theirs is the cry of Nature in distress. I never heard of a class at a Board School to teach babes to cry. All children can cry—even those who are without their reasoning faculties can cry. Yes, even the beast and the bird can cry. If prayer is a cry, it is clear that it is one of the simplest acts of the mind. O my Hearer, whatever you need, pray for it in the way which your awakened heart suggests to you! God loves natural expressions when we come before Him. Not that which is fine, but that which is on fire, he loves. Not that which is dressed up, but that which leaps out of the soul just as it is born in the heart, He delights to receive! This poor man did not do anything grand—but from his soul he cried.

A cry is as sincere as it is simple. Prayer is not the mimicry of a cry, but the real thing. You need not ask a man or woman, when crying, “Do you mean it?” Could they cry, otherwise? A true cry is the product of a real pain and the expression of a real need—and, therefore, it is a real thing. Dear Souls, if you do not know how to pray, cry! Cry because you cannot pray! Cry because you are lost by nature and by practice and will soon be lost forever unless Grace prevents. Cry with a strong desire to be saved from sin and to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus! Pour out your hearts like water before the Lord. Just as a man takes a pitcher and turns it upside down, pouring all the water out, so turn your hearts upside down and let them flow out until the last dreg has run away! “You people, pour out your heart before Him.” Such an outpouring of heart will be a cry and a prayer.

But now note, further, concerning the nature and excellence of prayer, that prayer is heard in Heaven. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” He was all alone, so that nobody else heard him—but the Lord heard him! Yes, the Lord, even Jehovah of Hosts, the All-Glorious, bowed His ear to him! In God’s ears the songs of angels are continually resounding. Yes, He hears all the voices of all the creatures He has made! Yet He stooped from His eternal Glory and gave attention to the poor man’s cry! Never imaging that a praying heart ever pleads to a deaf God, or that God is so far removed from men that He takes no note of their desires. God does hear prayer—He does grant the desires and requests of lowly men! I do not think that we shall ever pray in downright earnest unless we believe that God hears.

I have been told that prayer is an excellent devotional exercise, highly satisfying and useful, but that there its result ends, for we cannot imagine that the Infinite Mind can be moved by the cries of men. Do not believe so gross a lie, or you will soon cease to pray! No man will pray for the mere love of the act, when he has arrived at the opinion that there is no good in it so far as God is concerned! Brothers and Sisters, amidst all the innumerable goings forth of Divine Power, the Lord never ceases to listen to the cries of those who seek His face! It is always true—“The righteous cry and the Lord hears.” Wonderful fact this! Truly marvelous! It might surpass our faith if it were not written in His Word and experienced in our lives.

Many of us know that the Lord has heard us. Doubt about this matter has long been buried under a pyramid of evidence. We have often come from the Throne of Grace as sure that God had heard us as we were sure that we had prayed! In fact, our doubts all lie around our own praying and do not touch our assurance that God hears true prayer. The abounding answers to our supplications have been proofs positive that prayer climbs above the region of earth and time—and touches God and His infinity. Yes, it is still the case that the Lord listens to the voice of a man! It is still Jehovah’s special title—the God That Hears Prayer! The Lord will hear your prayer, my Hearer, even if you cannot put it into words—He has an ear for thoughts, sighs and longings! A wordless prayer is not silent to Him. God reads the intents of the heart and cares more for these than for the syllables of the lips. This poor man could not speak—his heart was so full that he could only cry—but Jehovah heard him!

Once more, prayer has this excellence—that it wins answers from God. “The Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” God does put forth power in answer to prayer. I know the difficulties which are started concerning this. There is a fixed purpose, from which God does not depart. But this is by no means inconsistent with the prevalence of prayer, for the God who decrees to give us blessings has also decreed that we shall ask for them! The prayer and the Providence are, alike, appointed by the predestination of God! Our praying is the shadow of God’s giving. When He is about to bestow a blessing, He first of all works in us earnest prayer for it. God moves us to pray—we pray. God hears and answers— this is the process of Divine Grace. The Lord does, in very deed, answer prayer!

I read yesterday certain notes taken by an interviewer who called on me some years ago. He reports that he said to me, “Then you have not modified your views in any way as to the efficacy of prayer?” In his description he says—“Mr. Spurgeon laughed and replied, Only in my faith growing far stronger and firmer than ever. It is not a matter of faith with me, but of knowledge and everyday experience. I am constantly witnessing the most unmistakable instances of answers to prayer. My whole life is made up of them. To me they are so familiar as to cease to excite my surprise, but to many they would seem marvelous, no doubt. Why, I could no more doubt the efficacy of prayer than I could disbelieve in the law of gravitation! The one is as much a fact as the other, constantly verified every day of my life.”

The interviewer reported me correctly and I would repeat the testimony! I could speak with even deeper confidence today. More than 40 years I have tried my Master’s promises at the Mercy Seat and I have never yet met with a repulse from Him. In the name of Jesus I have asked and received, save only when I have asked amiss. It is true I have had to wait because my time was ill-judged and God’s time was far better—but delays are not denials! Never has the Lord said to me, or to any of the seed of Jacob, “Seek you My face” in vain. If I were put into the witness box and knew that I should be cross-examined by the keenest of lawyers, I should not hesitate to bear my testimony, that by many Infallible proofs the Lord has proven to me that He hears prayer!

But, my Hearers, if you need evidence on this point, try it yourselves! Remember, the Lord has said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” Here is a fair test. Make an honest experiment concerning it. I have no doubt that at this moment I could call upon hundreds in this congregation who would not refuse to stand up and say that the Lord hears prayer. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” I might call on many a man and woman here who could solemnly declare that they cried—and the Lord heard them. Are you at this service, Hannah? You were here the other morning with a sorrowful spirit and now I see by your countenance that the Lord has smiled upon you and your soul is magnifying His name! Prayer has done this for you. Is it not so? God answers the supplications of His believing people and of this we are witnesses!

Thus have I set the matter before you and I would remind you of the words of the Lord Jesus, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds; and to him that knocks, it shall be opened.” Thus have we been instructed by our text as to the nature and excellence of prayer.

II. Let us move on and note, secondly, that our text leads us to think upon THE RICHNESS AND FREENESS OF DIVINE GRACE. Great Grace is revealed in this statement—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

You will see the richness and the freeness of Grace when you consider the character of the man who prayed—“this poor man cried.” Who was he? He was a poor man. How terribly poor I cannot tell you. There are plenty of poor men about. If you advertised for a poor man in London, you might soon find more than you could count in 12 months—the supply is unlimited, although the distinction is by no means highly coveted. No man chooses to be poor.

David, on the occasion which suggested this Psalm, was so poor that he had to beg bread of the Lord’s priests and though he was a soldier, he had to borrow a sword from their treasury. He had no house, no home, no calling, no income, no country, no safety for his life. He was poor, indeed, who wrote these words—“This poor man cried.” Why should men imagine that poverty is an injury to prayer? Will the Lord care about the age of your coat? What is it to Him that you have a shallow pocket and a scanty cupboard? “This poor man cried.” Does God hear poor men? Yes, that He does, the poorest of the poor, the poor in spirit! He hears those who are so poor that even hope has dropped out of their box—and that is the last thing to go.

This poor man was also a troubled man, for the text speaks of “all his troubles”—a great, “all,” I guarantee you. He did not know what to do. He could not see his way in his blizzard of trials. He was surrounded with difficulties, as with an iron net, and he could not hope for a deliverer. He was a troubled man and because he was a troubled man, he cried. People wondered what he cried about, but they would not have done so had they known his inward griefs. His old companions thought he had gone out of his mind—they said religion had turned his brain and they stayed out of his way. This poor man cried and no man noticed him because he was so poor and so wretched—but “the Lord heard him.” He does not turn away from the doleful and the desolate—He takes delight in coming to them and binding up their wounds!

This poor man was a mournful man—a man altogether broken down, a man who could not hold his head up—he blushed and was ashamed, both before God and man. All he did, when alone, was to cry. And if one watched him closely in company, the tears might be seen forcing their way from his heart through his eyes and down his cheeks This poor man cried, for he was so feeble, so faint, so forlorn, that he could not do otherwise— but “the Lord heard him.” The Lord so heard him as to make that poor man rich in Divine Grace!

I feel sure, also, that “this poor man” was a strange fellow. What did he want with crying when others were laughing? It is not a pleasant nor a usual sight to see strong men weep. Some men weep because they are very tender-hearted, but many others do so, I am persuaded, because they have been given to drink. This man was given to inward crying—he cried day and night unto the Lord because of a secret wound which never ceased to bleed. People could not make him out and they came to despise him, or, at least, to be shy of him—but “the Lord heard him.”

He was also a changed man. Why, he used to come in of an evening and was a thoroughly jolly companion! But now he looks as miserable as an owl and nobody desires his company, he is such a kill-joy. “Poor miserable creature!” people say. Even his wife sighs and says, “What has become of my poor dear husband?” He was a poor man and as sad and singular as he was poor. He sought out secret places and there he sighed and cried before the Lord.

But yet he was a hopeful man. There must have been some hope in him, though he could not perceive it, for people do not cry for help unless they have some hope that they will be heard. Despair is dumb—where there is a cry of prayer there is a crumb of hope! A cry is a signal of distress and people will not hoist a rag on a pole unless they have a little hope that a passing vessel may spy it out and come to their rescue. There is not only hope for a man, but hope in a man as long as he can pray. Yes, as long as he can cry. If you do but long, look, seek and sigh after God, you are one of those poor men whom I have tried to describe—and good will come to you. I can see that poor man now. I used to know him, for he was born in my native town and he went to the school where I was a scholar. He was hardly a man, but only a youth. And then I used to sleep with him, or rather to lie awake at nights with him and hear him groan.

He prayed in my hearing many a time—and very poor praying it was, but he meant what he said. I have been with him in the fields and he used to tell me that he was such a vile creature that he feared that he must be cast into Hell forever! He was afraid that he was not one of the chosen and redeemed people of God, and that he would never be able to believe in Jesus. I knew him when he gave himself up for lost. I know him now. I see him whenever I look in the mirror and I must say on his behalf this morning—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” Oh, the freeness and the richness of Grace, that God should hear nobodies! That God should look upon those who are less than the least of all saints—and the very chief of sinners!

If you desire to further see the richness and freeness of Divine Grace, by the help of the Holy Spirit, I beg you to remember the Character of the God to whom this poor man cried. He who prayed was poor and his prayer was poor, but he did not pray to a poor God! This poor man was powerless, but he did not cry to a feeble God. This poor man was empty, but he went to God’s fullness. He was unworthy, but he appealed to God’s mercy. Our God delights in mercy! He waits to be gracious! He takes pleasure in blessing the weary sons of men! This poor man cried to that Savior who is able to save to the uttermost! O my Friend, never mind how poor you are—you are not crying to your own poor self. Remember, you have not to draw water out of your own emptiness—you may come to God, who is the Fountain of Grace. Your merit is poverty, itself, but the mercies of God are unsearchable riches! The power by which you are to be saved lies not in your own spirit, but in the Holy Spirit! Therefore cry with great hope and believe that God is as great in His Grace as in His power and wisdom!

While we are thinking of the freeness and richness of this Grace in the text, I would have you notice the character of the blessing. “The Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” He gave him salvation from the whole of his troubles. His sins were his great troubles—the Lord saved him out of them all—through the atoning Sacrifice! The effects of sin were another set of grievous troubles to him—the Lord saved him out of them all by the renewal of the Holy Spirit. He had fallen into a perilous position by his own fault—and troubles came upon him thick and heavy—but in answer to prayer, the Lord made a way of escape for him, out of them all, and led him into peace. He had troubles without and within, troubles in the family and in the world, and he felt ready to perish because of them— but the Lord delivered him out of them all.

Note that word, “all”—it is large and comprehensive. If you will kindly look at the Psalm, you will see the range of this delightful deliverance. We read in verse four—“He delivered me from all my fears.” Sometimes our fears are more painful than our troubles. We suffer more in dreading troubles than in enduring them, but prayer banishes such fears. We see that all shame was removed in the same way—“They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.” Happy men, for the shame of their sin is gone! Their shame and their fears went when their prayers were heard. They were no longer distressed about the past and no longer under apprehension of wrath in the future—“He saved them out of all their fears.” If you will look further on you will find that the Lord saved them out of all their needs (v 9)—“There is no need to them that fear Him.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall not need any good thing.” Oh, to be saved from the pinch of dire necessity within the soul—saved from all fear, all shame, all trouble and then from all need! This is a grand salvation! But this is not all, for this poor man was saved from all dangers (v 20)— “He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken.” He saved him out of all real peril. And, lastly, He saved him from all apprehension of desertion—“None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.” The salvation that God gives in answer to prayer is a perfect one! And He gives it freely, gives it in answer to a poor man’s cry, without money or merit. How complete is God’s deliverance!

Did you ever notice how perfect was the answer which God gave to the prayer of Moses when he cried to God for Pharaoh in the day of the plagues? When the locusts covered the land, Moses prayed and we read, “There remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt” (Exo 10:19). So was it with the frogs and even with the flies—“He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.” Pharaoh could not have found a specimen of locust, or fly in all Egypt! So you may be devoured with troubles as the land by locusts and they may be croaking in your ears like the frogs in the bedchambers of Egypt—but when the Lord bids them, “Go,” they will depart from you and you will be in quiet. He who puts away as a cloud your iniquities and as a thick cloud your sins, will soon drive away your troubles like a swarm of buzzing flies! “The Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” Is not this Free Grace? Is not this rich mercy?

And, once more, think that this all came through a cry. A cry is all that the poor man brought. He did not go through a long performance. He did not perform a laborious set of ceremonies—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” What can be simpler? Oh, you think you need a priest, do you?—a priest on whom a bishop has laid his hands? Or do you dream that you must go to a holy place, a pile of stones put together in architectural form? Possibly you even dream that you must pine all through Lent and not expect joy till you reach Easter! What folly is all this! You have but to cry and the Lord will hear you! There is but one Priest—even the Lord Jesus! There is but one Holy Place—His glorious Person. There is but one holy time and that is today! When the Spirit of God works a cry in the heart of the poor man, that cry climbs up to Heaven by the way of Jacob’s ladder—and at the same instant, mercy comes down by the same ladder! Our Lord Jesus Christ is that Ladder which joins earth and Heaven together, so that our prayers go up to Heaven and God’s mercy comes down to us on earth! Oh, that men would be content with the blessedly simple apparatus of Divine Grace—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles”!

III. I must be brief on my last head, but it is a very important one. Consider THE NEED AND THE USEFULNESS OF PERSONAL TESTIMONY. It is David who says, “This poor man cried.” You see he tells the story—he writes it down in a book for us to read. He weaves it into a Psalm for us to sing.

Testimony is a weighty thing for the persuasion and winning of men, but it must be of the right kind. It should be personal, concerning things which you yourself know—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” Never mind if you should be charged with being egotistical. That is a blessed egoism which dares to stand out and bear bold witness for God in its own person! “This poor man cried.” Not somebody over the water—“and the Lord heard him”—not a man down the next street. The more definite and specific your testimony, the better and the more convincing.

One of our evangelists writes me that when he was praying with an inquirer and trying to lead him to Jesus, he was much helped by a working man coming in and kneeling down by their side and saying, “Lord, save this poor soul, even as you saved me at two o’clock this morning!” Afterwards the evangelist asked him how he came to use such an expression. “Well,” said the man, “I was saved then. Just as the clock struck two, I found the Savior, and I always like to tell when a thing happens.” Somehow or other, that “two o’clock in the morning” helped the inquirer mightily—it put such a reality into the transaction, he thought, “This man knows that he was saved at two o’clock in the morning. Why should I not be saved, now, at eight o’clock in the evening?” I do not say that we can all tell the date of our conversion—many of us cannot. But if we can throw in such details, let us do so, for they help to make our testimony striking.

Our witness should be an assured one. We must believe and, therefore, speak. Do not say, “I hope that I prayed. And I—I—trust that the Lord heard me.” Say, “I prayed, and the Lord heard me.” If you begin to stutter when you are giving your evidence for the Lord Jesus, worldlings will not believe you. Are you sure? If you are not sure yourself, you cannot assure others. The accent of conviction is indispensable if you would convince. Be sure that you have cried and be sure that God has heard you—and then bear testimony to what you have tried and proved.

Give your testimony cheerfully. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” Do not say it as if it were a line from “the agony column,” but write it as a verse of a Psalm—of such a Psalm as this, which begins with, “I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

Your testimony must have for its sole aim the glory of God . Do not wish to show yourself off as an interesting person, a man of vast experience. We cannot allow the Grace of God to be buried in ungrateful silence. When He made the world, the angels sang for joy! And when He saves a soul, we will not be indifferent. Let us call together our friends and our neighbors and charge them to rejoice with us, for our Lord has found us, though we were lost! Remember how the father, when the prodigal came back, said to his household, “Let us eat and be merry.” So, dear Friends, be glad at heart that the Lord has saved you—and tell others of what He has done, saying, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.”

Testimonies to facts have weight with men . Those who live to win souls have learned from experience that facts are grand things to use in their holy service. When you are teaching people doctrines, they will often be inattentive and unmoved. But when you come to facts, they listen and feel their force. I sat not long ago with one whom I would gladly win for my Lord. I told him certain facts with regard to the Lord’s hearing prayer for the College and the Orphanage and other parts of my work for the Lord. I marked the deep interest which these facts produced. He believed me to be a man of integrity and he could not resist the conclusion that the Lord is a prayer-hearing God! To yourself and to others, one fact is better than a dozen inferences! Even the hardest of the Gradgrind can only say, “What I need is facts.” Test prayer for yourself and then boldly state the results— and you will have power with men. Personal experience is far more convincing than observation—tell facts which you have, yourself, experienced! “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

Such testimony will have most weight with the same sort of men as yourselves. When a poor man tells what the Lord did for him, he wins the attention and gains the belief of other poor men. When any event happens to a person like myself, I become interested in it. The poor man says, “I see he is a poor man like myself and if God hears him, why should he not hear me?” Does not your brother’s salvation cheer you and make you feel that you will cry to the Lord, too? How wonderfully God has heard prayer from men in singular positions! He heard Jacob when his angry brother Esau was close upon him with armed men! At Jabbok the Lord heard him by night and he met his brother the next morning with a smiling face. Israel in Egypt was in sore bondage, but the Lord heard his people’s cry and sent Moses—and divided the Red Sea, and brought forth His chosen. The Lord heard Samson when he was ready to die of thirst. He heard the men of Reuben who cried to God in the battle against the Hagarites—“and He was entreated of them, because they put their trust in Him.”

He heard Hezekiah and Isaiah when Rabshakeh wrote his blasphemous and slanderous letter. We read that, “for this cause they prayed and cried to Heaven. And the Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty men of Assyria.” David prayed in the cave, and Elijah on Carmel, and Jeremiah in prison—and the Lord heard them! There was once a man in the belly of a fish miraculously kept alive. The great fish felt ill with such a thing as a living man within him and, therefore, it dived deep down till the prisoner felt himself to be at the bottom of the mountains! Then, to get vegetable medicine, the fish rushed among the sea meadows and Jonah cried, “The weeds were wrapped about my head!” He was in a strange, dark, horrible place and he says of it, “Out of the belly of Hell cried I.” Was his cry of any use? Yes! We read, “Out of the belly of Hell cried I, and You heard my voice. My prayer came in unto You, into Your holy Temple.” Wherever you may be and in whatever trial you may be involved, the Lord will hear your cry and come to your help. If any soul here is, like Jonah, in the very belly of Hell in feeling and apprehension, yet, his cry will prevail with Heaven and he shall know that “salvation is of the Lord.” A poor man’s cry will sound through the telephone of Christ’s mediation, in the ear of God—and He will respond to it.

Now, this witness, dear Friends, while it is very strong to those who are like ourselves, will be increased in force as one and another shall join us. One person says, “I cried to the Lord, and he heard me.” “But,” says an objector, “that is a special case.” Up rises a second witness and says, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” “Well, that is only two and two instances may not prove a rule.” Then, up rises a third, a fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh—and in each case it is the same story—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” Surely he must be hardened in unbelief who refuses to believe so many witnesses! I remember the story of a lawyer, a skeptic who attended a meeting where the subject was similar to our theme of this morning. He heard about a dozen tell what the Lord had done for them and he said, as he sat there, “If I had a case in court, I would like to have these good people for witnesses. I know them all, they are my neighbors. They are simple-minded people, straightforward and honest, and I know I could carry any case if I had them on my side.”

Then he very candidly argued that what they all agreed upon was true. He believed them in other matters and he could not doubt them in this, which was to them the most important of all. He tried religion for himself and the Lord heard him—and very soon he was at the meeting, adding his witness to theirs! If I were to put the question at this moment to my present audience, what would be the result? Our friend, Mr. Stott, said, just now, in prayer, that we were a very promiscuous company this dark morning. I agree with him. Still I will try it. You that have had answers to prayer say, “Yes.” (The response came like a thunderclap)! I am sure there are none of us who have ever tried the power of prayer who would have to say, “No.” If I were to put the contrary, there would be no answer. All who are accustomed to pray will vote with the ayes. Go home, then, with the words of our text in your hearts and on your tongues—“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

Glory be to God! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 34.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 67 (SONG II), 116 (SONG I) 34 (VER II).

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ASSURANCE SOUGHT  
NO. 3546

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1917.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
Psalm 35:3.

DAVID knew where to run to for shelter in his hour of difficulty. Many were there that opposed him. He had been much slandered. His course was rough. So, after spreading his case before the Lord, as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh’s blasphemous letter, he turns to the Most High and he cries to Him for succor with one request, as if this would suffice to relieve him from all his troubles—“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” He thus invokes God to give him a word from His own mouth, to take the buckler and the sword in his defense, and to be his Champion. “Oh, my God, speak to my soul some assuring word and it shall be enough for me!” It is a sign of adoption, a mark of the residence of the Spirit of God within us, if in our times of trouble we fly to our God! Soul, can you find any difficulty in doing so? Is this not one of your spiritual instincts? Then, be afraid lest you are an alien, and no true-born child, for the true-born child seeks its Father’s face, cries out for its Father’s notice and creeps into its Father’s bosom!

This short prayer I commend to everyone present—to saint and sinner, to the young and the old, to those who are assured and to those who are doubtful—“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” It appears to me to imply certain doctrines, to express certain desires, and to suggest certain practical lessons upon which we may profitably meditate.

I. “SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM YOUR SALVATION.”  
Is it not very clear on the surface of the text that we need salvation? Salvation is the great necessity of the human race. We need to be saved from the consequences of the Fall, from the results of our own transgressions, from the penalties due to our guilt, the indwelling power of sin and the domination of our corrupt nature. You all know this by the witness of conscience. Therefore I need not argue or attempt to prove it. The main question is whether we know it experimentally, for it is one thing to know the letter, but quite another thing to know the spirit—one thing to know a matter with the head—and another thing to be affected by it in a lively manner in the soul. Answer me, then, have you learned experimentally that you need to be saved? Did you ever see your past sins in their true color? Did you ever behold what a future sin opens up before you, till you did start back alarmed and terror-stricken? Have you perceived that you need just such a salvation as Christ came to bring? Truly we never seek it till we see we need it! We are usually driven into the Port of Grace by a storm. It is not often that we fly to Christ if there is any other door open. In the sore straits of poverty, we have to cry to Him for sustenance. When we are sick we resort to Him for health and cure.  
Moreover, Beloved, we continue to require a continuous salvation. It is well for the Christian to remember that in a certain sense he, too, needs to be saved—not from Hell, for we are saved from that—nor from the guilt of our sins, for, thank God, that is purged by the blood once shed for our remission. But we need to be saved every day from the temptations that assail our souls, from the trials that beset our path, from the corruptions of our nature. Mr. Whitefield said he hoped he was converted, but conversion was a thing to take place every day—not regeneration, mark you—that is once and for all. But conversion, “Why,” he said, “I need to be converted from lying too late in bed in the morning, and converted from idleness all the day long.” So do we! There is something or other we need to be converted from, some wrong thing that we need to be saved from—and until we get within the gates of pearl we shall still have need to cry for salvation from some evil that harasses us! Salvation by blood we have—salvation by the might and power of the Holy Spirit, who is to conquer and to destroy all our dire iniquity and innate depravity—we still need! Do we feel that we need it? Believer, do you feel that you need it? Beware of getting spiritually rich in yourself! Nothing is so near akin to soul-poverty as this! Beware of thinking that you are increased in goods. You are near to bankruptcy when you thus make account of your possessions. I counsel you, therefore, to still bow your knee and cry unto the great Savior, “Lord, save me, or I perish!” That prayer should never be in advance of the most advanced Christian!  
Another Doctrine lies on the surface of the text. His own personal salvation should be the matter of a man’s highest thoughts and greatest earnestness. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation,” should be the uppermost and the uttermost cry of your heart. Ask not the Lord to make you rich—you may well reckon that this would involve too high a position and too heavy a responsibility for you to bear with equanimity. Seek not a pinnacle from which you might be in peril of falling. Did you ask to be learned in all the knowledge and languages of the ancients? You might miss the road to Heaven, for oftentimes the shepherds are guided to the place where the Holy Child is, while the wise men miss their way, going to Jerusalem instead of Bethlehem! I will not crave the Lord to give me food for my vanity, or good fortune for my wishes, or anything beside for which my passions yearn, but, “Lord, give me salvation!” This is a gift I must have. It is essential to my instant and my endless welfare! Let not Your servant be put off with any inferior blessing. If You please to keep me poor on a scanty pittance, or bid me toil hard for slender wages, so let it be. Yet deny me not a draught from the upper springs! Give me the heritage of Your chosen. Grant me Your salvation!

Salvation! Oh, salvation! This should be the chief, the insatiable longing of each man’s spirit! Alas, for the ignorance and callousness that can trifle with salvation as though it were a matter of no immediate concern. Are you mad enough to imagine that whether you have an interest in Christ or not, is a question that may be solved in a few minutes in a fearful emergency upon a dying bed? Ah, it is not so! Wisdom should urge us, or peril should drive us to seek shelter from a calamity that would leave us a total wreck! Nothing lies so near to our interest and our happiness—nothing, therefore, should press so closely on our hearts as to be in Christ and be made, through Him, partakers of everlasting life! Dear Hearer, this question, then, I press upon you. Be pleased to answer it. Have you been led by the Spirit of God to see to this, your first concern? Are you saved? Or are you anxious to be saved with an anxiety that will not rest or abate? Are you striving and struggling in your heart to find the Savior, without whom you are utterly lost, ruined and undone? Unless God’s Holy Spirit clothes it with power, preaching reaches no farther than the ears! Oh, that He would speak to your souls! With what energy you would then be filled!  
A third Doctrine is couched in these words. Salvation, if it is worth the having, must come entirely from the Lord, Himself. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” The eyes of the suppliant here is evidently turned to God alone, and rightly so, for salvation comes not from the hills, nor from the multitude of the people, not yet from the prowess of individuals. Surely in the Lord, alone, is the salvation of Israel. Never did salvation spring from the devices of this poor heart. In vain do you seek to obtain it by any religious ceremonies, or by any bodily exercises. The source and fountain of salvation are only to be found in the eternal purpose of God! In the Covenant of God it was resolved, in the Wisdom of God it was planned, in the great Redemption of God it was effected and by the Spirit of God it is applied! Jonah went to a strange college to learn this masterpiece of sound theology, that salvation is of the Lord. As for Israel, he could destroy himself, but he could never save himself. In his God he found help, in his God alone! Happy the man that knows this! Thrice happy he who knows it experimentally! He will turn his eyes to the Lord alone.  
My Hearer, are you seeking salvation by works—by anything that is meritorious or meretricious? You are spending your money for that which is not bread! Are you seeking a knowledge of salvation by your own feeling? Do you consult your frames of mind, hopeful or desponding, as one marks the rise or fall of a barometer? Do you dream of being prepared for Christ and fitting yourself to receive mercy? This is to impose on yourself and to insult the Savior! Christ needs nothing from you—He comes to bring everything to you! Even your sense of need He gives you. All your fitness is to be unfit! All your preparation for washing is to be foul! All your prerequisite for enriching is to be poor as poverty can make you! Come as you are to your God through Christ, the Mediator, and in Him you shall find salvation! Do notice particularly that the words are not, “Say unto my soul, I am your Savior,” but more than that—“I am your salvation.” As if God were not only the Giver of salvation, but absolutely salvation itself. To get a hold of Christ is to get salvation! To get God on our side is to be saved! Salvation does not merely come from God as a gift—it absolutely involves the appropriation of God, Himself, as the portion of one’s own soul! How wonderful this is! Who can find God? Who can imagine, much less describe, His Infinite perfections? Salvation proceeding from THE LORD, from JEHOVAH, from the GREAT I AM, communicates the wealth of His adorable attributes. “Say unto my soul, I”— our translation reads—“I Am.” Ask, what are You, Lord? The answer comes, “I Am your salvation.” No title, however noble, could enhance the description! He is the “I Am.” His existence is original and pure. “He sits on no precarious throne, or borrows leave to be. “From everlasting to everlasting He is God the Most High. To Him there is neither past nor future, but one eternal Now.”  
The God who can save us must be the only true and living God. So great a salvation you cannot realize without a clear apprehension of Jehovah in all His attributes! And if any speak of Christ as delegated Deity, discredit His eternal power and Godhead, or deny that He made the heavens and the earth and bears them on His shoulders, they bring to us a Christ who cannot save! We must have a Redeemer as mighty as the Creator and the Preserver. We must have the strong Son of God, Immortal and Eternal, to rescue our souls from going down into the pit of Hell! If you are leaning on any arm but an eternal one, it will fail you! Poor silly heart, if you are depending on anything for salvation but the same God who bears the earth’s huge pillars up, your dependence will fail you when most you need its help! The strongest sinew of an arm of flesh will crack—even an angel’s wing will flag and the earth, itself, will grow dim with years! This globe, with all her granite rocks, shall melt with a fervent heat! The eternal God must be your refuge, and underneath you must be the everlasting arms, or else the salvation you pretended to have is worse than useless! “Say unto my soul, I, the glorious Jehovah, I am your salvation.”  
These doctrines may seem to some of you so commonplace that you will say, “We have heard them ten thousand times.” But I refer to them now to press the question—Do you know the vital force of these great Truths of God in your own hearts? Beloved, let each man, let each woman, enquire, “Do I know my need of salvation? Do I know that it must come from God? Have I got it from Him? Have I applied directly to Him for it? Have I received it at His hand in such a way that I have seen the Glory of God therein, so that my salvation shall be to me for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off?” If you have had no dealings with God, your soul is in bad plight. Let us turn now to observe—  
II. THE DESIRE EXPRESSED IN THE TEXT.  
It was David’s wish not only to have God for his salvation, but to know it for a fact, and that on the most conclusive evidence, with the best possible assurance, by a positive communication from God Himself—“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” There are some who doubt whether full assurance of faith can be obtained. They need not discredit an attainment which multitudes possess and daily enjoy! Others suppose that if they could experience a full assurance, it would be dangerous—and yet there are thousands of the saints who, so far from finding the privilege perilous, constantly prove its sanctifying, elevating power while they walk by faith and live near to God! Some have conjectured that any man who knew himself to be saved would inevitably grow listless in character and negligent of his conduct, but it is not so. A man who knows that an estate is really his own, does not become indifferent about its culture. He tills and farms it all the more sedulously. The fact is this—he who knows himself to be saved—being rid of that curse and burden of fear which often renders him incapable of serving God, passes beyond the sphere of a servile bondage! No more does he selfishly seek his own interest. His labor is free, cheered by love and lightened by song—  
*“Now for the love I bear His name  
What was my gain, I count my loss.”*  
Out of sheer gratitude he devotes himself to the service of the good God, by whom so great a blessing has been bestowed. If your confidence in your own salvation makes you walk without tenderness of conscience, then rely upon it—you have mistaken vain boasting for pure faith, and haughty presumption for true assurance! They who are really possessed of this Grace are always very tender of the Lord’s will. It compels them to walk humbly with God. A king’s courtier knows that conduct is expected of him far beyond that of ordinary subjects. He would not encroach upon the freedom he enjoys in approaching his sovereign, lest by any negligence or impropriety he should forfeit the good esteem and grateful smile of his royal master. He is not afraid that the king would kill him, nor is he in terror as if his majesty were a tyrant. But he is jealous of himself, lest he should provoke the king to take away the light of his countenance from him. And to any child of God who has once enjoyed the favor of Heaven’s eternal King and basked in the light of that Countenance which beams with Grace and Glory, there is no attraction in all the world that can compare with the peace and pleasure in which he abides! True assurance of faith is a humble thing, a comforting thing, a sanctifying thing—and it should, therefore, be the desire of all faithful hearts.  
This assurance of which the Psalmist speaks is a personal matter, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” Oh, Beloved, we must have personal dealings with our God! No proxy will avail. Churches may invent what ordinances they please to gratify their notions of expediency, but there can be no sponsors in godliness—the thing is irrational, it is impossible! Every vow and every offering, to be acceptable, must have its own proper individuality. No eyes but your own can acceptably weep for your sin. No heart but your own can acceptably be broken and contrite for your transgressions. You yourself must repent! Even the Holy Spirit cannot repent for you, as some seem to imagine. He works repentance in you, but you must, yourself, repent. And as to faith, that must be the looking with the spiritual eyes to Christ, and resting on Him with your whole heart. Another cannot do it for you. National religion—if it is depended upon for personal acceptance—is the most deceitful of all delusions! What use is it that we call ourselves a Christian nation if God does not call us so? Might we not be pronounced a heathen nation if we were polled? Take a survey of this great city and see how many there are who never enter a House of Prayer, who spend the entire Sabbath in idleness, or seek their own pleasure in sensual pursuits! What multitudes there are who scarcely know the name of Jesus! Are these Christians? It is a pity we should lend the slightest sanction to such an empty profession. While men live as heathens, we ought to deal with them as such, and seek to convert them from darkness unto God’s marvelous Light! And as to the religion which descends in families, this will not suffice, though it is perpetuated from generation to generation. Not a drop of true religion comes in the blood! You are all born of a corrupt stock and you naturally bear the image of the earthly! If, however, you are born of God, it is not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God! “You must be bornagain” is as true of the child of a long generation of godly ancestors as it is of the young Hottentot in the kraal who never heard the Savior’s name. “You must be born-again” is of universal application! There must be a personal work of the Spirit of God in each individual soul, and the assurance we ought to pant after is our own personal assurance, our own individual interest in the salvation of Jesus Christ!

Have you thought of this, dear Hearer, or, thinking of it, have you trifled with it? Let me urge you, since you will have to die alone. Since through the iron gates you must pass as solemnly as others. Since in the awful balances you must be weighed alone and before the last tribunal you must come as a separate spirit, I beseech you seek Christ, seek union with Him, that so you may have a blessed Companion in your death and in your everlasting destiny! These vast congregations are made up of units! Oh, that I knew how to reach your conscience one by one! O Man, awake to righteousness! Your brother’s conversion, your sister’s salvation, your mother’s piety, your father’s Grace—how will these avail you? Thank God if you have such relatives, for therein God has been so kind to you. But how will they comfort you if you are cast out? What drops of water can they administer to your burning tongue if you are cast away into the place of torment? Oh, I beseech you, be eager, be earnest, be anxious with a sacred covetousness to make your own calling and election sure! It is a personal assurance that we must seek after—so shall our souls be joyful in the Lord—and in His salvation we shall exceedingly rejoice.  
But, remember, lest any should be mistaken, that the assurance David sought was purely spiritual. When he says, “Say,” it is, “Say unto my soul.” We do not expect that God will make fresh Revelations to us. We are far from believing that voices heard or visions seen, or supposed to be seen, or dreams, can give any satisfactory evidence of the Divine Love to any man. I am ashamed of such ministers as would encourage their hearers in the conviction that their fancies are to be taken as assurances from God! Why, were you to dream tonight that you were in Hell, thank God it would not send you there! Or were you to dream that you were in Heaven, it would not carry you there. If you think that you see angels, or that you hear voices—well, there is much pretence in your tales, but little profit you will ever derive from them. Think as you like about your own experiences, but attempt to build any inference upon them and your construction will prove a baseless fabric. Such things furnish no grounds of dependence. Whether there may ever be supernatural manifestations of this kind to some men, or whether they can have a good effect upon their minds, are questions which I will not discuss, but that these visionary things can afford any evidence of the favor of God, I utterly deny! The voice which alone can confirm you is the voice of God to your soul, to your mind, to your spirit—not to your ears, not to your eyes! Salvation is a spiritual thing. It belongs not to external sounds, nor to external impressions upon the eyes. There is an eye inside the eye, an ear far quicker than this organ of sense. It is with that inner eye that you must see God, and with that inner ear that you must hear the voice of God saying unto your soul, “I am your salvation.” Be sure that you cultivate always a spiritual religion. “God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” The assurance that comes from God is addressed to the heart, to the mind, to the conscience, to the soul—it is purely spiritual. Seek not, therefore, after visions, fancies, miracles, signs and wonders, but believe when God speaks to your heart, according to all the statutes and testimonies, the precepts and promises which are contained in the sure Word of Revelation.  
And now mark this well, the assurance craved is Divine. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” Do you ask in what manner does God, Himself, tell a man that He is his salvation? He does it simply enough through His Word. If I read in God’s Word, I shall not find my name enrolled there among the saved—if I did, I would be suspicious that perhaps I was not the person intended. I should be rather dubious as to the spelling of the name, or I might be apprehensive that there was another individual of that same name. But when I find myself properly and fully described, then I cannot doubt my own identity. For instance, it is written, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Very well, I have believed—I know I have—I know I trust Christ with all my heart. I have also, in obedience to His Word, been baptized. Therefore, if the testimony of God’s Word is true—plain and designed to make mistakes impossible—that, “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” the conclusion is reached, the problem is solved, the evidence is transparent! When you find a description answering to yourself, you have only to accept the distinct statement of God’s Word. And, mark you, God’s Word in that old Book—this blessed Bible—is as good as if He rent the heavens and spoke right out from the excellent Glory! It is just as sure and as steadfast to the souls who believe it to be His Word as if He did speak with a trumpet, or as if He sent a message through an angel! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” You have but to make sure that you believes on the Son, and you have God’s assurance that you have everlasting life! But, over and above the testimony or Word, which is as clear as a mathematical demonstration—though Euclid is not more reliable than Moses and the Prophets—there comes a vital force to God’s people with the Word, compelling them to perceive the meaning and to accept it. This mysterious energy comes from the Holy Spirit, Himself! Of this we cannot speak to those who have not proved it, for we only know it and understand it by its effect—quickening us, enlightening our understanding, speaking to us—and saying of God to our soul that He is our salvation!  
Moreover, it is an immediate assurance. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” That is a pressing cry for prompt succor. It meant in David’s case that present moment. We, reading it, take it for this very hour. Beware of postponing the expectation of assurance until when you are about to die! You have no more reason to expect it, then, than to expect it now! If you are content to live in doubt and slur over the disquietude of your soul in the vigor of your days, you will probably be haunted with gloomy misgivings when the time of your departure arrives. It is your duty and your privilege as a Believer not to stand wavering over God’s promise, but, knowing it is truthful, to accept it with unstaggering faith! I can understand a man doubting whether he is truly converted or not, but I cannot countenance his apathy in resting quiet till he has solved the riddle. You may say—  
*“‘Tis a point I long to know.”*  
But, oh, Beloved, how can you trifle, how can you give sleep to your eyes till you have known it? Not know whether you are in Christ or not? Perhaps unreconciled, perhaps already condemned, perhaps upon the brink of Hell, perhaps with nothing more to keep you out of Tophet than the breath that is in your nostrils, or the circulating drop of blood which any one of ten thousand haps or mishaps may stop, and then your career is closed—your life story ended! What? Sit on such a volcano, take it easy on the brink of such a precipice and content yourself with merely saying, “I am but a doubting one”? I entreat you, I beseech you, shake off this sluggishness! Ask the Lord to say unto your soul tonight, “I am your salvation.” He is able and He is willing! You know that, Beloved. He will do it for you when you eagerly seek it from Him. How often does He suddenly disperse the doubts that overshadow us like clouds? An autumnal day like yesterday—what a strange, fitful atmosphere we breathed! How fiercely the wind blew—how heavily the rain fell! And then, how quickly afterwards the soft sunshine made the earth look cheerful and the heart of man feel glad! Perhaps you may be dull and heavy, or the raindrops of your weeping and the winds of your fears howling about you. All of a sudden the rain may stop, the clouds disperse, the clear shining come about you. God, by His dear Son, through His Spirit, may shine unto your soul at once. You may come in very heavily burdened, and go out very light-hearted! You may be exceedingly depressed and, all of a sudden, your soul may be like the chariots of Amminadab. Your attire may be changed from mourning to dancing with unspeakable joy and full of glory! You may rejoice in tribulation if the light gleams from His chambers. Pray, then! Let your soul now breathe out the prayer, “Oh, my God, if indeed I have relied upon Your dear Son to be All-in-All to me, whisper to my heart the full assurance of my everlasting safety and my present acceptance in the Beloved.”  
The Lord answer such a petition to every troubled spirit. And now—  
III. WHAT LESSON DOES THE TEXT TEACH?  
Surely it teaches us this—if we need blessings from God, let us pray for them. David needed assurance, he needed comfort and he prayed for both one and the other. The quickest road to spiritual wealth is prayer! Every prayer is like a ship sent to the Tarshish of spiritual riches to bring us back treasures better than gold or silver, or precious stones. Let us not be lax in the commerce, lest our wealth decline. Every cry to God from the true heart brings a result. You see the men in the belfry sometimes down below with the ropes. They pull them and if you have no ears, that is all you know about it. But the bells are ringing up there— they are talking and discoursing sweet music up aloft in the tower. And our prayers do, as it were, ring the bells of Heaven! They are sweet music in God’s ears and as surely as God hears, He answers, for, indeed, in Scripture, to hear and to answer are precisely the same things! Praying breath is not spent in vain. They who truly cry shall find that passage true, “The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them, and delivers them out of all their troubles.” If a man may have anything for the asking, and he will not ask, he deserves to go without! Why, if you may have assurance of every precious thing merely for the asking—and assuredly you may—if you will not knock and intercede at Mercy’s door, if you are such a fool, who is to be blamed but yourself? Be much in prayer, Beloved. What I say to you I say especially to myself. Yet I would press this home upon Believers with the more earnestness because these times are so full of labor and anxiety that they rob Christians of the opportunity for much prayer. Oftentimes, too, we get so fatigued and weary that we have not the inclination to pray as we should. I like to think of Welch, who used to cast a Scotch plaid over the bed where he rested at night, and would always rise in the night and cast this plaid about him, and pray for one or two hours. And he says in his biography, “I cannot understand how a man can sleep through the night without prayer.” That is a point to which few of us have ever thought of coming! David Brainerd, too, speaks of rising one morning by four of the clock, and the sun had not risen at six, and he says that in those two hours of prayer he had so wrestled with God that he was wet with perspiration! Such was the earnestness of his spirit as he pleaded before the Lord. I am afraid we do not practice much of this sacred importunity. We are sad hands at this devout exercise, whereby saints became famous in the days gone by. God restore to us the spirit of prayer, and all other blessings will come as the result.

Another lesson is this. Let everyone of us be satisfied we get a word from God. This was all David needed. Would God only say, though not do anything? He did not ask Him to interfere practically, or put out His hand to help, but only to say. If you go into the city, you may find plenty of merchants who, by simply writing their names, can enable you to get from the bank shovelfuls of gold. Think you not, then, that God’s promises always stand to us as good as their fulfillment? Will you blow upon His credit? Will you refuse to take Him at His word? I think I heard a Brother ask, the other day, I know I did—at family prayer—that we might trust God where we could not see Him. I have heard that prayer many times before. I have prayed it myself, I am sorry to say. But is it not rather a wicked prayer, if you scan it narrowly? Should anyone say at our Monday night Prayer Meeting, “Grant, O Lord, that we may be able to trust our minister when we cannot see him”? I think I would want to know a little about what that Brother thought of me! I am sure if I prayed like that for any of you, I would be likely to see you in the vestry before long to learn my cause for suspecting your character! How dare we, then, pray such a thing about our God?  
Yet I suppose this never struck us in that light. It seemed very proper. That is just because we have not learned yet to believe in God. If the Son of Man were to come into this world, would He find pure faith among His disciples? Talk of Diogenes with his lantern looking for an honest man! Were God to look with the sun, He could hardly discover a believing man. Mr. Muller, of Bristol, believes in God for the support of his benevolent institution—and God supplies him with all his needs. But whenever you speak about him you say, “What a wonderful thing!” Has it come to this, that in the Christian Church it is accounted a marvel for Christians to believe in the promises of God, and something like a miracle for God to fulfill them? Does not this wonderment indicate more clearly than anything else how fallen we are from the level of faith at which we ought constantly to live? If the Lord wants to surprise His people, He has only at once to give an answer to their prayers! No sooner had they obtained their answer than they would say, “Who would have thought it!” Is it really surprising that God should keep His own promise? Oh, what unbelief! Oh, what wretched unbelief on our part! We ask and we receive not because we do not believe in God! We waver—we must not expect to receive anything at His hand except what He chooses to give as a gratuity, an act of Sovereign Mercy, not a covenanted blessing. We do not get what we might have as the reward of faith because we have not got the faith that He honors!  
I like that story of a godly old woman, who, when told of God’s answering prayer, supplemented with a reflection, “Is not that wonderful?” She replied, “No, it is just like Him. Of course, He answers prayer! Of course, He keeps His promise!” We ought to consider it a right, natural, and blessed thing that believing prayer should be answered, and that faith should have its reward. Christian, rest content with a Word from God and be satisfied therewith. And as for those of us who have been living in the enjoyment of the full assurance of our own salvation (and, God be praised, there are some of us who do not often have doubts and fears), how thankful we should be! God likes to give to those who are grateful. Men like to put their jewels into a good setting and a grateful heart is a fit setting for so gracious a mercy! God loves to pour the river of His bounty along the channel of Grace in the soul. Be thankful, and you will keep your assurance—perhaps, keep it untouched till you die. It is a rare thing, I suppose, though I have known one or two holy men of God who have told me that they did not remember, for the space of 30 years, having been left to question their interest in Christ—they had enjoyed unbroken communion with Him. Why, then, should they doubt it? May we even come to that assurance, if so it pleases the Master!  
In what way, however, can we better show our gratitude than by comforting and assisting such as have not this blessing?—  
*“Thousands in the fold of Jesus  
This attainment never could boast.  
To His Name eternal praises,  
None of these shall ever be lost—  
Deeply graven  
On His hands, their names remain.”*  
Have you faith? You are saved, even if your faith should not develop into assurance. As the Puritan well said, “Faith is necessary to the being of a Christian. Assurance is necessary to his well-being.” Yet, mark you, it is a great necessity. Let us try to comfort, then, such as are distracted, distressed and bowed down. When the Lord sees that we are using our strength and our joy for the help of the rest of the family for whom He cares, He will give us yet more abundantly, and make us to be stewards of the manifold Grace of God in the midst of the Church! Thus shall we glorify His name while we cultivate happiness in our own bosoms.  
I would that all whom I now address could have this assurance. Some of you, alas, have not faith. “All men have not faith,” said the Apostle. Too true is this testimony! Soul, would you have faith? Consider what it is. You have to believe in God made flesh. Think of the Son of God bleeding on the Cross. It is at the foot of the Cross that faith is brought to light. If you would get faith, Christ must give it to you. Look to Him for the power to believe as well as for the Grace to receive all the benefits that follow. May He give it to you now! To you, oh, Seeker, He will give it. While you are seeking salvation, you shall find it near you. He will say to your soul, “I, even I, am your salvation.” May it be so with many here. Amen.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3137 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SOUL SATISFACTION  
NO. 3137

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1909. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. *“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
Psalm 35:3.*

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is Sermon #384, Volume 7— FULL ASSURANCE—  
Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THIS text may very properly be understood as a request that God would teach the soul to rest upon Him in temporal difficulties, straits and distresses. We are all apt to try to work out our own deliverance. We would go back to Egypt, or we would climb the rock on our right hand, or we would, if it were possible, force a passage on the left, but when the Red Sea rolls in front of us, when Pharaoh is behind and there are frowning rocks on the right hand and on the left, this most delightful Truth of God is learned—and probably it is the only occasion when we can learn it—God is our salvation! If you are in trouble, Christian, ask who brought you there, for He shall bring you out again. If you are sorely vexed and deeply grieved, why should you look to a human arm for succor, or why should you turn your eyes to the horses and to the chariots of Pharaoh? Lift up your eyes to the hills, from where your help came, and in the solemn silence of your soul hear the soft and cheering word, “I am your salvation; I have been with you in six troubles, and no evil has touched you; now I have brought you into another trouble, but I will deliver you out of them all; call upon ME in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.” O Believer, the strongest sinew in an arm of flesh will crack and the strongest band of human strength will give way! But trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength! Learn to stand still and to see the salvation of God, as He says to you, “I the Omnipotent, I the Omnipresent, I who have servants everywhere will work your rescue, for I am your salvation.”

It is also very necessary for us to learn this verse in its teaching as to soul-matters, for no man is saved, or can be saved, unless he knows that God is his salvation. The greatest enemy to human souls—I think I am not wrong in saying this—is the self-righteous spirit which makes men look to themselves for salvation—

*“From the Cross uplifted high,  
Where the Savior deigns to die”—*  
there comes a voice, as soft as it is potent, “I am your salvation.” But the sinner stops his ears and listens, perhaps, to the enchantments of Rome, or to the mutterings of some false priest, or to the equal lying of his own heart while these say, “We are your salvation.” We must get away, Brothers and Sisters, from every form of confidence which would take us from the finished work of Jesus Christ! From the beginning to the end of the entire matter, the great “I AM,” comprehends our whole salvation! Jesus, the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,” was, nevertheless, JEHOVAH, the “I AM,” and as the “I AM,” He speaks tonight to every soul that desires to know the way of salvation and He says, “I am your salvation.”

Sinner, there is no hope for you anywhere else! “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.” Your hopes, poor Sinner, shall be baseless—they shall be as the fabric of a dream. Rest not in them, but forsake them, pitying your own folly for having ever trusted in them. Jesus bids you renounce them now. Flee away from everything which has up to now yielded you a gleam of comfort, or a ray of joy, to the wounds of Him who suffered in the sinner’s place, and to the Cross of Him who was made a curse for us that we might be made a blessing! “I am your salvation.” You are to trust now. Are you saying, “How can I be saved?” Jesus answers, “I am your salvation.” Not “I will be,” but “I am.” Present salvation is stored up in Christ—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!*

*There is life at this moment for you.”*  
“But,” you say, “what am I to do? What am I to feel? What am I to be?” The answer is—

*“Nothing, either great or small,  
Nothing, sinner, no!  
Jesus did it, did it all,  
Long, long ago!”*

“Yes, but surely there is something needed to fit me for Him?” No, come just as you are. He does not say, “I will be your salvation when you have done this and that, so as to fit yourself for Me.” No, but He says, “I am your salvation.” If you do but trust Him unfeignedly and with your whole heart—He this moment forgives you, He this moment takes you into the family of Grace, regenerates you and makes you “a new creature” in Himself! May God grant that we may all spiritually learn this Doctrine, “I am your salvation.”

Not that I intend just now to use the text in this sense alone, though I think it is highly proper both in temporal and in spiritual dilemmas to feel that God is our salvation. Rather let me show you how it embodies a prayer of the Psalmist for the full assurance of faith. He is asking that, having believed in God, he may have a token for good, that he may be able to—

*“Read his title clear*

*To mansions in the skies.”*  
He wants to hear a still, small voice within him saying, “I am your salvation.”

I shall try, first of all, to describe the assurance intended in the text. Secondly, to show its blessedness. And thirdly, to set forth the way of reaching it.”

I. First, let me DESCRIBE THE ASSURANCE INTENDED IN THE TEXT.  
“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” The assurance which the Psalmist seeks in this prayer is one concerning a very solemn business. People like to be sure about purchasing their estates. There is a deal of searching every time the land is bought, in order to see that the title is good, valid and indefeasible. Some persons are very particular about their bodily health and they occasionally like to have an assurance from the physician that every organ is in a sound condition. But in this Psalm David is perplexed, neither about his estate, though that was a kingdom, nor about his health, though that was more than a fortune to him—he is concerned only about his soul! O my Brothers and Sisters, if we ought to be sure anywhere, it is here! Would that we were half as diligent to make our “calling and election sure” as some are to make secure their bonds, mortgages and title-deeds! Not to be sure of Heaven? What a wretched state to be in! To have a question about my soul’s eternal welfare—a dying mortal, whose breath may depart any second in the hour—oh, this is misery indeed! I had better know my true state. If it is bad, it will be well for me to know the worst of it while there is time, so that it may yet be mended. And if it is good, it will be a sweet thing for me to know that it is certainly so and then my “peace shall be like a river,” and my joy shall flow on in perpetual waves of freshness! O my dear Hearers, make sure work for eternity! If you must trifle anywhere, never trifle here! This anchor, this bower-anchor, this sheet-anchor of the soul—see that you have a good cable to this! Let everything else go and now that the dread storm is coming on, see that the anchor holds within the veil—and see, also, that it is God’s anchor of faith, worked in you by God the Holy Spirit! Breathe, I pray you, at the very outset of this address, the prayer, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
And you will notice, as it is about a very solemn business, so, also, it is an appeal to One who knows about it and who can speak on it with authority. Brothers and Sisters, if you should come to a minister, whoever he may be, and say to him, “Sir, I will tell you my evidence. I will relate my experience—tell me, are these the marks of a child of God?” You may deceive him in your statements and he himself may mislead you in his judgment. What would be the worth of the opinions of all the men in the world as to the state of a soul before God? Certainly it would be very suspicious and would give much cause for fear if God’s people were afraid of me, for I should begin to be afraid of myself! But still, though they have accepted me, let me not therefore take it for granted that God has done so! I may stand well with His Church. I may be beloved by His servants, but for all that He may know that I am none of His! I may be rather more thickly coated with gilt than some others and yet I may not be real gold. I may be better made and varnished than some and, yes, I may be but an imitation and not the true wood! But it looks well, my dear Hearers, when you dare to come before God and have an investigation of your case. When a man is willing to have the title-deeds of his estate examined in any court in the world, I should think that those deeds were thoroughly sound. When you can say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts,” or can even pray, as this text does, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation,” then there is hope for you!  
But observe that the evidence the Psalmist wants is personal assurance—“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” How many times have we to cry out against that bad habit of generalizing in religion! Beloved, let us repeat what we have said a thousand times before, that national religion is altogether a dream! That even the idea of family religion, excellent as it is, is yet often but a mere idea. The only godliness worth having is personal godliness and the only religion which will really effect salvation is that which is vital and personal to the individual. “You must be bornagain.” Now there is no way of being born-again by proxy. The Church of England may invent its “sponsors” at will, but God has nothing to do with such things! I pray you, never let the soul-damning lie of another man standing for you be tolerated in your soul for a single second! Another man cannot promise anything for you, or, if he should promise it, he would not be able to accomplish what he had promised. These works must be worked in you personally by God the Holy Spirit, Himself, or else you can never be saved. I love you to pray for your children. I am glad, poor woman, that you are anxious for your husband. It is a good thing that you, husband, should pray for your wife, but oh, remember, the salvation of another will be but poor comfort to you if you, yourself, should be cast into the everlasting burnings! Let your prayer be first for yourselves! Let that be the leading point and then you will breathe the prayer more hopefully for others. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation. I hear that showers of mercy are dropping all around, let them drop also upon me. I hear that conversions are numerous, oh, if I am not converted, convert me! I know that You do great wonders, Lord—let me be a monument of Your power to save.” It is personal assurance that the Psalmist needs!  
Observe, also, for it lies on the surface of the text, that it is an assurance sent, not to the ear, but to the heart. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” Now God does speak to us through our ears. When the Word is read or preached, we often get a blessing through hearing it. But if the words you hear merely come to the ear, it involves responsibility without insuring a blessing. Certain persons dream that God is their salvation! Go to bed and dream again, and dream fifty times, and when you have dreamed the same thing fifty times, there can and will be nothing but dreaming in it, after all! You who build on dreams had better mind what you are doing!  
“Well,” says another, “but I heard a voice in the air.” Nonsense! “But I did,” you say. Superstition! “But I am sure I did.” Well, what does it matter? I care not where the voice came from if you heard it only with your outward ears. It is as likely to have been the devil that spoke as anybody else, if, indeed, it was anybody at all! You are as likely to deceive yourself as anything in the world. The prayer of the text, is not, “Say to my ears,” but, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” Do you understand what soul-talking is? Oh, dear, dear—the most of people do not understand anything that has to do with the spirit world—there are materialists in Christianity as well as in other matters. They suppose that to worship God means to sing in a certain way, to bend the knees and to say certain words. Why, you may do all that and yet there may not be a fraction of worship in it! And, on the other hand, you may worship God without any of it. A man may sing God’s praises without ever opening his mouth! A man may pray unto God and yet never say a word, for it is soul-singing and soul-praying that God accepts! And when God speaks back again to the soul that has learned to talk with Him, He does not speak liplanguage, tongue-language, or ear-language, but soul-language! I have already said that this soul-language sometimes takes the body of preaching, or of the Word of God and so becomes, as it were, a thing to appeal to the ears, but even then the letter kills—it is only the Spirit that makes alive. It is God’s soul talking to man’s soul that is needed here. And mark you, dear Friend, if ever God speaks to your soul, you will not have to ask who it is that speaks, for if ever the eternal God comes into direct contact with the human heart, there is no making a mistake! Do you understand this? Some of you think I am fanatical. I would to God you were all as fanatical! May you have God talking with your soul and may the Holy Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are born of God! Pray the prayer and may God hear it now, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
Then I want you to also notice that the prayer here offered is a present one. It means, “Say now unto my soul, I am your salvation.” It is not, “Do it by-and-by,” but, “now, Lord, now!” Perhaps some of you have heard God’s voice in years gone by, but now you have got into Doubting Castle. Well, you may pray this prayer right now, while you are sitting in the pew, and though none shall hear it but yourself, yet God’s Spirit shall talk to you and you shall hear Him say, “I am your salvation,” and then your heart shall sing, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine!” Pray the prayer now and it need not take a moment to be answered, for, while you are yet speaking it, you shall feel it. You will be bowed down under a sense of gratitude and yet you will be lifted up with a “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” when you can sing—

*“While Jesus whispers I am His,  
And my Beloved’s mine.”*  
Come, Believers, let us all pray this prayer, whether we have heard this voice before or not! O my God make us true Believers and may we all pray it now, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” The preacher often needs to use this prayer himself. And he has no doubt that many of his Brothers and Sisters have been constrained to use just such a cry. Well, let it go up again tonight—“O God, give us back the love of our espousals, our first faith, our early joy and speak with Your own voice to our troubled hearts, and say to our souls, ‘I am your salvation.’”  
II. And now shall we turn, very briefly, indeed, to the second point? It was to be THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE ASSURANCE ASKED FOR.  
I do not think I shall preach on that at all, but leave you to find it out for yourselves. You who know it know that I cannot describe it, for you cannot describe it yourselves. And you who do not know it would not understand it if I told you what it is. You will understand as much as this—that if you were able to feel tonight that God Himself had said to your soul, “I am your salvation,” you would feel infinitely more happy than you do now. Some of you are very cheerful, but sometimes you do get troubled and cast down. You apparently have, I know, a great deal of hilarity and mirth about you, but at night, or in the early morning, or when you have to go to a funeral, you do not feel quite as you would like to feel. There is an aching void somewhere or other and you have not found out that which is to fill it yet. Now, if God, Himself, should say to you, “I am your salvation,” would not that fill it? Oh, what a different life you would then lead! How happy you would be and, being saved, how holy you would try to be! And, being holy, how near to God you would try to live! “If I were but saved,” says one, “then would I, indeed, praise the Lord as long as I had any being.” Well, poor Soul, I pray that this may be your case—but the blessedness of it you must taste to know. “O taste and see that the Lord is good!” There is no other way of understanding it than this.  
I think I told you, once, the little story of the boy at the mission station who had received a piece of sugar from a missionary. When he went home he told his father that he had had something so sweet. The father asked if it were as sweet as such-and-such a fruit? Oh, sweeter than that! Was it as sweet as such another? Yes, much sweeter than that, and when the boy could not make his father understand how sweet it was, he ran down to the station and said, “Oh, Sir, would you give me another piece of that sweet stuff? Father wants to understand how sweet it is and I want to make him understand it, but I can’t tell him.” So he got another piece of sugar and back he went to his father with it. “Here, Father, now you will understand how sweet it is.” A very good illustration is this of the text I just quoted, “O taste and see that the Lord is good!” Taste for yourselves—and then you shall know for yourselves.  
III. Now let us go to the third point without delay. HOW ARE WE TO GET THIS ASSURANCE? HOW SHALL THE BELIEVER KNOW THAT HE IS SAVED?  
The way to assurance is through the door of simple faith. The Gospel is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe is to trust Christ. Now, if I know that I trust Christ and that I have, in obedience to His command, been baptized, then God says I shall be saved and is not that enough for me? Ought it not to be, at any rate? If God says it, it must be true! I believe His Book to be Inspired and He has put it thus, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” Well, if I do believe on Him, then I am not condemned. Conscience says, “You are a long way off being perfect.” I know that. Ah, Conscience! I know it to my shame and to my sorrow, but the Word says, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” I do believe on Him and I am not condemned, let Conscience say what it likes! “Well, but” the devil says, “how can this be true?” That is neither my business nor yours, Satan! God says it is so and therefore it is so. That is enough for me! We take men’s word, why should we not take God’s Word? He who simply believes in Jesus Christ must have some degree of assurance, for the simple act of reclining, recumbently resting upon Christ, if it is done truly and sincerely is, in its measure, assuring to the heart. At any rate, it is the milk that brings the cream. Faith is the milk and assurance is the cream! You must get your assurance from your faith—and if it is a simple faith which relies entirely upon Jesus Christ, it will, if not directly, yet very speedily, bring you some degree of assurance of your interest in Christ.  
There are many good people who say, “We are trusting in Christ, and we hope we are Christians.” They do not like to say that they know they are saved. They think they are very humble in saying, “We trust so. We hope so.” Whereas there is nothing but pride, like a thick sediment, at the bottom of all that kind of talk! What right have I, when God tells me that a thing is so, to say that I hope it is so? If I were to promise to give a subscription of ten pounds to a charity and the person to whom I promised it should say, “Well, I hope you will give it,” I should answer, “But I have said that I will.” “Yes, I hope you will.” “But don’t you believe me?” “Yes, I hope I do, but…” Why, if such talk as this prevailed among men of the world, they would be for showing the door to one another! It would be looked upon as an insult not to believe a man—and why should you treat God in a manner in which you would not like to be treated by your fellow men? God says that I am saved if I trust Christ. I do trust Christ and I am saved—if I am not, then God’s Word is not true! It comes to that. Since his Word must be true—then if I really trust Christ and I know that I do—if whatever else I have left undone, my soul does cling to Him, sink or swim, not having the shadow of a hope anywhere but in His precious blood—and if I can say this, then I know I am saved, for God says I am! Experience and conscience may say whatever they like, but, “let God be true, and every man a liar.”  
The way, however, to increase the measure of our assurance is to be found in more study of the Word of God. Some people have not the confidence they might have because they do not understand the Truth. I think that certain forms of Arminianism are injurious to the faith of the Christian—those forms, for instance, which deny the election of God, the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit and the final perseverance of the saints. These denials seem to me to cut from under a man’s foot everything he has to stand upon! And I do not wonder that the man who believes them has no assurance. If I believe that God’s children may fall away and perish, it seems to me that full assurance, at any rate, becomes an impossibility, for if they may fall, why may not I? What is there in me that I should stand where others fall? But when I rest alone upon the finished work and righteousness of Jesus and believe it is finished, then I can sing, “Now unto Him who is able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, forever and ever. Amen.” Study the Word much, dear Christian Brothers and Sisters. Never mind the magazines! Never mind the newspapers! Further than they are necessary to your business, you need not trouble yourself with them. We would, all of us, be a great deal better if we kept to the one Book. Let us be as expansive in our knowledge as possible, but let us keep the Bible as the sun and center of the solar system of our knowledge—and let everything we know revolve around that center! If we knew more of God, we might be content to know less of men.  
Next to this, I think if we would have full assurance established, we must be more in prayer than we are. You will not be in a healthy state if you live without prayer. You cannot live without it if you are a Christian—and I mean you cannot be healthy if you live without much prayer. I am persuaded that none of us pray as we ought. I am not given to bandying accusations against God’s saints without thought, but I am afraid that this is not a praying age. It is a reading age, a preaching age, a working age, but it is not a praying age! When one reads of the Puritans prayers, one is astounded! Why, their public prayers were sometime three-quarters of an hour in length and sometimes one hour and a half by the clock. I do not like that. But their private prayers were far longer and days of fasting and of prayer were quite common things. I wish we could have a day of fasting and of prayer about this cattle disease, but I only say this by the way. I wish we all of us prayed a great deal more than we do. We just pray for a short season because we say that we are so busy, but we forget that the more we pray, the more we are able to work. The mower grudges not the time he spends in whetting his scythe, or the scribe the interval for mending his pen. Martin Luther, when he had twice as much to do as he usually had, said, “I must pray for three hours today, at least, or else I shall never get through my work.” The more work he had, the more did he pray in order that he might be able to get through it! Oh, that we did the same! We would have more assurance if we were more on the mountain with God!  
Let me also advise you to attend an edifying ministry and to get with well-advanced Christians. Some of the young plants here, when they get moved away, suffer terribly from the cold. They come, perhaps, from the country full of doubts and fears, and then some of my good Brothers and Sisters get round them and talk to them, and cheer them up, and then they are so glad. Oh, that all Churches were warm-hearted, cordial and affectionate! There is so much stuck-upishness, so much keeping aloof from one another that there can be no talking, one to another, about the things of God! By the Grace of God we will try to break this down and get a little warm-heartedness to one another—and so we will hope to get the full assurance by talking to one another of the things of the Kingdom of God and so strengthening each other in our work.

But, dear Friends, if you want to get full assurance, I can recommend to you another thing and it is this, work for Christ. We are not saved by works, but working for God brings us many blessings. Rest assured that if you spend and are spent for Christ, you shall never be out of spending money! If you lay out your strength for Him, He will lay in for you fresh stores of strength! He does not give us faith that we may bury it as the man buried his talent, but if we have five talents of faith and use them, He will give us five talents more—and so we shall have assurance if we use our faith well.  
And then, again, praise God for what you have. Old Master Brookes says, “If you only have candlelight, bless God for it and He will give you starlight. When you have got starlight, praise God for it and He will give you moonlight. When you have got moonlight, rejoice in it and He will give you sunlight. And when you have got sunlight, praise Him still more and He will make the light of your sun as the light of seven days, for the Lord, Himself, shall be the light of your spirit.” Praise and bless Him and your assurance shall grow!  
Above all, press through ordinances, and means, and prayers, to the Person of Christ, Himself! Thomas found that putting his finger into Christ’s wounds was a cure-all for his unbelief. And so will you. Ask Him to—  
*“Wrap you in His crimson vest,  
And tell you all His name.”*  
Pray Him to reveal Himself to you in His sufferings and in His Glory. Ask Him that you may read His heart, that He may speak to you and show you the great unspeakable love wherewith He loved you from before the foundation of the world. Then your communion with Christ shall be as eagle wings to bear you up to Heaven! Your fellowship with Jesus shall be like horses of fire to drag your chariot of flaming love up to the Throne of the Most High! You shall walk the mountain-top, talking with God, for you will have learned to commune with Christ! Your spirit shall make its nest hard by the Throne of the Most High. You shall get above the cares of earth, you shall mount beyond the storm and strife of worldly conflict and you shall even now bathe your soul in the unbroken sea of everlasting calm before the Throne of God!  
Let us ask Him to say to each of our souls tonight, “I am your salvation.” Some of us are going to the Communion Table. Perhaps He will say it to us there. And if He does not, we will go home to pray. And if He does not speak to us then, perhaps in the night-watches He will say it. And when we awake, we will still plead on until those lips which said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, shall again say, “Let there be light,” to us, and we shall know that He is our salvation! May God bless you very richly for hearing this prayer, for Jesus’ sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30; 2:1-11.** Philippians 1:21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [See Ser  
mon #146, Volume 3—THE GOOD MAN’S LIFE AND DEATH—Read/download the entire sermon, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] “To me to live is Christ.” If he lived, he lived to know more of Christ studying His Person and learning by his happy experience so that he increased in his knowledge of his Lord and Savior. If he lived, he lived to imitate Christ more closely, becoming more and more conformed to His image. If he lived, he lived to make Christ more and more known to others and to enjoy Christ more himself. In these four senses, Paul might well say, “For to me to live is Christ”—to know Christ more, to imitate Christ more, to preach Christ more and to enjoy Christ more!

“And to die is gain,” because death, he felt, would free him from all sin and from all doubts as to his state in the present and the future. It would be gain to him, for then he would no longer be tossed upon the stormy sea, but he would be safe upon the land where he was bound. It would be gain to him, for then he would be free from all temptations both from within and from without. It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all his enemies—there would be no cruel Nero, no blaspheming Jews, no false brethren then! It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all suffering—there would be no more shipwrecks, no more being beaten with rods, or being stoned! Dying, too, would be gain for him, for he would then be free from all fear of death and, having once died, he would die no more forever. It would be gain to him, for he would find in Heaven better and more perfect friends than he would leave behind on earth. And he would find, above all, his Savior, and be a partaker of His Glory. This is a wide subject and the more we think over it, the more sweetness shall we get out of it.

22. But if I live in the flesh. That is a very different thing from living to the flesh.  
22. This is the fruit of my labor. He lived to work for Christ and to see souls saved as the fruit of his labor.  
22, 23. Yet what I shall choose I know not. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

[See Sermons #274, Volume 5—PAUL’S DESIRE TO DEPART and #1136, Volume 19—“FOREVER WITH THE LORD”—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There were the two currents flowing in opposite directions. The Apostle seemed to hear two voices speaking to him. One of them said, “Live, and you will gather the fruit of your labor. You will see sinners saved, Churches established and the Kingdom of Christ extended in the earth.” The other said, “Die, and you will be with Christ!” So he knew not which to choose.

24-26. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more necessary for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. The Apostle desired to die, yet he was willing to live. Death would have been gain to him, yet he would endure the loss of living if he might thereby benefit others. Let us also always prefer the welfare of others before our own—and care rather to serve others than to make ourselves ever so happy. Now the Apostle gives these saints at Philippi a loving exhortation.

27. Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else am absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel. The unity of the Church is of the utmost importance. When there is a lack of brotherly love, the perfect bond is lost— and as a bundle of rods, when once the binding cord is cut becomes merely a number of weak and single twigs, so is it with a divided Church. May we always be kept in one holy bond of perfect union with each other!

28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition. “Away with them! Away with them!” cried the heathen. “Those who are not ashamed to acknowledge the Crucified Christ are only worthy of perdition.” But of what was their courage a token to themselves?

28. But to you of salvation, and that of God. For when saints can bear fierce persecution without flinching, it is an evident sign that they are saved by the Grace of God!

29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him. Which is a great gift.  
29. But also to suffer for His sake. Which is a still greater gift!  
30. Having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me. “The same agony,” it is in the Greek, as if every Christian must, in his measure, go through the same agony through which the Apostle went striving and wrestling against sin, groaning under its burden, agonizing to be delivered from it and laboring to bring others out of its power. Philippians 2:1, 2. If there is, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Paul knew that these saints at Philippi loved him. They had sent once and again to relieve his necessities, so he pleaded with them, by their love to him, to love each other. He does as much say, “If you really love me, if it is not a sham, if you have any sympathy with me and with my labors and sufferings. If you really have the same spirit that burns in my breast, make my heart full of joy by clinging to one another, by being like-minded, ‘having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.’”  
3. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory. This would be a good motto for those who are intending to build new places of worship! Let them not be built through strife, because of a squabble among the people of God, but make sure that all concerned are actuated by right motives and seeking only the Glory of God. But sometimes, if one gives a guinea, another feels that he must give two, so as to excel him—this is giving out of vainglory. Let nothing be done in this way, but as unto the Lord and as in His sight, let us do all our works and give all our gifts.  
3, 4. But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not, every man, on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Consider how you can help others and in what way you can prosper them both in temporal things and in spiritual. You are members of a body, so one member is not to think for itself alone—the unity of the whole body requires that every separate and distinct part of it should be in harmony with the whole.  
5-8. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the

death of the Cross. [See Sermon #2281, Volume 38—OUR LORD IN THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He

humbled Himself, so be you not unwilling to humble yourself. Lower than the Cross, Christ could not go, His death was one of such extreme ignominy that He could not have been more disgraced and degraded. Be you willing to take the lowest place in the Church of God and to render the most humble service! Count it an honor to be allowed to wash the saints’ feet. Be humble in mind—nothing is lost by cherishing this spirit, for see how Jesus Christ was honored in the end.

9-11. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to

the Glory of God the Father. [See Sermon #101, Volume 2—THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Some foo

lish and superstitious persons make this passage a pretext for bowing their heads at the name of Jesus whenever it is mentioned. Nothing can be more senseless, because the passage means no such thing!

What we are taught here is the great Truth of God that Jesus Christ, though once He stooped to the lowest shame, is now exalted to the very highest Glory and even the devils in Hell are compelled to acknowledge the might of His power! We are also to learn from this passage that the way to ascend is to descend. He who would be chief must be willing to be the servant of all. The King of kings was the Servant of servants—and if you would be crowned with honor, by-and-by, you must be willing to be despised and rejected of men now! The Lord give us this gracious humbleness of mind, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #384 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FULL ASSURANCE  
NO. 384

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 28, 1861, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
Psalm 35:3.**

THE Psalmist, when he wrote these words, was surrounded by many and furious enemies. He pleads with God to take hold on shield and buckler and to come forth for his defense. Yet he feels that there is only one thing which God has need to do in order to remove his fears and make him strong in the day of conflict, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation,” and I will defy them all. In the name of God I will set up my banner. And though weak in myself, yet shall I be able to overcome them readily and tread them as straw is trod from the dunghill, when the joy of the Lord shall be my strength, because You have said unto me, ‘I am your salvation.’ ”

Brethren, there is nothing that can make you strong to labor for God, bold to fight against your enemies and mighty to resist your temptations like a full assurance that God is your God and your sure salvation. Your doubts and fears weaken you. While they nourish your despair and diminish your joy, they do at the same time cut the sinews of your valor and blunt the edge of your sword. A fully-assured Christian is a very giant in our Israel—for happiness and beauty he stands like Saul, head and shoulders taller than the rest—while for strength and courage he can match with David and is like the angel of the Lord.

It is upon the subject of full assurance that I shall address you this morning. Without further preface I shall first bid you hear objectors, who oppose themselves to full assurance. Secondly, I shall beg you to hear the test. And then I shall request you to hear the preacher.

I. First of all, let us HEAR OBJECTORS.  
There are some who say it is better that a man should stand in jeopardy of his soul every hour—better for him to be exercised with doubts and fears—than that he should grow confident and have the joy of knowing assuredly that he is a saved man, is in the favor of God and shall never be condemned. We will hear these objectors for a moment and answer them speedily.  
One of them advances and he says, “First, I object to your preaching this morning, the doctrine of full assurance, because I believe it to be impossible—I cannot conceive that any man can know in this life whether he shall be saved in the life to come. Perhaps I may grant you that, in the dying hour, some men may get a little confidence—but, with the perception of a few of the eminently holy and the profoundly spiritual—it cannot be possible that Christians should attain to a full confidence and an infallible assurance of being saved.”  
To this, Sir, I reply thus. You say it is impossible—I say it is not only possible, but has been certainly enjoyed by the people of God. Does the Spirit of God teach men to pray impossibilities? Yet David prays for it here—“Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” The thing is possible, then, or else David would not have asked for it. It can be granted by God. It can be received by the Christian, else this prayer had never been put in the Inspired Record. Besides, do you think that the Holy Spirit would exhort us to do an impossibility?  
And does He not speak by the mouth of Paul and say, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure”? Does He not bid us be assured that we are called by grace and that we are chosen of God? I say that which may be a matter of prayer and which is a subject of precept, cannot be an impossible thing. Besides, it has been enjoyed by tens of thousands of even ordinary every-day Christians. We could read you their biographies and find expressions like this—“I have no more doubt of my interest in Christ than I have of my existence.” “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.”  
And there are many in this house today, who if this were the time for them to give their personal testimony, could say, “I know that I have been born again. I am sure that my sins are all forgiven. I am neither afraid to die, nor do I fear to live—for, living, Christ is with me and dying, I shall be with Christ—being justified, I have peace with God through Jesus Christ my Lord.” Brethren, it is not impossible. It is attainable by the man who has faith if he knows how to use the proper means.  
But shall I tell you who the gentlemen are who generally raise objections to the glorious privilege of assurance? There are, first of all, the adherents of the Pope of Rome. Of course, the Papist does not like full assurance. And why? The Pope and his priest would have a lean larder if full assurance were well preached. Only conceive, my Brethren, if the Roman Catholic could get the full assurance of salvation, surely the Cardinals would hardly find money enough to buy their red hats. For where were purgatory then? Purgatory is an impossibility if full assurance is possible. If a man knows himself to be saved, then he is not to be troubled with a silly fear about waiting in the intermediate state, to be purified with fire, before he can enter into Heaven.  
Purgatory is only acceptable to those poor trembling souls who know of no sure salvation here and are glad of this deceptive hope of a salvation to be worked in the world to come. Purgatory being thus built upon a lying imposition—on the fears of ignorant consciences—becomes what brave old Hugh Latimer used to call it—“Purgatory Pick-purse,” to the poor sinner and “Purgatory Fill-purse” to the vagabond priest. Once let full assurance be given to all Christian men—first make the Romanist a Christian and then let him be fully assured of his interest in Christ and away goes purgatory and there will never be a soul found to tremble at it any more.  
The other persons who object to this doctrine are generally people who have no religion and who want, therefore, to make themselves a little easy by the notion that nobody has any more than they have. Your easy Church-goers and Chapel-goers. Your ladies and gentlemen who think that religion consists in buying a Prayer Book, who imagine that to have a book of Psalms and Hymns, constitutes godliness. Your fine folks to whom religion is as much a matter of fashion as some new color, or some new form of dress—these people, having no vitality in their godliness, never having a religion which could either make them cry or sing, never having godliness enough either to make them miserable, or make them blessed— these think there is nothing more in godliness than they get themselves. They say, “I never knew my sins were forgiven,” and judging all others by themselves, they think that no one else can know it, either.  
And I am sorry to say and grieved at heart to say it that not seldom I have known professed ministers of the Gospel who have even rebuked those who have reached to the high attainment of assurance. I was waited upon, not very long since, by a lady of considerable standing who had long been seeking rest and nothing would satisfy her unless she knew her sins were forgiven. She had called upon a clergyman, of some standing, too, and he had assured her that the thing was utterly impossible. And she was ready to go mad with the idea that she must all her life go mourning on somewhere between hope and fear—in the balances between despair and hope.  
When I told her that it was not only the privilege of the Christian, but his duty, to know himself to be saved and that no man ought to rest till he was infallibly assured by the Holy Spirit that he was in a gracious state and delivered from fear of Hell, the joy that flushed her face was something worth beholding and she went on her way to seek and I trust to find, the grace which is in Christ Jesus.  
I would have each of you put aside those carnal quibbles which are raised by Romanists and Romanizers against the idea that we can know that we are saved—for not only can we know it—but we ought never to be satisfied till we do know it. And this, mark you, is not

 my statement. It is the manifest testimony of the Book of God and was plainly held by all the fathers of the Church—Augustine, Chrysostom and the like. It is the testimony of all the Reformers—of all the giant Divines of the Puritan times, it is the testimony of all truly evangelical Christians—that every Christian has a right to have a full assurance of his salvation and should never be content until he attains thereunto.  
But another objector rises and faintly says, “But I am afraid, Sir. I am afraid of your preaching full assurance, because so many persons have boasted of it and they have been vile pretenders and have perished after all.” Friend, it is to be admitted that there have been many who have mistaken presumption for assurance. They have thought that the arrogant impertinence of a proud unhumbled spirit was the same thing as the simple child-like confidence of a renewed, regenerated heart. But mark, assurance is not possible to you till you are born again. You have no business to dream of it till you have a new heart and a right spirit. It would indeed be a fearful piece of blasphemy for you to think that God is your Father when your Father He is not, or to dream that your sins are forgiven when your hands are scarlet with them and your soul is black with your crimes.  
But because some make the counterfeit, am I to throw away the genuine? Because, indeed, there is some tin shillings, will you cast away all the silver? Because some pass upon you the base forged bank-note, will you therefore burn those which really come from the bank? I think not. And, my dear Brethren, if thousands presumed, that would not be an argument why one true Christian should not be fully assured of his interest in Christ. “Yes, but,” says another, “I am afraid if men get fully assured, they will grow careless.” This is the old objection that was brought against faith in Luther’s time. “If men believe that they will be justified by faith,” said the Romanist, “they will never do any good works.”  
Whereas the fact is, men never do any good works till they are justified by faith. Those who cry down good works as the ground of hope are the very men who work with all their might in the service of Christ and as assurance is but faith come to perfection, the assured man will always be the most industrious man. Why, when I know that I am saved— *“Then for the love I bear His name,  
What was my gain I count my loss;  
I pour contempt on all my shame,  
And nail my glory to His Cross.”*  
A well-grounded assurance is the most active worker in the field, the most valiant warrior in the battle and the most patient sufferer in the furnace. There are none so active as the assured. Let a tree be planted in this soil and watered with this river and its branches will bend with fruit. Confidence of success stimulates exertion, joy in faith removes sorrows and realizing assurance overcomes all difficulties. Like the sword of Goliath we may say of assurance, “There is none like it—give it to me.” Who cares for deaths, or devils when he can read his title clear? What matters the tempest without when there is calm within?  
Assurance puts the heart in Heaven and moves the feet to Heaven. Its children are all fair, like the holy children in Babylon and no race can compare for a moment with these “hinds let loose,” these “lion-like men,” these children of the sun. There never were men so self-sacrificing, so daring, so zealous, so enthusiastic in the cause of Christ as the men who know that their names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life and therefore out of gratitude serve their God. Why, I put it to the sinner here, who never thought of this matter before—Poor man! If your sins could be all forgiven this morning and you could know it—if God should say to your soul, “I am your salvation,” and if you could go out of this house knowing that you were a child of God, do you think it would make you unholy? Do you think it would make you negligent?  
No, I think I see the tear in your eye, as you reply, “I would do anything for Him. I would live for Him. I would die for Him, to show how I love Him who loved me.” Ah, poor Soul, if you believe in Christ now, that will be true. If you will cast yourself on Jesus now, you shall be forgiven. There shall be no sin left in God’s Book against you. You shall be absolved, acquitted, delivered, cleansed and washed. And then you shall prove in your experience that assurance does not make men sin, but that assurance of pardon is the very best means of making men holy and keeping them in the fear of God.  
I have one class of objectors to answer and I have done. There is a certain breed of Calvinists, whom I do not envy, who are always jeering and sneering as much as ever they can at the full assurance of faith. I have seen their long laces. I have heard their whining periods and read their dismal sentences in which they say something to this effect—“Groan in the Lord always and again I say, groan! He that mourns and weeps, he that doubts and fears, he that distrusts and dishonors his God, shall be saved.” That seems to be the sum and substance of their very unGospellike Gospel.  
But why is it that they do this? I speak now honestly and fearlessly. It is because there is a pride within them—a conceit which is fed on rottenness and sucks marrow and fatness out of putrid carcasses. And what, say you, is the object of their pride? Why, the pride of being able to boast of a deep experience—the pride of being a blacker, grosser and more detestable backslider than other people. “Whose glory is in their shame,” may well apply to them. A more dangerous, because a more deceitful pride than this is not to be found. It has all the elements of self-righteousness in it. I would sooner a man boast in his good works than boast in his good feelings, because you can deal with the man who boasts in his good works—you have plain texts of Scripture and you can convict him of being a legalist.  
But this other man boasts that he is no legalist—he can speak very sharply against legality. He knows the Truth and yet the Truth is not in him—in his spirit—because still he is looking to his feelings and not looking to the finished work of Christ. Of all the Diabolians that ever stole into the city of Mansoul, Mr. Live-by-Feeling was one of the worst of villains, though he had the fairest face. Brethren, you had better live by works than live by feelings—both are damning forms of trust—but the one is more deceptive and more delusive than the other by far. You are justified by faith, not by feelings. You are saved by what Christ felt for you, not by what you feel and the root and basis of salvation is the Cross and “other foundation shall no man lay than that which is laid.” Even though he place his experience there, he builds “wood, hay and stubble,” and not the cornerstone, which is Christ Jesus the Lord.  
I have thus tried to meet my objectors—I shall now turn to the second part of the discourse.  
II. Let us HEAR THE TEXT. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” The first thing the text seems to say is, David had his doubts, then—for why would he pray, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation,” if he were not sometimes exercised with doubts and fears? Cheer up, Christian Brothers and Sisters! If David doubted, you must not say, “I am no Christian because I have doubts.” The best of Believers sometimes are troubled with fears and anxieties. Abraham had the greatest faith, but he had some unbelief. I envy the Brother who can say that his faith never wavered. He can say more than David did, for David had cause to cry, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.”  
But, next, the text says that David was not content while he had doubts and fears but he repaired at once to the mercy seat to pray for assurance, for he valued it as much fine gold. “O Lord!” David seems to say, “I have lost my confidence; my foot slips; my feet are almost gone; my doubts and fears prevail and I cannot bear it. I am wretched, I am unhappy. Say—say unto my soul, I am your salvation.’ ”  
And then the text tells you yet a third thing—that David knew where to obtain full assurance. He goes at once to God in prayer. He knows that knee-work is that by which faith is increased and there, in his closet, he cries out to the Most High, “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” O my Brethren, we must be much alone with God if we would have a clear sense of His love! Let your cries cease and your eyes will grow dim. Much in prayer, much in Heaven—slow in prayer, slow in progress.  
Now pull the text into pieces and let us look at the words. And notice, that David would not be satisfied unless his assurance had a Divine source. “Say unto my soul.” Great God! If the priest should say it, it is nothing! If my minister should say it—if the deacons, the Church officers and all the members of the Church should say it—it is nothing. Lord, You say it! Nothing short of a Divine testimony in the soul will ever content the true Christian. The Spirit of God must Himself after a supernatural sort, speak to our consciences and to our hearts. Gracious God! Let me not take my hopes haphazardly. Let not my confidence be ill-founded and built upon sand. Speak Yourself, with Your Word of Truth and Wisdom and say to me, even to me, “I am your salvation!”  
Note, next, David cannot be content unless his assurance has a vivid personality about it. “Say unto my soul, I am your salvation.” If you should say this to all the saints, it were nothing, unless you should say it to me. Lord, I have sinned I deserve it not. I am sinful. I scarcely dare to ask it. But oh, say it to my soul even to my soul, “I am your salvation.” Let me have a pointed, personal, infallible, indisputable sense that I am Yours and that You are mine.  
Next, David must have it come deep into his inner being. “Say unto my soul. Speak it not merely to my ears—say it to my soul, Great God! Let me not fancy that I heard it in the air. Let me not dream that I listened to it in my sleep, but speak it right into the ears of my spirit and let the inner man hear the echoes of Your peace-speaking voice—‘Say unto my

 soul, I am your salvation.’ ” Brethren, it is no skimming the surface which will do for us. We must have quiet in the deeps. That blessing “of the depth which lies under” we need and must have. It will not content us to have a fair skin, scarcely concealing with its deceitful gauze the foul and deadly leprosy. Our soul must be sound and healthy to the very core. Lord, say to my soul, in my heart’s inner depths, “I am your salvation.” Put it beyond doubt. Put it beyond all chance, dispute, or hazard, “I am your salvation.”  
Note again, David wants present assurance. He does not say, “Say unto my soul, I will be your salvation,” but, “I am.” And yet that “am,” as you will see if you look at the text, is not in the original, it is in italics. It has been supplied by our translators. That word “am” is man’s word, not God’s—therefore I will say but little of it. It may be, “I will be your salvation,” or “I have been your salvation,” or “I am—” and very rightly there is no word there at all. You can learn as much from God’s silence as you can from His speech and I think this silence means just this. There is no word put there at all, because full assurance enables the Christian to say of God, “He was my salvation before the worlds began, He is my salvation now, He will be when the world shall pass away.”  
So you may put up the prayer in any tense you prefer. “Say unto my soul, I \_\_\_ your salvation,” The two terms shall be alike. “God \_\_\_ the salvation. “I,” the great personal self-existent Deity, “your salvation.” The two shall stand and fall together. They shall both of them be sure, both eternal in the ancient ages, both everlasting in the ages to come. “Say unto my soul, I \_\_\_ your salvation.”  
I think we have thus heard what the text has to say to us. You will remark, when you look it all the way through, that the only question which we need put is this—How can God say to us, “I am your salvation”? You do not expect to hear it as you walk along the streets. You do not imagine that you will see it written on the skies. No, God speaks to His people thus—by His Word, by His ministers and by His Holy Spirit silently and mysteriously imprinting upon the heart the fact that that heart is washed in the Redeemer’s blood.  
Dr. Caesar Malan, of Geneva, has put in a very plain light the way in which God in His Word says to us, “I am your salvation.” You are to suppose the minister is talking to a friend. This friend is anxious and doubting and wants to know how the Bible can say to any man that that man is saved. The conversation runs thus—Pastor: “He who believes in Jesus Christ, has eternal life” (John 3:36)—do you know this declaration of the Word of God? Very well, but you appear to think it obscure or ambiguous.” John: “Never, I am sure it is true. Yet all those who say, ‘I believe in Jesus Christ,’ are not the elect of God, bought of the Lord, or saved by grace. All these are not chosen, for there are many hypocrites who dare say that they believe in the Son of God.”  
Pastor: “You observe that the Word does not say that those who say they believe, or pretend to believe in Jesus Christ, or who imagine falsely that they believe, have eternal life. But this infallible Word says that those who believe in reality really have this life. So, then, the multitude in Christian nations who profess to believe in Jesus Christ is not proof that they believe in reality. But if this multitude believes in reality on the Savior, certainly they will have eternal life.” John: “Thus, Sir, whoever is able to assure himself that he believes on the Savior, then he will be certain that he has actually the life eternal and that he is also elect.”—The minister takes a little bit of paper and writes upon it these words, “Whoever receives from my hand this paper and this declaration, I hold him for my friend.”  
He puts his name to these words and presenting it to John, he says to him: “Receive this from my hand and believe my testimony, for I am a creditable person—John takes the paper and reads what the minister had written. Pastor: “How am I to regard you, John, after this testimony that I have given you?” John: “I have the minister for a friend.” Pastor: “Is it from you to me that this friendship flows, or is it from me to you?” John: “It is from you to me.” Pastor: “Do you hesitate to say that I am your friend and that you have become mine?” John: “If I said I did not believe you, I should make you a liar.” Pastor: “Do you, then, look with affection towards me, or is it I with affection towards you? For you are assured that I am your friend and that I regard you as mine.” John: “You, dear Sir, love me and care for me.” Pastor: “And how are you assured that this good-will is addressed to you?” John: “Because you have been pleased to say it and I do not doubt your veracity.”  
Pastor: “I am sure that I have not written your name, as my friend. Why then do you know that I have mentioned you in particular?” John: “You have written with your own hand that whoever receives this paper, you shall have him for a friend. And because I have received this paper and because I know that you are of good authority, I have no doubt at all upon the subject.” Pastor: “That is, then, because you have been certain on the one hand of having received this paper from my hand and on the other hand, that I am of good authority, that you are certain of possessing, at the present, my affection?” John: “I do not think that I am able to speak with doubt upon this point, without insulting your veracity.”  
The substance of which is this—that when you can take the Word and find that you are the character there spoken of, it is as good as if out of Heaven an angel should fly down to you, sitting in your pew now and should say in your ear, in the presence of this congregation, “God is your salvation.” Now, Brethren, I know this day I have no other trust but in the Cross of Christ—therefore I am saved. And you can say the same, each one of you, if you are resting in Christ alone, There is not an “if” or a “but” about it. You are saved. Oh, do enjoy that thought and go home and live upon it. It shall be marrow and fatness to your spirit.  
But then, God often speaks by His minister, as well as by His Word. But that is very much in the same way. While the minister is preaching concerning those who are saved, you listen and you say, “Ah, he speaks to me!” He describes your character and though you are standing far away in the gallery, you say, “Ah, that is my character!” He speaks of the weary and heavy laden sinner and he bids him come and you say, “Ah, I am weary and heavy laden and I will come.” And when you have come, Christ has given you rest. You need have no doubt about it. If you can fairly take hold on the promise which is offered to certain characters and states, why, then you can go your way saying, “God has said to me by His servant, ‘I am your salvation.’ ”  
Besides this, God has a way of speaking without the Word and without the minister, to our hearts. His Spirit can drop like the rain and distil like the dew as the small rain upon the tender herb. We know not how it is, but sometimes there is a deep sweet calm. Our conscience says, “I have been washed in the blood of Christ,” and the Spirit of God says, “Yes, ‘tis true, ‘tis true.” In such times we are so happy—so happy that we want to tell our joys—so blessed that if we could but borrow angels’ wings and fly away, we would scarce know the change when we passed through the pearly gates, for we have had Heaven below and there has been but little difference between that and Heaven above.  
Oh, I wish my whole congregation without exception consisted of men and women who had heard the Spirit say, “I am your salvation.” What happy hymns! What happy prayers! You might go home to some poor single room—you might go to a scantily furnished house—and to a table that has barely bread upon it, but happy men! Happy men! Better would be your dinner of herbs, than a stalled ox without confidence in Christ! Better your rich poverty, than the poverty of the rich who have no faith in Jesus! Better all the griefs you have to endure, when sanctified by assurance, than all the joys the worldling has, when unblessed by faith and unhallowed by love to God. I can say now—  
*“Grant me the visits of Your face,  
And I desire no more.”*  
I shall now pass to my third and last point—a little while only, but earnestly, I trust.  
III. Will you patiently HEAR THE PREACHER in what he has to say? I know that in this large assembly I am addressing very many who never knew that they were saved. I must put you all into one class—though, indeed, you are not in the same state. For there are some who never knew that they were saved, who are saved. They do believe in Jesus. But their faith is so little that they never know that they are forgiven. I have to put you in the class, because you do belong to it for the time being. But there are many of you who never knew that you were saved, because you never cared to know. It has been a matter of concern with you to find out your pedigree. But you never asked, “Is God my Father?” You have made quite sure of the title deeds of your estate. But you never took the trouble to ask whether Heaven was yours or not.  
And possibly some of you have imbibed a notion that it is a very easy thing to be saved—that there is no need to trouble your heads about it much—that so long as you do your duty, attend your church or frequent your chapel, it is well and good. You say there is no use making this fuss about being born again and having a new heart and a right spirit. I may never have your ear again, but mark this at the Day of Judgment—I will be free of your blood if you perish in your delusion. This is the delusion of England. We have not half so much to dread Popery as we have that nominal Christianity, fostered by a national Church—that nominal Christianity which has no root nor soul within it. Oh, there are millions of Englishmen who think they are Christians because they were sprinkled in infancy with holy drops and because they have come to the Lord’s Table, whereas, little do they know that every time they have come there, they did eat and drink damnation to themselves because they did not discern the Lord’s body.

This is the curse and plague of England—that we have so much profession and so little possession. There are such multitudes of you who are content to sit under a sleepy ministry where ministers will not tell you the Truth for fear of hurting your feelings. Where they will preach the Truth generally, as if a man should wave a sword, but do not come home personally, as if a man should drive it through your very heart. What we want is more home dealing, more plain speaking, more thrusting of the hand inside your soul to make you tremble and ask yourselves the question whether you are right before God or not.  
I speak then, to the whole of you who never knew that you were saved. And first I say to you how foolish you are! O Sirs! You are to die soon and you are to go to Heaven or to Hell—to splendors and glories, or to glooms and horrors and yet you do not know which is to be your portion?  
O fools! Miserable fools! If some of you should say, “I do not know whether I have a cancer or not,” I should say, seek the physician and enquire if there is a fear. But to say, “I do not know whether I am in the bonds of iniquity and the call of bitterness or not,” is awful indeed. Why, you make your estates as tight as law can tie them. All the skill of legal language is employed to make the deed secure and yet you are content to have Heaven as a thing of if and but and perhaps? Oh, Fools indeed! How can you be so mad? Sure to die and yet not sure whether you are saved! Sure to appear before the bar of God and yet not know whether you shall be acquitted or condemned? Oh, if there is wisdom left within you, if your brain is not turned to perfect madness I conjure you by the living God to make sure work of it and never be content till you know that you are saved.  
But again—I must not only call you foolish, but miserable. Miserable, I say. Do you look at me and say, “We are comfortable, we are easy, we are content”? Yes, Sirs, so madmen talk. If I saw a man lying down upon the brink of the crater of a volcano and I knew that very soon the lava would come streaming up and then rolling down, I could not call him happy, though he were toying with Nature’s fairest flowers, or sucking her most delicious sweets. And you—you are in such a state as this! Upon a puff of wind, a bubble, hangs your eternal state. If life depended on a hair, it were indeed precarious. But here is your soul depending on your life, which depends on something frailer than a dream.  
O Sirs! You may drop dead in this house. Such things are not extraordinary. Men have come into the house of God bodies and they have gone out corpses. And while I think that any one of you may die and you are uncertain whether you shall be lost or saved I could sooner call you kings than call you happy—but the only correct title I can give to you is, O miserable men! Miserable men! Uncertain as to your future state.  
Once more—and let this last thought ring in your ears. Ah, you may go away, perhaps to your parties, to your rounds of merriment, to your midnight balls, to your varnished harlotries—but let this ring in your ears, “Oh, the danger—the danger of not knowing whether you shall be saved or lost!” You will die—I suppose you will not dispute with me about that. You do not claim to be immortal. You expect to die. You die—and what? Sirs— what? Madam—what if your fears should be true? Your companions are laughing no longer. They are the damned spirits of Hell—your occupations are frivolous no more. They are solemn and serious now—as solemn as death and as serious as eternity.  
Where now the music which once regaled your dainty ears? Your only symphonies are sighs, dirges and howling. Where now the soft couch on which you took your rest and pleasure? You have made your bed in Hell. And what a change for some of you—from the scarlet of Dives to the flames of Hell—from the feasts so sumptuous to the fiends so terrible! Where are you now, you church-goers, you chapel-goers? You have no profession of religion there. No hymn-books there—no minister of mercy— no voice of holy song. In Hell there are no ring of Sabbath bells—no tearful eyes—no tender hearts—no lips which tremble while they speak to you and only speak of terror because they love you and would save you if they could.  
O my Hearers, if you are not sure of being saved, what if you are sure of being damned? And you are either—mark this—not to your own apprehension perhaps, but in fact. You are sure of one or the other. Which is it? Which must it be? I know, when I preach these terrible things, men will not listen to me. But God is my witness, I would not speak about them if I dare be silent about them. But if you perish, Sirs, it shall not be for want of pleading with, or praying for, or weeping over. Sinner! I beseech you turn! By Him that died and lives and has sent me to plead with you, I beseech you, seek, if you have never sought and if you have sought, seek again and if you have found, find yet more fully, till you can say, “He is mine and I am His.”  
Put your downy pillow under your head tonight, you sluggards—but sleep not—for you may never wake in this world. Sit to your luxurious meal tomorrow—let the dainties be sweet, leave them untasted, for you may one day be denied a drop of water. O Sirs! Be not happy till you have made your happiness sure. Oh, have no peace, till your peace is everlasting, substantial peace. Talk not of being blessed, till God has blessed you. Think not that you are blessed, while “God is angry with the wicked every day,” and has said, “Cursed is he that is under the Law.”  
But do you wish to be saved? Does the Spirit of God whisper to you, “Escape! Escape!” There is forgiveness still. There is forgiveness now. There is forgiveness for you. Trust Christ, Sinner and you shall be saved— saved this moment. Believe in Him now with all your guilt and sin about you. May the Holy Spirit now lead you to trust my Lord and Master. And you may go home assured that He has forever put away your sin and you are accepted and blessed in Him. May God bless you, each one of you, now and forever. Amen.  
*“Surrounded by a host of foes,  
Stormed by a host of foes within,  
Nor swift to flee, nor strong to oppose,  
Single against Hell, earth and sin;  
Single, yet undismayed, I am;  
I dare believe in Jesus’ name.  
What though a thousand hosts engage.  
A thousand worlds my soul to shakes  
I have a shield shall quell their rage,  
And drive the alien armies back;  
Portrayed it bears a bleeding Lamb;  
I dare believe in Jesus’ name.”*

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EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE  
NO. 385

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1861,  
THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON TOOK THE CHAIR AT 3 O’CLOCK.

The proceedings were commenced by singing the 21st Hymn— *Saved from the damning power of sin,  
The Law’s tremendous curse,  
We’ll now the sacred song begin  
Where God began with us.  
We’ll sing the vast unmeasured grace  
Which, from the days of old,  
Did all His chosen sons embrace,  
As sheep within His fold.  
The basis of eternal love  
Shall mercy’s frame sustain;  
Earth, Hell, or sin, the same to move  
Shall all conspire in vain.  
Sing, O you sinners bought with blood  
Hail the Great Three in One;  
Tell how secure the covenant stood  
Ere time its race begun.  
Ne’er had you felt the guilt of sin,  
Nor sweets of pardoning love,  
Unless your worthless names had been  
Enrolled to life above.  
O what a sweet exalted song  
Shall rend the vaulted skies,  
When, shouting grace, the blood-washed throng Shall see the Top Stone rise.*

The Rev. GEORGE WYARD, of Deptford, offered prayer.  
The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON in opening the proceedings said—We have met together beneath this roof already to set forth most of those Truths in which consists the peculiarity of this Church. Last evening we endeavored to show to the world that we heartily recognized the essential union of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, this afternoon and evening, it is our intention, through the lips of our Brethren, to set forth those things which are verily received among us and especially those great points which have been so often attacked but which are still upheld and maintained—Truths which we have proved in our experience to be full of grace and Truth.  
My only business upon this occasion is to introduce the Brethren who shall address you and I shall do so as briefly as possible, making what I shall say a preface to their remarks.  
The controversy which has been carried on between the Calvinist and the Arminian is exceedingly important, but it does not so involve the vital point of personal godliness as to make eternal life depend upon our holding either system at theology. Between the Protestant and the Papist there is a controversy of such a character that he who is saved on the one side by faith in Jesus, dares not agree that his opponent on the opposite side can be saved while depending on his own works. There the controversy is for life or death, because it hinges mainly upon the doctrine of justification by faith, which Luther so properly called the test doctrine, by which a Church either stands or falls.  
The controversy, again, between the Believer in Christ and the Socinian, is one which affects a vital point. If the Socinian is right, we are most frightfully in error. We are, in fact, idolaters and how dwells eternal life in us? And if we are right, our largest charity will not permit us to imagine that a man can enter Heaven who does not believe the real divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
There are other controversies which thus cut at the very core and touch the very essence of the whole subject. But I think we are all free to admit, that while John Wesley, for instance, in modern times zealously defended Arminianism and on the other hand, George Whitfield with equal fervor fought for Calvinism, we should not be prepared either of us, on either side of the question, to deny the vital godliness of either the one or the other.

We cannot shut our eyes to what we believe to be the gross mistakes of our opponents and should think ourselves unworthy of the name of honest men if we could admit that they are right in all things and ourselves right, too. An honest man has an intellect which does not permit him to believe that “yes” and “no” can both subsist at the same hour and both be true. I cannot say, “It is,” and my Brother point blank say, “It is not,” and yet both of us be right on that point. We are willing to admit—in fact we dare not do otherwise—that opinion upon this controversy does not determine the future or even the present state of any man.  
But still, we think it to be so important, that in maintaining our views we advance with all courage and fervency of spirit believing that we are doing God’s work and upholding most important Truths. It may happen this afternoon that the term “Calvinism” may be frequently used. Let it not be misunderstood—we only use the term for shortness. That doctrine which is called “Calvinism” did not spring from Calvin. We believe that it sprang from the great Founder of all Truth. Perhaps Calvin himself derived it mainly from the writings of Augustine. Augustine obtained his views, without doubt, through the Spirit of God, from the diligent study of the writings of Paul and Paul received them of the Holy Spirit, from Jesus Christ the great founder of the Christian dispensation.  
We use the term then, not because we impute any extraordinary importance to Calvin’s having taught these doctrines. We would be just as willing to call them by any other name, if we could find one which would be better understood and which on the whole would be as consistent with fact. And then again, this afternoon, we shall have very likely to speak of Arminians and by that, we would not for a moment insinuate that all who are in membership with the Arminian body hold those particular views. There are Calvinists in connection with Calvinistic Churches, who are not Calvinistic, bearing the name but discarding the system.  
There are, on the other hand, not a few in the Methodist Churches who, in most points perfectly agree with us and I believe that if the matter came to be thoroughly sifted, it would be found that we are more agreed in our private opinions than in our public confessions and our devotional religion is more uniform than our theology. For instance, Mr. Wesley’s hymnbook, which may be looked upon as being the standard of his divinity, has in it some topics of higher Calvinism than many books used by ourselves. I have been exceedingly struck with the very forcible expressions there used, some of which I might have hesitated to employ myself.  
I shall ask your attention while I quote verses from the hymns of Mr. Wesley, which we can all endorse as fully and plainly in harmony with the doctrines of grace—far more so than the preaching of some modern Calvinists. I do this because our low-doctrine Baptists and Morisonians ought to be aware of the vast difference between themselves and the Evangelical Arminians—  
HYMN 131, VERSES 1, 2, 3.  
**“Lord, I despair myself to heal—  
I see my sin, but cannot feel;  
I cannot, till Your Spirit blow,  
And bid the obedient waters flow.  
“Tis Yours a heart of flesh to give;  
Your gifts I only can receive—  
Here, then, to You I all resign;  
To draw, redeem and seal—is Yours.  
With simple faith on You I call,  
My Light, my Life, my Lord, my all—  
I wait the moving of the pool;  
I wait the Word that speaks me whole.”**  
HYMN 133, VERSE 4.  
**“Your golden scepter from above  
Reach forth; lo! my whole heart I bow,  
Say to my soul, ‘You are My love;  
My chosen ‘midst ten thousand, You.’”**  
This is very like election.  
HYMN 136, VERSES 8, 9, 10.  
**“I cannot rest, till in Your blood  
I full redemption have—  
But You, through whom I come to God,  
Can to the utmost save.  
From sin, the guilt, the power, the pain,  
You will redeem my soul—  
Lord, I believe and not in vain;  
My faith shall make me whole.  
I too, with You, shall walk in white;  
With all Your saints shall prove,  
What is the length and breadth and height, And depth of perfect love.”**  
Brethren, is not this somewhat like final perseverance? And what is meant by the next quotation, if the people of God can perish after all? HYMN 138, VERSES 6, 7.  
**“Who, who shall in Your presence stand  
And match Omnipotence?  
Ungrasp the hold of Your right hand,  
Or pluck the sinner thence?  
Sworn to destroy, let earth assail;  
Nearer to save You are—  
Stronger than all the powers of Hell,  
And greater than my heart.”**  
The following is remarkably strong, especially in the expression “force.” I give it in full——

HYMN 158.  
**“O my God, what must I do? You alone the way can show; You can save me in this hour; I have neither will nor power— God, if over all You are,  
Greater than my sinful heart, All Your power on me be shown, Take away the heart of stone. Take away my darling sin,  
Make me willing to be clean; Have me willing to receive  
All Your goodness waits to give. Force me, Lord, with all to part; Tear these idols from my heart; Now Your love almighty show, Make even me a creature new. Jesus, mighty to renew,  
Work in me to will and do;  
Turn my nature’s rapid tide, Stem the torrent of my pride; Stop the whirlwind of my will; Speak and bid the sun stand still; Now Your love almighty show, Make even me a creature new. Arm of God, Your strength put on; Bow the heavens and come down; All my unbelief overthrow;  
Lay the aspiring mountain low— Conquer Your worst foe in me, Get yourself the victory;  
Save the vilest of the race;  
Force me to be saved by grace.”**

HYMN 206, VERSES 1, 2.  
**“What am I, O You glorious God!  
And what my father’s house to You,  
That You such mercies have bestowed  
On me, the vilest reptile, me  
I take the blessing from above,  
And wonder at Your boundless love.  
Me in my blood Your love passed by,  
And stop’s, my ruin to retrieve;  
Wept o’er my soul Your pitying eye;  
Your heart yearned and sounded, ‘Live!’  
Dying, I heard the welcome sound,  
And pardon in Your mercy found.”**

Nor are these all, for such good things as these abound and they constrain me to say that in attacking Arminianism we have no hostility towards the men who bear the name rather than the nature of that error and we are opposed not to any body of men, but to the notions which they have espoused.

And now, having made these remarks upon terms used, we must observe that there is nothing upon which men need to be more instructed than upon the question of what Calvinism really is. The most infamous allegations have been brought against us and sometimes, I must fear, by men who knew them to be utterly untrue. And to this day, there are many of our opponents, who, when they run short of matter, invent and make for themselves a man of straw—call that thing John Calvin and then shoot all their arrows at it.

We are not come here to defend your man of straw—shoot at it or burn it as you will and, if it suits your convenience, still oppose doctrines which were never taught and rail at fictions which, save in your own brain, were never in existence. We come here to state what our views really are and we trust that any who do not agree with us will do us the justice of not misrepresenting us. If they can disprove our doctrines, let them state them fairly and then overthrow them, but why should they first caricature our opinions and then afterwards attempt to put them down?

Among the gross falsehoods which have been uttered against the Calvinists proper is the wicked calumny that we hold the damnation of little infants. A baser lie was never uttered. There may have existed somewhere, in some corner of the earth, a miscreant who would dare to say that there were infants in Hell, but I have never met with him nor have I met with a man who ever saw such a person. We say, with regard to infants, Scripture says but very little and therefore, where Scripture is confessedly scant, it is for no man to determine dogmatically.

But I think I speak for the entire body, or certainly with exceedingly few exceptions and those unknown to me, when I say we hold that all infants are elect of God and are therefore saved and we look to this as being the means by which Christ shall see of the travail of His soul to a great degree and we do sometimes hope that thus the multitude of the saved shall be made to exceed the multitude of the lost. Whatever views our friends may

hold upon the point, they are not necessarily connected with Calvinistic doctrine. I believe that the Lord Jesus, who said, “Of such is the kingdom of Heaven,” does daily and constantly receive into His loving arms those tender ones who are only shown and then snatched away to Heaven.

Our hymns are no ill witness to our faith on this point and one of them runs thus—  
*“Millions of infant souls compose  
The family above.”*

Toplady, one of the keenest of Calvinists, was of this number. “In my remarks,” says he, “on Dr. Nowell, I testified my firm belief that the souls of all departed infants are with God in Glory. That in the decree of predestination to life, God has included all whom He decreed to take away in infancy and that the decree of reprobation has nothing to do with them.” No, he proceeds farther and asks with reason, how the anti-Calvinistic system of conditional salvation and election or good works foreseen, will suit with the salvation of infants?

It is plain that Arminians and Pelagians must introduce a new principle of election and in so far as the salvation of infants is concerned, become Calvinists. Is it not an argument in behalf of Calvinism, that its principle is uniform throughout and that no change is needed on the ground on which man is saved, whether young or old? John Newton, of London, the friend of Cowper, noted for his Calvinism, holds that the children in Heaven exceed its adult inhabitants in all their multitudinous array. Gill, a very champion of Calvinism, held the doctrine that all dying in infancy are saved. An intelligent modern writer, (Dr. Russell, of Dundee), also a Calvinist, maintains the same views. And when it is considered that nearly

 one-half of the human race die in early years, it is easy to see what a vast accession must be daily and hourly making to the blessed population of Heaven.

A more common charge brought by more decent people—for I must say that the last charge is never brought, except by disreputable persons—a more common charge is that we hold clear fatalism. Now, there may be Calvinists who are fatalists, but Calvinism and fatalism are two distinct things. Do not most Christians hold the doctrine of the Providence of God? Do not all Christians, do not all believers in a God hold the doctrine of His foreknowledge? All the difficulties which are laid against the doctrine of predestination might with equal force be laid against that of Divine foreknowledge. We believe that God has predestinated all things from the beginning but there is a difference between the predestinations of an intelligent, all-wise all-bounteous God and that blind fatalism which simply says, “It is because it is to be.”

Between the predestination of Scripture and the fate of the Koran, every sensible man must perceive a difference of the most essential character. We do not deny that the thing is so ordained that it must be, but why is it to be but that the Father, God, whose name is Love, ordained it? Not because of and necessity in circumstances that such-and-such a thing should take place. Though the wheels of Providence revolve with rigid exactness, yet not without purpose and wisdom. The wheels are full of eyes and everything ordained is so ordained that it shall conduce to the grandest of all ends, the glory of God and next to that the good of His creatures.

But we are next met by some who tell us that we preach the wicked and horrible doctrine of sovereign and unmerited reprobation. “Oh,” say they, “you teach that men are damned because God made them to be damned and that they go to Hell, not because of sin, not because of unbelief, but because of some dark decree with which God has stamped their destiny.” Brethren, this is an unfair charge again. Election does not involve reprobation. There may be some who hold unconditional reprobation. I stand not here as their defender—let them defend themselves as best they can.

I hold God’s election, but I testify just as clearly that if any man is lost he is lost for sin. And this has been the uniform statement of Calvinistic ministers. I might refer you to our standards, such as “The Westminster Assembly’s Catechism,” and to all our Confessions, for they all distinctly state that man is lost for sin and that there is no punishment put on any man except that which he richly and righteously deserves. If any of you have ever uttered that libel against us, do it not again, for we are as guiltless of that as you are yourselves.

I am speaking personally—and I think in this I would command the suffrages of my Brethren—I do know that the appointment of God extends to all things. But I stand not in this pulpit, nor in any other, to lay the damnation of any man anywhere but upon himself. If he is lost, damnation is all of man, but, if he is saved, still salvation is all of God. To state this important point yet more clearly and explicitly, I shall quote at large from an able Presbyterian Divine—“The pious Methodist is taught that the Calvinist represents God as creating men in order to destroy them. He is taught that Calvinists hold that men are lost, not because they sin, but because they are non-elected.

“Believing this to be a true statement, is it not wonderful that the Methodist stops short and declares himself, if not an Arminian, at least an Anti-Predestinarian? But no statement can be more scandalously untrue. It is the uniform doctrine of Calvinism, that God creates all for His own glory, that He is infinitely righteous and benignant and that where men perish it is only for their sins.”

In speaking of suffering, whether in this world or in the world to come— whether it respects angels or men, the Westminster standards (which may be considered as the most authoritative modern statement of the system) invariably connect the punishment with previous sin and sin only. “As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a righteous Judge, FOR FORMER SINS, does blind and harden, from them He not only withholds His grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings and worked upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had and exposes them to such objects as their corruption

makes occasion of sin. And gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.”

The Larger Catechism, speaking of the unsaved among angels and men, says, “God according to His Sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of His own will (whereby He extends or withholds favor as He pleases) has passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice.” Again—“the end of God appointing this day (of the last judgment) is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect and of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate who are wicked and disobedient.”

This is no more than what the Methodist and all other Evangelical bodies acknowledge—that where men perish it is in consequence of their sin. If it is asked, why sin which destroys is permitted to enter the world—that is a question which bears not only on the Calvinist, but equally on all other parties. They are as much concerned and bound to answer it as he. No the question is not confined to Christians. All who believe in the existence of God—in His righteous character and perfect Providence, are equally under obligation to answer it.

Whatever may be the reply of others, that of the Calvinist may be regarded as given in the statement of the Confession of Faith, which declares that God’s Providence extends itself even to the first Fall and other sins of angels and men, etc., “yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.”

It is difficult to see what more could be said upon the subject and if such be the undoubted sentiments of Calvinists, then what misrepresentation can be more gross than that which describes them as holding that sinners perish irrespective of their sin, or that God is the author of their sin? What is the declaration of Calvin? “Every soul departs (at death) to that place which it has prepared for itself while in this world.”

It is hard to be charged with holding as sacred Truth what one abhors as horrid blasphemy and yet this is the treatment which has been perseveringly meted out to Calvinists in spite of the most solemn and indignant disclaimers. Against nothing have they more stoutly protested than the thought that the infinitely holy and righteous and amiable Jehovah is the author of sin and yet how often do the supporters of rival systems charge them with this as an “article of faith”?

A yet further charge against us is that we dare not preach the Gospel to the unregenerate—that, in fact our theology is so narrow and cramped that we cannot preach to sinners. Gentlemen, if you dare to say this, I would take you to any library in the world where the old Puritan fathers are stored up and I would let you take down any one volume and tell me if you ever read more telling exhortations and addresses to sinners in any of your own books? Did not Bunyan plead with sinners and whoever classed him with any but the Calvinists? Did not Charnock, Goodwin and Whitfield agonize for souls? And what were they but Calvinists? Did not Jonathan Edwards preach to sinners and who more clear and explicit on these doctrinal matters?

The works of our innumerable Divines teem with passionate appeals to the unconverted. Oh, Sirs, if I should begin the list, time would fail me. It is an indisputable fact that we have labored more than they all for the winning of souls. Was George Whitfield any the less seraphic? Did his eyes weep the fewer tears or his heart move with the less compassion because he believed in God’s electing love and preached the sovereignty of the Most High? It is an unfounded calumny. Our souls are not stony. Our hearts are not withdrawn from the compassion which we ought to feel for our fellow men. We can hold all our views firmly and yet can weep as Christ did over a Jerusalem which was certainly to be destroyed.

Again, I must say, I am not defending certain Brethren who have exaggerated Calvinism. I speak of Calvinism proper, not that which has run to seed and outgrown its beauty and verdure. I speak of it as I find it in Calvin’s Institutes and especially in his Expositions. I have read them carefully. I take not my views of Calvinism from common repute but from his books. Nor do I, in thus speaking, even vindicate Calvinism as if I cared for the name, but I mean that glorious system which teaches that salvation is of grace from first to last. And again, then, I say it is an utterly unfounded charge that we dare not preach to sinners.

And then further, that I may clear up these points and leave the less rubbish for my Brethren to wheel away, we have sometimes heard it said, but those who say it ought to go to school to read the first book of history, that we who hold Calvinistic views are the enemies of revivals. Why, Sirs, in the history of the Church, with but few exceptions, you could not find a revival at all that was not produced by the orthodox faith. What was that great work which was done by Augustine, when the Church suddenly woke up from the pestiferous and deadly sleep into which Pelagian doctrine had cast it? What was the Reformation itself but the waking up of men’s minds to those old Truths?

However far modern Lutherans may have turned aside from their ancient doctrines and I must confess some of them would not agree with what I now say, yet at any rate, Luther and Calvin had no dispute about Predestination. Their views were identical and Luther, “On the Bondage of the Will,” is as strong a book upon the free grace of God as Calvin himself could have written. Hear that great thunderer while he cries in that book, “Let the Christian reader know then, that God foresees nothing in a contingent manner. But that He foresees, proposes and acts from His eternal and unchangeable will. This is the thunder stroke which breaks and

overturns Free Will.”

Need I mention to you better names than Huss, Jerome of Prague, Farrel, John Lennox, Wickliffe, Wishart and Bradford? Need I do more than say that these held the same views and that in their day anything like an Arminian revival was utterly unheard of and undreamed of? And then, to come to more modern times, there is the great exception, that wondrous revival under Mr. Wesley, in which the Wesleyan Methodists had so large a share—but permit me to say that the strength of the doctrine of Wesleyan Methodism lay in its Calvinism.

The great body of the Methodists disclaimed Palagianism, in whole and in part. They contended for man’s entire depravity, the necessity of the direct agency of the Holy Spirit and that the first step in the change proceeds not from the sinner, but from God. They denied at the time that they were Pelagians. Does not the Methodist hold as firmly as ever we do that man is saved by the operation of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit only? And are not many of Mr. Wesley’s sermons full of that great Truth, that the Holy Spirit is necessary to regeneration?

Whatever mistakes he may have made, he continually preached the absolute necessity of the new birth by the Holy Spirit. And there are some other points of exceedingly close agreement. For instance, even that of human inability. It matters not how some may abuse us, when we say man could not of himself repent or believe, yet the old Arminian standards said the same. True, they affirm that God has given grace to every man, but they do not dispute the fact that apart from that grace there was no ability in man to do that which was good in his own salvation.

And then, let me say if you turn to the continent of America, how gross the falsehood that Calvinistic doctrine is unfavorable to revivals. Look at that wondrous shaking under Jonathan Edwards and others which we might quote. Or turn to Scotland—what shall we say of M’Cheyne? What shall we say of those renowned Calvinists, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Wardlow and before them Livingstone, Haldane, Erskine and the like? What shall we say of the men of their school, but that, while they held and preached unflinchingly the great Truths which we would propound today, yet God owned their word and multitudes were saved?

And if it were not perhaps too much like boasting of one’s own work under God, I might say, personally, I have never found the preaching of these doctrines lull this Church to sleep. But while they have loved to maintain these Truths, they have agonized for the souls of men and the 1600 or more whom I have myself baptized, upon profession of their faith, are living testimonies that these old Truths in modern times have not lost their power to promote a revival of religion.

I have thus cleared away these allegations at the outset. I shall now need a few minutes more to say, with regard to the Calvinistic system, that there are some things to be said in its favor. I attach but little comparative importance, but they ought not to be ignored. It is a fact that the system of doctrines called the Calvinistic, is so exceedingly simple and so readily learned, that as a system of Divinity it is more easily taught and more easily grasped by unlettered minds than any other. The poor have the Gospel preached to them in a style which assists their memories and commends itself to their judgments.

It is a system which was practically acknowledged on high philosophic grounds by such as Bacon, Leibnitz and Newton—yet it can charm the soul of a child and expand the intellect of a peasant. And then it has another virtue. I take it that the last is no mean one, but it has another— that when it is preached there is a something in it which excites thought. A man may hear sermons upon the other theory which shall glance over him as the swallow’s wing gently sweeps the brook—but these old doctrines either make a man so angry that he goes home and cannot sleep for very hatred, or else they bring him down into lowliness of thought, feeling the immensity of the things which he has heard.

Either way it excites and stirs him up not temporarily, but in a most lasting manner. These doctrines haunt him, he kicks against the pricks and full often the Word forces a way into his soul. And I think this is no small thing for any doctrine to do in an age given to slumber and with human hearts so indifferent to the Truth of God. I know that many men have gained more good by being made angry under a sermon than by being pleased by it, for being angry they have turned the Truth over and over again and at last the Truth has burned its way right into their hearts. They have played with edge-tools, but they have cut themselves at last.

It has this singular virtue also—it is so coherent in all its parts. You cannot vanquish a Calvinist. You may think you can, but you cannot. The stones of the great doctrines so fit into each other that the more pressure there is applied to remove them the more strenuously do they adhere. And you may mark that you cannot receive one of these doctrines without believing all. Hold for instance that man is utterly depraved and you draw the inference, then, that certainly if God has such a creature to deal with, salvation must come from God alone and if from Him, the offended One, to an offending creature, then He has a right to give or withhold His mercy as He wills.

You are thus forced upon election and when you have gotten that you have all—the others must follow. Some by putting the strain upon their judgments may manage to hold two or three points and not the rest, but sound logic, I take it, requires a man to hold the whole or reject the whole. The doctrines stand like soldiers in a square, presenting on every side a line of defense which it is hazardous to attack, but easy to maintain. And mark you—in these times when error is so rife and neology strives to be so rampant, it is no little thing to put into the hands of a young man a weapon which can slay his foe, which he can easily learn to handle, which he may grasp tenaciously, wield readily and carry without fatigue.

A weapon, I may add, which no rust can corrode and no blows can break—trenchant and well annealed—a true Jerusalem blade of a temper fit for deeds of renown. The coherency of the parts, though it be of course but a trifle in comparison with other things, is not unimportant. And then, I add—but this is the point my Brethren will take up—it has this excellency, that it is Scriptural and that it is consistent with the experience of Believers. Men generally grow more Calvinistic as they advance in years. Is not that a sign that the doctrine is right? As they are growing riper for Heaven, as they are getting nearer to the rest that remains for the people of God, the soul longs to feed on the finest of the wheat and abhors chaff and husks.

And then I add—and, in so doing, I would refute a calumny that has sometimes been urged—this glorious Truth has this excellency that it produces the holiest of men. We can look back through all our annals and say to those who oppose us—you can mention no names of men more holy, more devoted, more loving, more generous than those which we can mention. The saints of our calendar, though uncannonized by Rome, rank first in the Book of Life. The name of Puritan needs only to be heard to constrain our reverence. Holiness had reached a height among them which is rare indeed and well it might for they loved and lived the Truth.

And if you say that our doctrine is inimical to human liberty, we point you to Oliver Cromwell and to his brave Ironsides, Calvinists to a man. If you say, it leads to inaction, we point you to the Pilgrim Fathers and the wildernesses they subdued. We can put our finger upon every spot of land, the wide world over and say, “There was something done by a man who believed in God’s decrees! And inasmuch as he did this, it is proof it did not make him inactive, it did not lull him to sloth.”

The better way, however of proving this point is for each of us who hold these Truths, to be more prayerful, more wakeful, more holy, more active than we have ever been before and by so doing, we shall put to silence the gainsaying of foolish men. A living argument is an argument which tells upon every man. We cannot deny what we see and feel. Be it ours, if aspersed and calumniated, to disprove it by a blameless life and it shall yet come to pass that our Church and its sentiments, too, shall come forth “Fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.”

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FATHOMLESS  
NO. 3368

A SERMON  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Your judgments are a great deep.”  
Psalm 36:6.

CONSIDER the word, “judgment,” in whatever light you please, this sentence is true. There is much of mystery connected with the terrible calamities which afflict the earth, devastate nations, destroy cities and sweep away the relics of the past. There is much of mystery about the judgments of God upon the wicked in this life—how they prosper for awhile and are suddenly cut down—how they grow fat like oxen and then are taken away to the shambles. The judgments of God regarding the wicked in the world to come are also “a great deep,” not to be spoken of with levity. A solemn subject is that of the future punishment of the ungodly—“a great deep,” a deep where some, I am afraid, speculate so deeply that the risk they run is imminent—they may drown themselves in Hell.

But I prefer tonight to take the text as it may refer to God’s dealings with His own people. He deals with them in judgment, not, I think, penally, vindicating the inflexible justice of the Law by the terrible vengeance He inflicts on the transgressor as He will deal with the wicked at the last dread assize. I mean not that. I rather interpret it of the salutary discipline and painful chastisements of God’s hand which are called “judgments” in Scripture. They do not come by chance, nor upon us at all merely as a matter of sovereignty, but they are sent in wisdom, because God judges them to be necessary. They are weighed out to us with discretion—given to us by prudence. It is a sweet name, I think, for affliction—not that I look upon affliction as a judgment upon me for sin, which I cannot do, now that I have seen sin punished in Christ, but I look at my afflictions as being sent to me according to the all-wise judgment of a kind Father, not at all without consideration, but always according to His Infinite wisdom and prudence, dealt out in measure and at proper times, according to the Infinite judgment and wisdom of God. In a word, they are called, “judgments,” not because they are judicial, but because they are judicious!

Now, these dealings of God with His servants, always wise and prudent, are frequently like great deeps. This evening I shall simply work out three or four thoughts which arise out of that metaphor.

I. THE DEALINGS OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNFATHOMABLE.

We cannot discover the foundation or cause and spring of them. Some of God’s servants who are earnestly desirous to provide things honest in the sight of all men, though they are industrious and energetic and use proper prudence, do not find themselves able to prosper in trade. They are thwarted in all their purposes. There seems to be a kind of fatality connected with all their enterprises. If they do but touch a business or a bargain which will turn into gold with the traffic of others, it melts under their hand into dross. Now, it is not always that this can be explained. “Your judgments are a great deep”—a matter to be perceived as a fact, but not to be explained by reasoning.

Sometimes in a family a dear child is born and is a great comfort to its parents. It seems, indeed, to be sent in love, to heal some old wound and to make the house happy! And then just as suddenly as it came, it is removed. Why? Ah, here, again, is another deep which a mother’s anxious heart would like to fathom, but which it is not for her to explore. It is a great deep.

Children will be spared to us and just when they are ripening to manhood and womanhood, and we hope to see them settled and established in life, it happens—as it happened to one of our beloved friends in this Church this afternoon—that we have to stand at the open grave, and say, “Earth to earth, dust to dust.” Why God takes away the holy and the good, the amiable and the lovely when they appeared to be most useful, we cannot understand. It is a great deep.

Oftentimes, too, it happens that when a man is surrounded by his family and all his household are dependent upon his exertions with a business just beginning to prosper, while he bids fair to live for many years, he is cut down as in a moment—his wife is left a widow—his children are orphans. He seems to be taken away at the very worst time, just when he could least be spared. The anxious wife may say to herself, “Why is this?” but she can only say in return, “I cannot comprehend it, it is a great deep.”

I might thus go on recounting instances, but they have transpired before us all in our lifetime. And if they have not occurred to us yet, they certainly will. Trials and troubles will come upon us quite beyond our measuring line. We shall have to do business in deep waters where no plummet can by possibility find a bottom! “Your judgments are a great deep.”

But why does the Lord send us an affliction which we cannot understand? I answer, Because He is the Lord. Your child must not expect to understand all his father does, because his father is a man of ripened intellect and understanding, and the child is but a child. You, dear Brother, however experienced you may be, are but a child and, compared with the Divine mind, what intelligence have you? How can you expect, therefore, that God shall always act upon a rule which you shall be able to understand? He is God and, therefore, it becomes us oftentimes to be dumb, to sit in silence and feel and know it must be right, though we equally know we cannot see how it is so.

God sends us trials of this sort for the exercise of our Divine Graces. Now, is there room for faith? When you can trace it, you cannot trust it. If you can understand all that He does, there is room, then, for your judgment rather than for your faith and for your reliance on His judgment. But when you cannot understand it, submit yourself to Him! Say, “I know that God is good. Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him; though I walk in darkness and see no light, yet shall not an unbelieving word cross these lips, for He is good and must be good, become of me what may.” Oh, then it is that faith is faith, indeed—the faith that brings glory to God and strength to your soul! Here is room, too, for humility. Knowledge puffs up, but the feeling that everything is beyond our knowledge, that we are nonplussed and cannot understand—the sense of ignorance and incapacity to understand the dealings of God—brings humility to us and we sit down at the foot of Jehovah’s Throne. Beloved, I think there is hardly a Grace which the Christian has which is not much helped by the deeps of God’s judgments. Certainly love has frequently been developed to a high degree in this way, for the soul at last comes to say, “No, I will not ask the reason—I will not desire the reason—I do so love Him! Let His will stand for a reason. That shall be enough for me. It is the Lord—let Him do what seems good to Him.” We love not those whom we are always bringing to book and questioning about all they do, but when love comes to perfection it admires all, it believes all to be right and to be perfect. And so, when love comes to perfection with reference to the most perfect God, then it is that everything that is done is endorsed without examination—everything, even though it is shrouded in darkness—is believed in without a question. It must be right, for You, Lord, have done it!

Many other reasons why God calls His people thus to feel His judgments occur to me. One I may give, then I will leave this point. We have sins which we cannot fathom, dear Brothers and Sisters, and it is little marvel, therefore, if we have also chastisements which we cannot fathom! There are depths of depravity within our heart that call for other deeps, as deep calls unto deep, and there are consequences of sin within us which we are not able yet to reach, consequences that are following us in secret and damaging us in very vital point. It needs that the medicine should be of a searching kind to follow the disease into the recesses of our soul where understanding cannot pry. Some of those deep judgments are like secret, potent, subtle medicines, searching out certain secret devils that have found their way into the caverns of our spirit and hidden there. Perhaps an affliction which I can understand is meant to direct my attention to some known sin—but it may be that the trial which I cannot understand is dealing deadly blows against a mortal ill, which, if not thus destroyed, might have been solemnly prejudicial to my own spirit.

I leave that thought with you—expect that God’s judgments will sometimes be unfathomable. In the next place—if God’s judgments are a great deep—

II. THEN THEY ARE SAFE SAILING.  
Ships never strike on rocks out in the great deeps. Children, perhaps, may fancy that a shallow sea is the safest, but an old sailor knows better. While they are off the Irish coast the captain has to keep a good look out, but while he is crossing the Atlantic he is in far less danger. There he has plenty of room and there is no fear of quicksands or of shoals. When the sailor begins to come up the Thames, then it is that there is first one sandbank and then another, and he is in danger, but out in the deep water, where he finds no bottom, he is but little afraid. So, mark you, in the judgments of God. When he is dealing out affliction to us, it is the safest possible sailing that a Christian can have. “What?” says one, “trial safe?” Yes, very safe. The safest part of a Christian’s life is the time of his trial. “What? When a man is down, do you say he is safe?” “Yes, for then he need fear no fall! When he is low, he need fear no pride. When he is humbled under God’s hand, then he is less likely to be carried away with every wind of temptation. Smooth water on the way to Heaven is always a sign that the soul should keep wide awake, for danger is near! One comes at last to feel a solemn dread creeping over one in times of prosperity. “You shall fear and tremble because of all the good that God shall make to pass before you,” fearing not so much lest the good should depart as lest we should make an ill use of it and should have a canker of sloth, or self-confidence, or worldliness growing up in our spirits! We have seen many professed Christians who have made shipwreck—in some few instances it has been attributable to overwhelming sorrow—but in ten cases to the one, it has been attributable to prosperity! Men grow rich and, of course, they do not attend the little Chapel they once went to—they must go somewhere where a fashionable world will worship! Men grow rich and immediately they cannot keep to that road of selfdenial which once they so gladly trod. The world has got into their hearts and they need to get more. They have got so much and they must get more! An insatiable ambition has come over them—and they fall—and great is the sorrow which their fall brings to the Church! Great the mischief which it does to the people of God!

But a man in trouble—did you ever notice a real child of God in trial? How he prays! He cannot live without prayer! He has got a burden to carry to his God and he goes to the Mercy Seat again and again. Notice him under depression of spirits. How he reads his Bible! He does not now care for that lighter literature which beguiled him many an hour before. He needs the solid promise, the strong meat of the Kingdom of God! Do you notice now how he hears? That man does not care a fig for your flowers and your fine bits of rhetoric—he needs the Word of God! He needs the naked Doctrine. He needs Christ! He cannot be fed on whims and fancies. He cares a great deal less about theological speculation and ecclesiastical authority—he needs to know something about eternal love, everlasting faithfulness and the dealings of the Lord of Hosts with the souls of His people, of the Covenant and of the suretyship engagements of Christ! Ah, this is the man who, if you notice him, walks tenderly in the world. He walks holding the world with a very loose hand. He expects to be often in the way, and hopes to be up out of the way, for the world has lost its attraction for him!

I say again, God’s judgments are a great deep, but they are safe sailing and, under the guidance and Presence of the Holy Spirit, they are not only safe but

 they are advantageous. I greatly question whether we ever grow much in Grace, except when we are in the furnace! We ought to do so. The joys of this life with which God blesses us ought to make us increase in Grace and gratitude, ought to be a sufficient motive for the very highest form of consecration, but, as a rule, we are only driven to Christ by a storm—the most of us, I mean. There are blessed and favored exceptions, but most of us need the rod, must have it and do not seem to learn obedience except through chastening—the chastening of the Lord! Here I leave that second thought. Thirdly, God’s judgments are a great deep—

III. BUT THEY CONCEAL GREAT TREASURE.  
Down in those great depths, who knows what there may be? Pearls lie deep there—masses of precious things that would make the miser’s eyes gleam like a star. There are the wrecks of old Spanish galleons lost these centuries ago and there they lie, huge mines of wealth, but far down deep! And so with the deep judgments of God. What wisdom is concealed there, and what treasures of love and faithfulness and what David calls, “very tenderness,” “for in very tenderness,” he says, “have You afflicted me.” There is as much wisdom to be seen in some of the deep afflictions of God—if we could but understand them, we would see as much wisdom in them as in the creation of the world! God smites His people artistically. There is never a random blow. There is a marvelous degree of skill in the chastening of the Lord. Hence we are told not to despise it, which, in the strongest meaning of it, means that we are to honor it! We honor the chastisements of our parents, but infinitely more the chastisements of God. “For they verily chastened us for a few days after their own pleasure, but He for our profit,” and there is a way of chastening us for profit.  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I said there were treasures concealed in the great deeps which we cannot yet reach, and so in the great deeps in which God makes us to do business there are great treasures that we cannot come upon at present. We do not, perhaps, as yet, receive, or even perceive, the present and immediate benefit of some of our afflictions. There may be no immediate benefit—the benefit may be for hence and to come. The chastening of our youth may be intended for the ripening of our age. “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” The affliction of today may have no reference to the circumstances of today, but to the circumstances of 50 years ahead! I do not know that that blade required the rain on such a day, but God was looking not to February as such, but to February in its relation to July, when the harvest should be reaped. He considered the blade not merely as a blade and in its present necessity, but as it would be in the full corn in the ear. There are certain marks that an artist makes upon the block that you cannot see the reason of as yet—and they spoil the apparent likeness of the block and marble to the image which you know he wishes to produce— but then those lines are to be worked out, by-and-by! They are scratches now, but they will be lines of beauty soon, when he comes to finish them. So, a present trial may even lame us for present service, damage us—I will even go the length of saying—for years to come and make us go groaning and brokenhearted, so as to be of comparatively little service to the Church and of very little joy to ourselves. But then afterwards— afterwards as Paul puts it—it bears the peaceable fruits of righteousness in those that are exercised thereby. Why will you not let the Lord have time? Why will you be in a hurry? Why will you stand at His elbow and perpetually say, “Explain this today and show me the motive and reason of this in this present hour”? A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night! The mighty God takes mighty time in which to work out His grand results! Therefore, be content to let the treasures lie at the bottom of the deep for awhile. But then faith may see them. Faith can make the deep translucent till it sees the treasure lying there—and it is yours and though you may not at this hour be able to be at it—yet you shall have it, “for all things are yours.” Everything that is stored up in the great deep of the Eternal Purpose, or in the deep of the manifest judgment, everything there belongs to you, O, Believer! Therefore rejoice in it and let it lie there till such a time as God may choose to raise it for your spiritual enrichment. God’s judgments are a great deep—  
IV. AND THEY WORK MUCH GOOD.  
The great deep, though ignorance thinks it to be all waste—a salt and barren wilderness—is one of the greatest blessings to this round world! If, tomorrow, there should be “no more sea,” although that may one day be a blessing, it would not be so today, but the greatest of all curses! It is from the sea that there arises the perpetual mist which, floating by-andbye in mid-air, at last descends in plenteous showers on hill and vale to fertilize the land. The sea is the great heart of the world—I might say the circulating blood of the world! We must have it. It must be in motion. Its tides, like a great pulse, must be felt, or the world’s vitality would cease. There is no waste in the sea—it is all needed. It must be there. There is not a drop of it too much. So with our afflictions which are Your judgments, O God! They are necessary to our life, to our soul’s health, to our spiritual vigor. “By all these,” said one of old, “do men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit.” Rising up from my trouble is the constant mist which is afterwards transformed into sacred dew, which moistens my life. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted,” said David. “Amen!” say all the afflicted ones. A thousand sick beds shall bear witness to the blessedness of the trial. A thousand losses and crosses that have been borne by the faithful now help the sweetness of the harmony of everlasting hymns in the land of the blessed. “Oh, blessed cross,” said one, “I fear lest I should come to love you too much! ‘Tis so good to be afflicted!” May God grant to us that at all times, instead of trying to fathom the deep, we may understand that it is useful to us and be content. Lastly, if God’s judgments are a great deep—  
V. THEN THEY BECOME A HIGHWAY OF COMMUNION WITH HIMSELF.  
We thought at one time that the deep separated different peoples— that nations were kept asunder by the sea. But lo, the sea is today the great highway of the world! The rapid ships cross it with their white sails, or with their palpitating engines they soon flash across the waves. The sea is the world’s great canal—a mighty channel of communication. And so, Brothers and Sisters, our afflictions—which we thought in our ignorance would separate us from our God—are the highway by which we may come nearer to God than we otherwise could! They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business on the great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. You that keep close in shore and have but small trials, you are not likely to know much of His wonders in the deep—but if you are made to put out far to sea, where deep calls unto deep and the noise of God’s waterspouts astounds the spiritual mariner, then it is that you shall see God’s wonders—wonders of faithfulness, wonders of power, wonders of wisdom, wonders of love! You shall see them and you shall rejoice to see them! These troubles shall be as fiery chariots to bear you up to God. Your afflictions, wave upon wave, shall wash your soul, like a tempest-tossed boat, nearer to the haven. Oh, but this is a blessed thing when God’s judgments bring us nearer to Him! Old Quarles has a quaint idea when he represents God as swinging a flail in judgment—he says if you would get away from it, you must got close to His hands, and then you are out of the reach of the swing of the blow. Get close up to God and He will not smite! Get near to God and the trials cease!  
You know, trials are sometimes weights to keep men down, but you have seen many a machine in which one weight going down lifts another weight up. And there is a way by faith of adjusting the consecrated pulleys so that the very weights of your affliction may lift you up nearer to God! The bird with a string and a stone to its feet cannot fly and yet there is a way that God has of making His birds fly even when they are tied to the ground! They never mounted till they had something to pull them down! Never ascended till they were compelled to descend! They found the gates of Heaven not up there, but down here! The lower they sank in self-estimation, the nearer they came to the everlasting God who is the foundation of all things!  
Thus, Brothers and Sisters, I have brought you to the last thought— may the Holy Spirit bring you to make it your own. May God’s deep judgments lead you to deeper communion.  
Dear child of God, you that are in trouble tonight, the voice of that trouble is to you—get nearer to God! Get nearer to God. God has favored you, favored you with an extraordinary means of growth in His Grace. To use Rutherford’s simile, He has put you down in the wine cellar in the dark. Now begin to try the wines on the lees well-refined. Now get at the choice treasures of darkness! He has brought you on to a sandy desert— now begin to seek the treasures that are hid in the sand. Believe that the deepest afflictions are neighbors always to the highest joys and that the greatest possible privileges lie close by the darkest trials. If the bitterer your sorrow, the louder your song at the last—there is a reason for that— and that reason faith may discover and experience live upon.  
May God bless the tried ones here! But there are some here, perhaps, who are in trial and have no God to go to. Poor souls! Poor souls! Poverty and no God! Sickness and no God! A life of toil, and no Heaven! A slavery of penury on earth and then driven forever away from God’s Presence! Oh, how pitiable! How pitiable! Pity yourselves and remember that it need not always be so. You may have a Heaven, you may have present bliss. Here is the Gospel—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Oh, if you can but trust Him who bled upon the Cross, you shall have comfort for your present trouble! You shall have pardon for your past, present and future sins! The Lord bless each one of you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 73; 37:1-10.**

TITLE, “A PSALM OF ASAPH.” He was a great singer, but he could not always sing. In the first part of the Psalm he felt rather like groaning than singing—and you shall find that those who sing the praises of God the sweetest, sometimes have to hang their harps upon the willows and are silent. The strong temptation through which Asaph passed is one which is very common. You find another account of it in the 37th Psalm. It may help your memory to notice that it is the 37th and the 73rd Psalm (transpose the figures) which are both upon the same subject—the temptation caused to the people of God by the prosperity of the wicked.

Verse 1. Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. It must be so. Whatever argument my soul may hold about it, I will set that down, to begin with as a certainty—“Truly, God is good to Israel.” He cannot be unkind or unfaithful to His own people! It cannot be possible, after all—however things may look—that God is a bad God and a bad Master to His own servants!

2. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped. Am I, then, one of His people or not? I know He is good to them, but how about myself? Perhaps some here will never question themselves in that way, and if they were led to do so, they would think it was of the devil. I do not think so. I think it is rather of the devil to keep us from questioning ourselves. I remember what Cowper said—

*“He that has never doubted of his state,*

*He may—perhaps he may—too late.”*  
Let us delight in full assurance, but let us keep very clear of presumption and that assurance which cannot bear self-examination is presumption, depend upon it! When a man declines to search himself and test himself, there is something doubtful, if not rotten in his estate—and it is time he began to say, “As for me, my feet were almost gone: my steps had well near slipped.” This is how it came about—

3. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. I know that wicked men are fools. Asaph and David had often said that before. Yet says he, “I was a greater fool, still, that I was envious of these fools—when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”

4, 5 *.*For there are no pangs in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Many of them keep up a hypocritical profession through a long life and die in a stupefaction—so that conscience never awakens and they pass out of the world loaded with guilt—and yet talk about being accepted before God! How can this be? Where is the justice of it?

6. Therefore pride compasses them about as a chain. As kings wear chains of gold, so is their pride to them.  
6. Violence covers them as a garment. They are not ashamed of it. They get to be so bold in sin that they wear it as an outside cloak!  
7. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. Superfluities! They never have to ask where a meal will come from. They have more than they need.  
8. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens. Such big mouths—such blasphemous words—have they, that they attack God Himself! There is nothing too high for them to drag it down—nothing too pure for them to slander. “They set their mouth against the heavens.”  
9. And their tongue walks through the earth. Like the lion seeking its prey, they take long walks in their slander. Nobody is safe from them.  
10, 11. Therefore his people return here: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High? God’s sorrowing children have to drink of the bitter cup while these proud ones are eating of the fat of the land!  
12-14. Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all the daylong have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. When Asaph got into this unbelieving state of mind, it looked as if all his care of his character and all his desire to serve God were wasted, for the wicked prospered, while he was chastened! It is a strong description which he gives of his state. “All the daylong have I been plagued.” Not by the half-hour, but by the whole day— plagued and weeping as soon as he was out of bed—chastened every morning! He almost seemed to be sorry that he was a child of God, to be so roughly handled. He almost, but not quite, wished that he could take the portion of the wicked, that he might enjoy himself as they did and might prosper in the world as they did.  
15. If I had said, I will speak thus, behold, I would have offended against the generation of Your children. That was very wise of Asaph. He thought, but he did not speak. Some persons say, “You may as well out with it.” You may as well keep it in! No, a great deal better—if you have it in your own heart, it will grieve yourself—but if you speak it out, you will grieve others. If you wear sackcloth, Brothers and Sisters, wear it round your own loins, but do not wear it as your outside garment. There is enough sackcloth in the world without your flaunting it before everybody else’s face! If you must fast, remember your Master’s words, “You, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast.” He gave us that precept in order to avoid Pharisaic ostentation, but we may also follow it from another motive, namely, that we may not spread sorrow in the world. There is enough of depression of spirit, enough of despondency, enough of heartbreak without our saying a word to increase it among the sons of men—  
*“Bear and forbear, and silent be—  
Tell no man your misery,”*  
lest you bring another into it, unless, indeed, you meet with a strong man who can help you. Then you may tell your sorrow to get relief. But tell it not to the children.  
16. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. “Too painful” to keep it. “Too painful” to speak it out and grieve other people.  
17. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood their end. Asaph went to his God. He got to Christ, whom he foresaw, for the Person of Jesus Christ is the Sanctuary of God! Some people call these buildings sanctuaries. They have no authority for so doing. “God dwells not in temples made with hands.” He may have done so under the Old Covenant, but not now. Christ is the Sanctuary of God and when we get to Him and come into fellowship with God in Him, then we begin to learn something! “Then understood I their end.”  
18. Surely You did set them in slippery places. There they are—on a mountain of ice, bright and glittering! Up aloft, where others see, admire and wonder at them. But oh, how dangerous their pathway!  
18. You cast them down into destruction. They are not left to slip, but a hand overthrows them—flings them down from the heights of their prosperity to the depths of unutterable woe!  
19, 20. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, O Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. As if God slept today and let these images of prosperity exist as in a dream, but by-and-by He wakes. His time of judgment comes and where are these prosperous men? They have gone. The “baseless fabric of a vision” has melted into thin air and “left not a wreck behind.” It is not. It is gone!  
21. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. I felt a heart-pain. I felt my whole nature go amiss, as if there had been calculi causing the deepest possible misery in my reins.  
22. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before You. I saw no farther than a goose! Like a beast that cannot look into the future, I judged these men by today—by the pastures in which they fed and the fatness which they gathered there. “I was as a beast before You.” Now notice the splendid connection of these two verses. I will read them again— the 22nd and the 23rd. “So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before You.”

23. Nevertheless I am continually with You: You have held me by my right hand. What a strange mixture a man is! And a godly man is the strangest conglomerate of all! He is a beast and yet continually with God. View him from one side—he is ignorant. View him from the other and he has an unction from the Holy One and he knows all things! View him from one point of the compass and he is naked, and poor, and miserable! View him from another quarter and behold he is complete in Christ and “accepted in the Beloved!” They know not man who do not know that every true man is two men!

24. You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory. I, the fool that envied fools, yet, “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.”

25. Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You. Now he has got out of the temptation! He is not going to seek for prosperity that he may rival the wicked in their wealth. No! He sees that in having God, he has all he needs. Even though he should continually be plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning, his portion in God is quite enough for him. He will not murmur anymore!

26. My flesh and my heart fail. I see what a poor thing I am. I allowed my flesh and my heart to get the mastery over me and I got caught in this trap.

26, 27. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. For, lo, they that are far from You shall perish: You have destroyed all them that go a whoring from You. A strong word, but none too forcible, for every heart that seeks delight away from God is an unchaste heart. It has got away from true purity even for a moment in pouring out its love upon the creature.

28. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works.

**PSALM 37.**Verse 1. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. A common temptation. Many of God’s saints have suffered from it. Learn from their experience. Avoid this danger. There really is no power in it when once the heart has come to rest in God. But it is a sad affliction until the heart does get its rest. “Fret not because of evildoers.”

2-4. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the LORD. Make Him your delight, and take care that you do really delight. Feel a fullness of joy in Him.

4. And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Because when the heart delights in God, then its desires are all such as God can safely grant. He does not say to every man, or even to every praying man, “I will give you the desires of your heart,” but, “Delight yourself in the Lord,” and then He will.

5. Commit your way unto the LORD. Give it up to Him to rule it, and to guide you and lead you in every step. “Commit your way unto the Lord.”  
5, 6. Trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. It is better to trust our character with God than with the ablest counselor. Scandal may pass over a fair name for a while and cloud it, but God is the avenger of all the righteous! There will be a resurrection of reputations, as well as of persons at the Last Great Day. Only we must commit it to God.  
7, 8. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. A fretful spirit soon comes to be an angry spirit—and when we begin to be jealous of evildoers, we are very apt to become evildoers ourselves! Many an honest man has snatched at hasty gain because he was envious of the prosperity of the unrighteous. And then he has pierced himself through with many sorrows in consequence. But “fret not yourself in any wise to do evil.” There is an old proverb that it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright. Therefore, when you are in temporal trouble, ask the Lord to fill you with His Grace, for then you will stand upright and, by-and-by, you shall be delivered.  
9. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. If there is anything good to be had here, men that wait upon God shall have it! If there is any grain of wheat amidst these heaps of chaff, Believers that are trusting the Lord shall find them!  
10. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. How transient are their joys! Their wealth which they accumulate, the beauty which they think is upon their estate—all this is but as the painted colors of the bubble, which is scarcely seen before it vanishes. Will you envy this? Will you envy a little child his playthings, which will be broken in an hour? Will you envy a madman the straw crown which he plaits and puts upon his head when he thinks himself a king? Oh, be not so foolish! Your inheritance is eternal and you are immortal! Why should you envy the creature of an hour? “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.”  
10. Yes, you shall diligently consider his place. His mansion, his house, the grand figure that he cuts in society.

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THE BEST THING IN THE BEST PLACE  
NO. 3002

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 31, 1875.

**“The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” Psalm 37:31.**

THIS verse occurs in a Psalm in which the contrast between the righteous and the wicked is drawn in a very vivid fashion. The wicked are depicted as being very frequently rich and prosperous, yet no one who is truly wise would wish to change places with them. The Psalmist so plainly points out the brevity of their prosperity, the certainty of their ultimate fate if they continue unregenerate and the terror of their overthrow, that we are not tempted for a single minute to be envious of them. As for the righteous, David gives us abundant hints that they will be tried, persecuted, hated and so on, but he indulges us with such sweet promises from the mouth of the great Father, Himself, that we feel perfectly satisfied to share the lot of His children, however hard it may sometimes be. If we wish to share the lot of the righteous, we must be as they are and, among other things, this text must be realized in our experience as it is in theirs. The Law of our God must be in our heart that our steps may not slide.

I remember, when I was a lad, hearing a sermon from a text which is almost a parallel to the one before us—“Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” The divisions of that discourse were so excellent and they fixed themselves so firmly upon my memory, that I shall borrow them for my own use on this occasion, for I cannot make any better ones for myself. The preacher said, “Here we have the best thing—‘Your Word.’ In the best place—‘have I hid in my heart.’ For the best of purposes—‘that I might not sin against You.’” Those are to be the divisions of my text, only altered thus—the best thing—“the Law of his God.” In the best place—“is in his heart.” With the best result—“None of his steps shall slide.”

I. So I am first to speak, for a few minutes, about THE BEST THING— “The Law of his God.”  
In these Gospel days we must use this expression in a wider sense than may have been originally intended by David and take it to mean a great deal more than the moral Law. If we are Christians, we delight in that Law, but we are not under it as a rule of condemnation and of judgment, but we rejoice to obey it. We could not suggest an alteration to it which would be an improvement. The Ten Commandments are very simple, but absolutely perfect for the purpose for which they were intended. To add another to them, or to take one away from them would be to spoil the whole. We “delight in the Law of God after the inward man.” Whoever may be Antinomians, that is, those who are “against the Law,” we are not to be numbered among them, for we can say with Paul, “The Law is holy and the Commandments holy and just and good.” And though we are carnal, and often feel ourselves “sold under sin,” yet we cannot find any fault with the Law of God. If eternal life could have come by any law, it would have come by that Law—and even though that Law can now do nothing for us but condemn us, yet, as we hear its terrible sentence, we feel that the Law “is holy, and just, and good.” We desire, then, to have even the moral Law in our hearts, and to have it written there, that none of our steps may slide.  
But we cannot use David’s expression in that limited sense only! It must now include the whole Book of God, and all its teachings, for it is often used in that sense. “The Law of his God is in his heart.” Take this expression as referring to the whole of Scripture, and I may truly say that it is the best thing. O my Brothers and Sisters, what can be better for informing the understanding than the Word of God? Would you know God? Would you know yourself? Then search this Book! Would you know time and how to spend it? Would you know eternity and how to be prepared for it? Then, search this Book! Would you know the evil of sin and how to be delivered from it? Would you know the plan of salvation and how you can have a share in it? This is the Book which will instruct you in all these matters! There is nothing which a man needs to know for the affairs of his soul, between here and Heaven, of which this Book will not tell him. Blessed are they that read it both day and night—and especially blessed are they who read it with their eyes opened and illuminated by the Divine Spirit! If you want to be wise unto salvation, select the Word of God, and especially the Spirit of God, as your Teacher. There is nothing else that is equal to the Bible for inflaming, sanctifying and turning in the right direction all the passions of the soul.  
Perhaps you are not satisfied with merely knowing. You want something or someone to love. You men and women with large hearts, whose one desire is to have a worthy object for your affections to fix upon, turn to this Word of God, this Law of God, this Gospel of His and you will see there how God Himself becomes the Object of His creatures’ love, and how, in the Person of His Son, you have the loveliest Object upon which human eyes ever gazed! You have, in Him, One who is so lovely that a glance from His eyes is enough to set your soul on fire and to make your heart enamored of Him forever! You who have mighty founts of love welling up in your soul may come and let them flow most freely here, for here is One who is worthy of them all! And when you have loved Christ as much as you can, you have not loved Him half as much as He deserves to be loved! Here your passions may burn and blaze and glow with sacred ardor, without any fear of your being idolaters—and without any risk of your being deceived!  
And if you want something more than enlightenment for the understanding and fullness of love to satisfy the heart—if you need practical directions for your everyday life—this Book will supply you with them. In every part of the sea of life in which a man may be, if this is his chart, he will not miss his way or suffer spiritual shipwreck. If you were a king, you might learn your duty here—and if you are a beggar, or the poorest of the poor, you may find comfort and instruction here! Fathers, you may here learn how to manage your households. Children, you may learn here the duties of your position in your various relationships. Servants, masters, husbands, wives, sick folk, people in robust health, you who are poor and you who are rich—this Book is for you all and when you consult it in the right spirit, it will talk with you all! Into whatever condition you may happen to be cast, this Book will follow you. It is such a wonderful Book that it adapts itself to all sorts and conditions of men and women! It whispers softly by the sick man’s bedside and it has often called aloud, as with a trumpet voice, amidst the fury of the storm. It has a message for you while you are yet in the heyday of your youth and a promise for you when you lean upon your staff and totter to your grave! It is

 Biblos, The Book, the everyday book, full of wisdom for every day in the week all year round. And when the circle of life is complete, you will see how the Book was equally adapted to the children and to the aged man whose life is just closing.  
Perhaps, dear Friend, you say, “I know the path that I ought to take. I know whom I ought to love and I trust I am instructed as to what I ought to believe—for all this I prize the Bible very highly! But what I really need is the courage of my convictions, the force of character which shall enable me to tread in those ways which I know to be right.” Yes, I know what you mean. But where else will you find Truths that have such power as those which glisten in the pages of this blessed Book? Where will you read any records so calculated to fire men with dauntless bravery as those that are contained in this Book? Above all, in Him who is the sum and substance of this Book, to whom all its pages point, you can see an example of disinterested love and perfect consecration to God and man which will suffice if the Holy Spirit shall bless it to you, to give you all the force of character and courageousness of spirit that you can possibly need. If young men would read their Bibles more, they would not be so easily turned aside as they now are. When a young man puts his foot down for the right and says, “I cannot and I will not tell a lie, or commit an act of dishonesty in business, or frequent places of amusement where I cannot go with a clear conscience,” I believe that he has cleansed his way by taking heed thereto according to God’s Word. I see here the treasure house of holy courage! Commune with God, commune with Christ Jesus, commune with saints, martyrs and Apostles as you read these pages, and you yourself will imbibe something of their determination and resolution, something of their zeal and energy for the right and the true!  
It is here that true men are made! As they peruse these pages, the weak grow strong and dwarfs develop into giants. Yes, and if you say, “I often feel unhappy—there is an aching void within my spirit, a something which prevents me from being perfectly satisfied. I have a kind of horseleech somewhere within me which cries, ‘Give, give,’ and I have not yet found the food with which to stop its clamor.” It is in this Book that you will find the comfort which your spirit craves! Here every grief may be allayed, every right desire satisfied and all wrong desires and evil lusting be ejected from the spirit. When the Holy Spirit applies this Book to the soul, it is food for man’s hunger and medicine for man’s disease! It lays its hand upon his fevered brow and cools him down to health. Or, if he is too cold, it warms him into holy energy. In fact, there is no end to the blessings which this Book bestows—  
*“This is the field where hidden lies  
The pearl of price unknown!  
That merchant is divinely wise  
Who makes the pearl his own.”*  
This is the best of books, as Christopher Harvey says—  
*“It is the Book of God. What if I should  
Say, God of Books?  
Let him that looks  
Angry at that expression, as too bold—  
His thoughts in silence smother  
Till he find such another.”*  
Its every page is a sheet of gold! No, rather let me say that Heaven’s banknotes are here, to be cashed by them who have faith enough to bring them to the God that issued them, that He may make their souls rich to all the intents of bliss!  
This, then, is the best thing—“The Law of his God.”  
II. Now, secondly, we have the best thing IN THE BEST PLACE—“The Law of his God is in his heart.” What does this mean?  
It means, first, that he loves it. That which we love is always said to be in our hearts, and the reason why he loves it is given in the text—“The law of his God”—not merely the Law of God, mark you—but, “The law of his God.” Men do not love the Law of God until they know that He is their God. Blessed, indeed, is this precious possession which God gives us first, in Himself, and then in His Word! Do you not all like to read a book which has been written by a near and dear friend? It must have greater interest for you than the works of strangers ever can say. You may pass over a hundred books on a stall, or in a shop, but if you notice a volume which was written by one who was your play fellow, or perhaps by one who is still nearer and dearer, you take an interest in that book at once! So is it with this blessed Book which was written by our Heavenly Father—this Book which tells us of our elder Brother—this Book into which the Divine Spirit has breathed the breath of Life and upon which He always shines as the great Illuminator—this Book must always be indescribably dear to us! How dear has the Bible been to God’s saints in past ages! They have even run the risk of losing their lives rather than part with it—and many of them have actually died as martyrs because they would translate it and pass its messages on to others! And this Book is equally dear to us. Sooner than give up the smallest jot or tittle of its Inspired teaching, I trust that we would be prepared to go to the stake as our brave forefathers did in cruel Queen Mary’s day. Precious Bible, you are in our hearts because we love you!  
But David meant more than that. The Law of his God was in his heart to be remembered as well as to be loved. We soon forget what we only learn in our head, so we tell our children to learn things “by heart.” What is written in the head may be erased, but what is written in the heart abides there. Neither sickness, nor death, nor the devil, himself, can ever take from us what is in our hearts. We have known people in sore sickness suffer from loss of memory, and that is a very serious loss. But we have known them retain their recollections of spiritual things unimpaired when they have forgotten their own wives or husbands, so strangely does the mind or heart hold most firmly to that which is most deeply engraved upon it. If you have the Word of God in your hearts, it will not matter who may try to tear it from you. All the Jesuits in or out of Hell could not wrest from a man the Gospel that is written in his heart! They could easily turn some people from their creed because it is only a creed, lying loosely in their brain. But the Truth which has really entered the heart of a man, neither Satan nor all his hosts could ever take from him! See to it, then, that the Law of your God is in your heart so deeply affecting you and so powerfully moving you, that it abides so tenaciously in your memory that you can never give it up!  
“The Law of his God is in his heart,” has a third meaning, namely, that he obeys it, for the heart is the most influential organ of the body. What is done in the heart affects every part of the man. Disease there means that the man, as a whole, cannot be well. If the heart’s affections are set on God, all is right, for the intent, the motive, sways the man. “As he thinks in his heart, so is he.” If your heart’s eyes are single, your whole body shall be full of light! But if your heart’s eyes are evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If the Law of God is in the heart, then every pulsing of that cerebral organ will affect the entire man. If the man has led an evil life, he will be altogether changed by it. And if, through the restraining Grace of God, he has been somewhat better than others, the Law of his God will operate in his heart and life and do for him all that he could well desire to have done as he yields obedience to it.  
To have the Law of God in your heart means, in fact, that you live by it—that you have the Gospel as the food of your soul and that you have the Christ of the Gospel as your hope for eternity. The heart is that by which we live, so, if the Law of God is in our heart, we shall live by it and draw our comfort, as well as our sustenance from it. Let each one judge how far this is true concerning himself. We are not perfect, but we wish we were—and this proves that the Law of our God is in our heart. We sin, but we grieve that we sin—and this proves that there is within us a longing for perfect holiness. We say, with the Apostle Paul, “To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not... When I would do good, evil is present with me.” Yet that willing and woulding prove that our heart has the Law of God within it! God looks upon you, dear Friends, very much according to what you desire to be. And if there is, in your soul, strong pangs of desire after that which is perfect, He accepts those desires and blesses you through Christ Jesus, His Son. John Bunyan used to put it in one of his simple allegories something like this. He says, “you want a man to fetch a doctor, and you tell him to be quick. So he mounts his horse, but it is a sorry jade, and very lame, and cannot go fast, yet you see that your man would fly if he could, for he is whipping and spurring the creature with all his might to try to make it go. So,” says Bunyan, “the Lord often sees that the spirit is willing—whipping and spurring, but the flesh is weak—like the lame horse. He sees what His servants would gladly be and accepts them as if they were really so.” It is well for us that we have so gracious a Master who looks so favorably upon our imperfect service! Have the Law of God in your hearts, my Brothers and Sisters, and albeit that you are foolish today, you will conquer some of those follies tomorrow. And you will, by God’s Grace, go on to conquer more and more, until the Law, written on your heart, shall also be written on all your members and you shall be presented spotless and faultless before the Throne of God!  
III. Now I must pass on to the last point, namely, THE BEST RESULT—“None of his steps shall slide.”  
Here is a man who has God’s Word in his heart and you notice that he takes pains about his steps. A step is a very little thing. We must take a good many hundreds of steps to walk a mile, but good men take notice of little things. The man who has the Law of God in his heart is scrupulous and conscientious about thoughts and imaginations, as well as about words and actions. Hence, the promise in the text is suited to him, for it is a promise about little things—“None of his steps shall slide.” I recollect—no, I hope it is so with me still—but I recollect that just after my conversion, I used to be almost afraid to put one foot before the other lest I should put it down in the wrong place. And often have I paused, when I was speaking, for fear I would not say the right word. That holy caution is most commendable in all who have it. I wish that many more had it. What a hop, skip and jump some men’s lives are! Not only do they not look before they leap, but they do not even seem to look

 after they have leaped! They rush on blindly and heedlessly, presuming where they ought to be praying and self-confident where they ought, with deep repentance, to be humbling themselves before God! Our old proverb says, “Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.” And the same rule applies to our actions. If we are careful about our little actions, the great ones will be pretty sure to be right. Oh, that we were all very guarded about how we act at home! Oh, that we were careful about our speech as we sit around the tea table! Such a little thing as that may do almost infinite mischief. I believe the worst evils in the world arise out of little things. It is said that the seed of mischief is as small as a gnat’s egg, and so it is. Then, look well to those gnat’s eggs, lest they hatch out far greater evils.  
I think, too, that whenever Christians go wrong, it is concerning something about which they thought they were quite safe, like the children of Israel with the Gibeonites. These people came to Gilgal wearing old garments, old shoes and clouted, and carrying bread that was dry and moldy. What need was there to ask counsel of God? It was as clear as the sun at noonday that they had come from a long distance, wishing to make a league with the Israelites because of the wonders that God had worked for His people! So even Joshua did not pray about the matter—and he was deceived, for these Gibeonites were near neighbors and had thus tricked the Israelites into a league which was always an impediment to them in their campaign. Always suspect where you have no suspicion and be afraid where you are not afraid—be especially afraid of a man who tells you that you have no need to be afraid of him. There was a man who said to a friend of mine, “I need a loan of so much from you. You know that I am all right. I have been a member of a Christian Church for so many years. I am not like So-and-So, and So-and-So who lately failed. You can trust me, you know you can.” “No,” said my friend, “you are the sort of man I would not trust with a bad half-crown.” And he was right, for those who did trust him lost everything! Be very cautious in such cases as that. If you are dealing with those who are known to be rogues, you hardly need to be put on your guard, but if you are dealing with rogues who pretend to be honest men, you must have all your wits about you or they will certainly take you in. They have covered up their wolf nature with sheepskin, so you had better see what is underneath the skin!  
When David says, “The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide,” what does he mean by that last clause? He means that God will guide him. As he has God’s Law in his heart, he will have God’s guidance for his steps! In the 23rd verse, David says, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in His way.” When a man really carries God’s Law in his heart, God will take care that he does not carry that Law into any evil place, for, as David goes on to say, “the Lord upholds him with His hand.” There will come to every man, whoever or whatever he may be, sudden assaults of temptation—but if the Law of his God is in his heart, he will be forewarned and forearmed against them! There will also come the long sieges of temptation and many a man has fallen by little and little. But if the Law of his God is in his heart, he will be safe against even them. There will come, sometimes, the temptation which results from loneliness, when he will be urged by Satan to do evil. As no human eye is upon him, may he not do wrong? But, with the Law of his God in his heart, he will not do any wrong even though he might never be found out—that Law within his heart is a sufficient check to keep him from evil! Sometimes he will be perplexed. I wonder whether every businessman here is not, at some time or other, puzzled to know what he ought to do? He is most anxious to do the right thing, but he does not know which of two courses is right. Well, that is the time to let the Law of your God, which is in your heart, be like a compass to you—and to plead this promise and say, “O Lord, You have said that as Your Law is within my heart, none of my steps shall slide! Fulfill Your Word unto Your servant, whereon You have caused me to hope.”  
For your steps to slide would be for you to bring dishonor upon your character. How many men who have stood firm for a while, either in the Christian Church or in business life, have thus slid! I recollect reading, some years ago, when there were some sad failures of this sort, that “neither the white cravats of Exeter Hall, nor the drab coats of Lombard Street could prevent some men from being great rascals.” And there has, sometimes, been only too much reason to say that. But the Law of God in the heart is better than a white cravat at the throat or a drab coat on the back, for it does keep men’s steps so that they do not dishonor their God. Trials may come to those who live nearest to God—possibly they will come all the more because these people have lived near to God—but there will not be the stain upon the character, or the casting down from integrity which causes so much sorrow. A true Christian would sooner die than that this should happen! And he may comfort himself with the assurance that if the Law of his God is in his heart, “none of his steps shall slide.”  
Nor shall he slide into despair. He may tremble, he may totter, he may be almost down, but as he has the Law of his God in his heart, he shall scramble to his feet again and shall still hold on his way! I hope all of you who have to fight the good fight of faith and to journey as pilgrims to Heaven, will take to yourselves all the comfort you can possibly get out of this text. You have asked to have the Law of your God in your heart and it is there. Well then, you shall be upheld! You are going to live, young man, where there are no other Christians, but your steps shall not slide, for the Law of your God is in your heart. You are going, my Brother, to occupy a position where a large number of people will be under your charge and you hardly know how you will manage them. But with the Law of your God in your heart, none of your steps shall slide. You are going, my young Sister, to live with ungodly relatives where you will scarcely get an opportunity for private prayer, yet, with the Law of your God in your heart, none of your steps shall slide! My young Brother, you are about to become the pastor of a large church and you tremble lest you should make some great mistake and bring dishonor upon God. But if His Law is in your heart, none of your steps shall slide. You need not mind about the slipperiness of the way if the Law of your God is in your heart! Many slip when the road is not slippery, and many a man, by God’s Grace, stands fast where it seems a miracle that he stands at all. Men are not in danger in proportion to their position—they are in danger or in safety according to the measure of their Grace! If the Law of your God is in your heart, you might face a world in arms and not be afraid! If God should make you the leader of a thousand squadrons of the armies of Heaven on their white horses, you would be able to command them all if you had His Law in your heart and yielded yourself wholly to Him!  
Note also that if you have the Law of your God in your hearts, this implies that you also have the Lawgiver there, for you cannot separate the Divine Lawgiver from His Law. Do you love Him? Do you trust Him? Is His name melodious to your ears? Is it like ointment poured forth, for sweetness, to your spirit? If you love Him who gives you the Law, you must love the Law that He gives. We are under Law—the Law of Grace— to Jesus Christ. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light to those who trust and love Him. If you trust and love Him, that proves that you have His Law in your hearts.  
Again, if you have the Law of your God in your heart, you also have there the great Teacher of the Law, namely, the Holy Spirit. You are conscious of His comforts, sometimes of His rebukes and often of His encouragements. How is it with you in this respect? Do you know anything about the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart? Alas, there are many who do not know that there is a Holy Spirit, for they have never felt His power. But the Law of God is never in the heart until the Holy Spirit puts it there—and where He puts that Law, He abides with it, to open our understanding that we may receive the Scriptures and to open the Scriptures that our understanding may receive them. What do you know about God the Son? Is He your Savior?  
What do you know about the Holy Spirit? Is He your Quickener and Comforter? If He is, be of good cheer, for none of your steps shall slide. But if He is not, and if you reject this Law of God, remember that solemn text, “Their feet shall slide in due time.” They stand up in their prosperity. They are great, famous, happy, full of mirth—and we are apt to envy them as we see them upon their high places. But watch! They are standing upon an Alp of ice! The pathway which they tread is very narrow and, in a moment, when they do not expect it, their feet shall slide and they shall descend into the abyss which has no bottom! Down they go, lost, lost, LOST! The high places they once occupied only increase the depth of their fall. They go from their full wine cups to craving a drop of water to cool their parched tongues. They go from the dainties of Dives’ table to the uttermost woes of Hell! Lazarus once begged for their crumbs and now they would gladly turn beggars and ask a blessing of Lazarus, himself! Their day is changed into night, their glory into shame, their banquets into miseries, their honors into everlasting shame and contempt! Be wise, men and women, and seek your Savior now, lest, as a dream when one awakes, the beauty of your present mortal life should all pass away and there should remain nothing but the ghastly form of a wasted existence to be visited forever with the strokes of Jehovah’s awful wrath—

*“You sinners seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear!  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,  
And find salvation there!  
So shall that curse remove  
By which the Savior bled  
And the last awful day shall pour  
His blessings on your head.”*  
God bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 37.

This is one of the Psalms of David which have often cheered the saints of God when they have been perplexed because of the prosperity of the wicked and their own troubles.

Verses 1, 2. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. What if their lot is sweet? Yet consider how short it is. No wise man envies the bull which is being fattened, for he knows that it is being fattened for the slaughter. None will envy the ungodly their pleasures when they remember how transient they must be. Let them have them and I would urge all Christians to do their best to make the ungodly happy. This is the only happy time they can ever have unless they repent and turn to the Lord. So do not make them unhappy, but contribute all you can to the little bliss they will ever know, for it will soon be over. Certainly, if you are a child of God, you have no cause to envy them.

3, 4. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Here is a duty which is as much a pleasure as it is a duty—no, it is even more a pleasure than a duty— “Delight yourself also in the Lord.” Here is a commandment to be happy in the safest conceivable way. Of all delights, the most delicious is delight in God, and to this we are commanded. But what a privilege is that which is annexed to it— “He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Why is this? Because, when you delight in God, your desires will be such as He can safely grant. Delighting in Him, you will only desire that which is for His Glory and then, without any restrictions, He may promise to you and give to you the desires of your heart.

5. Commit your way unto the LORD. Blindly, yet believingly, put your hand into His hand and follow wherever He may lead you.  
5-7. Trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD. Oh, what sweet precepts these are!—easier to read and to hear than they are to practice, yet, if Grace is given to us, we shall find them blessedly easy to practice. Surely, if it is easy to rest anywhere, it must be easy to “rest in the Lord.” There is no such resting place anywhere else like that where Omnipotence and eternal love are sweetly joined together—“Rest in the Lord.”  
7-9. And wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. I believe that in a right sense, the child of God does get the best of both worlds. He may not get, in this world, what ungodly men think the best. And as far as worldly good is concerned, he often gets the worst, but God makes his dinner of herbs to be sweeter to him than the stalled ox is to the wicked. If I knew that I should die like a dog, I would still wish to be a Christian. If there were no hereafter, no world to come and even if my lot, judged after the manner of men, should be of all men’s most miserable, yet to have had God to be my Friend, here, would have turned even that misery into happiness— **“O God of Love, how blest are they  
Who in Your ways delight!  
Your Presence guides them all the day  
And cheers them all the night!”**  
10. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. How often even the place where he lived—his house—becomes a ruin. The very palace where the tyrant dwelt is burnt down, or destroyed in some other way! Decay seems to delight to work with the teeth of time upon the palaces of despots!  
11. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. There is a great fulfillment of that prophecy yet to come in the latter days, but it is fulfilled even now. Who does not see that the man who really enjoys life and enjoys the world, is, after all, the meek, humble-minded Christian? That shepherd of Salisbury Plain, of whom we used to read in our childhood, when he was asked what he thought of the weather, said it was good weather, for God sent it—and any sort of weather pleased him if it pleased God. Anybody can see that a man of that kind is in a healthy state and that he inherits the earth and possesses far more of what is worth having—namely, ease and peace of mind—than the owner of broad acres who has no true rest of heart in the Lord.  
12-19. The wicked plot against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. Let me read that 19th verse again, so that any child of God here, who is in great straits, may be able to lay hold upon it—“They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”  
20-25. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. The wicked borrows, and pays not again: but the righteous shows mercy, and gives. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth, and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with His hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. We have often remarked here that we, also, though we are not old, have never seen the righteous forsaken and we do not think that the oldest man or woman here has ever seen the righteous forsaken. David says that he had not seen the seed of the righteous begging bread. Well, he was a king, so he was not likely to see very many poor people, but we have several times seen the seed of the righteous begging bread. It is not a common thing, but we have seen it— and when the seed of the righteous misbehave themselves—when they disgrace their father’s name—they will have to beg bread the same as other people’s children do. They will come to poverty through idleness and drink just as other people do. And it has been my unhappy lot, within these very walls, to have to minister relief to the unworthy and reprobate sons of Christian ministers about whose piety I could entertain no doubt, and some of whom are now in Heaven. These good men’s children have walked contrary to God, so God has walked contrary to them! I have often hoped that the poverty I saw might be the means of bringing them to seek the God of their fathers!  
You who fear the Lord may depend upon this—if the Lord helps you to train up your children rightly, He will take care of them. If they are truly the seed of the righteous by being themselves righteous, your children shall not beg bread, for the Lord will provide for them and you will find that God always takes care of the children of those who faithfully serve Him. He seems to say to them, “You mind My business, and I will mind your business. If you look after My children, I will look after yours.” If we serve the Lord with all our hearts, we may fairly reckon that the God of the fathers will be the God of the children.  
26-40. He is ever merciful, and lends and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the Lord loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment. The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”— 107 (SONG 2), 119 (SONG 2), 652.  
—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3232 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FACTS AND INFERENCES  
NO. 3232

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1863.

**“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree, Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man,**

**and behold the upright for the end of that man is peace. Psalm 37:35-37.**

WE must never judge by appearances, for many things that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears are not really what they appear to us to be. Our senses, like everything else within us, are imperfect, so that it is safer to walk by faith than by sight. Especially is this the case with regard to God’s Providential dealings with men. If we were to conclude, for instance, that all those who prosper in this world are peculiarly favored of God, we would make a very great mistake. And if, on the other hand, like Job’s friends, we should imagine that all persons who are grievously afflicted and tried are suffering because they have grossly sinned, we would equally err. It is true that there sometime are manifest judgments upon individuals, communities and nation, but every trial or affliction is not a judgment—nor would it be right for us to regard it so. Yet the man who walks through the world with his eyes opened and his understanding enlightened, must notice certain facts about which there can be no question—facts which are so important and so instructive that he will want other people to also notice them and to learn the lessons they are intended to teach.

There are two facts mentioned in our text. And I am going to talk to you concerning them, coupling with them certain inferences and Revelations which must not be separated from them. The first fact is concerning the wicked—we have seen them in great power, spreading themselves like a green bay tree—yet they have passed away and soon been forgotten. The second fact is concerning the righteous—we have not merely once, but many times, seen a godly man die and from our own experience we can confirm the testimony of the Psalmist, “the end of that man is peace.”

I. So let us for a while meditate upon THE FIRST FACT AND THE INFERENCE AND REVELATION CONCERNING IT.  
It is a fact that we have seen the wicked in great power and that we have seen them suddenly cut off. Those of you who are much older than I am can remember the terror that was associated with the name of one who was, for a while, in great power and who spread himself like a green bay tree—the branches whereof cast a baleful shade over most of the nations of Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte aimed at absolute sovereignty in France and won it. And then he aimed at universal sovereignty over all his fellow monarchs and, for a time, it seemed as though there would be no human limit to his great power. You know how he waded through slaughter and snatched crown after crown from other men to put upon his own head. But you also know how he led his vast army into Russia— and left the bulk of his followers to sleep in death beneath the snow, or to be devoured by wolves. And you remember how, afterwards, he met with men who could play the devil’s game of war more skillfully than he ever could and, in the end, the imperial eagle that had torn so many others in pieces with its cruel talons, was chained for the rest of its life to the lonely rock of St. Helena! Who that saw Napoleon’s empire in the height of its glory could have imagined that it would melt away like a snowman in blazing sunshine? I grant you that its grandeur [Mr. Spurgeon was, of course, referring to the state of affairs in France in 1863. But he lived to see the Second Empire also pass away, and the French republic firmly established in its place.] has been somewhat revived in our day, but the failure of the “great” Napoleon should teach the whole race of mankind that although a wicked man may be in great power and may spread himself like a green bay tree, yet no greatness will permanently endure unless it is founded upon goodness and upon God!  
There are some who have had great power because they have had great wealth. Many of us can recollect persons who seemed to have unlimited riches which enabled them to exercise enormous power over their fellow men. Solomon said that “money answers all things,” and they certainly made it answer their ends. Everybody was obsequious to them— whole nations yielded up their treasures at the bidding of these multimillionaires. They said to the North, “Give up,” and to the South, “Keep not back”—and gold and jewels and works of art came pouring into their palaces and mansions—yet those very men were reduced to beggary before they died and, at the same door where they had repelled poor Lazarus with scorn, they, themselves, were suppliants craving alms! I need not mention names. Many of you can remember such men who were in great power and spread themselves like a green bay tree—yet they have passed away and if you seek them they cannot be found.  
I find that the Hebrew has in it the idea of a tree indigenous to the soil, a tree that has never been transplanted. So David means that he had seen the wicked flourish like a tree whose roots had never been disturbed. You may have heard a rich man boastfully say, “My father lived in this house and his father lived here before him. And through a long line of ancestors, these estates have belonged to our family.” He had no trouble in his youth and no labor in his manhood—he is the man who, in his prosperity, said, “I shall never be moved.” But he has been moved— the ancestral hall of which he was so proud, has a new owner—those estates which he surveyed with such manifest delight have been sold to another family! And if you go to the district today and ask anyone whom you meet, “Where is that rich man who used to own all these broad acres?” you will receive the reply, “Nobody knows.” And you may say with the Psalmist, “I sought him, but he could not be found.”  
This has been the case with some who have gained honor among men. The bay tree was highly esteemed among the Greeks and Romans—they crowned their heroes with wreaths made from its leaves—yet neither the wreath nor the honor lasted very long. So, if a man receives honor from his fellows, yet is all the while a wicked man, his honor is like the dissolving-view which appears upon the sheet and quickly fades away—or like the mirage of the desert which makes the burning sand look like a lake, but which only mocks all who run to drink from it! Or like the willo’-the-wisp that frightens timid folk at night, but itself is without any enduring substance. So passes away the glory of this world and so passes away the man who has honor among men, but who is without that Divine Grace which alone brings true honor, glory and immortality! I can say of more than one such man, “he passed away and lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found.” Have you not noticed, dear Friends, how complete has been the disappearance of certain “great men” whose greatness has been founded upon wealth or upon sin? Every trace of them seems to have been destroyed—in the places where they used to live, nobody remembers them—their escutcheons have been broken up by the battle-axe of Time—and all their glory of heraldry has been burned in the fire. Why, as I am speaking of them, you can scarcely recall their names though they used to be as familiar as household words! Their names were written in the sand and Time’s ever-rolling waves have utterly effaced them! If you seek them, you cannot find them.  
Some men have appeared to be “great” because their true character had not been discovered. They were playing a very crafty part in the drama of life. Before the curtain, they appeared to be truthful, upright, even religious. But behind it, they were rogues, thieves, liars and everything that was bad. Then, all of a sudden, the curtain was torn in two and they were revealed to all men as they had been all the while, to the all-seeing eyes of God! And the whole world looked on and were amazed. There was a man who always wore a mask when he walked abroad and everyone said, “What a beautiful sight it is to see such a man!” But one day the mask was broken and all could plainly see the signs of leprosy on his brow—the deadly disease was there all the time—it was only hidden from the public gaze by the mask! Discovery has often trod on the heels of sin—the guilty one has been caught red-handed—and swift justice has been meted out to the criminal. But suppose, Sinner, that for years you conceal from your fellows your real character as so many others have done? God knows all about you and His Word still contains the warning that Moses gave to the Reubenites and Gadites, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Judas stood revealed, at last, as the Son of Perdition—his fellow Apostles did not suspect him even up to the night of the betrayal—but Jesus had known from the first that he had the heart of a traitor, and only awaited a convenient opportunity to sell his Master for 30 pieces of silver! Simon the sorcerer, who had “bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one,” professed to believe in Jesus and was even baptized! Yet Peter afterwards had to say to him, “Your heart is not right in the sight of God. For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” And, alas, both Judas and Simon Magus have many representatives even to this day!  
Other “great” men have been laid low by some striking disaster. A man seems to climb up one of the tallest cedars of Lebanon to build his nest there and you say to yourself, “How can that man ever be pulled down from such a height as that?” But the Omnipotent hand lays hold of him, scatters his nest upon the ground and before long he and his nest are alike forgotten! Perhaps the man has built himself what he calls an impregnable castle and in his marble halls he fondly hopes that no power can successfully attack him. But God has only to make a slight fissure in the earth’s surface and the man and his castle and all that he has shall disappear even as the earth once before opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah and all that appertained to him! God has many ways of putting down the mighty from their seats and exalting them that are of low degree! An Eastern potentate could not sleep on a certain memorable night and hence it came to pass that proud Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, the Jew—while the despised Mordecai was publicly proclaimed as the man whom the king delighted to honor! Mysterious have been the workings of God’s Providence by which the mightiest monarchs and the most powerful princes have passed away so completely that they have been like the wicked man of whom David says, “I sought him, but he could not be found.”

If in no other way the wicked man is removed from his pinnacle of greatness, he passes away at the call of death. We need not say much about his death, but when he is gone to his final account, he has few, if any, to mourn his loss. He lived for himself and he died for himself—no sorrowing widows, whose poverty he has relieved will keep his grave green with their grateful tears—no mourning children, whose ignorance he has dispelled by his instruction, will remember and revere his name. No sympathetic souls, turned from darkness to light through his instrumentality, will gratefully look up to him as their spiritual father.  
I have thus called your attention to the fact that the wicked who have been in great power have passed away and been forgotten. Now, what is the inference from this fact? I think a very safe inference is that as these men failed to attain that which was the great end and objective of their lives, they cannot have succeeded in that about which they were not at all concerned, namely, the everlasting interests of their never-dying souls! It is certainly fair to infer that as they made such a lamentable shipwreck in this life, they made an even worse shipwreck in the world to come. And as they passed away from everything in which they took pleasure, here, it is reasonable to infer that whatever expectation and hope they may have cherished with regard to the next life, they are certain to have been totally and finally disappointed.  
This, however, is not a mere matter of inference, for the teaching of Divine Revelation agrees with it and confirms it. The wicked man who was in great power here, in due course, dies—and he wakes up in the next world to find himself only a feeble worm exposed to all the fury of Divine Wrath! He had servants and slaves on earth to do his bidding, but there are none to crouch at his feet now! He was held in honor in this world but there are no praises or flatteries for him now. His wealth could at one time buy for him anything that his heart might wish, but he had to leave it all behind him—and even if he still possessed it, he could not purchase even a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. Nothing remains for him, now, but shame and everlasting contempt in that terrible prison where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. Throughout all Heaven and Hell there is nothing that can afford him even a moment’s solace—he has made an awful and an eternal failure of his whole life— and his dolorous cry is, “Lost! Lost! LOST!”  
But, just in passing, though my text speaks especially of the wicked who are in great power, I must remind you that their doom will be the doom of all who believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ—whether they are in the higher or lower walks of life! So, dear Friends, whoever and whatever you are, if you live only for this life, you, too, will pass away and be forgotten here—but you will not be forgotten in the next world! Remember that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Make the only fitting preparation for that judgment by repenting of sin and trusting in Him who died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God.” O Man, play not with shadows! Let not that which is the only real and substantial thing pass by you unheeded! If you must have something to play with, let it not be your immortal soul, for though you can play your soul into Hell, you can never play it out! Nor pray it out! Nor weep it out, nor work it out! Once there, it is there forever! Do you ask, “What is there that is real and substantial? What is there that will abide when all earthly glory has passed away?” Listen. “All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” So, my dear Hearer, believe that Gospel, lay hold on the hope set before you, trust in that blessed Savior who died in the place of sinners, put your eternal interests into the hands of the one Mediator between God and men and then, with the Apostle Paul, you will not be afraid to look forward even to the great Day of Judgment, but you will be able to confidently say, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Man, Woman, Sinner—whoever or whatever you are—give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids until you can truthfully say, “Jesus is my Savior. My Beloved is mine and I am His.”  
II. Now, with great brevity, I pass on to THE SECOND FACT AND THE INFERENCE AND REVELATION CONCERNING IT. “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”  
It is a fact that we have seen the righteous die and that we know that their end is peace. It is a fact that those who are accounted perfect in the sight of God through the blood and righteousness of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and whose lives have been made upright through the effectual working of the ever-blessed Spirit, do end their earthly careers in peace and then enter into that eternal peace which has no end! I am not speaking of dreams and fancies, but of facts that have happened in my own experience. Never shall I forget the deathbed of one who had often walked with me many a weary mile to preach the Gospel in country villages. I have told you before how I found him, when he was near his end. His sight had so completely failed that not a ray of light entered his eyes, but when he heard my voice, he sat up in the bed, and said to me, oh, so joyously!—  
*“And when you hear my eye-strings break, How sweet my minutes roll!  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But Glory in my soul!”*  
Verily, the end of that man was peace! There is a beloved Brother behind me on the platform, who went with me to see one of the members of this Church who was dying of consumption. While we talked with her, she told us that her only fear was lest she might live, for she dreaded the temptations of living far more then the pangs of dying! A few hours after we saw her, she passed away from this world of sorrow and sin—and entered the land of everlasting peace—but the rapture with which she anticipated death almost made us exclaim, after the manner of Thomas, “Lord, let us die with her.” As we came away, we felt that hers was the happy lot and that she was the one to be envied because she had gone to be “with Christ, which is far better.”  
Look at the dying Christian—what blessed peace he has! He is at peace even with those who have been his enemies! He says to those around him that if there are any who have done him harm, or said what was false concerning him, he not only freely forgives them, but his most earnest wish for them is that he may meet them all in Heaven! He is at perfect peace concerning the past, for he knows that all his sins have been forgiven him, for Christ’s sake, and that they will be remembered against him no more forever. He is full of peace in the present, even though he is near the end of his earthly life. His wife weeps and well may she grieve at the thought of parting with such a godly husband, but he reminds her of that ancient promise, “Leave your fatherless children. I will preserve them alive, and let your widows trust in Me.” And of that Inspired declaration, “A father of the fatherless, and a judge (or advocate) of the widows is God in His holy habitation.” He looks at his dear children gathered around his bed and although he would gladly have lived longer for their sake, he knows that it is his Lord’s will that he should depart out of this life, so he does not repine! He commits into the hands of God, his household, his business and all that concerns him. He says, “I have nothing more to do with them, I am dead to them all. And now I am only waiting until the messenger arrives to summon me into the Presence of the King.” As for the future, he is at peace concerning that, also. He knows that it is a solemn matter to pass through Death’s iron gate, but he is confident that Christ will come and meet him there, so he looks forward to the great transition without a tremor and without a murmur! He is fully aware that existence in a disembodied state is something very mysterious and awe-inspiring, but that mystery has no terrors for him, for he has the same assurance that Paul had when he wrote, “we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” He is not in the least troubled because the poor old worn-out tent is being taken down, for he knows that he is going to exchange it for one of the abiding mansions in his Father’s house! Indeed, he is so happy in the anticipation of going Home that he begins to sing the very hymn that we afterwards sing at his funeral—  
*“My Father’s house on high,  
Home of my soul! How near,  
At times, to faith’s foreseeing eyes,  
Your golden gates appear!  
Ah, then my spirit faints  
To reach the land I love,  
The bright inheritance of saints,  
Jerusalem above!  
‘Forever with the Lord!’  
Father, if ‘tis Your will  
The promise of that faithful word  
Even here to me fulfill.  
So when my latest breath  
Shall rend the veil in twain,  
By death I shall escape from death,  
And life eternal gain!”*  
The good man believes in the resurrection of the body, so he says with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” It is a blessed thing for such a man to die! And the many deaths of that happy kind that I have witnessed have made me also—  
*“Long for evening to undress,  
That I might rest with God.”*

What is the inference from all this? I think it is but fair to infer that if in the pain, agony and weakness of death, the Christian has such perfect peace, surely his peace will be even more profound when he enters that blest world where “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” If in this stormy world he has such peace of mind even amid the swellings of Jordan, surely there must be for him, in the life that is to come, stormless seas and cloudless skies—days that have no night and years which winter’s cold can never reach! And truly,

 Revelation confirms this inference. For a Christian to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord! What it must be to be present with the Lord, no mortal tongue can fully tell, but we know that “His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night, there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign forever and ever... And He that sits on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” What a change, Beloved, it will be from all the strife and turmoil of this world to the perfect peace of the world to come! Here, you and I have to work, work, work—either with the sweat of the brow or the sweat of the brain—and the latter is not the lighter of the two! But there, brain and brow shall both be perfectly at rest! Here we are sometimes perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked—but there we shall see that we have no cause to envy them! Here we are often made to grieve over losses and crosses, adversities and afflictions—but there we shall always be on the bright side of the hill—our dark night of sorrow and trial shall be forever over and our everlasting morning shall have come! Here we are constantly losing some of our best friends, they pass away as sweet flowers wither and die. But there—

*“Oh, it will be joyful*

*When we meet to part no more!”*  
Here we are plagued and tormented by sin—but there, “they are without fault before the Throne of God.” Here the fiery darts of the Wicked One are continually flying all around us—but there, they are out of range of the devil’s most deadly artillery! Yet let not one of us sigh and cry for the wings of a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest. In God’s good time, He will beckon us across the narrow stream of death! And till then let us patiently wait and earnestly work for Him who is all our salvation and all our desire.

Now, my Hearers, I have set before you two men representing two very different classes—those who have their portion in this life, and those whose inheritance is in the heavenly Canaan, the land of perfect peace and perfect bliss. What is the great objective upon which your soul is set? To get on in this world, to make money, to win fame, honor, glory, power? Oh, that is a poor ambition! And if you could attain it all, your wreath of bay leaves would soon wither—and then what would you have left? “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Profit him? It would be an eternal and irretrievable loss! Oh, seek not such “gain” as that, but “seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”— insofar as God sees that it shall be for His Glory and your own and others’ good for you to have them. May the Lord give you the Grace to make the wise choice this very hour, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 37.**

May the Spirit of God graciously apply this Psalm to our hearts, comforting us as no one else can! Is He not the Comforter? And what better cordial has He for our spirits than His own Word?

Verses 1, 2. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Evil cannot last! It is a feeble plant, like the grass and weeds which the mower’s scythe soon cuts down and leaves to wither in the blazing sunshine.

3, 4. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. [See Sermon #454, Volume 8—SUNSHINE IN

THE HEART—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

This is a most precious verse—its sweetness who can tell? Do not think first of the desires of your heart, but think first of delighting yourself in your God! If you have accepted Him as your Lord, He is yours, so delight in Him and then He will give you the desires of your heart.

5. Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. Give it over into God’s hands and then confide in Him as completely as a little child confides in its mother. “He shall bring it to pass.” It is quite certain that you cannot “bring it to pass,” so you will be wise if you leave it with Him who can do what you cannot!

6. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. You cannot make the light and the noonday— that is a work that is far beyond your power—but your God can give you both light and noonday. He can clear your character from any slander that may have fouled it and He can crown you with honor and glory in place of the contempt that is now cast upon you.

7. Rest in the LORD—[See Sermon #2393, Volume 40—A COMFORTING MESSAGE FOR THE CLOSING YEAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That is the sweetest word of all—“Rest.” Go no further! Fret no more. Bear your burdens no longer. Make this day a Sabbath to your soul—“Rest in the Lord”—  
7. And wait patiently for Him! Do not be in a hurry. The Lord has Infinite leisure, so partake of it as far as you can—“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”

7, 8. Fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger. You cannot do that unless you “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”Angry passions boil upon the fire of fretfulness! Therefore, “cease from anger”—

8, 9. And forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. Their turn will come in due time. It comes last, but then it comes to last, for there is nothing to come after the last!

10. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. The house in which he lived, or the place that was called by his name is often destroyed.

11, 12. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just. That has been the style of things from the beginning. And the old serpent’s seed will be like the old serpent and he, “was more subtle than any beast of the field.” “The wicked plots against the just”—he plots against the Lord’s people, but “the Lord shall laugh at him”—

13-18. For he sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the day of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. He gives them an eternal portion by an Everlasting Covenant.

19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. There is nothing that they can get, but God will give them what they cannot get themselves. He will ransack Heaven and earth to find food for His people! “In the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”

20-23 . But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lamb: they shall vanish; into smoke shall they vanish away. The wicked borrows, and pays not again: but the righteous shows mercy, and gives. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth, and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD—Even his “steps”—the little movements of his life—not only his great plans and his ambitious projects, but “the steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah”—

23. And He delights in his way. He loves to see him walk, even as parents delight to watch the first tottering steps of their little children, so that He who “takes not pleasure in the legs of a man,” takes pleasure in the ways of His people!

24. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down. For a while it may seem as if he had been finally defeated—things may seem to go altogether wrong with him—but, “though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down”—

24, 25. For the LORD upholds him with His hand. I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. And we can also still speak of the faithfulness of Jehovah. He who took care of His people in David’s day has not changed since then! We have not seen the righteous forsaken.

26. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed. God has a special regard for the children of Believers. Grace does not run in the blood, but it often runs side by side with it. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of Joseph, and the God of Manasseh and Ephraim!

27-29 . Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the LORD loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints. They are preserved forever but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever. I have frequently remarked to you that although the wolf is very strong and fierce—and the sheep is very weak and timid—yet there are more sheep in the world than there are wolves. And the day will come when the last wolf will be dead—and then the sheep shall cover the plains and feed upon the hills. Weak as the righteous often are, they “shall inherit the land” when the wicked shall have been cut off from the earth!

30. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment. That which is down in the heart will come up into the mouth— and you may rest assured that men are fairly judged by the common current of their conversation.

31-33 . The Law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous and seeks to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. How dreadful it would be for the godly man if the Lord were to leave him in the hand of the wicked! You remember how David sought to avoid that calamity when he had to choose famine, pestilence, or the sword of his enemies? “Let me fall,” he said, “into the hands of the Lord, for very great are His mercies; but let me not fall into the hands of man.” Let us thank God that even if we should get into the hands of the ungodly, the Lord will not leave us there, nor condemn us when we are judged!

34-37 . Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. There is no end to that man, for he is to endure, world without end! In any sense in which there is an end to him, his end is everlasting peace!

38, 39. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in the time of trouble. Have you not proved it so, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ? I know that you have had times of trouble, but has not God been your strength in a very peculiar way in all such times?

40. And the LORD shall help them—He is and He shall always be their Helper. “The Lord shall help them”—  
40. And deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him. That is the point—not because of any merit of theirs, nor because of any skill of theirs— but, “He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.” So, Lord, help us to trust in You! Amen.

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A TESTIMONY TO FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE  
NO. 1953

**A SERMON DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. ON A THURSDAY EVENING.

**“But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Psalm 37:39.**

SALVATION is a blessing peculiar to the righteous. The ungodly do not, as a rule, believe that they have any need of salvation and, therefore, they do not desire it, or seek after it. The righteous know that they are born in a fallen state; they acknowledge that they have destroyed themselves by personal sin; and they are conscious of a thousand dangers which surround them. Hence they need salvation, seek it and find it. It is to them that salvation has come to make them righteous, for until they are saved, they are unrighteous, even as others. But now that salvation has come to their house, they bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God their Savior.

This may be used as a description of the Believer’s life—he lives a life of salvation. He is saved in Christ, who is his life, in whom he has forgiveness of sins and every other Covenant blessing. He is always being delivered, or saved and, from the moment in which he begins as a Believer till that last moment on earth when he shall be about to depart out of the world unto the Father, his whole life is encompassed within the Divine circle of salvation. God is working salvation for him, salvation in him and salvation by him—and is giving him to receive the fullness of salvation which he shall forever enjoy in the world to come—

*“Salvation is forever near  
The souls that fear and trust the Lord.  
And Grace, descending from on high,  
Fresh hopes of Glory shall afford.”*

Beloved Friends, we rejoice in that right royal word, “salvation!” We would let its echo fly over the whole world. To us it is a word of great meaning. It does not signify salvation from the punishment of sin, alone, though it comprehends that blessing and we are glad that it does so, but it means complete and immediate salvation from the love of sin, conscious salvation from the power of sin, growing salvation from the propensity to sin and ultimate salvation from all tendency to sin! When we have gained full salvation, we shall never, never again sin, but shall find ourselves before the Throne of God as pure as that throne, made perfect by the work of the Holy Spirit, who will have sanctified us wholly—spirit, soul and body! Men of the world think, when we talk of salvation, that we mean escaping from Hell. This is all they would fear and so it strikes them as the great matter—but we are not of their mind. Being delivered from the pains and penalties of evil is certainly a great blessing, but it is by no means the greatest! It follows in the train of a grander blessing, even as the blaze of the comet follows the central light. The righteous dread sin more than Hell and, to them, wrong is more terrible than any punishment which awaits it. The joy of salvation to us is that we are delivered from this present evil world, delivered from the lusts of the flesh, delivered from the old death of natural corruption, delivered from the power of Satan and from the dominion of evil! Our salvation will not be full till we are totally and finally delivered from every trace of sin and are “without fault before the Throne of God.” Sanctification completed is our salvation perfected—purity without spot will be our Paradise Regained!

“The salvation of the righteous” in the broadest sense of the word “is of the Lord” and the more breadth of meaning we give to it, the more completely we shall see that it must be Divine. At the same time, our life is made up of a series of salvations and each of these is of the Lord. We are constantly being saved—saved from this and that form of danger and evil. As each daily trouble threatens to engulf us, we are saved from it. As each temptation, like a dragon, threatens to swallow us up, we are saved from it. Our God is the God of salvations and unto Him belongs the issues from death. We escape from deaths often, yes, and from the very belly of Hell— and still we live to sing, as Jonah sang when he was in the depths of the sea, “Salvation is of the Lord!”

I have said that this glorious salvation, which is of the Lord, is the peculiar heritage of Believers. They alone know their need of it and they alone participate in it. Look at the ungodly man who is pictured in this Psalm. He does not want salvation. He flourishes like the green bay tree— he spreads his branches to overshadow everybody else. Such men need no salvation. “Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.” They want no salvation—their lands are abundant, their house is full of treasure and they leave the rest of their substance to their babes. They put no trust in the name of the Lord. “They call their lands after their own names.” They want no God—they have no sighs after Him. They never cry, “As the hart pants after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God!” They have no trials in their lives and “there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” The rod of God’s children does not fall upon them—“Whom the Lord loves, He chastens”— but often those whom He loves not, He leaves to indulge in such pleasure as they can find. He gives His swine good measure of husks, for He would not be unkind even to them! And there they lie and feed without fear— knowing nothing of another world, nor caring for it—

*“Fools never raise their thoughts so high— Like brutes they live, like brutes they die!  
Like grass they flourish, till Your breath  
Blasts them into everlasting death.”*

See the distinction between the righteous man who fears God and he that fears Him not! Were it not for this word, “salvation,” their ease and prosperity might make us envy the ungodly, but this turns the scale. Because “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord,” we would take the worst portion that ever was meted out to them in preference to the best that was ever given to the ungodly! Taking all for all, God’s worst is better than the devil’s best and the portion of God’s saints at the lowest ebb is better than the portion of the wicked, even when their joys are at the flood!

I am going to speak at this time upon our text as a statement by itself. It is complete and self-contained. It is a diamond of the first water. Its words are few, but its sense is precious. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”

I. Our first head is this—THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF SOUND DOCTRINE. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” There are several young men here who go forth to preach the Gospel. I hope that they will speak with clear knowledge and attractive speech, but this is far from being the main object of my desire—I want them to really preach the Gospel, the whole Gospel and nothing but the Gospel! I reckon preaching to be Gospel preaching and sound preaching, in proportion as it is consistent with this statement—“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” It is not every preacher who proclaims this Truth of God in bold terms and in plain English. More or less, I hope that all who preach Christ Crucified would subscribe to this. But some are a little afraid of it in all its breadth and length. They must bring in man a little. They must have him something, or some thing. They are always afraid lest Grace should be misunderstood and should be turned into licentiousness and, truly, I share in their fear, though I would not use their way of preventing the evil which I dread.

I have known some of these timorous ones try to say, “Free Grace,” but they have had a little impediment in their speech and the words have come out, “

free will.” They have meant that it should be all of Grace, but by some means or other there has been so much hesitancy and such a deal of fencing, that one could hardly tell Grace from works! There will be no hesitancy on my part when I say that “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord”—neither will you find me guarding the statement as if I thought it a lump of spiritual dynamite which might do infinite damage!

“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord” in the planning. Long before we were in existence, God had planned the way of salvation. Before the Fall He had ordained the Covenant by which the fallen should be restored and that plan shows, in every line of it, that consummate wisdom and infinite love which can be found nowhere but in the Lord. He took counsel with no one and no one instructed Him—He alone fixed the eternal settlements of unchanging love!

“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord” as to the persons who are included in it, for God has chosen from the beginning, His people and, “whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed unto the image of His Son.” There is a choice, somewhere, and I am persuaded we have not chosen Him, but He has chosen us. Did not the Lord Jesus say as much? He is first and foremost in salvation and though we gladly run when He calls, yet His call comes first and His choice comes before the call! The salvation of the righteous was determined in the council chambers of eternity before the stars began to shine. It is of God and only of God!

And as it is of the Lord in the planning, so it is of the Lord in the providing. It was He who gave His Son from His bosom and truly our Lord Jesus Christ is the full purchase -price of our salvation. We do not add a penny to it. The mortgage upon lost humanity was paid off by Christ to the last farthing, without any contribution on our part to eke out the matchless price.

The Spirit of God, who is another great item in the provision of salvation, is of the Lord. God has given us the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes, not according to our mind or will, but according to the gift and purpose of the Lord. Nothing is lacking for the salvation of men. God has provided all. He has not left the garment almost long enough, just needing that we should add a fringe. Nor has He provided a feast almost sufficient for us if we bring at least another loaf. Nor has He built a house of mercy, almost completed, but leaving us to add a few more tiles to the roof. No, the work is finished and, from top to bottom, salvation is of the Lord! All Covenant provisions are already in the Lord Jesus in full and the salvation of the righteous is entirely of the Lord in the providing!

So, dear Friends, it is of the Lord in the applying. The first application of the blessings of the Covenant to us is of God. Of course that first application is in regeneration, when the soul first begins to live. The first sense of need of mercy springs not from nature, but is a work of Grace. The first desire we have to be right—the first prayer we breathe towards God—all this is the movement of eternal Grace upon our souls which otherwise would have lain as dead as the corpses in their graves! The Lord first deals with us before we have any inclination whatever to deal with Him. We do not see this Truth of God at first. Possibly we discover it months after our conversion, when we come to sit down and look over our experience. Then we cry, “Yes! Had You not sought me, I had never sought You! Had You not drawn me, I had never run to You! Had You never looked on me in love, I had never looked to You in faith! It is Your Free Grace which began with me. I acknowledge that the Alpha of my salvation is of the Lord.” The knowledge of this Truth of God usually comes to us as we advance in knowledge—the full understanding of it is a fruit of the Spirit and belongs to our riper years rather than to our spiritual infancy.

As salvation is of the Lord at the commencement, so it is as to the continuing of it. Rest assured, Beloved, there is no true growth in Grace except that which is of the Lord. No, there is no sustaining the position to which you have reached except by the Lord—

*“And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness  
Are His and His alone.”*

He has worked all our works in us and if we have produced any fruit to the honor of His name, from Him has our fruit come, for our Lord truly said, “Without me You can do nothing.” We must give Him all the glory, for certainly He has given us all the Grace and as it has been, so will it be. Between here and Heaven there will be nothing of our own in the matter. We shall work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because He first works it in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. There is no working out our salvation unless the Lord works it in! We bring to the surface of our life what He works in the deep foundation of our inward nature, but both within and without the spiritual life is all of Grace. When we put our foot upon the threshold of Glory and pass through the gate of pearl to the golden pavement of the heavenly city, the last step will be as much taken through the Grace of God as was the first step when we turned unto our great Father in our rags and misery! Left by the Grace of God for a single moment, we would perish. We are dependent as much upon Grace for spiritual life as we are upon the air we breathe for this natural life. Take the atmosphere from us—put us under an exhausted receiver—and we die. Take Your Grace from us, O our God, and we perish at once! What else could happen to us?

Brothers, we must always believe this and preach it, for it is the sum of all true doctrine. If you do not make salvation to be wholly of the Lord, depend upon it, you will have to clip salvation down and make it a small matter. I have always desired to preach a great salvation and I do not think that any other is worth preaching. If salvation is of man, then you do not wonder that man falls from Grace. Of course he does! What man begins, man also soon ends in his own way with a failure! When God saves, He saves eternally. Someone said to me the other day, “I do not quite know about that doctrine of Final Perseverance, whether it is true or not.” So I said to him, “What kind of life does Jesus Christ give His sheep?” He answered very correctly—“He has said, ‘I give unto My sheep eternal life.’” Very well, does not that settle it? If He has given them eternal life, they have eternal life.

“But,” he said, “might they not die?” I answered, “Is it not clear that those who die have not eternal life? If they had eternal life, how could they die? Does eternal life mean six months’ life?” “No.” “Does it only mean 600 years’ life?” “No. It must mean nothing less than life which has no end.” Death is out of the question. I must live if I am one of those of whom the Great Shepherd says, “I give unto My sheep eternal life.” But what is next? If you cannot quite see the Truth of God from that one expression, what follows? Will the sheep of Christ ever perish? Here is His answer. “They shall never perish.” Does not that secure them? What language could better describe their security? But another question is raised—“May it not mean that, if they get away from the Lord Jesus, they shall perish?” Then comes the next sentence—“Neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Does not that answer it? “Oh, but perhaps the Savior might fail!” We think not! But listen again—“My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”

There are four great reasons why Believers are and must be saved! Neither can anything shake the force of any one of them. If words mean anything, those who are in Christ are safe! The Lord God Almighty has given them eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ’s hand and over that first hand of Jesus is the Father’s hand to make assurance doubly sure!

Salvation, then, is of the Lord. This is a doctrine to be believed. If you do not believe it, you are sure to minimize and make small salvation and especially are you likely to deprive it of its certainty and immutability. It is a pity that you should attempt this, for thus you rob Christ of His power, God of His glory and the saints of their comfort! That is the awkward point about a salvation which is of man—it is worth nothing when you get it. We need an eternal salvation. We need a salvation which does really save. We need something which is not made up of, “ifs and ans,” and, “buts,” and, “perhapses,” and, “maybe,” and, “if you do this,” and, “if you do that.” We need sure, immutable, abiding, unchanging salvation—and this is exactly what we get and what we are not ashamed to preach, while we thunder out this Truth of God, “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord!”—

*“‘All of Grace’—from base to summit,  
Grace on every course and stone.  
Grace in planning, rearing, crowning,  
Sovereign Grace, and Grace alone!”*

II. Secondly, this is not only the essence of sound doctrine, but THIS IS A NECESSARY FACT. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Assuredly it must be so, or else they will never be saved. Look for a moment, you that love the Lord, to your own inward conflicts. Beloved, we are not all alike, tossed to and fro with the uprising of inbred sin, but there are times with most of God’s saints when they are hard put to it to withstand a certain raging temptation—they have to struggle hard to keep it down. And when they have mastered that evil, another form of sin comes on the sly and attempts to stab them in the back. You were giving all your attention to one insidious foe and at that terrible moment you were set upon by another! And you had to turn round and bend all your strength in the name of God to resist this second adversary. Nor was this all, a third evil bent its bow against you and a fourth prepared a net for your feet! Thus you were beset behind and before—and had it not been that the Lord was on your side, you would have been quickly swallowed up! Some of us know the truth of this in our experience if the rest of you do not.

Salvation must be of the Lord with me, I know, or else my inward lusts, my proud spirit, my rebellious will and my natural despondency will surely ruin me! Do you not feel it to be so with you? If God does not save you, you are a lost man. You must feel that. I know that those who have no conflicts sing another song and praise themselves. Your carpet-knights who wear the regimentals of Christianity, but know nothing of battle with inbred sin, may talk about salvation by self, but he that is hard put to it to wrestle against all wrong-doing will tell another tale! He who grieves if he even utters a rash word, or allows an impure thought to cross his mind feels that if God does not save him, saved he never can be! And he sees it to be a necessary fact that the salvation of the righteous must be of the Lord.

When you have looked within a sufficient time to convince you, just look at your outward temptations. Ah, we little know what many of our Brothers and Sisters have to endure in the form of temptation in their own houses from their own friends. Many have a very hard fight of it. I know some now present who will, I believe, persevere and hold on to the end, but almost every day they endure a martyrdom. Cruel words are spoken and unkind actions are done against them. And a bitter spirit is shown towards them because they are the people of God. Salvation must be of the Lord to these poor persecuted ones, or they will faint under their oppressions! Outside in the world, what temptations abound! You cannot engage in any business without finding that it has its peculiar sins. Many things are done in the trade—many matters established by custom— which the scrupulously upright child of God cannot tolerate. He has to set his face against the general habit and, therefore, he has a battle. Need I go into particulars? Why, Brothers and Sisters, we are surrounded with snares! They are on the table—you may readily sin there. They are in your secret chamber—you are tempted there. They are in the counting-house and on the study table. You cannot sit down to read a book without being in danger. You cannot go among the crowd without risk. Depend upon it, if any man is saved in the midst of this wicked and ungodly generation in which the very air smells of corruption and the common talk is polluting— his salvation will be evidently of the Lord! If any Believer remains steadfast in this day of philosophic doubt, verily, I say unto you, his salvation must be of the Lord. He cannot go through this Vanity Fair. He cannot pass through this horrible slough, this Stygian bog of modern society and be pure in heart, lips and life unless God shall grant him His salvation!

Besides that, our salvation will certainly be of the Lord, because the world hates us. It cannot help it. If you are a genuine Christian, the world will not love you. There may be natural traits of kindness and goodness about you which even the outside world may respect, but in proportion as you are definitely and thoroughly a Christian, you will have the dogs at you. Worldlings will see a little flaw in your character and they will report it and magnify it. Some of us cannot do anything but we are misrepresented so that we have become unmindful of what people say about us, so long as we know in our own conscience that we are clear. The act which we have done with the most transparent sincerity has been the very one which they have set upon as though it were a piece of trickery! Blessed be God, the world is crucified to us and we are crucified unto the world! But if we are to escape its venom—especially those who stand in the front of the battle—if we are to hold on to the end with a stainless character, then we shall have to say and sing, “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”

We know, dear Friends, that it must be so. It is a necessary fact, even if we only look at the contrary view. What professions some make and how long they keep them up! We have said of such-and-such a man, “If he is not a child of God, who is?” We have even wished that our soul were in his soul’s place when we have heard him pray and marked the impressive devotion of his demeanor. And yet we have lived to see the very person we admired rolling in filth, character gone and hope gone! This happens in the Church sadly too often. Whenever we see it, we may truly feel that “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” If ever you see a Christian man, professedly so, suddenly disappear and melt away, you will say to yourself, “Ah, had it not been for Divine Grace, it would have happened just the same to me and my fellow professors, too.” We should have gone out, like the snuff of a candle, if God had not preserved us and kept us alight. The older we grow in the Divine Life and the more earnestly we seek to exhibit the character of a Christian, the more we shall feel that if we had to go to this warfare at our own expense, it would be better for us that we had never been born! The life of many modern professors might be lived without supernatural help, but the life of a genuine Christian is a perpetual miracle which could be worked by none but the Lord God! True Christian life is produced by God, Himself, working mightily, even as when He made the world, or raised His only-begotten Son from the dead! I say that this is a necessary fact, for there can be no salvation but that which is of the Lord.

III. In the third place, our text being true, that “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord,” THIS IS A SWEET CONSOLATION, for if my salvation is of the Lord, then I shall be saved! If it had been of anybody else, I would be lost. Ah, Gabriel, if my salvation had to be accomplished by you and all your fellow angels, I would despair! Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, if all of you put together were sent into this world to try and help poor me to Heaven, you would never get me there! I would wear you all out! When it is written, “Salvation is of the Lord,” I am comforted, for I am sure that the Lord will do it. He can, for He is Omnipotent. He will, for He has promised to do it—and He is true and unchangeable! He will go through with what He has begun. If man began, he might leave off before he had finished for lack of stores to go on with it, or because he had made a mistake and changed his fickle mind. But when God begins, as surely as ever He opens the war, He will push on till He has won the victory. As surely as He lays the first stone, He will not withdraw His right hand till He has brought forth the top stone, with shouts of, “Grace, Grace unto it!” “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord”—therefore it will be accomplished. Not all the temptations of life, nor all the terrors of death, nor all the furies of Hell shall prevent any soul upon whom God has begun His work of Grace from reaching eternal salvation! What a blessing is this and what a comfort it is!—

*“Things future, nor things that are now, Not all things below nor above,  
Can make Him His purpose forego,  
Or sever my soul from His love.”*

This grand fact comforts us partly by leading us to believe in prayer. If the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, then, whenever we get into any great trouble, we go to Him and cry, “O Lord, my salvation is of You! I have come to You for it.” When strong temptation seems to catch us, like birds in a net, and we cannot break loose, then we cry, “O God, salvation is of You alone! Help me. You can. I look to You for it!” When our soul lies dead, as it sometimes does, like this heavy weather—when there is little sun to brighten us, or air to enliven us—we feel inactive and cannot stir. Oh, then it is most blessed in prayer to feel “all my fresh springs are in You, my Lord! You can quicken me! You can give me vigor, force of character and energy to do Your work, or suffer Your will!” In drawing near to God, we are coming to the right place—we are only asking God to do what He undertakes to do, since, “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”

This, in addition to increasing our hope in prayer, urges us at all times to look out of ourselves to God. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Then I must not be always searching within my own heart to find some good thing within me. I must not be turning over evidences and living upon past experiences, but I must remember that salvation, even of the righteous, is of the Lord. I have often thrown all my evidences overboard—every one of them. I have felt that I would not give a farthing for the whole lot put together and I have gone to Christ Jesus just as I went at first, singing my old ditty—

*“I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”*

We are encouraged to do this by the fact that salvation is of the Lord. Go again to the Cross and read your pardon there. Suppose the devil tells you, or suppose it even to be true, that all your experience is a fiction, all your past profession a lie, all your faith presumption, all your enjoyments delirium, all that you have known and felt a daydream? Well, then, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and He can save you! O my Lord, I can boast nothing whatever of myself, but I come and cast myself on You! You have said, “He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out”! Frequent beginnings are the very safest things. In fact, we should, in a sense, be always beginning, for the spiritual life begins with coming to Jesus and the continuance of that spiritual life is described thus—“To whom coming as unto a living stone.” To whom coming, always coming—always trusting, always looking out of self, always looking to Christ!

When evidences are bright, you know where you are, but at such a time you could tell that without them. It is easy to tell the time of day by a sundial, but then the sun must be shining. And when I am at home and can see the sun, I know whereabouts the sun is at 12 o’clock and, therefore, I do not need the sundial to tell me the time. Evidences are exceedingly good things when you do not need them, but they are of very little use when you do. Evidences are clear when Christ is present, but when Christ is present you do not need their help! But when Christ is

 not present, evidences fail to comfort you. It is better to live by a daily faith upon Christ than to live upon evidences. They most readily turn moldy and then they are most unwholesome food. Live upon Christ who is the daily manna and you will live well!

You will be driven to such a life by the force of this blessed Truth of God, that the salvation of the righteous, just as much as the salvation of the wicked, is of the Lord! A sinner cannot be saved by himself and neither can a righteous man. A sinner must look to the Lord for salvation and so must a righteous man. We are on the same footing here—the rich saint as well as the poor sinner. Christ must be everything to one as well as to the other—and what a blessed thing it is that He is everything to us! Let us hourly make Him so.

IV. Fourthly, and very briefly, THIS DOCTRINE IS A REASON FOR HUMILITY. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Are you saved, my dear Brother or Sister? And do you know it? Then all idea of pride must vanish, for it is clear that you did not save yourself. That regeneration, of which you are a partaker, is the free gift of God to an undeserving one—a work of Grace upon one who could not have worked it upon himself. Pride is excluded! Has the Lord granted you such a salvation that you have remained fast in your integrity all these years? Do not be proud of it, for your salvation from any gross outward sin has been of the Lord! It is none of your doing. Above all, do not begin to censure others! And when you see a poor Brother down—yes, when you see a child of God who has erred and grossly sinned, do not begin censuring him in bitterness and giving him over to despair. If you had been in his case, you might have done worse.

Do I speak harshly? Any man who says, “If I had been in that Brother’s place I would have done better,” is a fool! He does not know himself. The probabilities are that he would have done worse. Ah, Sir Pharisee! You— yes, oh yes, you are a wonder! Marvelous is your purity! Splendidly you act! What a paragon you are! If you were to see yourself in God’s light, you would see that You are a mass of corruption, smelling of pride! That is what you are. The man who begins to exult over his fallen brother is the likeliest man to fall, himself. He who points at a tear in his Brother’s garment is in rags himself. If we have stood fast amid temptation, we may bless God that we have done so, but we must not find fault with others as though there was some good thing in ourselves. The salvation of the most righteous man that ever lived is of the Lord! If his sun has not been eclipsed—if his moon has not been turned into darkness—if his stars have not fallen like withered leaves from the tree, it is all owing to the Grace of God and the Grace of God alone! It is necessary to say this to keep us from being lifted up with foolish boasting.

So, dear Friends, we shall have to sing to a grave, sweet melody as long as we are here, whenever we touch a matter that concerns ourselves. When we get to Heaven, we shall see, then, much more than we do tonight that salvation is of the Lord. Mr. Bunyan represents his Pilgrim as going through the Valley of the Shadow of Death—and even while he was in the darkness and horror of that defile place, he knew that he needed the Lord to help him. He felt that he had a terrible walk of it that night, when there was a bog on this side and a quagmire on that—and hobgoblins and all sorts of horrid creatures all around—he knew that he needed Divine aid. He held on his way, with his sword in his hand and, grasping the weapon of All-Prayer, till at last he left that horrible place. And then he knew better than before how great was his necessity. He looked back when the morning rose and till then he had not fully known what a place he had been traversing—and how great was the power which upheld him in his night march! When we get to Heaven and look back upon our life below, we shall then see the wonders of delivering Grace which at this time we do not fully appreciate—

*“When I stand before the Throne  
Dressed in beauty not my own.  
When I see You as You are,  
Love You with unsinning heart.  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—  
But not till then—how much I owe.”*

I believe that in the day of our full deliverance we shall lift up, every one of us, such a song of praise as we are not capable of here. We shall sing with all our powers of heart and tongue at the sight of what we have been delivered from. Even then this will be the sum and substance of the song—“Salvation is of the Lord!” He has worked it all and brought us safely through. The hymn of Miriam and of all the children of Israel at the Red Sea, when they had passed through it and all the Egyptians were drowned, was a very exultant song. But what will ours be when the gates of Hell shall have been overthrown, all our enemies destroyed and we shall find ourselves before the Eternal Throne, saved forever? Shall we not exclaim, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously”?

Shall we not, each one, tell out his own experience and bid our fellow Believers sing yet more and more rapturously unto the God of salvation? Will not some of you take up that note which Miriam dwelt upon when she could not see a single Egyptian? Pharaoh’s chariots and horses were all sunk in the sea! His chosen captains were also drowned in the Red Sea and so she struck her timbrel and with all the maidens she danced right joyously as she sang, “The depths have covered them. There is not one, not one, not one of them left.” Thus will we sing in Heaven. “There is not one, not one of them left! Not one of all the sins, all the trials, all the temptations and all the vexations of life—the Lord has removed them all! There is not one of them left! Salvation is of the Lord.”

V. I close with one more remark and it is this—this text GIVES US A COMFORTABLE GROUND OF HOPE. “The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Then I believe He will save me. I trust myself with Him and thus I become righteous by faith and, therefore, He will save me from my trouble and care. Brother, draw the same conclusion. Sister, draw the same conclusion. You are in a terrible condition just now. Everything has been going wrong. You do not know what to do. But “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” He will bring you through. You are in good hands. The Great Pilot knows the navigation of the river of life better than you do. You cannot see a channel for your boat—there are snags everywhere, or quicksand, or rocks, or shallows. He knows all about them. Rest. Trust. Wait. Commit your way unto the Lord. There is personal comfort in the fact that our salvation is of the Lord.

And there is comfort, next, with regard to all our tried Brothers and Sisters. It is my lot—my happy or unhappy lot—to be continually consulted by Brothers and Sisters in great trouble. They think I can help them, though I cannot. I hardly know what to say to them. I can only take their burden with my own unto the Lord. I often feel great pain in sympathizing with trials which I cannot remove, but then it is cheering to know that the Lord can help where we cannot, for “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” He can help the helpless, the forlorn, the impoverished, the dying. He will bring His people safely through floods and fires. Their straits are very great and their burdens very heavy, but the Lord will put underneath them the everlasting arms. Pray for them; sympathize with them; help them as far as you can and then, when you cast yourself on your Lord, cast them, also!

Next, this ought to give us hope about seekers. I see some Brothers and Sisters before me whose lives are spent in trying to encourage poor erring souls to return unto the Lord. Sometimes you are balked and defeated. Well, “the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.” Surely, if the salvation of the righteous is to come from the Lord, much more must the salvation of poor seekers! Have hope about the vilest and worst of men. If there are any such here, tonight, let them have hope, for if the Lord bids the righteous, in whom there is a measure of His Grace, to look to Him for salvation, assuredly He bids you to do the same, for you have nothing of your own. If those who are righteous before God yet find their salvation in Him, alone, where are you to look? You must look to the Lord, also! Look to Jesus on the Cross and find salvation in Him, for the Lord Jesus redeemed with His precious blood all who trust in Him.

O my dear Hearer, come and cast yourself upon Him! “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” So runs the Word of God. Look to that wondrous death of the Son of God which redeems such as you are and, in your case, too, it shall be found that your salvation is of the Lord! May God bless you and cause you to rejoice in His salvation!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 37.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—242, 238, AND PSALM 37. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #454 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SUNSHINE IN THE HEART  
NO. 454

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 15, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Delight yourself also in the Lord. And He shall  
give you the desires of your heart.”  
Psalm 37:4.**

THERE are two teachings in our text which must be very surprising to those who are strangers to vital godliness. To sincere Believers these marvels are recognized facts, but to the outside world they will appear very strange. We have here, first of all, the life of a Believer described as a delight in God. And thus we are certified of the great Truth of God that true religion overflows with happiness and joy. Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon religion as a joyful thing—to them it is service, duty, or necessity—but never pleasure and delight.

Why should they go up to the House of God? Is it not because of custom—a custom which they would gladly avoid if they dare? Why do they attend to the ordinances of the Church? Is it not either out of Pharisaic hope of merit, or from a superstitious dread? How many view the forms of religion as charms to avert ill, or as lesser evils by which they escape from dreaded judgment? What is their service but drudgery, and their worship but weariness? Ask the worldlings what they think of religion—and even when they practice its outward rites they snuff at it as a dull and dreary thing. “What a weariness it is!”

They love it as much as the ass loves labor, or the horse the whip, or the prisoner the treadmill. They cry for short sermons. Indeed, none at all would suit them better. How cheerfully would they clip the hours of Sunday. Indeed, if Sabbaths only came but once a month, they would prefer it. The heavy necessity of pious customs weighs upon them as tribute upon a conquered province. They pay to religion an observance of the character of a tax, or a toll, which custom demands.

Free will offerings they know not, and loving enjoyment of hallowed fellowship they cannot understand. They serve God as Cain did, who brought his offering, it is true, but brought it late—brought it because it was the family custom and he would not be outdone by his brother. He brought it of the common fruit of the ground and with a sullen, loveless heart. These Cainites bring such as they are forced to bring, and mingle no faith in Jesus’ blood with their offerings. They come with lead heels to the House of God, and they go away as if they had feathers on their feet. They serve God, but it is either that they may gain thereby, or else because they dare not do otherwise. The thought of delight in religion is so strange to most men, that no two words in their language stand farther apart than “holiness,” and “delight.”

Ah, but Believers who know Christ understand that delight and faith are so blessedly married that the gates of Hell cannot prevail to divorce them. They who love God with all their hearts, find that His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. Such joy, such brimful delights, such overflowing bliss do the saints discover in their Lord, that so

far from serving Him from custom, they would follow Him should all the world cast out His name as evil. We fear not God because of any compulsion—our faith is no fetter—our profession is no prison. We are not dragged to holiness, nor driven to duty. No, Sirs, our religion is our recreation. Our hope is our happiness, our duty is our delight.

I know it always will be a calumny against Christ’s religion that it makes men miserable. But a greater misapprehension, or a baser falsehood never cursed the world. Because we cannot trifle so foolishly, nor sin so boldly, nor brag so lustily as the servants of sin, therefore you think us miserable! Ah, Sirs, it is well written, “A stranger meddles not with our joy.” The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and their joy no man takes from them. Let us remind you, however, that still waters run the deepest. The brook which rattles over the stones dries up in the summer. But the deep-flowing river speeds on, come drought or heat, and yet glides silently along the meads.

We do not talk so loudly of our joys as you of your merriments, because we have no need to do so. Ours are known as well in silence as in exciting company. We need not your society to make us glad, much less the varied accompaniments which prop your bliss. We need neither bowl, nor feast, nor viol, nor dance to make us glad—nor even the stalled ox and the bursting wine vat to make us rich. Our happiness lies not on passing creatures but in the eternal, immutable Creator. I know, despite all we shall say, this slander will survive from generation to generation—that God’s people are a wretched people.

But, at least, let us clear our conscience of you, and let us make you without excuse if you believe it again. We do have joy. We do have delights, such that we would not part with one ounce of ours for tons of yours. Not drops of our joy for rivers of your delights. Ours are no tinsel or painted joys, but solid realities. Ours are joys that we can take with us to our bed in the silent dust—joys that shall sleep with us in the tomb and that shall awake with us in eternity—joys that we can look back upon and so live them over again in retrospect—joys that we can anticipate and so know both here and hereafter.

Ours are not bubbles which only glitter to burst. Ours are not apples of Sodom, turning to ashes in our hand. Our delights are substantial, real, true, solid, lasting, everlasting! What more shall I say? Dismiss from your minds this mistake. Delight and true religion are as allied as root and flower, as indivisible as truth and certainty. They are, in fact, two precious jewels set side by side in the same socket of gold.

But there is another wonder in our text to worldly men, though it is a wonder well understood by Christians. The text says, “He shall give you the desires of your heart.” “Why,” the worldly man says, “I thought religion was all self-denial. I never imagined that in loving God we could have our desires. I thought that godliness consisted in killing, destroying, and keeping back our desires.” Does not the religion of most men consist in an open abstinence from sins which they secretly love? Negative godliness is very common in this age. It is supposed by most men that our religion consists in things which we must not do, rather than in pleasures which we may enjoy.  
We must not go to a theater. We must not sing songs, trade on Sundays, use ill words, and so on. We must not do this, and we must not do that. And they suppose us to be a crabbed, miserable race of persons who, no doubt, make up by some private allowance for denying ourselves in public.

Now, it is true that religion is self-denial. It is equally true that it is not self-denial. Christian men have two selves. There is the old self and therein they do deny the flesh with its affections and lusts. But there is a new self. There is a new-born spirit, the new man in Christ Jesus. And, Brethren, our religion does not consist in any self-denial of that. No, let it have the full swing of its wishes and desires. For all that it can wish for, all that it can pant after, all that it can long to enjoy—it may most safely obtain.

When I hear persons say, “Well, you know my religion consists in some things that I must do and in some things that I must not do,” I reply, “mine consists in things that I love to do and in avoiding things that I hate and would scorn to do.” I feel no chain in my religion, for I am free and never man more free. He who fears God and is wholly God’s servant, has no chains about him. He may live as he likes, for he likes to live as he ought. He may have his full desires, for his desires are holy, heavenly, Divine. He may take the full range of the utmost capacity of his wishes and desires, and have all he wants and all he wishes—for God has given him the promise and God will give him the fulfillment of it.

But do not go away with the idea that we are always afraid to put one foot before the other because there are some must nots in our way. And do not think that we do not go that way to the right, or that way to the left because we dare not. Oh, Sirs, we would not if we might. We would not if the Law were altered—we would not have your pleasures if we might. If we could go to Heaven and live as sinners live, we would not choose their way and conversation. It would be a Hell to us to be compelled to sin, even if sin could go unpunished. If we could have your drunkenness, if we could have your lusts—oh, you ungodly ones—if we could have your mirth and your joy, we would not have them.

We do not deny ourselves when we give these up. We despise your mirth, we abominate it and tread it beneath our feet. “I can’t understand,” once said a bird to a fish, “how it is that you always live in the cold element. I could not live there. It must be a great self-denial to you not to fly up to the trees. See how I can mount aloft.” “Ah,” said the fish, “it is no self-denial to me to live here, it is my element. I never aspire to fly, for it would not suit me. If I were taken out of my element I should die unless I was restored to it very soon and the sooner the better.”

So the Believer feels that God is his native element. He does not escape from his God, or from his Master’s will and service. And if for a time he were taken out of it, the sooner he could get back to it, the better. If he is thrown into bad company he is miserable and wretched until he gets out of it again. Does the dove deny itself when it does not eat carrion? No, verily the dove could not delight in blood, it would not feed on it if it could. When a man sees a company of swine under the oak delighting themselves in their acorns and grunting out their satisfaction—does he deny himself when he passes them by without sharing their feast?

No, verily, he has better bread at home he can eat, and swine’s meat is no dainty to him. So it is with the Believer—his religion is a matter of delight, a matter of satisfaction—and that which he avoids and turns from is very little self-denial to him. His tastes are changed, his wishes are altered. He delights himself in his God, and joyously receives the desire of his heart.

This by way of preface. Now to come to our text itself. There are two things in the text very plainly. The first is a precept written upon sparkling jewels, “Delight yourself in the Lord.” The second is a promise priceless beyond rubies, “He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

I. The first is a PRECEPT WRITTEN UPON SPARKLING JEWELS. I have added those last words, because the Law of the Ten Commandments was written upon stone—perhaps hard granite—in which men could take but little delight. But this Law of one command, “Delight yourself in the Lord,” is no stony Law to be written upon tablets of granite. It contains a precept for sparkling brightness, worthy to be written on amethysts and pearls. “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Why, Brethren, when delight becomes a duty, then certainly, duty is a delight!

When it becomes my duty to be happy, when I have an express command to be glad, then, indeed, I must be a sinner if I refuse my own joys and turn aside from my own bliss! Oh, what a God we have, who has made it our duty to be happy! What a gracious God, who accounts no obedience to be so worthy of His acceptance as a gladsome obedience rendered by a joyous heart. “Delight yourself in the Lord.”

1. Now, first, What is this delight? I have been thinking the word, “delight,” over, and I cannot explain it. You know it is a word by itself. A delightful word—I cannot use anything but its own self to describe it. If you look at it—it is flashing with light. It sparkles like a star. No, like a bright constellation, radiant with sweet influences like the Pleiades. It is joy, yet is it more, it is joy running over. It is rest but such a rest as allows of the utmost activity of every passion of the soul.

Delight! It is mirth without its froth. Delight! It is peace, yet it is more than that—it is peace celebrated with festivity—with all the streamers hanging in the streets, and all the music playing in the soul. Delight! To what shall I compare it? It is a stray word that belongs to the language of Paradise. When the holy words of Eden flew away to Heaven at the Fall, this one, being entangled in the silken meshes of the net of the first promise, was retained on earth to sing in Believers’ ears.

Where shall I find metaphors to describe it? Man fails me. Let me turn, then, to the unsinning creatures of God. Go to the seaside when the sea is going down, and in some parts of the coast you will see a little fringe just at the edge of the wave. It looks like a mist but on closer examination you will find there are millions of very small shrimps, leaping up in all manner of postures and forms, out of the receding wave, in exuberance of glee and merriment.

Or look on a summer eve at the gnats as they dance untiringly, scarcely knowing how to enjoy themselves enough! Or see the lambs in the field, how they skip and leap! Hark to the morning song of the birds of the air, and listen again to their delicious notes at eventide! See the fish as they leap from the stream, and hear the insects as they hum in the air—these may give faint glimmerings of the light of delight!

Wing your flight to Heaven if you would know what delight means. See the spirits there, as their fingers sweep the golden strings! Hark to their voices, as with peals of joy unknown to human ears, they sing unto Him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in His blood! Mark them as they keep eternal Sabbath in the great temple of the living God, and gaze upon His Throne and gaze and gaze and gaze again, absorbed in glory, beatified in Jesus, full of Heaven, overflowing with exceeding joy. This is delight!

I fail in the description, I know. You must take the word and spell it over letter by letter. And then you must pray God to put your hearts into a sweet frame of mind, made up of the following ingredients—a perfect rest from all earthly care. A perfect resignation of yourself into God’s hands. An intense confidence in His love for you. A Divine love to Him, so that you feel you would be anything or do anything for Him. Then, there must be added to all this, a joy in Him. And when you have these, they must be all set a-boiling—and then, by His Grace, you have delight in the Lord your God. Matthew Henry says, “Desire is love in action, like a bird on the wing. Delight is love in rest, like a bird on its nest.” Such is the meaning of the word and such the duty prescribed. “Delight yourself also in the Lord.”

2. Secondly, from where comes this delight? The text tells us, “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Delight yourself in Jehovah, in His very existence. That there is a God is enough to make the most wretched man happy if he believes. The nations crash, dynasties fall, kingdoms reel, what does it matter? There is God. The father has gone to the tomb, the mother sleeps in the dust, the wife has fallen from our side, the children are removed— but there is God. This, alone, is enough to be a wellspring of joy forever and ever to all true Believers.

Delight also in His dominion. “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice.” Jehovah is King! Come what may of it, He sits upon His Throne and rules all things well. The Lord has prepared His Throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all. Standing in the chariot of Providence, He holds the reins and guides the dashing coursers according to His own will. God is exalted above the mountains and above the hills—He has sway in all things, both the magnificent and the minute. Be glad, O daughter of Zion, for the Lord is King forever and ever, hallelujah, hallelujah!

Every attribute of God should become a fresh ray in this sunlight of delight. That He is wise should make us glad who know our folly. That He is mighty should cause us to rejoice who tremble at our own weakness. That He is everlasting should always be a theme for our music, when we know that we are grass, and wither as the green herb. That He is unchanging should always give us a song, since we change every hour and are never long the same. That He is full of Grace, that He is overflowing with it, and that this Divine Grace in the Covenant He has given to us—that it is ours, ours to cleanse us, ours to keep us, ours to sanctify us, ours to perfect us, ours to bring us to Heaven—all this should tend to make us delight ourselves in Him.

Oh, Believers, you stand today by a deep river. You, perhaps, have waded into it up to your ankles, and you know something of its clear, sweet, heavenly streams—but onward the depth is greater and the current more delightful still. Come, take a plunge! Now, plunge into the Godhead’s deepest sea! Lose yourself in His immensity. Let His attributes cover up

all your weakness and all your folly and everything else that can make you groan and fill you with despondency. Rejoice in Him, though you cannot rejoice in yourselves! Triumph in the God of Israel, though in yourselves you have cause enough for despair.

The Christian also feels that he may delight himself in all that God has done in the past. Those Psalms which end with, “His mercy endures forever”—where we find such divisions as these—“Og, king of Bashan, for His mercy endures forever.” “Sihon, king of the Amorites, for His mercy endures forever”—all these show us that God’s people in olden times were likely to think much of God’s actions. They did not throw them in a lump into one verse, but divided them, to have a song about each of them. So let God’s people rehearse the deeds of the Lord! Let them tell of His mighty acts. Let them sing, “Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces Your enemy.”

“The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name.” “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Let them continue to rehearse His deeds, till they come to the deeds of Grace in their own hearts. And here let them sing more sweetly than ever. Nor let them cease to sing, for as new mercies flow unto them each day, let day unto day utter His praise, and night unto night testify of His Grace. “Delight yourself in the Lord.”

If these that I have already mentioned were not enough, we might delight ourselves in all that God is to do—in all the splendid triumphs He has yet to achieve. In all the glories of the latter days. In all the splendors of His Throne, when all the hosts of God shall meet at last. In His triumph over Death, and Hell, and in His ultimate victory over sin, when He shall make the whole earth to become filled with His praise.

Oh, Brethren, time would fail us, eternity might fail us, indeed, to catalog all the different points of holy delight which Believers, when they are in a spiritual frame of mind, may find in the Lord their God! You should delight yourselves in God the Father, in His eternal love to you when there was nothing in you to love. In His election of your soul, in His justification of you in Christ, in the giving up of His only begotten Son to redeem you from Hell. You should delight yourselves in Jesus, you should—

*“Tell what His arm has done,  
What spoils from death He won.  
Sing His dear name alone,  
Worthy the Lamb!”*

You should delight yourselves in God the Holy Spirit, in His quickening operations, in His illuminations, in His consolations, in the strength which He gives you, in the wisdom which He imparts to you, in the faithfulness with which He attends to you, and in the certainty that He will ultimately perfect you, that you may be met to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. And here we might branch out into a thousand themes. Delight yourselves in God as your Father, as your Friend, as your Helper. Delight yourselves in Jesus Christ as your Brother, as your Bridegroom, as your Shepherd, as your All in All.

Delight yourselves in Christ in all His offices, as Prophet, Priest and King. Triumph in Him, in all His garments, for they all smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia. Delight yourselves in Christ, in His glory and in His humiliation, in His Cross and in His crown, in His manger and in His eternal triumph, wherein He led captivity captive. Delight yourselves in the Holy Spirit, in all His various dealings with men’s minds. Delight in Pentecost and in Pentecosts that are yet to come. And—but we close. What more should we say? Surely we might talk on forever! Delight yourself in Jehovah, that great, that boundless, that joyful theme—and delight yourself in Him forevermore.

3. Now another question suggests itself. When is this delight to be practiced? “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Precepts without limit as to time are for perpetual observance. My text does not say, “Delight yourself in the Lord occasionally. Or now and then.” But at all times. There are two occasions when it is hard to delight in God, and therefore I will mention these. It is hard to delight in God when everything goes well with us. “Oh,” I hear you say, “I cannot understand that. That is the time when I do delight in God most.”

Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid it is the time when you delight in God least. “Well but when my comforts are round about me, when Providence smiles upon me, then I can delight in God.” Stop! Are you sure of that? Is it not likely that often you are delighting in His mercies rather than in Him? Delighting in the creature, rather than in the Creator? I fear, Brethren, it is our sunshiny days that are the greatest times of temptation. Well may we pray, “In all times of our wealth deliver us.” We are somewhat like a foolish wife who, when her husband gives her jewels and rings, grows apt to love the jewels, rather than her husband.

Many Believers we have known who have had Divine Grace and mercies and have had great privileges—come to pride themselves more in the mercies and the privileges than in their God. It is hard when the wine vat is full, to love God more than the vineyard. It is hard when there is a fine harvest to think more of God than of the sheaves. It is hard when you are growing rich, still to say, “this is not my treasure.” The treasures of earth will besmear our garments unless we see well to our hearts—our soul cleaves to the dust and dust is no aid to devotion. Oh, take heed, rich Believer, that you delight yourself in God! Not in your parks and your lawns, your gardens and your houses, your lands and your estates. For if you delight in these, your gold and your silver are cankered, the moth is in your garment, and the blight will soon be on your heritage. Say, “These are not my portion.” “God is my portion says my soul.”

Another time when it is hard to delight in God—not so hard as in this first one—is when everything goes ill with us. Then we are apt to say with old Jacob, “All these things are against me.” What a noble opportunity Job lost, when servant after servant came to tell him that everything was gone, when he sat on the dunghill and did scrape himself with a potsherd. If he could have stood upright and have said, “Now will I rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in the God of my salvation,” what a triumph of faith would he have achieved!

If he could have thus played the man for God, Job would have been the most splendid character that we have in Holy Scripture. He did go far when he said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” There spoke a man whom God had made mighty. But if he could have delighted still more in God—when the sores were on him and they were bursting—that would have been all but superhuman. I think I may say it would have been as much as ever Grace itself could work in a man. Yet how often have I noticed that Believers do rejoice in God much more readily in their

afflictions than they do in their prosperity.

I have seen the hyssop growing upon Lebanon and I have seen the cedar growing on the wall. I have seen great saints where there was little mercy. And I have seen driveling saints where there were great Providential blessings. God’s birds sing best in cages, and the praise of God comes better out of the mouth of the furnace of affliction than even from the top of the mountain of communion. We are so constituted, it seems to me, that unless God screws the strings of our heart up by pain and affliction, we never give forth much sweet music to Him.

Yet it is difficult, very difficult, for a man, when every earthly prop gives way, to say—“the fig tree does not blossom, the calves perish from the stall, the harvest has been mildewed, the cankerworm eats up all the produce, but still my delight is in God and my triumph is in the God of my salvation.” Yet, by Divine Grace, at all times we are to delight in God. But I hear a voice say, “But when is the Christian to be miserable?” Never, Brother, never! “But not at times?” No. Not if he does his duty. “But ought not a Believer sometimes be cast down?” Saints are cast down but they ought not to be.

“Well but many of God’s saints are full of doubts and fears.” I know they are, and the more’s the pity. “But some of the Lord’s children go mourning all their days.” It is their own fault, their Lord has not bid them do so. The Scriptures teaches us, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again,” says the Apostle, “I say, rejoice.” “But are there not times when we may indulge the melancholy vein and cultivate sorrow?” Well, if you do, you will soon find it grow. God often serves His children as I have known parents do theirs. If His children pray for afflictions they shall have them until they shall begin to pray ten times more earnestly to have them taken away.

If God’s people cry for nothing, they shall soon have something to cry for. If they will make themselves miserable they will soon have miseries added to their miseries. But so far as the promise is concerned, and the precept is concerned, it is the daily, constant, hourly duty and business of the true Believer to delight himself in the Lord his God.

4. Before I leave this point, I answer one other question. Why is this delighting in God so rare? Why do you see so many desponding Christians? So many doubting Christians? Why do you see so many whose religion seems to them to be a yoke, a very heavy yoke, too? It is, I fear, because there is so little on the one hand of genuine religion, and so little, on the other, of deep-toned religion where the little that there is, is genuine. Why, the man who has a religion that is not of his heart, I do not wonder that he is wretched! You have seen sometimes a man with a dog of a breed that does not like the water, and he throws it in—how quickly it gets out again!

But there are some of a different breed, that will swim by the hour, and delight in it. So, now, there are some professors who are known to be hypocrites by the fact that their religion is against their will. You have put them into it, and they would soon get out. But the true Christian takes to his religion by Divine Grace with ardor and delight. He loves it, he delights in it. This is one of the best tests to discern between a hypocrite and a true Christian. Job says of the hypocrite, “Will he delight himself in God?” No—the hypocrite will pull a long face. The hypocrite will look wretched. The hypocrite will make himself as miserable as ever man can be when the time has come for it. He never did, and he never can, and he never will delight himself in God as a rule.

He may have some joy in the outward means, for even Herod heard John gladly. But that is only a spasm. Only the true Believer can have a constant and an abiding satisfaction and delight in the service and love of God. This is an evidence so sure and infallible, that if any among you delight in God, I conclude, without hesitation, that you are a saved soul. But if any of you, on the other hand, never have any delight in God of any kind, I question whether you ever knew God at all—for if you have known Him you must in your degree have found delight in Him.

“But what is the good of this delight?” asks one. “Why should Christians be such a happy people?” Why, it is good in all ways. It is good for our God. It gives Him honor among the sons of men when we are glad. It is good for us. It makes us strong. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” It is good for the ungodly. For when they see Christians glad, they long to be Believers themselves. It is good for our fellow Christians. It comforts them and tends to cheer them. Whereas, if we look gloomy, we shall spread the disease and others will be wretched and gloomy, too. For all these reasons and for many more that can be given, it is a good and pleasant thing that a Believer should delight himself in God.

II. I now turn to the second point of the subject, briefly. “He shall give you the desires of your heart.” HERE IS A PROMISE PRICELESS BEYOND RUBIES. What connection is there between the first part of the text and the second—“Delight yourself in the Lord,” and, “He shall give you the desires of your heart.” There is this connection—they who delight in God are qualified to have the promise fulfilled. They are qualified, in the first place, as to the desires. It would not be a safe thing for God to give to everyone of you here the desire of your heart—it would be your ruin.

One of the best things that the Lord does for some men is to check them and thwart them. There is many a man that has gone to Heaven through not having had his desires, who would have gone to Hell if he had had them. Ungodly men have desires that would lead them to the pit, and when God refuses to give them their desires, it is as though He had put chains and posts and barriers in the road to keep them from going post haste to their own destruction. The ungodly man is not qualified to have the promise, because he would desire something that would neither glorify God nor profit himself. But when a man’s delight is in God, then his desires are of such a sort that God may be glorified in the granting of them, and the man, himself, profited by the receiving of them.

Again, delighting in God qualifies the Believer not only for desiring aright but for spending aright. Some men, if they had their heart’s desire, even if it were a good desire, would, nevertheless, make a wrong use of it. And so it would happen to them as it did to Israel of old, while the meat was yet in their mouths, the curse of God would come upon them. But he that delights in God, whatever he gets, knows how to use it well. People say use is a second nature. Brethren, abuse is the first nature. To abuse mercies is much more the nature of man than to properly use them. But when the Believer delights in God, whatever he has from God he spends aright—he makes it not a sacrifice to himself—much less a god before whom he will bow down and worship.

But, by God’s Grace, he makes it a means of serving God better and delighting himself more in the Master. The rivers of worldly men run away from the sea. But the rivers that Christian men have, run into the sea. If a worldly man sails along the stream of his mercies, he gets further and further from God and becomes more and more an idolater. But when the Christian gets mercies, he sails nearer and nearer to his God. And so his mercies become highways to the Throne of God Himself.

“Still,” asks one, “what are those desires which we are sure to receive?” Now, Brethren, we must single out those who delight themselves in God, and I believe the range of their desires will be found in a very short compass. If I had my desire of my God this morning, it is not much for me to say I have no earthly thing that I would desire, “for I have all things and abound.” But if the Apostle Paul were here, who had nothing, who was often naked, and poor, and miserable, I am persuaded if he had his wish, he would say, “I have nothing to wish for, nothing upon earth, for I have learned in whatever state I am therewith to be content.”

But if I must have a wish, Brethren, I know what I would wish for. I would wish to be perfect, to be free from every sin, from every imperfection, from all self, from all temptation, from all love of the world, from all care for everything or anything that is contrary to God’s Word. Is not that your wish, you that delight in God? Would you not, now, if an angel were to stand before you at the pew door, would you not say, “If I may, let me be perfectly set free from the very name and nature, guilt and power of sin.”

You shall have your desire—the Lord shall give unto you the desire of your heart. But I hear another say, “If I might have my desire it would be that I might live nearer to Christ. That I might have constant communion with Him till I knew Him and the power of His resurrection, being made conformable unto His death.” Brother, I join you in that desire. I am sure if you had ten kingdoms offered in the one hand, and this fellowship with Christ in the other, do not I speak the desire of your heart when I you say would choose to have communion with Christ rather than these kingdoms? Well, the Lord shall give you the desire of your heart. Only delight yourself in the Lord.

“Well,” says another, “if I might have my desire I would have all these things but I would desire to be useful always.” Ah, to be useful! How many men live like Belzoni’s toad in the pyramids of Egypt, which had been there two thousand years? And what had it done, but sometimes sleep and sometimes wake the whole time through. And so some men live and do nothing. “But if I had my desire,” I think I hear many of you say, “I should like to be useful. To win crowns for Christ, to save souls for Him, to bring in His lost sheep.” Brothers and Sisters, delight yourself in the Lord, you shall have your desire. Perhaps not exactly as you would like to word it. You may not be useful in the sphere you aspire to, but you shall be useful as God would have you useful in His own way and in His own measure.

I must say one thing, though. I have a desire, which if now I might offer it, knowing that it should be granted me, it would be this—I desire to see you all converted. Mothers and Fathers, can you not say, “My heart’s desire is that my children might be saved, for I have no greater joy than this, that my children walk in the Truth of God”? And I as a minister say, my earnest desire, the highest desire I know, that which my soul feels most when it pants the most, and aspires the most, after some big and great thing, is that I may present every man of you perfect before God at the last. That I may not only be clear of your blood which is a great thing, but that I may have you with me when I shall say, “Here am I, Lord, and the children You have given me for Christ.”

Oh, you who are members of this Church, will you pray that your minister may delight himself in God, that he may have this desire of his heart? And will you, yourselves also delight in God, so that when you come to God in prayer and pray for this congregation, you may be sure He will give you the desire of your heart, because you have delighted yourselves in Him? They said of Martin Luther as he walked the streets, “There comes a man that can have anything of God he likes.” You ask the reason of it. Because Luther delighted himself in his God. Give us some such men in this congregation, and in this Church—who love the Lord and rejoice in Him—what an effect their prayers will have!

These are the men who have the keys of Heaven, and of death, and of Hell. These are the men that can open Heaven or shut it up, make it rain or rain not. The Church of Rome pretends that she has the keys. But the Church of Christ has the keys without pretending to have them, and these keys swing at the girdles of the men who delight in God! You can, by your prayers, bring down such showers of the Spirit upon the Christian Church, that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. And if you cease to delight in God you can shut up Heaven itself, so that no rain descends and the whole Church becomes barren and unfruitful once again.

Now to wind up. Mark this—this is the only thing that a man can delight in and get his desires. There is a man that delights in money, but he does not get his desire. He gets his money, but he never gets the satisfaction he expected. We read in the papers but the other day of one who had a singular success in his profession, but who lately attempted suicide under the notion that he should lose his all through the American war. We remember in this great city one of the largest merchants who died worth more than three millions of money—for at that amount I think his property was sworn—who during the latter part of his life was accustomed to be paid the same wages as his gardener and believed that he should certainly die in a workhouse.

He had got his broad and wide estates, and money that could not be counted—but he did not get the desire of his heart. He had delighted in his gold, and he had not the desire of his heart. So have we known men that have delighted themselves in fame, and when they have got it, they would have been only too glad to get rid of it. They have been great statesmen, or mighty warriors, and they have been greatly renowned. But when they have gained all the fame and stood on the very top of the pinnacle, there was not that in it that they expected and they have said, “Would that I had lived in obscurity, for then I might have known some satisfaction.”

And look at many of you. When you were apprentices, the desire of your heart was to be journeymen. Well, when you became journeymen, what then? You wanted to be masters, and set up in trade for yourselves. Well, you have set up in trade and got on pretty well. Have you the desire of your heart? Oh, no! That has gone on a little further. Now, you are waiting till you have brought up this large family of yours, and then when

you have your children started in life, you are looking out for a villa in the suburbs where you can retire and spend the rest of your days.

And some of you have the villa in the country and have wound up your business affairs. Have you the desire of your heart yet? Well, not quite yet. There is still something else that you want. Ah, yes—getting the desire of a man’s heart is like chasing a phantom. It is here, there, and everywhere— now on the hill, now down in the valley. You leap down on it and it is away again on the next hill—and then on the next—and you find your chase is fruitless. Satisfaction in this world is like the diamond which the fool sees lying at the foot of the rainbow. So he runs after it, and as he runs the rainbow is ever in the distance, and he can never find what he expected. If you would have the desire of your heart, delight in your God. Give Him your love. Give Him your heart. Plunge deep into this stream and you shall have all that you can wish for. The desire of your heart to the full extent shall be granted.

Are there not in this house today those who cannot delight in God?— Cannot—cannot—cannot? “How,” you say, “can I delight in God? He is angry with me.” You are right, you cannot. How can he delight in God whose sins are unforgiven, upon whom the wrath of God abides always? Can a man delight in a roaring lion, or in a bear robbed of her whelps? Can a man delight in a consuming fire? Can a man delight in a naked sword that seeks to reach his very heart? God is such to you so long as you are out of His Grace. How then can you delight in God?

There is one step that is necessary—believe on the Lord Jesus Christ— and then you shall delight in the Lord. That is, trust yourself to be saved by Christ. Go and put yourself into Christ’s hands to have all your sins put away. And when you have trusted Christ you shall know that your sins are forgiven, that you are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. And you may go your way and delight yourself in God, for the promise is this—your desire shall be granted you.

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“REST IN THE LORD” NO. 1333

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Rest in the Lord.”  
Psalm 37:7.**

THE occurrence of our text in the Psalm before us is an instance of the great rule that the Lord does nothing by halves. In this priceless Psalm, the Lord found His servant, in the first verse, liable to fretfulness and envy—and He exhorted him to cease from fretting. Then, in verse three, He taught him to trust. In verse four He led him on to delight. In verses five and six He conducted him into a peaceful committing of his way unto God and He did not stay the operation of His Grace till He had perfected that which concerned him and brought him up to the elevated point of our text, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” God does not merely cure the evil in us, but He confers unspeakable good! He takes away the disfiguring wound, but He imparts, also, comeliness and beauty.

If any of you, this morning, are in a low state of Grace, so that you have even fallen into fretfulness at the prosperity of the ungodly, do not cast away all hope, for the Grace of God abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence, and He will restore your soul! Remember how David said, in the 73rd Psalm—“I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” “So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You: you have held me by my right hand.”

The Lord knows how to bring His people, again, from Bashan, yes, and to lift them up like Jonah from the depths of the sea! And He can bring you, this day, by the operation of His Grace, upward from doubt to assurance, from fretfulness to rest! Rest is a blessing which properly belongs to the people of God, although they do not enjoy it one tenth as much as they might. Under the Old Testament dispensation there was considerable provision made for rest. Typically the chosen nation was shown that one great end of the visitation of the Lord was to give His people rest, for on the seventh day they rested and did no manner of work.

Yes more, in the seventh year they rested according to the Divine precept. “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.” When they were obedient to the Lord’s commands, they thus enjoyed a whole year of rest, and were no losers by it, for, no doubt, the seventh fallow year so benefited the land that it brought forth all the more fruit during the other six, so that there was none the less store in their barns.

Over and above this, once in 50 years, when the seventh year came round, they carried out, still further, the Sabbatic idea and the Jubilee

Year was a time of peculiar and emphatic rest and festival. For thus had the Lord commanded. “A Jubilee shall that 50th year be unto you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of your vine undressed. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.” So very prominently, even in that somewhat servile and yoke-bearing dispensation, there was brought before the mind of the Israelite the privilege of rest. And those who possessed the inner sight, as Moses did, realized the promise, “My Spirit shall go with you and I will give you rest.”

Indeed, Canaan, itself, was intended to be the type of rest—the land that flows with milk and honey, the land of brooks and valleys, the land that the Lord Your God thinks about, the land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year, was meant to be a place where every man should rest under his own vine and fig tree, and look for a yet deeper rest in God. Had they known it, in giving them Canaan, Joshua had given them a fair picture of rest. They did not see through the type so fully as to understand its significance, but, nevertheless, there it was.

O Christian men and women, you, also, miss much of your rest! You have too much of fretfulness, too much of care, too much that is servile. The land does not keep her Sabbaths as she should, neither does your soul rest as it might! And as for jubilees, how very scarce they are! If Christians lived near to God and enjoyed the peace which Jesus gives, they might keep Jubilee every year and Sabbath every day! The Lord grant that we may have power to enjoy His rest and that it may never be said of us, “They could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Brothers and Sisters, the Lord, as if to show us that He would have us rest, has been pleased to speak of resting, Himself! It is inconceivable that He should be fatigued! It were profanity to suppose that He who faints not, neither is weary, and of whose understanding there is no searching, can ever be in a condition to need rest! And yet He did rest, for when He had finished all the works of His hands in the six days of creation, the Lord, “rested on the seventh day and sanctified it.” When afterwards that rest was broken because His works were marred, we find Him further on smelling a “sweet savor of rest” in the sacrifice which was offered unto Him by Noah, whose very name was rest.

These two facts are highly instructive and teach us that God rests in a perfect work and that when that work is marred the Lord rests in a perfect Sacrifice, even in the Lord Jesus Christ! He has a rest there and He speaks of our “entering His rest” as it is written, “they shall not enter into My rest.” There is a rest of God, then, and there remains a rest unto the people of God. And of that rest, not in its highest development in Heaven, but in its present enjoyment on earth, we are about to speak. “Rest in the Lord.”

First, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us consider the steps to this royal chamber of repose. Secondly, let us meditate upon the rest which is enjoyed in that quiet chamber. And then, thirdly, let us look at that sumptuous chamber, itself. As the result and issue of it all, may the Holy Spirit sweetly lead us into quietness and peace, even as of old it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest.”

I. First, then, let us consider certain STEPS TO THIS ROYAL CHAMBER OF REST. How are we to reach this place of sacred repose? The steps are in the Psalm before us. The first is, “Fret not yourself.” You are out in the fields among the wild beasts—cease hunting them. You are among those who toil in bondage, suffering all the brunt of ill weathers and hard seasons—get away from them. Come within doors, into your Father’s house. By the help of the Divine Spirit leave the green bay trees which have cast their shadow upon you and enter into the sanctuary. No longer be as the carnal who envy one another.

So long as you are out there among those who lust after evil things and fret against the Lord’s Providence, you cannot rest. While you are agitating yourself to gain what other men lust after and to enjoy what other men take pleasure in, you are missing the peculiar privileges of the children of God! While your spirit is running with worldlings in the race and wrestling with them in the battle, you cannot enjoy the peace which Jesus left as a legacy to His disciples. Get away from them, then, for the first step to rest is, “fret not yourself.” The griefs which make the ungodly pine are not for you, for the objects which they seek are not your objects! The losses which make them despond must not make you disconsolate, for their treasure is not your treasure.

Get away from them and stop admiring their transient felicity and lamenting your present distress. Have you been envying transgressors? Count yourself to have been foolish and ignorant in so doing, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb! Rise above the things which are seen, for they are temporal! Spurn the things which make the flesh smart, for this light affliction is but for a moment. Let not the world weigh you down, for you are bound, as an heir of Heaven, to tread the world beneath your feet—and all its honors you are called upon to despise! And in order that your soul should not lust after its dainties, come away unto your God and no longer fret yourself.

When you have thus come out of the field and have arrived at the palace of Love, the first staircase is described as trust and do. Read the third verse, “Trust in the Lord and do good.” You believe in the Lord’s love? Prove your confidence by committing yourself to the keeping of Him who loves you. You believe in the Atonement of Jesus? Fly for cleansing to the blood which was shed for you! You believe in the Glory of your risen Lord? Commit all your future to Him with whom you are one day to sit upon the Throne!

As for all your trials, come, now, and believe in God concerning them. Do not let anything make you mistrust or distrust your God. Know that He is God and “His mercy endures forever,” and trust in Him forever! But let this faith be practical—“Trust in the Lord and do good.” A dead faith will bring you but poor comfort. Yours must be a faith which can do as well as receive. It is through the exercise of faith that comfort comes to the heart, even as the exercise of our limbs warms our bodily frame. Do good even if you suffer for it and you shall partake in the joy of your Lord—

*“Commit your way to God,  
The weight which makes you faint.  
World’s are to Him no load.  
To Him breathe your complaint.  
He who for winds and clouds  
Makes a pathway free,  
Through wastes, or hostile crowds  
Will make a way for thee.”*

When you have learned to trust and to do, you will have ascended a noble staircase of the royal Palace—and where does it land you? It lands you in the king’s dining room, where it is written—“Verily you shall be fed.” Observe the promise—if you have a living, active faith you shall be provided for! Your bodily needs, as they come, shall be relieved. Your mental needs, also, shall be satisfied. And as for the vast demands of your spirit, God All-Sufficient shall supply them all—“So shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.” It will be a happy circumstance, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you can come up the first staircase this morning, leaving the fields, leaving the elder brother who complains concerning the many years of service in which his Father has never given him a kid, that he might make merry with his friends—if you, I say, can come up rejoicing to do the will of the Lord out of motives of love!

Leave the sinner and the grumbler alone, and go up those stairs of active faith! Then sit down where a feast is spread, even a feast of fat things full of marrow and of wines on the lees well-refined! We must ascend somewhat higher and climb the next staircase which is marked, Delight and Desire. “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Think what a good God you have, yes, what a blessed God He is! Remember how good He has been to you in the past. Think of the richness of His Word, the sureness of His promises, the tenderness of His love and the power of His arm till your soul shall say, “Whatever I have not, I have my God! Whatever is unsatisfactory, He satisfies me! And whatever grieves me to think it is so unfit for me, nothing grieves me in my God. I would not have Him changed, nor have Him change in any respect. He is a sea of blessedness in which my soul does swim.”

When you have delighted, begin to desire. Open your mouth wide and the Lord will fill it! Enlarge your petitions and He will grant them to you. Desire more Grace, more holiness, more love, more knowledge of Christ, more Heaven below and all these shall come at your call. Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you! See, now, we have ascended beyond the dining room and mounted to the royal treasury! We have entered the king’s armory! Yes, we have came into the king’s withdrawing room where He listens to the desires of His suitors and enters into fellowship with them and bids them delight in Him.

Here He bids you open your heart and pour forth your secret longings, for He will lavish upon you the gifts of His love and fill you with all His fullness! It will be a great joy for you, today, if you have now climbed from the low marshy lands of fretting into the upper chamber of delighting in the Lord! But you are not up to the royal chamber of rest yet! You must now climb another stair, marked, Commit your way and Trust. “Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him.” Concerning that part of your way which you understand and have under your control, labor to walk according to the Lord’s mind.

But all that portion of your way which you understand not, and have no power over, leave entirely to the absolute will of God! What have you to do in ordering your own way? “All the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.” If you must have the arrangement of your own march through the wilderness—if you will advance without the guidance of the pillar of cloud and fire—who is to provide for you and where will you go? Your fallible judgment and feeble strength will soon fail you! Leave to your Lord’s will to ordain every step which you shall take and ask only to know so much of His mind as to be able to follow His guidance. Do not wish to pry into the secrets of the future, but “commit your way unto the Lord.”

Do not worry about the troubles or the present, but leave your way where you have left your soul. Say unto the Lord, “My Father, since this road is all too rough for my infant feet, be pleased to carry me, even as You did Your people all the days of old.” And His strong hands shall lift you up! And in His bosom you shall ride over the miry places of the earth, rejoicing in almighty love! Commit and trust! Now this brings us into the undressing room which stands side by side with the royal bedchamber. Take off the dusty garments of your cares and commit them to the Lord. Strip yourself of one anxiety after another! Unrobe yourself of all that reminds you of this miry, weary pilgrimage and leave your worn and travelstained raiment.

Then you need a candle to light so you can see your way to your bed— here it is for you in verse six, “He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday.” You feel convinced that what is left with God is safe. You have an assured confidence that if you commit a matter to Him you have left it in the hands of a faithful Creator—these gracious confidences will light you to your couch of rest! Like Paul, you will be at peace as to the future whether it bring you life or death, for you will say, “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him until that day.” There is your candle! Enter the quiet chamber and take your rest. “Rest in the Lord.”

These are the steps which I have tried, briefly, to describe. There is a coming out from the fretfulness generated by the world and its cares and troubles—a pulling off the shoes, as it were—before you enter the Palace, saying to your soul, “Fret not because of evildoers.” Then there is a sitting down to a feast of love by a simple but active faith. Next there is, after the feast, the sweet dessert of communion with Christ—a leaning of the head upon the bosom of the Lord as John did at the supper—delighting oneself in the Lord and getting the desires of your inmost soul.

After this comes a disrobing of everything like care—and the laying aside of all that is earth-born and gross which tends to distract us. And, last of all, there is the resigning of the soul to the peace which the Holy Spirit brings—which is comparable to reclining upon a soft couch, provided by Him who says to us, “My child, you are very weary; rest in the

Lord.”—  
*“Long did I toil and knew no earthly rest! Far did I roam and found no certain home! At last I sought them in His sheltering breast Who spreads His arms and bids the weary come. With Him I found a home, a rest Divine!  
And I, since then, am His and He is mine.”*

II. Now, let us try and form some idea of THE REST, ITSELF, WHICH IS BESTOWED UPON US IN THIS ROYAL CHAMBER. First, it is a rest of mind of which the prominent ingredient is a sense of security and calm—a fixed belief in the teachings of the Divine Spirit and in the Gospel which we have received. It is a sense of having grasped the blessings which that Gospel holds out to us and, therefore,, a sense of the certainty of our acceptance with God and of our eternal security in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, if you are of the school which shifts its creed every week. If you belong to the modern-culture gentlemen who cannot tell us what they believe because they do not know, themselves—who are so eminently receptive that it appears to me that they are mainly occupied in turning out what lumber they have warehoused in order to be able to stow away more—then you will never know any rest! This hallowed state of mind cannot come to the unsettled doubter. The sacred, dove-like Spirit quits the regions of uncertainty and dwells with those who know whom they have believed! Where He dwells there is rest, but nowhere else!

Look at John—the blessed, loving John—how, all through his three Epistles, he continually uses that word, “know.” He is a terrible Dogmatist! He is sure of everything! He dogmatizes gloriously and he rests! There is no rest till you are sure. A little, “if,” is like a stone in your shoe—you cannot travel comfortably—it blisters the foot and prevents restful progress. “Ah, but,” says one, “I do not know how to interpret such-and-such a text.” Well, then, Brother, cease from interpreting it and believe it as it stands! It is infinitely better to believe God’s Word than to interpret it! In fact, much that passes for interpretation, nowadays, is simply the drying of all sap and soul out of the Inspired Words and making them retain only a very dry and husky sense.

Be more earnest to believe than to interpret! Ask, “What does the text say?” Believe that and if you do not comprehend all its meaning, do not be any the less believing. How shall God be comprehensible by finite creatures, or His glorious Truths be seen in all points by such poor mortals as we are? Believe so you shall be established. And then, being established in the Truth of God, grasp the blessings which that Truth brings to you and rejoice! You believe in justification by faith—be sure that you are justified! You believe in the election of God—make your calling and election sure! You believe in the final perseverance of the saints—persevere even to the end!

Grip the blessings and then understand that having believed that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God! Having put your trust in Him, there is, therefore, no condemnation to you, for you are in Christ Jesus! As you realize these doctrines and the positive security—the indisputable security— which comes to every Believer who is relying upon Jesus, you will feel that perfect rest which is indescribable in sweetness! The rest “which only he that feels it knows.” Our rest is a sense of security.

Next, this rest is, in another aspect, contentment—perfect satisfaction with our earthly lot. Ambition spoils rest. The constant greed of avarice puts rest out of the question. The worry, the fret, the fume of accumulating, of desiring more, of impatiently coveting more than God is pleased to give—all this ruins rest. Oh, to say, “The Lord’s will be done! Having food and clothing, I am content.” “I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content,” and to let ambition, lofty desires, fretfulness and complaining all go and just say, “God has appointed my portion and ordained all my ways. So let it be.” This is rest! Put this together with security as to the eternal future and you have gained two very sweet ingredients with which to compose a rest worthy of the sons of God—

*“Rest, weary heart,  
From all your silent griefs and secret pain, Your profitless regrets and longings vain. Wisdom and love have ordered all the past, All shall be blessedness and light at last!  
Cast off the cares that have so long oppressed. Rest sweetly, rest!”*

Next, there is in this rest the idea of immovable confidence—perfect confidence in God so that when severe trail comes, the soul says, “It is right—I am sure it is right. I cannot see the reason, but I know that the trial is sent in love. I am certain of that.” When another trial befalls, childlike confidence in God still says, “It could not be better if God sends two troubles, they are better than one. And if He sends six, they are six times better than one, though they seem six times worse.” That confidence says, also, “He will bring me out of it. He never sent me out, yet, upon the sea of tribulation but what He brought me home again! He never sent me to a battle at my own charges yet. He never bade me do a work but what He gave me strength for it! He never called me to suffer but what He sustained me under the pain.”

Oh, but this is a blessed thing, to be quite confident that God cannot err, cannot forsake, cannot change, cannot cease to love and that, therefore, everything that comes from Him comes in the right way, at the right time, in the right measure—and that all is well and will end well! Though all the tempests come forth from their caverns to howl at once across the tremendous seas. Though every cyclone and hurricane that ever blew should come back, again, and my poor ship should be almost a wreck by reason of their fury—it is well, it is well! If only on a board or a broken piece of the ship I shall come safely to land, for so has God decreed, so glory be to His name! I will leave all to Him. This is rest—thorough rest, security, contentment, confidence!

Then, perhaps, mainly, according to the Hebrew, this rest consists in submission, for the Hebrew is, “Be silent to God.” That is the word. One of the old versions reads it, “Hold you still before God.” This holy silence is illustrated by what we read of Aaron, when his sons died. Before the Lord—“Aaron held his peace.” Let your tongue be quiet. Do not murmur.

Do not argue—leave all to God and bow in silence. “My soul is even as a weaned child,” said David. He would no longer cry after the warm breasts of comfort—he was weaned at last!

Now, O Lord, Your will is my will. It has been a sharp lesson, but You have taught it to me at last! Before I struggled, but now I acquiesce. Once I quarreled, but now sweetly yield. Let it be as You please. Your will is mine. This, also, is rest—

*“This is a holier, sweeter rest,  
Than the lulling rest from pain,  
And a deeper calm than that which sleep  
Sheds over heart and brain.  
It is the soul’s surrendered choice,  
The settling of the will,  
Lying down gently at the Cross,  
God’s purpose to fulfill.”*

There comes, next, the rest of patient waiting, for that is in the text. What does it say? “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” This is to have desires, but to feel that you can waive them and tarry at the Lord’s leisure. This is to have wishes, but always to keep them tethered so that they do not go too far. This is to have a will only in subserviency to the wiser and kinder will which rules above, always saying, “Lord, that is what I think I should wish for, but I do not know, for sure, whether it would be good for me or not. Therefore I ask You to deny me if my wishes are wrong. Do not hear my most earnest prayers, my Father, if they should not please You, for I would ask You rather not to hear me than to hear me if I ask amiss.

“I have wishes and a will, Lord which You have permitted me to have, for You have said You will grant me the desires of my heart. But Lord, if my heart should not be delighting herself in You when she feels her desires, they shall not be my desires, I will disown them! My most supreme will shall be not to will anything except Your will—and if I do will it, I repent of so willing and discard the evil will and the undesirable desire. I will turn all willfulness out of doors, by Your Grace, that You may have Your will.” This is a blessed spirit, dear Friends, and he that has attained it has entered the royal bedchamber where he shall rest in peace, for, “so He gives His Beloved sleep.”

This rest means, also, peace—peace of soul with yourself, with your fellow men, with God. It takes two to make an enemy and if you will not be one of the two, you will not have an enemy seriously to distress you. Men may dislike you, but they shall be held in check, for, “when a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” “He makes the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder does He restrain.” At any rate, the assured Believer possesses that peace which Christ had, who, when His foes gathered round about Him and sought to catch Him in His words, baffled them all by His calm self-possession.

This rest means quiet happiness, inward calm. The soul has mounted where it desires to be and does not intend to move from its position. Noah’s dove has been round the earth and seen nothing but waste of waters. But at last she has flown home—she is in Noah’s hand and she means to stay in the ark until better times shall come and the waters are endurable. Oh, if any of you have wandered and lost the peace which Christ gives, even that which He gives not to the world—if you are troubled and fretful, envious and weary—commune with your own heart this morning and say, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Say to your heart as I have said to mine, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” “Rest in the Lord.”

To close our description of rest, I think we must add one other term to it. It is the rest of expectation, especially in regard to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest fret that some of us ever have concerns the cause of God. Personal troubles and domestic troubles sit very lightly on some of us, but Church trouble perplexes us. Not in my case, because none of you who love the Lord ever intentionally cause me distress of mind. But there are some who walk, of whom we would tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ—and yet they have entered into the Church to her dishonor and injury!

And outside this Church, outside in the great Church of Christ, you can see, everywhere, looming heavily over us, the black clouds of Romanism! And amidst the gloom, the specters of skepticism are fitting to and fro. Everything in these times seems to be loose and out of joint! The men of “thought” have pulled up the old landmarks. They have broken down the hedges and laid the Lord’s enclosures common to all that pass by the way. Behold, they go about to break down the carved work of the sanctuary with their axes! They defile the temple of the Lord! Nothing is sacred for these wise men of modern times! No Truth of God that was taught by their sires can be taught by them.

The Doctrines of Grace to these men are platitudes and the doctrine of the Cross, itself, is denied! Or, when not denied, so obscured that we know not what it is! Scarcely do they, themselves, know what it is they affirm! They are great at questions and negations. Novelties of doctrine are poured out upon the earth in countless numbers as the frogs which came up in the apocalyptic vision! And what shall the end be? “Go your way,” says God to His beloved, “for you shall rest and stand in your lot in the end of the days.” Christ will take care of His own Church! The gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. Leave all this to Him who sees the end as well as the beginning and to whom the victory shall surely come! Your strength is to sit still. Rest in the Lord with expectation that He will overrule the evil and will, Himself, surely come to end it all and reign gloriously among His ancients.

III. Lastly, and here I needed time, but with my usual improvidence I have squandered it—our third point is, let us enter and examine THE ROYAL CHAMBER ITSELF. “Rest in the Lord.” Now the text does not say rest in anything about the Lord, but rest in the Lord Himself! Oh that the Spirit might bring us into such union and communion with God that we might, to the fullest, know the meaning of this text! “Rest in the Lord!” The Lord has revealed Himself to us in these days in the Person of His onlybegotten Son! Jesus, akin to us by nature! Jesus, our Substitute and

Surety! Jesus, our All in All!  
Now, Beloved, come near to Jesus by a living faith! Hide yourselves in  
Jesus! Enter into His wounds! Feel your safety in Him, your union to Him!  
Live to Him, live with Him, live for Him, live in Him and as you do, so you  
must rest! Only in the Lord is there any rest for you! Only as you are a  
man in Christ Jesus and lose yourself in Him, your life, being hidden with  
Christ in God, in that way, in that way only, shall you find perfect rest!  
What a resting place do saints find in the finished work of Jesus! Let but  
the Holy Spirit lead them to see the Glory of His atoning blood and they  
are sure to rest!  
Let me tenderly entreat the tempted Believer to tell Jesus all his case  
and look to Him for that rest which He Himself promised when He said,  
“Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and you shall find rest unto  
your souls.”—  
*“Rest, weary soul!  
The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,  
For all your sins full satisfaction made!  
Strive not to do yourself what Christ has done, Claim the free gift and make the joy your own. No more by pangs of guilt and fear distress, Rest, sweetly rest!”*  
Although this is obviously the main meaning, we may add that, “Rest in  
the Lord,” means rest in Him as your Covenant God. You have not to deal  
with an abstract Deity who stands afar off as your offended Creator. Behold, Beloved, if you believe in Jesus, the Lord has entered into an everlasting Covenant with you, ordered in all things and sure! He has said  
concerning you, “I will not turn away from you to do you good.” He has  
promised to keep you and preserve you and bring you into His eternal  
Glory by a Covenant signed and sealed with the precious blood of Christ! “Rest in the Lord.” He will keep His Covenant even to its jots and tittles,  
therefore be not disquieted. The eternal shalls and wills shall never fail!  
“This is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I  
would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. In a little wrath I hid My  
face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have  
mercy on you, says the Lord your Redeemer. The mountains shall depart,  
and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you.”  
Glory be unto our Covenant God! Come and rest in Him, Beloved! Then rest in all the relationships into which the Lord has been pleased  
to bring Himself. Know that this God of yours is your shield and your exceedingly great reward! He is your rock, your dwelling place! He is your  
Shepherd and your Preserver. Best of all, He is your Father! Oh, Brothers  
and Sisters, one cannot talk about this! One needs to drink it in by quiet  
meditation! It is a bliss too great for words to be, indeed, a child of the  
heavenly Father! Jehovah is Creator of Heaven and earth, Maker and Destroyer! And yet I am His child! And as surely as a child may trust its parent and rest in its mother’s bosom, so surely and safely may I trust my  
Father and rest in Him!  
Do you not know, too, that to set forth the nearness and tenderness of  
His relationship to us, the Lord is pleased to describe Himself as the Husband of our souls? For, “Your Maker is your Husband, the Lord of Hosts is  
His name.” “I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness, and you shall  
know the Lord.” Shall not the spouse trust her husband? I hope we will,  
each of us, say to Him this morning, “Lord, I trust You, for I love You  
since You have made me one with You in blessed union. And I say to You,  
today, as the Church did of old, ‘Tell me, O You whom my soul loves,

where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon: for why  
should I be as one that turns aside by the flocks of Your companions?’”  
Rest in your Friend, your Savior, your All in All! I leave the full list of Divine relationships for you to think of at your leisure. They are all full of  
rest.  
Rest, next, in each one of the attributes of God. Are you conscious of  
sin? Come and rest in the mercy which blots it out! Poor Sinner, I would  
gladly invite you with the burden of your guilt upon you, to remember  
that He delights in mercy! It is God’s joy to pass by transgression! You will  
never escape from the bondage of your sin except as you come to the  
mercy of God in Jesus Christ, His Son. Rest in boundless mercy! Beloved  
child of God, are you troubled about inward sin?—then rest in His power  
to break the neck of corruption! Perhaps your affliction concerns your  
worldly affairs—then rest in the power of God to help you! He is great at a  
dead lift and when none can help us but God, then is God most ready to  
come to the rescue.  
Rest, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, in God’s wisdom. You cannot see  
your way, but He can—leave it to Him, for there is no possibility of error in  
His counsels. Rest, also, in His immutability—that sure anchor amid the  
troubled sea of life. You have changes every day—He never changes! Come  
back to Him whose constancy of love is a mountain of strength! He has set  
His mind upon saving you and He is of one mind—who shall turn Him?  
This is His mind—that He that believes and is baptized shall be saved—  
and He will perform that salvation! Not death nor Hell shall thwart the sacred purpose of an unchanging God! He will carry out His gracious work  
and glorify Himself!  
Rest, also, in His faithfulness. What He has promised He will perform.  
He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Has He said and shall He not do it? Take His promise and believe it  
to be as good as fulfilled, for so it is. Rest also in His Word which He has  
written for your consolation. The Holy Spirit has, in a thousand ways, declared the Divine goodwill towards you—meditate upon what He has dictated. As full as the skies are of stars so full are the Scriptures with promises! Take these precious promises, one by one. Believe them and pray to  
the Lord, saying, “Fulfill this Word unto Your servant whereon You have  
caused me to hope. O Lord, do as You have said.”  
Then sweetly rest in the eternal truthfulness, for the Lord will keep  
every one of His promises to you. What a subject I have before me! I seem  
to be like those bold explorers in the northern seas, before whom a passage opens up to the left and then another channel on the right. They sail into the center of a great bay and then further on enter upon another sea and know not how wide the ocean may yet become still further on! My text is an ocean to which I see no boundary! It is full of wondrous Grace but I have neither time nor ability to sail over its shoreless surface! I must leave you to spread the sails of meditation! And favored by the gales of the Spirit’s influences, I trust you will be borne along—not to an ocean of pri  
meval ice—but to the condition of unbroken rest in the Lord! Next, let us rest in the will of God. It is a high point to arrive at to feel  
that my Father’s will is such that I can entirely rest in it, be it whatever it  
may. Yet it would not be so difficult if we were not so depraved. O for conquering Grace to crush down self! I would be as a grain of dust blown in  
the summer’s gale without power to change my course, carried on by the  
Irresistible Spirit of the Lord—forever made willingly unwilling to will anything but the will of my Lord! I would be as a tiny straw borne along by  
the Gulf Stream, carried wherever the warm love of God shall bear me, delighting to lie low and see the Lord, alone, exalted!  
The Buddhists talk about being absorbed into Buddha and ceasing to  
be. And they make it their heaven to be, at last, swallowed up in their god.  
I know the falsehood of this teaching, but I know that there is a truth  
which is very like it in outward aspect. Oh, to be nothing! To be less than  
nothing! To have no will and no desire about life or death, about sickness  
or health, about poverty or wealth—no will about anything—and yet to  
have a strong resolved will to deny self and say, “Not as I will, but as You  
will.” This is to rest in the Lord!  
Beloved, may the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, grant you abundantly, from  
this day forward, to enter into this which is man’s first, man’s last, man’s  
sweetest, truest rest—the rest of the sinner coming to Christ—the rest of  
the saint abiding in Heaven! This is the only real rest that can be found on  
earth or Heaven—rest in the Lord! God grant it to us by faith, for Jesus’  
sake. Amen.

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A COMFORTING MESSAGE FOR THE CLOSING YEAR  
NO. 2393

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, DECEMBER 30, 1894.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 1, 1863.

**“Rest in the Lord.”  
Psalm 37:7.**

IT is certain, Christian, that you have nowhere else to rest. Of the whole of this time-state it was well said, “This is not your rest,” and of all the comfort that you find in earthly friendships and relationships, in the good things of this life, or in any hopes short of Heaven, we may truly say, “This is not your rest.” The other day, at Highgate, I passed some fine old trees that were marked with a white cross, to indicate, no doubt, that they were to be cut down. So, everything we have here is marked with the woodman’s cross and the axe must fell all our joys. You birds of paradise, build not your nests on trees that are marked to fall! This earth is not your rest! You shall fly the wide world over till your wings are weary, but, you doves of Christ, you shall find no rest till you come back to the hand of your Noah and nestle in His ark of Covenant Grace. “Rest in the Lord,” says the text, and in saying so it does, as it were, condemn all other pretended rests and fancied refuges! May everyone of you who have wandered hear the voice of Wisdom and may your hearts say, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you!”

But though there is no rest to be found in earthly things, yet we may have rest even while here—rest which drops from above. Just as the wilderness yielded no bread to the children of Israel, yet there was bread for them in the wilderness, for it fell from Heaven! The arid sands could give no streams of cooling water, yet there was water even there, for the Apostle Paul tells us that “they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” Because I tell you that this world is a wilderness and you find it true, do not think that you are never to have any rest in it. Behold, your rest is sent to you from on high! Behold, your refreshment comes from the Rock of Ages! In Jesus you have rest, even though you are pilgrims, and even though you are troubled, for we who have believed in Him, even now have entered into rest! True Christians, when they are in a healthy state of mind and heart, rest in the Lord and, as I hope this Tabernacle is not a leper house, but a place where the warriors of Christ have come to feast at the table of their great Captain, I desire for each of you, and for myself, also, that all of us who are in Christ may this night have perfect “rest in the Lord.”

What is this rest that is mentioned in our text?  
I. The rest which Believers enjoy is, first of all, REST FROM WANDER

ING.  
You know that God promised to give rest to His ancient people. They  
had none in the wilderness, for, often, they had no sooner pitched their  
tents than they had to strike them again. As quickly as the fiery-cloudy  
pillar moved, so had they, though weary and footsore, to follow. Joshua  
said to the Reubenites and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance was to be on the further side of Jordan “You shall  
pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valor, and help  
them until the Lord has given your brethren rest.” The Promised Land  
was always looked forward to by the weary and wandering tribes as a  
place where they would rest.  
Well, Beloved, you and I no longer wander—we have come to our rest.  
O my Heart, how you did wander, like a weary pilgrim, through the Egypt  
of your bondage! You did wander to Sinai, where you did hear the Law of  
God that made you tremble! You did wander across the wilderness of Sin,  
where your good works vexed and tired you, and your evil works, like  
fiery serpents, bit you! But that is all over now. My Soul, you have  
crossed the Jordan and, having found Christ, you have no inclination to  
wander anymore. My Brothers and Sisters, remember how our minds  
used to wander after 50 pretended comforts and we found no joy in any  
of them? One day we thought this, the next day we thought that. One  
day we dreamed that peace was to be found here, the next day, we fancied it was to be obtained yonder, the bubble mocked us as we pursued  
it and it continually fled from our grasp! We thought full sure that we  
had secured something solid, but the apple of Sodom was crushed when  
we laid hold upon it—it turned to ashes in our hand!  
We used to be always wandering—none could tell where we would rest  
on the morrow—but now we rest in the Lord! We have no inclination to  
wander to anyone else. “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will  
sing and give praise.” Every now and then people discover a new gospel  
and they want us to believe it, but we say to them, “No, we are perfectly  
content with what we have received.” Sometimes a new form of religion is  
invented, but it has no attractions for us! We have left off being pilgrims—we are settled down and cannot, by God’s Grace, be moved! We  
say of all these inventions—  
*“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”*  
I do not usually find it worth my while, nowadays, when anybody tells

me, at the beginning of a book, that he is going to disprove all that I believe, to read the book at all! If a cook informs me that a joint of meat is bad and, on tasting the first mouthful, I find that it is so, there is no need that I should eat it all in order to prove that it is not good wholesome food! So, you had better leave these tainted doctrines alone! When you have your principles firmly fixed, especially when you have come to rest at the very feet of the unchanging Jesus and have learned the meaning of that text, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” you have reached perfection’s own self and you may well grow conservative and never go a step beyond! Paul could say to the Galatians, “If any man preaches any other Gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed,” for he could also say, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”—  
*“Now rest, my long-divided Heart,  
Fixed on this blissful center, rest,*  
never more to go gadding abroad, to seek after other loves and other trusts! In that sense, dear Friends, “rest in the Lord.” Be not carried about with every wind of doctrine, but abide fast by Christ, whom you  
have received by faith.  
II. We have also another rest, and that is, REST FROM ALL OUR  
FOES.  
Scripture, speaking of the victories of the children of Israel under  
Joshua and Caleb, says, “The land had rest from war.” When Saul of  
Tarsus, the great persecutor, was converted, we read, “Then had the  
churches rest.” Now, dear Friends, the people of God are always being  
molested by enemies—there are multitudes of foes on the right hand and  
on the left. Yet was David right when he penned that verse, “You prepare  
a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” The moment we begin  
to think of the prevalence of Christ’s plea, the merit of Christ’s blood, the  
power of Christ’s arm, the faithfulness of Christ’s heart—what are all our  
sins within us, or all our foes without us? Do they not melt away like the  
host of Midian before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon? Does some  
stout sin, like Goliath of Gath, come out and challenge you to fight? Take  
the name of the Lord as your sling and stone, and you shall yet be able  
to cut off the giant’s head! Do your foes come out against you with multitudes of chariots? Let your faith open its eyes and you shall see horses of  
fire and chariots of fire round about you! Put your trust in God and you  
shall soon learn that more are they that are for you than all that can be  
against you. “War, war, war!” the voices of enemies constantly cry around  
the walls of Zion, but what is that sweet sound within the city? It is the  
music of the harp and the song of them that make merry!— *“There is a stream whose gentle flow  
Supplies the city of our God  
Life, love, and joy, still gliding through,  
And watering our Divine abode.”*  
Yes, Brothers and Sisters, notwithstanding that Hell is against us, and  
that devilish trinity, the world, the flesh, and Satan—yet, when we come  
to our Lord Jesus Christ and sit under the shadow of His great Atonement and remember His glorious Resurrection and Ascension—we feel at  
once that we can “rest in the Lord.”  
III. Further, we have REST IN THE SENSE OF CONFIDENCE. In this meaning of the word, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
we do really, “rest in the Lord.” We are not Christians if we do not, for the  
first mark of a Believer is that he rests in Christ for everything, depending on the blood and righteousness of Christ as the Alpha and the Omega  
of his salvation. Now, as Believers rest in Christ for the first things, so  
ought they to rest in Christ for all things. Whatever need you have, rest  
on the bare arm of God to supply it. Though you should require infinity,  
it is at your beck and call. Only rest in God, for Omniscience is watching  
for your good and Omnipotence is prepared to aid you!  
Beloved, I fear that we often place our confidence in ourselves, or get  
resting on an arm of flesh, depending first on this friend and then on  
that, relying first upon this scheme and then upon that plan. Happy is  
the man who has learned to cast off Saul’s armor, saying, “I cannot go  
with these.” The man who can cry, as David did to the giant, “You come  
to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to  
you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel,  
whom you have defied.” “Rest in the Lord,” Christian, whatever it is that  
you require to bring you safely to His dwelling place above, and let your  
confidence exercise itself upon your Lord’s faithfulness, almightiness and  
truth.  
IV. Now, though we have used the word, “rest,” in three senses, we  
have not as yet come to the sweetest part of our subject. Believers have  
REST IN THE SENSE OF SAFETY.  
A Hebrew, pursued by the manslayer, never rested till he reached the  
City of Refuge. Lot must not rest until he gets into the little city of Zoar.  
So, we must never think of resting till we are saved. You who are afraid  
you are not saved have no rest. There are some of you who never say  
more than this, “Well, I hope I am saved,” or, “I trust I may be saved.”  
You do not have real rest, dear Friends—you may have something like  
rest, but you do not know the perfect peace of one who has fled for refuge  
to Christ—one who has given up every resting place except the finished  
work of Jesus! Such a person, having taken refuge in Christ, feels positively sure that nothing can harm him. What if I should venture to make  
my boast in my God tonight? What if I should say—  
*“In my Surety I am free  
His dear wounds avail for me.”*  
What if I should glory in sin completely pardoned and in a robe of righteousness, woven from the top throughout, in which I stand arrayed before the Lord? If I said all this, I should say no more than you ought to  
say, you who are trusting in the Lord!  
You are saved, you are saved now! You are safe for all the days and all  
the nights you may live. You are safe in life and in death, in time and  
through eternity! Since Christ endured your condemnation, it cannot rest on you! God acquits you—therefore no accusation can lie against you. God absolves you. Christ pleads on your behalf—it is not possible that all your past sin can ruin you, for it was laid upon the Scapegoat’s head of old—nothing in the present can daunt you, for Jesus says, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Nothing in the future shall cast you down, for even to the end does the Lord keep His people! He gives unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any  
pluck them out of His hand.  
I recollect when I first heard the glorious doctrine of the Believer’s  
eternal safety—the good old man preached it very plainly, indeed, but its  
effect on me—I was then an unconverted but anxious soul—its effect on  
me was that it set my mouth a-watering. “Oh,” I thought, “what would I  
not give to be saved?” I never had any relish for that tinkering gospel  
which is preached by Arminians—it is a very fine thing to look at, but it  
does not bear the wear and tear of life! I never cared for that sham gospel  
which may save today, but may damn tomorrow. I never admired that  
gospel chariot which has no bottom to it, or has wheels with rotten  
spokes, and that breaks down in the miry places of the way. I never had  
a taste for that sort of teaching, even before I was converted. But that Gospel which says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be  
saved,” and makes no, “ifs,” and, “ands,” about it—that Gospel which  
promises eternal life and says that Believers shall never perish—oh it set  
my heart a-longing! How ardently I desired to get hold of it! And when I  
learned that I might have it, that I, the vilest of the vile, might have it,  
have it on these terms—“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of  
the earth”—oh, it seemed worthy of God’s giving and worthy of man’s accepting, worthy of the Spirit’s work, worthy of Christ’s procuring, worthy,  
indeed, of the man it blesses and of the God who is glorified in blessing  
him! O dear Friends, let us, if we are not safe in Christ, long to be so,  
and may the Lord bring us to Him, even at this very hour!  
“Rest in the Lord,” then, Christians, for in Him is every Believer perfectly safe—  
“**Munitions of stupendous rock  
His dwelling place shall be.  
There might his soul without a shock,  
The wreck of nature see.”**  
V. But the word, “rest,” has a further meaning. God gives to His people  
PERFECT REST FROM WEARINESS.  
Man sometimes wipes his brow, and asks, “When will the shadows  
come? When shall I have fulfilled as a hireling my day of toil? “ To think  
of being saved by our feelings and works brings much weariness to the  
spirit and, indeed, even to a Believer, this world’s cares and strifes may  
often make him fling himself down upon his couch, and say, “Lord, let  
me die; I am no better than my fathers!” But, dear Friends, when we  
really rest in Christ—when we sit down under His shadow with great delight—all our weariness goes away at once! Do you not know what it is to  
spring up with elastic footsteps and go forth to some new duty, or to some fresh suffering, at the mere mention of your Lord’s name, when, just before, you were bowed down with sorrow and thought that surely your end must soon come, and that you must speedily fall by the hand of the enemy? Every now and then, you know, our bodily strength needs to be renewed in sleep—constantly must this experience recur, or else we must die. Now, Jesus, “gives His beloved sleep,” and all the calm that sleep can infuse into the body, does faith in Christ give to the soul! The jaded mind is calm when He is near. The distracted heart, when Christ  
has breathed upon it, is like a mountain lake on a summer’s day. Absence from Christ produces weariness, but the Presence of Jesus  
always brings a sense of perfect ease. Have I not seen a man go staggering along beneath a little load of trouble because he had not gone to God  
with his burden? Yet I have seen another carry three times the weight

and stand like a Hercules, unmoved, with his feet firmly set, because  
God was in him, and his confidence was in the Most High. I have seen  
you, Friend, groaning and repining because you had a trifling loss, or a  
slight sickness. And I have seen another, close to the verge of death, who  
has suffered the loss of all things, who has, nevertheless, rejoiced in the  
Lord and sung aloud in his Redeemer’s name. All the difference is here—  
if we rest in the Lord, we rest, and nothing can make us weary—but if we  
go not to Him, we know no rest, and the slightest fatigue bows us down. I would, dear Friends, that all the members of this Church had more  
of this resting in the Lord. Sometimes I wish that some of you had more  
weariness—you will never work yourselves to death serving Christ—you  
are a great deal more likely to weary yourselves by serving the world.  
How men will moil and toil, and run here and there, to get a little of this  
world’s goods—and then they put it into a bag that is full of holes! They  
neglect the means of Grace and, as to the week-night service—dear, dear,  
dear, there is that shop that must be attended to! And some of you can  
scarcely give yourselves time to pray because you must rise up early and  
sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness. I wish that you would sometimes grow weary in that kind of labor, and take to another Master, and  
work for Him as you have worked for the world, till you grew weary in His  
cause, for then would you know the sweet rest with which He makes the  
weary to rest when they have wearied themselves for Him in preaching,  
in teaching, in spreading His truth!  
We read in Isaiah’s prophecy, “This is the rest wherewith you may  
cause the weary to rest,” and I know there are some weary ones here.  
You are not weary of God’s work, but you are weary of bearing Christ’s  
Cross. You have had so much shame and so much sorrow—well, well,  
Brothers and Sisters—“rest in the Lord.” You may come to Him and since  
He carried His Cross, and that Cross was yours as well as His, you may  
put your cross upon His shoulder, and then you will find it easy work to  
carry the cross, yourselves! This, then, is one of the rests which every  
Christian may have—rest from weariness.  
VI. There is also a rest called THE REST OF ACCOMPLISHMENT. Was it not said of Boaz, by the mother-in-law of Ruth, “The man will  
not be in rest until he has finished the thing this day”? Some Christians  
never have any rest, or they have but very little, because they do not understand the doctrine of a finished salvation. If you and I are only halfsaved, why, of course, we can never be really restful till the work is finished. No, if we are only three-quarters saved, we shall never have any  
true rest till the other quarter of the work is done! If there is one stone  
for us to lay in order to complete the edifice, we must not give sleep to  
our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids, till it is fixed in its place. But here is the joy, here is the peace of Christians, that our salvation  
is a finished one! We have not a farthing to pay to complete the ransom  
of our souls. We have not a stitch to set to finish the robe of our salvation. We have not an act to perform, a prayer to offer, a tear to weep, a  
thought to think in order to finish the work of our redemption! I know  
that all these things shall be worked in us and, that by the Spirit of God  
we shall be made to do them—but all that shall not be with any view to  
the completion of our salvation—that was finished in the Person of the  
bleeding Lamb of Calvary!  
There are a great many people who imagine that they will be saved because they regularly go to Church—they might go to Church as long as  
Methuselah lived, but not get an inch nearer to Heaven by doing so! Others of you may suppose that you will go to Glory through constantly coming here. We will soon drive that delusion out of your minds if you are  
indulging any such notion! Still, there it is—you think that if you are  
kind, moral, upright, if you do good to your neighbors, if you bring up  
your families well—in some way Jesus Christ will mysteriously come in  
to make up your deficiencies and then when you get to Glory, of course,  
you intend to have a song all to yourself! You will say, “Praise and glory  
and honor be to myself! I did my part and Christ’s assistance made the  
matter all right.” The man who thinks that the work of salvation is partly  
his own does not understand the finished work of Christ! Either Christ  
completed all that was necessary for your salvation, or He did not! If He  
did finish it, then rest in Him and be glad, and say, “I am secure forever  
because my salvation is finished. I have nothing to do but to live to the  
honor of Him who has completely saved me by His Grace, His blood, His  
righteousness.”  
But if Christ did not finish the work, you cannot complete it! If He has  
left a stitch unsewn or a stone unlaid, you cannot supply the deficiency.  
What? The human and the Divine joined together as equals? What? Yoke  
your little, insignificant, insect-like power with the Omnipotent strength  
of the Divine Redeemer? God forbid! What? Shall the dross and scum of  
human merit come and be reckoned with the pure gold of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice? No! That can never be! Grace reigns, and Grace, alone,  
reigns! It reigns in this, that there is a finished work! Therefore, Christian, rest—“rest in the Lord,” for the work is done! Be of good cheer, take  
your ease in Christ. Eat of Him, drink of Him and be merry, for you have much goods laid up for many years. Your feasting will never bring to you the censure of being a fool, but you will be as foolish as a thousand fools  
if you do not rest in Jesus!  
VII. Once again, we have, as Christians, enjoyed and we do now enjoy,  
THE REST OF COMPLETE SATISFACTION. There are very few persons in  
this world who are perfectly contented, but true Believers, when they are  
in a right state of mind, are always so. I do not believe that I have a wish  
in all this world except to know more of my Master and to win more souls  
for Him. Besides that, I cannot see anything to long for and I can truly  
sing—  
*“I would not change my blest estate,  
For all that earth calls good or great!  
And while my faith can keep her hold,  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”*  
Rich sinners think poor saints are great fools. You, young man, over  
there, you own a fine horse and you have a splendid house and garden,  
or you have a flourishing business and very bright prospects. But I could  
pick out some old woman here—and, thank God, there are many such  
who regularly come to the Tabernacle, poor souls who have little else but  
the Grace of God to comfort them—I could bring this old women up for  
you to see. Her clothes are darned in a hundred places, or else she would  
be in rags. She works very hard to earn the little that keeps her out of  
the workhouse. She has not many comforts, yet sometimes, when we get  
a shake of her hand, we find she has some comforts, though they are of a  
sort that this young man does not understand.  
Well now, come here, my good Sister! Do you see that young man over  
there? He never has rheumatism in his bones. He never has to sit shivering in winter because there is no fire in the grate. He never has to say to  
his landlord, “I do not know where I shall get the week’s rent.” He never  
has to pinch himself and live on nothing but a small piece of bread-andbutter for a couple of days—no, never! I ask her, “Will you change places  
with this young gentleman?” “Well,” she says, “I should like to know,  
first, whether he has an interest in Christ.” When I tell her that he has  
not, I am sure her answer would be, “Change places with him? No, never!  
I’d sooner starve and have Christ as my Savior, than own all the wealth  
and comforts of this world, and be without Christ.” So say we, Brothers  
and Sisters, and in the language of Watts we sing—  
*“Go now, and boast of all your stores  
And tell how bright you shine!  
Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,  
And my Redeemer’s mine.”*  
Having Christ, we feel perfect satisfaction and need nothing more! If  
we go up or down, to the right or to the left, we can find nothing beyond  
our Lord! Having Him, we possess all things, and our soul is satisfied!  
You remember that Naomi spoke of Ruth finding rest in the house of her  
husband. That is to say, she would have all she needed. Her husband  
would be all things to her. She did not need another husband, she did not need to find another house, nor broader fields, nor larger wealth. Boaz was all in all to her and what he gave her was enough for all her needs. So is it with the Christian—Christ is All in All to him—whatever  
He may give, or whatever He may deny, the Christian is perfectly content! VIII. I close, dear Friends, by noticing that all these forms of rest  
should bring to the Believer THE REST OF CONSCIOUS ENJOYMENT. Going down to Windsor to preach some time ago, my friend, John  
Anderson, was with me. And about twelve o’clock, as we were near  
Datchet, under the broad trees of a park we saw a number of sheep lying  
down peacefully. My friend quoted that passage in the Canticles, “Tell  
me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed, where You make Your  
flock to rest at noon.” It was the very picture of content and restful enjoyment! And as I came along tonight, I was thinking that I should like to  
see the same picture in this Church when we meet presently around the  
Communion Table. May you all have the rest of enjoyment! You have  
Christ to feed upon. You have heard about Him, again, this evening. You  
know He is yours. Then kiss Him with the kisses of your mouth. You  
have not a doubt, I hope, of your interest in Him—if you have, come to  
Him, again, just as you came at first, as poor sinners resting on Him  
alone!  
And if He is, indeed, yours, treat Him as you would treat a loaf of  
bread if you were hungry—do not merely look at Him, but eat of Him and  
eat abundantly, O Beloved! Leave all your cares behind. You remember  
what Pharaoh said to Joseph’s brethren, “Also regard not your stuff, for

the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Now, do not regard that  
household of yours, tonight, leave that stock-in-trade behind, let all that  
lumber lie where it is, for the good of Christ and of all the land of Heaven  
is yours! Come now, and be satisfied with all the goodness of God’s  
Grace. “Ah,” you say, “it is not quite so easy to leave all these things.  
There are such attractions in the world.” Attractions, Brothers and Sisters? Rather, call them distractions! But I say that the attractions of  
Christ are greater than the distractions of the world! Fix your souls  
steadily on this fact, that you have Christ, that Christ is All in All to them  
that trust Him, and so come, now, and take your full rest in the Lord  
your God!  
Oh, that some might be set a-longing, tonight, and say, “That is what  
we want to do!” Well, if you long for Christ, then Christ longs for you! If  
you want Christ, then Christ wants you! If you penitently return to the  
Lord now, He will hasten towards you while you are yet a great way off!  
He will run to meet you, even as the father ran to meet his prodigal son.  
If you begin to confess with the prodigal, “Father, I have sinned against  
Heaven, and in Your sight, and am no more worthy to be called Your  
son,” the Lord will say to His servants, as the father in the parable said,  
“Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand,  
and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this, My son, was dead, and is alive again! He  
was lost, and is found.”  
Remember that verse of Joseph Hart’s which we have often sung, and  
as I repeat it, trust the Savior of whom He sings—  
*“Trust Him; He will not deceive us,  
Though we hardly of Him deem:  
He will never, never leave us,  
Nor will let us quite leave Him.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Psalm 123, 124. 125.**

We shall read, this evening, three short Psalms—the 123rd , 124th and 125th . May the Holy Spirit, who Inspired the writers of them, strengthen our faith while we read these songs of joyous confidence!

Psalm 123:1. Unto You lift I up my eyes. Instead of looking downward in despair, or looking to the right hand or to the left to human confidence, or looking within in pride, “Unto You lift I up my eyes.”—

1. O You that dwells in the heavens. It is always delightful to the Christian to remember what the title of his God is—“Our Father, which are in Heaven.” It is the place of prospect from which God looks down and sees all men, and understands all their ways. And it is also the place of His Power and His Glory. Lord, I look up to You! You dwell in Glory, therefore all power is in Your hands, and You know how to use that power on the behalf of Your people!

2. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that He have mercy upon us. The servant looks to his master’s hand for direction and for support. If he has a work to do that is too heavy for him, he looks to his master to send him help. And he also looks to his master’s hand for his reward when his work is done. So, dear Friends, are we, day by day, walking as in our Master’s light?

3. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. The best thing that the best of men can ask for is God’s mercy! And that mercy is so great, even to the heavens, that, under the weariness of trials and troubles, it is a sufficient help for them. When we are not only in contempt, but even filled with contempt and, as the text puts it, “exceedingly filled with contempt,” so that we have lost our good name among men, still may we turn to our God and seek His mercy.

4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. This was the lot of God’s people in David’s day. It is the same with Believers, now, and I suppose that, so long as the earth stands, the saints of the Lord will have to cry to Him concerning their adversaries. Let them remember always to use the same remedy that the godly ones of old used and not plead in earthly courts of law, but take the case to the great Court of King’s Bench in Heaven! Let not any of the Lord’s children ever be concerned about defending their own characters, but let them always go at once to Him whose bare arm is quite sufficient to right all wrongs and to deliver the oppressed.

Psalm 124:1. If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say. There is a break here, the sentence is not finished, so finish it for yourselves. If the Lord had not been on your side, what then? You would have been condemned on account of sin! If the Lord had not been on your side as the Redeemer, you would have been left to perish through the natural depravity of your own heart! If He who is “mighty to save” had not been your Helper, just think, Christians, you who are today filled with joy, whose feet are treading Mount Tabor—think what you would have been if the Lord had not been on your side—and then praise and magnify that Grace to which you owe so much!

2, 3. If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. The word, “quick,” here means, “living.” Before we were dead, they would have swallowed us up, for the anger of men against God’s people is always exceedingly great. They called the Master of the house, “Beelzebub,” so they are not likely to be very warmly affected towards His disciples! Suppose that we had been given up to the devices of wicked men, where would we have been?

My brethren, a man may live so circumspectly that, outwardly, he may be without fault, yet he may wake up, come morning, and find his character blasted! And it may remain so for years, for the tongue of slander is full of all manner of villainy and, often, the more pure the alabaster of a man’s character may be, the more black are the filthy spots which the world makes upon it! Be not too much cast down, O you children of the living God, when you are dishonored among men, for so was it with the Lord God, Himself, who was slandered in the garden of Eden! Expect not, therefore, that you will escape the serpent’s venom!

4, 5. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Here, in this life, we may have troubles, not only from our own evil hearts, but also from Satan and from the world. Truly, if it had not been for the Lord, the proud waters had gone right over our souls! It is a wonder that we are alive, Brothers and Sisters! We can sing with Watts—

*“Our life contains a thousand springs  
And dies if one is gone!  
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings  
Should keep in tune so long!”*

But it is a ten thousand times greater miracle that we are spiritually alive when there are so many in this world seeking to destroy us! This is a marvel of marvels and the whole world, itself, contains no greater wonders than are to be found in that one little world of Mansoul!

6. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.

We were almost in their teeth, like David’s lamb, but David’s Son plucked us out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear! Now the Psalmist uses another figure. First he spoke of the proud waters, then of the wild beasts—now he mentions the fowlers.

7, 8. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made Heaven and earth. What a blessed conclusion is it to our experience when we can sing of what the Lord has done and so are encouraged by the all of what He will yet do! Let us write this text upon our banners and lift them up in the face of every adversary, “Our help is in the name of the Lord.” As John Wesley said, “The best of all is, God is with us,” that is the best of all to the Christian, so good an, “all,” that he is blessed with that even if he has nothing besides!

Psalm 125:1-3. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about His people from henceforth even forever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. By, “the rod,” is here meant, “the scepter.” The wicked shall not permanently rule over the righteous—they may have a temporary dominion and sovereignty but, in due season, their rod shall be broken and their power shall be scattered to the winds.

4, 5. Do good O Lord, unto those that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel. May we have faith to lay hold upon that last blood promise and so enjoy the peace of God which passes all understanding! Amen!

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END OF VOLUME 40.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3347 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED  
NO. 3347

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 1913. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“A Psalm of David to bring to remembrance.”  
Psalm 38:(Title).

THESE words form the title to the Psalm before us, which we read just now in your hearing. Let us note, for a short time, the subjects which David thought it necessary to bring to remembrance. We must all have noticed that our memories much more readily retain evil than good. The snatch of a profane song heard in childhood will remain with us to our graves—while many a holy thought leaves scarcely an impression upon the tablets of memory. We heard it—it is gone—it would be difficult to recall it. The draft that flows down the rivers of Sodom, one retentively collects, but the goodly cedars of Lebanon that are floated down the stream pass by unheeded. We may well say, “Forget not all His benefits,” for, alas, while the multitude of God’s benefits is forgotten, if there is anything to murmur at, it is pretty sure to be treasured up as though it were a priceless relic to be carefully preserved! May the Lord mend our memories. As He makes us new men and women in Christ Jesus, may the Holy Spirit give to our memories the power to grip the right and the true—and with a loose hand to let slip that which is evil and contrary to His rule. The Psalm is “to bring to remembrance.” This seems to teach us that good things need to be kept alive in our memories, that we should often sit down, look back, retrace and turn over in our meditation things that are past, lest, at any time we should let any good thing sink into oblivion. I have read the Psalm to you and I think you will all agree with me that among the things which David brought to his own remembrance, the first and foremost were—

I. HIS PAST TRIALS AND HIS PAST DELIVERANCES.  
Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let me stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Let me remind you of your past battles and victories, of your troubles and conflicts and your sweet cheer and safe preservation. It will do you good to remember them—such a remembrance will prevent your imagining that you have come into the land of ease and perfect rest. We may have our time of prosperity and say with David, “I shall never be moved. Lord, by Your favor, You have made my mountain to stand strong.” But soon adversity surprises us, as it suddenly overtook him and changed his note, “You did hide Your face and I was troubled.” This is not the place for us to have peace and rest! We are as yet at sea—the vessel has not reached the port. We are as yet in the wilderness—we have not come to the goodly land, even to Canaan. We are not yet out of gunshot of the devil. We are not yet beyond afflictions and trials and if, for awhile, the weather has been calm and the sun has been bright—and we poor pilgrims have been trudging on along green pastures and by the side of still waters—let us remember the giants with whom we fought in days long gone! Let us remember the hills of difficulty, the valleys of humiliation, the conflicts with Apollyon—for as it was at the first, so shall it always be till we come to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Oh, you who are making for yourself a downy nest and building up a castle in the air, remember you do this without the permission of your God! No, you do it in the teeth of His warnings, for has not Jesus said, “In the world you shall have tribulation”? And is it not written, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous”? Bring to remembrance, then, your former struggles lest you begin to settle upon your lees and fancy that there is no more trial for you!  
Remember them, too, because they will refresh your memories with regard to the mercy of God and so will stir you up to gratitude. Oh, we thought when we were in trouble that if the Lord would guarantee us deliverance, He would never hear the last of it! We said to ourselves, “I will praise Him while I have any being if He brings me out of this strait and sets my feet, once again, in a large room.” But our song was not quite as long as we expected and, after having praised God a little, the novelty of the mercy departed and our gratitude subsided. But, oh, my Brothers and Sisters, have we not much cause to bless God? Have we not cause to bless Him that we have been delivered from the burden of guilt—a burden that once bowed us to the earth—that we have been saved in dire afflictions when it seemed as if we must be crushed, that tribulations have been averted which threatened us, or that we have been sustained under those which have actually come upon us? Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song! And weave that new song out of the remembrances of His past mercies when He appeared for His servants in the times of trouble and worked amazingly for them according to the counsels of His love! Blessed be the name of the Lord at this time as we bring to remembrance trials past, and mercies that have been received!  
Such a remembrance will be of great service to you, my Brothers and Sisters, if you are at this time enduring the like exercises. What God was, that He is. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever,” is His people’s trust and glory. Having begun to deliver you, He will not afterwards forsake you! He has not brought you this far to put you to shame. What is the trouble of today? You have passed through another quite as great. What is the doubt that assails you? You have already met a doubt quite as gloomy and by faith you have overcome it! What is the fear which now gathers like a heavy cloud? The time before, it burst with mercies upon your head—and it shall do the same again! Draw courage from the recollections of the past and go forward to the fears of the future—and they shall vanish as you advance confident in your God. The great point, however, in David’s Psalm is—  
II. TO BRING TO REMEMBRANCE THE DEPRAVITY OF OUR NATURE.  
There is, perhaps, no Psalm which more fully than this one describes human nature as seen in the light which God, the Holy Spirit, casts upon it in the time when He convicts us of sin. I am persuaded that the description here does not tally with any known disease of the body. It is very much like leprosy, but it has about it certain features which cannot be found to meet in any leprosy described either by ancient or modern writers. The fact is, it is a spiritual leprosy—it is an inward disease which is here described—and David paints it to the very life and he would have us remember this. Child of God, let me bring to your remembrance, tonight, the fact that you are by nature no better than the vilest of the vile! “Children of wrath even as others,” are we. Even you who are favored by Divine Grace to enter into rich fellowship with Christ are no better, naturally, than the lost spirits in Hell! There was no difference at birth and no intrinsic essential difference of moral constitution between Peter and Judas, between Paul and Demas, between the brightest Apostle and the bloodiest persecutor! We have grown in Grace—had we been left to ourselves, we would have rotted in sin! We have gone from strength to strength in the way of holiness, but if it had not been for Divine Grace that interposed most sovereignly, we would have gone from depth to depth in the way of crime!  
Just turn that over for a minute. By nature not one whit better than the rest of mankind, see what Grace has done for you in making such a difference! Why are you not tonight upon the drunkard’s bench? Why fill you not the seat of the scorner? Perhaps you have been there already, and if Divine Grace had not prevented, you would have continued there! I think it does us a world of good, when Grace has made the difference, to still take the place which the publican did. I never feel so well in spiritual health as when I cry out, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Somehow there is a safeness about it, when a sense of sin makes one cling to the sinner’s Savior. Growth in Grace and high frames in spirituality are very pleasant, but it does us so much good, every now and then, to come right on the ground again, flat on our face before the Lord, crying out, “What am I that You have brought me to this? God forgive me, and accept me through the precious blood, for in myself I am loathsome, vile and abhorred—and in me there dwells no good thing.” The best mode of living is to live upon Christ every day as you did the first day of your conversion— always to stand at the foot of the Cross with—  
*“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*  
A saint, I hope, by Grace, but a sinner certainly by nature. Still, still dependent upon the same merit of the Substitute, still accepted through the continual plea of the Divine Intercessor who has espoused my cause and is able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him. “Heirs of wrath even as others”—this is what we were! Sinners saved by Grace—this is what we are! It is well to bring to the remembrance of the child of God that although his past sin is all blotted out, and he is justified by faith which is in Jesus Christ, yet there still remains in him the old body of this death. Sin, the force of sin, still dwells in him! Now, Brothers and Sisters, there are times when everything goes very smoothly with us. Everybody treats us kindly. We are much in religious exercises. We go from Prayer Meetings to lectures, from lectures to sermons, and from sermons to our room and to our Bibles. We do not get vexed or troubled and we begin to think, “Now I really am somewhat of a superior being. I think I am not what I used to be—I never could be roused to that old anger which once flamed out so furiously, nor could I now be led into such fretfulness as once was known to overcome me.” I have noticed— take my experience for what it is worth—that the most dangerous time in the Christian’s life is when he has been nearest to God in devotion. You meet the devil and not expecting him, he is too much for you. It is just when you have been most spiritual that the temptation which you had almost thought would never come again, trips you up, and ah, how soon you find that if when upon the mountain, your face glowed, down in the valley, again, unless your Master holds you up, your foot will slip and your face will be covered with the filthiness of the valley! Remember, child of God, let others say what they will to you, that the dictates of experience and the teachings of God’s Word lead you to the remembrance that there is still in you a spirit that lusts after all manner of evil, a nature which, if it were not curbed and confined by the Grace of God, would make you again to be what you were, yes, and would bring into your house seven devils worse than the first! Never conceive that any one of the evils of your nature is so dead that it cannot have a resurrection. Strive against every form of sin, every thought of sin, every carnal tendency, every evil passion—and when you have striven most, never count your victory to be complete until your feet are within the pearly gate! Never reckon that you may take off your helmet and lay aside your sword and say, “The battle is fairly won,” until you have crossed the River of Death and go waving the banner of love in the streets of the New Jerusalem!  
David brings this to remembrance and that, too, in the most forcible words. Some of the children of God can use very terrible words about what they feel in their own nature, so that ungodly men say of them, “How bad these Christians must be!” It is not that they are worse than others, but that they have the sense to see the evil. A man in a black coat may have a hundred spots and blots upon it, but nobody will see them— but let him wear a coat of white and if there is only a little a speck of mire, it is immediately perceived! The holier the Christian becomes, the more readily he perceives his imperfections and the wickedness of his sins—and sin, instead of becoming more bearable to a Christian, becomes growingly more and more intolerable! A man in the water may bear much—in fact, much of it might roll over his head and he would not feel the weight of it—but let him come out on the dry land and put but a small quantity of water in a bucket and how heavy it is when he carries it upon his head! When he is in the water, he does not feel the weight, for it presses him on all sides—but get him out of the water and then he begins to feel its gravity. So, a sinner in his sin is like a man in the deep— he does not feel the weight of his sin. But get him out of it, bring him into a new element, and then immediately sin becomes exceedingly sinful! Oh, if we could but be perfect! If it were possible to be rid of this evil nature! So we sigh and so we cry, waiting for the adoption, for the coming of the Lord, for the perfecting of our nature as it shall be, by-and-by, when the furnace work of Providence and the refining work of Divine Grace shall all be done!

It is a gloomy thing to bring to your remembrance, my dear Friends, but it is often brought to mine, and I know it is good for me—what you were by nature, and what you still are, unless the Grace of God prevents it. Remember old John Bradford’s remark whenever he saw a man go by his window to Tyburn to be hanged—and he lived at that time where he saw them all—“Ah,” he said, “there goes John Bradford if the Grace of God had not prevented.” It is said that a Scotchman once went to see Rowland Hill and, sitting down, he looked at the lines in his face. He looked a long while, till Rowland smilingly said, “And what are you looking at, my Friend?” “I am looking at the lines in your face, Mr. Hill.” “And what,” said he, “do you make of them?” “Why, that if the Grace of God had not saved you, you would have been a great rogue.” “Ah,” said Rowland, “and you have hit the mark!” It is even so, and even worse than that! If the Grace of God had not come into our hearts and made new creatures of us, we had been equal to the devil, or, at any rate, it would not have been our fault if we had not excelled even Apollyon, himself, in rebellion and enmity to God! A third thing the Psalm brings to our remembrance is—  
III. OUR MANY ENEMIES.  
David says that his enemies laid snares for him, sought his hurt, spoke mischievous things and devised and imagined deceits all day long. “Well,” says one, “how was it that David had so many enemies? How could he make so many? Must he not have been imprudent and rash, or, perhaps, morose?” It does not appear so in his life. He rather made enemies by his being scrupulously holy. His enemies attacked him not because he was wicked, but, as he says in this very Psalm, they were his enemies because he loved the thing which is good. Now, you must not suppose that because you seek to live in all peaceableness and righteousness, that, therefore, everybody will be peaceable towards you. Far from it! Our Lord put us upon the right tack when He said, “I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword.” The ultimate result of the religion of Christ is to make peace everywhere—but the first result is to cause strife. When the Light of God comes, it must contend with the darkness. When the Truth of God comes, it must first combat error. And when the Gospel comes, it must meet with enemies—and the man who receives the Gospel will find that his foes shall be they of his own household. You shall not be helped by an ungodly father, nor be cheered onward by an un-Christian mother. One would think that even nature, itself, might lead parents to admire that which should make their children virtuous, preserve them in this life and bless them in the life to come. But such is the enmity of the human heart against Christ and His Gospel, that hundreds of parents have been monsters to their children when those children have been obedient subjects to Christ! Why those stakes, those dungeons and those racks? Why the snows of Piedmont dyed scarlet with human gore? Why the glens of Scotland marked with the lurking places of the saints? Because this world hates the people of God! “You are not of the world,” says Christ, “even as I am not of the world, and therefore the world hates you.” It is good to be reminded of this, that we may not be astonished at the fiery trial as though some strange thing had happened to us! It is the part and lot of the follower of the true to have to contend with deadly odds.  
And remember, Christian, you have enemies who seek to turn you aside and do you mischief. You are not now traveling along a road that is safe for your feet, in which there is no enemy whatever, but behind every hedge there lurks a foe. Whether you are in high or low estate, temptation will assail you. It is not possible for you to shut the door so quickly as to shut out temptations to sin! Snares assail you in your bed and at your table—snares will be about your feet at home and abroad, with your fellow workmen and in the bosom of your family. Be always on the alert then. Travel with a naked sword—never sheath it. “Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation,” and until you have come out of the enemy’s country, into the land that flows with milk and honey, always hear your Captain say, “What I say unto you I say unto all—watch.” Watch— especially watch against those who come to you with words softer than butter which inwardly are drawn swords! Watch against temptations that appeal to your pleasure. You need not be so much afraid of that which grieves you as of that which charms you. Watch against the fair siren whose fascinating song will attract you from the billowy deep with the hope of rest to where, alas, you will find shipwreck and ruin! Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it moves itself aright. Let the charm of the temptation be the warning to you. Let the pleasure be the very beacon which shall make you turn aside from it, feeling that there must be evil lurking there. Christian, be always on your guard! Never be taken by surprise. Once more—  
IV. THE PSALM REMINDS US OF OUR GRACIOUS GOD.  
Anything which drives us to God is a blessing and anything which weans us from leaning on an arm of flesh, and especially that weans us from trying to stand alone, is a blessing to us! Think awhile how much you owe to the Grace of God who has preserved you until now. The man who carries a bombshell within his heart, and has to walk through the midst of sparks, may wonder that he has not been blown to pieces— *“Kept alive with death so near,  
I to God the glory give.”*  
With such a heart as mine, if You, O Lord, had not held me fast, I had long ago declined and turned back to the world! Praise the Grace that has held you till now! Keep in remembrance the patience of God in enduring with you, the power of God in restraining you, the love of God in instructing you and the goodness of God in keeping you to this day.  
Nor ought we ever to forget with regard to our inward depravity and the Grace of God, that mighty work which the Holy Spirit has undertaken. I was trying the other day in my own mind to weigh in the scales the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit—and the only conclusion I could come to was this—that I did not know which in its execution was the more difficult, or which in its results was the more precious. For Christ to take the guilt of sin and suffer was certainly a marvelous thing, but for the Holy Spirit to condescend to dwell in our hearts and to combat day by day with our sin until He should eradicate the very principle of selfishness and make us to be holy even as God is holy—this is a work worthy of God! And if the former work, that of Christ, was Divine, certainly this is no less so! Oh, let us never depreciate the Holy Spirit’s work, but looking forward to what we are to be, as well as backwards upon what we were, let us magnify the Holy Spirit with our heart, soul and strength who has worked all our works in us and by whom we shall be presented faultless before the Presence of God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing!  
“My God, I thank You for reminding me of Yourself, of Your Son by whom I am cleansed, of Your Holy Spirit by whom I am sanctified, of Yourself by whom I am daily succored. Oh, bind me to Yourself with tenfold cords and as your Providence brings me where I have to encounter new sins, and new trials, and to experience new deliverances and new mercies, may You be brought more closely to my soul and may everything bring You to remembrance.” We never walk so safely as when we walk with God. We are never so rich as when we are poor in everything without Him, and never so strong as when we are weakness, itself, except for such strength as we get from our invisible Helper. Lean heavily there, Christian. Lean heavily! You can never make that arm weak. Bear with all your weight—He can never tire. Cast all your burden upon Him. You may even be glad to have a burden to cast there, so that you may have opportunities of knowing and proving the power and faithfulness of your God. Tonight, as your troubles have been brought to remembrance, let those bring your weakness to remembrance—let that bring your God to remembrance and so do you go up the rungs of the ladder from the bottom of the horrible pit and of the miry clay, to the very heights of joy and gladness! And as you go say, “My God, You are mine—mine, despite my sin—mine to deliver me from it all and to make me like Yourself, to dwell with You forever.”  
Brothers and Sisters, the mercy is that all the badness that we see in ourselves does not at all affect our standing before God, or our belief in our own personal safety! Though I see within myself all that is foul and corrupt, everything that is villainous and even devilish, by nature, yet do I know that I am saved and rejoice that neither death nor Hell shall divide me from my Master’s bosom, for our standing rests not in ourselves, but wholly in what Christ has done! His perfect work presents to us a foundation upon which we can build securely—and though we grieve daily over indwelling sin and have come to God with many a bitter accusation against ourselves, yet glory be to His name, Christ changes not and our acceptance in the Beloved does not wax and wane like the moon, but abides in one sacred, high, eternal noonday never to go down! Glory be to God, and let our souls exult in such mercy as this!  
I would to God as I bring these things to your remembrance, that you would remember how many have forgotten these things all their lives. How many of your own companions live as if there were no God and no hereafter? I bring them to your remembrance. Pray for them and do what you can to lead them to Jesus!  
I wish I could bring to their remembrance that they must die and that after death there comes the judgment—and that the judgment for an unpardoned soul means eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord! Oh you who have much remembrance for the things of this world that are not worth remembering, for awhile use that faculty for nobler ends. Scrape not up the mire of the streets, but begin to gather a little of the pure gold that God puts before you! Think upon your latter end! Think upon the Gospel which now is preached to you. Think upon the time when it shall be preached to you no more! Think of the hour when you shall be called to account for having rejected the Gospel’s invitation. Whoever trusts Jesus shall be saved. Rely upon what Jesus has done and, guilty as you are, your sins shall be forgiven!

God grant that it may be so with you, for His love’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 6.**

Verse 1 What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that Grace may abound? The 5th Chapter ends up in this way, that “where sin abounded, etc… Jesus Christ our Lord.” Then he goes on to say, “What shall we say, then?” What inference shall we draw from the fact that where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound? Shall we be base enough to draw a wicked inference from a gracious statement? Shall we continue in sin that Grace may abound? It is a horrible suggestion and yet it is one which has come into the minds of many men, for some men are bad enough for anything—they will curdle the sweet milk of love into the most sour argument for sin! “Shall we continue in sin that Grace may abound? God forbid!” With all the vehemence of his nature, he says—

2. God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? The Grace of God makes us dead to sin. This is the Grace of God which delivers us from the power of evil—and if this is so, how can we live any longer therein?

3. Know you not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? If we are in Christ at all, we are partakers of His death and as His was a death for sin and a death to sin, we are made partakers of it—we are really dead because Christ died and we are in Him. Therefore we are dead to the old life, to the old way of sin. We signify that by our baptism.

4. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Our Baptism, solemn as it was, was a great acted lie, a living pretense unless we are dead to our former way of living and have come to live unto God in a new life altogether, by virtue of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead!

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His Resurrection. If we have partaken of His death, we partake also of His rising power. We live because He lives and we live as He lives, not after the old manner, but in newness of life.

6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. We are to regard ourselves as persons that have been dead. We are ourselves, it is true, and yet in another sense we are not ourselves. We are not to look upon ourselves as though we owed any kind of service to the power which we obeyed before we knew the Lord. We are new people—we have a new life and have entered upon a new existence—the old man is crucified with Him

7, 8. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. There was no getting free from the power of sin except by dying to it but, being dead to it, we are free from it and, now being dead that way, we have entered into a new life that we might live as Christ lives!

9. Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. So we, being raised from our former death, shall die no more—death has no more dominion over us. That is to say, sin cannot reign in us again—we are dead to it, we are brought into a new life that can never end, even as our Lord Jesus Christ is. There is a parallel between us and Christ, even as there is a union between us.

10. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God. And so do we! We have died unto sin once, but now that we live, we live unto God.

11, 12. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. It is in the body that it tries to reign. These poor things, these mortal frames of ours, have so many passions, so many desires, so many weaknesses, all of which are apt to bring us under the dominion of sin unless we watch with great care.

13. Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. “Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin”—neither eyes, nor ears, nor hands, nor feet—neither suffer any of these to become the tools of sin, “but yield yourselves unto God.” He is ready to use you! Lay all the powers of your nature out as tools for Him to use. “Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.” He is not the God of the dead—He cannot use the dead, but He is the God of the living—and as you profess to have received a new life in Christ, yield up all the faculties of this new life unto the living God, “and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. When you were under the Law, sin did get dominion over you! That Law which was ordained to life, worked towards death. The evil concupiscence of your nature revolted against the command and led you astray. But now, Beloved, it is of love and Grace, and now sin cannot get in—stronger motives shall hold you to holiness than ever held you before, and the Grace of God, itself, like a wall of fire, shall guard you from the dominion of sin!

15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid! That must not be! Again the evil spirit crops up, trying to turn the Grace of God into licentiousness, and to make us feel free to sin because of God’s love—that must not be!

16. Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? It is a wonderful heart-searching text, is this! Let us put ourselves under its power. Whatever you obey, that is your master! And if you obey the suggestions of sin, you are the slave of sin! And it is only as you are obedient to God that you are truly the servants of God. So that, after all, our outward walk and conversation are the best test of our true condition. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, nor can he have any reason to believe that he belongs to God.

17. But God be thanked that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Or into which you were delivered. God has taken you, melted you down, and poured you into a new mold! God be thanked for that—you are not what you used to be. Although you are not what you hope to be, yet you have reason to bless God you are not what once you were—you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you were delivered.

18. Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness. The fetters are struck off, the lusts of the flesh do not hold us any longer. We are the Lord’s free men and women—and out of gratitude for this glorious freedom, we become the willing servants of the righteous God!

19. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanliness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. It needs no explanation. In the days of our sin, we sinned with all our power. There was not one part of us but what became the willing servant of sin and we went from iniquity into iniquity! But now the Cross has made us entirely new and we have been melted down, poured out into a fresh mold. Now, let us yield every member of our body, soul and spirit to righteousness, even unto holiness, till the whole of us, in the wholeness and consequently the holiness of our nature, shall be given unto God.

20. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. You did not care about righteousness then. When you served sin, you felt it was utterly indifferent to you what the claims of righteousness might be. Well, now that you have become the servant of righteousness, be free from sin! Let sin have no more dominion over you, now, than righteousness used to have when you were the slaves of sin! “What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?” What profit did they ever bring you? There was a temporary delight, like the blossom on the tree in spring, but what fruit did you find? Did it ever come to anything? Is there anything to look back upon with pleasure in a life of sin? Oh no, those things whereof we are now ashamed were fruitless to us, “for the end of those things is death.”

22, 23. But now being made free from sin, and being servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*ISAIAH 53.*

This is a Chapter which you have read hundreds of times, perhaps. I am sure it is one that needs no comment from me. I shall read it through with scarcely a sentence of comment.

Verses 1-9. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He has done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. A strange reason for making His grave with the wicked, and yet remember, if it had not been that He had done no violence, He would not have been fit to be a Substitute for sinners! And so He was numbered with transgressors to redeem men.

10, 11, 12. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief; when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong because He has poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. How clearly you have before you, here, our blessed Redeemer, and how strong are the expressions used by Isaiah to set forth His Substitution. If he intended to teach us the Doctrine that Christ suffered in the place of His people, he could not have used more expressive words. And if he did not intend to teach us that Truth of God, it is marvelous that he should have adopted a phraseology so likely to mislead. Yes, we believe and hold it fast, that Christ did take the sins of His people verily and truly upon Himself and did, in proper Person make a complete expiation for the guilt of all His chosen! And in this we find our hearts’ best confidence—

*Our soul can on this Doctrine live,  
Can on this Doctrine die!”*  
Have you and I an interest in this Atonement, or must the complaint be made concerning us—“Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” While I was reading just now, could you say by faith, “Yes, surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”? Have you an appropriating faith which takes the sufferings of Christ to be its own? Do you now humbly, but yet confidently, look to Jesus Christ, the great Burden-Bearer on yonder tree, and know that your guilt was there? If so, rejoice and walk worthily of your calling! If not, Soul, you do not know the first letters of the alphabet of religion! May the Lord teach you, for His name’s sake.

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“CASES OF CONSCIENCE”  
NO. 2911

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1862.

**“For my iniquities are gone over my head: as a  
heavy burden they are too heavy for me.”  
Psalm 38:4.**

I HAVE a special purpose before me this evening. I shall endeavor to describe the state of the sinner’s heart when it has been awakened, when conscience is set at work, when sin and the judgment of God upon it occupy the mind’s attention—that period which John Bunyan describes in his, “Pilgrim’s Progress,” as being spent between the City of Destruction and the Wicket Gate—that state of mind in which a man is found when he flees from his former sin and desires to escape from the wrath to come, but has not yet found out the way of salvation so as to realize his own pardon and forgiveness through the great Atonement made upon the Cross.

In fulfilling this intention, I propose, first, to speak of the terrors which frequently accompany conviction of sin. Secondly, to describe the cases of some who, while really convicted of sin, are, nevertheless, strangers to those terrors. And then to address a few words of advice both to those who are sorely broken by cruel fears and those, on the other hand, who are more gently brought to Christ.

I. There is A GREAT AND APPALLING TERROR OF MIND WHICH FREQUENTLY ACCOMPANIES CONVICTION OF SIN. The experience which I shall try to describe has not been that of all those who are brought to Christ. I must make, as it were, a broad outline—an open sketch without filling it up—a picture in which many, though certainly not all, may be able to read the story of their own passage through the Slough of Despond.

Usually, when Divine Grace comes into the heart, one of the first things that attends it is a sort of indefinable fear. The man does not know how or why it is that he has such a fear. He felt safe enough before, but now the very ground under his feet seems to be rotten. He played with sin, thinking it was only a trifle, but, suddenly, he is made to tremble at it. He finds that the serpent has a sting and he is afraid of it. Sometimes, by night, he will be scared with visions in his dreams and, by day, something more vivid than visions will appear before him. He now begins to believe that there is a Hell, that there is a just God, that sin must be punished, that he has sinned and that, therefore, he must die! He does not know that he is to do, but he feel that something must be done, either by himself or by somebody else, for his soul is truly afraid. To a greater or less extent, he has first the fear of punishment which afterwards, through the Grace of God, grows into a fear of sin!

Then, as this fear increases, a kind of disquietude and unrest lays hold of the man. David tells us his own experience and his prayer when he was in such a state as I am trying to describe. “O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath: neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. For Your arrows stick fast in me, and your hand presses me sorely. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger. Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.” That is the case with a man under conviction of sin—he is restless and ill at ease. Those things which he once counted as pleasures now seem to him to be exceedingly wearisome. If he still seeks the amusements which once charmed him, they only sicken him now—he cannot bear to look at them. He has such a sad heart within him that he does not want to have songs sung to him, for they seem to be out of place to such a man as he feels himself to be. The Psalmist’s words describe him just now. “Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat and they draw near unto the gates of death.”

The companions of such a man cannot understand what is the matter with him! They think that he is suffering from a fit of melancholy. So, indeed, he is, but I pray that it may not be a mere fitful spasm, but that it may continue and that it may be increased and intensified until he is “dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The man’s melancholy will then give place to “unspeakable joy and full of glory.” He then begins to be a quiet stay-at-home. He tries to find rest there but, somehow, even his own family does not afford him the peace it once did. His wife thinks that something strange has come over him and if she is not herself converted, it must be quite incomprehensible to her. But if she should ever be led forth on the same pilgrimage, she would understand that this is a part of the footsteps of the flock—one of the first of the footsteps of the straying sheep when the Shepherd comes to fetch them back.  
This disquietude and unrest of spirit will grow, by-and-by, into a burdensomeness of heart, just as Bunyan describes Christian with a burden on his back which made him sigh and groan. You remember how he pictures the pilgrim—“I saw a man clothed with rags standing in a certain place, a book in his hand and a great burden upon his back. I looked and saw him open the book, and read therein. And as he read, he wept and trembled and, not being able to contain it any longer, he broke out with a lamentable cry, saying, ‘What shall I do?’” The man of whom I am speaking comes to just such state as this. He has no visible burden upon his shoulders, yet he has upon his heart a load so heavy that it threatens to crush him to the very dust and to drive him to utter despair! It may be that through the persuasion of his former companions, he is led to indulge in sin as he was known to do, but if so, in the sin he is wretched and after the sin he is far more miserable than he was before! He may sing, but even while he is singing, he will be like the man who could amuse others with his funny sayings while his own heart was heavy within him. And this becomes the man’s constant state of mind—not only can he find no rest, night nor day, but all the while he has to carry his heavy burden wherever he may be! And he cries to the Lord with David, “Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.”

With some men this state of mind will continue until they come, at last, to utterly loathe themselves. They might even adopt the language of David in the Psalm from which I have taken my text. “I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease and there is no soundness in my flesh.” There was one who said that he wished he had been a frog or a toad— anything rather than a man—when he realized how sinful he had been! So detestable did he appear in his own sight for having sinned and wantonly sinned against such light, against such love, against such longsuffering—for having rejected Christ, grieved the Holy Spirit and despised the precious blood which alone can cleanse from sin! All these things come up before the man’s mind and he thinks that no doom is too bad for him. “No,” he says, “I once thought that it was an unjust thing for a man to be cast away to all eternity, but now I feel that whatever You do with me, O God, it will be impossible for You to be too severe! I deserve all that Your Infinite Justice can bring upon me. I will be quite willing to sign my own death warrant and to set my seal to my own condemnation and say that it is just.”

Loathing thus himself and his life, his sin and his pleasures—and loathing even his very existence—the man, if left to himself, will often undergo such terror of conscience that even his body will begin to feel it. His mortal frame, sympathizing with his immortal spirit, will grow sick. There have been some with whom I have myself had to deal, who have had sore sickness through conviction of sin and, for a little season, it did seem as if the only hope for them to be able to live at all was for them to find immediate pardon through the blood of Jesus Christ. There have been some, I doubt not, who have almost been bereft of their senses when they have seen sin in its true colors. Thank God, dear Friends, if you have never come to this! But if you have, thank God for it. There are thousands who have passed through that experience and yet, through the thickest darkness, have come into the brightest Light of God!

The man who is the subject of this conviction will also have a perpetual consciousness of feebleness as David says in the eighth verse of this Psalm, “I am feeble and sorely broken.” The strong man suddenly becomes weak as a little child. The very wise man, the keen critic, the severe judge of others suddenly becomes gentle, tender-hearted, soft in spirit. He does not now sit in judgment upon any other man, for he has enough to do in standing before the bar of his own conscience—and he dreads lest he should soon be judged and condemned by his God! He used to talk, in days gone by, a great deal about the dignity and might of man but now he knows more about human depravity and weakness. At one time he used to say, “I can believe in Christ whenever I like. I can be saved whenever I please!” Salvation seemed to him a very easy matter in those days but now it seems to him to be the hardest thing in the world to believe in Christ! His cry now is—

*“But oh, for this no strength have I,*

*My strength is at Your feet to lie.”*  
He does not find fault with sermons as he used to do. If they do but reach his heart and bring to him even a little comfort, he is pleased and thankful. He is glad enough, now, to eat his food off the poorest platter if he can but get food for his soul. He feels that if the Lord would but send him His pardon, even if it came by a limping messenger, he would not trouble about the messenger, but he would prize the pardon that he brought! He is brought very low—the high-soaring spirit lies in the dust and out of the dust cries—“Lord, save me, or I perish!”

Beside and beyond all this, his soul gets to be in a terrible agony of desire. It has come to this with him—that he must have mercy, that he must be saved! He feels as if he could not take a denial—that it were better for him to die than to continue to live in such a state as that in which he finds himself. He can use the words of our hymn—

*“Wealth and honor I disdain,  
Earthly comforts all are vain—  
These can never satisfy—  
Give me Christ, or else I die!”*

He has the same sort of look that you may have seen on the faces of starving people when, at last, a roast is set before them. It is bread they need—bread! So this spiritually starving man feels that he must have provision for his soul or he will expire. There is something terribly startling in the cry of, “Fire!” at the dead of night. But the cry of, “Bread! Bread!” seems to come from the very vitals of humanity and to reach the very center of our hearts. So will it be with this man’s prayer at last. It is not a matter of, “maybe,” with him—he cannot bear to look upon salvation in the light of a perhaps or a maybe—he feels that he must have it, that he cannot take a denial! He agonizes, groans and cries to God, “Lord, save me! Lord, save me! God be merciful to me a sinner!”

We have known some who have gone even further than this until, at last, their prayer has been mingled with despair rather than with faith. They have prayed to God for deliverance. They have, in some sense, looked to Christ upon the Cross. Yet they have not seemed able to believe that there could be power in Him to save them. Some of us have known what it was to have the great Judge of All put on the black cap and pronounce sentence of death upon us. We have gone into the condemned cell and waited there—really expecting to be led out to execution—and to hear the Lord say to us, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” I cannot tell you what is the intense delight of a heart that has been prostrate in the dust when it receives full remission, free forgiveness! It mounts as high, then, as it was known to descend into the depths!

I will mention only one more characteristic of this man under conviction of sin—he probably feels himself a solitary person. David says in this Psalm, “My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague and my kinsmen stand afar off.” The man under conviction of sin feels that he is quite alone, that he has no one in the world to help him. I have frequently noticed that young people in this condition have been afraid to mention to their own parents, or to their minister, what they feel. If we try to probe them a little, to find out what is the matter, they are very reluctant to tell us because it seems to them that they are the only persons who ever felt as they do. I believe that almost all those who come to Christ think that they are very singular people—very odd people. I know I thought that there never could be any other sinner as bad as I was—and that none could ever have felt the horror of great darkness that I felt! Little did I think that the path I was then treading, instead of being trodden by one solitary pilgrim, was the beaten track of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims!

II. Now, secondly, I shall endeavor to show you that IT SHOULD NOT BE A CAUSE OF DISQUIET TO ANY OF YOU IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN SPIRITUALLY EXERCISED TO THE SAME EXTENT AS OTHERS.

Dear Friends, all the distress that is felt by the mind when under conviction of sin is not the work of the Spirit of God, though some of it is. I cannot draw the line and say exactly how far it is the Spirit’s work but, certainly, there is a portion of this horror and distress which does not come from God. Therefore, learn this lesson—that it is not necessary for you to traverse the whole ground of every other sinner’s experience in passing from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son!

No doubt part of the horror I have been describing comes from Satan. He does not want to lose those who have been his subjects. He sees that one who was once a very contented slave begins to feel his chain irksome and longs to escape from the cruel servitude and, therefore, Satan brings out his great whip to frighten him, tells him that he must not attempt to escape, or he will flog him for his past sins. So the poor wretch crouches down at his feet and Satan says, “Now is my only chance to prevent him from escaping. Servants of the infernal powers attack him, vex him, torment him, insinuate every doubt and every fear and every blasphemy that you can! This is our only opportunity! He will be out of gunshot soon—it is now or never with us. Let us leave no stone unturned to break his heart and ruin him before he gets peace through Christ.” No doubt that evil spirit who “worries whom he can’t devour,” has very often tried to trouble poor sinners because he knew that they were about to escape from his domain. It is not necessary, Brothers and Sisters, and it is not desirable that you and I should know all this horror! That which comes from Satan we should think ourselves happy to escape.

Another part of this agony, no doubt, arises from ignorance. If some of those poor weeping souls knew more, they would sorrow less and suffer less. In John Bunyan’s, “Grace Abounding,” you can trace very clearly that very much of the conflict that he had to endure was the result of his utter ignorance. He knew very little about spiritual things. At first he had but one book, “The Poor Man’s Pathway to Heaven.” He does not appear to have attended much on the ministry in his early days, so he had not learned much about the Kingdom of Heaven and he was in a state of great darkness when he found his way to Christ. But I do not think that you and I, Beloved, who have been from our youth up instructed in the things of God—if we know the plan of salvation, if we know that simple faith in the precious blood will save us—should desire to pass through these extraordinary agonies and racking of conscience and heart.

Besides, a part of this experience may also come from constitutional tendencies. There are some who seem to have been born on the darkest nights of the whole year and, on every possible occasion, they look rather at the spots on the sun than at the sun itself. Their observations are rather directed to the whirlpools and the barren deserts than to the gentlyflowing rivers and green pastures! They have a very keen apprehension of the snakes and other reptiles, but not of the flowers and the birds. They were born in gloom and they seem to carry the gloom of their nativity to their graves—and it seems very natural and very likely, since the Spirit of God does not change our physical constitutions, though He does change our moral nature—that there should be in such people, coupled with that conviction which is the work of the Spirit, a tendency to certain fears and trembling which spring only from the flesh and are not the work of the Spirit of God.

These few remarks may help to put some here who have been praying to experience these terrors, upon the right track. They will not, I hope, pray for such a thing anymore! Am I addressing any who think they are not saved because they have not known such terrors as some others have experienced? Let me remind you, dear Friends, that there are many of the true children of God who have never known these horrors! I suppose there are many in this church, over which I am overseer, who have not experimentally known these terrors. They know what repentance of sin is, but the horror of great darkness they have not known. Certainly, in Scripture, we have not many of such cases recorded. I do not think that Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, ever went through such an experience as David did in this matter. It may be that the Apostle Paul did, for he had scales upon his eyes—and it may be that the blindness of his body was but a picture of the darkness of his mind. But I do not think that Peter, James and John and those other disciples whom Christ called while they were fishing, or engaged in other occupations, knew much about this kind of experience. They knew what repentance of sin was— mark that—and that is the Spirit’s work beyond any doubt. But they do not appear to have known that terror which springs from the flesh, or rises from the pit of Hell.

Therefore, dear Brothers and Sisters, since many of the children of God have not felt these horrors, do not look upon those who have felt them as models for your imitation! And do not condemn yourself because you have not gone through an experience similar to theirs. While it is quite certain that some good people have known these terrors, you must remember that there may have been special demons in their case, why it was so with them. What a blessing it has been to others that John Bunyan, who seems to be my chief illustration tonight, passed through such an experience, for, if he had not done so, he could not have written his, “

Grace Abounding” and “Pilgrim’s Progress.” But you and I do not expect to write a “Pilgrim’s Progress.” We have not that special work to do! But Bunyan had and, therefore, we do not need the peculiar training through which he had to pass.

Certain metals that will have to endure an extraordinary strain have to pass through an annealing process. But other substances which are not put to so severe a test need not be prepared in the same stern fashion. The Apostle Paul traces many of his deep troubles and holy triumphs to the qualifications with which he was fitted for ministering to the saints. “Whether we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer or whether we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” Beyond a doubt there are some servants of God who have a great work to do in deep waters. In the course of their lifetime they are to contend with Satan in a very special fashion—so the Lord gives them a special training that they may become good soldiers of Jesus Christ from the very commencement of their career. None of you may have to do the work of Luther or Calvin—you will not all have to go forth to address multitudes, as Whitefield did—and you do not, therefore, need the peculiar training which was necessary for them.

But I again remind you that you must have that which is the work of the Spirit! Repentance and abhorrence of sin you must have! But that which is beyond this, which God employs as a disciplinary training for some of His servants, is not necessary for all of you to have. If you had felt such horrors as others have experienced, you might not have been in your right senses now. The Lord, who tempers the wind to the shorn sheep, has tempered the Spirit’s convictions to you. Possibly you are of a feeble constitution and you could not safely pass through what some strong men have endured. Your spirit may be so tender, your mind may be so susceptible, that it would have been broken if it had been subjected to the rough handling that others have had. You know that a physician, when he seeks to cure a number of patients, treats them in various ways. He gives a good dose of medicine to a strong soldier and lets it work its way. But if he has to deal with a feeble girl, he gives her only a small dose, lest the larger quantity should kill her. So our Lord, when He is curing us of the evil disease of sin, acts differently in different cases and, with some of us, He works very gently.

It is not necessary for me to say any more upon this point except to remind you that these horrors and terrors are not essential to salvation, or else they would have been commanded. Faith and repentance, the essentials to salvation, are commanded—“Repent and be baptized, every one of you.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The things that are essential to salvation are put very plainly in the Scriptures. I do not read anywhere in the Word of God, “Be tempted of the devil and you shall be saved.” I do not read, “Feel a horror of great darkness and you shall be saved.” I do not find the Lord commanding you to despair in order that you may be saved. So far from these things being essential to salvation, they are often stumbling blocks in the way of sinners seeking the Savior—and devices of the devil from which may God deliver us!

To doubt, for instance, whether Christ can save me is a heinous sin! To think that my case is so bad that God cannot blot out my sin is to doubt His Omnipotence and to do Him grievous dishonor. For me to despair of receiving the mercy of Christ is to do despite to that generous and self-sacrificing Savior who bled to death on Calvary’s Cross! To think that He is either unable or unwilling to forgive us is to add to our former offenses—and that which is, in itself, sinful cannot be a help to salvation! That which is, in itself, the very climax and culminating point of human guilt—to doubt the love, kindness and mercy of God—cannot, in any sense, be a desirable thing in any child of God! To repent is one thing, but to despair is quite another matter. To dread sin and to loathe it is one thing—but to doubt the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin is quite another.

III. Now, having handled these two points, let me close with WORDS OF ADVICE TO BOTH THESE CLASSES OF PERSONS WHOM I HAVE BEEN DESCRIBING.

Dear Friends, you who are frightened and alarmed, vexed and troubled, I know what you are saying, “Oh, that we could escape from this misery!” There is another friend, over yonder, who has never had these fears and he is saying, “I wish I had them, for, if I had them, there would be some hope for me.” If you do not have them, you want them— and if you do have them, you want to get rid of them! There is no pleasing you either way. But good physicians do not seek to please their patients, but to cure them! It is not their aim to make the medicine palatable, but to make it efficacious. So, the Lord does not study our wishes, but gives us what is best for us—and we are very foolish to wish to have it otherwise.

Let me remind you who are in terror because of sin that the only way to escape from that terror aright is to flee at once to Jesus! As a good old woman, who had long been accustomed to reading “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” wisely said, “No doubt Mr. Bunyan described what he went through before he found Christ, but he did not picture the way of salvation as he might have done. Evangelist ought to have said to the pilgrim, ‘Do you see that Cross yonder? And do you see Jesus, the Son of God made flesh, and bleeding and dying there? Look to Him and you shall be saved! Trust Him and your sins shall all be put away at once.’ That is the true Gospel which gives peace to troubled hearts.” So I say to you, poor troubled Friend, and to you who are not troubled, flee to Christ! Trust the Son of God to save you and He will save you! Trust Him to put away all your past guilt and He will do it. Trust Him to keep you in the future and He will vouchsafe you His promised aid. Trust Him with the enormous load of your sin and He will take it upon His shoulders and roll it into the Red Sea of His atoning blood! Trust Him with the foul disease of your evil habits—and with the touch of His healing finger you will be made whole! Say not, “I am too miserable to rest on Him,” but rest on Him, however miserable you may be. Say not, “I am not in a fit state to come to Christ,” for whatever state you are in, you are fit to come to Christ. He needs no fitness in you except that, just as you are, you trust in “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” May the Holy Spirit enable you to do so! I will not argue with you about your doubts and fears, your, “ifs,” and your, “buts.” This is God’s commandment to you, poor Sinner—“Trust in Christ.” So, do not dare to disobey it, but may the Holy Spirit compel you to obey it, for then shall you go on your way rejoicing because your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you!

To you who have not felt such terrors as I have been describing, what shall I say? Do not displease the Lord by seeking for them. Do not begin fretting and complaining because you have not been tried as others have been. If a child cries because he has not been whipped, he ought to have full satisfaction! If a young man should go to a physician and complain that he was afraid he would not continue to live because he had not had the measles, or whooping cough, or scarlet fever, what would the physician say to him? The most likely reply would be, “Be thankful, Sir, that you have not had those maladies.” If you cry because you have not had to smart under the Lord’s rod, it may be that you will have your desire granted to your cost! The Lord may say, “That sinner might have gone straight to the Cross, but he would not. He wanted to go through the Slough of Despond, so he shall go through it—and he shall flounder about in it with the frogs croaking in his ears and the filth rolling into his mouth for many a day—until he knows better than to dictate to his Heavenly Father.” If you have not gone to Sinai with Mr. Worldly Wiseman to hear its thunder and to see its lightning, be thankful that you have not! Flee from all these things to Christ, without asking Him for a preparatory training in the terrors and horrors which some have had to experience! Trust in Christ and you shall find salvation at once!

I was reading, the other day, the preface to the hymn of a very excellent writer. There is a passage in the memoir in which the author says that “he stuck by a feeling religion, and a feeling religion stuck by him.” Well, dear Friends, I am afraid that many of you find that “a feeling religion” does stick by you—but I believe that is one of the worst kinds of religion in the whole world! It is a believing religion that saves the soul! And those who are so dependent upon feelings are in the seventh Heaven of delight one day and in the depths of despair the next! They go up and down so quickly because they are built upon the sandy shifting foundation of their own emotions! Be not so foolish, Beloved! Build on what Christ did, on what Christ was, on what He is and what He suffered! Building so, you shall find Him “the same yesterday, and today, and forever”—and your hope, faith and comfort shall abide with you—since they are founded upon the immovable Rock of Ages!

I have tried to preach the Gospel simply tonight. Remember, Souls, that the Word is not preached in vain. We are either, “a savor of life unto life,” or, “of death unto death” to our hearers. Which is it to you, dear Friends? Is it a savor of death unto death to you, O impenitent Sinner? And is it to you, O penitent Soul, a savor of life unto life? By this test shall you tell which it is—if you now, from your heart, trust Christ, in obedience to the Lord’s command, then has the Gospel saved you and you may go in peace. “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” “Arise, take up your bed and go to your house.” Go your way, for the Lord has had mercy on you! Glorify Him in the family and tell others, wherever you can, what great things the Lord has done for you!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 38; ISAIAH 53.**

I am going to read two portions of Scripture. In the first—the 38th Psalm—we shall hear a suffering servant of Jehovah crying out to his God.

Psalm 38:1. O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath: neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. “If You do rebuke me, do it gently, O my Lord! If You do chasten me, let not Your displeasure wax hot against Your servant.”

2. For Your arrows stick fast in me, and Your hand presses me down. God may aim His arrows even at His own children and He may lay His hand very heavily upon those whom He deeply loves.

3. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. David was under the afflicting hand of God even with regard to his bodily disease. He could have borne the pain if it had been merely physical—but there was a sense of sin mixed with it which made it sting him in his very soul.

4, 5. For my iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. David had some painful old sores. I mean old sins and they seem to have broken out again and again. And when he wrote this Psalm, he was groaning in his spirit at the remembrance of them. His faith was at a low ebb and his feelings were of the most bitter and sorrowful kind.

6. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. Yet he was a true child of God all the while, for this is, according to its title, “A Psalm of David,” concerning whom the Lord said, “I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, which shall fulfill all My will.” God’s flowers do not have sunlight 24 hours in the day. They have their night seasons when it is not only dark, but it may also be heavy with the cold dew, or trying with a sharp frost.

7, 8. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sorely broken: I have roared by reason of the turmoil of my heart. That is an expressive word that David uses—“I have roared.” He felt as if his prayers were more like the agonized cries of a wounded beast than the intelligent supplications of a human being—least of all, of a man of God. And sometimes, when the spirit is greatly bowed down, it cannot express itself in words, but has to be content with groans, cries, sobs and tears.

9. LORD, all my desire is before You; and my groaning is not hid from You. What a sweet, sweet Truth that is! Happy is that man who, in the time of deepest darkness, can still grasp that Truth of God and hold it fast. “Lord, my groaning is not hid from You! I could only roar out my complaint, or groan it out, but You could hear it just as well as if I had ordered my words aright before You.”

10, 11. My heart pants, my strength fails me: as for the light of my eyes, it also is gone from me. My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; and my kinsmen stand afar off. “Relatives and friends alike all get away from me as far as they can, for they cannot bear to be in such sorrowful company.”

12, 13. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not: and I was as a dumb man that opens not his mouth. Although David was a tried man, he was, at least at that time, a wise man. God did not leave His servant to act or to speak foolishly and, Beloved, when men are unjustly rebuking and reproaching you, there is nothing more wise than to act as if you did not hear them! It is the very acme of wisdom if you can keep quite quiet and not answer them—refusing to make any apologies or extenuations—or even showing any sign that you have so much as heard what they have said!

14, 15. Thus I was as a man that hears not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. For in You, O LORD, do I hope. What sublime faith there is here! It is easy to have faith in sunshiny weather—to have faith when you have the least need of it. There are plenty of people who fancy they are believing in God when everything is going well with them. It is one thing to believe when you are lying at anchor in a peaceful harbor—it is quite another matter to believe when you are at sea in a storm. David hoped in God when trouble had come upon him wave upon wave—“For in You, O Lord, do I hope.”

15. You will hear, O LORD my God. “Even if I do not hear You, You will hear me and if no man shall hear me, You will hear my prayer and answer my supplication.”

16-20. For I said, hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slips, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare my iniquity. I will be sorry for my sin. But my enemies are vigorous, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are my adversaries; because I follow what is good. We need never be afraid of any man’s opposition when the reason for his being our adversary is that we “follow what is good,” as our translators quaintly express it.

21, 22. Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my Salvation. Now we shall see, as we read that wondrous 53rd chapter of Isaiah, not a man of God in trouble, but the Son of God in trouble! And we shall see Him, also, as a deaf man that hears not, “and as a dumb man that opens not His mouth.”

Isaiah 53:1-9. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned everyone to His own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Those wicked men were His enemies because He did “follow what is good.” They that rewarded Him evil for good were His adversaries even as they are ours.

10. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him. We might say the same of that tried child of God whose utterances we read just now—“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.”

10, 11. He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. What gracious Gospel words these are, even though they were recorded under the old dispensation! Oh, how you who are full of iniquity ought to catch at these Inspired declarations which so clearly set forth the substitutionary work of Christ on behalf of the guilty! If you realize your need of such a Savior as He is, how these words ought to gladden Your heart!

12. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1564 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

DESIRES TOWARDS GOD— A SERMON FOR THE WEAK  
NO. 1564

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 24, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Lord, all my desire is before You; and my groaning is not hid from You.” Psalm 38:9.**

IT is our earnest desire that all who are in Christ may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. I would earnestly wish to see such spiritual life among us that every man had reached the very height of holy manhood and was in possession of the utmost possible degree of spiritual vigor. It is a great calamity when there is a very large proportion of sick folks in any Christian community, for these must draw off the care and strength of the Church from aggressive movements. How favored would we be if it could be said of us as of Israel when they came out of Egypt, “There was not one feeble person in all their tribes.” Oh that the day would come when the Word of God shall be fulfilled which says—“He that is feeble among them shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them.”

Let no man suppose that there is a necessity that he should always be weak in faith, always walk under a cloud, or that he should forever be a Mr. Feeble-Mind or Mr. Ready-to-Halt. Miracles of Grace are for saints as well as sinners! Feeble minds can be strengthened and crutches thrown away. We ought to grow out of the feebleness of our spiritual childhood. We should cry to God for Grace that we may get up “into the hill country” of holy confidence and there, like Mary, sing, “My soul does magnify the Lord.” Oh that we might all attain to assurance, yes, to the

 full assurance of understanding, so that we should know why we are thus assured and so become rooted, grounded and settled in the faith—for then nothing would, by any means, remove us from the Truth of God or even move us in the Truth. May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.

I would to God that you might each realize that promise of the 25th Psalm, “What man is he that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease and his seed shall inherit the earth.” At the same time, we are most painfully conscious that all of God’s people are not in a vigorous condition and we know that there is a large mixture in every Church of those who are sickly, desponding and faint. These we are bound to care for. Common humanity demands it, our sacred office binds us to it and the example of the good Shepherd constrains us. We must feed the lambs. We must “lift up the hands that hang down and confirm the feeble knees.” The voice of God is heard in our heart saying, “Comfort you, comfort you My people,” which voice we dare not disregard!

Indeed, the sympathies awakened within us by a similar experience prompt us to be forward in compassion for the weak and the tried. Therefore, at this time I would seek out the weary and wounded and feeble—not with a view of trying to multiply their number—but with the hope of diminishing their number by cheering them till they grow out of their low condition. We would not pamper weakness till we seem to offer a premium to unbelief, but yet we would feed the feeble in the king’s meadows till they become strong in the Lord! I shall now look after those who cannot get beyond desires and groans and let none blame me for this service. If the shepherd spends much of his time among the weakly sheep—if he gathers the lambs with his arms and carries them in his bosom—if he seems, even, to neglect the stronger sheep because they do not so urgently call for his care, no one should, therefore, infer that he delights in feebleness.

Far from it! He is trying to remove it by his tenderness! You do not blame the humane for caring for the sick. If great efforts are put forth to build or endow a hospital, you do not say, “Sickness is a desirable thing, for all this money is spent upon comforting and helping those who feel it.” Your feelings are quite the contrary—though these sick folk become the object of care, it is not as a reward to them—but an act of compassion towards them. Let none, therefore, say that the preacher encourages a low state of Divine Grace—he encourages it no more than the physician encourages disease when he tries, by his care and skill, to heal the sick! Whatever your judgments may be, I always mean to look after the downcast and the struggling! Nor shall the babes be forgotten of my soul while I am able to be a nursing father to them.

In a large family where there are little children there must always be arrangements for their feeding. Spoon victuals and milk must always be in the house, for if the cupboard contained nothing but meat and biscuits, the tender ones would starve. If it should ever come to pass that a ministry consisted entirely of the higher doctrines and the deeper experiences, it would leave many unsupplied and it certainly would not be like the ministry of Christ which had in it as much of simplicity as of mystery! A true steward cares for all the household and provides milk for babies as well as meat for men. If he forgets anything, he had better forget the meat than the milk, for though babies could not live on strong meat, men can live upon pure milk. To tell the truth, I have known the strong men come into such a condition at times that the milk for babies was all that they could take.

Burly Samsons who can carry Gaza’s gates may yet be so reduced that they can digest nothing but a milk diet. Those whose confidence is at its very height, today, may be brought so low that they will prize beyond gold the smallest marks and evidences of Grace and will be delighted to take hold upon those elementary Truths of God which belong to new-born Believers! Even fathers in Christ are glad, at times, to seize upon those simple promises which they left, before, to the most trembling of the saints, or perhaps to desponding sinners. If, therefore, at this present time I speak to the very lowest form of Christian life—if I try to meet the weakest case—I shall not admit that I am neglecting the strong. My giant Brother over yonder can have a drink of milk if he likes—it will not hurt him.

Come and try it, my worthy Friend! Receive, again, the simple doctrine by which little children live and you will find wholesome fare! Delight yourself, by all means, in such grand old doctrine as we were singing just now in Toplady’s noble hymn, but do not disdain the plain Truths of God which must always remain the staple food of the household of faith! Come we, then, to the text, “All my desire is before You; and my groaning is not hid from You.” May the Holy Spirit be our Instructor and we shall learn aright!

I. Our first point is DESIRES TOWARDS GOD SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO HIM. You, it may be, my dear Friend, cannot see any Grace in yourself at all—all that you perceive is a desire to have Grace. You know that you desire to repent of sin, desire to be delivered from it, desire to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus, desire to be perfectly reconciled to God—but you fear that you have come no farther. Now, it is true that many desires are of no use whatever. “The sluggard desires and has nothing.” Mere wishes are sorry things. But the desires of our text are earnest desires—the movements of the heart—for they are accompanied by “groaning.” The Psalm evidently speaks of desires after God, not after temporal things— desires which are mainly expressed in the first verse of the Psalm, “O Lord, rebuke me not in Your wrath: neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure.”

It is of intense, earnest, agonizing desires toward God for spiritual things that I am about to speak. Such desires ought to be made known unto God. It may be said that God knows our desires and that is what the text asserts. I do not doubt the Omniscience of God! But He bids us confess everything to Him quite as carefully as if He did not know it until we informed Him. We are to declare our cases for ourselves, just as David did, for it was not until after he had told out his sad story in the eight previous verses that he said, “All my desire is before You.” We may expect the Lord to treat us as if He did not know our desires if we are negligent in declaring them. Does not the Apostle say, “In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God”?

Mark the language—“Let them be made known.” The Lord waits to be gracious, but He tarries till His people have pleaded for the blessing! He knows, but frequently He does not act upon the knowledge till we have laid bare our case before Him. Make known, then, your requests and do so, first, because our whole life ought to be transparent before God. What is the use of endeavoring to hide anything? “All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” The life of every man should be unveiled before the eye of Heaven—but as for those who are believers in Christ, even in the humblest degree they desire no concealment—rather do they cry, “Search me, O God.” We do not wish to hide anything! Our hope lies in our heavenly Father’s knowing all.

There should be no wish to hide, even, a stray desire, or to conceal the most doleful groan. All should be open and aboveboard between a sinner and His Savior. What secrets can there be between a soul convinced of sin and a pardoning God? It would have an ill look if we still sewed fig leaves together, or hid among the trees of the garden. No, let us stand forth and let our covering be such only as the Lord, Himself, provides. Take care, then, in prayer, to set forth the secrets of your soul before God. Tell Him your sin and spread it out in all its sorrowful detail. Tell Him your fears for the past, your anxieties for the present and your dreads for the future. Tell Him your suspicions of yourself and your trembling lest you should be deceived. Tell Him what salvation you wish for and what work of Grace it is that your soul desires—make all your heart known unto God and keep back nothing, for much benefit will come to you from being honest with your best Friend.

Do this, next, because it is commanded of God that we should make our desires known to Him. Prayer, which is a constant duty and privilege, is, practically, “desire.” It is desire with its garments on. It is desire booted and saddled for traveling the heavenly road. Prayer without desire is dead—its soul has fled, it is but the carcass of prayer. When desire is burning in the soul, it sends up the flame of prayer, or the sparks of sighs and groans. Prayer is the fiery chariot and desires are its horses of fire! Since, then, we are commanded to “pray without ceasing,” we are really commanded to make known our desires continually. Give utterance to your desire in the best form you can, however difficult may be the task. I pray you do this, for God would have you confess all to Him. He says that “men ought always to pray and not to faint.” And again, “In everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.” Jesus said, “Watch and pray,” and His Apostle said, “I will that men pray everywhere.”

And what is this but to make your desires known to God? It is a great benefit to a man to be able to express his desires and this is an argument for making them known to God! You know your own desires better by trying to express them. They are indistinct till prayer sketches their likeness and fixes their image. Even should you fail to express your desires, their inexpressible character will better make known to you their greatness and their intensity. Sometimes a desire that is in the heart would at once be extinguished if you were to attempt to express it, for you would not dare to allow it to exist after you once saw its true nature. A glance at some desires would seal their doom, for we should feel them to be unworthy to be presented before the Lord. But when it is a holy and pure desire, tell it, for it will relieve your heart! It will heighten your estimate of the blessing sought! It will bring you to think over the promises made to such desires and it will, thereby, strengthen your hope that your desire will be fulfilled and enable you, by faith, to obtain it.

The prayerful expression of one desire will often quicken further desires and make a thousand of them where there was but one. If you will make known your desire before your God it will gather strength and soon obtain fulfillment. Desire should not be like a bird shut in within the ark—it should be sent out as Noah sent forth his dove. There! Let it fly towards Heaven! It will come home bearing the olive-leaf in its mouth. The return of prayer brings peace, therefore send it on its profitable errand and never attempt to hold it in the cage of silence! Though it has lain among the pots and is grimed with groans, let it mount towards Heaven and soon its wings will be covered with silver and its feathers with yellow gold! By prayer shoot out the arrows of desire from the quiver of your heart, for every one of them shall smite your enemies.

Perhaps you feel that you cannot pray because you are under so dense a gloom—but that is the time to double your desires and your pleading! I am told that the flower, of which the ancients used to say so much because it always turns toward the sun, is said to follow the great lord of day just as much in cloudy weather as when his bright beams gladden all things. What? Though the sun is not visible, yet he is still in his sphere and the nature of the flower seems to tell it in what direction to turn! Be it ever so with our soul in gloomy hours! When we cannot see the Lord’s face, may we still look towards Him with strong desire. O Soul, pray even when God does not appear to hear! When your eyes are blinded with tears, turn your mournful face towards the Mercy Seat and look towards His holy hill!

Remember where He was known to manifest Himself to you. If He meets you not today at Zion’s gates, yet remember Him from the Hermonites and the hill Mizar, where He revealed Himself, before, and let your desires follow hard after Him until you find Him again! Let nothing stop you from desiring and pouring out your complaint, for herein is the way of health to your soul. A gracious expression of desire before God will often be to you a proof that those desires are right. A desire that you dare tell to God is sure to be of a godly sort. If I can say, “O Lord, all my desire is before You and I wish it to be before You—I court Your inspection because I hope You will fulfill the desire,” then my wish is such as conscience approves and is right and good! Is there not comfort in this for those of you who think you have nothing more than desires? If you have desires which you wish the Lord to know of, they must be right—you would not dare to bring them before God if they were not good desires!

When you are in God’s House and with God’s people, or reading God’s Word, or when you are drawing near to God in contemplation, then these desires are strongest. Now, if they were bad desires, they would not flourish in the best of atmospheres—they would not be watered and nourished by the best of influences—for such influences would tend to kill ill weeds of strange desire. So, then, there is some good thing in you towards the Lord God of Israel after all! You would not have these heavings of your soul, these strivings of your heart, this panting, hungering and thirsting if it were not that there is somewhat in you of the Spirit’s working! God has dealt graciously with you in giving you these good desires! Sparks of everlasting life are alive within your spirit so long as you have spiritual hunger and thirst, your desire must be a good thing or you would not dare to make it known to God and, seeing that it is a good thing, take care you nurture it well and cause it to grow by expressing it with your whole heart before God.

II. This leads up to my second head which is this—DESIRES TOWARDS GOD ARE GRACIOUS THINGS. Intense groaning desires towards God are, in themselves, works of Grace. For certainly, first, they are associated with other Graces. When a man can say, “All my desire is toward God and my heart groans after Him and yet I find little in myself but these desires,” I think we can point him to some other good things which are in his heart. Surely humility is apparent! You take a right view of yourself, O man of desires! A lowly esteem have you of yourself and this is well. I would to God that some who are full of bragging and boasts about their holiness could only be as safe as you are with your desires and groans, for there is in you that broken and contrite heart which the Lord will not despise.

God has given you this jewel among the rest—a meek and lowly spirit. Yes, and there is faith in you, for no man heartily desires to believe unless he does, in some measure, already believe. There is a measure of believing in every true desire after believing. If you say, “I desire to trust Christ,” why, Soul, you trust Him, already, in some degree, since you believe that He is the kind of Person whom it would be right to trust! Your desire to cast yourself wholly upon Christ has in it the beginning of saving faith! You have the grain of mustard seed within you which will grow into a great tree. I can tell the mustard by its taste—the strength of your desire, its pungency and heat—betray the genuine seed. And you have love, too. I am sure of it! Did ever a man desire to love that which he did not love already? You have already some affection toward the Lord Jesus, some drawings of your heart Christward, or else you would not sigh and cry to be more filled with it.

He who loves most is the very man who most passionately desires to love more. Love and desire keep pace in Christians so that the more love, the more desire to love—and so I gather that this desire of yours to love Jesus is a sure evidence that you love Him already! Your desire is the smoke which proves that there is fire in your soul. A living flame lingers among the embers and, with a little fanning, it will reveal itself! Your desire to serve God is obedience! Your desire to pray is prayer! Your desire to praise is praise! I am sure, also, that you have some hope, for a man does not continue to groan out before his God and to make his desire known unless he has some hope that his desire will be satisfied and that his grief will be relieved. David lets out the secret of his own hope, for he says in the 15th verse, “In You, O Lord, do I hope.” You, my downcast Brother, do not hope anywhere else, do you? You know that every other door is shut; every other road is blocked up except that which leads from your soul to God. I know you have some hope and, therefore, if you have no hope anywhere else I am persuaded that you have a hope in God!

That thought of God which makes you cry, “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him,” has the seeds of hope and the beginning of comfort within it. I might go over many of the Graces, but these will suffice—as a man is known by his company, so may our desires be known by their attendants— and as holy desires after God keep company with humility and faith and love and hope, I am persuaded they are of like character and are gracious themselves. Another proof that they are gracious is that they come from God. Desires after God must come from some source or other. If you desire to be holy, where did that desire come from? From your own corrupt nature? Impossible! Certain believers in free will may think so, but we are not agreed with them. We believe that none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, neither can thorns bring forth figs. If there is a desiring and a groaning of the heart after God in your bosom, depend upon it, human nature never originated it!

Can sin desire holiness, or death pant for life? Holy desires are plants which are by no means native to the soil of human nature—their seed comes from a far country. Do you think the devil worked these holy desires? Listen, Brother—does the devil make you thirst after God? Does he make you sigh and cry after the light of your Father’s Countenance? Does he make you pray to be delivered from temptation? Does he make you sigh to be conformed to the image of Christ? Then the devil has very greatly altered since I met him, last, and since he was described in Holy Writ, or seen in the conflicts of good men! Who, then, has kindled these heavenly flames of desire? I earnestly acknowledge my belief that every pure desire is as much the work of God as the Grace which it desires! He who sincerely longs to be right with God has already somewhat of a work of Divine Grace within his soul creating those aspirations. Now, as God can say of all that He creates, “It is very good,” I come to the conclusion that these groaning desires after God are very good. They are not great, nor strong, but they are gracious. There is water in a drop as well as in the sea. There is life in a gnat as well as in an elephant. There is light in a beam as well as in the sun and so is there Grace in a desire as truly as in complete sanctification!

Thirdly, holy desires are a great test of character—a test of eminent value. You ask, “Can you judge a man’s character by his desires?” I answer, yes. I will give you the other side of the question that you may see our side all the more clearly. You may certainly judge a bad man by his desires. Here is a man who desires to be a thief. Well, he is a thief in heart and spirit. Who would trust him in his house, now that he knows that he groans to rob and steal? Here is a man who desires to be an adulterer—is he not, in God’s sight, already such? Did not Jesus tell us so? Here is a man who desires to be a Sabbath-breaker but he is compelled by his situation to attend the House of God—he is already, in God’s sight, a Sabbath-breaker because he would follow his own works on God’s holy day if he had the opportunity. The desire to commit a fraud and especially the earnest desire to do it, would prove a man to be a villain at heart. If a man were to say, “I want to cut my enemy’s throat. I am full of revenge. I am groaning to murder him.” Is he not a murderer, already, before God?

Let us, then, measure out justice in our own case by the rule which we allow towards others. Let me help you to apply the principle. If you have a desire, an earnest, agonizing desire towards that which is right, even though, through the infirmity of the flesh and the corruption of your nature, you do not reach to the height of your desire, yet that desire is a test of your character. The main set of the current determines its direction—the main bent of the desire is the test of the life. It is well with you even though you have to cry with Paul, “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which I would, I find not.” If you earnestly desire to love God, you do love Him! If you desire to be purified. If with a strong, continual, agonizing desire you pine for it—already the work of purification has begun, for your desire has been purified—your wish, your will, your heart have already been purified! Is there not proof enough that there is a measure of graciousness about true desires after God?

Note, further, that our desires are a test very much superior to several other favorite modes of self-judging. For instance, many people judge their religion by the regularity of their attention to its outward duties. “I was never absent on a Sunday morning, nor even from an evening service. I attend communion at least once a month. I go to the Prayer Meetings, I read a chapter or half a chapter every day. I bow my knees at my bedside every morning and evening—I have never omitted any part of my duty for many years.” I am very glad to hear it, respected Friend, but if you have no desires towards God, all your regularity of attendance does but liken you to the Church clock which is quite as punctual, or to the pulpit Bible, which never leaves its place. You may be a capital Pharisee, but you are not a true Christian unless your soul is full of living desires!

If you cry out, “I am thirsting for God, the living God. My spirit groans after holiness. When I have bowed my knee, I groan before God because I cannot live as I would, or even pray as I desire to pray. I have come to the House of God longing to be fed with spiritual meat. I have always been a hungry soul towards Divine things.” Then I quote my Master’s words, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Living desires are better than dead duties—as a living dog is better than a dead lion. The most regular outward performance of pious duties may be the revolution of heartless machinery, but desires mean life and life is necessary if we would please the living God! Desires are a better test than the self-congratulation I have sometimes met with about the possession of gracious things. I say not better than the possession of Graces, but better than the supposed possession of them.

Did you say, “I have faith. I can move mountains”? I had sooner hear you say, “Lord, increase our faith.” Did you boast, “I have love so that I shall never backslide or deny Christ”? I had rather you should say, “Hold me up and I shall be safe.” Do you say, “I have experience and shall never be misled. I can hear heresy and be none the worse”? Ah, yes, I have heard that kind of talk, but I feel safer about a man who says, “Preserve me, O Lord, for in You do I put my trust.” Remember that the chief of the Apostles said—“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

We feel surer as to the Grace in a man’s heart who groans after more Grace than we do of him who boasts—“I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing.” A man may be full and dead! But he who hungers is alive. Brothers and Sisters, if your soul is desiring and crying and groaning after God, do not condemn yourself because you cannot speak quite so positively as others as to your safety or your sanctity! Desire on and groan on, but at the same time get nearer to the Cross! Trust more completely! Look out of self and rest more fully in the Covenant promises of God. Your state is not one to cause trouble—it is painful but it is not perilous. I am sure that there is a graciousness about holy desires because they have been very prominent in the very best of men. Look at David! See how his soul longs, yes, even faints! Hear how he pants, like a hart for the water brook, that he may draw near to God!

His Psalms are very largely made up of desires—they abound with such passages as, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.” “Unto You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.” “My soul thirsts for God.” All his desires went heavenward, for he said, “Whom have I in Heaven but You?” And in his last hours he exclaimed concerning the Covenant of Grace, “This is all my salvation and all my desire.” Nor must we forget Daniel. In the passage in which Daniel is spoken of as a “man greatly beloved,” which is a very sweet translation—the words may be read, “a man of desires”—I suppose that he obtained that name of the Lord because he much abounded in holy longing and was accustomed to rise from one desire to another. There is a remarkable expression in the second of Daniel at the 18th verse.

When the king had dreamed and none could interpret the dream, the Word of God said—“Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret.” In other books we would have found it stated that he asked his friends to pray, but Daniel went to the very soul of things and begged them to desire. His prayers thrice a day were not formal—they were deeply and intensely sincere and, therefore, they were full of desire which is the motive force, the life-blood of prayer! Daniel, then, was a man of great desires and hence a desirable man with God—a man greatly beloved. As for Nehemiah, that faithful servant of God, he began his work by praying for a blessing on those who “desired” to fear God’s name.

If you turn to the New Testament, what a man of desires Paul was! He was always desiring this and desiring that for other people, until he desired for himself that he might depart and be with Christ! A part of the inheritance of Israel of old lay on this side of the Jordan, but the major portion was on the further shore—and so the major part of a Believer’s portion for the present lies in desires for things not yet attained. A man of devotion is always a man of desires. Among your acquaintances you will find the best people are full of longing to be better. They know that God has blessed them—they rejoice in every particle of Grace they have ever received from Him—but they are always wanting more. They are, in spiritual things, as hard to satisfy as the king whom Du Chaillu met with in the center of Africa. He gave him a huge present of goods and his gracious majesty was overjoyed and held a great feast over the treasure.

But before the week was over his black kingship said to Du Chaillu, “Truly, goods and money are like hunger; you are filled today, but tomorrow you are hungry again.” In one sense he who has obtained Grace never hungers, that is to say, he needs nothing beyond his God. But in another sense he always hungers more and more, the more he obtains. Covetousness of goods is a crime, but covetousness of good is a virtue. “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” He who has little Grace can be content with little. He that has more Grace longs for more and he who has most is insatiable to a still larger degree. He has the greatest esteem for the heavenly treasure who has had the most acquaintance with it and, therefore, he longs to possess all that can be possessed!

Time warns me to leave this point, only repeating the fact that desires towards God are gracious things.  
III. Thirdly, DESIRES TOWARD GOD ARE CAREFULLY OBSERVED BY HIM. Was not that the first head? No, it was not. The first head was that we ought to make our desires known to God—the third head is that they are known. It is wonderful condescension that the Lord should observe so poor a creature as a sinful, mournful mortal. You heard me read the whole Psalm just now. Is it not a terrible description of a horrible sickness? I wonder how many of you would like to go and visit a man who was in the condition which David pictures and watch over him and nurse him? Here was a man who had no soundness in his flesh and no rest in his bones, but was eaten up with a loathsome disease and covered with wounds which corrupted till they stank.  
The Lord cannot look upon iniquity. He hates and loathes it infinitely and yet He looks upon His poor servant when sin has worked in him all this mischief. Oh, poor, broken-down Believer, your God still looks upon you! Oh you whose wounds gangrene; you who seem, already, to be rotting into the sepulcher of apostasy, still if there is any life and desire in you, your God is watching you! With tender, loving eyes He sees you in your misery and filthiness! The best thought of all is that He sees the good points in us for, while David does not say, “Lord, all my wounds are before You; Lord, all this stench and corruption are before You,” he does say, “Lord, all my desire is before You.” God has a quick eye to spy out anything that is good in His people—if there is but one speck of soundness; if there is a single mark of Grace; if there is any remaining token of spiritual life—though it is only a faint desire; though it is only a dolorous groan, the Father sees it and records it, casting the evil behind His back and refusing to behold it.  
Oh, is it not a blessed matter of fact that my desire is before God? Even when I cannot speak it, it is all before Him! I cannot explain it, but it is known to Him! It puzzles me to state my case, but it will not puzzle Him to solve it and to deal with it and to deliver me out of the evil of it. “All my desire is before You,” as if David had said, “There it is, Lord, I have not kept back anything. As far as I know I have put it all in Your view. But, inasmuch as I do not know it all nor I cannot express it all, this is still my comfort, that Your eyes miss no point, Your heart leaves nothing unperceived! You know all about me and You will deal wisely with me!”

IV. The last head is that EARNEST DESIRES TOWARDS GOD WILL BE FULFILLED. How do we know this? If men are sighing and crying to God they will be heard—how do we know that? Why, first, because these desires are of God’s creation and you cannot imagine, at least I hope you cannot imagine, that God would create desires in us which He will not satisfy! Why, look even in Nature—if He gives the beast hunger and thirst, He provides the grass upon the mountains and the streams that flow among the valleys for it! There is not a fish in the sea nor an insect in the air but what God has made provision for gratifying its instincts and its desires. If, then, He has put in you a desire after Himself, He will give you Himself!  
If He has made you long after pardon, He will give you pardon! If He has made you sigh after purity, after eternal salvation, He means to give you these. Do you think that God would act towards us wantonly and torment us with the torments of Tantalus needlessly? Has He made His mercy flow all around you and has He given you thirst and will He never let you drink? If He did not mean that you should drink, why has He created the longing within you? You do not thirst after God by nature and if He had let you alone you never would have so thirsted! You did not pine after His love until He made you pine for it—why, then, this creation of a wish if it is not to be gratified? Has He made you long after faith and yet, do you think, He will deny it to you? Has He given you a groaning after His dear Son, Jesus Christ, and will not Jesus yet be yours? Soul, He is yours!  
I have seen some treat children very unkindly when, to make sport for themselves, they have exhibited fruit or toys to the children which have excited great desire and they have acted as if they were going to give them to the children and then they have gone away and given them nothing and laughed at them. They thought there was wit in such conduct, but it seemed to me meanness, itself! God has no such cruel ways with men—if He has taught them to desire His Grace, He will fulfill their desire because He is always a merciful and gracious God. Remember, O desiring man, that you already have a blessing! When our Divine Master was on the mountainside, the benedictions which He pronounced were no word blessings, but they were full of weight and meaning and among the best of them is this— “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Blessed while they hunger, blessed while they thirst! Yes, they are already blessed and there is this at the back of it, “for they shall be filled.” Thank God that you hunger!  
Oh, my Friends, if we could make this city of London to be full of souls that hungered after Christ, we might pray day and night for so blessed a consummation! If we could cause the multitudes of men who go up and down these streets, careless of God and of eternity, to thirst and sigh and cry after God, what a blessing that would be! Time was, perhaps, when you, too, were stony-hearted and had no such desires—the change is a thing to be grateful for. Bless God for your grief, your agony, your anguish—for anything that is like a spiritual feeling—it is better than to be left altogether alone. Here is something comforting for your distressed heart—a blessing is already pronounced upon you. And we may be sure, dear Friends, that God will hear the desires which He has, Himself, created, because He loves to gratify right desires.  
It is said of Him in Nature, “You open Your hands and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” Does God care for sparrows in the bush, for minnows in the brook, for midges in the air, for tiny things in a drop of stagnant water and will He fail to satisfy the longings of His own children? Nothing gives us more pleasure, perhaps, as parents, than to gratify the proper desires of a dear child. We like to see the pleasure that beams upon the little face when the desire is fulfilled. Do you not know that God loves to give us pleasure? It is His joy to do it! It is one of the joys of the great Father’s heart to make His children glad. Be assured, my dear Friend, it is no joy to God to see you with that dreary countenance. God delights in the delight of His people! He has made a promise to the happy which well fits in with my text—“Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”  
He would have us rejoice in Him, for He rejoices over us! If you need proof, note well the names He gives us—“You shall be called Hephzibah and your land Beulah: for the Lord delights in you and your land shall be married.” If God delights to fulfill our desires, let us not be slack in desiring! If you need a sure proof that He will grant gracious desires, let me remind you of His promises. Sometimes one promise may stick in the memory and be better than quoting fifty. Here is the 19th verse of the 145th Psalm—take it home with you—“He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry and will save them.” If there is a holy awe of God in your soul, so that you fear Him, He will yet fulfill your desire and your cry shall bring you salvation!  
The Lord will keep His promise—you can be you sure of that. Has He said and shall He not do it? What a joy it will be when you get your desire satisfied and how you will praise the Lord! It may not be long before your soul’s longing is before you. This prophecy I venture to make concerning you, that when the Lord has given you the desire of your heart, you will hardly know how to extol Him sufficiently! How you will bless and magnify His dear name! And what is more, others will begin to praise Him, too. In the 21st Psalm, when the king had obtained a blessing from God, his subjects began to bless God for him. Read the second verse—“You have given him his heart’s desire and have not withheld the request of his lips.” Now, I should not wonder but what, before long, others will say the same of you— “The Lord has done great things for him.”  
His wife, who lamented his deep dejection, will bless God and say, “Lord, I thank You that You have given him the desire of his heart and that You have not withheld the request of his lips.” Godly friends will hear of his deliverance and rejoice, saying, “He who has long been cast down has found the light of God’s Countenance,” and they will also say, “You have given him the desire of his heart.” As you spread your new joy and perfume the atmosphere with gladness, the saints will bless God that He has given you the desire of your heart! I am persuaded that you will obtain your desire since it will glorify God for you to have it. “Whoever offers praise, glorifies God” and you will praise Him and thus glorify Him. Go your way and seek the Lord with confidence through Jesus Christ and He will bless you evermore. Amen.

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STRANGERS AND SOJOURNERS  
NO. 3234

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 5, 1863.

**“For I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” Psalm 39:12.**

IF you read the whole verse, you will see that David used these words as an argument in prayer—“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” It is a grand thing to be able to argue with God in prayer! Faith grips the Angel of the Covenant, but it is by well-grounded arguments that we will wrestle with Him until we prevail. Expectancy puts in the wedge, but it is solid argument that drives it home. When we want to obtain any mercy from the Lord, we must support our plea by reasons drawn from His Nature, His promises and the experiences of His children as recorded in His Word. Martin Luther was a great master of this holy art of arguing with God in prayer, as was the Apostle Paul and, therefore, their supplications were not presented in vain. Let it be so with you, also, Beloved—besiege the Throne of Grace with the most powerful arguments you can find in the heavenly armory! Lay hold upon the arm of Omnipotence and say to the Lord, as wrestling Jacob did, “I will not let You go, unless You bless me.”

I. It is, however, the argument that David used, rather than the prayer that he presented, upon which I want to talk to you at this time. So first, I ask you to notice that DAVID WAS A STRANGER AND A SOJOURNER, AS ALL HIS FATHERS HAD BEEN BEFORE HIM. A stranger is a person who is away from his home. And a sojourner is one who only stays in a certain place for a short time and then must be up and away. Such is a true Christian. In what respects is he a stranger?

First, he is a stranger in his position. He is not in his native land—he is a freeman of the New Jerusalem. He sings—  
*“I’m but a stranger here,  
Heaven is my home!  
Earth is a desert dreary,  
Heaven is my home!  
Dangers and sorrows stand  
Round me on every hand—  
Heaven is my fatherland,  
Heaven is my home!”*

While we are here in the body, we are absent from our nearest and dearest relatives. You know how Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father, who are in Heaven.” Our Elder Brother has gone Home before us to prepare the many mansions in His Father’s house for our eternal abiding place. Many of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ have already joined the general assembly and Church of the First-Born which are written in Heaven. ‘Tis true that we have many very dear relatives here, but they, also, are strangers here even as we are—pilgrims to the Celestial City that lies beyond the river! Our true possessions are not here. We own no property in this world. We have had certain things lent to us for use while we are here, and we have to give an account of how we use them, but we must leave them all behind us when we go Home. We brought nothing into this world and we can carry nothing out of it. Our inheritance is above—an inheritance which is undefiled, and that fades not away—which we are to share with Christ, for we are joint-heirs of it with Him! Our treasure is where our heart is and both are now before the Throne of God on high in the keeping of Christ—unto whom we have committed them until that day when we shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory! “Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”I know that there are tender associations connected with our earthly homes and loved ones, yet how often are the ashes of our family hearth quenched by the tears of grief while the black pall of mourning hangs over those who have been taken from us? Ah, no, this is not our home! Our native land, our true country is in the heavenly highlands where Jesus dwells! And we long for the time when He shall say to us, “Come up here.” Then, but not till then, shall we be at Home with the Lord!

Next, we are strangers, not only in position, but in character. When an Englishman crosses over to France, he is quickly recognized as a stranger and a foreigner. And a true Christian is not in any place long before it is discovered that he is of a different nationality from them by whom he is surrounded! His pedigree is not the same as that of worldlings—they are of their father, the devil, and they do his works—but he has been “born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.” God is now his Father, for He has “begotten him again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” His manners, too, as well as his pedigree, are not like those of worldlings. If an Englishman goes to the Continent and tries to pass himself off as a German or a Frenchman, he is soon detected. And, in a similar fashion, a true Christian reveals the fact that he is an alien in this world—his ways and manners and customs are not those of the men of the world who have their portion in this life. He has obeyed that great Apostolic command, “Be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.” There is also something in a Christian’s speech which shows that he is a stranger in this world. He has a peculiar accent which the worldling cannot imitate. Even when a Christian speaks wrongly, he is speedily detected. Peter denied with an oath that he even knew Jesus of Nazareth, but those that stood by were not deceived by his swearing, for they said to him, “Surely you, also, are one of them, for your speech betrays you.”

The reason of all this is because there is an essential difference between the nature of a Christian and the nature of a worldling—the worldling is of the earth, earthy. But the Christian is no longer a mere natural man, for he has had a higher and spiritual Nature imparted to him! Indeed, he has been made a partaker of the Divine Nature! The worldling seeks the things of the world, but the spiritual man seeks the things of the Spirit. That which came down from Heaven returns back to Heaven and, just as fire seeks the sun, the great central source of light and heat, so the new spirit within the Christian seeks God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and things eternal, heavenly, and Divine! I say again that there is an essential difference between the nature of a Christian and the nature of a worldling—you cannot make a true Christian into a worldling and you cannot make a worldling into a Christian! A natural man must be born-again before he can become a Christian—and then he will not be the same man that he was before, but a new creature in Christ Jesus!

Further, being strangers in this world, we must expect to be treated as strangers by the world. Worldlings cannot understand us, just as the people in a foreign country cannot understand an Englishman who can only speak his native language. He is a stranger in a strange land and so is a Christian in this world. When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon this earth, the great mass of the people could not comprehend Him—He was a stranger in the very world which He had made! And the world knows us not because it knew Him not—and the more we are like He, the less will the world to able to comprehend us. The carnal mind knows not the things of the Spirit “because they are spiritually discerned.” We must not marvel, therefore, Beloved, if our motives are misconstrued and our words wrested and twisted—and we are slandered and abused. We are like the pilgrims passing through Vanity Fair—and if we did not receive such treatment as they received, we might begin to suspect that we had become like the citizens of that country and were no longer pilgrims bound to Zion!

Further, we are in our hearts, strangers to the world. Wherever a true Englishman wanders, his heart always turns towards his native land and he says—

*“England, with all your faults, I love you still”—*

and when once again he sees the hoary cliffs of old Albion, his heart leaps within him, for he is glad to be back in the dear homeland! I have traveled through many lands and I can appreciate their beauties, but, after all, “there’s no place like home!” So is it with the Christian. He has various interests and occupations here and he seeks to be a blessing in the land where he is for a while, a sojourner, but his heart is with Christ in Heaven—and he can never be fully satisfied until he is there, too! An Englishman abroad is often hard to please. He, thinks, sometimes very foolishly, that there is nothing as good as what he has in his fair island home! But a Christian knows that heavenly things are infinitely preferable to the things of earth! He has long since learned that there is nothing here to satisfy his immortal spirit and his heart is always anticipating the time when he shall be at Home with his Lord and find in Him all that his capacious soul can wish.

Certainly, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we ought to be strangers to the world in our conversation. When we are in a foreign country, we are very cautious where we go, for we do not feel as safe as when we are in our own land where we can ask our way and easily understand the directions given to us. When we try to bargain with the foreigners, we are not certain whether they are cheating us and, certainly, the Christian in this world has many who are attempting to cheat him—not merely for time, but for eternity, too! That arch-rogue, Satan, is plotting against him every day and all Satan’s legions are constantly seeking to rob him of his holiness or of his peace of mind—or in some way or other to lead him astray. So be on your guard, Christian, as you journey through this foreign land! You are in an enemy’s country, a foe may be lurking behind every hedge, a fiery dart may be shot at you from every bush! Keep your sword unsheathed, ever have ready for use that two-edged “sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God,” and hold as with a death-grip the great “shield of faith wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” The great adversary of your soul will attack you just at the moment when you think yourself most secure, so “be sober, be vigilant”—always obey your Master’s command—“What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” Strangers in a foreign land should have their wits on the alert and Christians in this world should have their graces in active exercise! If they do not, they will bitterly regret their folly and sin.

Yet further, we are strangers as to our supplies. When we go on the Continent, we do not expect the people living there—the hotel-keepers, shop-keepers, and so on, to pay the cost of our travels, board and lodging, and to buy for us anything that takes our fancy! No, we take with us as much money as we think we shall need, or drafts that we can cash at a foreign bank. And if we find that we have not sufficient funds, we send to England for more, for we are absolutely dependent upon our home supplies. Just so is it in spiritual matters with the Christian—he knows that he must not look for a single lump of coal from earth’s mines to keep alight the fire of his piety—he must depend upon God for everything. Like the Israelites, he is in a howling wilderness that can yield him no supplies of corn—and his bread must drop from Heaven day by day, or he will starve. He is in an desert not watered by any river where he can quench his thirst—all he has to drink must flow from the struck Rock, Christ Jesus. Everything he has must come directly from his God! His eyes must always be lifted up to the hills, from where comes his help— his help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth!

And, to close this part of the subject, the Christian is a stranger as to the short duration of his sojourn in this world. Thank God we are not to be here long. Though the days of our pilgrimage should be seventy, or eighty, or even 90 years, how swiftly they come to an end! No weaver’s shuttle flies so fast as does the life of man—and the Christian who dies the soonest is all the earlier in Heaven! The worker for Christ who gets his service finished first, receives his reward the sooner. [It is remarkable that this

Sermon, taken in the regular order of the unpublished manuscripts, should be first available for reading on the last Sabbath in January, just 19 years after Mr. Spurgeon’s Home-going at Mentone, a little before midnight on January 31st, 1892, at the age of fifty-seven! The Sermon intended for reading that day, #2241, Volume 38—A STANZA OF DELIVERANCE, was the second of only two which the beloved preacher had been able to revise during his last long illness. The other one was #2237, Volume 38— GRATITUDE FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE GRAVE—Read/download both sermons, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Instead of dreading Death, and bidding him depart from us, we might rather beckon him to come for us! Come quickly, blessed messenger, to summon us to the Presence of the King! Come, chariot of fire and horses of fire, and take the servant of the Lord to be forever with his gracious Master and Savior! Of course, I am saying all this in complete subservience to the will of God. He knows the best time and way to end our earthly service and, after all, it matters not when and how we go Home to Heaven! And if we “are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” we “shall not prevent (or have any preference over) them which are asleep. For the Lord, Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

II. Now, secondly, notice that DAVID WAS A STRANGER WITH GOD— and so is the true Christian. The worldling is a stranger to God, but the true Believer in Jesus is a stranger

 with God—and there is an eternal difference between the two!

What is the meaning of the sentence, “I am a stranger with You”? I think it means, first, that although we are strangers in the world, we are constantly under God’s eyes and care. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open unto their cry.” Beloved, you are always under God’s discerning eyes. He searches you, tries you and sees if there is any wicked way in you—and leads you in the way everlasting. You are all constantly under God’s protecting eyes. You know what He said of old concerning His vineyard—“I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” Further, you are continually under God’s directing eyes—“I will guide you with My eyes.” You are also always under God’s pitying eyes. “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” You, too, are never absent from God’s providing eyes. One of the Lord’s most precious names is Jehovah-Jireh, which means, “The Lord will see, or provide.” And you are perpetually under God’s delighting eyes. He says to you, “You shall no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall your land any more be termed Desolate: but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land, Beulah, for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married.”

Further, that sentence means that although we are strangers in the world, we enjoy peculiar fellowship with God. The Apostle John says, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” We are not strangers to God, for, like Enoch, we walk with God in hallowed and intimate union and communion. He has told us some of His greatest secrets, for “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant.” He has given us the high privilege of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty! He has brought us into His banqueting house and His banner over us has been love. And we have had such rapturous fellowship with Him that we understand what Paul meant when he said that he was “caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

The sentence “I am a stranger with You,” also means that, although we are strangers in the world, God, too, is a stranger. It is passing strange, yet is it strangely true that God is a stranger in His own world! Here is His handiwork all around us, most fair and beautiful, yet the fool says in his heart, “There is no God,” and proves himself to be a fool by saying it! Here are signs on every hand of the working of God’s gracious Providence—mysterious but wondrously wise—yet worldlings cannot see any traces of the finger or mind or heart of God, for He is a stranger to them! And as God is a stranger here, we need not marvel that we, who are His children, are also strangers on the earth—

*“Behold what wondrous Grace  
The Father has bestowed  
On sinners of a mortal race,  
To call them sons of God!  
‘Tis no surprising thing  
That we should be unknown—  
The Jewish world knew not their King,  
God’s everlasting Son.”*

I think I see my gracious Lord and Master wandering through this world as a Stranger, “despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief—spit upon, scourged, hounded out from among men and, at last crucified “outside the gate.” Then, when we “go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach,” we are strangers with Him and what higher honor than that can any of us ever desire? “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he is as his Master, and the servant as his Lord.”

There is another thought that I must not leave out. It is this. Though we are strangers in the world, we are with Christ all the while. Where is the true Christian’s life? Paul answers the question in writing to the Colossians—“If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead and your life is His with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory.” Christ is the Christian’s All-in-All, so what can there be belonging to the Christian that is left here on earth? Why, nothing at all that need trouble us for a moment for, “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace you are saved) and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Representatively, we are in Heaven even now—and where our Head is, there will all the members of His mystical body be gathered in due time.

III. Now, lastly, IF WE ARE STRANGERS AND SOJOURNERS HERE, WHAT THEN?  
First, it is clear that we must have a home somewhere. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,” and shall the immortal spirit of man have no home? God forbid! We could not be called strangers and sojourners unless we had a native land somewhere! A man who is an alien in one country, is a citizen of another, so we who are strangers and sojourners here, are citizens of a better country, even a heavenly!— *“There is a happy land,  
Far, far away”—*  
which is my true Home and there, in God’s good time, I know that I shall be—  
*“No more a stranger or a guest,  
But like a child at home!”*  
Do you think God would make us so dissatisfied with this world if He did not mean to satisfy us with another and a better one? Surely not! The very fact that we are strangers and sojourners upon the earth proves that we have a country of our own that is very different from this wildernessworld through which we are passing!

This being the case, it is not surprising that we sometimes long to get Home. We ought not to long for Heaven from any lazy motives. A good workman may be so tired with heavy toil that he eagerly looks forward to Saturday night so that he may enjoy his Sabbath rest and renew his strength for fresh service on the morrow. And you and I, Beloved, though we are not tired of our Master’s work, are often tired in it, and we shall be glad when our rest day comes. Thank God, it is not to be six days’ work, and then one day’s rest, but it is to be a rest that shall know no end—a rest in untiring service! “There remains therefore a rest (a Sabbatismos, an eternal keeping of Sabbath) to the people of God.” I said that it is not surprising that we sometimes long to get Home. You would not think that a boy loved his home if he never longed for the holidays to come. I recollect that when I was at boarding-school, I made an Almanac with a square for every day and I blotted out each one as it went by—and sometimes I blotted it out the night before so that I might seem to have fewer days at school! And, Christian, you, also, may rejoice as the days of your school training here pass, for, as each one flits by, you are “a day’s march nearer Home.”—

*“Though in a foreign land,  
We are not far from home.  
And nearer to our Home above  
We every moment come.”*

Do you not also think, dear Friends, that the fact that we are strangers here should make us treat one another well? And surely, if the worldling knew Christians better, he would treat them better. They are strangers to you, Man, but they are God’s strangers! They are royal personages incognito, princes of the blood imperial travelling through this world to their wondrous palaces above! But let us who are fellow pilgrims and strangers help one another all we can. If you are in Switzerland, or up the Rhine, and have got into some difficulty or trouble, if you see an Englishman coming, you feel pretty sure that your fellow countryman will do what he can to help you. It should be so with Christians! We are strangers in this world, so let us aid one another all we can. We are soldiers in an enemy’s country, so back to back and shoulder to shoulder let us face the foes that are all around us! Though we are strangers to the world, we are not strangers to God, so let us not be strangers to one another, but let us be of one heart and mind, walking in love, even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

Then, next, surely we ought never to envy the lot of sinners. I never grudge horses their corn or the swine their husks and hog-wash. Then why should I envy sinners? I remember David’s words, “Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.” When a friend once gave Martin Luther a large sum of money, he stood at the Church door and gave it all away to the poor because, he said, he had made up his mind to have his portion in the next world— and not in this. There is nothing in the sinner’s lot, either here or hereafter, that you and I have any cause to envy!

And let us never murmur at our own lot—  
*“The road may be rough, but it cannot be long! So let’s smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”*

There are you, my poor Brother or Sister, fretting about what you will do in six months’ time, worrying about the rent, the fire, food, the clothing and I know not what! Yet it may be that before even this year ends, your head may be wearing the crown and your fingers sweeping the golden harp strings, and you yourself—

*“Far from this world of grief and sin,*

*With God eternally shut in!”*  
And if you are still here for a while, the Lord will provide for you—so cast all your care upon Him who cares for you!

So, lastly, what an easy thing it should be for a Christian to die! He is a stranger with God even here, but he will be with God, and not as a stranger up there! He has been with God in life, and God will be with him in death—

*“Strangers into life we come,*

*And dying is but going Home.”*  
And going Home is not hard work. Going Home is not a thing to be dreaded—rather should we sing in joyous anticipation of it, as so many of our dear Brothers and Sisters have done when they have actually reached the hour of their Home-going!

Yet, alas, there are some here who may well dread their Home-going, for they are strangers to God, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” O Soul, if that is your condition, do not remain a stranger to God a moment longer! Repent of your sin and trust God to forgive it for Jesus sake! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” And then, though you will be a stranger, here, you will not be stranger up there where He is! God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 39.**

This Psalm gives a description of David’s experience and conduct when stretched upon a sickbed. He appears to have felt impatience working within him, which I am sorry to say is a very common disease with most of us when God’s hand is heavy upon us. Yet David struggled against his impatience. Though he felt it, he would not know it, lest he should thereby open the mouths of his enemies and cause them to speak evil of his God. Let us imitate his restraint if we resemble him in the temptation to impatience.

Verse 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. This government of the tongue is a most important part of our ways. It is a very essential part of holy discipline, yet we have heard of one saint who said that he had lived for 70 years and had tried to control his tongue, but that he had only begun to understand the art when he died. David said, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.”

1. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked are before me. They have such quick ears and they are so ready to misinterpret and misrepresent our words—and if they can find one word awry, they will straightway preach a long sermon over it! So let us muzzle our mouths while they are near. The ill words of Christians often make texts for sinners, and thus God is blasphemed out of the mouths of His own beloved children! Let it not be so with any of you, Beloved.

2. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. We all know that unless our grief can find expression, it swells and grows till our heart is ready to break. We have heard of a wise physician who bade a man in great trouble weep as much as he could. “Do not restrain your grief,” he said, “but let it all out.” He felt that only in that way would the poor sufferer’s heart be kept from breaking. David determined that before the wicked, he would have nothing at all to say, and though his griefs were surging within him, yet for a time he kept them from bursting out.

3. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing, the fire burned: then spoke I with my tongue. He could not hold his peace any longer—it would have been well if he had done so, for he uttered an unwise prayer when he spoke with his tongue—

4. LORD, make me to know my end. That is what you and I are apt to say when we get into a little trouble—we want to die and get away from it all! We say that we long to be with Christ, but I am afraid that it is often only a lazy wish to share the spoils of victory without fighting the battle— to receive the saints’ wages without doing the saints’ work and to enter into Heaven without the toils and dangers of the pilgrims’ way! Perhaps this has been the case with us, sometimes, when we have thought that our aspirations were of the best and holiest kind. When David prayed, “Lord, make me to know my end,” his prayer was not a very wise one, but the next sentences were not quite as foolish—

4. And the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Oh, that we could all know how frail we are! But we reckon upon living for years when we have scarcely any more minutes left! We think our life’s hour-glass is full when the sands have almost run out. And although the hand of God’s great clock may be upon the striking-point, we think our brief hour has but just begun!

5. Behold, You have made my days as an handbreadth. This is a very common measure, the breadth of the human hand—and David says that this span is the measure of his life. Some here must surely have spent a great part of that handbreadth—let them and all of us be prepared to meet our God when that short span’s limit is reached!

5. And my age is as nothing before You. It is an incalculably tiny speck when compared with the immeasurable age of the Eternal! “My age is as nothing before You.” When Alcibiades boasted of his great estates, the philosopher brought him a map of the world and said to him, “Can you find your estates on this map?” Even Athens, itself, was but as a pin’s point! Where, then, were the estates of Alcibiades? Nowhere to be seen! So when we see the great map of eternity spread out before us, where is the whole of this world’s history? It is but a speak! And where, then, are your life and mine? They are as nothing before God!

5. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Then what must he be at his worst state?  
6. Surely every man walks in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in

vain. [See Sermon #2346, Volume 40—EARTH’S VANITIES AND HEAVEN’S VERITIES— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] They fret,

and fume, and flurry, and worry—and all about what? About nothing! We sometimes say, “It will be all the same a hundred years hence.” Ah, but it will be all the same much sooner than that when the six feet of earth shall be all our heritage!

6. He heaps up riches, and knows not who shall gather them. “Do you think,” says an old writer, “every time you lock up your money in a box, how soon death shall lock you up in your coffin?” Some men seem to be like our children’s money-boxes into which money is put, but they must be broken before any can come out! To some men, how sad must be the thought that they have been accumulating wealth all their days, and they know not for whom they have been gathering it! A stranger may, perhaps, inherit it—or if their own kith and kin shall get it, they may squander it just as thoroughly as the misers hoarded it!

7. And now, Lord—If all earthly things are nothing but emptiness—  
7. What do I wait for? “I wait for nothing here, for there is nothing here to wait for.”  
7. My hope is in You. Ah, this hope makes life worth living! Now that we hope in God. Now that we know that there remains another and a better world than this world of shadows, life is invested with true solemnity!  
8, 9. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because You did it. It is always a blessed reason for resignation when we can say of any bereavement or affliction, “The Lord has done it.” Shall He not do as He wills with His own? Then let us say with Job, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”  
10-12. Remove Your stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of Your hand. When you with rebukes do correct man for iniquity, you make his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears. Tears have always had great prevalence with God. Christ used these sacred weapons when, “with strong crying and tears,” He prayed to His Father in Gethsemane, “and we heard in that He feared.” Sinner, there is such potency in a penitent’s tears that you may prevail with God if you will come to Him weeping over your sin and pleading the precious blood of Christ! Your tears cannot merit Heaven or wash away your sins, but if you do penitently grieve over them, and trust in the great atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, your tearful prayers shall have a gracious answer of peace! Mr. Bunyan describes the City of Mansoul as sending Mr. Wet-Eyes as one of her ambassadors to the Prince Emanuel—and he is still a most acceptable ambassador to the King of kings! He who knows how to weep his heart out at the foot of the Cross shall not be long without finding mercy. Tears are diamonds that God loves to behold!  
12. For I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. “I am not a stranger to You, O my God! Blessed be Your holy name, I know You well, but ‘I am a stranger with You.’ You are a stranger in Your own world, and so am I. The world knows You not, and the world knows me not. And when I act as You act, the world hates me even as it hates You.”  
13. O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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QUIET MUSING!  
NO. 576

**A SERMON DELIVERED  
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“While I was musing the fire burned.”  
Psalm 39:3.**

OUR subject this evening will not stand in need of much preface. The Psalm may teach us that there are times when solitude is better than society and silence is wiser than speech. The company of sinners was a grief to David’s soul and because their converse was profane he chose, rather, to fly away from their midst—or if they must still continue in his presence, he determined that he would resolutely seal his lips. Touchingly he says, “I was dumb with silence (that is, utterly dumb), I held my peace, even from good.” This painful necessity soon proved to him a pleasing occasion. While he yielded himself up to the thoughts, the reveries and the pensive workings of his own heart, a sacred fire of devotion was kindled in his breast.

And, Brethren, whatever the circumstances of the Psalmist, you will all see that the exercise was profitable. And however peculiar the advantages of meditation at particular seasons, it may not be amiss for us to make it a common habit. Inverting a popular proverb, “What was one man’s medicine may be food for others,” there is much that is light and frothy in our ordinary communion. And our communications, one with another, soon grow frothy and insipid when we have no definite matter in hand. Whether, therefore, to free ourselves from the stress of business, or to escape from the temptations of idleness, let it be thought worthy of note that “musing” has sweet charms and calm reflection is capable of kindling a bright fire.

Our remarks will now run in two directions. First, we shall say something in praise of musing. And then, secondly, we shall supply you with some fuel to burn on the altar of your hearts.

I. First, then, LET US SAY SOMETHING IN PRAISE OF MUSING. We do not muse much in these days of ours. We are too busy. We are hurrying here and there, doing much and talking much, but thinking very little and spending but very little time, indeed, in the modesty of retirement—

*“The calm retreat, the silent shade,”*  
are things which we know very little about. We would be better men if we were more alone. And I suppose that we should do more good, after all, if with even less of active effort we spent more time in waiting upon God and gathering spiritual strength for labor in His service. Where lives there upon earth, in these days, a man who spends hour after hour of the day in meditation upon God? There may be such and if there is I wish that I

had their acquaintance.

Where will you find giants such as those who lived in the Puritanical times, whose lips dropped pearls because they themselves had dived down deep in the fathomless ocean of mercy by the sweet aid of meditation? There may be such and I wish that it were our lot to sit under their ministry. But I fear that the most of us are so little in retirement—so seldom in communion with God in private and even when there, the communion is for so short a time—that we are but tiny dwarfs, and can never, while we live thus, attain to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

The world has put a little letter before the word “musing,” and these are the days, not for musing, but for amusing. People will go anywhere for amusement. To muse is a strange thing to them and they think it dull and wearisome. Our good sires loved the quiet hour and loved it so well that they cherished those times which they could spend in musing as the most happy because they were the most peaceful seasons of their life. We drag such time off to execution in a moment and only ask men to tell us how we may kill it.

Now there is much virtue in musing, especially if we muse upon the best, the highest and the noblest of subjects. If we muse upon the things of which we hear and read in sacred Scripture, we shall do wisely. It is well to muse upon the things of God because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. A man who hears many sermons is not necessarily well-instructed in the faith. We may read so many religious books that we overload our brains and they may be unable to work under the weight of the great mass of paper and of printer’s ink. The man who reads but one book and that book his Bible, and then muses much upon it, will be a better scholar in Christ’s school than he who merely reads hundreds of books and muses not at all.

And he, too, who gets but one sermon in a day, though it is an ill habit to stay away from half our Sunday engagements and only go out once, yet, he who hears but one sermon in a day, if he meditates much upon it, will get far more out of it than he who hears two or three but meditates not! The Truth of God is something like the cluster of the vine—if you would have wine from it, you must bruise it—you must press and squeeze it many times. The bruisers’ feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches or else the juice will not flow. And they must leap and leap and leap again, and well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted.

You must, by the feet of meditation, tread the clusters of Truth if you would get the wine of consolation from them. Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth—the process which really supplies the muscle and the nerve and the sinew and the bone is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with inner life. And so is it with our souls. They are not nourished merely by what we hear by going here and there and listening awhile to this and then to that and then to the other.

Hearing, leading, marking and learning all require inward digesting. And the inward digesting of the Truth of God lies in the meditating upon it. Ruminating creatures chew the cud and these have always been considered clean animals. And so it is a mark of a true child of God that he understands how to chew the cud of meditation. Why is it that some people are always in a place of worship and yet they are not holy though they make some slight advances in the Divine life? It is because they neglect their closets. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it. They would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it.

The fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it. The water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. They are either too idle, or too busy—I will not say which—but often to be busy is to be idle. And when some men think us idle, we are then best at work. You who know anything of the Divine life know very well what I mean by that. Meditation is not idleness and retirement is not forsaking the good of the world. I suppose that Moses did as much for Israel on the mountain’s summit with uplifted hands as ever Joshua did in the valley with his drawn sword. And Elijah upon the top of Carmel, yes, even by the brook Cherith, or in the house of the widow of Zarephath was as much serving Israel as when he smote the priests of Baal and hewed them in pieces before the Lord. I commend meditation to you, then, for fetching the nutriment out of the Truth of God.

Another note in the praise of this most blessed, but much-neglected duty is that it fixes the Truth upon the memory. You complain of short memories—you say that what you have heard you can scarcely remember to another day. If your paint is thin and you can not make your picture stand out in glowing colors, lay on many coats of your paint and so will you do what you want. If your memory will not retain the Truth the first time, then think it over and over and over again and so, by having these several coats of paint, as it were, the whole matter shall abide.

When the fly fisherman goes out to fish, it may be that in mid-stream he sees a great fish and having cast his fly, the hook is soon fairly in the fish’s jaws. But what now? Why, he must let him run out the line and then he must drag him back again! And after all that he never thinks his fish safely his own till he gets him into the net. Well, now, hearing sermons is, as it were, getting the hook into the fish’s mouth and meditation is the landing-net—it is this which gets the thing to shore!

And what if I say that after that the same meditation becomes a fire of coals upon which the fish is broiled and prepared for our spiritual food? If you cannot hold a thing well, try and get many hooks to hold it with and meditation will supply you, as it were, with a hundred hands—every one of which you may grasp the Truth of God. I am sure, dear Friends, that we give not earnest heed enough to these things, or else we should not let them slip. There are many photographers who can take a street view more rapidly than I can speak of it. They have but just to lift up the cover and put it down again and the whole thing is done.

But the same photographer, if he wishes for many things which are to endure and last, he likes, if he has time, to have the object long before the camera. And there it stands and fairly fixes itself upon the plate. And surely, there may be some few men who can just hear a sermon and retain the impression of it all their days. There are some who are quick of understanding in the things of God and as with a flash they get the Truth and never lose it. But the most of us need more than this. If we would have the Truth photographed upon our hearts we must keep it long before the spiritual lens or else it never will fix itself there.

Complain not, then, of your memory! Complain of yourself if you are not given to meditation. If your memory is frail let your closet rebuke you because you have not been there more often. Whereas another man may do with less meditation, if you say your memory is weak, the more reason why you should be a longer time and more often with your God in secret. All need this, but you need it more than others. See to it, then, that you neglect not this duty. For getting the nourishment out of Truth and moreover, for preserving, for salting down the Truth for future use, employ much meditation. Meditation clips the wings of thoughts which otherwise would fly away at the first clapping of the world’s hands. You shall thus keep your prey, as it were, surrounded and entangled in a net or else it might escape you. Your meditation shall hold it fast until you need it.

Yet further, meditation is of great value in opening up the Truth of God and leading us into its secrets. There is some gold to be found on the surface of this land of Ophir, the Book of God. There are some precious jewels which may be discovered even by the wayfaring man—but the mass of the gold is hidden in the heart of the earth. And he who would be rich in these treasures must dig into Scripture as one who seeks for choice pearls. You must go down into its depths and you must rummage there until you get at last at the treasure.

Truth is sometimes like a flint, which, when it is struck the first time yields not, and you may even strike it yet again and still it yields not. But at last, one happy blow of the hammer shall make it fly to shivers. Meditation may be compared for its potency to the great battering ram which Sir Christopher Wren used when he built the present St. Paul’s Cathedral. Old St. Paul’s, you remember, had been destroyed by fire, but its walls were so extremely thick that it was found very difficult to take the old walls away.

And they were so lofty that there was also great danger to the workmen. Sir Christopher therefore invented a ram composed of a large piece of timber and intended to be used in the same way as the Romans used their rams of old. A number of men were set to work with this ram and of course, being a new instrument to them, they did not like it and they did not believe in it, either.

After hammering away some five or six hours and the wall showing no sign, whatever, of anything like an impression, they complained to Sir Christopher that he had given them a useless work to do. He set them at it again and the ram fell heavily but not a stone seemed to stir. One whole day they kept on thus, battering away at the walls. The architect knew full well that although it might not be palpable to the laborers, there must have been a degree of oscillation given to the whole structure. And so it proved, for the next morning when they began the work again, all of a sudden down tumbled the whole mass! Thus at length the men were convinced that the work of the day before had not been lost—it really had been telling when they could not chalk down the progress.

You will find it the same with Gospel doctrine that you want to understand but cannot. There is some difficulty you cannot surmount. Meditation comes and gives one stroke after another with all the weight of prayer and of thoughtfulness, but it stirs not. But at last our diligence is rewarded and we see the whole mass of masonry which reason had piled together of fabulous traditions comes tumbling down. The foundation is discovered and the Truth of God made clear to our apprehension in a moment.

What? Do you think that the great thoughts of masterminds come in a minute? People say, “Oh, what a genius!” Nonsense! The man had been hard at work over that for years and years, and years—though perhaps the thing came at last to him suddenly. It was not a whit less a result of study—the success which crowns the patient brainwork of a meditative mind. Never despair, dear Friends, of understanding the Truth. If you will, in the name of Jesus, give your souls to the study and come resolved to sit at Christ’s feet as Mary did—to believe just what He tells you, as He tells it to you though He may reveal dark things and speak of them to you in parables—you shall be able to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and you shall yet know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.

Be not weary of well-thinking! Use much diligence in musing! Yield up your heart to sacred meditation. Turn the matter over and over and over again in your minds. You remember the story of the great philosopher who had been attempting to discover how much alloy there was in the king’s crown but who could find no way of doing it. By day and by night he pondered it. No, at night when he slept, his daydreams did but come to him again! But all of a sudden, when he was in bed, he sprang up and wrapped his garments about him and ran through the street, crying out, “Inveni, Inveni,” I have found it! I have found it!”

And one of these days, Christian, when you are puzzling over some doctrine which you feel must be true but which you cannot grasp, you will spring upon your feet when God the Holy Spirit has revealed the Truth to you and you will cry, “I have found it! I have found it!” And great will be your joy at the discovery! Cultivate much, then, the habit of retirement and meditation because of the way in which it opens up the Truth of God. Here, almost unwittingly, I have touched upon another suggestion. This musing is a charmed exercise, for, mark you, the joy which it brings.

There is a text in Scripture which speaks of the sinner as rolling sin under his tongue as a sweet morsel, an allusion to the habit of the man, who, when he gets a dainty thing, swallows it not at once but rolls it under his tongue, trying to draw out more and more of its sweetness. Well,

now, this is what the Christian should do with doctrinal Truth—he should roll it under his tongue! You will have far more enjoyment while it is in your mouth than you will afterwards, so keep it there! Meditate much upon it—roll it under your tongue again and again and again—until you get more to find its savor.

Scripture is often like a bone, but meditation is the hammer which cracks it and then the soul gets the marrow and the fatness. The beauties of Christ are not to be seen by the passerby who merely glances at Him. There is something to arrest attention at a glance, it is true, but he who would see the beauties of Jesus must look and look and look again until his whole soul is enamored of the Savior. And as he looks and is transformed into the Savior’s image, he shall have such enjoyment that this side of Heaven there is none other like it! Communion comes after musing. “My meditation of Him shall be sweet,” said the Psalmist, and so truly it is.

When I can walk with Him, as the old philosophers walked with Plato in the groves of the Academe, then am I indeed made wise unto salvation! And then, too, is my heart made glad. There is no riding in the chariots of Amminadib except by being much with Christ. The spouse does not say, “I stood under His shadow,” no, but, “I sat under His shadow with great delight.” Sitting down is the posture of waiting in which we ungird the loins of the mind and indulge the repose of meditation. Let us sit down, then, beneath His shadow and we shall have great delight in musing upon Christ.

But perhaps, after all, the best reason—at least the best to clench all the other reasons I have given, why we should spend much time in musing—is because musing, then, becomes easier to us. I never did light an oven fire in my life, but I have heard that sometimes when a baker goes to light a coal oven, if his fuel is a little damp, he gets no blaze. But when the fire is once up then he may throw in what he will and everything is speedily consumed by the vehement heat. So sometimes you and I feel our hearts to be like cold ovens. And we try to put some fresh Truth in but it will not burn. But, ah, when the heart gets hot and the fire is roaring, then even such damp material as I am able to give you on Sundays will burn right well and the feeble words of a poor servant of God will make your hearts hot within you!

We can meditate better after we have addicted ourselves to a meditative frame. When we have mused a little, then the fire begins to burn. And you will perceive that as the fire burns meditation gets easier and then the heart gets warm. And oh, what holy affections, what blessed excitements those have who are much alone with Christ! Such a man never has a cold heart or a slack hand who is much in meditation with his Lord Jesus. His heart comes to be like a mass of molten lard and before long he verifies the experience of the Psalmist and can make my text his own!

“Then spoke I with my tongue.” He cannot help it, for this lava will soon be running over in burning hot words. And if this man should be a preacher, he will preach with holy power! His heart being hot, his words will burn their way into his hearers’ hearts. Nor will it end there—this hot heart will soon make a hot hand and the man who once has his soul full of Christ will not have his hand empty for Christ. Now he will work! Now he will preach for Christ! Now he will pray! Now he will plead with sinners! Now he will be in earnest! Now he will weep! Now he will agonize! Now he will wrestle with the angel and now he will prevail!

As the fire burns his whole being gets into a glow. And the man, like a pillar of fire, warms those who are round about him—burns his way to the glory of success and gives his Master fresh renown! Commend me, then, for all these reasons which we have given this blessed art of holy musing.

II. And now we have to spend the few minutes which remain in PUTTING SOME FUEL ON THE FIRE OF MEDITATION. The man who says that he has nothing to think about can surely have no brains. And that professing Christian who says he has nothing to muse upon must be a laughingstock for devils. A Christian man without a subject for contemplation? Impossible! Only give us the time and the opportunity and there are a thousand topics which at once present themselves for our consideration.

Let me just suggest a few of these to the Christian. Your heart will surely burn like an oven, my Christian Brothers and Sisters, if you think, first, upon eternal love! What a topic to muse upon!—

*“Sing we, then, eternal love,  
Such as did the Father move,  
When He saw the world undone,  
Loved the world and gave His SON.”*

Think of that love without beginning and which, blessed be God, shall never, never cease! Give the wings of your imagination full play and go back to the time before all time—when there was no day but the Ancient of Days—when ages had not begun to be, but God dwelt alone!

Remember, if you are one of His people, the Father loved you even then and He continues still to love you and will love you when, like a bubble, this earth has melted and like a gypsy’s tent the universe has been rolled up and put away! Why, as you think of this, surely you will say with our songster—

*“Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I’d burn—  
Chosen of God before time began,  
I’d choose Him in return.”*

If you want meditation, dear Friends, here is an ocean to swim in! That one doctrine of election, that precious Truth of predestinating love and all the consequences which flow from it—why, here is a well—an overflowing well which you can never drink dry. Take deep draughts of it, then, and while you are musing you shall find that your heart is warmed.

Then, next, there is dying love to think of. Oh, think of the Savior descending from the starry heights of Glory and coming down to the Virgin’s womb, and then descending from that lowly manger of Bethlehem even to the Cross and to the grave for you! He counted it not robbery to be equal with God and yet for your sake He took upon Himself the form of a servant and made Himself of no reputation, but became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross!

Many of the ancient saints were accustomed to spend hours in meditating upon the wounds of Christ, and many of the martyrs were for days engaged in solemn meditation upon those wounded hands and feet and that pierced side. Oh, of all the volumes which were ever written, this volume, printed in crimson upon the pure, lily-like flesh of Christ, is the best to read! Talk you of pictures? Was there ever such a picture as that which God drew with the pencil of eternal love, dipped into the color of Almighty wrath on Calvary’s summit?

Angels desired to see it, but there was a veil before the picture until Jesus came and drew it up—then the spectacle was revealed—to be gazed upon throughout eternity by adoring spirits, with fresh wonder and admiration forevermore! You cannot exhaust this subject, but, O, let me beseech you to give it the first and chief place in your meditation. “I have set the Lord always before me,” would be a good motto for the Believer and well would it be for him to have the Cross painted upon his very eyeballs so that everywhere he should be reminded of Christ Crucified and so should be led always to say, “For me to live is Christ.” That topic never can be exhausted and there are kindred ones connected with it—your justification, the work of the Spirit—and so on.

Let me now hint at one or two other matters which I wish you should solemnly brood over. You will do well, Christian, to meditate much upon death. What? Man, did I see you turn away? A Christian afraid of death? No, verily, for death is our Lord’s doorkeeper. Life keeps the key and says to us, “You shall not enter into your Father’s mansions.” But Death comes and with his bony hand snatches the key out of the grasp of the tyrant, Life, and puts it into the lock and opens the gate and lets us in! Why, we say sometimes, “the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death,” but if he is “the last enemy,” he is not altogether the less a friend, for he is a friend, too, now that Christ has transformed him.

It is to be greatly wise, Christian, to think sometimes of the grave, the mattock, and the shroud. The catacomb is no ill place for musing, and a little cemetery, with its green knolls and its white memorial stones will be a good place in which to study for the man who wishes to muse upon life and immortality in the midst of death. The old naturalists, who tell us a good many things which are not true, as well as some which are, say that the birds of Norway always fly more swiftly than any others because the summer days are so short and therefore they have so much to do in such a little time.

I do not know anything about the birds of Norway, but this I do know, that Christ’s birds would surely fly more swiftly if they would only meditate upon the fact that the day is so short and that the night is so near at hand. Surely they would fly more swiftly and work more earnestly if they only thought more of the nearness of eternity! And then, Christian, if that does not make your heart burn, let me persuade you to think of Heaven! O, carry your thoughts from this poor dunghill world up to the golden streets and to the music-begetting harps! Up yonder, I say, let your souls soar and dwell where your treasure is—with Christ upon His Throne.

Listen how they sing tonight the eternal hallelujah louder than the voice of many waters and yet sweet as harpers harping with their harps! Listen how the music swells in a sea of Glory round about the Throne of the eternal God! And you and I shall soon be there—leaving behind the sweat of toil, the rags of poverty, the shame of persecution, the pangs of sickness and the groans of death—of the death of sin. We shall soon be immortal, celestial, immaculate, glorified with the Glory which Christ had with His Father before the world was. Oh, your hearts will surely glow if you can muse thus upon Heaven, if you can sing with me tonight—

*“My soul amid this stormy world  
Is like some fluttered dove,  
And fain would be as swift of wing  
To flee to Him I love.  
My heart is with Him on His Throne,  
And ill can brook delay,  
Each moment listening for the voice,*

*‘Rise up and come away!  
I would, my Lord and Savior, know  
That which no measure knows,  
Would search the mystery of Your love,  
The depth of all Your woes.  
I fain would strike my harp divine  
Before the Father’s Throne,  
There cast my crown of righteousness,  
And sing what Grace has done.  
Ah, leave me not in this base world,  
A stranger still to roam,*

***Come, Lord and take me to Yourself,  
Come, Jesus, quickly come!”***

Why is His chariot so long in coming? Why does He tarry? Come quickly, come, Lord Jesus, come! Lash the white horse and bid him come as soon as may be, that Death may meet me and that I may meet my God!

And if that stirs you not, Christians, there is one other subject necessary for you to muse upon. Sometimes, Christians, think of Hell. No, start not, I pray you, for you will never have to feel it and therefore you need not shrink from thinking of it. Think of that Hell from which you have escaped and it will surely fire you with gratitude. Think of that place of doom into which multitudes are going every day and if this brings not the tears to your eyes and makes not your heart palpitate with zeal, I know not what will!

Consider that now, while I have been speaking, a soul has passed into eternity and oh, since we have been here how many spirits have taken the last dreadful plunge into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone— lost, lost—lost beyond my call and beyond your prayers! No sermons can save them now! No tears can bring them to repentance now! They are gone, gone! Yes, and there are others who are going—who walk the streets of this great London! What multitudes do we meet who will forever have

to magnify the awful justice of that God whom they have slighted, and of that Savior whom they have rejected!

And will not this make you bestir yourselves? O my Brethren, if we can think of Hell and yet be idle. If we can meditate upon the wrath to come and yet be prayerless, then surely feeling has been given to beasts and we are turned to stone. What? Believe in judgment and in eternal wrath and yet not weep for sinners? Believe in Hell and yet not weep for sinners? Surely, we may expect to be turned, like Lot’s wife, into pillars of salt if we thus show signs of looking back with careless and wicked eyes on burning Sodom, instead of fleeing from it and urging others to escape from the wrath to come!

Christians, I have given you topics enough to meditate upon. May I fondly hope that some of you will try during the next week to scrape up some fragments of time to be alone? I should not have a cold-hearted congregation—I should not have need to stir you up to liberality in giving, or in earnestness, or in service, if you would but muse much—for well am I persuaded that while you are musing the fire will burn.

But I address myself now—stealing a minute of your time which might, perhaps, be worse spent than here—though I go beyond the allotted hour, I address myself to those who are not yet converted to God. I could have hope for you, my dear Hearer, I could have good hope for you if I knew that you were given to musing. And if you are so given, may I suggest a few topics which are most likely to be useful to you? Muse, I pray you, unregenerate man and woman, upon your present state. “Dead in trespasses and sins,” as you now are, the wrath of God abides on you! Heirs of wrath even as others, afar off, without God, without hope and without Christ in the world, I pray you remind yourselves of the hole of the pit where you now are and out of which you have never yet been dug.

Perhaps I have thought more about your soul than you have ever thought about it in your life! I pray you now let your own thoughtfulness begin to exercise itself—examine yourself—see what your state is. And when you have thought that over, I pray you consider what your end must be if you continue what you are. If you are resolved to perish, at least look your doom in the face. If you mean to make your bed in Hell, I pray you look at it and see the dreadful coverlet of flame in which you shall be wrapped forever! If you have made a league with Hell, I pray you see where that league will take you!

Count the cost, I beseech you, for every wise man should do it. Can you dwell with the devouring flames? Can you? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? I know you cannot—for while I do but even use the word—my bones seem to tremble and rottenness takes hold upon my heart. And how will you endure it when God comes forth to tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver? Oh, what will you do in that day of your visitation? What will you do when the sharp and furbished sword is drawn from its scabbard—when God comes forth dressed as a man of war—to take vengeance upon your iniquities?

I pray you, then, muse upon these things and perhaps the fire may burn, perhaps the heart may melt, perhaps tears of penitence may come streaming down from both your eyes in rivers. But if you will not think of this, at least let me give you a better and a sweeter topic to muse upon. Think of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ—

*“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by,*

*Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?”*I pray you sit down at the foot of His Cross and answer these questions. Did He die for you, or not? Remember, my Hearers, Christ did not die for everyone. Some of you will have no lot and no part in His blood. If you die without faith in Him, that blood will never cleanse you—that precious blood is not an Atonement for your sins.

Do not suppose that Christ came into the world to save damned souls. No, those whom He came to save He will save and every vessel of mercy bought with His blood shall glitter upon the tables of Heaven—not one of His precious sheep shall be cast out. The question is—Is that blood shed for you? And you may know whether it is or not by this—Are you willing to trust Him? If you trust Him, this is the mark of redemption, this is the blood mark upon the purchased sheep. Can you, as you sit there, think upon this—that He died for sinners, the Just for the unjust—that He might bring them to God and that He died for those who hated Him?

I think I see Him now. There on the Cross He hangs and suffers for those who cursed Him. He bleeds for those who hounded Him through the streets. He bows His head upon His bosom in an extremity of anguish for the very men who put the vinegar and the gall into His mouth. “Of whom I am chief,” says Paul, when he spoke of sinners for whom Jesus died. Sinner, you can not have sinned so foully as Paul did and if you rest on the blood of Christ you shall be saved! Some men tell me that they do not know how to get faith. Faith is the gift of God, but then faith usually comes by meditating much upon Christ. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” As it comes in this way, hearing begets meditation. And while we are meditating upon the great and marvelous story of the condescension and the suffering of Jesus, something seems to say within us, “Yes, it is true, I will believe it,” and faith is thus worked in us before we are aware of it and we cast ourselves upon Jesus Christ.

And then, Sinner, if this topic will not suit you, let me remind you that there shall come a day when you will have to muse without any hope. Abraham said to Dives, “Son, remember.” Son, remember, you may forget today. You have, perhaps, forgotten until now and you will forget when you leave this Tabernacle what I have said to you, or what God has said— but you will never be able to forget when once you have come into Hellfire. Then it will be, “Son, remember,” and you will remember your mother’s tears and your father’s prayers! You will remember your privileges. The invitations and the wooings of love which you had will all rise up before you anew and you will see how guilty you have been.

“Son, remember,” and then all your sins will rise again before you—the nights, the days, the words, the thoughts, the deeds—will all start up and people Hell with multitudes of worse than Fiends to plague and torment

you forever. “Son, remember,” and then you will remember the Christ who was preached to you, the stirrings of conscience which you once had and how you sinned against it all and choked the good seed. “Son, remember,” and then you will be made to remember all that is yet to come! You will remember God’s threats concerning the wrath which never can be appeased, the fire which never shall be quenched, and the worm which shall never die. O I pray you, instead of remembering then, remember now! O that I could plead with you!

I stand here so far away from you—would that I could come and take you by the hand and say, “Why will you perish? Men and women, why will you die?” O you who are strangers to my Lord and Master, do you find any pleasure in your sins? Are the ways of the world, after all, so fair and so pleasant as you once thought them to be? Is there not an emptiness? Do you not find “an aching void” in all your pleasures? Tell me now, will you be able to die quietly as you now are? Can you put your head down upon your death pillow softly and in peace? Can you think of meeting God and hearing the thunders of the last tremendous day and beholding the wonders of the resurrection—can you think of these things with anything like composure? You cannot! I know you cannot!

O, then—  
“*Come, trembling souls and flee away  
To Christ and heal your wounds!  
This is the glorious Gospel day  
In which free Grace abounds!”*

May the Spirit of God now sweetly bring you to the Savior. Poor Dove, poor Dove, the hawk is after you and you can not fight him, nor can you escape him. Hearken to One who loves you! There is a cleft in yonder Rock to hide yourself in and then the hawk would lose his prey. Soul, the wounds of Jesus are the clefts in the Rock! Flee there and the fowler, Satan, shall seek, but shall never be able to reach you, for there is salvation in Him who died that we might live. Save us now, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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“BRIEF LIFE IS HERE OUR PORTION”  
NO. 3414

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1914.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“LORD make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am.”  
Psalm 39:4.**

ACCORDING to the judgment of Calvin, and some of the ablest commentators, there is a kind of pettishness in this verse. The context appears to imply that David had grown impatient under the chastening hand of God. Job, under similar circumstances, longed to accomplish as a hireling, his day, and sought the repose of the grave. And so the Psalmist inquires how much longer he has to bear the ills and griefs of life, or when the goal shall be reached. But I am sure it is not for any of us to upbraid the Psalmist, for what is his impatience compared with ours? When I read of Elijah casting himself under the juniper tree, saying, “Let me die, I am no better than my fathers!”—should I wonder at the weakness of so great a man—it is only because he is great! No doubt that kind of weakness has seized us all. We have, every now and then, expressed a longing to depart—not so much, I fear, because of our eagerness to be with Christ, as because we have grown weary with the trials, the services and the sufferings of this poor wilderness. Well, if we are the subjects of the same infirmity as these godly men of old, we must flee where they fled for strength to grapple with these infirmities and overcome them! We must look to the Strong for strength and pray God to work in us that ripe fruit of patience so rare and yet so precious, for it greatly glorifies God wherever it is brought forth!

David here asks the Lord to be his Teacher. Observe the words, “Make me to know.” That is to say, “Instruct me, let me be the scholar, and You condescend to my ignorance and weakness, and teach me.” What? But did not David know his end? Did he not know the measure of his days? Was his frailty a secret that he could not discover? We may be sure that he knew it in part—knew it, perhaps, in that superficial manner in which many of us assent to moral and spiritual truths, with little understanding and no appreciation. But he wanted to know it after a more perfect way—he would apprehend it with that spiritual enlightenment which God alone can communicate. Upon the dishes at the china factories you have, perhaps, seen an impression produced—the inscription is to be there in the future—that is, like common knowledge. Have you afterwards seen that piece of china when it has passed through the oven, has been baked, and comes forth with what you saw there, superficially baked into its very substance? Such should be our prayer, that what we know as upon the surface may be burned into our innermost consciences, may become indelibly a part of our own selves. Lord, not only make me to know, but make me to know by Your own Divine art—burn it into me— make me to know my end and the measure of my days. Observe the condescension of God, that we are allowed to ask Him to teach us such a lesson as our frailty! And mark the proof of our own ignorance and our own forgetfulness that we cannot even learn this lesson unless God teaches us! And must He make us know? We need that our minds should be renewed, as it were, by a creative or a regenerating process, else we shall fail to discern the very simplest Truths of God. Confessing our ignorance, let us go to God with the prayer of the Psalmist and He will answer us.

There are, then, three things which the Psalmist wishes to know— his end, the measure of his days and growing out of these, a just estimate of his own frailty. May the Lord teach us to profit while we meditate upon them!

I. “LORD, MAKE ME TO KNOW MY END.”  
Do we know this already? If you do, let your pure minds be stirred up by way of remembrance. The certainty of your end—try to know that by grasping the fact and letting the truth of it affect your souls. Yes, I must die unless the Lord should come and I should be caught up together with the saints in the air. I must reach the terminus of this mortal life as other men, on the couch of weakness and the bed of death. I must die. There is no discharge in this war. There is no possibility of your having an everlasting life here. You don’t desire it if you are Christians! Neither could you have it if you did desire it—a time will come when you must depart. Think, then, dear Brothers and Sisters—common places will be useful to you. Let it pass over your soul, that for you the funeral bell must toll, for you the grave be dug, for you the winding-sheet and the cerements of the tomb, for you, “earth to earth, and dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,” as sure as you are a man. Being born mortal, you must die. The Lord make you to know this! You must die, not another for you! You must gather up your feet into the bed and, like old Jacob, pass across the stream, the narrow stream of death. You, though now in the prime of life, or in the gaiety of childhood. You who have escaped so many accidents and are now ripe and mellow in the quietude of old age— the dearest friend and companion cannot be a sponsor for you. When the call shall come, your pitcher must be broken at the fountain, your wheel at the cistern and you, in your own proper flesh and blood, must pass away—and your disembodied spirit must stand before God. Forget not, then, the certainty, or the personality of it!  
It shall be conclusive, “Make me to know my end.” It shall not be a halt, but a finale. Not a starting on the road, but a termination of the great journey of life. “My end,” my end for all things beneath the sun, the end of my sin as far as this world is concerned and the end of my service of Almighty God! The end of all my opportunities of doing good, of my occasions of getting good. My end so that whatever after is done under the sun, I shall have no share nor interest in it. The living know that they must die, but the dead know not anything! Other saints walk over their graves, nations rise and fall, convulsions shake the most solid empires, all things change—but there, beneath the sod, they slumber on. Their memory and their love are lost alike—“unknowing and unknown.” Certainly we shall come to an end. Certainly I, myself, shall come to that end, and when my death comes, it will, for this life and this mortal state, be a veritable end which I cannot pass.  
While musing on our end, the accompaniments of our end may well excite passing reflection. In all probability, Brothers and Sisters, though we know not what may come to us, our departure out of this life will be attended with the same languor and prostration we have witnessed in the case of others. We may expect the sick bed, the days of pain and the sleepless nights which are the premonitions of decease. We may imagine for ourselves what we have so often seen among our kinsfolk and acquaintances—the family gathered in silent watchfulness and the weeping children summoned to give the parting kiss—while the hot tears fall on the blanched cheeks of the departing. We can picture it all to our minds. It may be well we should, and make a rehearsal of it, too, for it is probable enough that so it may come. We are not sure that we shall take so deliberate a leave of the world. It may happen to us in the crowded streets. Our end may come to us as we go by the way. That, however, rather strikes us as the course of Nature, when there is the taking down of the tent, the folding up of the canvas, the putting away of each pin and pin-hold, and so we shall be removed as a shepherd’s tent. Then will come a leaving of all earthly things—your shutters will be put up by somebody else—your books will be no more kept by you—you will have struck the balance for the last time. Some other hand must go out to earn the children’s bread, now that the father is gone. Some other woman’s tender care must watch over the little ones, now that the mother is no more. And the time must come when the rich man shall bid farewell to his parks and lawns, when he must bid farewell to his mortgages, to his bonds, his deeds and his estates. And the poor man, who may, perhaps, find it as hard, must bid farewell to the cottage and the hearth, and all that made life dear to him. There will be a parting time for each of us, and we pray the Lord make us to anticipate it! In connection with this, it is probable there will be many regrets to all of us. I hope when we come to die it will be no question as to whether we are saved or not. But even to a saved man, there arises this thought, “Oh, that I had glorified God more! Oh, that I had devoted of my substance, and of my time, and of my talents, more to my Master’s service! I can no more feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, or teach the ignorant. Oh, that those golden opportunities had been seized more eagerly, and employed more industriously by me! But now my time for service here is over, and I am mourning the scantiness of my life-work—and I cannot amend that which is faulty, or supply that which is lacking.” Our end, Beloved, will be the end of all our Christian labor here below. No going to your Sunday school class any more. No coming, again, of the preacher to his rostrum. No standing here to admonish or to console. No more will the corner of the street listen to your voice, my Brother, in your earnest evangelizing. No longer can your hand be outstretched to distribute the Word which tells of the great Savior and the good Shepherd—our Lord Jesus Christ. On that bed you will be taking leave of all your Christian service and if anything has been left undone, there will then be no opportunity to complete it. Depend upon it—and it is wise to look forward to the event—our end will be no child’s play. We may often smile and sing about death and long for evening to approach, that we may rest with God, but it is, at the same time, a most solemn thing. The best way to deal with it is to die daily, to go down to Jordan’s brink and bathe every morning in that death stream, till death shall be as familiar as life, till you shall come to think of it with daily expectation! Yet at times we almost wonder that we are lingering here, for we are expecting to be called away to dwell in the land of the living, where there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor sighing.

Then, again, it will be well for us to be made to know our end in all its results. Although it is called our end, yet surely it is, strictly speaking, a great beginning! A more true beginning, I was about to say, even than our first birth. The moment a man dies, he then enters upon the most solemn part of his existence. Make me, Lord, to know what it will be after this, my departure. What will then happen to me? Come, let me reflect. My soul must wing her way without the body up to the Throne of God, and there, at once, receive the preliminary sentence, the forecast of the sentence of the Last Tremendous Day. “Committed for trial,” to lie in durance vile without the body till the Resurrection trumpet, or be admitted into Glory, such as that Glory can be without the body, until the Lord Jesus Christ shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and the trumpet of the archangel, and the voice of God! Which will it be with me? Ask this, dear Hearers, and ask your God to make you to know which it shall be— your spirit rejoicing in the Presence of Christ, your Savior, far from the world of grief and sin, eternally shut in with God—or shall it be your spirit mocking among kindred condemned in the Pit that has no bottom, where the iron key is turned and through the door of which there can be no escape? Which shall it be with you? When you think of your end, remember one of these must be your portion—Heaven or Hell! Then comes the Day of Judgment and of the Resurrection. The clarion, clear and shrill, shall be such as wakens man, not for battle, nor sleepers for the fray—it shall wake the long-buried from their silent graves and they shall rise from sea and land an exceedingly great multitude! Then shall the Great White Throne be set and the books be opened! This is the end God will have you to know. Oh, seek to know it! When that book is opened, and Christ shall read with eyes of fire, and with a voice of thunder, what shall the Lord award you? Will He turn to the page and say, “Blotted out with My blood are all the transgressions that were once recorded here and, therefore, there is nothing now to read except that which is the award of My chosen. I was hungry, and you gave Me meat; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; sick and imprisoned, and you ministered unto Me! Come, you blessed!” Or will it be to see the page turned over and to hear the voice declare, “I was hungry, and you gave Me no meat; thirsty and you gave Me no drink”? Will it be a record all of sin, and not of virtue, with the accompanying sentence, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire”? “Lord make me to know my end,” and let not my end be to be banished forever with the wicked! Gather not my life with sinners, nor my soul with bloody men! Cast me not away from Your Presence! Banish me not from Your mercy! Shut me not up in the lowest Pit! Condemn me not to eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord! “Make me to know my end,” and let this be the end—to be with Christ where He is, to behold His Glory, the Glory which You gave Him from before the foundation of the world!  
It seems to me that when David prayed that he might be made to know his end, he well knew these were the accompaniments. But the way in which he wished to be made to know them was that he might be made to believe in them firmly, so as to realize them vividly, look upon them not as fictions, myths and traditions, but as realities—that he might be made to know them, so as to meditate upon them, to have his mind exercised constantly about them—that he might be made to know them so as to be prepared for them and to set his house in order, because he must die, and not live, preparing to meet his God. And, above all, that he might know his end by having a full assurance of being saved in Christ Jesus, so that his end should be everlasting peace! “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” Oh, that we might, while mentioning such men, become such men ourselves—and know that our end shall be peace through Jesus Christ! Now, in the second part of the prayer, David says—  
II. “MAKE ME TO KNOW THE MEASURE OF MY DAYS.”  
It is a very humbling thing to recollect that our days have a measure. In the Latin there is a proverb, “As poor men count their sheep.” And it is only because we are so poor in life that we are able to measure our days. God’s days are not to be counted. “Your generations, who can tell, or count the number of Your years? From everlasting to everlasting You are God.” “The measure of our days.” Ask in prayer that you may be made to know this. I will just give some outlines, like a drawing-master’s sketch on the blackboard. How insignificant the measure of my days—what a very little time I have to live after all. If 70 years is my term, of what small account they are! Perhaps you have sometimes stood by a sandcliff, as I did the other day, looking at alternate layers of shells, one above another. I should think at least one hundred feet thick of shells of a modern sort succeeded by thin layers of sand! Now, this must undoubtedly have been formed by the gradual deposit of some ancient sea, but how long must it have taken to have composed a rock of one hundred feet thick of white shells and sand? Well, but that is only a comparatively small layer of this earth. We go a little deeper and we find sandstone and limestone which must have taken, if the laws of Nature have been at all in other times as they are now, not thousands, but even millions of years to form by the gradual deposit of the ocean! You go deeper, still, and at last you come to rocks made by fire, and the geologist is most reasonably led to the conclusion that this world, as it now stands, must have existed several millions of years, because it has taken so long a time to collect these various deposits. I know as I stood poking my stick into this sand and shells, I felt as if I had shriveled into a little ant and less even than a tiny animalcule which had scarcely come into this world when it was driven away and there were these rocks looking at me, and saying, Where were you when we were formed? When the waving ocean was washing up these shells, where were you? But now take your mind away from this world and recollect that some beings dear to us are older than this world, for when this world was made, the morning stars sang and shouted for joy! Oh, you angels—what infants we must seem in comparison with your age! Where were you when Gabriel first flew upon his errand, swift as lightning? Where were you when sin made Lucifer, Sun of the Morning, descend swift beneath the wrath of God into the shades of darkness which are reserved for him forever? What is your life when once compared with the period of life which cherubim and seraphim have seen? Oh, but what are cherubim and seraphim compared with God? When, in this great world, sun, moon and stars had not begun, God was as great and glorious as He is now! And when the whole of this Creation shall be rolled up like a worn out scroll, He will be the same—no older in a myriad myriad years than He is now, for with Him there is no time— *“He fills His own eternal Now,  
And sees our ages pass.”*  
All things are present to Him! We are carried away as with a flood, but He sits serene, neither age nor time change Him! “Lord, make me to know the measure of my days.” Help me to fall down in my utter insignificance before Your Throne, adoring Your eternal majesty— *“Great God, how infinite are Thee,  
What worthless worms are we!  
Let the whole race of creatures bow,  
And pay their praise to Thee.”*  
While seeking to know the measure of our days, let the great importance that attaches to them stand out distinctly before us, for on this link our everlasting destiny is hung. It is this life which, as far as we are concerned, decides the next. In this life a Believer, then a life of Glory, happiness, and immortality! In this life an unbeliever, then in the next life, in the world to come, everlasting punishment from the hand of God! This thought makes even this little life swell to wondrously great proportions! Here is a man next door to a worm and yet next door to God—born but yesterday and yet his existence will go on perpetually with God, for man shall not die! So momentous, and yet so insignificant! So magnificent, and yet so minute is the measure of my days!  
“Lord, make me to know the measure of my days”—the certainty of that measure. God has appointed that you shall not die before the time— you shall certainly not live beyond it. That thread shall be cut off in its due season—  
*“Plagues and death around me fly,  
Till He wills, I cannot die.”*  
While I admonish you to remember the certainty, let me urge you to reflect upon the uncertainty of it, as far as you are concerned. You may live another twenty, thirty, or forty years—or you may not live as many seconds! You may be spared for the next 50 years, and still taking part in life’s battle. Or it may be that before the clock has ticked again, you may be like a warrior taking his rest. Certain to God, but uncertain to you! It is well, in thinking of our days, to remember they will be quite long enough for us if God helps us to use them well. Life is very short, but a great deal may be done. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in three years, saved the world! Some of His followers in three years have been the means of saving many and many a soul. It was a short life that Luther had to do his great work in. If I remember rightly, he was hard upon 50 before he began to preach the Truth of God at all! This is a hopeful sign for some of you who have wasted your young days! There have been men of 60 that have yet achieved a life’s work before they had slept and gone their way. After all, time is long or short as you like to make it so. One man lives a 100 years and dies a worldling. And yet another man, through God’s Grace, puts forth as much energy in two or three years as if he were a thunderbolt launched from the hands of God! And he leaves his name among imperishable memorials. Your life will be long enough to achieve great things if God will help you to remember, in measuring your days, that they will be quite short enough for the enterprise you have in hand. You will only have finished the picture when the master palsies the arm and makes you drop the pencil. And you will only have completed the day’s work when the shadow shall have fallen and you shall go Home to your rest. Work with all your might, but don’t work despondingly—there is time enough for your soul to glorify God! Do your piece of the great work, though it be but a hair’s breadth you are allowed to perform, and though it is as nothing in the presence of Him whose mighty deeds are shown through all generations. Shall I need to say anything more about measuring our days, except that it may be a painful recollection for us to remember that if they are not longer days, it is the prevalence of sin that made it necessary to shorten them! We might have lived to the age of Methuselah but the Antediluvian fathers so filled the earth with violence that God sent a flood and swept them all away! It is great mercy that men don’t live too long. Where were progress if the old men of 200 years ago were here to obstruct it? Where the chance for reform if the vested interests of avarice were permitted to accumulate without any check? Now, however, the old blood is constantly superseded by fresh blood and the stream of life is kept purer by the passing away of the old conservative element, which when here, was exceedingly good in its season, but must give place to the influx of a spring tide more adapted to the growth of the times. Thank God, the great infidels don’t live forever—who would have wished to have a Voltaire forever stalking about this world! What a mercy that his was but a short life! What would you think if you had a Tom Paine blustering against Almighty God 500 years at a stretch? A mercy it is that even good men don’t live here forever, because their temptations would so accumulate in the recollection of years of service, that self-righteousness would become inveterate, hero worship an established idolatry and dogmatism a nuisance without abatement! I grant you experience might come in to modify some of the evils, for so the Grace of God can do anything—but there would be at least a natural tendency to perpetuate corruptions. We don’t measure, I am afraid, our own years, in some respects, as we are known to do those of others. Some have to thank themselves that their lives are short—sins of their youth lie in their bones! And as we remember our days, we may provoke very painful recollections as to past sin, be checked as to all future folly and desire henceforth to walk in holiness and fear in the service of God until our days are ended. To number our days seems to me to mean, “

not let them run away and be wasted.” Hours ought to be counted—we sleep too much, some of us—we spend too much time at the table, too much in idle talk. Lord, help us to measure out our days, count them as they fly, and even the odd five minutes—those little pieces of time which we think we may idle away—much may be accomplished with them if we really set our minds as in the sight of eternity to employ the scraps for God. “Lord teach me to know the measure of my days.” But my time has failed and, therefore, I must have but one or two words about the third point. David prays that he might know his frailty—  
III. LORD, HE SAID, “MAKE ME TO KNOW THAT I HAVE AN END, THAT I MAY KNOW MY FRAILTY.”  
I must come to that end soon. I am coming to it now. Lord, make me to know that I am so frail that I may die at any time—early morning, noon, night, midnight, cockcrow. I may die in any place. If I am in the house of sin, I may die there. If I am in the place of worship, I may die there. I may die in the street. I may die while undressing tonight. I may die in my sleep. I may die before I get to my work tomorrow morning. I may die in any occupation. But God, grant I may never die a blasphemer! I may die with the cup of Communion at my lips. I may die preaching. I may die singing. In all, grant I may die as I wish to die—doing Your service for the love of Christ and by the power of Your Spirit. Perhaps, as I stand here and readily speak, the arrow is on its way—soon may the hand be stretched and dumb the mouth that lisps this faltering strain! Oh, may it never intrude upon an ill-spent hour, but find me wrapped in meditation and hymning my great Creator, or serving my fellow man with love to God, or in some way so laboring that it shall not come to me as a thief in the night, but shall find me watching, ready for His Advent! And this is what David meant, “Make me to know my end.” It may come at any time, but let me always be ready for it. Make me to know the measure of my days with the same object. My days are measured. These days may be few—they may be very few—I may have come to the last one. The pilgrimage of life is a very solemn one. It reminds me of a caravan proceeding forward in a track—some know it, some of the travelers have forgotten it—but on the road which they are pursuing, there is a deep gulf or chasm, and some in the front part of the caravan have already fallen into the gulf. Others are proceeding. In some cases they can hear the shrieks and cries of those who have fallen into the chasm on ahead. But here in the darkness, in the rear of the caravan, there may be many others indulging in such sparks of fire as they have kindled. They are sounding the tabret and the cymbal, and still making merry—though everyone of them is going onwards towards the same precipice over which their comrades, who led the way, have already fallen! There they go—onward, onward, onward in the darkness, till they come to that fatal step which will plunge them into the world unknown! God has led you to this tabernacle well in health and strong, but your next step may be into eternity! Beware, then, that you lay hold on the hand which was once crucified lest, when you slip, there be none to hold you up! And, when you fall, there be none to rescue you, and you fall through the black and cheerless darkness forever and ever, lost, lost, lost, beyond hope of rescue! God forbid this for His mercy’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 90.**

“A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” It is well to know the author because it helps you to an understanding of the Psalm. Remember that Moses lived in the midst of a pilgrim people who were dwelling in tents, journeying towards Canaan. He lived in the midst of a people doomed to die in the wilderness. Only two of them—Moses, himself, not one of them—only two of those that came out of Egypt were to be permitted to enter into the promised land. You may expect, therefore, to find much that is somber about this Psalm—and yet there is much that is very restful and trustful about it. If it is the prayer of Moses, it is the prayer of a man of God.

Verse 1. LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Your chosen people have dwelt in You. You are their rest, their refuge, their comfort, their home. It is just the same, now, as in the days of Moses. God’s people have no dwelling place for their souls, but their God. They are happy when they get to Him. In Him they dwell at ease.

2. Before the mountains were brought forth—Before they were born like infants, gigantic as they are.  
2. Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Everything else changes. You do not. We lose our comforts. We dwell, as it were, in tents which are taken down and removed, but there is no change in You. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you know this Truth of God, but do you enjoy it? I think there is no sweeter food for the soul than the Doctrine of the Immutability of the eternal existence of God—God who cannot die and cannot change—that is, and always is, God. Oh, He is our confidence and joy! As for men, what are they?  
3. You turn man to destruction and say, return, you children of men. He has only to speak—no need to take the scythe and mow us down. He does but say, “Return, you children of men,” and we go back to the dust!  
4. For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. A thousand years is a very long period in human history. If you fly back and try, in your knowledge of history, to recollect what the world was a thousand years ago, it seems a long, long time ago. But to God, who always lives, all the age of the world must seem but as the twinkling of an eye! What are a thousand years to You, You glorious One, before whom the past is present, and the future is as now?  
5. You carry them away as with a flood. Men stand, as they think, firmly, but as the best built buildings are swept away by a torrent—trees, cattle, everything dispersed before the impetuous outburst—so, great God, do You carry men away as with a flood!  
5, 6. They are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes, and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers. Have you ever watched a field of grass when in full bloom? There is, perhaps, no more beautiful sight! What variety of colors in the flowers which are the glory of the grass! And then you come by and the mower has done his work—and there it all lies. It has been withered by the sun’s heat. Just such are we. Our generations fall before the scythe of death as falls the grass. And it is done at once. “In the morning it flourishes; in the evening it is cut down.”  
7. For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled. Whenever God’s anger breaks forth against a people, it must consume them! Oh, what a blessing it is if you and I know that His anger is turned away and He comforts us. Then we are not troubled by it any longer. Do not apply these words to yourselves. They belong to the Israelites in the wilderness who were dying, consumed by God’s anger and troubled by His wrath. But as for us who believe in Jesus Christ, we have love instead of anger—and the sure mercies of David instead of wrath— and in this we may rejoice.  
8. You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. And what was the result of that but that they all had to die? Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Oh, if you are a Believer in Jesus Christ, this text is not true to you—does not belong to you. Here is another that does belong to you—“You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” He has not set them in the light of His Countenance, but He has cast them into the depths of the sea and, Beloved, you stand acquitted, justified! And yet there may be some here who feel their sins, tonight, and know that God is looking at their sin. Do you know, dear Friend, there is no hope for you but one? And that is written in the Book of Exodus—“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” If you do but put your trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, God will turn away His eyes from your sins and look upon the blood of Jesus Christ! Yes, the blood of Jesus shall blot out your sins and you shall rejoice!  
9, 10. For all our days are passed away in Your wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away. It is well to have such a sense of our mortality upon us as this Psalm suggests. And yet, it is better still to recollect that we are immortal—that when we die after the flesh, we shall not die, but live in Christ, world without end! Life is cut off and it is like a string that holds a bird by the leg—we fly away. Which way? If we are God’s own, we fly away above yon clouds. We reach the eternal fields where we shall sing forever and ever!  
11. Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to Your fear, so is Your wrath. Dreadful is God’s anger, indeed. Who knows it? None of us do. The lost in Hell begin to know it, but it will need eternity for them to learn it all! Oh, I charge everyone here who is unpardoned never to attempt to learn what God’s anger means! It will be an awful lesson, the power of that anger! Why, when it is let loose against a man, even in this life, in a measure it crushes him. But what the power of that anger must be, who can tell?  
12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Count how many days have gone. Will not the time past suffice us to have worked the will of the flesh? You cannot tell how few remain, but still, if you live to the longest period of life—taking that for granted which you may not take for granted—how little remains! Oh, that we might, by the shortness of life, be led to apply our hearts unto wisdom, so as to live wisely! And what is the best way of living wisely, but to live in Christ and live to God?

13. Return, O LORD, how long? It is an earnest prayer, full of grief. The Prophet of Israel, Moses, was attending one continual funeral. Whenever the tribes halted, they formed a cemetery and buried another legion of their dead. I do not wonder that he prays, “Return, O Lord, how long?”  
13, 14. And have compassion on Your servants. O satisfy us early with Your mercy: that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. If they are but few, help us to live happily in them. Grant us the art of Your Grace of knowing Yourself, the source of happiness, that we may drink of bliss to the fullest.  
15. Make us glad according to the days wherein You have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Give us measure for measure— sweets in bounty, according to the bitterness. Surely God has done more than this to some of us! We can bless His name because His love has abounded and He has made our cup to run over with His goodness!  
16. Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your glory unto their children. We will do the work and the next generation shall have the glory. We will be content to wait, plodding on. Jesus will come, by-andby. “Let Your work appear to us—Your Glory to our children.”  
17. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us. That if we must go, we may do something that will live, that we may not have lived in vain. “Establish the work of our hands upon us.”  
17. Yes, the work of our hands establish. It is my daily prayer. My heart often goes up to Heaven that the work that is done in this place may never pass away, but that God would make it such a work of true and real Grace, that it may abide until the Lord, Himself, shall come! We may expect it if we seek it at His hands. “Yes, the work of our hands, establish.”

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2346 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EARTH’S VANITIES AND HEAVEN’S VERITIES  
NO. 2346

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1894.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING NOVEMBER 7, 1889.

**“Surely every man walks in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the  
reproach of the foolish.”  
Psalm 39:6-8.**

These are solemn words. Sometimes we have a more joyful theme than this, but I believe that, spiritually, as well as naturally, it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. A meditation of a quiet kind, on things not as they are in fiction, but as they prove to be in fact, is always salutary. There is a great mass of sorrow in the world and all of us meet with something, every now and then, to calm our spirit and cool our blood. So, tonight, if we think a little of the fleeting character of this world, and of the real world where certainty, alone, is to be found— and if we school ourselves to learn facts and realities, by the blessing of God’s Spirit—we may go away even more lastingly refreshed than if our hearts were made to leap for joy by meditation upon some transporting theme.

I will have no further preface. There is too much in the text, itself, to allow time for a lengthy introduction. Therefore, notice, first, that David records his view of human life—“Surely every man walks in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them.” Then, next, David expresses his own emotions in contemplation of these things—“And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in You.” And, then, in the third place, David offers an appropriate and necessary prayer, for he cries, “Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.”

I. First, then, let us notice that in our text DAVID RECORDS HIS VIEW OF HUMAN LIFE.  
You will notice that he puts, “surely,” twice over in this verse, and with the, “verily,” of the fifth verse, which has the same meaning, but might have been translated, “surely,” he has uttered the same word three times, “surely, surely, surely,” or, if you please, “verily, verily, verily.” He half reminds us of his greater Son, the Son of David, whose speech was often emphasized with that sacred assuring word, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” David here seems to tell us that there is nothing sure except that nothing is sure. “Surely,” he says, “nothing on earth is sure. Verily there is not verity, or happiness, anywhere here below.” There is a land of verities. There is a home of “surelies”—some of us are on the way there and already have the earnest of our inheritance. But as for you who have your portion in this life, you have vanity, not verity—change is written on everything earthly.  
Having thus given us the keynote of certainty—for the Psalmist did not write haphazardly, but he wrote what he knew. He wrote what he had experienced and he wrote under the Inspiration of the Spirit of God—we should the more carefully look at what he has written. If it is so, surely, let us be sure to know what it is.  
And, first, he seems to me to speak of life as a walk. And of that he says, “Surely every man walks in a vain show.” Then he speaks of life as a worry. And of that he says, “Surely they are disquieted in vain.” And then he speaks of life as a success, as men call it. And of that he says, “He heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them.”  
David first speaks of life as a walk. He seems to have had in his mind the idea of a great procession—“Surely every man walks in a vain show.” If you choose to go to the Lord Mayor’s show next Saturday, you may see a vain show, and may know precisely what David meant. Such things were more common in Oriental countries than they are with us, but whether it is the Lord Mayor’s show or any other, it is a picture of what this mortal life is! The procession, if you see it, or if you do not see it, but only read and hear of it, may remind you of what life is—what you see of it is all show. There are kings in the show, princes in the show and heroes of old time in the show. But there are neither kings, nor princes, nor heroes there in reality! It is all show and such is this mortal life to a large extent.  
Among some classes of society, show is everything—they must “keep up appearances.” Just so and, all the world over, that is about all there is— “appearances”—a vain show! If you want reality, you cannot see it—only the unseen is real. If you want shadow, you can see it—“the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” I wish we could get a hold of that idea as a practical thing—that everything we can see is shadow, but what we cannot see is the real substance. When we talk about faith, men call us “visionary.” Well, well, you may call us that if you like, for we have a vision of a very high order. But we beg to return the word to you in its ordinary meaning, for if you make your treasure of what you can see and handle, you are the visionaries—for this is but a vain show in which you rejoice and that which you see with your eyes is but a vision—a dream that vanishes when one awakens! Earthly life is only a show.  
Oh, Friends, I wish we really thought this! We would not be so hotbrained as we are if we said to ourselves, “These are only shadows.” We would not be so vexed and worried as we are if we often said to ourselves, “These are shadows. I could not see them if they were not. If they were real, they would not be perceptible to my senses—they would only be perceptible by the higher faculty of faith.” “Surely every man walks in a vain show.” It is a show and nothing more.  
But it is a passing show, for David does not say, “Surely every man sits down in a vain show and remains in the same place,” but, “every man walks in a vain show.” It is with life as with a procession which passes before your eyes. It comes—listen to the shouts of the people! It is here in a few minutes. There are the people crowding the streets! But presently it has vanished and is gone. Does not life strike you as being just that? I remember, oh, I remember so many figures in the procession! I have seemed to stand as at a window, though that, itself, has been but seeming, for I also have been in the procession. I remember the great hearty men of my boyhood, whom I used to hear pray—they are now singing up yonder! Then, when I think of you, dear Friends, I remember a long procession of saintly men and godly women who have all passed before me and have gone into Glory. What a host of friends we have in the unseen world, “gone over to the majority!” As we get older, they really are the majority, and our friends on earth are outnumbered by our friends in Heaven! Some of you will fondly remember dear ones who have passed away in the procession, but please remember that you, also, are in the procession. Though they seem to have passed before you, you have been passing along with them and you may reach the vanishing point before long! And then there will be this talk among the brotherhood you love, “he, too, has gone,” or, “she has fallen asleep,” for we are all walking as in a procession and passing away to the land of substance and reality!  
A show which is passing away is, in itself, if it is measured by this mortal life, vain—“a vain show.” To a man who has no hope hereafter, it is all, “vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Within the narrow compass of this poor globe there is nothing that is worth a man’s opening his mouth to ask for or to receive. Take the broader, larger circle of the heavens and there, within that boundless circumference, there is something to be found that is worth finding! Dwell in God and you have something substantial! Dwell out of God and you make “much ado about nothing.” Life is a vain show when it is lived apart from God.

If you will only consider, for a minute, you will see that it is so. Think of the armies of Babylon and Assyria, the palaces their kings built, the mighty cities that they built—where are they now? Think of the Medes and Persians, with all their pomp and power—where are their glories now? And Greece—her palaces and her temples are a desolation. Listen to the tramp of Roman armies up the Via Sacra—listen to the acclamations of the people as they climb the very chimney-tops to see the conquerors come home—where have they all gone? Fame did but blow one blast upon her bronze trumpet and the echoes sounded, for a while, and then there was silence. “Surely every man walks in a vain show.” Get the idea of a procession and you have caught the thought which David would convey to you. Such, too often, is the whole of a man’s life—just the passing of a pageant—and nothing more.  
The Psalmist then speaks of life as a worry, and he says, “Surely they are disquieted.” So they are. How few people are so free from the spirit of the things of this world as to pass through this life quietly? If we could once live in the eternities, we would be calm, still and restful. But we live by the moment and the day and we are all on the worry, the fidget, the fret, the fume and we know no real rest. The work of this world, if carried on only as for this world, is well described here—“Surely they are disquieted in vain.” See how they begin life, eager for its joys, its honors, its wealth. Note how they plod, toil and labor. How much of brain-work is done by the light of the midnight oil! Many a man agitates his mind and wearies his spirit till his life is lost in finding a livelihood. They are trying to live and lo, life is gone! And they wake up and wonder how it is that they have let it go and have not really lived at all. Some are all for getting, never for enjoying in any measure. When such men get wealth, it is not sufficient for them. When they get twice that, they are still eager for more and live on in a perpetual worry.  
Then one has more than another and envy comes in—of all passions, one of the most wearing—and when a man has, at last, all he thought he would ever need, then he is afraid of losing it! Now he is anxious about this and worried about that, and fretting about the other. Believe me, there are no people who take the fret of life so much as those who ought to have sense enough not to—“having food and raiment” they are not “therewith content”—and having taken all that is good for them to carry, they are like a traveler who, having one good substantial staff to help him in his walking, must carry a bundle of sticks with him, and so loads himself unnecessarily. Is it not so?  
Did you ever stand in the Bourse at Paris, or did you ever, by any chance, hear the noise of our own Stock Exchange? The latter place is more difficult to see than the former, but when I have stood upstairs in the Bourse in Paris, and have looked down upon the raving multitude below, I have wondered whether if bedlam had been emptied out, there would be more noise, more uproar, more calling out, more pushing and rushing, first this way, and then that way! I could not understand what they were doing! Perhaps that made the scene appear the more maddening. Every man seemed all alive and as though he would eat up every other man in the place!  
And I believe that the Bourse is but a picture of mercantile life everywhere—competition, competition, everybody buying cheaply and grinding down everybody that works, and then complaining that, in his turn, he is ground, too—his own measure being measured back to him! Ah me, what a life it is! Had David penned this Psalm, today, he might have written in capital letters, “SURELY THEY ARE DISQUIETED IN VAIN!” Oh, for a little quiet! Oh, for time to think! Oh, for opportunities to get near to God and unload all your thoughts and all your cares before Him—and then to go away feeling patience mingled with joy, and joy with the expectation of unutterable bliss, helping us to really live, instead of being disquieted in vain!  
Well, next, David passes on to speak of life as a success, and he mentions those who were supposed to have been successful in life, though, mark you, it is not success in life, after all, to accumulate riches. When you read in The Illustrated London News that somebody died, “worth” such and such, do not believe it! A man is not worth what he has when he dies! A man may not be worth two-pence—although he may possess a million, he, himself, is worth nothing—poor grabber of everything! But you say such and such a man died and left £200,000. Yes, there are several of us who, when we die, will leave much more than that. I shall leave all the world behind me and there are many others here who will do the same— and leave all the millions that there are, all the estates that ever were and all the treasures of the world! And I suppose that every one of us, when he dies, will leave everything behind him, for shrouds have no pockets and men carry nothing with them into their graves.  
But even when a man is successful in heaping up riches, see how David describes it—“He heaps up riches.” That is all—he does not partake of them. He does not use them, he merely heaps them up. He accumulates without enjoyment. When a man has food and raiment, and has what he needs for comfort, all that he has beyond, if counted by thousands, might as well be a thousand pins as a thousand pounds, so far as any good it is to him! But the bigger heap will not give more comfort, for there is the additional anxiety of taking care of it. When riches are consecrated to God’s Glory, they assume quite another character, but I am now talking about this world and the mere possession of its treasures. David calls it the heaping up of riches and that is all that it is, getting a big heap, like children do at the seaside—one gets a bigger heap of sand than another has, but what is the good of that?  
The Psalmist also says that when the man heaps up riches, he, “knows not who shall gather them.” He hoards without security. This is probably an allusion to the husbandman who has cut down his corn and put the sheaves together. And then at night, before he can gather them into the garner, much less before he can thresh out the grain and grind it, some marauder comes and runs off with it all. The miser heaps up his gold, but he does not know who may gather it. Have we not seen the fruit of many years toil vanish in an hour? The reaping of a lifetime has disappeared by a panic in a moment.  
“He heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them.” He leaves his wealth without pleasure. The Psalmist alludes to the fact that men cannot tell what will become of their possessions when they die. I am sure that there is many a man who would turn in his grave if he knew what was being done with his hard-earned wealth! To live wholly to enrich somebody about whose character you know so little seems a poor objective in life. And yet it is the only objective which many are pursuing. Without chick or child, it may be, still men will go on scraping together riches for some unknown heir who, if they knew him, would be, perhaps, beneath their contempt—yet they go on working like slaves for one who will never be grateful to them when they are dead!  
Now does not the whole of this put together make up a very sorry picture? Yet it is true of the worldling, of the man who has no hope hereafter—of the man who has never projected his soul, by Grace, into the spiritual and the heavenly realm!  
II. And now, glad to get away from this part of our subject, we notice how DAVID EXPRESSES HIS OWN EMOTIONS IN CONTEMPLATION OF THESE THINGS.  
And first, he has come to a decision. Having turned these matters over, he begins the expression of his own feelings, thus, “And now, Lord.” I like that mode of speech. It is a great thing to come to God with a, “now.” You know how the Lord comes to us. He says, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.” I like a man, sometimes, to come close up to God and sit down, and seem to say, “Now, Lord, You see that I have realized the vanity of this world. I may well let it all go, for it melts away in my hands—it is a mere shadow which is not worth living for—and I have to live in eternity with You. I have to live in Heaven or in Hell. O my God, bring me to my bearings! Bring me close up to You and let us reason together, and have the question out. And now, Lord.” Every moment is solemn if we would but make it so, but there are certain turning points in life when a man has had his eyes opened to see the fallacy of his former pursuits, when, stopping where the roads meet, he looks up to the signpost and says, “And now, Lord, guide me. Help me to take the right turn, to avoid the shadow and to seek after that which is substantial. Now, Lord.”  
I also like this expression of David’s emotions because he consults with God. “Every man walks in a vain show, but,” he says, “and now, Lord, there is no vanity with You, no deception, no delusion with You, behold, I turn away from this mirage, which just now deluded me, to You, my God, the Rock of my salvation, and I look to You. And now, Lord.” I would to God that somebody here would say, “I have to spend eternity somewhere. I will not waste this present time and live as if this world were all, but I will lift up my prayer, tonight, and say, Now, Lord. Now that I have passed my childhood and am a young man. Now that I have reached my 21st birthday. Now that I am 30, forty, fifty—now that my hair is turning gray it is time for me to be wise if ever. Now, Lord.” And if I am so unhappy as to have a person here who has advanced to the very end of his lease and has become 70 and yet is still living for a world that is slipping away from him, I would to God that the Holy Spirit would make him say, tonight, “And now, Lord. Now I seek You, now I turn to You.”  
You can see at once that David feels that he is out of place, for he says, “Lord, what wait I for?” He says, “What wait I for? I can see what these

 fools are waiting for—they are waiting to take their place in the show. They put on their masquerading garments and go out there to take part in the pageant. But I will not go there. I do not belong to any of the classes that make up that show. What wait I for, then? I see the men worried in vain, but, Lord, I have learned to trust in You. Then, what wait I for? And, O my God, I see how others clutch the treasure which they cannot keep, which is not worth the having, for they are soon to leave it, or it quickly leaves them. By Your Grace I am not after that kind of thing. Now, Lord, what wait I for?” He is like a fish out of water, he is a man out of his native country, evidently a stranger and an exile, who is turning to his God. He is a fellow-stranger with his God and he says to Him, “Now, Lord, what wait I for?”—a question only God, Himself, can fully answer!  
You observe, also, that he has his eye on the future. He is a man who is waiting for something. Faith is a high virtue. And waiting upon God is a flower that grows out of it. “What wait I for? I have not found it yet. I am waiting for it, for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” Our treasure is not here—it is away there upon the eternal hills, where Christ sits at the right hand of God! The man described in our text is a waiting man whose chief delight is now in a world that is to come.  
And you observe, lastly, on this point, that he is a man whose hope is in God. “My hope is in You.” I have no earthly expectations, but I say, “My Soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” “Hopes of ever finding anything here which can fill me, or content me, I have long ago abandoned. And now, Lord, my hope is in You. It is only You, my God, that I desire, and if I get You, if I am filled with You, if You abide in me, if You transform me into Your image. If You deign to use me for Your Glory. If You will take me Home to dwell with You where Jesus is, this is what I wait for, and I wait for nothing else.” We are expectant of good things to come. We are not inhabitants of this country, we are citizens of the New Jerusalem which is above! We are only shipwrecked, here, for a while, and exiled from Home until the boat shall come to ferry us across the stream to the land where our true possessions lie and where our best Beloved is! Life, light, love and everything to us is He who has gone as our Forerunner to the place which He has prepared for them that love Him.  
III. Now I close by noticing that DAVID OFFERS AN APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY PRAYER. “Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.” After all, we are here, Brothers and Sisters. We do not know how long we may have to stay here and there are things which we need while we are here. Well, what are they? Send in your requests! What do you need?  
David puts down what he needs. “He needs, first, to be delivered from trouble,” says somebody. No, he does not say anything about that. He prays, “Deliver me from all my transgressions.” “He needs to be delivered from that headache, that heartache, that pain in the limbs, that depression of spirit.” Nothing of the sort! The prayer of this godly man is, “Deliver me from all my transgressions.”  
That is, first, he prayed for deliverance from sins committed. “Lord, put all my sin away, so that I may be clean every whit from every sin that I have ever committed.” Can that be? Oh, yes, it is so with many of us! We are washed in the blood of the lamb and that washing is perfect washing— it leaves no stain behind it! If you believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, He has taken your sin upon Himself—He has put your sin away by the great blood shedding! It is not on you any longer. It has even ceased to be, according to that wonderful text, “The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” What a blessed thing it is to live with no cloud, whatever, between your soul and your God—to know that every sin is blotted out by the Atonement of Christ and that your heavenly Father looks upon you with delight and favor—even as a child of God and does not chide you! O happy, happy, happy man who walks in the Light of God, as God is in the Light, and so has fellowship with God while the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses him from all sin! David’s first prayer is for deliverance from sins committed. If you get it answered in your case, you will not walk in any vain show and you will not be worried at all, much less, “disquieted in vain.”

Next, he prays to be delivered from the assaults of sin. Who is there, here, that is not tempted? If anyone says, “I am above temptation, or beyond temptation,” well, that person must have gone far in pride and carnal security—he is eaten up with the leprosy of self-deceit! We are all tempted and every day we need to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” “Deliver me from all my transgressions. Lord, do not let me sin; let me not in heart, or thought, or word, or deed, offend You.” Oh, if we could but be perfect, so that we could never manifest an ugly temper, never speak a wry word, never have an evil thought! Oh, if we could but be perfect! Ah, Sirs, this is the riches we covet, to be perfectly free from every tendency to sin! If we could but get to that, then we should have got to Heaven, for that is Heaven—to be perfectly delivered from sin! Well, well, we shall have that perfection! God will give it to us, but let us make this the subject of our daily prayer, “Deliver me from all my transgressions.”

David also prayed for deliverance from peculiarly dangerous sins. Allow me to put an emphasis on one little word in my text, “Deliver me from all my transgressions.” I am afraid that we all have some special sin that is our sin more than it is anybody else’s—some tendency, hereditary— perhaps some liability to a particular form of sin. I believe that if some Brothers and Sisters were ever tempted to hilarity, they would not transgress in that direction, for they were born in November, and they have a fog in their very soul! There are some others, who, if they were tempted to great depression, would not transgress in that way, for they have sunlight in their souls and their eyes always twinkle with a natural merriment! Some men are not tempted to be misers—it would be a mercy if they were, for they are such dreadful spendthrifts! Some men are never tempted to be lavish—I half wish that the devil or someone better would tempt them, that way, for they are so mean and it is so hard to get even a three penny piece from them to help the best of causes! Satan is pretty well acquainted with us—he sees the joints in our harness, he knows to what sins we are specially inclined—and if it is so in sinners, it is also so in saints! We all have need to pray, “Deliver me from all my transgressions, especially from the sins to which I am most liable. Lord, save me from them.” I invite you, dear Friends, to pray this prayer of David.

And then, also pray the other—“Make me not the reproach of the foolish. If I am to be reproached, let me be reproached by wise men. Make me not the reproach of the foolish.”

Thus, David prayed for deliverance from deserved dishonor. Oh, may God grant that none of you, whom He has called to a higher and better life, and made to long for Glory and eternity, may ever make the enemy to blaspheme, or give them real reason for despising you! God keep us from falling! O Christian men, women, Christ has been more wounded by His friends than by His foes! We do not mind what the infidel has to say. At least we would not mind it if we did not, at times, help him to say sad things by our inconsistency. We feel the point of the arrow and the smart of the wound is acute, but far keener is it to feel that our own wrong-doing feathered the arrow which the enemy shot from his bow! God keep us from that evil! May we never lend a feather from our wings with which to furnish an arrow against Christ or His cause!

David also prayed to be preserved from undeserved defamation. “Make me not the reproach of the foolish.” If you live the life of an angel, foolish persons will soon spread an evil story against you. Unless the Lord holds their tongues, they will not hold them. Pray, then, that you may be preserved from slander. If it comes, may it be real slander, with no truth in it, but may God preserve you even from that, for it is a cruel thing and cuts to the quick!

Again, David prayed for deliverance from spiritual disappointment. And may we also be preserved from all disappointments concerning our trust in God! If we trusted in God and He did not deliver us, we would be, indeed, the reproach of the foolish. We come out boldly for the Truth of God and stand alone—and yet that Truth never vindicates us! Why, then, we shall be the reproach of the foolish! We pray that we may not be put to shame and that God’s bare arm may defend His own cause and we believe it will be so.

And last of all, in his prayer, “Make me not the reproach of the foolish,” David pleads for deliverance from dreadful taunts at the last. May I never be lost and then forever have to bear this reproach! You know, the thought has sometimes come to me that if I am not true, and if at the Last Great Day the Master should say, “I never knew you, depart, you cursed” how will those who have to depart with me turn round, and say, “And you, and you? You talked to us! You preached to us! And yet you, yourself, are here?” This would be to suffer shame as did the king of Babylon when he went down to the Pit and the kings whom he had slain began to say to him, “Have you become like one of us?” How they gloried over their conqueror, himself, shut up in Hell, conquered by the Almighty God! Professors, I beseech you to pray this prayer, tonight, “Make me not the reproach of the foolish.” Be sincere, true men, lest on the last day you not only have the wrath of God to bear, but the shame and the

 everlasting contempt which your fellow sinners will heap upon you while you lie there, after all your profession, a castaway!

The Lord grant His blessing to those who are to be baptized tonight! May they be faithful to the end and may others of us, who have confessed Christ years ago, be kept from sin! May we all trust Christ tonight! If we never trusted Jesus before, let us begin at once, each one saying, “Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in You.” May we all come to Jesus and find eternal life in Him! Amen, and amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 39**

To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.  
David dedicated some Psalms to Asaph and one or two to Jeduthun. Some of this chief musician’s family appear to have remained singers as late as the time of Nehemiah. It is a great honor to be a singer in the House of God. Ungodly men have no right to lead the Psalmody—only redeemed lives can sing aright the song of redemption. I reckon that it is almost as wrong to have an unconverted person to lead the singing as it would be to have an unconverted man to preach the Gospel. David was in a great heat of spirit, and much tried, when he wrote this Psalm. There is little that is cheerful in it, yet there is much that may cheer us. Sometimes, when we are unusually thoughtful, we are more likely to be blessed than at other times. Specific gravity is better than specific levity—there are some who have a great deal of the latter quality.

Verse 1 . I said. “I thought it, and at last I said it. I resolved. I determined upon it and I registered the vow.”  
1. I will take heed to my ways. Men never go right by accident—he who is heedless is graceless. A holy life is a life that comes of taking heed.  
1. That I sin not with my tongue. He who keeps his tongue can keep all the rest of his body. The tongue is the helm of the ship and if that is well managed, the ship will be steered aright. How many sins of the tongue there are—proud words, false words, trifling words, unclean words! I cannot mention the whole list. The tongue is the best thing in the world or the worst thing, according to how it is used.  
1. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. “I may feel free when I am with God’s people. Then I may wear my heart upon my sleeve, for there are no claws to scratch at it. But when I am with the wicked, I must not cast my pearls before swine. I must be careful what I say, for they will be sure to misunderstand and misrepresent me.”  
2. I was dumb with silence. Ah, me! How often we do wrong even when we try to do right! He tried not to sin with his tongue, so he was silent, but silence, itself, may be a sin of the tongue! God forgive our idle silence and silence our idle words! I do not think we often sin this way, but silence may sometimes be more wicked than speech even though at other times, speech is silver and silence is golden. If silence is sometimes better than speech, it may also be worse. So poor David, like a pendulum, swings first, this way, and then the other way. Yet he went too far in the silent direction.  
2. I held my peace, even from good. Which he should not have done. A dumb sorrow is a heavy sorrow.  
2. And my sorrow was stirred. Or “troubled.” Water, while it is quiet, may look clear, the sediment lies still at the bottom. But if you stir it, you see all there is in it. So is it with sorrow—when it is stirred, you find its bitterness.  
3. My heart was hot within me. The fire was kept in his heart—it was not allowed space to break forth—so his heart was hot as an oven.  
3. While I was musing, the fire burned. He grew so hot with grief that he was compelled to speak.  
3. Then spoke I with my tongue. I am not sure that he did not sin then. We sin if we are silent and we sin if we speak, for we are such sinful creatures. It would have been better, perhaps, if David had said, “Lord, help me to take heed to my ways and rule, You, over my tongue,” for as it was, you see, he could not manage his tongue. He was either too fast or too slow. However, this time he spoke well, for he spoke to God. More talk to God and less chat to men—and we would be wiser and better! 4. LORD, make me to know my end. It is greatly wise for us to be familiar with our last hours. There is much to be discovered in the shroud, the mattock and the spade.  
4. And the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. A bubble is more substantial than I am—a little handful of dust, easily blown in the wind—rather an appearance than a reality! Ah, me, little do we know, any of us, how frail we are!  
5. Behold You have made my days as an handbreadth. How short is our life! It is just a span and no more,  
5. And my age is as nothing before You. What multitudes of generations of men have come and gone! An angel might have cried, long before, “Man is but a thing of yesterday compared with the eternal God.” God created the first star that twinkled out of the primeval darkness. “The everlasting hills,” as we call them, are but infants of a day compared to Him. Therefore, man may truly say, “My age is as nothing before You.”  
5. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. The best man is only man at the best and when he is at his best, he is nothing but vanity. It is strange that he should get vain of his best state, when his best is only vanity!  
6. Surely every man walks in a vain show. He is a shadow walking among shadows.  
6. Surely they are disquieted in vain. They fret and fume about nothing.  
6. He heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them. He is busy with a rake, but another will be busy with a fork. What the miser gathers the spendthrift scatters.  
7. And now, Lord, what wait I for. “Do I wait to gather riches for another to squander? Do I wait to worry myself? Do I wait here to walk as a vanity in the midst of vanities? No, Lord, I am waiting for something better than that!”  
7. My hope is in You. Here the Psalmist steps off the sand and puts his foot on the Rock. Happy is the man who can say to the Lord, “My hope is in You.”  
8. Deliver me from all my transgressions. When he gets near to God, he sees himself to be a sinner.  
8, 9. Make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because You did it. That is fine silence when a man will not complain because his affliction comes from the hand of God! There is something better, even, than that—when a man breaks the silence and begins to praise God under the rod! A mute Christian smarting under the rod is a wonder of Grace, but a singing Christian under a cutting stroke is a still greater miracle of mercy! Such ought all Christians to be.  
10. Remove Your stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of Your hand. When God smites, He never plays at chastisement and there are times when His blows are very heavy, and then the smitten one cries out, “Remove Your stroke away from me. I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.”  
11. When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity, You make his beauty to consume away like a moth. Stout, he is reduced to a shadow. Comely and beautiful, he is wrinkled and looks like a skeleton. Joyful and blithe, he ends his day in mourning. Ah, dear Friends, we who have joy, calm and peace ought to be very grateful! Praise God while you can, for it may be that a dark night will follow the bright day. Oh, for Grace to praise God even then! That is the best of music that comes from God’s nightingales! Music by night is music, indeed. But when God corrects men, how soon He takes them down!  
11, 12. Surely every man is vanity. Selah. Hear my prayer, O LORD. “If I cannot do anything else, I can pray, and I will pray.” That is the best relief that mourners have—“Hear my prayer, O Lord.”  
12. And give ear unto my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears. “Do not see me weeping and yet refuse me comfort and relief. Do not, I pray You, hear my cry, and yet turn Your back upon me.”  
12. For I am a stranger with You. Notice, not a stranger to You, but, “a stranger with You. You are a stranger in Your own world and I, also, am a stranger here.” Men will not entertain the King, for they know Him not, therefore—  
*“‘Tis no surprising thing,  
That we should be unknown:  
The Jewish world knew not their King  
God’s everlasting Son.”*  
“I am a stranger with You.” There is a sweet familiarity about this expression, as if the Psalmist said, “Lord, I am not at home. I am a stranger here and You, too, are a stranger. Men will not acknowledge You. Therefore, Lord, sympathize with me. Hold not Your peace at my tears, for I am a stranger with You.”  
12. And a sojourner, as all my fathers were. “You are my Host. I am Your guest. You entertain me. Lord, look at my tears! When the good man entertains a stranger, he is kind—he pours oil and wine into his wounds. Lord, do so with me! You are the Good Samaritan and I am a stranger with You—a sojourner, a temporary guest with You in this world—as all my fathers were.”  
13. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. There is much sweet comfort, here, though the Psalm reads like a dirge, rather than a hymn. God give us, if we are obliged to sing such words as these, to sing them with a full belief that the Lord will hear us, will bless our trials to us and make them work our lasting good!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—39, 657, 823.  
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BROUGHT UP FROM THE HORRIBLE PIT  
NO. 1674

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 13, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I waited patiently for the Lord: and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my going. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear,  
and shall trust in the Lord.”  
Psalm 40:1-3.**

This passage has been used with great frequency as the expression of the experience of the people of God and I think it has been very rightly so used. It is a very accurate picture of the way in which sinners are raised up from despair to hope and salvation—and of the way in which saints are brought out of deep troubles and made to sing of Divine love and power. Yet I am not certain that the first verse could be truthfully uttered by all of us. I question, indeed, whether any of us could thus speak. Could we say—“I waited patiently for the Lord.” Do you think, Brothers and Sisters, that it might rather read—“I waited

 impatiently for the Lord,” in the case of most of us? All the rest may stand true, but this would need to be modified.

We could hardly speak in our own commendation if we considered our conduct in the matter of patience, for that is, alas, still a scarce virtue upon the face of the earth! If we read the Psalm through, we shall see that it was not written to describe the experience of God’s people, exclusively. Secondarily we may regard it as David’s language, but in the first instance a greater than David is here. The first Person who uttered these words was the Messiah and that is quite clear if you read the Psalm through, for we fall upon such language as this—“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears have You opened: burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.”

We need not say with the Ethiopian, “Of whom speaks the Prophet? Of himself or of some other?” For we are led at once by the plainest indications to see that he is not speaking of himself, but of our Lord. And if we needed confirmation of this we get it in Hebrews 10, where Paul expressly quotes this passage as referring to the Lord Jesus. To Him, indeed, alone, of all men can it, with accuracy, be applied! So this morning I shall have to show that this text of ours is most fit to be the language of the Lord, our Representative and Covenant Head. When I have shown this, you will then see how we can use the same expressions, because we are in Him.

Each Believer becomes a mirror in which is reflected the experience of our Lord, but it would be ill for us to be so taken up with the mere reflection as to forget the express Image by which this experience is formed in us. I shall ask you, then, at this time, to observe our Divine Lord when in His greatest trouble. Notice, first, our Lord’s behavior—“I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto Me, and heard My cry.” Then consider, secondly, our Lord’s deliverance, expressed by the phrase, “He brought Me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay,” and so forth. Then let us think, thirdly, of the Lord’s reward for it—“Many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord”—that is His great end and objective—and in it He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

We shall close, fourthly, by perceiving the Lord’s likeness in all His saved ones, for they, also, are brought up from the Pit of destruction, and a new song is put into their mouths. He is not ashamed to call them Brethren, since in each one of them His own experience is repeated, though upon a smaller scale.

I. First, let us think of our Lord’s behavior. “I waited patiently for the Lord.” Here, we greatly need the teaching of the Holy Spirit—may it be given us abundantly. First, our Lord’s conduct when He was under the smarting rod was that of waiting. He waited upon the Lord all His life and this waiting became more conspicuous in His passion and death. He went down into Gethsemane and there He prayed earnestly, but with sweet submission, for He said, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Complete submission was the essential spirit of His prayer. He rose up from prayer all crimson with His bloody sweat and He went to meet His foes, delivering Himself up voluntarily to be led as a sheep to the slaughter.

He did not unsheathe the sword as Peter did, much less did He flee, like His disciples, but He waited upon the will of the Most High, enduring all things till the Father should give Him deliverance. When they took Him before Annas and Caiaphas, and Pilate and Herod, hurrying Him from bar to bar, how patiently He kept silence, though false witnesses appeared against Him. Like a sheep before her shearers He was dumb, submitting Himself without a struggle. In the Omnipotence of patience, He held His peace even from good, because it was so written of Him. When they led Him away to crucifixion through the streets of Jerusalem, He did not even encourage the lamentations of the sympathizing women who surrounded Him, but in His wondrous patience He said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me.”

He did not refuse to bear His Cross, or to let the Cross bear Him. He did not complain of contempt and contumely, since these were appointed Him. When they nailed Him to the tree and there He hung in the burning sun, tortured, fevered, agonizing—the words that escaped Him were not those of murmuring and repining, but those of pity, pain, patience and submission. Till He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He bowed His whole being to His Father’s will, waiting His time and pleasure. He steadily took a long draft of the appointed cup and drained it to the bitter end. His eyes were unto the Lord as the eyes of servants are to the hands of their masters. He waited in service, in hope, in resignation and in confidence. He knew that God would help Him and deliver Him.

He knew that His head would be raised on high above the sons of men, but still He waited for the Father’s time and, meanwhile, made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a Servant—and as a Servant yielded all His strength to the work which was given Him to do. He was willing, in the hour of His passion, to be treated as the scum and scorn of all mankind! Nor did He hurry the hour when all the shame and scorn should blossom into Glory and honor. He went down in His waiting, even, to the utmost of self-denial and truly proved that He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. Never man served and waited like this Man!

Our text adds to this word, “waited,” the word, “patiently.” “I waited patiently.” If you would see patience, look not at Job on the dunghill, but look at Jesus on the Cross! Job, the most patient of men, was assuredly impatient at the same time, but this blessed Lord of ours gave Himself up completely and showed not the slightest sign of repining. Not a speck of impatience can be detected in the crystal stream of our Lord’s submission! His soul was all melted and it all flowed into the mold of the Father’s will—no dross was in or about Him—nothing refused to melt and to run into the mold. One would have supposed that He would have spoken an angry word to Judas, who betrayed Him. Instead of which He gently asked of him, “Friend, why are you here?”

It would not have seemed out of place if He had upbraided the Jews who so falsely accused Him, or the rulers who so unjustly treated Him. But here is the patience of the Saintly One—He was perfect master of His own Spirit. His answer to His murderers was the prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” So meek and lowly in heart was He that to men He gave no sharp replies. His answers were all steeped in gentleness. Take, for example, His word to the High Priest—“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you smite Me?” They sat down around the Cross and mocked Him, jeered at Him, insulted Him and made mirth even of His cries and prayers! But He did not utter a single word of rebuke, much less did He leap from the Cross to dash His mockers to pieces and prove by their destruction that He was, indeed, the mighty Son of God.

“I waited patiently,” He says. No thought or word or deed of impatience can be charged upon Him! Waiting, He waited and waited more. We are in such a hurry when we are in trouble—we hasten to escape from it at once—every minute seems an hour and every day an age. “Help me speedily, O my God!” is the natural cry of the child of God under the rod! But our Savior was in no ill haste to get from the chastisement which came upon Him for our sakes—He was at leisure in His woe. So thoroughly was He resolved to do His Father’s will that even on the morning of His Resurrection He arose with deliberation and quit the grave in order, folding His grave clothes and laying the napkin by itself. He steadily persevered in all His work of holiness and sorrow of Sacrifice, never accepting deliverance till His work was done. Patiently He endured to have His ear bored to the doorpost, to have His head encircled with thorns, His cheeks disdained with spit, His back furrowed with the lash, His hands and feet nailed to the wood and His heart pierced with the spear! In His body on the tree, patience was written out in crimson characters.

Now, this was necessary for the completeness of His Atonement. No expiation could have been made by an impatient Savior. Only a perfect obedience could satisfy the Law of God. Only an unblemished Sacrifice could put away our sins. There must not, therefore, be about our Substitute a trace of resistance to the Father’s will, nor as a Sacrifice must He struggle against the cords, or turn His head away from the sacrificial knife. In truth, His was willing—patiently doing and suffering the Divine Will. “He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.” “I waited patiently for the Lord,” He says, and you know, Brothers and Sisters, how true was the declaration.

But while the Savior thus waited, and waited patiently, we must not forget that He waited prayerfully, for the text speaks of a cry which He lifted up, and of God’s inclining Himself to it. That patience which does not pray is obstinacy! A soul silent to God is apt to be sullen rather than submissive. A stoical patience hardens itself against grief and asks no deliverance—but that is not the patience which God loves—it is not the patience of Christ. He used strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death. Let Gethsemane tell of that wrestling which infinitely excelled the wrestling of Jacob—Jabbok is outdone by Kedron! His was a wrestling, not to sweat, alone, but unto sweat of blood! He sweats who works for bread, the staff of life, but He sweats blood who works for life, itself.

What prayers those must have been under such a fearful physical, mental and spiritual agony which were so fervent that they brought an angel from the Throne of God, and yet, so submissive that they are the model of resignation! He agonized as earnestly as if He sought His own will and yet He wholly resigned Himself to the Father, saying, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God.” Our Lord was always praying—there never was a moment in His life in which He was not in full communion with God, unless we except the period when He cried, “Why have You forsaken Me?” He did often go aside to pray a more special prayer, but yet, even when He spoke to the people; even when He faced His foes, His soul was still in constant fellowship with His Father. But ah, when He came between the upper and the nether millstones—when this good Olive was ground in the olive press and all the oil of His life was extracted from Him—then it was that His strong crying and tears came up before the Lord, His God, and He was heard in that He feared!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, look at your Pattern and see how far short you have come of it! At least, I will remember with regret how far short I have come of it! Have we waited? Have we not been in too great a hurry? Has it not been too much our desire that the Lord might make His will like our will rather than make our will like His? Have you not had a will of your own, sometimes, and a strong will, too? Have you not been as the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke? Have you not kicked against the pricks? You have not waited, but you have worried! Can we say that we waited patiently? Oh, patience! Every man thinks he has it until he needs it! But only let his tender point be touched and you will see how little patience he possesses. It is the fire which tires our supposed resignation and under that process much of our palace of patience burns like wood, hay and stubble! Old crosses fit the shoulder, but let a new cross be laid upon us and we writhe under it. Suffering is the vocation of a Christian, but most of us come short of our high calling. Our Lord Jesus has joined together reigning and suffering, for we read of “the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” He was the royal example of patience, but what are we?

Remember, again, that Jesus prayed importunately while He waited— “being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.” Have we not, at time, restrained prayer? Have we not pleaded as an excuse for our feeble petitions the very facts which ought to have been a spur to our earnestness? “I felt too ill to pray.” Could you not pray for health with all the more fervency? “I felt too burdened to pray.” Should you not pray for help to bear your burden? Can we ever safely say to ourselves, “I may be excused from supplication, now, for my sorrow is great.” Talk not so! Here is your balm and benediction, your comfort and your cordial! Here is your strength and succor, your constancy and confidence! Even in the midnight of the soul let us arise and pour out our hearts like water before the Lord. O tried Believer, get to your knees and from above the Mercy Seat the Glory of the Lord shall shine forth upon you! Pray even as Jesus did and as all His saints have done and so shall you, in patience, possess your soul.

In due time the Lord inclined to the afflicted Suppliant, listening to His moaning from the bottom of the pit—of this it is high time for us to speak. Yet let us not leave this first point till we learn from the example of our Lord that patience is seen in waiting as well as in suffering. To bear a great weight for an hour or two is nothing compared with carrying a load for many a day. Patience knows its letters, but waiting reads the page and praying rehearses it in the ears of God! Let us add to our patience waiting—and to waiting—prayer.

II. We come, secondly, to consider our Lord’s deliverance. In due time, when Patience had had her perfect work and prayer had, at last, prevailed, our suffering Lord was brought up, again, from the deeps of sorrow. His deliverance is set forth under two images. First, it is represented as a bringing up out of a horrible pit. It is a terribly suggestive metaphor. I have been in the dungeon in Rome in which, according to tradition, Peter and Paul were confined (though, probably, they were never there at all).

It was, indeed, a horrible pit, for originally it had no entrance, but a round hole in the rock above. And when that round hole at the top was blocked with a stone, not a ray of light nor a particle of fresh air could possibly enter. The prisoners were let down into the cavern and they were left there. When once the opening was closed, they were cut off from all communication with their fellow men. No being has ever been so cruel to man as man! Man is the worst of monsters to his kind and his cruel inventions are many. He has not been content to leave his fellows their natural liberty, but he built prisons and dug pits in which to shut up his victims!

At first they would place a man in a dry well merely for custody and confinement, or they would drop him into some hollow cavern in the earth in which corn or treasure had been concealed. But afterwards, with greater ingenuity of malice, they covered over the top of these pits so that the prisoners could not be partakers of God’s bountiful air, or the merciful light of the sun, or the silver sheen of the moon. Covered all over and shut in, the captives were buried alive. Even in modern times we have seen what they call oubliettes, or dungeons in which prisoners were immured, to be forgotten as dead men out of mind, buried so as never to come forth, again. Such unfortunates as were doomed to enter these tombs of living men bade farewell to hope. They were inhabitants of oblivion, dwellers in the land of death-shade, to remain apart from their kind, cut off from memory.

These worst of dungeons may illustrate our text—“He brought Me up also out of a horrible pit.” In the original, we get the idea of a crash, as when some mailed warrior in the midst of the battle stumbles into a pit and there he lies, bruised and broken. And there is the thought of the fall of waters rushing strangely, furiously, mysteriously. The Hebrew has it, “The pit of noises,” or as some render it, “the pit of destruction.” Such was the condition of our dear Redeemer when He was bearing our sin and suffering in our place. Just notice, first, that our Lord was like a man put into a pit and so made to be quite alone. Imagine yourself now confined in one of those caverns with a big stone rolled over the mouth of it. There would be neither hearing nor answering.

Now you will know the dread solemnity of silence! You may speak, but no gentle whisper of sympathy will reach your ears in return! You may cry again and again and make the dungeon’s dome echo to your voice—but you are speaking as to brass—no man cares for your soul. You are alone— alone in a fearful solitude. Thus it happened to our Savior. All His disciples forsook Him and fled. And what was infinitely worse, His God forsook Him, too. He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Can any man tell me all that was meant by that infinite lament? Of course, a prisoner in such a pit as that was in total darkness. He could not see the walls which enclosed him, nor so much as his own hand. No beam of sunlight ever wandered into that stagnant air—the captive would have to grope for the pitcher of water and the morsel of bread which a cruel mercy would allot to him.

Our Lord was in the dark. Midnight brooded over His spirit. He said— “Now is My soul troubled.” “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.” His was a pit of gloom, the region of the shadow of death, a land of darkness as darkness, itself! When a man is shut up in a pit he is, of course, full of distress. If you were, any of you, to go into one of the solitary cells of our own jails, I guarantee you a short sojourn in it would be quite enough! These cells, some years ago, were thought to be wonderful cures for all sort of evil dispositions in men, but probably they have more often destroyed reason than conquered depravity. Go in, if you dare!

Ask the warden to shut the door and leave you in the dark, all alone, that you may try the solitary system for yourself. No, I would not advise you to try it even for five minutes, for you might, even in that short time, inflict such an injury upon your nervous system as you would never recover. I believe that many of the gentler ones, here, would be quite unable to bear total darkness and solitude even for the shortest time. In the grim gloom, the soul is haunted with phantom fears, while horror peoples the place which is empty of human beings! The heart is worried with evil imaginations and pierced with arrows of distress. Grief takes hold of the spirit and alarm conquers hope.

In our Lord’s case, the grief and sorrow which He felt can never be described, nor need it be conceived. It was something tantamount to the miseries of damned souls. The holy Jesus could not feel the exact misery which takes hold on abandoned rebels, but He did suffer what was tantamount to that at the Judgment Seat of God. He gave a quid pro quo, a something which, in God’s esteem, reckoning the dignity of His mighty Person, stood instead of the sinner’s eternal suffering. He felt woe upon woe, night blackening night! Do not try to realize His agony—He wills that you should not—for He has trod the winepress alone and of the people there were none with Him—as if to show that none could understand His sorrows and that we can do no more than speak of His “unknown sufferings.”

But I must add, to complete the figure, that shut up in such a pit there might be a great tumult above, like to the tramping of armed hosts. Or there might be a rush of waters underneath the captive deep in earth’s bowels. He could not tell what the noise was, nor from where it came and, therefore, he would often be in terrible fear while he sat alone in the thick darkness. Our Lord had His fears, for we read that He was heard in that He feared. Torrents of sin rushed near Him! Floods of wrath were heard around Him and cataracts of grief fell upon Him. Besides, there was a mystery about this anguish which intensified it—a mystery not to be written or explained. Our Redeemer’s spirit was cast down within Him far beyond anything that is common to men. In that horrible pit, that pit of destruction, He lay with none to pity or sustain.

But, oh, change the strain, and sing unto the Lord, awhile, as we read the verse, “He brought Me up out of a horrible pit.” The Lord Jesus Christ was lifted up from all sorrow of spirit at that moment when He said so bravely, “It is finished,” and though He died, yet was He lifted up from death, as it is written, “You will not leave My soul in Hell; neither will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.” His Spirit ascended to God and, by-and-by, when the third day had blushed with morning light, His body rose from the tomb, to ascend, in due time, to Glory! He came up out of the pit of the grave, delivered from all fear of corruption, pain, or defeat! Now His sorrow is ended and His brow is clear from care. His visage is marred no more! He bears the scars which do but illumine His hands and feet with splendor, but—

*“No more the bloody spear,  
The Cross and nails no more,  
For Hell, itself, shakes at His name  
And all the heavens adore.”*

Sing you unto the Lord, you saints of His, as you behold your Master brought up again from among the sorrowful, the despised, the deserted, the dead!

A second figure is, however, used here to express our Lord’s grief and deliverance from it—“Out of the miry clay.” Travelers tell us that wherever pits are still used as dungeons, they are damp, foul and utterly loathsome, for they are never cleansed, however long the prisoner may have been there, or however great the number of victims shut up within them. You know what the prisons of Europe were in Howard’s days—they were even worse in the East in periods further back. The imprisoned wretch often found himself sinking in the mire! He found no rest, no hope of comfort and when extricated, he needed a hand to drag him out of the thick clay.

Our blessed Lord and Master found Himself, when He was suffering for us, where everything appeared to give way beneath Him. His spirits sank, His friends failed Him and His heart melted like wax. Every comfort was taken from Him. His blessed Manhood found nothing upon this earth upon which it could stay itself, for He had been made sin for us, made a curse for us—and so every foundation of comfort departed from Him. He was deprived of visible support and reduced to a sad condition. As a man who has fallen into a slough cannot stir so as to recover himself, so was it with our Redeemer, who says in the Psalms—“I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.” Some morasses are so destructive that if a man should once fall into them, he might give up his life for lost unless someone came that way to drag him out.

So did the Savior sink in the miry clay of our sin and misery until the Lord Almighty lifted Him out! The clay of sorrow clung to Him. It held to Him while He was performing the great work of our redemption. But the Lord brought Him up out of it. There is no mire upon His garments now! His feet no longer sink! He is not held by the bands of death! He slides not into the grave, again! He was dragged down, as it were, by bearing our sin, but that is over and He has ascended on high—He has led captivity captive and received gifts from men! All honor be unto Him and to His Father who delivered Him!

As we read our text, we pursue this story of our Master’s deliverance and we are told that He was brought up out of the lowest deeps. Say the words or sing them as you choose—“He brought Me up.” God raised up His obedient Son from the depths into which He had descended on our account. He was brought up, like Jonah who went to the bottom of the mountains and yet was landed safely on the shore. He was brought up like Joseph, who rose from a pit to a palace; like David, who was led up from the sheepfold to the kingdom. “The king shall joy in Your strength, O Lord; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! His glory is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon Him. For You have made him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your Countenance.”

Then we are told He was set on a rock, and oh, the Glory of our blessed Lord in this matter, for now He stands on a firm foundation in all that He does for us! Judgment and truth confirm His ways and the Judge of all the earth approves His doings. Christ has no sandy foundation for His work of mercy or His words of comfort. When He saves, He has a right to save—when He puts away sin—He does it on indisputable grounds! When He helps and delivers His people, He does it according to Law, according to the will of the Highest. As Justifier, Preserver and Perfecter of His people, He stands upon a rock! This day I delight to think of my Lord as settling His Church with Himself upon the immutable foundations of the Covenant, on the decree of God, on the purpose of the Father, on His own work and on the promise of God that He would reward Him in that work!

Well may we say that His feet are upon a rock, for He is Himself, by another figure, the Rock of Ages, the Rock of our salvation! And now the goings of our glorious Christ are established. When He goes out to save a sinner, He knows that He can do it and has a right to do it! When He goes up to His Father’s Throne to make intercession for sinners, His goings are established and the desire of His heart is given Him! When He comes in among His Church, or marches forth with His people to the ends of the earth, His goings are established. “For the King trusts in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High He shall not be moved.” He shall surely come a second time without sin unto salvation, for so has the Father decreed—His glorious goings are as surely established as were those of His labor and suffering.

We shall never be without a Savior! We shall never have a fallen or a vanquished Savior, for His goings are established for continuance, certainty and victory! Such honor have all His saints, for, “the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.” And again, “None of his steps shall slide.” Best of all, there is a new song in the mouth of our Well-Beloved. It is grand to think of Jesus singing! Read the 22nd Psalm and you will find Him doing it, as also in the Hebrews—“In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto You.” Toward the end of His earthly career, you hear Him bursting into song. Was not that a grand occasion just before His passion, when He was going out to die? We read that “after supper they sang a hymn.”

If we had been bound to die that night, as He was, we should rather have wept or prayed, than sang! Not so our Lord. I do not know what Psalm they sang—probably a part of the great Hallel, usually sung after the Passover—which consists of those Psalms at the end of the book which are so full of praise. I believe the Savior, Himself, pitched the tune and led the strain. Think of Him singing when near His hour of agony! Going to scorn and mockery, singing! Going to the crown of thorns and the scourge, singing! Going to death, even the death of the Cross, singing! For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame! But now, what must that new song be which He leads in Heaven? “They sang, as it were, a new song before the throne.” But it is He that leads the heavenly orchestra!

How greatly He excels Miriam, the sister of Moses, when she took her timbrel and led forth the women in their dances, saying, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and His rider has He thrown into the sea.” This is called, “the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb,” so I gather that the Lamb’s new song is after the same triumphant fashion—it is the substance of that which Moses’ song foreshadowed! In Christ Jesus, the Lord our God has led captivity captive. Let us praise Him on the high sounding cymbals! Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! The powers of darkness are destroyed! Sin, death and Hell are drowned in the atoning blood—the depths have covered them—there is not one of them left. Oh, “sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously!” “Ascribe you greatness unto our God.”

III. Such is the exalted condition of our Lord at this hour. Let us turn and look upon the Lord’s reward. The Lord’s reward for having gone down into the horrible pit and having sunk in the miry clay for us, is this—that “many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord. “Many!” Not all mankind, but, “many” shall look to Jesus and live. Alas! Vast numbers continue in unbelief, but “many” shall believe and live! And the Lord’s “many” means very many. As I was thinking over my text, I thought, “I hope there will be some at the Tabernacle this morning that belong to the ‘many’ who shall see and fear and trust in the Lord.” “Many shall,” for the Lord has promised it.

But, Lord, they will not. “But they shall,” says God. Oh, but many refuse. “But they shall,” says God and He has the key of men’s hearts and power over their judgments and their wills. “Many shall.” Do you, oh you unbelievers, think that Jesus shall die in vain? Oh, Sinners, if you will not have Christ, others will! You may despise Him, but He will be none the less glorious! You may reject His salvation but He shall be none the less mighty to save! He is a King and you cannot pluck a single jewel from His crown! If you are so foolish as to provoke His iron rod so that He shall break you in shivers with it, yet He will be glorious in the sight of God and He will save His own! Notwithstanding your hardness of heart, be this known unto you, oh House of Israel, that, “many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord.”

What shall the many do? They shall “see.” Their eyes shall be opened and they shall see their Lord in the horrible pit and in the miry clay—and as they look, they shall see that He was there for them! What joy this will create in their spirits! If they do not see the Lord Jesus as their Substitute, they shall, at any rate, be made to see the exceedingly sinfulness of sin. If, when Jesus only takes imputed sin and has no sin of His own, yet He must be cast into the horrible pit and sink in the miry clay—then what will become of men who have their own sins about them, provoking the fierce anger of the Lord? If God thus smites His Well-Beloved, oh Sinner, how will He smite you! Beware, you that forget Him, lest He tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver you!

By the suffering Surety, all covered with His own gore, I do beseech you, provoke not God, for if His Only-Begotten must suffer so, you must suffer yet more if you break His Law and next reject His Gospel! “Many shall see.” Do you wonder that it is added, “and shall fear?” It makes men fear to see a bleeding Christ and to know that they crucified Him! It makes men fear, however, with a sweet filial fear that is akin to hope when they see that Jesus died for sinners, the Just for the unjust, to bring them to God. Oh, when they see the Lord of Love acting as a scapegoat and bearing their sins away into the wilderness of forgetfulness, they begin to hate their evil ways and to have a reverent fear of God, for so says the Scripture, “there is forgiveness with You that You may be feared.”

But best of all—and this is the chief point—they come to “trust in the Lord.” They build their hope of salvation upon the righteousness of God as manifested in Christ Jesus. Oh, I would to God that some of you would trust Him at once! Beloved Friends, are you trying to be saved by your own works? That is a delusion! Are you hoping to be saved by your own feelings? That is a lie! But you can be saved, you shall be saved if you will trust yourself with that Blessed One who was alone in the dark pit of noises for the sake of sinners—and slipped in the miry clay for the ungodly! You shall assuredly be saved from wrath through Him! Trust Him and as surely as He lives, you shall be saved, for He that trusts in Him cannot perish! God’s truthfulness were gone if the Believer could be lost. Has He not said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved”? The Throne of God must rock and reel before the Cross of Christ shall lose its power to save those that believe!

IV. Fourthly, let us see the Lord’s likeness in His people. This whole passage, as I said in the beginning, has often been used by individual Believers as a description of their own deliverance. It is a true picture, because we are made like unto our Head and all the Brethren are partakers of that which the Head has endured. Do I speak to any of my Master’s servants in sore trouble? Dear Friends, are you made to wait, though your trial is sharp and severe? Is it so that your prayer has not yet been answered? Then remember the waiter’s place was once occupied by the Lord Jesus, for He says, “I waited patiently.” If the Lord keeps you waiting for a certain blessing, year after year, do not despair. He will give it, at length, if it is truly for your good, for He has said, “no good thing will I withhold from those that walk uprightly.” He kept His Son waiting and He may very well keep you in the same posture, for how long did you delay and cause the Lord of Grace to wait on you! “Blessed are they that wait for Him.” I have seen people very uppish when they have called on a public man and have had to wait a little. They feel that they ought not to be kept in the lobby. But suppose some young man said to them, “I am his own son and yet I have been waiting an hour”? Then they are more patient! So when God keeps you waiting, do not be proud, and say, “Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?” But remember, “It is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.” Jesus waited—“waited patiently.” Seek to be like He and in patience possess your soul.

“I cannot see how I am to be delivered.” Wait. “Ah, this is such a heavy burden.” Wait. “But I am ready to die under this terrible load.” Wait! Wait on! Though He tarry, wait for Him—He is worth waiting for. “Wait” is a short word, but it takes a deal of Grace to spell out its full meaning—and still more Grace to put it in practice. Wait: wait! “Oh, but I have been unfortunate.” Wait. “But I have believed a promise and it has not been fulfilled.” Wait, for you wait in blessed company—you may hear Jesus saying, “I waited patiently.” Blessed be His name, He is teaching us to do the same by His gracious Spirit!

Next, the Lord may send you, His dear child, a very heavy sorrow. You may fall into the horrible pit and see no light, no comfort and no one may be able to cheer you or help you. Some that have a touch of despondency in their nature have been brought so low as almost to despair of life. They have sat in darkness and seen no light—they have felt the walls of their prison and have not discovered a crack or cranny through which escape was possible—they have looked up and even then they have seen nothing to console them. Ah, well, here is a word I commend to you—the Savior says it—“He brought Me up.”

The Lord God can and will bring up His troubled ones. You will have to write in your diary, one of these days, “He brought me up.” I was in the dark, I was in the dungeon, but, “He brought me up.” I can personally say this with gladsome gratitude, for, “He has brought me up,” again and again! My heart is glad as I reflect upon my past deliverances. I have often wondered why I am so often shut up in prison and bound as with fetters of steel. But I cease to wonder when I think of the many among you who are called to wear the same bonds. This is my portion, that I may be a witness-bearer for my God! And that I may be able to speak to the experiences of God’s tempted people and tell how graciously the Lord delivers His servants who trust in Him. Faith shall never be shamed or confounded, world without end! God can and will hasten to the rescue of the faithful.

I set to my seal, also, that, “He brought me up,” and, beloved Brothers and Sisters in tribulation, He will bring you up. Only rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. “Ah,” you say, “But I do not know how to stand, for I sink as in miry clay, through faintness of heart. I cannot find the slightest foothold for my hope.” No, you are sinking in the miry clay like your Master, but, in answer to prayer, the Lord will bring you up out of your hopeless state and He will set your feet upon a rock and establish your goings, give you joy, peace and delight. Therefore see and fear, and trust in God and give Glory to His blessed name!

Lastly, do I address any seeking one who finds no rest for the soles of his feet? Dear Friend, are you sinking in the deep mire of your guilt? The Lord can pardon you, for, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Are you shut up by conscience in prison under a just sense of deserved wrath? Jesus will give you immediate rest if you come to Him! Do you feel as if you cannot kneel to pray, for your very knees slip in the mire of doubt? Remember, Jesus makes intercession for the transgressors! Do you seem as if, every time you move, you are burying your hope and slipping deeper and deeper into ruin? The Lord has plenteous redemption! Do not despair! You cannot deliver yourself, but God can deliver you—you cannot stand of yourself, but God can make you stand! You cannot go to Him nor go abroad among your fellow men with comfort, but the Lord can make you to run in His ways.

You shall yet go forth with joy and be led forth with peace! The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Only see Christ, and fear and trust your God, and you, too, shall sing unto Jehovah your Deliverer, and this shall be your song—

*“He raised me from a horrid pit,  
Where mourning long I lay,  
And from my bonds released my feet,  
Deep bonds of miry clay.  
Firm on a rock He made me stand,  
And taught my cheerful tongue  
To praise the wonders of His hand  
In a new thankful song.”*

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“OUT OF THE DEPTHS”  
NO. 2353

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, MARCH 25, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 26, 1888.

**“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: my iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD make haste to help me.”  
Psalm 40:12, 13.**

You remember that these were the words of a man of God, a man after God’s own heart, a man undoubtedly the possessor of the Grace of God. They were the words, also, of a preacher, one who could say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation...I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and your Truth from the great congregation.”

This teaches us that however eminent for Grace a man of God may be, it may happen to him, sometimes, that the thought of his sin may be paramount over his faith. There are times when the Lord seems to give His servants a new start. It is not a second conversion, but it is something very like it. They are made to see, once more, the deformity of their character, the defilement of their nature, the inward sinfulness of their hearts—that they may prize more than ever that they have experienced the cleansing Fountain of atoning blood and the wonderful power of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. I mention this fact so that, if any of you are in trouble like that described in the text, you may be comforted by knowing that there are the footprints of a fellow Believer in this dark part of the way you have to travel. Others have been here before you! Others who were undoubtedly the people of God, others who were saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

You have had to write bitter things against yourself—so have other people. Have you ever felt as though you were surrounded by sin so that you could not look up? You are not the first man who has been in such a plight and you are not likely to be the last. This part of the road has been frequented by full many of the pilgrims bound to Zion’s city. All the people of God have not taken this route—there are different ways of traveling along the road to Heaven. But some of the true saints of God have gone by this rough path and I mention this fact in order that no troubled heart may fall into despair because of the painful experience through which it is passing at the present time.

I. In trying to describe a soul in the condition mentioned in our text, let me say, first, that we have evidently before us A SOUL BESET—“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: my iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head.”

The text describes a man who is, first, made to see the countless number of his sins. He did not know so much about them, before. He said that he was a sinner and he meant it, but then he wrote the words in very small letters. Now, a further enlightenment has been granted to him—the Spirit of judgment and of burning has come to deal with him— and now he writes the sentence, “I AM A SINNER,” in capitals so large that he needs the whole sky and all the sea, as well, to make the page on which to emblazon the terrible words. With an emphasis of which he used to know nothing, he now calls himself a sinner, for sins that he had forgotten come up before his memory. Now he sees that there is a great number of sins in any one sin, like so many Chinese boxes shut up, one inside another.

Moreover, things which he formerly did not recognize as sins, he now perceives to be among the deadliest of transgressions. He realizes that the imagination of evil is sin, that sin is any lack of conformity to the perfection of God. Now he seems as if he swarms with sins and yet, a short while ago he thought himself clean and pure in the sight of God! It is amazing what a ray of light will do—the sun suddenly shines into a room and the whole air seems full of innumerable specks of dust dancing up and down in the sunbeam! The light does not make the room full of dust—it only shows you what was always there—but which you did not see until the sun shone in. And if a beam of God’s true Light were to shine into some of your hearts, you would think very differently of yourselves from what you have ever done. I question whether any one among us could bear to see himself as God sees him.

I think it is highly probable that if any man were to see his own heart as it really is, he would go mad! It would be a sight too dreadful for an awakened conscience and a sensitive reason to endure. And when the Lord comes to any of His servants and reveals sin in its true character, unless there is a corresponding revelation of the cleansing blood, it puts a man into a very dreadful condition of mind. He says that his sins are more than the hairs of his head. He feels that that is a very poor comparison, so he says they are innumerable, they cannot be counted! In the process of trying to count them, we would have sinned, again, I know not how many times—sinned in our judgments about our sins—our thoughts about our sins would only increase the number of them!

Now, this is no morbid feeling of a perverted brain! It is a true and strictly accurate statement of a sad fact. It is not possible for any of us to think too badly of ourselves as we really are in the sight of God. Comfort does not come by trying to lessen our sense of sin—it comes in a much better and more effectual way—as I will presently try to show you.

This man, then, is troubled by the number of his sins. He also seems to be greatly perplexed by a sort of Omnipresence of sin, for he says, “Innumerable evils have compassed me about.” He looks that way and says, “Surely there is a gap, there, I have not sinned in that direction.” But no, there are sins in that quarter. He turns sharply round and he looks this way and says, “Perhaps I shall find a lane, there, through which I may escape. I hope I have not sinned in that way.” But when he steadily looks, he finds that he has sinned there, too. These innumerable evils have compassed him about. David said of his enemies, “They compassed me about like bees.” They were all around him. When a swarm of bees gets about a man, they are above, beneath, around, everywhere stinging, each one stinging—until he seems to be stung in every part of his body!

So, when conscience wakes up the whole hive of our sins, we find ourselves compassed about with innumerable evils—sins at the board and sins on the bed, sins at the task and sins in the pew, sins in the street and sins in the shop, sins on land and sins at sea, sins of body, soul, spirit, sins of the eyes, of the lips, of the hands, of the feet—sins everywhere, everywhere sins! It is a horrible discovery when it seems to a man as if sin had become well-near as Omnipresent with him as God is! It cannot be actually so, for sin cannot be everywhere as God is, but it is hard to say where sin is not when once conscience is awake to see it. Our whole life, from our first responsible moment, even until now, appears defiled. There are sins even in our holy things! Only half the heart is laid upon God’s altar and the sacramental bread, itself, is defiled as it passes into our mouth. Oh, it is dreadful when the heart is awakened to see that it is even so! “Innumerable evils have compassed me about.”

But that is not all. This man is so beset with sin that it seems to hold him in a terrible grip. Read this—“My iniquities have taken hold upon me,” as though they were so many griffins, or other monsters of the old fables. They come and fix their claws into him—they have taken hold upon him. Did any of you ever feel the grip of a single sin? I hope that you have, for you have never been rightly delivered from it if you have never felt its grasp. I once knew a young man who had not a true sense of sin. He believed himself to be a sinner, but he never had a real conviction of sin. He was a working-man, steady and upright, and he prided himself upon his sobriety and industry. One day, in some little frolic, he upset an oil can and, when his employer came in, and asked, “Who did that?” he said that he did not. No one ever found out who upset that oil can, but he knew that he did it. Knocking over that can was not, in itself, an act of criminality, but he felt mean and despicable because he had told a lie—and that lie fixed itself upon his heart, clawed at it and tore away at it so that he could not get away from its cruel clutches!

He came to the House of Prayer on the Lord’s-Day to try to get rid of this iniquity that had taken hold upon him, but it kept its hold month after month, hissing in his ear, “You have been a liar.” Nobody knew of it but himself, yet that one sin was quite enough to take hold upon him and to fix him with an awful grip. It was in this House of God that he was delivered from that sin through the precious blood of Christ and I said within myself, when I heard the whole story, “Well, I am glad that sin took hold of that young man, for there were many sins beside which he afterwards thought of and acknowledged with tears before his God—but they had all passed by unnoticed, they had never laid hold on him as that one lie had!

Let me tell you, Friend, if you have a number of sins which have once taken hold on you, you will be something like a stag when the whole pack of hounds has seized him and his neck and his flanks and every bone in him seem to feel the hounds’ teeth gnawing at them. I speak what I know—I have felt these dogs upon me—and I have had to cry to God for deliverance! And perhaps I am speaking to some soul that is in that condition tonight. It is no child’s play when this is the case. Here we have to deal with stern facts and it is only God, by some great act of Grace, who can set free a poor soul that is once beset in this way!

Thus, you see, he realizes the countless number of his sins, he recognizes the almost Omnipresence of his sins and he feels the terrible grip of his sins tearing at his conscience—judging him, condemning him, breathing curses into him! Oh, if you know this experience, you can follow me when I take you a little further along this dark, dreary road!

II. Here is, secondly, A SOUL BEWILDERED—“My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.” Do you hear that, “not able to look up”? That is the only hope that a man has when he is under a sense of sin—his one way of escape is by looking up! But the Psalmist says, “I am not able to look up.”

Does it not mean, first, that he did not dare to look his sins in the face? He felt so guilty, so self-condemned, that, as the judge, when he pronounces the death sentence, covers his head by putting on the black cap, so this culprit felt that he must hide his own face! He wants to have a handkerchief tied over his eyes, for he is shocked at the sight that meets his gaze. He dares not look up—that is, he cannot face his sin.

It means, also, that he is unable to excuse himself. He used to be as big a braggart as anybody. At one time, he could talk as glibly as anyone about there being no God and no Hell. But that kind of speech is all gone out of him now. The Lord can soon knock such folly as that out of a man! Just one prick of the conscience and the boaster is brought to his knees—and he does not try to look up for a single moment to justify or excuse himself. All he can do is to hang his head and murmur, “Guilty, guilty, guilty.” He knows, then, the meaning of Dr. Watts’ lines—

*“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath, I must confess You just in death.  
And, if my Soul were sent to Hell,  
Your righteous Law approves it well.”*  
Now, I may talk to you, thus, and you may not feel the force of what I am saying. But if God deals with you, it will be a different matter! You will then be brought into such a state of bewilderment that you will not be able to face your sin, or excuse yourself, or even dare to think of it, the mere thought of it will be too horrible for you!  
A man in this state of bewilderment dares not look up to read God’s promises. I come to him and I say, “Friend, do you not know that there is a Bible full of promises for such as you are? ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’” I put my hand on his shoulder and I say, “Now, look at that promise.” He cannot look up. We read, in the 107th Psalm, of some who were so ill that when the most dainty food was brought to them, they shook their heads, for they could not touch it— “Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.”  
Well, that is the condition of this man. “But,” you say, “my dear Fellow, look at this passage, ‘All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.’ ‘Whoever confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy.’” “Ah,” he says, “it is too late for me, it does not apply to me.” Now, this is all a mistake, you know—the Lord is willing to receive you, my dear Hearer, however horrible your offenses may have been! If you are up to your neck in blasphemy and iniquity, Christ can make you clean in a moment! He has such sovereign power that, with a word, He can forgive you. Yes, and with a word, He can change your nature and make a saint out of a sinner, an angel out of a very human devil—such power does Christ possess to save the vilest of the vile! So we say to the poor man, “Dear Friend, look up! Look up at God’s promises.” Perhaps we try what effect

 the testimony of others will have upon him. We stand in front of him and we say, “Look at us for a moment.” There was a dear Brother who prayed at the Prayer Meeting before the service— no doubt he is here somewhere—“Lord, save the big sinners, for,” he said, “Lord, since you have saved me, I believe that you can save anybody.” Now, that was good pleading, and I can say the same. There are many here who would say to you, “We looked unto Christ and were lightened. We came with all our sin heavy upon us and we did but look to Jesus, and we found peace, rest, new hearts and changed lives! What He has done for us, He can do for you, for He has shown forth in some of us, as he did in Paul, all long-suffering for a pattern to all others who will believe in Him unto life everlasting.”  
Still, the man cannot look up. His sins have so bewildered him, his sense of guilt has so muddled his poor thoughts that he dares not look up—and yet he ought to! If I were suffering from a certain disease and a number of persons came to me and said, “We were afflicted exactly as you now are, but we went to Dr. So-and-So, and he cured us almost at once,” I think that I would go to that doctor and I would try the medicine that had healed others! Oh, I wish that some of you would try my Savior! You young people—would God that you would try Him in your youth! You older ones, I pray that you may be led to Jesus, now, though your sin rises like a mountain, for He is able to forgive and to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him!  
But this poor soul cannot yet look up, so we put our hand upon him, again, and we say, “But, dear Heart, if you will not look to the promises in the Bible and you will not look to us who are specimens of what Divine Grace can do, yet do look to Jesus on the Cross. Have you ever heard the story of how He lived and how He died? Do you not know the meaning of those blessed wounds of His? He was the Son of God and He suffered all this for sinful men. He was pure, holy and innocent, yet He died, ‘the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.’ Must there not be great merit in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Look up! Look to Him! Look up to Jesus on the Cross.”—  
*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee!  
Then look, sinner—look unto Him and be saved— Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”*  
But it is no use for us to talk to him—his sins have taken hold upon him so that he cannot look up.  
So we try again and we bid him look up to Jesus on the Throne. We say, “Do you not know that Jesus has risen from the dead? He has gone up into Heaven and He is at the right hand of God, making intercession for the transgressors. The business of Christ in Heaven is to plead for sinners. Oh, how I wish that you would look up to Him! Do it!” Thus we plead, but our pleading is not sufficient. Spirit of God, break these poor creatures away from their infatuation and help them, now, to just look up to the living Savior who is seated at the right hand of God, pleading for the guilty, for such as they are! Dear Hearers, look to Jesus! Only trust Him! A look will do it. Look, look now! In God’s name, I command you to look! In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I do not merely advise, but, speaking by His authority, I bid you look and live! May He set His seal to that command, as He did when Ezekiel bade the dry bones live and they did! But yet I know that, apart from the Eternal Spirit, the poor soul will not look up, though looking up is the only way to safety. III. Follow me for just a few minutes more while I notice, in the third place, that here is A SOUL FAINTING—“My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me.”  
Why, that is the man who used to come in here as big as anybody, and now he cries, “My heart fails me.” You used to sing above all the rest, did you not? And you despised those poor weeping ones. But now your lament is, “My heart fails me.” When a man’s heart fails him, it is as when the standard-bearer of an army faints—everything gets in disarray. “My heart fails me.” You have come to a fainting condition and when the heart fails, death is approaching. You feel as if you must die, you are so utterly faint. You dare not hope. You have no energy—what can you do? “To will,” you say, “is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.” You are the man who used to think that you could believe whenever you liked and jump into Sovereign Grace whenever you pleased! You do not find it so easy, now, do you?  
“My heart fails me.” This is the language of one in whom fear is working. Why, there is poor Mercy! Poor Mercy! You, as a young girl, said, “I will not come to Jesus yet. I can come to Him whenever I like.” And now you are fainting outside the gate because the big dog barks at you and your heart fails you! Oh, lie not there to die, dear swooning one! Jesus Christ will come to you in all your faintness. Is it not written, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”? “When we were yet without strength.” Now you see what there is in yourself, do you not? Nothing at all! Your very heart fails you and if Sovereign Grace does not interpose, you are lost, you know you are!  
“Yes,” you say, “that is quite true, I am lost.” I am so glad that you confess this, for your confession proves that you are the one whom God has chosen unto eternal life from before the foundation of the world! You are the sort for whom Jesus died when He poured out His heart’s blood. You are already called, by His Grace, to come to Him, for He said, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” You are the very character whom He describes as being the objects of His love! Come to Him, just as you are, and cast yourselves upon Him. Fainting Heart, do not wait till you are revived, but faint on the bosom of Jesus! Failing Heart, do not wait till you grow strong again, but come and confess your failure, your spiritual bankruptcy at Christ’s feet! Remember, there are none who are declared to be clear of all obligations but those who are bankrupts before the Lord, even as Joseph Hart sings— *“‘Tis perfect poverty alone  
That sets the soul at large.  
While we can call one mite our own,  
We have no full discharge.”*  
“But I have no good feelings,” says one. I am glad of it! Come to Christ for them. “But I cannot repent as I would, or believe as I would.” Then listen to Hart again—  
*“True belief and true repentance,  
Every Grace that brings you nigh,  
Without money,  
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”*  
He needs nothing from you but that you will agree to let Him be everything to you! “Free Grace and dying love”—I delight to ring those charming bells! Oh, that every ear would welcome their blessed music! Poor fainting Heart, hear the gladsome tidings of Free Grace and dying love, and catch at the message and rejoice in Christ tonight! The Lord grant that it may be so!  
IV. I finish, as the time has nearly gone, by introducing this man to you once more. We have had a soul beset, a soul bewildered and a soul fainting. But here is A SOUL PLEADING—“My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up...My heart fails me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.”  
“Oh!” says one, “I would plead with God, but I do not know how to go to Him.” Do you not? Did you ever teach your girl how to come to you when she needed anything? She comes and she says, “Father, I need soand-so.” You do not send her to school, do you, and pay so much a week to teach her that art? No, she knows it naturally. If there is anything to be got out of a father, trust a boy or a girl for knowing how to do it! You smile. Let that smile go a little deeper. Smile again, if you like, that it may go right down deep. It is in this way that you should deal with God— just as your children, being evil, know how to ask good gifts of their father, so you should know how to ask good gifts of your Father who is in Heaven! And the more childlike you can be in your praying, the better. If your boy were to come in, tomorrow morning, and take out a prayer book and proceed to read the collect for the day in the same kind of tone that you can hear it read in certain churches, and then say in the same tone, “Father, I know that you are generous and noble-hearted—be pleased to give me the valuable present of five shillings,” you would cry out, “Boy, hold your tongue, I cannot stand such nonsense!” But if he says, respectfully but earnestly, “Father, I shall be very grateful if you will give me five shillings, for there is such and such a thing that I want to buy,” you say at once, “Yes, my boy, certainly. Here is the money.” That is to say, if you have it and consider it wise. I do not think that God is to be approached in a dignified, stupid way, with intoned prayers and what Africans call, “palaver.”  
Come to God in the simplest way possible and tell Him all that is in your heart. Pour out your desires before Him, expecting that He will hear you and answer you—and go your way rejoicing that you have such a God to go to! The easiest thing in the world to a child of God should be to talk to his Father. He should not feel as if he had to put his best coat on in order to approach the Lord. Let him stand out in the yard, in his shirtsleeves, and pray! Why not? Wherever you are, if you should wake up in the middle of the night, begin to pray! You would not think of going to see a person in your shirtsleeves, but your boy may come to you like that whenever he pleases.  
A person said to me, some time ago, “Would you mind telling me what to say when I pray? “I answered, Say what you feel. Ask God for what you desire.” “But,” she said, “I am such a poor ignorant woman that I would like you to tell me the words to say.” Then I thought of the passage in Hosea, “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.” Thus, the very words were put into the suppliants’ mouths and, in our text, David does, as it were, make a prayer that is suitable for many of you. May the Lord put it into your mouths and hearts!

I will only briefly call attention to the drift of the prayer and, first, it is a prayer distinctly to God. This poor bewildered heart does not look to itself, or to a priest, or to a sacrament—it turns to God and to God, alone, and says, “Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me! O Jehovah, make haste to help me.” Your only hope is in your God! Salvation must come from God alone. You know how I pictured this matter some little time ago, about the baby picked up in the street. There is somebody who is going to tell us what that baby needs. He needs some milk and he needs to be washed. And he needs some clothes. He also needs nursing and he needs soothing to sleep. He needs—well, we can go on for a week and hardly tell all that he needs. But I will put in one word what the baby needs, and that is, his mother. And you, poor Soul, you need—you need—you need— you need so many, many things that I will not stay to mention them! I will put them into one word—you need your God! Nobody but He who made you can ever new-make you! Therefore, as you need remaking, recreating, you need your God! Oh, poor Prodigal, I know you need a new pair of boots and a new pair of trousers, and a good dinner and a great many other things—but most of all, you need to go home to your Father! And if you go home to your Father, then you will get all the other things that you need! Cry unto God, then, you who have never prayed before! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, make you cry to your God in Christ Jesus! And then, do you notice the style of the prayer in our text? “Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me.” It is an appeal to the good pleasure of God. There is no arguing of merit, there is no plea but that of God’s good pleasure! He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy—and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion! Divine Sovereignty is not to be denied! No man has any right to God’s Grace—if it is given to anyone, it is by the free favor of God—as He pleases and to whom He pleases! Shall He not do as He wills with His own? But you, as a suppliant, must take this lowly ground—“Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me, for Your mercy’s sake, for Your goodness’ sake! Universal Ruler as You are and able to save whom You will, for the rights of life and death are in the hands of the King of Kings, be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me!” That is the way to plead with God.  
And then you may, if you like, use that last sentence—“Make haste, O Jehovah, to deliver me!” You may plead urgency—you may say, “Lord, if You do not help me, soon, I shall die. I am driven to such distress by my sin that if You do not hear me, soon, it will be too late! Innumerable evils have compassed me about, so that I am not able to look up. I am driven to such dire distress that my case is urgent; O Lord, help me now!” Oh, how I wish that such a prayer as that might go up from many and many a heart in this audience! You are not truly awakened to a sense of your lost condition if you want to be saved tomorrow. If you are really convicted of sin, your prayer will be, “Make haste, O Lord, to deliver me.” I pray that you may be brought to that point, tonight, so that you may not dare to go to bed till you have found your God, or, if you must go to bed, may not be able to sleep till you have found your Savior and put your trust in Him!  
Dear Friends, may God save every one of you! Oh, how I would pour out my very soul in pleading with you if I thought that longer talk would lead you to Christ! But words are only air and wind. Eternal Spirit, Master of all hearts, come and deal with men and lead them to Jesus, now! And unto the Triune Jehovah shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 40.**

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.  
If I were to read this Psalm all through as referring to Christ and to Christ, only, I would be correct in so doing, but still, there is such a unity between Christ and those who compose His mystical body that what is true of the Head is true of the members. What is true of the Vine is true of the branches. What is true of Christ is true of those who are in Him. Therefore, this Psalm relates to David as well as to “great David’s greater Son,” and it also concerns everyone who is of the royal seed, every true Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the Psalm begins—

1. I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. “I waited.” “Do not beggars wait long at a fellow creature’s door for some pitiful alms, and should not I be content to linger at Mercy’s gate for such great gifts as I am craving? “I waited patiently.” Well may we tarry in patience till Jehovah’s time to help since we know that, “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” And if He is full of pity, we can well afford to be patient. “I waited patiently for Jehovah.” Those who have been most mighty in prayer have sometimes had to wait for the answers to their supplications. Do not expect the Lord to hear you today or tomorrow. He may hear you before you speak, according to His promise, “Before they call, I will answer,” but He may, for the trial of your faith, make you wait. Are you able to wait? Then you are certain to receive a great blessing! “I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me,” bowed down out of Heaven, inclined unto me, stooped to me, thought well of me and also of my prayer, “and heard my cry.”

2. He brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. This is a wonderful song, full of rapturous joy. You know how Orientals were accustomed to cast their prisoners into pits—and these pits were often horribly deep, dark and damp—and the mud at the bottom would be such that a man would sink in it. David sings of the Lord, “He brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.” What a wonderful bringing up was this and, as God never does anything by halves, He did not let His servant slip back, again, for David added, “and set my feet upon a rock.” “He set my feet.” When God sets a man’s feet, those feet are well set! There is no sliding, no slipping! The Lord set David’s feet upon a rock and, more than that, established his goings—made them firm, so that when he stirred he did not stumble.

3. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Sing, then, Believer! You groaned often enough in the pit! Sing, now that you are on the rock! You were desolate enough in the dungeon. Sound aloud your grateful thanksgivings, now that your goings are established!

3. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. There you have a picture of a sinner’s conversion and its effects. The man sees the Lord’s goodness to the child of God in distress. He fears—that is, he stands in awe of the great God—and then he, also, believes! He trusts in the Lord. One saint makes many! One child of God brought up out of the horrible pit leads to the bringing up of a great many others in the same way.

4. Blessed is that man that makes the LORD his trust and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. If you trust in God, you will have no reverence for the proud, nor for those who turn aside from God’s Word and teach falsehood. If you really fear God, you will have no fear of men.

5. Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto You: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. The child of God, reviewing the Lord’s great goodness, feels that he can never count the mercies of God to Him and, as to telling them out, that can never be! It will be, perhaps, a part of our eternal employment to tell angels, principalities and powers in the heavenly places, the story of the loving kindness of the Lord which we have experienced here below. If we had no troubles, we would have nothing to tell, but now that we are led in a strange way, and into very difficult places, we can write another page in our diary which will be worth reading in those days when fictions shall all have been consumed in the fire, but the great facts in the lives of the Lord’s people shall make God to be admired in His saints forever and ever!

6-8. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears have You opened: burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Your will, O my God: yes, Your Law is within my heart. Spoke I not truly when I said that the Christ of God is here? To whom is this passage one hundredth part so applicable as to the Lord Jesus, Himself? Does not Paul dwell upon this passage as teaching the putting aside of the old Covenant Law and the bringing in of something better, even the obedience of Christ, our Savior? However, this evening, I wish to read the Scripture in reference to the saints—the Lord’s own people. I trust that many of us, seeing that God does not delight in ritualistic performances, or in the externals of religion as much as He does in the obedience of the heart, can come to Him and declare with David, “I delight to do Your will, O my God.” Beloved Friends, you are not what you ought to be! You are not what you need to be. You are not what you shall be, but, tell me, are you ever happier than when you are consciously doing the will of God? Do you not find misery in sin and delight in holiness? If you can say that it is so with you, then you are bound for the Kingdom—you are on the way to complete victory over sin! Be of good cheer, He who has worked in you this same thing, to delight to do the will of God, will grant you Grace to do it! He will shortly bruise Satan under your feet and your inbred corruptions shall yet be uprooted by the Spirit of His Grace.

9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, You know. This is what Jesus can say. He was the Prince of open-air preachers—the Great Itinerant, the President of the College of all preachers of the Gospel—and I trust that many of us here can also say that, according to our ability and opportunity, we have tried to tell of Christ to those round about us.

10. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your truth from the great congregation. If any of you have done so. If there has been a sinful reticence about the things of God. If, called to preach, you have not preached the full Gospel of God’s Grace, the Lord forgive you and bring you out into a clear manifestation of what He has written within your hearts! We cannot tell what we do not know and we ought not to try to do so—but what was engraved in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are bound to tell to others. This gas was lighted that it might shine and you received the Divine Fire that you might shine to the Glory of God. It may be that, in some dark hour, it shall afford you at least a little comfort to be able to say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation.” You may be able to use it as an argument in prayer, as the Psalmist does—“I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your truth from the great congregation, therefore,”—

11. Withhold not You Your tender mercies from me, O LORD: let Your loving kindness and Your truth continually preserve me. Depend upon it, God will take care of us if we take care of His Truth. If we, from cowardly reasons, keep back any part of the Gospel, God may leave us to defend ourselves. But if we conceal nothing that He has revealed to us. If we are faithful to the Truth committed to our charge—that Truth will, itself, preserve us—and we shall know more and more of the loving kindness of the Lord. But what a sad verse is the next one if it describes the experience of any of you who have known the Lord!

12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: my iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me. If that is the condition of any whom I am addressing, be comforted by the remembrance that another has been along that dark road where you are now found! Follow his example in praying to the Lord to deliver You—

13. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. Thus did David cry unto the Lord “out of the depths.” Imitate his example if you are in similar circumstances. Say with good John Ryland—

*“Out of the depths of doubt and fear,  
Depths of despair and grief,  
I cry; my voice, O Jesus, hear,  
And come to my relief!”*

14-16. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it. Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You. Here is comfort for all poor trembling seekers—they are only seekers, but let us thank God that they are seekers, and let us say with the Psalmist, “Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You.” All true Christians, those who have found Christ, are still seekers, for, after finding Christ, they inflame their souls to seek Him more and more! So that our prayer, also, is, “Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You”

16, 17. Let such as love Your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me: You are my Help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. The Lord bless to us the reading of this precious portion of His Word, for His name’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—733, 587, 607. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3040 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HAPPY BEGGAR  
NO. 3040

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1907.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me.” Psalm 40:17.

THERE is no crime and there is no credit in being poor. Everything depends upon the occasion of the poverty. Some men are poor and are greatly to be pitied, for their poverty has come upon them without any fault of their own. God has been pleased to lay this burden upon them and, therefore, they may expect to experience Divine help and ought to be tenderly considered by their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Occasionally poverty has been the result of integrity or religion—and here the poor man is to be admired and honored. At the same time, it will be observed by all who watch with an impartial eye that very much of the poverty about us is the direct result of idleness, intemperance, improvidence and sin. There would probably not be one-tenth of the poverty there now is upon the face of the earth if the drinking shops were less frequented, if debauchery were less common, if idleness were banished and extravagance abandoned. Lovers of pleasure, (alas, that such a word should be so degraded), are great impoverishers of themselves. It is clear that there is not, of necessity, either vice or virtue in being poor and a man’s poverty cannot be judged of by itself—its causes and circumstances must be taken into consideration.

The poverty, however, to which the text relates is a poverty which I desire to cultivate in my own heart! And it is one upon which our Divine Lord has pronounced a blessing. When He sat down upon the mountain and poured forth His famous series of beatitudes, He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” The poor in pocket may be blessed, or may not be blessed, as the case may be, but the poor in spirit are always blessed and we have Christ’s authority for so saying! Theirs is a poverty which is better than wealth! In fact, it is a poverty which indicates the possession of the truest of all riches.

It was mainly in this sense that David said, “I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me.” Certainly, in any other sense, there are vast multitudes who are “poor and needy,” but who neither think upon God, nor rejoice that God thinks upon them. Those who are spiritually “poor and needy”—the sacred beggars at Mercy’s gate, the elect mendicants of Heaven—these are the people who may say, with humble confidence, as David did, “Yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

Two things are noteworthy in the text. First, here, is a frank acknowledgment—“I am poor and needy.” But, secondly, here is a comfortable confidence—“yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

I. First, here is A FRANK ACKNOWLEDGMENT.  
Some men do not object to confess that they are poor in worldly goods. In fact, they are rather fond of pleading poverty when there is a collection coming, or a subscription list in dangerous proximity. Men have even gloried in history in the name of, “The Beggars.” And, “silver and gold have I none,” has been exalted into a boast! But spiritually, it is little less than a miracle to bring men to feel, first, and then to confess their poverty, for naked, and poor, and miserable as we are by nature, we are all apt enough to say, “I am rich and increased with goods.” We cannot dig and to beg we are ashamed. If we did not inherit a penny of virtue from father Adam, we certainly inherited plenty of pride! Poor and proud we all are. We will not, if we can help it, take our seat in the lowest room, though that is our proper place. Grace alone can bring us to see ourselves in the glass of truth. To have nothing is natural to us, but to confess that we have nothing is more than we will come to until the Holy Spirit has worked self-abasement in us. The emptiers must come up upon us for, though naturally as empty as Hagar’s bottle, yet we boast ourselves to be as full as a fountain! The Spirit of God must take from us our goodly Babylonian garment, or we shall never consent to be dressed in the fair white linen of the righteousness of saints. What Paul flung away as dross and dung, we poor rag-collectors prize and hoard up as long as ever we can!  
“I am poor and needy,” is a confession which only He who is the Truth of God can teach us to offer. If you are saying it, my Brother, you need not be afraid that you are under a desponding delusion. But, true as it is, and plain to every Grace-taught child of God, yet only Grace will make a man confess the obnoxious fact. It is not in public that we can or should confess our soul-poverty as we do in the chamber when we bow our knees secretly before God. But many of us, in secret, have been compelled, with many tears and sighs, to feel as well as to say, “I am poor and needy.” We have searched through and through, looked from the top to the bottom of our humanity and we could not find a single piece of good money in the house, so greatly reduced were we. We had not a shekel of merit, nor a penny of hope in ourselves! And we were constrained to fall flat on our face before God and confess our inability to meet His claims. And we found no comfort till, by faith, we learned to present our Lord Jesus as the Surety for His servants for good. We could not pay even the poorest composition and, therefore, cast ourselves upon the forbearance of God.  
The Psalmist is doubly humble, for first he says he is poor, and then adds that he is needy—and there is a difference between these two things.  
He acknowledges that he is poor, and you and I, if taught of God, will say the same. We may well be poor, for we came of a poor father. Our father Adam had at first a great estate, but he soon lost it. He violated the trust on which he held his property and he was cast out of the inheritance and turned adrift into the world to earn his bread as a daylaborer by tilling the ground from which he was taken. His eldest son was a vagabond. The first-born of our race was a convict on parole. If any suppose that we have inherited some good thing by natural descent, they go very contrary to what David tells us when he declares, “Behold, I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Our first parents were utter bankrupts. They left us nothing but a heritage of old debts and a propensity to accumulate yet more personal obligations. Well may we be poor who come into this world heirs of wrath with a decayed estate and tainted blood!

Moreover, since the time when we came into the world, we have followed a very miserable trade. I recollect when I was a spinner and weaver of the poorest sort. I dreamed that I would be able, by my own spinning, to make a garment to cover myself with. This was the trade of father Adam and mother Eve when they first lost their innocence—they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. It is a very laborious business and has worn out the lives of many with bitter bondage. But its worst feature is that the Lord has declared concerning all who followed this self-righteous craft, “their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.” Even those who have best attired themselves and have, for awhile gloried in their fair apparel, have had to feel the Truth of the Lord’s words by Isaiah, “I will take away the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles…and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils… and instead of a girdle there shall be a rent; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth.” Vain is it to spend our labor on that which profits not, yet to this business are we early put apprentice and we work at it with mighty pains!  
We are miserably poor, for we have become bankrupt even in our wretched trade. Some of us had, once, a comfortable competence laid by in the Bank of Self-Righteousness, and we meant to draw it out when we came to die—and thought we should even have a little spending money for our old age out of the interest which was paid us in the coin of SelfConceit. But the Bank failed long ago and now we have not so much as a farthing of our own merits left us, no, nor a chance of ever having any! And, what is worse, we are deeply in debt and we have “nothing to pay.” Instead of having anything like a balance on our account, we are insolvent debtors to the Justice of God, without a single farthing of assets! And unless we are freely forgiven, we must be cast into prison and lie there forever. Job described us well when he said, “for want and famine they are solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. They have no covering in the cold…and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.”  
See, then, what poverty-stricken creatures we are—of a poor stock, following a starving trade and made bankrupts even in that!  
What is still worse, poor human nature has no power left to retrieve itself. As long as a man has a stout pair of arms, he is not without a hope of rising from the dunghill. We once thought that we were equal to any task, but now Paul’s description suits us well—“without strength.” Our Lord’s words, too, are deeply true, “Without Me you can do nothing.” Unable so much as to think a good thought, or to lift our hearts heavenward of ourselves—this is poverty, indeed! We are wrecked and the whole vessel has gone to pieces. We have destroyed ourselves. Ah, my fellow man, may God make you feel this! Many know nothing about it and would be very angry if we were to say that this is their condition— and yet this is the condition of every man born into the world until the Spirit of God brings him into communion with Christ and endows him with the riches of the Covenant of Grace!  
“I am poor,” this is my confession! Is it yours? Is it a confession extorted from you by a clear perception that it is really so? I will recommend you, if it is so, to take to a trade which is the best trade in the world to live by—not for the body, but for the soul—and that is the profession of a beggar, certainly a suitable one for you and me! I took to it long ago and began to beg for mercy from God. I have been constrained to continue begging every day of the same kind Benefactor and I hope to die begging! Many of the saints have grown rich upon this holy mendicancy—they have indeed spoken of being daily loaded with benefits! The noblest of the peers of Heaven were here below daily pensioners upon God’s love—they were fed, and clothed, and housed by the charity of the Lord—and they delighted to have it so. How clear is it from all this that none of us can have anything of which to glory! Boasting is excluded, for, let the beggar get what he may, he is but a beggar still—and the child of God, notwithstanding the bounty of his Heavenly Father, is still in himself a penniless vagrant!  
The Psalmist also said, “I am needy.” There are poor people who are not needy. Diogenes was very poor, but he was not needy. He had made up his mind that he would not need anything, so he lived in a tub. He had but one drinking vessel and when he saw a boy drinking out of his hand, he broke his vessel, for he said he would not possess anything superfluous. He was poor enough, but he was not needy, for when Alexander said, “What can I do for you?” he answered, “Stand out of my sunshine.” So it is clear that a man may be very poor and yet he may not be burdened with need. But David was conscious of extreme need—and in this many of us can join him.  
Brothers and Sisters, we confess that we need ten thousand things, in fact, we need everything. By nature, the sinner needs healing, for he is sick unto death. He needs washing, for he is foul with sin. He needs clothing, for he is naked before God. He needs preserving after he is saved, he needs the Bread of Heaven, he needs the water out of the Rock. He is all needs and nothing but needs. Not one thing that his soul needs can he, of himself, supply. He needs to be kept from even the most common sins. He needs to be instructed as to even the first elements of the faith. He needs to be taught to walk in the ways of God’s most plain commandments. Our needs are so great that they comprise the whole range of Covenant supplies and all the fullness treasured up in Christ Jesus.  
We are needy in every condition. We are soldiers and we need that Grace should find us both shield and sword. We are pilgrims and we need that love should give us both a staff and a Guide. We are sailing over the sea of life and we need that the wind of the Spirit shall fill our sails and that Christ shall be our Pilot. There is no figure under which the Christian life can be represented in which our need is not a very conspicuous part of the image! In all aspects we are poor and needy.  
We are needy in every exercise. If we are called to preach, we have to cry, “Lord, open You my lips.” If we pray, we are needy at the Mercy Seat, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. If we go out into the world to wrestle with temptation, we need supernatural help lest we fall before the enemy! If we are alone in meditation, we need the Holy Spirit to quicken our devotion. We are needy in suffering and laboring, in watching and in fighting. Every spiritual engagement does but discover another phase of our need!  
And, Brothers and Sisters, we are needy at all times. We never wake up in the morning but we need strength for the day—and we never go to bed at night without needing Grace to cover the sins of the past. We are needy at all periods of life. When we begin with Christ, in our young days, we need to be kept from the follies and passions which are so strong in giddy youth. In middle age our needs are still greater, lest the cares of this world should eat as does a canker. And in old age we are still needy and need Preserving Grace to bear us onward to the end. So needy are we that even in lying down to die, we need our last bed to be made for us by Mercy and our last hour to be cheered by Grace. So needy are we that if Jesus had not prepared a mansion for us in eternity, we would have no place to dwell! We are as full of needs as the sea is full of water! We cannot stay at home and say, “I have much goods laid up for many years,” for the wolf is at the door and we must go out a-begging again! Our clamorous necessities follow us every moment and dog our heels in every place. We must take the two adjectives and keep them close together in our confession—“I am poor and needy.”  
II. The second part of the subject is much more cheering. It is A COMFORTABLE CONFIDENCE—“yet the Lord thinks upon me.”  
A poor man is always pleased to remember that he has a rich relative, especially if that rich relative is very thoughtful towards him, finds out his distress and cheerfully and abundantly relieves his needs!  
Observe that the Christian does not find comfort in himself. “I am poor and needy.” That is the top and bottom of my case. I have searched myself through and through and have found in my flesh no good thing. Notwithstanding the Grace which the Believer possesses and the hope which he cherishes, he still sees a sentence of death written upon the creature and he cries, “I am poor and needy.” His joy is found in Another! He looks away from self to the consolations which the eternal purpose has prepared for him.

Note well who it is that gives the comfort—“The Lord thinks upon me.” By the term, “the Lord,” we are accustomed to understand the glorious Trinity. “The Lord thinks upon me,” i.e., Jehovah, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. O beloved Believer in Christ, if you have rested in Jesus, then the Father thinks upon you! Your person was in His thoughts—

*“Long before the sun’s refulgent ray*

*Primeval shades of darkness drove.”*  
He regarded you with thoughts of boundless love before He had fashioned the world, or wrapped it up in swaddling bands of ocean and of clouds. Eternal thoughts of love went forth of old towards all the chosen—and these have never changed. Not for a single instant has the Father ever ceased to love His people! As our Lord said to His disciples, “The Father Himself loves you.” Never has He grown cold in His affections towards you, O poor and needy one! He has seen you in His Son. He has loved you in the Beloved. He has seen you—

*“Not as you stood in Adam’s fall,  
When sin and ruin covered all,  
But as you’ll stand another day,  
Brighter than sun’s meridian ray.”*

He saw you in the glass of His eternal purpose, saw you as united to His dear Son and, therefore, looked upon you with eyes of complacency. He thought upon you and He still thinks upon you. When the Father thinks of His children, He thinks of you. When the great Judge of All thinks of the justified ones, He thinks of you. O Christian, can you grasp the thought? The Eternal Father thinks of

 you! You are so inconsiderable that if the mind of God were not Infinite, it would not be possible that He should remember your existence! Yet He thinks upon you! How precious ought His thoughts be to you! The sum of them is great, let your gratitude for them be great, too!

Forget not that the great Son of God, to whom you owe your hope, also thinks of you. It was for you that He entered into suretyship engagements before the earth was. It was for you, O heir of Heaven, that He took upon Himself a mortal body and was born of the virgin! It was for you that He lived those 30 years of immaculate purity that He might weave for you a robe of spotless righteousness! For you poured down His bloody sweat in the garden! He thought of you, He prayed for you in Gethsemane. For you were the flagellations in Pilate’s Hall, the mockeries before Herod and the blasphemous accusations at the judgment seat of Caiaphas! For you the nails, the spear, the vinegar and the, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?” Jesus thought of you and died for you with as direct an aim for your salvation as though there had not been another soul to be redeemed by His blood! And now, though He reigns exalted high, and you are “poor and needy,” yet He still thinks upon you! The Glory of His present condition does not distract His thoughts from His Beloved. He is lovingly thoughtful of you. When He stands up to intercede, your name glitters on His priestly breastplate with the names of the rest of the chosen. He thinks of you when He prepares mansions for those whom His Father has blessed. He looks forward to the time when He shall gather together in one all things in Heaven and in earth that are in Him—and He counts you among them. Christian, will not this Truth of God comfort you—that the Son of God is constantly thinking upon you?

We must not forgot the love of the Spirit, to whom we are so wondrously indebted. He cannot do otherwise than think upon us, for He dwells in us and shall be with us. As He dwells in us, He cannot be unmindful of us. It is His office to be the Comforter, to help our infirmities, to make intercession for us according to the will of God. So let us take the three thoughts and bind them together. “I am poor and needy, but I have a part in the thoughts of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” What fuller cause for comfort could we conceive?

We have answered the question “who?” Let us now turn to “what?” “The Lord thinks upon me.” He does not say, “The Lord will uphold me, provide for me, defend me.” The declaration that He “thinks upon me” is quite enough. “Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things,” says our Lord, as if it was quite clear that for our Heavenly Father to know, is for Him to act. We poor short-sighted and short-armed creatures often know the needs of others and would help if we could, but we are quite unable—it is never so with God—His thoughts always ripen into deeds. Perhaps, O tried Believer, you have been thinking a great deal about yourself of late—about your many trials—so that you lie awake nights, mourning over your heavy cares! “Alas,” you think, “I have no one to advise me and sympathize with me.” Let this text come to you as a whisper and you paraphrase it into a soliloquy, “I am poor and needy, this is true, and I cannot plan a method for supplying my needs, but a mightier mind than mine is thinking of me—the Infinite Jehovah thinks of me! He sees my circumstances, He knows the bitterness of my heart, He knows me altogether and His consideration of me is wise, tender and gracious. His thoughts are wisdom itself! When I think, it is a poor, little, weak, empty head that is thinking! But when God thinks, the gigantic mind which framed the universe is thinking of me!”

Have you ever attained to the idea of what the thoughts of God must be? That pure Spirit who cannot make mistakes, who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind, thinks upon us! He does not act without deliberation, does not come to our help in inconsiderate haste, does not do as we do with a poor man when we throw him a penny to be rid of him, but He thoughtfully deals with us. “Blessed is he that considers the poor,” says the Psalmist. Those who take up the case of the poor, weigh it and remember it, are blessed! That is what the Lord does for us—“yet the Lord thinks upon me.” He considers my case, judges when, and how, and after what sort it will be most fitting to grant me relief. “The Lord thinks upon me.” Beloved, the shadow of this thought seems to me like the wells of Elim, full of refreshment, with the seventy palm trees yielding their ripe fruit! You may sit down here and drink to your full—and then go on your way rejoicing! However poor and needy you may be, the Lord thinks at the present moment upon you.

We have spoken upon who and what—now we will answer the inquiry, How do we know that the Lord thinks upon us? “Oh,” say the ungodly,

“how do you know?” They are very apt to put posing questions to us. We talk of what we know experimentally and again they cry, “How do you know?” I will tell you how we know that God thinks upon us. We knew it, first of all, when we had a view of the Redeemer by faith, when we saw the Lord Jesus Christ hanging upon a tree for us, and made a curse for us. We saw that He so exactly suited and fitted our case that we were clear that the Lord must have thought and well considered it. If a man were to send you a sum of money tomorrow, exactly the amount you owe, you would be sure that someone had been thinking of you. And when we see the Savior, we are compelled to cry out, “O Lord, You have given me the very Savior I needed! This is the hope which my despairing soul required and this the anchorage which my tempest-tossed boat was seeking!” The Lord must have thought upon us, or He would not have provided so suitable a salvation for us.

We learn anew that the Lord thinks upon us when we go up to the House of God. I have heard many of you say, “We listen to the preacher and he seems to know what we have been saying on the road. The Word comes so home to our case that surely God has been hearing our very thoughts and putting into the mind of the preacher a word in season for us.” Does not this show how the preacher’s Master has been thinking of you? Then sit down and open the Bible, and you will frequently feel the words to be as much adapted to your case as if the Lord had written them for you alone! If, instead of the Bible having been penned many hundreds of years ago, it were actually written piecemeal to suit the circumstances of the Lord’s people as they occur, it could not have been written more to the point! Our eyes have filled with tears when we have read such words as these, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”— “Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help you, says the Lord.”—“He shall deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you.”—“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” And such like which we could quote by the hundreds! We feel that the Lord must have thought about us, or He would not have sent us such promises.

Best of all, when we sit quietly at the feet of Jesus, in the power of the Spirit of God, in solemn silence of the mind, then we know that the Lord thinks upon us, for thoughts come bubbling up, one after another, delightful thoughts, such as only the Holy Spirit could inspire. Then the things of Christ are sweetly taken by the Spirit and laid home to our hearts. We become calm and still, though before we were distracted. A sweet savor fills our heart like ointment poured forth—it diffuses its fragrance through every secret corner of our spirit. Sometimes our soul has seemed as though it were a peal of bells and every power and passion has been set a-ringing with holy joy because the Lord was there! Our whole nature has been as a harp well-tuned, and the Spirit has laid His fingers among the strings and filled our entire manhood with music. When we have been the subjects of these marvelous influences and gracious operations, if any had said to us that the Lord did not think of us, we would have told them that they lied, even to their face, for the Lord had not only thought of us, but spoken to us and enabled us, by His Grace, to receive His thoughts and to speak again to Him!

The Lord not think of us? Why, we have proof upon proof that He does! He has very remarkably thought upon us in Providence. Should some of us relate the memorable interpositions of Providence on our behalf, they would not be believed—but they are facts for all that. William Huntington wrote a book called, “The Bank of Faith,” which contains in it a great many very strange things, no doubt. But I believe hundreds and thousands of God’s tried people could write “Banks of Faith” too, if it came to that, for God has often appeared for His saints in such a way that if the mercy sent had been stamped with the seal of God, visible to their eyes, they could not have been more sure of its coming from Him than they were when they received it! Yes, answered prayers, applied promises, sweet communing and blessed deliverances in Providence all go to make us feel safe in saying, “yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

We will close our meditation upon this text when we have remarked that those who are not poor and needy may well envy in their hearts those who are. You who have abounding riches, who feel yourselves to be wealthy in goodness. You who feel as if you could afford to look down upon most people in the world. You who are so respectable, decorous and deserving, I beseech you to note well that the text does not say a word about you! You are not poor, and you are not needy, and you do not think upon the Lord—and the Lord does not think upon you. Why should He? “The whole have no need of a physician.” Christ did not come to call you. He said He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Shall I tell you that it is your worst calamity that you have such an elevated idea of your own goodness? Whereas you say, “We see,” you are blindest of all! And whereas you boast that you are righteous, there is in that self-righteousness of yours the very worst form of sin, for there is no sin that can be greater than that of setting up your own works in competition with the righteousness of Christ! I bear you witness that you have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for you, being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, go about to establish your own righteousness—and your efforts will end in terrible disappointment!

I pray you to cast away all reliance upon your own works. Tear up, once and for all, all that you have been spinning for these many years— your tears, your prayers, your church attendance, your chapel attendance, your confirmation, your baptism, your sacraments—have done with the whole rotten mass as a ground of confidence! It is all quicksand which will swallow you up if you rest upon it. The only rock upon which you must build, whoever you may be, is the rock of the finished work of Jesus! Come, now, and rest upon God’s appointed Savior, the Son of God, even though you may not have felt your own poverty and need. If you mourn that you do not mourn as you should, you are one of the poor and needy, and are bidden to turn your eyes to the Lamb of God and live!

I would to God that all of us were poor and needy in ourselves and that we were rich in faith in Christ Jesus! Oh, that we had done both with sin and with self-righteousness, that we had laid both those traitors with their heads on the block for execution! Come, you penniless sinners, come and receive the bounty of Heaven! Come, you who mourn your need of penitence, come and receive repentance and every other heavenly gift from Him who is the sinner’s Friend, exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins! But you must come empty-handed and sue, as the lawyers say, in forma pauperis, for in no other form will the Lord give ear to you! “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty.”—

**“‘Tis perfect poverty alone  
That sets the soul at large!  
While we can call one mite our own,  
We have no full discharge.  
But let our debts be what they may,  
However great or small—  
As soon as we have nothing to pay,  
Our Lord forgives us all!”**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 40.**

If our hearts are in trouble, as his was who wrote this Psalm, may we be able to act as wisely and as well as he did, and so obtain a like deliverance!

Verses 1, 2. I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. God does nothing by halves. If He brings people up out of their sorrow, or their sin, He takes care that their feet shall not slip back again into the mire. David says, “He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.” What a blessing that last little sentence contains! God does not set our feet upon a rock, that we may afterwards slip off and finally fall, but He establishes our goings, He makes our footing firm, so that we do not ever perish!

3. And He has put a new song in my mouth. Such a song as I never sang before, for I had never been in such trouble before and, therefore, had never experienced such a deliverance as the Lord has now granted to me. “He has put a new song in my mouth.” With that sweet songstress, Ann Letitia Waring, I can say—

*“My heart is resting, O my God,  
I will give thanks and sing.  
My heart is at the secret source  
Of every precious thing.  
And ‘a new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set—  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.”*

3, 4. Even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. You know that this

Book of Psalms has many benedictions in it. It begins with a blessing upon “the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.” But here it has a blessing for the Believer—“Blessed is that man that makes Jehovah his trust.” As for the proud and the false, may God preserve us from ever paying any regard to them for, if not, they will lead us into some such mischief as that into which they have themselves fallen.

5. Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done. “Your works in creation, in Providence and in Redemption.”  
5. And Your thoughts which are to us-ward. God is always thinking of His people, and His thoughts are wise, and kind, and practical, for when He thinks of doing anything for us, He speedily performs it.  
5. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto You: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Think of that! You cannot count God’s thoughts of you. If He were only to think of us once, in tender mercy, that one thought would run on throughout eternity, for He does not retract either a thought that He thinks or a word that He utters! Instead thereof, one gracious thought is followed by another, swiftly as the beams of light flash from the sun, so that it is impossible for us to number them. Thus thinking and writing concerning God’s work, the Psalmist is carried away, as it were, into a vision in which he sees Christ and speaks in the name of Christ.  
6. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. The blood of all the bullocks, and rams, and lambs offered in sacrifice had possessed no real efficacy in putting away sin. They had no virtue except as types, symbols and prophecies of the one great Sacrifice that was to come!  
6. My ears have You opened. Probably alluding to the ceremony of boring to the doorpost the ears of those who determined to remain as slaves to their masters when they might have gone free. So Christ was ready to be the Servant of His Father, and the Savior of sinners. He voluntarily undertook to bear all that this would involve.  
6-8. Burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart. He was the Perfect One, coming to do God’s will for us and offering Himself as the truest Sacrifice that could ever be presented to God. So we may rightly picture our great Lord and Master uttering these words when He came to die.  
9, 10. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips. O LORD, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within My heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your truth from the great congregation. With what indefatigable earnestness, with what indomitable courage, with what sacred faithfulness, with what holy tears did Christ preach the Truth of God while He was upon earth! He was always the Prince of Preachers, so, when He was dying, He could plead this fact with His Father.  
11, 12. Withhold not You Your tender mercies from Me, O LORD: let Your loving kindness and Your truth continually preserve Me. For innumerable evils have compassed Me about. Was it not so with Christ? The evils of sinners seemed to compass Him about and, like wild beasts, to hunt Him to the death! And the saints of God, in their measure, may often use similar language to that which the Psalmist here prophetically used concerning Christ.  
12. My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me. We could not apply this language to the Savior except as we spoke of the sins of ourselves and others which were laid upon Him, but we may apply this language, and ought to apply it to ourselves when we are sorely beset by sin. Have not even you, who are the dear children of God, sometimes felt as if you could not look up and dared not look up? You were so desponding, so downcast that there seemed no help for you, even in God. Your sins, your cruel sins, your fierce tormentors were and, therefore, your heart failed you.  
13-15. Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. So will it surely be, for the enemies of God’s people are God’s enemies—and Satan and all his host who seek to destroy the souls of the Lord’s chosen shall be driven backward and covered with eternal shame!  
16. Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love Your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. Are you content to bear your present trial, dear Friend, so that God may be magnified? Are you willing to be reduced by infirmities and weaknesses to a condition of absolute nothingness, so long as God is exalted? If you are, then you will be saying continually, “Let God be magnified in my weakness, let His majestic love be seen amid all my sorrows.”  
17. But I am poor and needy. A double expression for a poverty that is doubly felt—perhaps poor in temporals—certainly poor in spirituals! Poor and full of needs, yet with nothing to supply those needs. “I am poor and needy.”  
17. Yet. That is a blessed, “yet.”  
17. The Lord thinks upon me. That is enough for me! If He thinks of me, His thoughts are so kind, generous, wise and practical that He will help me!  
17. You are my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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SUNLIGHT FOR CLOUDY DAYS  
NO. 3345

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1913. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT MENTONE.  
“But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.” Psalm 40:17.

IT is not everybody who would like to apply to himself the first part of the text. Perhaps we, most of us, accept it because it happens to be Scriptural language—and yet we might not spontaneously say of ourselves, “I am poor and needy.” Some would even wish us to believe the very opposite, for if I read their hearts aright, they say, “I am not poor, nor needy.” They have enough of this world’s goods and as for spiritual matters, they are strong and self-reliant. All this comes of vainglory and, in the long run will end in vanity and vexation of spirit—for if a man can do without God, it is certain that God can do without him—and the day will come when God

 will do without him, according to His Word, “I will ease Me of My adversaries.” He who has tried throughout life to do without God will inherit remorse forever and ever. It is well to begin, continue and end in this life with God’s favor, that we may enjoy it world without end! I therefore trust that none among you would wish to say, “I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing,” for that would be tantamount to a proud resolve to do without God—and it will end in your eternal ruin!

There are some who cry, “I am poor and needy, woe is me that I should be so! But the Lord does not think of me. I have looked up to Heaven, but no eye of pity looks down upon me in the depth of my misery.” Many a wretched mind, many a bereaved spirit, many a downcast heart has cried, “The Lord has forgotten me! He counts the number of the stars and calls them by their names, but as for me, I am too little, too insignificant, too obscure—I cannot believe that God thinks upon me.” Dear Friend, I hope you will be converted from this unbelief! I pray that you may not only be able to join in one half of my text by saying, “I am poor and needy,” but that you may humbly unite in the second declaration, “Yet the Lord thinks upon me.” Despite your insignificance and unworthiness, you may yet learn that the Lord has thoughts of love towards you and is causing all things to work together for your external, internal and eternal good!

Do not let it surprise you that one of old should say, “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me,” for God has often thought of poor and needy persons. Look at Joseph when he was in prison and the iron entered into his soul—his reputation was gone, he was reproached and even punished unjustly—yet we read that the Lord was with Joseph and, in due time He brought him out and set him on the throne of Egypt! Ruth, the Moabitess, came penniless to Israel’s land and she went to glean among the sheaves as a poor and needy peasant woman. But the Lord was thinking upon her and so provided for her that she rose to an honorable estate and her name is written among the progenitors of our Lord Jesus! To give you a more modern instance—the Apostles were poor fishermen with their little boats and well-worn nets, upon the Lake of Galilee—yet the Lord looked upon them—unlearned and ignorant men as they were, and made them to be the pioneers of His Kingdom! Never mind how poor and needy you are, you may yet be heirs of God, jointheirs with Jesus Christ!

“Alas,” you say, “my trouble is not a poverty of gold and silver, but I am poor as to anything like goodness in the sight of God. I feel so guilty and so far from being what I ought to be.” Yet the Lord has oftentimes thought of such people as you! Look at the blessed Master sitting on the well at Sychar, talking with that wanton woman who had had five husbands and he whom she then had was not her husband—she was a woman whom none would honor—but the blessed Savior thought upon her! Remember, too, the thief dying upon the cross next to the Redeemer—with all his sins red upon him, for he had been a robber and probably a murderer, too—his prayer, “Lord, remember me,” touched the heart of Jesus and, “Today you shall be with Me in Paradise” was the gracious response! The Lord thought on him and yet there was never one more poor and needy than he! There, too, was Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, breathing out threats and slaughter against the Church of God! But the Merciful One in Heaven, who saw his sin, thought on him with love and said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” Poverty of all merit and need of all Grace do not prevent the Lord from thinking upon men! Is not this fact as clear as the sun in the heavens? However spiritually poor you may be, you may yet partake of the riches of His Grace and so become rich in faith—indeed, none but consciously needy ones ever obtain the privilege of saying, “Yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

I was troubled, when I was asking the Lord, with the notion that I was so utterly insignificant that the Lord would never notice me. There is no reason for such fear, since the Lord has thought upon very obscure people. Think of the Syro-Phoenician woman’s daughter. What was her name? Do you know what sort of a girl she was? Can you tell her afterhistory? She is quite unknown to fame, yet the Lord thought upon her and healed her. That little daughter of Jairus, a child of 12 years of age, what could she do? Did she become a distinguished woman? What lifework did she perform? She makes no figure in history, yet the Lord thought upon her and even restored her from the dead! The widow’s son, who was being carried out of the city of Nain, what did he achieve? What post of honor did he occupy? What lofty path did he pursue? We know nothing of him except that the Lord thought upon him! The most of the persons whom the Lord Jesus thought upon in the days of His flesh were unknown to fame and, for my part, I judge that the happiest persons are those who pass through life unknown of men, but known of God! During the French Revolution, a man of great influence escaped the guillotine and when asked how it was, he replied, “I made myself of no reputation and kept silent.” Those who are content to follow the cool sequestered vale of life are often happier than those who climb the high places of the earth. Do not, therefore, think that your being in the background is any hindrance to the Lord’s thinking upon you! He cares nothing about the blare of trumpets, or the blaze of fame—the Lord looks upon the meek and lowly and finds out the men that are of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at His Word—and with these He deigns to dwell. May we be found among them!

At this time my desire is to do four things upon each of which I would speak briefly. By the words of the text I desire, first, to help your faith to remember that if you are poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon you. Then I long to enlarge your hope. Thirdly, to inflame your love and fourthly, to direct your life. May God the Holy Spirit perform all these things for us! First, let me—

I. HELP YOUR FAITH. You say to yourself, “I cannot understand why God should think of me.” Why not? “Because I am so little.” Let me ask you if there is anything in the world which is not little to God? You say, “There is the world, itself,” and I answer that the earth which we think so large, is no more to God than a single grain of dust! The solar system and all the other systems that make up the Creation of God are as nothing to the Infinite Jehovah! So great is the universe that the most elevated conception of the most enlarged mind has never compassed more than a fragment of it—yet God is infinitely beyond the inconceivable whole of created existence! A man must always be really greater than his own works and certainly God must be infinitely greater than all that He has ever made. Now, if you think it difficult that God should think upon the little, what else should God think upon? You reply that you expect Him to think of the great ones of the earth. Alas, the most of them think very little of Him—the Lord has had the least worthy treatment from those who are ranked as rich and honorable. When we reach Heaven, we shall find few kings and princes, few of the learned and lauded—“God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith”—so says the Inspired Apostle.

Again, if it should seem difficult to you for God to think upon the poor and needy, I invite you to answer the question, “Who need God’s thoughts most?” On the field of battle, after the fight, if a surgeon should be there to attend to the wounded, where will he go first? Of course he will go to those whose gaping wounds have almost opened the gates of death for them! And the slightly wounded he will leave till he has more time. The Lord will not look upon us according to what we deserve, for if He did, He would destroy us all! He will look upon us in proportion to our needs. Our urgent needs move His mercy and He will go first to those who require Him most. Do you need His Grace more than anyone else? Then He will hasten at once to you! If I see a physician’s carriage hurrying down the street, I feel morally certain that he is not driving to my door, for I am not dangerously ill. But if I know of one who has fallen in a fit, or has been badly injured by an accident, I conclude that he is going to him. When the Angel of Mercy is made to fly very swiftly, you can be sure that he is speeding to one who is in urgent need of Divine Grace.

Remember, too, that God has always dealt with men from that point of view. When God made His election of men before the earth was, He chose them as fallen and undeserving, that He might lift them up to the praise of the glory of His Grace. His choice of men was never guided by anything good that He saw in them! As says the Apostle Paul, “For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls.” The decree still stands, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion.” The Lord of Grace asks in His Sovereignty, “Shall I not do as I will with My own?” God views all men as guilty and, finding them guilty, He yet chooses unto Himself a people in whom His Grace shall be resplendent! Therefore do not conclude that He will pass you by because you are poor and needy.

Moreover, the redemption of Christ obviously views us as fallen and guilty. Did He lay down His life to redeem those who were not captives? Did He pour out His blood to cleanse those who were already clean? If we had not needed a great salvation, would the Darling of Heaven have stooped to the death of the Cross that we might be saved? They who think that sinners cannot be saved, or that men can be saved by any other means than by true faith in Jesus, make a superfluity of the death of Christ—and this is a blasphemy atrocious to the last degree! “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save”—

the righteous?—oh no, but, “to save sinners, even the chief.” Stagger not at the Grace of God to your own hurt but say, “Though I am spiritually poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.”

Furthermore, the gift of God the Holy Spirit proves that God regards us as poor and needy. If we were strong and full of all spiritual forces, we would not have needed the Spirit of God to quicken and regenerate us! And we would not have needed that Spirit to abide in us as our Teacher and Helper. Why, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot even pray without the Spirit of God! The Spirit is given to help your infirmity in prayer because that infirmity most surely exists. The gift of the Spirit of God to men is a proof that God looks upon them as being poor and needy in spiritual things. Now, if you feel that you cannot pray, that you cannot repent, that you cannot believe, that you cannot do anything that is good in your own strength, fret not about it, but fly to the Strong for strength! Say, “I am poor and needy, but the gift of the Holy Spirit is an evidence that the Lord thinks upon me.”

Let me further say, to help your faith, that though you say you are very poor and spiritually needy, you are not alone in this, for so are all God’s saints—and the brighter the saints the more they feel their own poverty and need! Certain boasters talk “exceedingly proud” about their religious attainments. But the more they glory, the more vain is their glory. True saints are humble. In a company where certain people were displaying their spiritual attainments, it was noticed that one devout person remained silent. Finally a talkative man turned to him and asked, “Have you no sanctification?” He replied, “I never had any to boast of, and I hope I never shall have.” The more high in Grace, the more low in self-esteem! Ask the man who has the most holiness what he thinks of himself and he will be the first to lament that he has not yet reached the point which he desires. We are like those old-fashioned wine glasses which had no foot to them, so that they could not stand upon the table, but must be held in the hand. When Jesus has us in His hand, we can be filled with the Water of Life—but out of His hand we cannot hold a drop, nor even stand! We are nothing at all without our All-in-All! “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,” said one. “Without Me you can do nothing,” is the true word of Christ to every branch of the living Vine. Now, if all God’s saints say that they are nobodies, do not despair because you are a nobody! If they all confess that they can do nothing without Christ, do not despond because you, also, can do nothing without Him!

Do you reply, “I wish I had a greater sense of spiritual riches”? If you had more faith in Christ, it would be well, but to have any confidence in your own experience would do you mischief!

Let me here relate a story which may cheer those who feel themselves to be so guilty that the Lord will not think upon them. The Lord looks upon those who feel their guilt. A Savior is on the lookout for sinners quite as much as sinners are on the lookout for a Savior. I have heard that a great English prince on one occasion went to visit a famous king of Spain. The prince was taken down to the galleys, to see the men who were chained to the oars and doomed to be slaves for life. The king of Spain promised, in honor of the prince’s visit, that he would set free any one of these men that the prince might choose. So the prince went to one prisoner and said, “My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you in this plight, how came you here?” “Ah, Sire,” he answered, “false witnesses gave evidence against me. I am suffering wrongfully.” “Indeed!” said the prince, and passed on to the next man. “My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you here, how did it happen?” “Sire, I certainly did wrong, but not to any great extent. I ought not to be here.” “Indeed!” said the prince, and he went on to others who told him similar tales. At last he came to one prisoner who said, “Sire, I am often thankful that I am here, for I am sorry to admit that if I had received my due, I would have been executed. I am certainly guilty of all that was laid to my charge—and my severest punishment is just.” The prince replied wittily to him, “It is a pity that such a guilty wretch as you are should be chained among these innocent men and, therefore, I will set you free.” You smile, and well you may. How you will smile if Jesus does the same for you! Assuredly this is the manner of Him—He passes by those who think highly of themselves and looks upon those who are self-condemned and plead guilty before God. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance! When we have nothing to pay, He frankly forgives the debt! He thinks upon the poor and needy.

I ask you to look at the text again, by way of—  
II. ENLARGEMENT OF YOUR HOPE. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.” It is a great thing that God should think upon us. Is it true that the great heart of God is thinking upon me, an inconsiderable atom of existence? What then? It is enough to make the bells of our hearts ring for joy! Let us listen again to the silver note of the text, “The Lord thinks upon me.” The Lord thinks as much of one of His people as if there were nobody else for Him to think upon! Poor needy one, the Lord thinks upon you as intensely as if you were the only being now existing! The Lord is able to concentrate His whole mind upon any one point without dividing that mind—He has such an infinite capacity that each one of us may be the center of God’s thoughts—and yet He will not be forgetting any other beloved one! God is a Being whose center is everywhere, but His circumference is nowhere! “The Lord thinks upon me.” Is it not beautiful to notice how God thought of the first man whom He placed on this earth? He did not make man till He had prepared everything for his happiness! The Lord would not rest until He had finished His work, until He had lighted up the heavens and created all manner of comforts and conveniences for His child. Not till He had even prepared the birds to sing to him and the flowers to breathe their perfume upon him, did God create man. Why did God rest on the seventh day? Because He had thought of all that man needed and had made all things good for Him. Our Lord Jesus never rested till He had finished the work that His Father gave Him to do, which work was all for us—and the great Providence of God will never rest till all the chosen of God are brought safely home to Heaven! Thus you see how God thinks upon us.  
Remember, also, that God’s thoughts are not dumb thoughts. They break out into words and this precious Bible contains the expression of those thoughts of love. This priceless Book is a love letter from our Father who is in Heaven. Read each line as if it were freshly written and it will make you say, “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me, and here are His thoughts.”  
Nor does the Lord rest in words. I have heard of a waiter who said to a guest, “I hope you will remember me, Sir.” “Yes,” replied the other, “I shall never forget your bad behavior.” It would be well for us if our fellow men would not think of us when we have done them wrong, but God’s thoughts of us are always kind and forgiving. His thoughts are practical and produce deeds of kindness. He thinks to give and forgive, to save and succor, to cheer and cherish. The Lord is thinking what He will give you, what He will make of you and what mansion in Heaven He will appoint for you! If He has thought upon you, He always will think upon you, for the Lord never changes! Our God, in whom we trust, is not fickle. He is not thoughtful of us today and forgetful of us tomorrow. If you should live to be as old as Methuselah, the promises of God will never wear out—and if all the troubles that ever fell upon humanity should pounce upon you—God’s strength will be put forth to sustain you and to bear you to a triumphant close!  
Oh, the joy of knowing that God thinks upon us! It is better to have God thinking upon us than to have all the kings of earth and all the angels of Heaven thinking upon us. Thirdly, and very briefly—  
III. LET THIS INFLAME YOUR LOVE. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.” Dear Friends, think much of God since He thinks much of you. Let your hearts go out towards Him on whose heart your name is written. It ought to be impossible for a Christian to wander among these olive groves without saying, “Beneath such trees as these my Savior sweat great drops of blood.” We ought not to sit on the beach without thinking, “The Lord has cast my sins into the depths of the sea.” As the palm tree lifts itself to Heaven, without an earthward branch, so send all your thoughts upward! As the vine, though sharply pruned, yields its cluster, so bear fruit unto your Lord. Upon yonder sea the Apostle of the Gentiles was tossed and wrecked for love of Jesus—yield to that same Lord, your whole hearts as you think upon His thoughts of you! Everything about this place should make us think of our Lord, for in many respects it is the counterpart of “Your land, O Immanuel!” This day God is thinking upon you! This day think upon God! Christ in Heaven is preparing Heaven for us—let us be preparing a place on earth for Him. I have often wondered what is meant by our Lord’s preparing a place for us, since Heaven is prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. I suppose Heaven was not fully fit for us till Jesus went there and the very going there of our Well-Beloved has prepared Heaven for redeemed men and women to live in it in His own sweet society! Jesus is watching in Heaven for the time when we shall come Home and He is praying for that Homecoming—“Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am.”  
Do you not receive frequent tokens that the Lord Jesus is thinking upon you? Special mercies in answer to prayer, sweet visits of love—do not these cheer your heart? Our sacred joys, which come from Jesus, are like those boxes of flowers that we send to our friends who are freezing in the cold at this time in England. They know that we remember them as they look upon every rosebud, violet and anemone that comes to them through the post. Our heavenly Father sends us many such tokens of His loving remembrance while we are hearing the Gospel, or enjoying the Lord’s Supper, or occupied in our private prayers and meditations. “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them!” To close, let me use this text to—

IV. DIRECT YOUR CONDUCT. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks upon me.” The whole of what I say shall go into this one thought—if God thinks upon you, leave off all anxious and carking care about yourself! I do not suppose there is any place in the world that has more care and anxiety in it than this little town which nestles beneath the mountains and suns itself by the sea.  
Many of you come here with dear ones who are pining away before your eyes, or you are alarmed about your own health. Do not unduly trouble yourselves, for if you do so, you cannot remove sickness, thereby, but you may even increase it. If I could do any good by worrying, I would worry away to my heart’s content! But as it is useless, I find it best to let it alone. They tell me that if a man were to fall into the sea, he would float if he would remain quiet, but because he struggles, he sinks. I am sure it is so when we are in affliction. Fretfulness results in weakening us, in hiding from us wise methods of relief and, in general, in doubling our pains. It is folly to kick against the pricks! It is wisdom to kiss the rod. Trust more and fear lees. If you have trusted your soul with Christ, can you not trust Him with everything else? Can you not trust Him with your sick child, or your sick husband? With your wealth, with your business, with your life? “Oh,” says one, “I hardly like to do that. It is almost presumption to take our minor cares to the great Lord.” But in so doing you will prove the truthfulness of your faith! I heard of a man who was walking along the high road with a pack on his back. He was growing weary and was, therefore, glad when a gentleman came along in a chaise and asked him to take a seat with him. The gentleman noticed that he kept his pack strapped to his shoulders, and so he said, “Why do you not put your pack down?” “Why, Sir,” said the traveler, “I did not venture to impose. It was very kind of you to take me up, and I could not expect you to carry my pack as well.” “Why,” said his friend, “do you not see that whether your pack is on your back, or off your back, I have to carry it?”  
My Hearer, it is so with your trouble. Whether you care, or do not care, it is the Lord who must care for you! “But my daily trouble seems too mean a thing to bring before the Lord in prayer.” Then I fear you forgot my text, or fail to see the spirit which dictated it—God thinks upon the poor and needy—and all the concerns of the poor and needy are, like themselves, poor affairs. Why do you weary yourself with care when God cares for you? If I were afraid of burglars and kept a watchman to guard my house at night, I certainly would not sit up all night, myself! The Lord is your Keeper, why are you fearful? It is infinitely better that you should be able to say, “The Lord thinks upon me,” than that you should have all power, wisdom and wealth in your own hands! I charge you, then, to rest in the Lord and fret no longer!  
First, trust your Lord with your souls, and then trust Him with everything else! First, surrender yourself to His love, to be saved by His infinite compassion—and then bring all your burdens, cares and troubles— and lay them down at His dear feet and go and live a happy, joyful life, saying, as I will say, and close—  
*“All that remains for me,  
Is but to love and sing!  
And wait until the angels come,  
To bear me to my King.”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 8:1-31.**

Verse 1. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To my mind one of the sweetest words of that verse is that little word now. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation—at this very moment! Walking under the power of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus, there is, therefore, now no condemnation to Believers! It is a logical conclusion, too, from something that went before. You and I are not absolved from sin apart from the Truth of God, but there is a great truth at the back of it which necessitates it. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of sin and death. Sin and death cannot govern me—cannot condemn me—cannot destroy me. Another Law has come in. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has brought me into another kingdom wherein I cannot be affected, so as to condemn me, by the Law of sin and death.

3, 4. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The Law of God was a good Law, a just and holy Law. It was weak, not in itself, for, verily, if righteousness could have been by any Law, it would have been by the Law of God! But it was weak through our flesh. We could not keep it. We could not fulfill the conditions of life laid down under it. Therefore, what the Law could not do, God has now done for us! He has found a way of making us righteous through the righteousness of His own dear Son, whom He has sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. He has found out a way of condemning sin, without condemning us! He condemned sin in the flesh, but we escaped. And He has found a way of making us practically righteous, too, through the abundance of His Grace, enabling us to walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Blessed be God for this, for when we had broken His Law, He might justly have left us to take the consequences, but He has stepped aside—He has gone beyond all that might have been expected of Him—and brought in a Law by which a remedy is applied to all our ills. Glory be to His name!

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. They live to eat and drink. They live for self-aggrandizement. They live for the world and its pleasures. It is according to their nature. Everything acts according to its nature. The wolf devours—the sheep patiently feeds. They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.

5. But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. God has given us, then, the Spirit to dwell in us and now I trust we can say that we desire holiness, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, for these things are the things of the Spirit!

6, 7. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. It is so deeply vitiated, so thoroughly depraved, that so long as the fleshly mind exists, it will be in rebellion against God. “You must be born-again,” for that which is born of the flesh is flesh—and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Unless we are renewed, then, by the Spirit of God, we never shall be subject to the Law of God—neither, indeed, can we be.

8, 9. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if, indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Christ does not acknowledge any that are not indwelt by His Spirit. They may wear the Christian name. They may perform some acts which look like Christian acts—but all this means nothing. You must have the Spirit of God within you, or else you are none of His! And what a thing it is to be “none of His.” “Verily,” says Christ, “I never knew you.” “But, Lord, we ate and drank with You! You preached in our streets.” But He says, “I never knew you.” They are none of His. Oh, dear Friends, the highest point to which human nature can reach of itself falls short of being in Christ! There must be the Spirit of God dwelling in us or else we are none of His!

10. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin. Therefore, it suffers disease and pain, for the soul is regenerated, but not the body. If I may so speak, the Regeneration of the body happens at the Resurrection. It is then that it will receive its full share of the blessed work of Christ! “The body is dead because of sin.”

10, 11. But the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. So there is a complete deliverance provided for body, soul and spirit! As Moses said to Pharaoh when he agreed to let the people of Israel go, but said that they must leave behind their flocks, “Not a hoof shall be left behind,” so no particle of our real manhood shall be left under the thralldom of sin and death! The soul is already emancipated and the body shall be—by the Spirit which dwells in you!

12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For we owe the flesh nothing by way of gratitude or service. The flesh has dragged us down. The flesh has ruined us. We owe it nothing except mastery of it. We are not debtors to it, to live after it.

13. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die. It will die and so will you who make it your master!  
13. But if you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. “Mortify,” kill, put to death.  
14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. There may be a great many weaknesses and infirmities about them, but if they follow the Divine Leadership of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God!

15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. Is this true of you? “You have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Dear Friends, hearing these words, can you respond to them? Are they true of you?

16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Many of you make a profession of being the children of God. Can your own spirit say that it is true? And is there, in addition to this, the witness of the Spirit within you that it is true? If not, unless there is a witness to our testimony, it avails nothing. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.” And if He chooses to put Himself on a level, as it were, with the rest of humanity in that respect, we cannot expect that our witness will stand for anything if it stands alone! No, there must be the Spirit, Himself, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God!

17. And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Oh that if—“if children.” There are some that get over all that. They believe in a universal fatherhood—which is not worth the words in which they describe it. This is a different fatherhood altogether!

17. If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Oh, this blessed co-partnership—this fellowship! Joint-heirs with Christ! Taking part in the whole heritage—as well the heritage of suffering as the heritage of glory. “It shall bruise Your heel, but You shall bruise his head.” There is to be the heel-bruising for the Christ, as well as for us, but there is to be the head-crushing of sin and Satan for Him and for us, too!

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Glory in us? Only think of that! You know the Revelation that is in the Book—but how grand will be the revelation that is in the man! “The glory which shall be revealed in us.” We shall be full of glory! And a part of God’s Glory, which otherwise must have lain concealed, will be revealed in His people to His own praise forever and ever—but also to our own eternal joy.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. There is something that the whole creation is waiting for and it cannot come till God’s children are manifested—till the glory is revealed in them!

20, 22. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. “The whole creation.” It is the same word all through—so I have used the same word. The whole world is in its pangs and birth throes, and there can never come its complete deliverance into the new heavens and the new earth, except there shall also be the manifestation of the children of God and their deliverance from all that now hampers and hinders the Divine Life that is within them!

23. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. This is what we are looking for! Our manhood is not all soul—it is body, too! And here, as yet, this poor body seems to lie outside the gate, like Lazarus, while the soul rejoices in God. But its time of glorifying is coming! The trumpet of the archangel shall proclaim it!

24. For we are saved by hope. As yet we are saved by hope.  
24-26. But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. That is a grand thing! We have got the first fruits of the Spirit to be the pledge of all the glorious harvest. The very fact that the Spirit dwells in us is the conclusive proof that our bodies shall be raised from the dead! Meanwhile, the Spirit of God is helping us, as we groan and labor, towards the complete perfection. “The Spirit helps our infirmities.”  
27. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Nor is it only the Holy Spirit who is thus helping us onward towards the grand finale!  
28, 29. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And you know that He is the First-Born in this sense—not only as the greatest, but that as the First-Begotten from among the dead, He has risen from the dead! He has risen from the dead and in this He leads the way for us all. “That he might be the first-born among many brethren.”  
30. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. No slips, no gaps or chasms by the way. The foreknown are predestinated. The predestinated are the called. The called are justified. The justified are glorified!  
31. What shall we say, then, to these things? Shall we succumb under the sufferings of the body? Shall we yield to doubt because of all our heavy feelings and the dullness that comes of the flesh? By no means!  
31. If God is for us, who can be against us? We can get through all these difficulties if God is with us!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2424 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE NEW SONG ON EARTH  
NO. 2424

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, AUGUST 4, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 17, 1887.

**“He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.” Psalm 40:3.**

THIS man who talks about his song and seems to be very much struck with the fact that he has become a singer, was formerly a man of prayer. I doubt not that he was still praying while he was praising, but he began to pray before he began to praise. It is not good to go in the choir, first— we must begin our spiritual experience at the “penitent form.” He who sings without having wept may have to weep, by-and-by, where he can never sing!

Listen to what this man’s experience had been—“I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.” That is where God gets His singers—out of the place of praying and weeping! Where they learn to pray they begin to sing. Oh, yes, even in Heaven, itself, the sweetest voices that praise God and the Lamb belong to those who came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple. Do not try to get the joy of Christ without first having sorrow for sin—

*“The path of sorrow, and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*

This man, who says that God has put a new song in his mouth, began with a new prayer in his heart—“I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.”

Further, this man, who sings so well that he cannot help talking about it, was once in a very deplorable state where there was no singing for him, but God brought him up out of it! Hear what he says, “He brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.” Nowadays people do not seem to know much about that horrible pit. I wish they did. There are more gentle, quiet conversions—and I care little how men are converted so long as they are really converted—but, after all, the old-fashioned sort of conversions wear best. Men who know from what they are saved—men who have felt the iron rod of the Law and have been crushed and broken beneath the millstones of conviction—these are they who appreciate “Free Grace and dying love” to the fullest and speak of it, and sing of it! I do not find so much of this singing, now, and the reason is because there has been so little of the deep experience of which our good old fathers used to speak.

The Psalmist says, “He brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings and, therefore, it is that this new song is in my mouth.”—

*“Firm on rock He made me stand,  
And taught my cheerful tongue  
To praise the wonders of His hand  
In a new thankful song.”*

I. First, notice that we have HERE A MAN AMAZED TO FIND HIMSELF SINGING for the text is evidently a declaration that God had put a new song into his mouth and that it was a marvel, even to himself. Here is, then, a man amazed to find himself singing, and it would not be difficult to find one like he, here.

What makes you so amazed, my Friend? Other people sing—why is it at all amazing that you should? He answers, “It is amazing that I should sing because I have been so used to sighing. Had you seen me, Sir, when the arrows of God stuck fast in me, you would have heard many sighs, but never a song! If you had followed me home, you would have found my pillow wet with tears. But I was no nightingale, I could not sing in the dark. I woke in the morning almost sorry to think that I had to face the world, again, and that I had my burden still to bear! And I chanted no morning hymn and I went about the world still burdened till night came on again. Those around me talked of vesper hymns, but I had no such hymns. I had my evening moans and groans, for sin was heavy upon me, and an angry God seemed to make the darkness about me a darkness that might be felt! Had you seen me then, you would not think it strange that I should be amazed that I now sing!” Oh, yes, dear Hearers, if you have ever known the depths of sorrow for sin, you will be amazed to think that you can be as happy as you are because Christ has loosened the burden from your shoulder and made you free, saying, “Go, and sin no more. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.”

Well, my Friend, I can see why you are astonished at your singing. Is there any other reason? “Yes,” he answers, “if you had known me a little farther back, before I came under the hand of God and was awakened to a sense of sin, you would have known a fellow that could sing, but the wonder, now, is that I can sing ‘a new song.’ I am glad, Sir that you did not hear me sing in those days, for my songs would have done you no good. They were very light and trifling, sometimes lewd and sometimes profane. Oh, how I set my companions in a roar with my jests! And when I had a little drink in me, how I liked to thunder out some loose verses and bid the others take up the chorus! And ‘jolly good fellows’ were all of us said to be when those hymns of the devil were upon our tongues.” Oh, you are

 that man, are you? Yet I heard you sing, just now, and I think you sang it from your heart—

*“My heart is resting, O my God,  
I will give thanks and sing!  
My heart is at the secret Source  
Of every precious thing!  
And a ‘new song’ is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set!  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.  
I have a heritage of joy  
That yet I must not see.  
The hand that bled to make it mine  
Is keeping it for me!”*

Ah, now I am amazed, too, that such a man as you once were should be singing such a song as that! O Brothers and Sisters, there are some of us here who are amazed at ourselves when we think of what we used to be! Some of you forget the dunghills where you grew, but if you have any honesty in you, you cannot but feel the tear starting up between your eyelids at the recollection of how God has changed you. What a miracle of mercy you are! Surely it took almighty power to make a saint of such a sinner as you were! The utmost bound of infinite love must have been reached in the case of some who are in this House of Prayer praising redeeming love and wishing that they had a thousand tongues with which to shout the Savior’s praise! Yes, Friend, I can see why it is that you are amazed that a new song is put into your mouth! The time past well suffices us to have sung the songs of Belial—now let us sing unto the Lord with all our strength, and tell all around what great things His Grace has done for us!

Still, my Friend, you who are so much amazed at yourself, you tell me that you marvel to find yourself singing because you so lately were sighing and, farther back, were singing such a different tune. Is there any other wonder in it? “Well, yes, Sir, my greatest wonder is because I am singing a new song. It is a totally new song—it is new to me, for I knew nothing of it, once. I ridiculed what I did not understand! I cast scorn on what I had not the candor to wish to know. I said that religion was all cant and that religious people were all hypocrites. I did not know this for a fact, but I said it, all the same. I did not want to know anything about Christ Crucified and the Gospel of His Grace. I said that these were only terms that were used by fanatical people and had no meaning in them. And as to the songs of Zion, why, Sir, I sometimes spoofed them to give a little zest to my profane merriment. But, as to singing them, myself, I felt that could never be the case.”

Yes, Beloved, there are some who are now singing of Free Grace and dying love who, years ago, would not have believed it possible even if a Prophet of God had told them it would be so! They would have spat at any man who would have said, “And you, too, will take up the cross, and follow the Nazarene.” Yet tonight they are singing a song altogether new to them! These low notes of penitence, the deep bass of confession are all new to them—and these highest notes, the jubilates that rise even to the skies—are all new to them. None of this score did they ever read in their days of sin! They never tuned their harps to such Psalms as this in the time of their unregeneracy. It is all new to you. Do I not remember when it was all new to me? Yet I heard it when I was a child. I was never away from the hearing of it, but when I came to know it, it was just as new to me, nursed on the lap of piety, as it was to you who lived in the midst of a wicked world, for I was blind in the light as you were blind in the dark! I was deaf in the midst of music and you were only deaf in the midst of discord. There was but a slight difference between us, after all, and truly are we amazed to think that we should be singing a new song!

It is not only called a new song because it is new to us, but because it is so uncommon. Rich and rare things are often called new in the Bible. There is a New Covenant, there is a new Commandment. I will not quote the many things in Scripture that are called new because they are so rare. And, oh, the praises of God are, indeed, rich and rare! If an angel, fresh from Heaven, were asked his judgment of the various kinds of music played or sung below, I know what he would say. Your finest operas and your noblest lyrics concerning things of time and sense would be but doggerel in his ears and discord to his heart! But the hymns in which we praise our dying, yet risen Lord—the Psalms in which we exalt the God of Heaven and earth—these would be music, indeed, to him, and he would write these down as truly sweet! Yes, and so it is to us! Dull is the song that does not praise our Lord! But the burst of united Psalmody from a vast congregation that exalts Him brings tears to our eyes, as Augustine says it did to his—when he heard the singing at Milan. When first he entered the church, there, to hear the many simple folk praise God, touched his soul. But if it is not so—if the music is not to the praise of the Lord—there is no thing rich and rare in it for us. Oh, believe us, we have learned a rare song now that we have learned to praise the Lord our God!

And, truth to tell, there is a wonder about our new song because it is always new. Do you ever tire—you who love your Lord—do you ever tire of Him? You who praise Him, do you ever weary of singing His praises? You may very well weary of me, poor creature that I am—I who have addressed you so many hundreds of times—but you never weary of my subject when I talk of Jesus! You may very well weary of the monotony of any human voice, but you can never be tired of the many-stringed harp which is to be found in that one name, the name of Jesus! His name, fresh? Oh, I think it is newer to me, now, than when I first heard it! It may seem a paradox, but the Gospel is, to me, fresher, the longer I know it! Did not my heart leap at the sound of Christ’s name nearly 40 years ago? Yes, but not as it does now! The music of His name will refresh our soul in death with a new depth of sweetness! It is all new as you go on in Jesus!

You seem, sometimes, to fancy that you are coming to an end, but there is no end to this music! Did you ever sail up or down the Rhine? If so, standing in the steamboat you thought you were in a lake rather than in a river—and you wondered how you could proceed any farther. You turned a corner and the river opened up before you with a fresh stretch of beauty and where it seemed to end, again, the end was all a delusion, for it still went on and on! So is it with the song which the Lord has taught us—it is always fresh and always new! We may make it say, as the poet made his brook to sing—

*“Men may come, and men may go,  
But I go on forever”*  
and so does the sweet melody of Jesus’ precious name! It is a new song, a new song altogether!

Yet, again, if you wonder that we call it new, let me remind you that it is new because it seems to have awakened us into a newness of life. I have seen men excited—look at them whenever there is an election—but there is a far better kind of excitement than that which is produced by politics! When a man comes to know Christ and to love Him, it wakes him up from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. We steady-going people, you know, try to be very serene and quiet, and our worship is apt to get terribly stiff and dull—but if we could let our souls have their liberty, if we could speak and sing as we feel—what a noise we would make sometimes! There would be hallelujahs and hosannas, indeed, and it is amazing that we can restrain them, for the Gospel of Christ somehow brings out of a man new faculties which he does not know of himself till a glorious breeze of Everlasting Life has blown through him! Then odors which otherwise had lain asleep, odors such as God delights in, are poured forth on every side! This is, indeed, a new song, for it makes us new! God grant, dear Friends, that many of you may so continually sing it that you may know what I mean—and a great deal more than I can say! That is a wonderful thing, then—a new man singing a new song!

There is yet a further wonder. My Friend, you have been telling us that you marvel that you have a new song. What is it that makes you so surprised? You have told us much—tell us a little more. And he answers, “Well, Sir, I wonder at my new song because it is raised unto our God— ‘even praise unto our God.’” It should not be, but still it is, a marvel when a man praises his God. We are by nature so averse to this sweet exercise that when we come to do it, and to do it heartily, it is a marvelous thing! Look. We praise God’s Grace; we sing—

*“Grace! ‘Tis a charming sound!  
Harmonious to the ear!”*

And each saved man among us feels it to be so in his case. We praise God’s power! What power He has put forth in bringing us up out of our graves of sin and turning us from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God by that same mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. Yes, every man whom God has saved praises His Grace and His power.

The pith of the song is this—“praise unto our God.” You cannot praise another man’s God. At least there is no sweetness in such a song. But there is a blessed melody when it is “praise unto our God”—our Covenant God, the God who belongs to us, the God who by a perpetual Covenant has given Himself up to us to be our possession forever—“praise unto our God.” I like to have it put in the plural. My soul can praise my God, but the highest note is reached when many of us, together, can praise “our God”—yours and mine! We who are Brothers and Sisters in Christ. We who know each other and love each other find a peculiar sweetness in our new song when it is “praise unto our God.” If you all knew the sweetness of bringing others to Christ, more of you would live for it and be prepared to even die for it.

I have had some very happy days in my life, but my happiest times have been such as I had one day last week when I shook hands with somewhere about a hundred persons who called me their spiritual father. It seemed to them to be quite a grand day to touch my hand, while to me, the tears standing in my eyes as I saw each one of them—it was as the days of Heaven upon earth, for I had never seen all those people before! Perhaps some of them had been in this House of Prayer, now and then, but I did not know them. They had read the sermons and as I went from village to village, and found them standing at their doors, begging me to stop just to hear how such a sermon was “blessed to me,” and, “my old father read your sermons and died in peace after reading them”— there, I could have died of joy, for this is the truest happiness we can have on earth! Seek sinners, my Brothers and Sisters, seek their conversion with all your heart and soul! If you would be happy men and women, and would sing the sweetest song that could be sung on earth, let it be, “praise unto our God”—not yours alone, but the God, also, of those whom Infinite Mercy shall permit you to bring to the same dear Savior’s feet!

There is one more wonder about this song and then I shall have finished what I have to say about this friend of ours. You tell us that you sing and that you sing a new song—what is the greatest wonder about that song? “Why, Sir, to tell you the truth, I do not know which is the greatest marvel. There is a world of wonders in my singing this new song, but there is one point I have not told you, and that is this—‘He has put a new song in my mouth.’” Oh, I see, then—you did not learn it from anybody? You did not make it up yourself? “No, no, no. A thousand times, no! It was God that put it into my mouth.” Well now, when God puts a song into a man’s mouth, that is a grand thing, for the devil, himself, cannot get it out! If God puts a new song into a man’s mouth, he has a right to sing it and he ought to sing it—and he must sing it—therefore, let him sing it!

Magnify the Lord if He has done this great thing to you, if He has put this new song into your mouth! All that we ever do for ourselves never has the sweetness in it of that which God does for us. You may labor and toil and tug, and all the wage you get you may hold in the hollow of your hand—and it shall melt in the morning sun! But if God shall give it to you of His free, rich, Sovereign Grace, it shall be within you a well of water springing up into everlasting life! And neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come shall ever take it away from you! If God has put this new song in your mouth, that is the best thing you can tell us about it!

And so, my good Friend, I will ask you no more questions. Sing away, sing away, as long as ever you like! Sing praise unto our God— *“Sing, though sense and carnal reason  
Would gladly stop the joyful song!  
Sing and count it highest treason  
For a saint to hold his tongue.”*

II. Now, secondly, and very briefly, we have here, dear Friends, A MAN WHO IS RESOLVED TO KEEP ON SINGING, for, you notice, he says, “He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” So that this man means to keep on singing. I must have you back, again, old Friend, and ask you why it is that you mean to keep on singing?

He answers, first, “ Because I cannot help it.” When God sets a man singing, he must sing! Good Rowland Hill once had, sitting on the pulpit stairs, a person who sang with such a cracked, squeaking voice that it put the dear man out of heart. And this person with the cracked voice, of course, sang more loudly than anybody else! So Mr. Hill said to him, while the hymn was being sung, “Be quiet, my good man. You make such a dreadful noise that you put us all out.” “Oh,” said the man, “I am singing from my heart, Mr. Hill!” “I beg your pardon, my Friend,” said the preacher, “go on, go on, go on with your singing if it comes from your heart!”

So we would not stop any man, whatever his voice is, if he sings from his heart! But, what is more, we not only say that we would not stop him, but we could not stop him if we wanted to. If, as men say, “murder wills out,” I am sure that Grace will! You cannot put salvation into a bottle and put the cork in! It will burst the bottle, for it must come out! If God has put a song into your mouth, you must sing it. Therefore, again I say, sing away!

But, my Friend over yonder, do not sing before everybody—perhaps it would be casting pearls before swine. “Oh,” he says, “but I must! I mean to sing before many.” Why? “Well, I used to sing before many in my evil days. I was not ashamed to sing for the devil—when I ought to have been ashamed, I was not. And now that I ought not to be ashamed, I will not be ashamed and I will sing! Besides, why should I be so tender and considerate of their nerves? They are not thoughtful about mine.” The ungodly sometimes complain of us for preaching outdoors. They say that it disturbs them. Bless their dear delicacy! What a noise they make at night, sometimes, when they keep us from sleeping while they noisily declare that they, “won’t go home till morning”! Surely, we may sing as loudly as they do! And when we sing songs of Zion, we can well reply to them that when they are quiet, and will suspend their music, we may consider when we will suspend ours!

Still, my Friend, do you think that it is worth while to sing at this rate? “Yes,” he says, “I do, for I believe that it is good for them to hear it.” Do you? What good can it do them? And he answers me thus. “Look at your text, Sir, and you will not need to ask me that question! What does your text say?” “Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” It is good to preach the Gospel, but it is better to preach and sing the Gospel! I mean, dear Friends, that if you and I, in our daily lives, were to sing the Gospel more—especially by a holy cheerfulness of character—we would bring the Truth of God home to a great many who now turn aside from it, and do not feel its power! Sing of Christ your Lord! Proclaim His love to you! Proclaim how you were converted! Tell how He brought you up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay—and as you do it, others will long to experience the same deliverance and so will be drawn to the Savior by your sweet testimony to His Grace. There are many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar and there are many more sinners brought to Christ by the gracious tidings of His love than ever will be driven to Him by all the threats of His Law. I do not know a better soultrap than a happy Christian experience! This will catch them—therefore be sure to use it. Sing, sing, sing unto the Lord a new song! Sing His praise unto the ends of the earth, for many will see it, and fear, and put their trust in the Lord!

If I had come here, tonight, knowing that there were persons here that were ailing, and were to say, “Now, listen. I will tell you how I suffered from your same illness,” you would be sure to attend to me. And if I then mentioned a certain remedy, and said, “I took it and I have experienced a very remarkable cure,” you would listen with both ears and you would ask, “Where is that remedy to be purchased?” You would begin thinking whether you could get some of it to-morrow morning, especially if you were very ill, yourselves, as I had been, and you would go away thankful to think that you had met with someone who, through his own experience, could guide you to a perfect cure!

Well now, that is exactly what I want you to do with regard to yourselves, you who are sick of sin, and care, and fear, and grief. I, too, as a youth, was sick of sin and I was made to feel it—and to endure great grief on account of it. I sought to be delivered from it. I gave up many things in which I had indulged and I hoped, by self-denial, that I would come to peace. But I did not, I was as far off as before I began! I said that I would very diligently attend the means of Grace and I did so. Thrice on the Sabbath I was found somewhere or other hearing the Word of God. But mere sermon-hearing brings no peace. Then I said that I would read good books. How I remember reading Alleine’s Alarm and Doddridge’s Rise and Progress, and Baxter’s Call to the Unconverted. And how they plowed me, and brought tears into my eyes—but I found no rest to my soul by all the godly books I read—the best that could be read. Whatever was proposed to me that looked likely to bring me rest, I was eager to try. I was willing, I am sure, to become a monk, or anything else beneath the sun that would promise peace to my spirit, for I wanted to be right and longed to be at peace with God.

At last, I found rest. The preacher pictured Christ upon the Cross, bleeding for sinners. And he said, in his Lord’s own words, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth.” And I looked! It was all I could do—it was all I was asked to do—I looked! It was but a look, yet in that moment all my fears were ended, my doubts were solved, my burden was removed, and I, too, could say, “He has put a new song in my mouth. He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.”

Now, after trying and testing this salvation for a good many years— well near on to forty—I have only this to say of it. It is a simple salvation, but it is as sound as it is simple! It is fitted for the poorest of us, but it is as enriching as it is suitable to our poverty! The weakest may look to Jesus, but by looking he shall soon be ranked among the strongest! He who is at death’s door may look to Jesus Crucified, but the life that look brings is life everlasting which shall never die! There is the remedy and I have tried it! That is all I can say to you except that I beg you to try it yourselves. Try it yourselves! Look to Christ. Look to Christ! Trust Jesus, that is all—trust, simply trust! It seems as if this could not be all, but it is. You with the broken heart, trust! You with the heart that will not break, trust to have it broken! You that are deeply penitent, trust—not in your repentance, however—but in Christ! And you that can not repent, but wish to repent, look to Christ for repentance!

Trust! Trust! Trust as the drowning man trusts to the life buoy, as the shipwrecked mariners trust to the lifeboat. Trust! Trust in God Almighty, Incarnate in the bleeding Man of Sorrows, for it is God that hangs on the Cross in the body of the Nazarene. Trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Mary—and as surely as He lives, as surely as God lives, you shall live and live forever! Heaven and earth may pass away, but that Word shall never pass away, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” May you have it tonight! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 33; 1 JOHN 1.**

Verse 1. Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, for praise is comely for the upright. False gods were worshipped with dolorous sounds, accompanied by cutting with knives and with lances, but our God is the happy God and He would have His people happy. “Rejoice in Jehovah, O you righteous.” The praises of God are very beautiful when they are sung by holy people, “for praise is comely for the upright.” But the praises of God on the lips of godless men are altogether out of place. I wonder how Christians can allow those to lead their praises in the sanctuary who never can, from their hearts, praise God? They who sing to the worldling all the week should not be employed to sing to the God of the holy on the Sabbath! Surely, “Praise is comely for the upright.” Hymns and Psalms sung by the ungodly are but as sweet spices laid upon a dunghill—but— “praise is comely for the upright.”

2, 3. Praise the LORD with harps: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. Under a dispensation of types and shadows, the use of musical instruments seemed to be necessary and suitable, but in the early Christian Church, in her purest ages, these things were discarded as tending towards Judaism. And at this day, the sweetest singing in the world is heard in the assembly which utterly renounces the use of every musical instrument! Yet I believe that there is Christian liberty about these things and, for my part, I like to think of Luther with his lute and of George Herbert with his harp. If they were helped to praise God the better, let them have the music! Yet the singing is never sweeter than when it is all song—and there is no better music than that which comes from hearts and tongues that are alive—and that know what sounds they make and why they make them. Anyhow, let us sing unto Jehovah! Hang not your harps on the willows, suspend not your music! Praise God somehow, praise Him anyway, but praise Him!

4. For the Word of the LORD is right. Praise Him for His Word, then. It is truth, it is righteousness. If we had nothing else but the Bible for which to praise God, there would be reason enough for giving Him endless praise for bestowing upon us such a priceless treasure!

4. And all His works are done in truth. Praise Him for His Providence. There is never a mistake in what He does—“All His works are done in truth.”

5. He loves righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. Therefore praise Him. So good a God should not be without your gratitude.

6. By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. Praise your Creator, then, the Maker of the universe!

7-9. He gathers the waters of the sea together as an heap: He lays up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. These are simple but grand words! The work of creation was very wonderful and it was all worked by the Word of the Lord. There were no angelic agencies. “He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast.”

10. The LORD brings the counsel of the heathen to nothing. They plot and they contrive, but He baffles them! Men may think and scheme as they will, but God has His way, after all!

10, 11. He makes the devices of the people of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations. His decrees stand fast. Jehovah still reigns and still He must reign forever and ever.

12. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. There is the reason why they are blessed—it is all owing to God’s electing love! “The people whom He has chosen.” If God has chosen them, they are blessed people, indeed! Whom He determines to bless none can effectually curse.

13. The LORD looks from Heaven; He beholds all the sons of men. As we look out of a window and see the people passing in the street below, “He beholds all the sons of men,” whether at the pole or at the equator! None are hidden from His Omniscient eyes.

14, 13. From the place of His habitation He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their hearts alike. Not that their hearts are alike, but it means that He only fashions all their hearts—they were all made by Him. There is no understanding so great but He made it and there is no mind so feeble but still He made it—

**“He fashions their hearts.”**  
13, 16. He considers all their works. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host. See what vast companies of soldiers Darius gathered together, yet Alexander smote them—and Napoleon led into Russia more than half a million of men, yet they melted away like snow!

16. A mighty man is not delivered by much strength. Sooner or later, he dies, however strong he is.  
17. A horse is a vain thing for safety. It throws its rider, or falls upon him, or is killed with him.  
17, 18. Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy. Beautiful expression! I always like that mixture of fear and hope. An old fisherman used to compare it to his net. “Fear,” he said, “is the weight that sinks it, and hope is the cork that floats it.” To make a perfect character, there must he both fear and hope! The man that never fears may begin to fear, but he that is all fear is a miserable creature. God help him to begin to hope!  
19. To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. When others die of want, the Lord will take care of them that fear Him. I remember a story of the siege of Rochelle, when the city was in such straits that the people had to eat cats, dogs, rats and all manner of filthiness. There was one Christian woman, who, having some stores, fed the poor therewith, whereat her friends said she was a fool, for she would soon be starving. They asked, “Who is to take care of you when all is gone?” She answered, “The Lord will provide for me.” At last her stores were exhausted. She went to beg from her friends, but they refused her. She was nearly famished when, strange to tell (as we put it), someone, unknown to her, shot down a sack full of wheat at her door! She never knew who it was, and then she said to her friends, “God has provided for me,” and, while others died, she lived, for she had practiced holy charity. She had feared God and given to her neighbors—she had not selfishly hoarded what she had—and the Lord rewarded her. Let me read these two verses again. “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine.”  
20. Our soul waits for the LORD: He is our help and our shield. Notice the three, “ours.” Personal possession is the very soul of piety—all else is mere verbiage. Not, “What do you hear?” but, “What do you have?” Not, “What do you talk about?” but, “What do you possess?” That is the thing—“Our soul waits for the Lord: He is our help and our shield.”  
21. For our heart shall rejoice in Him because we have trusted in His holy name. If you do but trust in His holy name, you shall, one day, rejoice in Him. Trust Him in the dark and you shall see the Light of God! Trust Him in famine and you shall surely be fed.  
22. Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in You. Let us each one pray that prayer now—“Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in You.” Amen. Now turn to the First Chapter of the First Epistle of John, that you may see what an Apostle had to say concerning joy.  
1 John 1:1. That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life. You know who that is, who it is that John had heard, seen, looked upon and handled even Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!  
2, 3. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us), that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Father delights in His risen Son, no more to suffer and to die, having accomplished all His work. And I am sure that we have fellowship with the Father in that rejoicing! Then think what is the joy of Christ, who has passed through the shades of death, and risen from all the gloom of the sepulcher no more to die! I trust, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that we have fellowship with Him, for we, also, have risen with Him unto newness of life!  
4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. “There,” the Apostle seems to say, “if you have doubts, they will kill your joy. Doubt is a great joy-killer, but we have seen Him, we have heard Him, we have handled Him who is the Fountain of all true joy! Let no doubts come into your hearts, for these are well-attested facts of which we speak. “We live still,” says John—though, perhaps, when he wrote, he may have been the last survivor of the eleven—“we live still, by our testimony concerning Christ, to confirm your faith, that your joy may be full.”  
5-7. This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not say the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. That is, if we walk in the brightest light we can ever know, and if our fellowship with God is the highest that can be enjoyed this side Heaven, we shall still need the cleansing blood of Jesus and, blessed be God, we shall still have it and we shall still find that it “cleanses us from all sin!’’  
8. If we say that we have no sin., we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. We are walking in darkness when we thus talk of light. It is easy for a blind man to talk of light though he cannot see it and there are some who boast of very superior light who, nevertheless, are so much in the dark that they cannot even see their own sin.  
9, 10. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us. The Lord bless to us the reading of his Word! Amen.

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UNBELIEF CONDEMNED AND FAITH COMMENDED  
NO. 1784

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” Deuteronomy 32:20.  
“Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” Psalm 40:4.**

THESE two texts will serve to show the different estimate which God has of unbelief and of faith. He says of unbelievers, in my text taken from Deuteronomy, “They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith”—as much as to say that the absence of faith proves them to be froward, presumptuous, willful, disobedient—a people at cross-purposes with God. He says not only that they are perverse and froward, but He adds an emphatic word—“they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” The second text most clearly shows us that God has a high approbation for faith, for He, Himself, by the Holy Spirit, says, “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord His trust.” Here, then, we have set before us a great evil to which we are sadly inclined—and a great Grace which we greatly need. May God the Holy Spirit work faith in us by His own gracious power! Alas, it is still true that “all men have not faith.” Even when an Apostle preached, we read of the congregation, that some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. There is that division among you at this time. Oh, that unbelievers may become Believers before this service ends!

I will tell you what I shall be driving at this morning—I have a special character in view and I long to be made useful to persons of that sort. Outspoken and naked unbelief the most of you abhor. Should unbelief display itself in its real hideousness, you who have been brought up religiously would be startled at its approach, would close the door immediately and bolt it fast lest such a demon of the deep should gain an entry into your souls! Consequently, unbelief, when it attacks the regular hearer of the Gospel, takes care to disguise itself. It pretends to be something other than it is. It does not walk abroad in all its natural deformity, but it approaches us as the Gibeonites came near to Israel when “they did work wilily and went and made as if they had been ambassadors.”

There are those here who do not doubt, for a moment, the existence or goodness of God—neither have they any question about the Inspiration and Infallible Truth of Holy Scripture—and yet they are entertaining within their hearts an unbelief which eats as does a canker! A deadening unbelief is upon them so that they abide in darkness and take no pains to come into the Light of God. Yet they do not condemn themselves, but rather look for pity as though it were their infirmity and not their fault. To them, unbelief acts like Jezebel when she tired her hair and painted her face. Oh, that my words could strip off the disguise of this evil thing! Of this most deceitful form of unbelief I would say, as Jehu said of Jezebel, “Throw her down.” And then I would cry—Go see, now, this cursed thing and bury it, for it is a horrible evil. That which prevents men from finding salvation by putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is an enemy so hateful and malicious that no quarter must be given to it! No excuse must be made for it—it must be utterly destroyed from under Heaven!

Dear Friend, you tell me that you are by no means an infidel or a skeptic, and yet you do not believe so as to find peace with God! You tell me that you cannot believe, which is a confession that you are so false at heart that you cannot believe the Truth of God! It is well that you should admit this gross depravity, but I have reason to fear that you are hardly conscious of the horrible nature of the crime which you acknowledge! I beg you to lay to heart this fact—that unless you have faith in Jesus you will perish just as surely as if you were an open denier of the Word of God and a reviler of His Son! There are, doubtless, degrees in the terribleness of the punishment, but there are no degrees in the certainty of the fact that every unbeliever will be shut out from the blessing of the Gospel of Christ! “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.”

I want you to remove every flattering unction from your souls and to know for sure that, “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Dream not that because you do not happen to be an avowed atheist, or deist, or agnostic, that, therefore, your own form of unbelief is harmless! We read of Israel in the wilderness that, “they could not enter in because of unbelief”—yet they were not atheists! A passive unbelief will ruin a man as surely as an active infidelity! Suppose that an enemy is on this side of a river, destroying everybody? To find safety, the river has to be crossed, and there is but one bridge. Yonder man declares that he will never go over such a bridge—he does not believe in it! He asserts that it is a rotten old thing which would break down under his weight. He hates the structure. He will not even call it a bridge at all! He ridicules all who venture upon it. It is clear that he will stay on this side of the river and die by the pursuer’s sword. He is the type of the avowed skeptic!

But where are you? You say with unfeigned distress, “I am horrified to hear that man talk so of that excellent bridge. I believe that it is well constructed and that it has carried hundreds of thousands over it. I cannot bear to hear a word said against it, for my dear father and mother found refuge by crossing it and they are now in the land of peace.” Yet you do not escape by that bridge, yourself, though well aware of your danger! Do you answer, “Well, I do not feel worthy to go over it.” Why, that is nonsense! It is as if you should say, I cannot swim and, therefore, will cross over the river by means of the bridge. Your unworthiness cannot be a reason for refusing to accept a free salvation! On the contrary, it is a reason why you should accept it at once. However, it matters little what your excuse may be—you will perish forever if you do not believe in Jesus!

Take another illustration. A fatal disease is abroad and a remedy has been discovered of the most effectual kind. One man denounces the medicine, the physician who invented it and the apothecaries who distribute it—he can hardly find words enough in the dictionary with which to express his contempt for what he calls a monstrous quackery. He will evidently receive no benefit from the medicine. That is not your case—you are of quite another mind. You esteem the medicine, reverence the physician and even feel an affection for the apothecaries who distribute it! No question about the matter has ever crossed your mind—on the contrary, you are an advocate for the great remedy and believe firmly that it has healed multitudes of persons. Why do you not take the wholesome medicine yourself? You tell me that you are trying to get better and that you do not quite see how the medicine can heal you.

This shows that you mistrust the power of the medicine to heal you just as you are. You will derive no more benefit from it than the other man who rails at it! It is quite impossible that any man should receive the blessing which comes through the atoning blood of Christ unless he has faith—and whether he goes to the length of an utter contempt of the great Sacrifice, or stands off from it because he does not feel as he could desire—he will surely die without forgiveness. Out of Christ, the doom of eternal wrath will fall on you whether near to the Kingdom of God or far off from it.

I want to talk with those unbelieving people who are not avowedly skeptical. Some of these I have seen and I know that they are a numerous class. They are very sincere and are really seeking after salvation, but the one thing which they refuse to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus. They will not trust their God! They will not believe in the promise which He has made to us in Christ Jesus! They would suffer any penance. They would give anything they possess. They would cut off their right arm—they would consent to lose their eyes—if they might but be saved! But this one matter of trust in God and accepting His way of salvation is the point in which they quarrel with the Most High. Upon this matter, in which the Lord will assuredly never yield to them, they stand out very obstinately, and so prove that they are “a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” If they would obtain the Lord’s blessing, the only way to it is faith. Oh, that they would hold out no longer, for, “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.”

I. To begin, then—our first statement is UNBELIEF IS FROWARDNESS—“they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.” One very frequent disguise of unbelief is that of humility. “I feel myself such a great sinner. I feel so much evil to be in my heart, I dare not believe in Jesus!” If you judged by appearances you might think this unbelief very modest, but, indeed, it is not so. It imitates the tone of humility, but it cannot catch the accent. This deceptive vice dares to hint that the sinner’s unworthiness is a reason why Jesus should not be trusted! What? Would any man tell me that his own wickedness is a reason why he should distrust me? That would be too absurd! Because you are such a sinner, is God, therefore, a deceiver and not to be trusted? This is not humility, but audacity!

Our fearing to trust the promise of God because we are evil is a most perverse piece of wickedness. Surely, God is true, even if we are liars! Our falsehood does not make Him false, or deprive Him of His right to be believed! Do we dare to tell Him that He cannot save when He assuredly promises to save us if we trust Him? Do we deny His willingness to save when He sends us gracious invitations and entreats us to turn to Him? This is insolence—not penitence! However great a sinner you may be, there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared, for, “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” Do not deny this. Do not be so profanely bold as to call Jesus a liar!

Unbelief also claims to be timid. It cries, “I am afraid to come to Christ, afraid to trust Him with my soul.” This is not true fear, but an evil pride! The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau! The sound is that of an amiable timorousness, but the spirit is that of frowardness. Friends, if you truly feared God, you would tremble at the idea of distrusting Him. It is a very daring act of impiety to question any promise of the Most High—it is the height of rebellion to deny the power of the death of His dear Son! That kind of timidity and humility is to be shunned and to be abhorred which dares to make God’s love a dream and His mercy a fiction! Since the Lord’s mercy endures forever; since Jesus has never yet cast out a soul that has come to Him, it is folly to talk of being afraid to come to Him! Dread doubting and fear not to trust your God!

Unbelief is a very froward thing. We repeat the statement and go on to prove it because, in the first place, it calls God a liar. Can anything be worse than this? God says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” and the unbeliever replies, “I cannot believe that Jesus will save me.” That is to say, translating it into plain English—You do not think that God speaks the Truth! You do not believe that God is able to make His promises good to you. You do, in effect, imagine that He has said a great deal more than He means, or promised more than He is able to perform! At any rate, you think it unsafe to trust Him with your soul. I beseech you, if you must transgress, do not select a sin so presumptuous and so provoking as the sin of denying the Truth of the Most High! “He that believes not God has made Him a liar because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.”

Oh, you poor, timorous soul, as some would call you, I will not flatter you, or excuse you, for I am afraid you must be very proud or you would not look the great Father in the face, and say, “You will not receive me if I come back to You like the prodigal child”—when, again and again, He invites you to return and promises to receive you. O Soul, can you dare to look up to the Cross of Jesus and say, “There is no life in a look at the Crucified One for me”? Can you even think of the Holy Spirit and then say that He has no power to change a heart so black and hard as yours? Oh that this miserable slander of God and of His Christ might be stopped!

Again, unbelief is great frowardness because it refuses God’s way of salvation. No man can read the Scriptures without seeing God’s way of salvation is not by works nor by feelings, but by trusting in the Son of God who has offered a full atonement for sin. Now the sinner says, “Lord, I would do or suffer anything if I might, thereby, be saved.” God’s answer is, “Trust in My Son”—and this is put into a great many shapes to make it plain! Jesus says, “This is the work of God”—the highest and noblest work—“that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” But the soul wriggles away from this believing in Jesus. It cries, “Surely I must feel this, that, and the other!” Oh foolish heart! Stop all these vain observations and listen to this one thing—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!” If you will make the Lord your trust, you shall be blessed—but if you will not, you are assuredly accursed—seeing you have rejected the blood of the Eternal Sacrifice, refused the way of mercy which Infinite Love has appointed and done despite to the Spirit of God. To what a pitch of madness you have reached! You will sooner destroy your own soul than treat your God as you would treat an honest man! You can trust your wife, your husband, your father, or your friend—but you will not trust your Maker! You will sooner go to Hell than trust yourself with Christ! Ah me! Ah me!

Unbelief is a very froward thing, again, because it very often makes unreasonable demands of God. When Thomas said, “Unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe,” he was speaking very frowardly. I have heard the sinner say, “Oh, Sir, if I could have a dream! If I could be broken down with anguish, or if I could enjoy some remarkable revelation—THEN I would believe God!” This, also, is frowardness. And so you dare look the Eternal in the face and say, “You shall be a liar to me unless You will gratify my whims and wishes, and do this or that to prove what I admit to be true.” Will you say to your fellow man, “Sir, you have offered to help me in this time of need. I am quite willing to depend upon you for that help, provided you will do it in my way—the way which you propose for my assistance I utterly reject”? You will probably turn your friend against you if you talk so!

Beggars must not be choosers—certainly not with God! If I mistrust a friend who has been good to me all my life, it is an unjust thing. And if I tell him that I cannot believe him unless he will do what I choose to demand of him, I am insulting him. This towards man is evil—but what is it towards God? What? Must God do according to our mind and play the lackey to us or else He shall be under this penalty—that we will not believe His Word nor accept His gracious forgiveness? Shame on unbelief, that it should be so insulting to the God of Heaven before whom angels bow with veiled countenances! Surely, the devil, himself, cannot go further than unbelief—nor so far—for he believes and trembles!

Unbelief is very froward, next, because it indulges hard thoughts of God. Why do you not trust your God to save you by the blood of Jesus? Do you say that, “Salvation by faith is too good to be true”? Is anything too good to come from God, who is infinitely good? Is He not Love? Do you say, “If I were to come to Him, He would not receive me”? How dare you say that when it is written, “Him that comes to Me I will by no means cast out”! “Oh, I have so offended that if I were to cry, ‘Father, I have sinned,’ I could not expect Him to forgive my offense.” This is a base slandering of the heavenly Father! What penitent has He ever repelled? You know not how good He is—He is inconceivably gracious, He delights in mercy! It is His joy to pass by transgression, iniquity and sin. Have you never heard that, “as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than your ways, and His thoughts than your thoughts”? Has He not declared that He will abundantly pardon? Has He not said, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”? Why will you so cruelly defame the Ever-Merciful One? Turn from this wickedness or you will destroy your own soul!

And yet again, unbelief is a very froward thing because it disparages the Lord Jesus. It tramples upon the blood of the Son of God! The unbelieving sinner virtually asserts that he has discovered the limit of the Savior’s power to save and that he stands just over the margin to which His Grace extends, for he thinks that Jesus may save anyone except himself! O Soul, do you doubt the infinite virtue of the Divine Sacrifice? Do you question the power of the intercession of the risen Lord? Is it not true, as He has said it, that He is, “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them”? “Oh, but I am such a singular person.” And are you so singular that you have a right to limit the Holy One of Israel? Oh, if you did but know my Lord and Master, you would not talk so, for He, with a word, can cast out devils, heal the sick and raise the dead! He has but to say “Son, your sins are forgiven you,” and they are forgiven! He has but to look on you, poor sinner, and you shall live! Yes, be assured that if you will look on Him, you shall live! Has He not said, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth”? Has He not also said, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”? If you believe, you shall see the Glory of God! Trust Him, trust Him! He deserves your trust, for He is a great Savior for the greatest of sinners.

And do you not think it is another instance of great frowardness that unbelief casts reflections upon the Holy Spirit? It seems to say, “I feel sorely afraid and, therefore, there is no peace for me. I am too hardened and foolish for the Holy Spirit to lead me to faith in Jesus and, therefore, I will not trust.” “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Change you, man? Why, He has turned millions from darkness to the Light of God! Look upward— see what hosts surround the Throne of Glory and “day without night” magnify His saving Grace! Not save you? Who are you that you should stand out against the witness of the Spirit of Truth? Will you refuse the three-fold witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood? Who are you that you should set yourself up as a kind of vanquisher of Grace, conquering Grace by your sins and saying to the ocean of God’s love, “This far shall you come, but no further”? Your unbelief is a very froward thing—nothing can be said for it—it dishonors Father, Son and Holy Spirit! It denies the Inspired Scripture and keeps your soul in cruel bondage.

This vile unbelief has in it a tendency to destroy the Gospel itself. If it could but have its own way, it would undermine the whole fabric of salvation. When a man says that God cannot save him, he suggests that there maybe others in the same case. Where, then, is Christ’s wisdom in bidding us preach the Gospel to every creature? If it would be vain for one man to believe, each one of us would be afraid that it would be vain for us, also, and where, then, would be the Gospel promise? If it could be proven that any one man, if he believed in Jesus, would not be saved, then the Gospel itself would be disproved! Who among us would have any ground for believing in Christ if we knew it were possible to believe in Him and yet to be cast away? What is this but to rob us all of hope? Why, man, you are scuttling the ship! I mean that such is the tendency of your unbelieving talk.

If Jesus is not worthy to be trusted and you seem to say so by your own refusal to trust Him, then all of us who are resting upon Him for salvation are under a delusion! Do you mean to say this? If you, as a sinner, cannot be saved upon believing in Christ, then the whole Gospel is called into question—you have broken the whole staff of bread for the souls of men! Oh, wicked unbelief! God-dishonoring, soul-killing unbelief! Dear Hearer, be warned against it, for it will shut you out of Heaven unless you shut it out of your heart!

II. And now, secondly, we turn to the better side of our subject and remark that FAITH HAS THE DIVINE APPROVAL. “Blessed,” says God, “is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” We are sure that it so. Wherever there is faith, God is pleased with it, for faith is the sure mark of God’s elect. We can only know them by their believing in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. God would never have set that of which He disapproved to be the mark of His eternal choice, but, as He makes faith in Jesus to be the token of His covenanted ones, He must approve of it. Remember that God has been pleased, in His great love, to make this the main requirement of the Gospel. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

The Lord puts faith into the very forefront because He delights in it. I find not that the Lord has promised salvation to love, or to patience, or to courage—admirable as these Graces are—He has put this crown upon the head of faith. “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” The Lord must certainly approve of that which He makes to be the grand necessity of salvation! Do you not know that God has made faith to be the one thing necessary in the matter of prayer? If you come before Him in prayer, He will not ask you to bring your hands laden with gifts, nor to drop from your tongue choice words of eloquence! But you “must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” or else you can have nothing at His hands. If, then, God has made the efficacy of prayer to turn upon faith, He must have a high estimate of it! He has made faith to be the master key by which all the chambers of His treasury may be unlocked and, therefore, depend upon it, He will never cast it out as unwarranted and presumptuous. “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord His trust,” whoever that man may be!

Beside that, He has been pleased to make faith to be the mode and manner of the spiritual life. “The just shall live”—how? By works? No— “the just shall live by faith.” There is no living except by faith. Let any child of God try to live by sense or reason, even for a day, and see how miserable he will be! It comes to this with me—I must believe my God or else I perish. I can walk the waves by faith—but, beginning to doubt—I sink. It is only as I trust that my soul can bear her daily burden and perform her daily duty. If, then, God has made faith to be the way of His people, rest assured it can never be wrong for a soul to exercise faith in Him. Why, Brothers and Sisters, look what God has done to make us believe! He cannot object to our trusting in Him, seeing He works to that end! For this purpose the Scriptures are in our hands. John says, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:31). The Lord multiplies His exceedingly great and precious promises that we might have strong consolation and find it easy to put our trust in Him!

His Holy Spirit comes on purpose to work faith in the soul and the witness of the Holy Spirit in the Word, and in the hearts of His people, is intended to create and nourish faith in God. The Lord rewards faith even in this life! Read the 11th Chapter of Hebrews—see what men gained, what they enjoyed, what they did by faith! Unbelief does nothing, gets nothing, rejoices in nothing! But faith wins the blessing. The Covenant was made with Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief.” Who are Abraham’s seed? Why, they that trust as Abraham trusted, that exhibit a whole-hearted confidence in God, feeling that what He has promised, He is able, also, to perform! Oh Souls, you cannot have too much faith in God! You need never say, “May I believe?” It is altogether another question—How dare you doubt your God? “But is it true,” asks one, “that faith means trusting in God?” That is it. God bids you trust Jesus and you shall be saved. Will you accept His testimony and trust Jesus? That is the whole of it.

In common life we exhibit faith in man and no one blames us for a legitimate trust. A man says that he has received a thousand pounds. How is that? He has nothing in his hand but a bank-note and that is merely a bit of paper. Yet he is quite confident that he has the thousand pounds because he has faith in the Bank of England and in its promises. That is my own mind as to God’s promise—it is to me the thing which it promises, even as the note for £1,000 is a thousand pounds. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” If you believe God as you believe your friend, you are saved—for faith has brought you into the state of salvation. But this is what men will not come to. They will stop and mutter and sputter, and spin all kinds of cobwebs—and invent all sorts of theories in order to evade the sweet necessity of trusting in the Lord! Simply and wholly to hang upon the bare arm of God and trust the merit of His Son—this is what they will not come to—for they are “a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.”

Furthermore, it is not unreasonable, but it is highly reasonable that God should take pleasure in faith. Beloved, look at yourselves. Judge of the Lord from yourselves in this matter—for the Lord Jesus permits you so to judge of the Father’s mind. You who are fathers, what would you say of your child if he did not believe your promise? If he said that he could not trust you, what would you think of him? If your boy had offended, but refused to ask pardon because he could not believe that you would forgive him, what would be your judgment of his character? Would you be pleased with him if he would not confess that he was wrong, but took to sulking because he thinks you are unwilling to forgive? Would you take pleasure in such a child as that? No, but one of the beautiful things about your little children is just this—that they have not a thought or a care— but trust you implicitly! They never question where Monday’s dinner will come from—father has always found food—father will always do so.

If you make them a promise of a treat on Saturday, look how they will jump for joy! Though there is still a week to come before that promise is to be fulfilled, yet they begin to live on the prospect of it and they enjoy the pleasure a hundred times over by the expectation of it! They will ask you tomorrow whether it is not already Saturday. You are pleased that your children should trust you—it would be most unpleasant for you if they did not. When children have lost confidence in their parents, farewell to domestic peace! If you, being evil, love to be trusted, must it not be so with God? If you, a poor sinner, come and say, “Lord, I have greatly sinned, but I believe You are such a greatly loving Father that you can blot it all out for Jesus’ sake,” do you not think that He will be pleased to hear your confidence? But He cannot be pleased with you when you say, “Lord, I know all about Your Gospel and its blessings, but I really cannot trust You!” Oh, naughty words! Vile words! How can they look for favors who thus throw dirt into the face of God? How shall He bestow His Grace on men who will not even believe Him?

God will accept our faith, for it is in conformity with our position towards Him. What position ought the creature to occupy to its Creator? Should it not constantly depend upon Him? What position should a sinner occupy towards His Savior? Should He not rely upon Him most heartily? What position should a child of God occupy towards the Divine Father but one of loving confidence? Brothers and Sisters, God loves faith because faith supplies the missing link between us and Himself! If we cannot keep His Law perfectly, as, indeed, we cannot, for we have already broken it—yet if we trust Him, our heart is right before Him! The complete confidence of the heart is the essence of obedience and the fountain of it. A servant who thinks evil of his master cannot be an acceptable servant to any man—he will be looking out for his own interests and, whenever they come crosswise with those of his master, we know what will happen! But if, after having acted very crookedly, the man should have proof of his master’s affection for him, and should come to the belief that his master is a model of goodness, then you have laid the foundation of another kind of service, such as no wages can purchase! From a loving trust there will proceed patience, diligence, zeal, fidelity, obedience and everything which is suitable in a servant towards a good master.

So, when a soul comes to make the Lord its trust, it has set out upon the right track, and though it is but at the head of the way, yet it will make advances and arrive at no mean degree of rightness with God. “Oh,” says one, “it seems such a small matter to simply trust.” It may seem so, but within the compass of that little thing there lies a force whose power it would be difficult to measure. Every Grace in embryo lies within true faith! It is a virtue which contains within it seed enough to sow all the acreage of life with holiness! O my Hearer, God blesses faith, therefore, I pray you, render it to Him! God has put His curse on unbelief—oh, may His Spirit help you to shake yourself free of it this day!

III. My time has failed me and, therefore, I must close by noticing, in the last place, this fact—that FAITH IS BLESSEDNESS. “Blessed is that man that makes the Lord his trust.” To believe in God is to be blessed by God. “Oh, but,” says one, “I believe in God and I am in great trouble.” Just so, and within that trouble there dwells a measureless blessing! Your trial is the veil which covers the face of a loving God. Faith will make you sing with the author of this Psalm, “I waited patiently for the Lord.” Faith says, “I am in deep trial, but all things work together for my good. It is, therefore, a great gain to me to be as I am. All these griefs and woes are but a heavenly surgery to cure me of the malady of inbred sin.” This enables the Believer to receive correction with patience. He knows that all is right and, therefore, the child of God frets not and does not kick against the pricks. As in the old days of surgery, a brave man laid himself down and gave himself up to the knife, so does the Believer resign himself to sharp affliction because he knows that it is necessary for his spiritual life and will tend to his perfection in Grace. Thus faith distils a potent medicine from poisonous plants and extracts light out of darkness. Is not this enough to make a man blessed?

Faith, again, releases the afflicted out of trouble. Turn to the Psalm, again, and read—“I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song in my month, even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” If you are shut in by affliction, like a man in a deep pit and, if instead of rising out of it by your exertions, you only sink lower, like one who struggles to rise out of miry clay. If you see no way of escape, whatever, do not despair or resort to desperate means, or think bad of God, but just pray and trust—and soon, like David, you shall bear witness to the blessedness of trusting! “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” The Lord knows how to deliver the righteous when they cannot guess how He will do it! Jehovah is not limited in ways and means. Is the Lord’s arm waxed short? Trust in the Lord in the dark and He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Thousands of saints who have tried and proved the faithfulness of the Lord unite in chorus to declare that He has delivered His people and will deliver them!

The man that makes the Lord his trust is blessed because his faith creates in him a deep peace. It is responsibility which causes the wear and tear of life—at least it is so in my case. Now, he who trusts a matter with the Lord sees that the fulfillment of the promise lies with God and not with him. When we trust in the Lord, we cease to worry because it is the Lord’s business to answer to our faith—

*“Tis mine to obey, ‘tis His to provide.”*  
He who takes the Lord for his Guide no longer worries about the way. He who takes Him for his Watchman rests in perfect peace. He who accepts Him as a Savior looks for sure salvation at His hands. There is a wonderful calm in the heart when we can commit our way unto the Lord—then we delight ourselves in the Lord—and He gives us the desires of our heart. That blessed act of casting every burden upon the Lord is faith’s masterpiece and it gives a sweet quietus to all care. To rest in perfect peace of mind is the best blessedness beneath the stars—and we have it, for we hear the Spirit say concerning all the people of God, “And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.”

Now, suppose you and I were laboring to reach Heaven by our own merits? Then we might bid farewell to peace, for all the way we would be terribly afraid that we had not done enough, or suffered enough, or prayed enough, or repented enough. There is no rest upon that bed, for it is shorter than a man may stretch himself. But, “we who have believed, enter into rest.” Jesus is our Rest—in Him we have peace with God. If I could make the Lord Jesus my trust and yet be lost I should be a great loser, but I should not lose so much as God would! How is that? I should lose my salvation, but the Lord would lose His Glory, His truthfulness, His goodness! His Gospel would be dishonored and His Son robbed of His reward. That cannot be! When a man trusts his money with a firmly established bank, he does not sit up all night to protect his cashbox and iron safe. No, his money is out of his own keeping and he feels at ease about it. Thus we commit our body, soul and spirit into the pierced hands of Jesus who has redeemed us, and we know and are confident that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him until that day. None can know perfect rest of heart but those whose minds are stayed on God by a sincere trust in Him.

Faith, in addition to bringing peace, creates a holy elevation of character, and that is blessedness. The man who lives by sight and walks according to the judgment of the flesh is confined within a range too narrow for blessedness. He is not much above the brute that perishes! His provender and stall are the main dependence of his joy! But the man that lives by faith ranges among eternal things and drinks from celestial fountains! His is a high, sublime, mysterious life. Is it not the life of God in man? I have compared the ascent of faith to climbing a succession of lofty stairways. Up from the depths we have already risen by no other means than faith in the Invisible! Not a single step before us can we see. Beneath and around, clouds and darkness roll in enormous masses—the mist hangs thick over our pathway. Like the world, which the Lord hangs upon nothing, so our life has no visible dependence! We put down our foot on what seems thin as air and behold—it is firm as a rock beneath us! Rising, ever rising, we tread from stair to stair and are safe as the Throne of the Eternal—but we never see more than one step at a time and at times scarcely so much as that. Sight brings us no comfort, but Faith fills us with delight, for above her head shines out as clear as the sun, the Words of the Immutable Jehovah!

“Ah,” cries one, “I could not live with nothing to depend upon!” Oh, my Brother, is God nothing? Elijah had nothing to depend upon, for Cherith dried up and the ravens came no more with bread and meat. And the widow woman had only flour enough for one more meal—yet the little meal in the barrel wasted not and the cruse of oil never failed! Isaiah had nothing to depend upon but God, you know—that is to say, he had only everything. The Believer has nothing to depend upon except his God, but what more does he need? What more could he have? Mark how yon heavens stand without a pillar! See how the round world floats in space without a stay! What more does the universe require than the power of the Eternal? O Believer, get out into these deep waters where there is sea room for faith and no weak creatures to interfere with unmingled reliance upon God—for blessed is that man whose life is rendered sublime by an undivided confidence in the living God!

Lastly, blessed is the believing man when he thinks of dying, for he is sure and certain that he cannot truly die. Faith has so linked him with the one living God that he feels immortality pulsing through his entire nature! When he comes to lie on the bed of sickness and gradually decays, he has no fear of his departure! On the contrary, he looks forward with expectation to be delivered from the bondage and sinfulness of this mortal life and to be admitted into the liberty and perfection of the life eternal! Look at him as he quits the shores of earth—he is not torn away by violence, forced unwillingly into an unknown hereafter—no, he undresses for his last rest solemnly but expectantly! A song is on his lips and glory is in his heart! He has finished his work; he has been washed from his sin; he has embraced the promise and now he falls asleep upon the breast of his Redeemer—assured that he shall wake up in the likeness of his Lord! “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”

Oh, Souls, if you will believe, you shall have both Heaven on earth and Heaven in Heaven! But if you will not believe your God—your Savior— many sorrows shall be to you and, in the end, you will destroy yourselves forever! It matters not what excuses you make about this, or that, or the other—if you will not trust your God, He will have nothing to do with you! If you cannot believe Him. If you will make His Son to be false. He must say at the last, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” It cannot be otherwise! This shall make the great division between you and the righteous—that you believe not in Him—while they have made the Lord their trust. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, you shall be numbered with His chosen! And all His promises shall be fulfilled to you, for with you has He made an everlasting covenant which shall stand fast forever and ever when all visible things have melted away! May God uplift you from the miry clay of unbelief to the rock of confidence in Him, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—192, 738, 685. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2202 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“LO, I COME”—EXPOSITION  
NO. 2202

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING. APRIL 26, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, My ears have You opened: burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I have come—in the volume of the Book it is written of Me—I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:6-8.**

Explained to us by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:5-7—

*“Therefore when He came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, Lo, I come—in the volume of the Book it is written of Me—To do your will, O God.”*

WE have, in the use made of the passage by the inspired Apostle, sufficient authority for applying the quotation from the 40th Psalm to our Divine Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With such a commentary, we are sure of our way and our whereabouts. We might have been perplexed as to its meaning had it not have been for this, although I think, even without the guidance of the New Testament passage, those who are familiar with Holy Writ would have felt that the words could not be fulfilled in David, but must belong to a greater than he, even to the Divine Messiah, who, in the fullness of time, would come into the world. We rejoice that the Lord Jesus, Himself, here speaks of Himself. Who but He can declare His own generation? Here He is both the subject of the Words and the Speaker. The Word is from Himself and of Himself and so we have double reason for devout attention. He tells us what He said long ago. He declares, “Then I said, Lo, I come.” Because He has come to us, we gladly come to Him, and now we reverently wait upon Him to hear what our Lord shall speak, for, doubtless, He will speak peace to us, and will cause us to learn, through His Spirit, the meaning of His Words. O Savior, say to each of our hearts, “Lo, I come”!

I. Without further preface, I call upon you to notice, first, THE SWEEPING AWAY OF THE SHADOW. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. . .burnt offering and sin offering have You not required.”

When the Son of God is born into the world, there is an end of all types by which He was formerly prefigured. The symbols end when the Truth, itself, is made fully manifest. The sacrifices of the Law had their times and place, their teaching and their influence. Blessed were those in Israel whose spiritual minds saw beneath the outward sign and discerned the inward Truth of God! To them the sacrifices of the holy place were a standing means of fellowship with God. Day after day they saw the Great Propitiation as they beheld the morning and the evening lamb—so often as they looked upon a sacrifice, they beheld the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world! In the Paschal supper they were instructed, by the slaying of the unblemished victim, the roasting with fire, the sprinkling of the blood upon the door outside and the feasting upon the sacrifice within.

Spiritual men could have found in the rites and ceremonies of the old Law a very library of Gospel literature! But, alas, the people were carnal, sensual and unbelieving and, therefore, they often forgot, even, to celebrate the appointed sacrifices. The Passover, itself, ceased for long periods and when the festivals were maintained, there was no life or reality in them. After they had been chastened for their neglect and made to wander in exile because of the wandering of their hearts after their idols, they were restored from captivity and were led to keep the Ceremonial Law, but they did it as a heartless, meaningless formality—and thus missed all spiritual benefit—with the unlighted candle in their hand they blindly groped in the dark. They slew the sacrifices and presented their peace offerings, but the soul had gone out of the service and, at last, their God grew weary of their formal worship and said, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me.”

We read, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of hegoats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?” When once the life is gone out of the best symbolism, the Lord abhors the carcass and even a Divinely-ordained ritual becomes a species of idolatry! When the heart is gone out of the externals of worship, they are as shells without the kernel. Habitations without living tenants soon become desolations—and so do forms and ceremonies without their spiritual meaning. Toward the time of our Lord’s coming, the outward worship of Judaism became more and more dead—it was time that it was buried. It had decayed and waxed old and was ready to vanish away—and vanish away it did—for our Lord set aside the first, or old, that He might establish the second, or new. The stars were no longer seen with their twinkling, for the sun had risen!

The removal of these things was wholesale . We have four sorts of sacrifice mentioned here, but I need not go into details. Sacrifices in which blood was shed were abolished when the Son of God offered Himself without spot unto God. Bloodless offerings, such as fine flour, wine, oil, sweet cane bought with money and precious incense—which were tokens of gratitude and consecration—these, also, were no longer laid upon the altar. Both sacrifice and offering were not desired. And burnt offerings, which signified the delight of God in the great Sacrifice, were ended by the Lord’s actual acceptance of that Sacrifice, itself! Even the sin offering, which was burned outside the camp as a thing accursed, ceased altogether. It represented sin laid upon the victim and the victim’s being made a curse on that account. It might have seemed always useful as a reminder, for they were always sinning and always needing a sin offering, but even this was not required.

Nothing of the old Ceremonial Law was spared. Now we have no Ark of the Covenant, with its Shekinah light between the wings of the cherubim. Now we have no bronze laver, no table of showbread, no bronze altar and no sacred veil—the Holy of Holies, itself, is gone! Tabernacle and Temple are both removed. “Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father.” But the time is come when “they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” A clean sweep has been made of all the ancient rites, from circumcision up to the garment with its fringe of blue. These were for the childhood of the Church, the pictures of her first schoolbooks! But we are no longer minors and we have Divine Grace given us to read with opened eyes that everlasting classic of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Now has the brightness of the former dispensation been quite eclipsed by the Glory which excels.

As these outward things vanish, they go away with God’s mark of nonesteem upon them—they are such things as He did not desire. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire.” The Lord God had no desire for matters so trivial and unsatisfactory. They were good for the people, to instruct them—if they had been willing to learn—but they fulfilled no desire of the heart of God. He says, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” By the Prophet Micah, He asks, “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil.” These furnish no delight for the Great Spirit and give no pleasure to the thrice holy Jehovah! The formal worshipper supposed that his offerings were, in and of themselves, pleasing to God and, therefore, brought his “burnt offerings, with calves of a year old.” So far as they believingly understood the meaning of a sacrifice and presented it in faith, their offerings were acceptable, but in themselves considered, these were far from being what the Lord desired.

He that fills Heaven and earth says, “I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he-goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” The spiritual, the infinite, the almighty Jehovah could not desire merely outward ritual, however it might appear glorious to men! The sweetest music is not for His ears, nor the most splendid roses of priests for His eyes. He desired something infinitely more precious than these—and He puts them away with this note of dissatisfaction.

And more, these sacrifices passed away with the mark upon them that they were not what God required. “Burnt offering and sin offering have You not required.” What did God require of man? Obedience. He said by Samuel, “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” He says in another place, “He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” The requirement of the Law was love to God and love to men. This has always been God’s great requirement. He seeks spiritual worship, obedient thought, holy living, grateful praise, devout prayer—these are the requirements of the Creator and Benefactor of men. Ritualistic matters were so far required as they might minister to the good of the people and, while they stood, they could not neglect them without loss. But they were not the grand requirement of a just and holy God and, therefore, men might fulfill these without stint or omission, and yet God would not have of them what He required. “Yes,” He asks, “who has required this at your hand, to tread My courts?” To see His Law magnified, His justice vindicated, His sovereignty acknowledged and His holiness imitated, is more to His mind! Absolute conformity to the standard of moral and spiritual rectitude which He has set up is His demand—and He can be content with nothing less. These things are not found in sacrifice and offering, neither do they always go therewith and, therefore, the outward sacrifice was not what God required.

They were so to be put away as never to be followed by the same kind of things. Shadows are not replaced by other shadows! The ceremonials of Aaron are not to be followed by another set of carnal ordinances! There are some who seem to think that they are to be so. Instead of Aaron, whom God ordained, we have a so-called priesthood among us at this day, claiming an Apostolic succession, which is impossible if they are priests, since no Apostle was a priest! Instead of rites which God has ordained, we have rites of man’s invention! The blessed ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, have been prostituted from their instructive and memorial intent into a kind of witchcraft, so that by what is called, “baptism,” children are said to be born again and made members of Christ and children of God! While in the second, or what they call, “Holy Communion,” the sacrifice of Christ is profanely said to be repeated or continued, even in the unbloody sacrifice of the “mass.”

Ah, Friends! Our Lord did not put away that grand, magnificent system of Mosaic rites to introduce the masquerade in which Rome delights, which certain Anglicans would set up among us! No, no! We have done with the symbolic system and have now but the two outward ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are meant only for Believers who know what it is to be buried with Christ and to feed on Him. You have no right to bring in your own forms and ceremonies and place them in the Church of Christ. Beyond what God has ordained, we may not dare to go—and even in those things we may not rest as though there were anything in them of their own operation apart from their sacred teaching! These are instructive to you if you have a mind to be instructed—and if you know the Truths of God which they set forth. But do not imagine that men have come under another kind of ceremonialism, another system of ritual and rubric, for it is not so. The rites appropriate to priests are abolished with the Aaronic priesthood and can never be restored—“He takes away the first, that He may establish the second.” When He comes into the world, these carnal ordinances must go out of the world! Sacrifice and offering, burnt offering and sin offering and all other patterns of heavenly things are swept away when the heavenly things, themselves, appear!

II. Thus much upon the shadows being swept away. And now, secondly, let us view THE REVELATION OF THE SUBSTANCE. We find the Son of God, Himself, appearing. We read here and we hear Him say—“My ears have you opened.” The Lord Himself comes, even He who is all that these things foreshadowed!

When He comes, He has a prepared ear . The margin has it, “My ears have you digged.” Our ears often need digging, for they are blocked up by sin. The passage to the heart seems to be sealed in the case of fallen man. But when the Savior came, His ears were not as ours, but were attentive to the Divine voice. He says, “He wakens My ears to hear as they that are taught. The Lord God has opened My ears, and I was not rebellious.” Our Lord was quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord. He knew what the will of the Lord was and He could say, “I do always the thing that pleases Him.” As Man, He had a Divine instinct of holiness which made Him to know and love the Father’s will—and caused Him always to translate that will into His own life.

You see He came with opened ears and some think that we have here an allusion to the boring of the ear in the case of the servant who had a right to liberty, but refused to quit his servitude because he loved his master and wished to remain with him forever. It is not certain that there is any such reference, but it is certain that our Lord was bound forever to the service which He had undertaken for His Father—and that He would not go back from it. He pledged Himself to redeem us and He set His face like a flint to do it. He loved His Father and He loved His chosen so much that He vowed to execute the Father’s work, even to what I might call, “the bitter end,” if I did not know that it was a sweet and blessed end to Him. His ears were prepared for His service!

But our Lord came also with a prepared body. Therefore the Apostle Paul, when He quoted this passage, probably taking the words from the Septuagint translation, writes, “A body have You prepared Me.” You will wonder how, in one passage, it should speak of the ears and the next should speak of the body, and yet there is small difference in the sense. We do not think of an ear without a body—that would be a sorry business. The reading in the Hebrews is involved in the text as it stands in the Psalm. If the ear is there, a body is there—you cannot even dream of an ear hearing if separate from the rest of the body! The Apostle gives us the sense of the text rather than the words and, at the same time, dealing as He was with Jews by whom the Septuagint was prized, He quoted from the version which they would be sure to acknowledge—and very properly and wisely so—because that version was perfectly accurate as to the meaning of the Hebrew. Regardless, he was inspired to read it—“A body have You prepared Me.” There was fashioned by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the blessed Virgin, a body fit to embody the Son of God. Worked mysteriously, by means into which we must not inquire—for what God has veiled must remain covered—that body was suited to set forth the great mystery, “God manifest in the flesh.”

The whole body of Christ was prepared for Him and for His great work. To begin with, it was a sinless body, without taint of original sin, otherwise God could not have dwelt in it. It was a body made highly vital and sensitive, probably far beyond what ours are, for sin has a blunting and hardening effect even upon flesh, and His flesh, though it was in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” was not sinful flesh, but flesh which yielded prompt obedience to His spirit, even as His whole human Nature was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. His body was capable of great endurance, so as to know the griefs and agonies and unspeakable sorrows of a delicate, holy and tender kind which it was necessary for Him to bear. “A body have You prepared Me.” In the fullness of time He came into that body, which was admirably adapted to enshrine the Godhead. Wondrous mystery, that the Infant of Bethlehem should be linked with the Infinite! And that the weary Man by the shores of Galilee should be very God of very God, revealed in a body prepared for Him! “A body have You prepared Me”—He had prepared ears and a prepared body.

He who assumed that body was existent before that body was prepared . He says, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come.” He from old eternity dwelt with God—the Word was in the beginning with God—and the Word was God. We could not, any one of us, have said that a body was prepared for us and, therefore, we would come to it, for we had had no existence before our bodies were fashioned! From everlasting to everlasting our Lord is God and He comes out of eternity into time—the Father bringing Him into the world. He was before all worlds and was before He came into the world to dwell in His prepared body!

Beloved, the human Nature of Christ was taken on Him in order that He might be able to do for us that which God desired and required. God desired to see an obedient man, a man who would keep His Law to the fullest—and He sees Him in Christ. God desired to see One who would vindicate the eternal justice and show that sin is no trifle. And, behold, our Lord, the eternal Son of God, entering into that prepared body, was ready to do all this mighty work by rendering to the Law a full recompense for our dishonor of it! An absolutely perfect righteousness He renders unto God—as the second Adam, He presents it for all whom He represents. He bows His head, a victim beneath Jehovah’s sword, that the Truth, justice and honor of God might suffer no detriment. His body was prepared to this end. Incarnation is a means to Atonement. Only a man could vindicate the Law and, therefore, the Son of God became a Man. This is a wonderful Being, this God in our nature. “Emmanuel” is a glorious word! Surely, for the Incarnation and the Atonement, the world was made from the first!

Was this the reason why the morning stars sang together when they saw the cornerstone of the world, because they had an inkling that here, God would be manifest as nowhere else, and the Creator would be wedded to the creature? That God might be manifested in the Christ, it may even be that sin was permitted. Assuredly, there could have been no Sacrifice on Calvary if there had not, first of all, been sin in Eden. The whole scheme—the whole of God’s decrees and acts—worked up to an atoning Savior! Of the pyramid of creation and of Providence, Christ is the apex— He is the flower of all that God has made! His Divine Nature in strange union with humanity constitutes a peerless Person, such as never was before, and can never be again! God in our nature, one Being, and yet wearing two Natures, is altogether unique. He says, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come.” Think of this—it is a Truth of God more fit for meditation than for sermonizing. The Lord give us to know it well by faith!

III. But now, thirdly, I call your attention to THE DECLARATION OF THE CHRIST made in the text—“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come.” Observe when He says this. It is in the time of failure. All the sacrifices had failed. The candle flickered and was dying out. And then the great Light of God arose, even the Eternal Light and, like a trumpet, the words rung out, “Lo, I come.” All this has been of no avail; now I come. It is in the time of failure that Christ always appears. The last of man is the first of God and when we have come to the end of all our power and hope, then the Eternal Power and Godhead appears with its, “Lo, I come.”

When our Lord comes, it is with the view of filling up the vacuum which had now been sorrowfully seen. God does not desire these things. God does not require these things, but He does desire and He does require something better, and lo, the Christ has come to bring that something! That awful gap which was seen in human hope when Moses had passed away and the Aaronic priesthood and all the ordinances of it were gone, Christ was born to fill! It looked as if the light of ages had been quenched, and God’s glorious revelation had been forever withdrawn. And then, in the dark hour, Jesus cries, “Lo, I come!” He fills the blank abyss! He gives to man in reality what he had lost in the shadow!

When He appears, it is as the personal Lord . Lay the stress upon the pronoun, “Lo, I come.” The infinite Ego appears. “Lo, I come.” No mere man could talk thus, and be sane! No servant or Prophet of God would ever say, “Lo, I come.” Saintly men talk not so. God’s Prophets and Apostles have a modest sense of their true position—they never magnify themselves, though they magnify their office. It is for God to say, “Lo, I come.” He who says it takes the body prepared for Him and comes in His own proper personality as the I AM. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” He comes forth from the ivory palaces to inhabit the tents of manhood! He takes upon Himself the body prepared for Him of the Lord God and He stands forth in His matchless personality ready to do the will of God! “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Everything is stored up in His blessed Person and we are complete in Him.

Observe the joyful avowal that He makes— “Lo, I come.” This is no dirge—I think I hear a silver trumpet ring out—“Lo, I come.” Here is a joyful alacrity and intense eagerness! The coming of the Savior was to Him a thing of exceeding willingness. “For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.”

He comes with a word calling attention to it, for He is not ashamed to be made partaker of our flesh. “Lo,” He says, “I come. Behold, behold, I come.” This is no clandestine union. He bids Heaven behold Him come into our Nature! Earth is bid to gaze upon it. O you sinners, listen to this inviting, “Lo!” Others have cried to you, “Lo, here!” And, “Lo, there.” But Jesus looks on you and cries, “Lo, I come.” Look here—turn all your thoughts this way and behold your God in your Nature ready to save you! Verily, the Incarnate God is a subject meet for the loftiest thoughts of sages and for the lowliest thoughts of children. Blessed are the children of Grace who can sit at the feet of the Incarnate God and look up, forgetting all the wisdom of the Greeks and all the sign-seeking of the Jews in the satisfaction which they find in Jesus!

I think, too, I hear in this declaration of the coming One, a note of finality. He takes away the sacrifice from Aaron’s altar, but He says, “Lo, I come.” There is the end of it. “Lo, I come.” Is there anything after this? Can anything supersede this—“Lo, I come”? “Lo, I come” has been the perpetual music of the ages! Read it, “Lo, I am come”—for it is in the present tense and how sweet the sound! Christ is come and joy with Him! Read it, as well, in the future, if you will, “Lo, I come,” for He comes “the second time without sin unto salvation”—here is our chief hope! “Lo, I come.” He, Himself, is the last Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word” and so He was God’s first Word. But He is the end as well as the beginning—God’s last Word to man—Christ is God’s ultimatum! Look for no new Revelation—“Lo, I am come,” shines on forever. Do not ask, “Are You He that should come, or do we look for another?” He has come! Look for no other! Behold, He came to give what God desires, what God requires—what more would you have? Let Him be all your salvation and all your desire. Let Him be “the desire of all nations.” He is the fulfillment of all the requirements of the human race as well as the full amount of what God requires.

IV. Next, I beg you to note THE REFERENCE TO PRECEDING WRITINGS. He says, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.” If I preached from the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, I might fairly declare that in the whole volume of Holy Scripture much is written of our Lord and prescribed for Him as Messiah. The pages of Inspiration are fragrant with the name of Jesus. He is the top line of the entire volume and in the Greek Word I see a half allusion to this. He is the headline of contents to every chapter of Scripture. He is, of all Scripture, the Sum. “In the beginning was the Word.” Everything speaks of Him. The Pentateuch and the books of the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospels and the Epistles all speak of Him. “In the volume of the Book it is written of Me.”

Preaching as I am from the Psalms, I cannot take so long a range. I must look back and find what was written in David’s day and certainly within the Pentateuch. And where do I find it written concerning His coming? The Pentateuch drips with prophecies of Christ as a honeycomb overflowing with its honey. Chiefly is He to be found in the head and front of the book—as early as the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, when Adam and Eve had sinned and we were lost—behold, He is spoken of in the volume of the Book in these terms. “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” So, early was it written that the Redeemer would be born in our nature to vanquish our foe.  
But I confess I do not feel shut out from another interpretation. I conceive that our Lord, here, refers to another Book, the Book of the Divine purposes, the volume of the Eternal Covenant. There was a time before all time, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days—when all that existed was the Lord, who is All in All—then the sacred Three entered into Covenant, in mutual agreement, for a sublime end. Man sinning, the Son of God shall be the Surety. Christ shall bear the result of man’s offense. He shall vindicate the Law of God and make Jehovah’s name more glorious than ever it has been! The Second Person of the Divine Unity was pledged to come and take up the nature of men, and so become the FirstBorn among many Brothers and Sisters to lift up a fallen race, and to save a number that no man can number, elect of God the Father, and given to the Son to be His heritage, His portion, His bride.

Then did the Well-Beloved strike hands with the Eternal God and enter into Covenant engagements on our behalf— “In the volume of the Book it is written.” That sealed Book, upon whose secrets no angel’s eyes have looked, a Book written by the finger of God long before He wrote the Book of the Law upon tables of stone! That Book of God may be spoken of in the Psalm, “And in Your Book all My members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Our Lord came to carry out all His suretyship engagements—His work is the exact fulfillment of His engagements recorded in the Everlasting Covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” He acts out every mysterious line and syllable, even to the fullest. Then He said, “A body have You prepared Me. Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.” It is always a pleasing study to see our Lord, both in the written Word, and in the Everlasting Covenant of Grace.

V. I must close with the fifth point, THE DELIGHT OF HIM THAT COMES. He said, “Lo, I come.” As I have already told you, there is wonderful delight in that exclamation—“Lo, I come.” But lest we should mistake our Lord, He adds, “I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.” There can be no denial of His joy in His service!

Note well that He came in compete subservience to His Father, God. “I delight to do”—what? “Your will.” His own will was absorbed in the Divine will! His pleasure it was to say, “Not as I will, but as You will.” It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. Though He was Lord and God, He became a lowly servant for our sakes! Though high as the highest, He stooped low as the lowest! The King of Kings was the Servant of Servants, that He might save His people! He took upon Him the form of a Servant, girded Himself and stood obediently at His Father’s call.

He had a prospective delight as to His work . Before He came, He delighted in the thought of His Incarnation. The Supreme Wisdom says, “My delights were with the sons of men.” Happy in His Father’s courts, He yet looked forward to an access of happiness in becoming Man. “Can that be?” asks one. Could the Son of God be happier than He was? As God, He was infinitely blessed, but He knew nothing by experience of the life of man—and into that sphere He desired to enter. To the Godhead there can be no enlargement, for it is infinite, but still, there can be an addition— our Lord was to add the nature of man to that of God! He would live as Man, suffer as Man, and triumph as Man—and yet remain God! And to this He looked forward with a strange delight, inexplicable except upon the knowledge of the great love He bore to us. He had given His heart so entirely to His dear bride, whom He saw in the glass of predestination, that for her He would endure all things—

*“Yes, says the Lord, for her I’ll go  
Through all the depths of care and woe,  
And on the Cross will even dare  
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”*

It was wondrous love! Our Lord’s love surpasses all language and even thought. I am talking prodigies and miracles at every word I utter. It was delightful to our Lord to come here!

“What did He delight in?” asks one. Evidently He delighted in God’s Law. “Your Law is within My heart.” He resolved that the beauties of the Law of the Lord should be displayed by being embodied in His own life and that its claims should be vindicated by His own death. To achieve this, He delighted to come and keep it and honor it by an obedience both active and passive. He also delighted in God’s will and that is somewhat more, for law is the expression of will and this may be altered. But the will of the great King never changes. Our Lord delighted to carry out all the purposes and desires of the Most High God. He so delighted in the will of God that He came to do it and to bear it, “by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

He delighted also in God. He took an intense delight in glorifying the Father. He came to reveal the Father and make Him to be beloved of men. He did all things to please God. Moreover, He took a delight in us and here, though the object of His love is less, the love, itself, is heightened by the conspicuous condescension. The Lord Jesus took a deep delight in His people, whose names were written on His heart and engraved on the palms of His hands. His heart was fixed on their redemption and, therefore, He would present Himself as a Sacrifice on their behalf. The people whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world lay on His very soul—for them He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened till it was accomplished. He gave Himself no rest till He had left both joy and rest to ransom His own.

May I go a step further and say that He had an actual delight in His coming among men? “I delight to do Your will, O My God”—not merely to think of doing it. When our Lord was here, He was the most blessed of men! Are you amazed? Do you remind me that He was “a Man of Sorrows”? I grant you that none was more afflicted, but I still stand to it, that within Him dwelt a joy of the highest order. To Him it was joy to be in sorrow—and honor to be put to shame. Do you think that lightens our estimate of His self-denial and disinterestedness? No, it adds weight to it! Some people fancy that there is no credit in doing a thing unless you are miserable in doing it. No, Brothers and Sisters, that is the very reverse! Obedience which is unwillingly offered and causes no joy in the soul is not acceptable. We must serve God with our heart, or we do not serve Him. Obedience rendered without delight in rendering it is only half obedience! You shall say what you will about the greatness of my Lord’s agonies. You shall never go too far in your estimate of His unfathomable grief, but going with you to the fullest in it all, I shall still take liberty to say that He had within Himself a fountain of joy which enabled Him to endure the Cross and even to despise the shame! Blessed among men was He, even when He was made a curse for us! With delight He gave Himself for us and made a cheerful surrender of Himself, that He might be the Ransom for many. The text is express upon that fact.

And all this because our Lord came with such intense heartiness. He says, “Yes, Your Law is within My heart.” Our Lord is most thorough in all that He does. His work is never slovenly, nor in a half-hearted way. He does not even sit on the well and talk to a poor woman, but what His heart is there. He does not go into a fisherman’s hut, but what His heart is there and He heals the sick one. He does not sit down to supper with His followers, but what His heart is there and He reveals His love. I wish we were always at home when the Lord calls for us! Sometimes we are all abroad and our heart is away from the service of our Father—but He loved the Lord with all His heart, mind and strength. For us He gave His whole being, rejoicing to redeem us! He was always intense. Whether He preached or practiced, Jesus was all there and always there. Hence His delight, for what a man does with his heart he delights to do. These two sentences are melodious of joy to my ears! “I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.”

Hear this one other word. It is all done now. Jesus has fulfilled the Father’s will in the salvation in the midst of His ransomed ones. And shall I tell you, need I tell you, what must be the delight, the heavenly Joy of our Lord, now that the work is finished? He is now the focus, the center, the source of bliss! What must be His own delight? We often say of the angels that they rejoice over one sinner that repents. I doubt not that they do, but the Bible does not say so. The Bible says, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” What does it mean, “the presence of the angels”? Why, that the angels see the joy of Christ when sinners repent! Hear them say to one another, “Behold the Father’s face! How He rejoices! Gaze on the Countenance of the Son! What a Heaven of delight shines in those eyes of His! Jesus wept for these sinners, but now He rejoices over them! How resplendent are the nail-prints today, for the redeemed of the Lord’s death are believing and repenting! That blessed Countenance which is always as a sun, shines in the fullness of its strength now that He sees of the travail of His soul.” He who suffered feels a joy unsearchable—

*“The first-born sons of light  
Desire in vain its depths to see:  
They cannot read the mystery—  
The length, the breadth, the height.”*

Oh, the joy of triumphant love! The joy of the Crucified, whose prepared body is the body of His Glory as once it was the body of His humiliation! In that Manhood He still rejoices and delights to do the will of the Father. My time has fled and yet I am expected to say something about missions. What shall I say? My Brothers, Sisters—all of you—do you know anything about the Truths of God I have spoken? Then go and tell the heathen that the Lord is come! Here is a message worth the telling! Mary Magdalene and the other Marys hasten to tell the disciples that the Lord had risen—will you not go and tell them that He has come down to save? “Lo, I come,” He says. Will you not take up His Words and go to the people who have never heard of Him and say, “Lo, He has come”? Tell the Ethiopians, the Chinese, the Hindus and all the islands of the sea, that God has come here to save men and has taken a prepared body, that He might give to God all He required and all that He desired, that sinful men might be accepted in the Beloved, with whom God the Father is well pleased!

Go, and take to the heathen this sacred Book. “In the volume of the Book it is written of Him.” Do not begin to doubt the Book, yourself. Why should you send missionaries to teach them about a Book in which you do not, yourself, believe? Tell the nations that, “In the volume of the Book it is written of Him.” Believe this Book and spread it! Help Bible Societies and all such efforts. And aid Missionary Societies which carry the Book and proclaim the Savior! The men of the Book of God are the men of God such as the world needs. Bid such men go and open the Book of God and teach the nations its blessed news!

Go, dear Friends, and assure the heathen that there is happiness in obedience to God. So the Savior found it. He delighted in God’s will, even to the death! And they will also know delight, as in their measures they bow before the authority of the Word and the will of the one living and true God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Jehovah, the I AM, must be worshipped, for beside Him there is none else. Give glory unto God, whom our Lord Jesus has come to glorify. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—383, 271, 229.  
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“LO, I COME”—APPLICATION  
NO. 2203

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MAY 3, 1891, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Then said I, Lo, I come.”  
Psalm 40:7.**

To my great sorrow, last Sunday night I was unable to preach. I had prepared a sermon upon this text with much hope of its usefulness, for I intended it to be a supplement to the morning sermon [Sermon #2202, “Lo, I Come”—Exposition”] which was a doctrinal exposition. The evening sermon was intended to be practical and to commend the whole subject to the attention of enquiring sinners. I came here feeling quite fit to preach, but an overpowering nervousness oppressed me and I lost all selfcontrol—and left the pulpit in anguish. I come here this morning with the same subject. I have been turning it over and wondering why it was so. Perhaps this sermon was not to be preached on that occasion because God would teach the preacher more of his own feebleness and cast him more fully upon the Divine Strength. That has certainly been the effect upon my own heart.

Perhaps, also, there are some here, this morning, who were not here last Lord’s-Day evening, whom God intends to bless by the sermon. The people were not here, perhaps, for whom the eternal decree of God had designed the message and they may be here now. You that are new to this place should consider the strange circumstance—which never happened to me before in the 40 years of my ministry—and you may be led to enquire whether my bow was then unstrung that the arrow might find its ordained target in your heart! The two sermons will now go forth together from the press and, perhaps, going together, they may prove to be like two hands of love with which to embrace lost souls and draw them to the Savior, who herein says, “Lo, I come.” God grant it may be so!

The times when our Lord says, “Lo, I come,” have all a family likeness. There are certain crystals which assume a regular shape and, if you break them, each fragment will show the same conformation. If you were to dash them to shivers, every particle of the crystal would still be of the same form. Now, the goings forth of Christ which were of old, His coming at Calvary and that great Advent when He shall come a second time to judge the earth in righteousness—all these have a likeness, the one to the other. But there is a coming of what I may call a lesser sort, when Jesus cries, “Lo, I come,” to each individual sinner and brings a revelation of pardon and salvation—and this has about it much which is similar to the great ones. My one desire this morning is to set forth the Lord Jesus as saying to you, as once He did to me, “Lo, I come.”

He still cries to the weak, destitute, forlorn, hopeless sinner, “Lo, I come.” I shall talk about that coming and hope that you will experience it, now, and thus be able to follow me in what I say. I speak mainly to the unconverted, but while I do so, I shall hope to be refreshing the grateful memories of those already saved—but this will all depend upon the working of the Spirit of God. To Him, then, lift up your hearts in prayer.

I. I will commence with this observation—THE LORD CHRIST HAS TIMES OF HIS FIRST COMINGS TO MEN—“Then said I, Lo, I come.”  
What are these times? Maybe some here present have reached this season and this very day is the time of blessing when the text shall be fulfilled—“Then said I, Lo, I come.” Go with me to the first record in the volume of the Book, when it was said that He should come. You will find it in the early chapters of Genesis.  
Jesus said, “Lo, I come,” when man’s probation was a failure. Man in the Garden of Eden had every advantage for obedience and life. He had a perfect nature, created without bias towards evil and he was surrounded with every inducement to continue loyal to his Maker. He was placed under no burdensome law. The precept was simple and plain—“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.” Only one tree was reserved—all the rest were given up to be freely enjoyed. In a very short time—some think it was on the first day, but that we do not know—our mother Eve ate of the fruit and father Adam followed her, and thus human probation ended in total failure. They were weighed in the balances and found wanting—“Adam, being in honor, continued not.” At that point we read in the volume of the Book that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Then our Redeemer said, “Lo, I come.”  
Listen to me, my Friend—you, also, have had your probation, as you have thought it to be. You left your father’s roof with every hope. Your mother judged you to be of a most amiable character and your friends expected to see in you one whose life would honor the family. You thought so yourself. Your probation has reversed that hope—you have turned out far different then you should have and, looking back upon the whole of your life to this moment, you ought to be ashamed! It has been a terrible breaking down for you and for all who know you—and you are sitting in this place feeling, “Yes, it is so. The tests have proven me to be as a broken reed. I am under condemnation by reason of my transgressions against God.” How rejoiced I am to tell you that, at such a time when you are conscious that you are a dead failure, Jesus says, “Lo, I come!” If you had not been a failure, you would not have needed Him and He never comes as a superfluity. But now, in your complete breakdown, you must have Him or perish—and in infinite pity he cries, “Lo, I come!” Is not this good news for you? Believe it and live!  
That also was a time when man’s clever dealings with the devil had turned out a great failure. The serpent came and said, “God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” How craftily he put it! How cunningly he insinuated that God was jealous of what man might become and was keeping him back from a nobler destiny! He even dared to say, “You shall not surely die,” thus giving the Lord the lie direct! He seemed to say—“His threat is a mere bugbear, a thing to scare you from a great advance in knowledge and position! You shall not surely die.” Eve, in her supposed wisdom, was not able to cope with the serpent’s subtlety. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” The devil had played his cards so well that man was left bankrupt of virtue, bankrupt of happiness, bankrupt of hope!

 Then, in the volume of the Book, it was written, “I said, Lo, I come.” Yes, in the exact hour when hellish falsehood had robbed man of everything!  
No man has yet dealt with the devil without being a loser. The archdeceiver promises very fairly, but he lies from beginning to end. I know he promised you pleasure unbounded and liberty unrestrained. Now the pleasure is burnt out and the ashes of that which once blazed and crackled are terrible to look upon! As for liberty, where is it? You have become the bond-slave of sin. You were to enjoy life and lo, you are plunged in death! It may be there are in this house persons who bear in their bodies the marks, not of the Lord Jesus, but of the devil’s temptations. He has made you to sin so that your bones are filled with the sins of your youth—and you know it. He needs a long spoon who eats out of the same dish as the devil and your spoon has not been long enough! Sin has overreached and betrayed you. And you stand trembling before God as the result of having listened to the falsehoods of Hell and having rejected the commands of Heaven  
Supposing such a person to be present—and I feel sure he is—I pray that he may hear my text as from the Lord Jesus, Himself. “Then said I, Lo, I come.” The devil has trod you down, but Jesus comes to raise you up! Your paradise is lost, but by Him it is to be restored! Jesus has come to give repentance and remission of sins. That crafty head which deceived you—the Lord Jesus has broken—He came for this purpose. If you had not been betrayed, you would not have needed a Deliverer, but your misery has made room for His mercy. Not while Adam is perfect in Paradise is there any news of the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent’s head. But after the serpent has done his deceitful work and has ruined the race, then we hear that ancient Gospel of God and see the only hope of fallen man! Here is good cheer for you who look with shame upon your foolish yielding to Satan’s deceits! You are caught as silly birds in a snare! You have been as foolish as the fish of the sea which are taken in a net, but when you are captives, Christ comes to be your Liberator and God commends His love towards you in that while you are yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly!  
Further than this, when we find the first promise of our Lord’s coming, “in the volume of the Book,” we find that man’s covering was a failure. The guilty pair had gathered the leaves of the fig tree and had made themselves aprons, for they knew that they were naked. This was the first fruit of that boasted Tree of Knowledge and it is the principal one to this day! Their scant coverlet contented them for a little while, but when the voice of the Lord God was heard in the Garden, they confessed that their aprons were good for nothing, for Adam acknowledged that he was afraid because he was naked and, therefore, he had hidden himself in the thick groves of the Garden. It is easy to make a covering which pleases us for a season, but self-righteousness, presumption, pretended fidelity and fancied natural excellence—all those things are like green fig leaves which shrivel up before long, lose their freshness—and are rather an exposure than a covering.  
It may be that my hearer has found his imaginary virtues failing him. It was when our first parents knew that they were naked that the Savior said, “Lo, I come.” My downcast Hearer, if you are no longer in your own esteem, as good as you used to be. If you can no longer hide the fact that you have broken God’s Law and deserve His wrath. If you no longer believe the devil’s lie that you shall suffer no penalty, but may even be the better for sin, then our Lord, the Savior, says to you, “Lo, I come.” To you, O naked Sinner, shivering in your own shame, blushing scarlet with conviction—to you He comes! When you have nothing left of your own, He comes to be your robe of righteousness wherein you may stand accepted with God!  
That first news of the coming Champion came at a time when all man’s pleas were failures. Adam had thrown the blame on Eve—“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” Eve had also thrown the blame on the serpent, but the Lord God had silenced all such excuses and driven them from their refuges. He had made them feel their guilt and had pronounced upon them the inevitable sentence— and then it was that He spoke of the “Seed of the woman.” Here was man’s first and last—and best hope! So too, my Friend, when you dare no longer plead your innocence, nor mention extenuations and excuses, then Jesus comes in! If conscience oppresses you so sorely that you cannot escape from it. If it is so that all you can say is “Guilty! Willfully Guilty,” then Jesus comes! If you neither blame your surroundings, nor your companions, nor the Providence of God, nor your physical weakness, nor anything else, but just take all the blame to yourself because you cannot help doing so—then Jesus comes in! Verily you have sinned against God, against your parents, against your fellow men, against the Light of God, against knowledge, against conscience and against the Holy Spirit! No wonder, therefore, that you stand speechless, unable to offer any plea by way of self-justification! It is in that moment of shame and confusion that the Savior says, “Lo, I come,” for such as you are He is an Advocate! When a sinner cannot plead for himself, Christ pleads for him! When his excuses have come to an end, then will the Lord put away his sin through His own great Sacrifice. Is not this a precious Gospel Word?  
When our Lord did actually arrive, fulfilling the text by being born of a woman, it was when man’s religion had proven a failure. Sacrifices and offerings had ceased to be of any value—God had put them away as a weariness to Him. The scribes and the Pharisees, with all their phylacteries and wide-bordered garments, were a mere sham. There seemed to be no true religion left upon the earth. Then said Christ, “Lo, I come!” There was never a darker 30 years than when Herod slew the innocents and the chief priests and scribes pursued the Son of God and, at last, nailed Him to the tree. It was then that Jesus came to us to redeem us by His death! Do I speak to any man here whose religion has broken down? You have observed a host of rites and ceremonies—you were christened in your infancy, you were duly confirmed, you have taken what you call, “the blessed sacrament.” Or it may be you have always sat in the most plain of Meeting Houses and listened to the most orthodox of preachers—and you have been among the most religious of religious people—but now, at last, the Spirit of God has shown you that all these performances and attendances are worthless cobwebs which avail you nothing! You now see that— *“Not all the outward forms on earth,  
Nor rites that God has given,  
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,  
Can raise a soul to Heaven.”*  
You are just now driven to despair because the palace of your imaginary excellence has vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision. If I had told you that your religiousness was of no value, you would have been very angry with me and, perhaps, you would have said, “That is a bigoted remark and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for making it!” But now the Spirit of God has told you the same and you feel its force—He is great at convincing of sin! When the Spirit of Truth comes to deal with the religiousness of the flesh, He withers it in a moment! All religion which is not spiritual is worthless. All religion which is not the supernatural product of the Holy Spirit is a fiction. One breath from the Spirit of God withers all the beauty of our pride and destroys the comeliness of our conceit and then, when our own religion is dashed to shivers, the Lord Jesus comes in, saying, “Lo, I come.” He delights to come in His glorious Personality when the Pharisee can no longer say, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men” and when the once bold fisherman is crying, “Lord, save, or I perish.” If you feel that you need something infinitely better than Churchianity, or Dissenterism, or Methodism—in fact, that you need Christ, Himself, to be formed in you—then to you, even to you, Jesus says, “Lo, I come.” When man is at his worst, Christ is seen at His best. The Lord walks to us on the sea in the middle watch of the night. He draws near to those souls which draw near to death. When you part with self, you meet with Christ. When no shred of hope remains, then Jesus says, “Lo, I come.”  
Once more. The Lord Jesus is to come a second time and when will He come? He will come when man’s hope is a failure. He will come when iniquity abounds and the love of many has waxed cold. He will come when dreams of a golden age shall be turned into the dread reality of abounding evil. Do not dream that the world will go on improving and improving— and that the improvement will naturally culminate in the millennium. No such thing! It may grow better for a while—better under certain aspects— but, afterwards, the power of the better element will ebb out like the sea, even though each wave should look like an advance. That day shall not come except there is a falling away first. Even the wise virgins will sleep and the men of the world will be, as in the days of Noah, eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage.  
And then, all of a sudden, the Lord will come as a thief in the night! The deluge of fire will find men as unprepared as did the deluge of water! He will come taking vengeance on His adversaries. When things wax worse and worse we see the tokens of His speedy coming. He will shortly appear, for the sky is darkening. When every hope will seem blotted out and nothing but grim ages of anarchy and ungodliness are to be expected, then our Deliverer will come! When the count of bricks was doubled in Egypt, Moses came. And when the world attains to its utmost unbelief and iniquity, Jesus will come. So at this moment my Hearer may be saying, “I cannot be worse than I am; if I am not actually already in Hell, yet I feel a fire within which tortures my soul! The sword of vengeance hangs over my head suspended by a single hair! I tremble to live and I fear to die. Lost! Lost! Lost! I am past hope!” This is the time for my text—“

Then said I, Lo, I come.” He who is able to save to the uttermost appears to the soul when every other hope disappears. In your deep distress, I see a token for good! You are now reduced to spiritual death and now, I trust, the Eternal Life will visit you!  
Now all this I put before you in simple language, believing what I say, and trusting that if I describe your case, you will know that I mean it for you. I have heard of a preacher who was so fearful lest he should be thought personal, that he said to his congregation, “Lest any of you should think that what I have said was meant for you, I would observe that the sermon I am preaching was prepared for a congregation in Massachusetts.” I can plead nothing of the sort! I refer to you, my Hearer, in the most pointed manner! I will attend to Massachusetts, if ever the Lord sends me there, but just now, I mean YOU. Oh, that you may have Grace to take home these thoughts to yourselves, for if you do, they will, by the Spirit’s power, bring the light of hope into your souls!  
II. Secondly, I would remark that CHRIST COMES TO SINNERS IN THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON—“Then said I, Lo, I come.” Note that glorious, I! Have you not seen people engaged in urgent work who did not understand their business? Apprentices and other unskilled people are muddling time away. They are making bad, worse, and running great risk. Perhaps a great calamity will occur if the work is not done well and quickly. A firstrate worker is sent for. See, the man has come who understands the business. He cries, “Let me come! Stand out of my way! You are on the wrong tack—let me do it myself!” You have not blamed him for egotism, for the thing needed to be done and he could do it—and the others could not. Everybody recognized the master workman and gave place to him. The announcement of his coming was the end of the muddle and the signal of hope! Even so, Jesus comes to you sinners and His Presence is your salvation! He says, “Lo, I come.” What does He mean?  
He means, the setting of all else on one side. There is the priest—he has not helped you much. He may go, for Jesus says, “Lo, I come.” There are your own efforts and doings. There are your feelings and thoughts. There are your ceremonies and austerities. There are your prayers and tears. There are your hearings and readings—all these must be laid aside as grounds of confidence—and Jesus, alone, must be your trust. He can do for you what none of these can. You are trying to work yourself up to repentance and faith, but you cannot succeed. Let Him come and He will bring every good thing with Him. It is glorious to see our Lord throwing down all our bowing walls and tottering fences and to hear Him cry, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation.” Everything else vanishes before His perfect salvation!  
Before Him there is a setting aside of self. You have been your own confidence. What you could feel, or do, or think, or resolve, had become the ground of your confidence, but now Jesus puts self down and He is, Himself, exalted. By working yourself to death, you cannot effect our own salvation. Lo, Jesus comes to save you! You cannot weave yourself a garment. Lo, He comes to clothe you from head to foot with His own seamless robe of righteousness! He annihilates self that He may fill all things.  
Here is a glorious setting of Himself at our side and in our place. Mr. Moody tells a story which I would gladly hope may be true, for one would like to hear something good about a Czar of Russia, and especially about our once enemy, the Emperor Nicholas. The story concerns a soldier in the barracks who was much distressed by his heavy debts. He was in despair, for he owed a great deal of money and could not tell where to get it. He took a piece of paper and made a list of his debts and underneath the list he wrote, “Who will pay these debts?” He then lay down on his bunk and fell asleep, with the paper before him. The Emperor of Russia passed by and, taking up the paper, read it, and being in a gracious mood, signed at the bottom, “Nicholas.” Was not that a splendid answer to the question? When the soldier woke up and read it, he could scarcely believe his own eyes. “Who will pay these debts?” was the despairing question. “Nicholas,” was the all-sufficient answer! So are we answered! Who will bear our sins? The grand reply is, “JESUS.” He puts His own name to our liabilities and, in effect, that He may meet them, He says, “Lo, I come.”  
Your debt of sin is discharged when you believe in Christ Jesus. “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” but the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin! You are not now to bear your own sins. Behold the Scapegoat, who carries them away into the wilderness! Yes, Jesus says, “Lo, I come!” He takes our sins upon Himself. He bears their penalty and we go free! Blessed words—“Lo, I come”—I come to take your weight of sin, your burden of punishment! I come to be made a curse for you, that you may be made the righteousness of God in Me. Sinner, stand out of the way and let Jesus appear for you and fill your place! He sets you on one side and then He sets Himself where you have been! Jesus is now the one Pillar on which to lean, the one Foundation on which to build, the one and only Rest for our weary souls!

He sets Himself where we can see Him, for He cries, “Lo, I come.” That is to say, “See Me come.” He comes openly, that we may see Him clearly. How I wish the Lord would reveal Himself at this moment to each one of those who are weary of earth, of self, of sin and, possibly, even weary of life, itself! Oh, if you could but see Jesus standing in your place, you would have faith to stand in His place and so become, “accepted in the Beloved”! O Lord, hear my prayer, and cause poor hearts to see You descending from the skies, to uplift sinners from the dark abyss! Holy Spirit, touch that young man’s eyes with heavenly salve, that he may see where salvation lies. Deal with that poor woman’s dim eyes, also, that she may perceive the Lord Christ and find peace in Him. Jesus cries, “Lo, I come! Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth”—

*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee.  
Then look, sinner—look unto Him and be saved— Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”*

Should you even lie in all the despair and desolation which I described, I would persuade you to believe in Jesus! Trust Him and you shall find Him all that you need!

Our lord sets Himself to be permanently our All in All . When He came on earth, He did not leave His work till He had finished it. Even when He rose to Glory, He continued His service for His chosen, living to intercede for them. Jesus was a Savior 1,900 years ago and He is still a Savior—and He will be a Savior until all the chosen race shall have been gathered Home. He tells us, “I said, Lo, I come,” but He does not say, “I said, I will go away, and quit the work.” Our Lord’s ear is bored and He goes out no more from the service of salvation. It is not written of any penitent souls, “You shall seek Me, but shall not find Me.” But it is written, “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” O my Hearer, you are now in the place where the Gospel is preached to you—yes, to you, for we are sent to preach the Gospel to every creature! And though you should be the worst, most benighted and most guilty of all the creatures out of Hell, yet you are a creature, and we preach Christ to you!

O poor Heart, may the Lord Jesus say to you “Lo, I come!” for He comes to stay—to stay until He has worked salvation in you as He has worked out salvation for you. He will not leave a Believer till He has presented him spotless before the Throne of God with exceeding joy. I wish I could make all this most clear and plain. You are altogether ruined by your own fault and you cannot undo the evil. You have done all you can and it has come to nothing. You are steeped in sin up to your throat—yes, the filth has gone over your head—you are as one drowned in black waters. Despairing one, cast not your eyes around to seek for a friend, for you will look in vain to men! No arm can rescue you, save one, and that is the arm of Jesus who now cries, “Lo, I come!” Set everything else on one side and trust yourself with the Savior, Christ the Lord!

III. Oh, that many may be comforted while I dwell on the third head! CHRIST IN HIS COMING IS HIS OWN INTRODUCTION. Here our Lord is His own herald, “Lo, I come.” He does not wait for an eloquent preacher to act as master of ceremonies for Him—He introduces Himself. Therefore even I, the simplest talker on earth, may prove quite sufficient for my Lord’s purpose if He will graciously condescend to bless these plain words of mine. It is not I that say that Jesus comes, but in the text our Lord, Himself, declares, “Then said I, Lo, I come.” You need not do anything to draw Christ’s attention to you—it is Christ who draws your attention to Himself! Do you see this? You are the blind bat and He is all eyes towards you and bids you look on Him. I hear you cry, “Lord, remember me,” and I hear Him answer, “Soul, remember Me.” He bids you look on Him when you beseech Him to look on you!

He comes when quite unsought, or sought for in a wrong way . To many men and women, Christ has come though they had not even desired Him. Yes, He has come even to those who hated Him. Saul of Tarsus was on His way to worry the saints at Damascus, but Jesus said, “Lo, I come”— and when He looked out of Heaven, He turned Saul, the persecutor, into Paul, the Apostle! The promise is fulfilled, “I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me.” Herein is the glorious sovereignty of His love fully exercised and Grace reigning supreme. “Lo, I come,” is the announcement of majestic Grace which waits not for man, neither tarries for the sons of men.

Our Lord Jesus is the way to Himself. Did you ever notice that? He Himself comes to us and so He is the way by which we meet Him. He is our rest and the way to our rest. He says, “I am the way.” You want to know how to get to Christ? You have

 not to get to Christ, for He has come to you! It is well for you to come to Christ, but that is only possible because Christ has come to you! Jesus is near you—near you now. Backslider, He comes to you! Wandering Soul, roving to the very brink of perdition, the good Shepherd cries, “Lo, I come.” He is the way to Himself!

Remember, also, that He is the blessing which He brings. Jesus not only gives life and resurrection, but He says, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” Christ is Salvation and everything necessary to salvation is in Him. If He comes, all good comes with Him, or rather, in Him. An enquirer once said to a minister, “The next step for me is to get a deeper conviction of sin.” The minister said, “No such thing, my Friend—the next step is to trust in Jesus, for He says, Come unto Me.” To come to Jesus, or rather to receive Jesus who has come to us, is the one essential step into eternal salvation. Though our Lord says, “Come unto Me,” He has preceded it with this other word, “Lo, I come.” Poor cripple, if you cannot come to Jesus, ask Him to come to you and He will! Here you lie and you have been for years in this case—you have no man to put you into the pool and it would do you no good if he did—but Jesus can make you whole and He is here! You cannot stir hand or foot because of spiritual paralysis, but your case is not hopeless. Listen to my Lord in the text, “Then said I, Lo, I come.” He has no paralysis! He can come, leaping over the mountains of division! I know my Lord came to me, or I should never have come to Him—why should He not come to you? I came to Him because He came to me—  
Why should He not draw you, also? Is He not doing so? Yield to the pressure of His love!

*“He drew me, and I followed on, Charmed to confess the voice Divine.”*

“Then said I, Lo, I come.” You see our Lord is His own spokesman. He says to me, “Go and tell those people about My coming”—and I gladly do so—but you will forget my words and refuse to accept the Coming One. Your consciences will be unawakened, your hearts unmoved—I fear it will be so. But if this text is fulfilled concerning our Lord this day—“Then said I, Lo, I come”—you will hear HIM! If He speaks, He is, Himself, the Almighty Word, and His voice will reach your hearts and accomplish His purpose! Dear Christian people, join with me in this prayer—Lord, speak to Your chosen ones that lie here in their death-like despair, far off from You, and say to each one of them, “Lo, I come.” O downcast Soul, this is your morning—this is the set time to favor you—this day is salvation come to your house and to your heart! Make haste and come down from the tree of your frivolity or your self-righteousness! Receive the Lord Jesus, for today He must abide in your house and in your heart—the hour for the imperial “must” of the eternal purpose has arrived! God grant it may be so! May this be an hour of which Jesus shall declare—“Then said I, Lo, I come!”

IV. Our next point is this—CHRIST, TO CHEER US, REVEALS HIS REASONS FOR COMING. Only a few words on this. Note the rest of the verse—“Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me.” When we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly because it was the due time according to Covenant purposes. Christ comes to a guilty sinner just as He once came to a manger and a stable, because so it was appointed. There is nothing for Him to get, but everything for Him to give. He comes because so it is written in the volume of the Divine Decrees—

*“Thus the eternal counsel ran—  
Almighty Grace, arrest that man!”*  
Therefore in love the Savior appears to the sinner and, by Divine Grace,

arrests him in his mad career.

It is His Father’s will . Christ’s coming to save a soul is with His Father’s full consent and aid. The Father wills that you who believe in Him, lost though you are, should now be saved—and Jesus comes to do the will of the Father.

He comes because His heart is set on you . He loves you and so He hastens to your rescue. Your salvation is His delight. Though your soul is sunk in a sea of need and you are in despair because of that need, Jesus loves you, and comes to meet your case. The best of all is that Jesus loves you. One asked an old man of 90, “Do you love Jesus?” and the old man answered with a smile, “I do, indeed. But I can tell you something better than that.” His friend asked, “Something better than loving Jesus! What is that?” The old disciple replied, “He loves me.” O Soul, I wish you could see this fact which is, indeed, better than your love to Jesus, namely, His love to you! Because He loved His redeemed from before the foundation of the world, therefore, in due time, He says, “Lo, I come.”

The fact is, you have need and He has love—and so He comes. There is no hope for you unless He comes and that is why He comes! If you had a penny of your own, He would not give you His purse. If you had a rag of your own, He would not give you His robe. If you had a breath of your own, He would not give you His life! But now that you are naked, poor, miserable, lost and dead, Jesus reveals Himself and you read concerning Him, “Then said I, Lo, I come.” He gives you His reasons—reasons not in yourself, but all in His Grace. There is no good in you—there is no reason in you why the Lord should save you—but because of His free, spontaneous, rich, sovereign, almighty Grace, He leaps out of Heaven, He descends to earth, He plunges into the grave to pluck His Beloved from destruction!

V. Here is my last word—CHRIST’S COMING IS THE BEST PLEA FOR OUR RECEIVING HIM—and receiving Him now! O Sirs, remember you have not to raise the question whether He will come or not. He is come! You have not to say, How can I come to Him? He comes to you! You need a Mediator between your soul and God, but you do not need any mediator between yourself and Jesus, for He says, “Lo, I come.” To you in all your filthiness, in all your condemnation, in all your hopelessness, He comes! Wait not for anybody to introduce you to Him, or Him to you—He has introduced Himself and here is His card—“Then said I, Lo, I come.” No pleas are needed to persuade Him to come to you, for He says, “Lo, I come.” Though you cannot think of a single argument why He should appear to you in mercy, He does so! It is written, “I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, You are My people; and they shall say, You are my God.” O Words of wondrous Grace! Our gracious Lord does not wait for our entreaties; but of His own accord He says, “Lo, I come.” Without asking you and without your asking Him, He puts in an appearance in the sovereignty of His Grace.

No search is needed to find the Lord, for He comes in manifested Grace and calls upon us to see Him. “I have long been searching for Christ” murmurs one. What? Seeking for the sun at noonday? Jesus is not lost! It is you that are lost and He is searching for you! He says, “Lo, I come”—it is you that will not come. Still one declares that he has been seeking the Lord Jesus for many a day. This is sadly strange, for Jesus is near. “Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep? The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart, that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved! Searching after Christ? No, verily He says, “Lo, I come.”

Moreover, no waiting is needed and no preparation is to be made by you. Why do you wait? HE does not wait, but cries, “Lo, I come!” “I will get ready for Christ,” you say, but it is too late to talk so, when He cries, “Lo, I am come.” Receive Him! If you are, in yourself, sadly unready, yet He, Himself, will make everything ready for Himself. Only open wide the door and let Him in. Do you say, “But I am ashamed”? Be ashamed! He bids you be ashamed and be confounded, while He declares, “I do not this for your sakes.” Yet be not so ashamed as to commit another shameful deed by shutting the door in your Redeemer’s face! Shut not out your own mercy!

A pastor in Edinburgh, in going round his district, knocked at the door of a poor woman for whom he had brought some needed help, but he received no answer. When next he met her, he said to her, “I called on Tuesday at your house.” She asked, “At what time?” “About eleven o’clock. I knocked, and you did not answer. I was disappointed, for I called to give you help.” “Ah, Sir!” she said, “I am very sorry. I thought it was the man coming for the rent and I could not pay it and, therefore, I did not dare to go to the door.” Many a troubled soul thinks that Jesus is One who comes to ask of us what we cannot give, but, indeed, He comes to give us all things. His errand is not to condemn, but to forgive. Miss not the charity of God through unbelief! Run to the door and say to your loving Redeemer, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, but as You have come to me, I welcome You with all my heart.”

No assistance is needed by Christ on your part. He does not come with half a salvation and look to you to complete it. He does not come to bring you a robe, half woven, which you are to finish. How could you finish it? Could the best saint in the world add anything to Christ’s righteousness? No good man would even dream of adding his home-spun to that raiment which is of worked gold! What? Are you to make up the deficient ransom price? Is it deficient? Would you bring your clods of mud into the royal treasury and lay them down, side by side with sapphires? Would you help Christ? Go, yoke a mouse with an elephant! Go harness a fly side by side with an archangel! But dream not of yoking yourself with Christ. He says, “Lo, I come,” and I trust you will reply, “My Lord, if You are come, all is come, and I am complete in You”—

*“You, O Christ are all I need,  
More than all in You I find.”*

Receive Him—receive Him at once! Dear children of God and sinners that have begun to feel after Him, say with one accord, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.” If He says, “Lo, I come,” and the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and he that hears says, Come, and he that is thirsty comes, and whoever will is bidden to come and take the Water of Life freely—then let us join the chorus of comes, and come to Christ ourselves! “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go you out to meet Him!” You who most of all need Him, be among the first and most glad, as you hear Him say, “Lo, I come!”

All that I have said will be good for nothing as to saving results unless the Holy Spirit shall apply it with power to your hearts. Join with me in prayer that many may see Jesus, just now, and may at once behold and accept the present salvation which is in Him.

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THE MASTER’S PROFESSION— THE DISCIPLES’ PURSUIT  
NO. 977

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 21, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. **In aid of the Baptist Young Men’s Missionary Association.**

**“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid your righteousness within my heart,  
I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your  
Truth from the great congregation.”  
Psalm 40:9, 10.**

WHO is the speaker that gives utterance to these marvelous words? In the first instance they must be understood to proceed from our Lord Jesus Christ. By the Spirit of prophecy in the Old Testament they were spoken of Him, and by the Spirit of interpretation in the New Testament they have been applied to Him. Mark, then, how vehemently He here declares that He has fully discharged the work which He was sent to accomplish. When, in the days of His flesh, He was crying to His Father for preservation in a season of dire distress, He might well ask that He should then be helped, since all the previous strength He possessed had been laid out in His Father’s service.

But because this profession emphatically belongs to our Savior we need not suppose that it exclusively belongs to Him. On the other hand, Christ, being our forerunner and our example, we are encouraged to emulate the high calling and the dutiful obedience He so perfectly exhibited.

I. UNDOUBTEDLY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AS WE READ HIS HISTORY IN THE FOUR EVANGELISTS, MOST GLORIOUSLY FULFILLED HIS LIFE-MISSION. He was constantly testifying to the Gospel of God, the Gospel of His righteousness and of His Grace. From the first moment when He, being full of the Holy Spirit, began to preach the Gospel, until the day when He was taken up into Heaven, while He blessed His disciples, He was instant in season and out of season.

There were no wasted moments of time, no neglected opportunities, no talents held in reserve. “I must work,” was His motto. The zeal of God’s House consumed Him. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. A marvelous study is this life of Christ on earth. And as one looks at it thought begets thought, for—

*“Kindred objects kindred thoughts inspire, As summer clouds flash forth electric fire.”*

Mark you not how He concentrated every attribute of His Nature, ever faculty of His mind, and every power of His body in the one work He had undertaken—to do His Father’s will? He seems all His life through to have challenged the enquiry, “Don’t you know that I must be about My Father’s business?”  
He was continually preaching the Gospel. “Never man spoke as this

Man,” may apply to the quantity as well as the quality of His utterances. All places seemed to be alike suitable to His ministry. Your gowns and your pulpits, your chancels and naves, your aisles and architecture were of no account with Him. He wanted no toga or rostrum, nor did He need a prior arrangement of the assembly to lend Grace to His discourses when He made known the Word of God to the people and astonished them with His doctrine.

He could speak anywhere—even along the crowded thoroughfare, where the multitudes thronged Him. He went down the lowest streets, and from the poorest beggars He didn’t turn aside. He was not thwarted by the sneers, and sarcasms, and subtle questioning of the Pharisees and Sadducees. One thought possessed Him—and He persistently worked it out. His life-sermon was so thorough that nothing of earthly splendor could allure or distract Him, or break the thread. He was always and everywhere either pleading with God for men, or else pleading with men for God.

The reiterated expressions of these two verses are emphatically the Truth of God—the asseverations are vehement, yet the effect is a noble vindication of integrity. “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within My heart. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness, and your Truth from the great congregation.”

He was the great Witness for God, the great Testifier, who went proclaiming everywhere the kingdom of God, and the good tidings of salvation to man. Do not these words likewise suggest to you the thought that Christ testified frequently to the greatest crowds? “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. . . I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.”

On the hilltop, where His disciples came unto Him and He began with His benediction of, “Blessed,” the multitude that gathered together, when He sat down and taught them, was doubtless imposing. The people sometimes thronged to hear Him in such numbers that the historian describes them as innumerable, and tells us that they trod one upon another. From the statement given us, that there were at one time five thousand and at another time four thousand men, besides women and children, collected together in the desert place and the wilderness, when He fed them, we might reasonably infer that in populous places the crowds assembled on a yet vaster scale.

Of course, the whole population off Judea, scattered all over the land, was scarcely equal to the population of this city, and therefore greater crowds may be collected in London than could have been gathered in Jerusalem. Yet the concourse there must at times have been exceedingly great and the spectacle unusually grand, especially when at the great feast our Lord stood up before the people, and rang out, in words clear and distinct—“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.”

Why, for years afterwards, the very tones of His voice must have haunted the memories of those who stood and listened to Him, if they had rejected the message. It is not easy to stand up before a crowded assembly. Let those who think so come and try. Oftentimes it tests a man’s valor. It brings many trials to his spirit to be prepared for the work. But our Lord Jesus Christ was fully equipped for His blessed ministry. He was a great Preacher, with a great Message, full of a great love, with a great Father by whom He was commissioned, sustained, cheered. All the qualities of His Character and conduct were congruous.

With a great assembly He was at home. For His sympathy was mighty in its aggregate and minute in its detail. At the same time, Christ did not need a great congregation to enable Him to preach. The first verse of our text, if I catch the heart of its meaning, seems to me to intimate that He could speak personally to one or to two—“Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know.” From the court of human conscience to the court of Divine Omniscience the appeal is carried.

Fame has not heard of this private fidelity. Howbeit He that dwells in the heavens takes cognizance of it? “O Lord, You know, and can bear witness to it. When there was but one woman at the well’s brink, I refrained not My lips.” When there were but two—His disciples, as He was going to Emmaus—He opened His mouth. Whether they were those whom He had made, or would make His disciples, He had a word for all at all times and at all seasons. In this we ought to imitate the Master. Be ready to tell of Christ not only when your heart is prepared for it at a set time, but at all times, whether you have prepared for it or not.

Your spirit should be always on the alert. You should always be on the watch for souls. Gladly would I be like the eagle that is on its way to the nest, and looks for it long before it comes in sight, and no sooner discerns it than, like a lightning flash, it darts off and alights upon it. O for a heart that is set on winning souls, that is set on glorifying God, that is set on coming nearer to the Model and being more conformed in this matter unto Christ our Head! Our Lord could truly assert that He had not kept back the Gospel.

He had preached it publicly to the crowds, and He had declared it privately, as opportunity allowed. That He never did seal His lips or stifle His testimony, He could call God to witness. Does not the tenth verse, in its first clause, intimate that Christ’s preaching was never heartless preaching? “I have not hid Your righteousness within My heart.” As if He had said, “It is in My heart, but I have never concealed it there. What I have received of You, O My Father, I have made known unto the people— indeed, Your will—which I have observed in Heaven, and engaged to fulfill on earth.

“Your righteousness, as it appears in the Justice of Your Throne and the benevolence of Your Laws. Your faithfulness, as it is verified in the stability of Your Covenant and the perpetuity of Your ordinances. Your salvation, as it was prepared in Your counsels of old, and is displayed when You makes bare Your right hand and Your holy arm. Your loving kindness which flows in one perpetual stream of mercy. And your Truth, which sets the final seal to Your Testimonies—all these have I treasured in My heart, not to hide them from the children of men, but to manifest them for the Glory of Your name and the welfare of Your people.”

Is it so? Then this solemn statement before God is of vital interest to us. From now on every Word, every Statute, every Precept of the Gospel comes to us distilled through the heart of Christ. I like the idea of pouring our sermons out of our own hearts. They must come from our hearts, or they will not go to our hearers’ hearts. But, oh, how full of gracious secrets our hearts ought to be, priceless secrets, which though hidden from

the wise and prudent, are revealed unto babes! Jesus, we thank You for this, that You have not concealed Your Father’s loving kindness and Truth from us.

See, too, our Master kept always to vital matters. We notice here how He uses words which show that His teaching had a distinct reference to God. “I have not hid Your righteousness. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.” Our Lord, in His teaching, never seems to have diverged from the great central Truth. We are too apt to be taken up with the mere externals, and if we do not become mere sectarians, it is just possible that points of our creed of the least importance occupy the most prominent place in our thought and conversation.

Our Lord, with eagle eyes, descries what is most important for men to know, and upon that He dwells. Sinners must know of God’s righteousness. They will never know their sinfulness otherwise, or knowing it they will think it to be a little thing. The righteousness of God comes like a stream of light into the soul, and reveals its corruption. God’s salvation, again, must be shown in its true colors. It does not owe its origin, its accomplishment, or its application to our works or our merits, but it proceeds from God’s Grace, and redounds to His Glory.

I hold that this should be the cherished motive of the Gospel preacher, to glorify God! While it should be the chief end and aim of Christians ordinarily, it is to be the chief end and aim of the preacher extraordinarily. Beyond everyone else, he is concerned with that which, beyond everything else, brings Glory to Him who is first, last, midst, and without end. Jesus Christ preached God’s righteousness, and showed God’s righteousness even in salvation. And then He preached that salvation fully.

Nor, dear Friends, did He withhold His testimony of the other attributes of God. Think for an instant of God’s faithfulness. Oh, what a delightful theme! As immutability is a Glory that belongs to all His attributes, so faithfulness pertains to all His purposes and promises. Well may His people everywhere rely upon His fidelity. Well may we tell that we serve no mutable God. “He is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” Moreover He will rest in His love, “for the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake.”

He is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” His promises and His threats abide steadfast. Side by side with the faithfulness of God there is witness of His loving kindness. Oh, what a glorious Revelation! The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of pity and of pardon, the God of love. Not of love as with us, in a mere effeminate sense, as though it were only an impulse of human admiration that would wink at iniquities. He is Love, love in the essence, love essentially Divine—love consistent with holiness, that hums like flames of fire.

In Justice deep and terrible is God. In Majesty He does ride on the wings of the wind. This God of Tempest, is the God of God, and this is the God whom Jesus preached! And while He did not conceal the sterner attributes of the Almighty, yet He did not forget to depict the heart of mercy and the hand that is ready to help. The God whom He preached is full of gentleness and tenderness.

May we learn to believe in the God and Father whom His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, delighted to make known, and if called to testify of Him may we testify fully and heartily as Jesus did. To sum up all, we may say that our Lord’s three years’ ministry was matchless in its perfection, such as He could look back upon without a single regret, but with unsullied complacency. It was matchless as to its doctrines, and as to its completeness it was unsurpassed. More might be said of His manner, which was full of tenderness to the men among whom He walked, and of His majestic oratory, which we may admire and seek to imitate, but which we can reach only at a distance, for it is peerless beyond all competition, it stands alone.

“Never yet man spoke like this Man,” shall be true of Him to the world’s end. All His life long there is no flaw, there is no excess. “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do,” He could truly say, as He laid down His earthly ministry, and ascended to exercise His ministrations before the Throne. In the retrospect of His labors there was no occasion for selfreproach, no cause for a fault to be found, even by the Accuser of the Brethren. All was to be joy and rejoicing when He had completed His lifework.

Thus much concerning our Lord. I have only opened the door for you to enter. I wonder whether it will ever be given to us to be able to say, as Christians, in our humbler measure, what He said, as the very Christ in such exalted strains?

II. Let us now use the text IN REFERENCE TO OURSELVES. It ought to be the ambition of every Believer here, in a sense more or less extensive, to be able to say, “I have preached righteousness. I have not refrained my lips. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed your loving kindness and your Truth.”

It is quite certain that many careless Christians will never be able to lay this unction to their heart. In all our Churches there is a very large proportion of idle people. I hope they are saved. The Lord knows whether they are or not, but whatever else they are saved from, certainly they are not saved from laziness. We have in the visible Church a large proportion of flesh that is not living, or if it is alive it gives very little indication of life.

Now, I do like, as pastor, to be in fellowship with a living Church, all alive, and everybody active. Though it may be our happy lot to have a goodly preponderance in this Church of living men and women, I know there is a considerable portion of added flesh about it. Albeit, there are some portions of the body which may be said to be ornamental, but it is equally true that they also have some distinct service. There is not one of them put there to do nothing.

Some Christians seem to think themselves “a thing of beauty and a joy forever” to the Church, and that they have nothing to do in it for the common good. They must imagine that they are ornaments, for certainly they are of no use, so far as any good offices are concerned. It used to be almost thought that the whole duty of man consisted in taking your sitting, paying your quarter’s rent, filling up your place, and listening with more or less attention to the sermons that were preached.  
As to the idea of everybody doing something for Christ, and the exhortation to them as good soldiers of the Cross not to shirk their duty, these people said that it was sheer madness. To do or dare, to labor or suffer in the cause of the Captain of our salvation was no article of their creed. Sleepy souls, they presently become victims of their own infatuation. As men who habituate themselves to take opium, they grow soporific. Then their Christianity becomes like a dream. It may be they are filled with flattering illusions, but in full many a case they are scared with strange specters that issue in the short sighs, weak cries, and dismal groans of doubt and fear.

Alas for them! They will not be able to say, “I have preached righteousness: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.” No, no! When their conscience is awakened, they shall have poignant regrets that they have neglected so many glorious opportunities of bringing crowns to Christ. Nor will cowardly people be able to make this statement.

Many Christians are of a retiring disposition, and their retiring disposition is exemplified somewhat in the same way as that of the soldier who felt himself unworthy to stand in the front ranks. He felt that it would be too presumptuous a thing for him to be in front, where the cannon balls were mowing down men on the right hand and on the left, and therefore he would rather be in the rear-guard. I always look upon those very retiring and modest people as arrant cowards, and I shall venture to call them so.

I ask not every man and woman to rush into the front ranks of service, but I do ask every converted man and woman to take some place in the ranks, and to be prepared to make some sacrifice in that position they choose or think themselves fit to occupy. But ah, there are some who shrink back from any post that demands toil or vigilance! When they were young their ardor was never kindled, the spirit of enterprise was never stirred within them. Had they shown any mettle then, they might have been lion-hearted now.

Had they done nothing then, their career of usefulness might have been in full vigor now. But alas for the man upon whom there is the rust of wasted years! He waits, he doubts, he parleys still, and shelters himself under a fictitious humility. Would God I had more courage myself, but I will tell you one thing, I dare not fold my arms, nor dare I hold my tongue. It seems to me so awful a thing not to be doing good, and it seems to me so dastardly a thing to shrink back when opportunities lie in one’s path.

I do wish that some of you would learn to imitate the character of the godly man—

*“Who holds no parley with unmanly fears; Where duty bids, he confidently steers,  
Faces a thousand dangers at her call  
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.”*

The cowards will not be able to say, “I have preached righteousness: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.”

Nor, again, will spasmodic people be able to adopt this language. There are some people who, if there is a revival, are so marvelously zealous and earnest that we are ready to clap our hands—but all of a sudden they stop. That Sunday school class they were just getting into right order, but before there was an opportunity to reap the fruit they felt it was not precisely what they were called to. That Young Men’s Bible Class—yes, that was a happy thought, the pastor was delighted. But, unfortunately, some little difficulty occurred that you had not foreseen, and that, also has fallen through.

So it has been in other cases. Know, therefore, that those who cannot, like the Master, look back upon a continuous and persevering testimony, will not be able to speak with a clear conscience as He did. But although so many classes of those who profess and call themselves Christians will not be able to take a happy retrospect of their lives, yet there are not wanting those who could do so.

I have known men of one talent who without any self-righteousness could say, “I have preached righteousness. I have not regained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.” Dear good men in many a country village whose names will never be known to fame have gathered just a few people together and have preached on, on, on for years! And when they come to die in the Lord and rest from their labors, their works will follow them, and their life-service will be as acceptable as the services of many men with ten times the talents and ten times the scope for their exercise.

Perhaps the Master will say to them, “Well done!” With a stronger emphasis than to some who were better known. That poor girl whose only work she could do for Christ was to teach those two little children who were entrusted to her, and that nursery maid with but one gift, and one only, may be able to say, “I have preached righteousness: lo, I have not refrained my lips: I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation. I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.”

You one-talent servants, you have this within your reach. And those, too, with an extremely narrowed sphere may be able to say this. It is not, perhaps, the man who can stand and talk to thousands, but it may be you in the family—the housewife, the kitchen maid, the serving-man, or the woman who has been bedridden for years, whose only audience will be a few poor neighbors, or perhaps, now and then, a generous friend. By God’s Grace it is you within these narrow spheres who may yet be able to say, “I have preached righteousness: I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.” I have sat by a bedside where I have envied the poor woman despite the agonies and pains of body she suffered, because she could yet praise and magnify the loving kindness revealed to her there.

But, Brethren, we may be able to quote these words, some of us, to whom greater talents have been committed. Though we may feel that we have not preached as earnestly as we could have wished. That we have not done our utmost towards those whom we have taught. That in our house-to-house visitation we have not been so earnest with poor souls as we might have been in this respect, for alas, alas, we are all unprofitable

servants! Yet we can say, “I have preached righteousness. I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth.”

Fervently do I hope that those of you with the largest opportunities may yet be privileged to make this good profession with all sincerity. I am not afraid for those friends who have but narrow spheres—sometimes I wish that mine were such. I am not afraid for those in humbler fields, but oh, if with such spheres, and such Churches as God here and there allots to some of His servants, if they can thus give account of their stewardship, it will be Grace, indeed! And to Grace alone will the honor be due.

Yet let us hope that we, too, may be able to say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.”

III. It is with an overwhelming sense of the importance, as well as the moral grandeur of this profession, that I repeat it to you again and again. For when we are able to feel this, and to say it humbly and confidently, with good faith and without guile, IT CASTS MUCH COMFORTABLE LIGHT ON MANY SOLEMN SUBJECTS. How awful to remember that every hour there are hundreds of men and women who are dying without Christ.

Turn to the obituaries of this one city. Be our sentiments ever so charitable, let us judge with the utmost liberality. The dreadful fact fills our mind, and every knell speaks it to our heart, “They go out of this world unforgiven. They go before their Maker’s bar without a hope!” I think our hearts would break with the dread recollection of this if we could not say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.”

And how many deaths there always are among our hearers! What comfort can any Christian who knows you, have, if you die unsaved, unless he is able to appeal to God, and say, “My Father, I did all I could to teach that soul the way of salvation. I did all I could to persuade him to accept the Christ of God”? Dear Friends, whenever you see any of your neighbors, your relatives, your acquaintance die, can you forbear to ask yourselves, shall their blood be required at my hands? Are your garments stained? Are there no blood drops there?

Come, look them down, and say if you can ponder with a clear conscience the fact of a sinner dying in a Christless state without your being able to say, “I have done all I could to bring that soul to Christ.” And as for that dreadful outlook—the hereafter of the lost—would that we could believe the softer theories which some so eagerly embrace! We would, but dare not. We believe that those who die in their sins when they pass from this life into the next, shall find that second death to be no extinction of existence, but an eternity of sin and of misery,

Ah, how can any of us bear to think of this if we feel that we are morally responsible for any one soul that is damned? Yet we are so—I speak but the bare Truth—until we have delivered ourselves from that responbility by faithful earnestness. Is there a Cain here who says, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” I shall not appeal to your most sympathetic soul, but leave you to your Judge. But to the Christian I say, “No man lives to himself.”

When you think of a spirit in despair, cast out forever from the Presence of his God and from the Glory of His power, may you, Friends, be able to say, “Great God, though I understand not Your ways, for Your judgments are a great deep, yet I warned the sinner, I admonished him to lay hold on Christ, and if he perished it was not for want of preaching to or for praying over. My warnings and tears were never spared. I did what was in me to prevent his ruin.” Put in that light, we may look at least with some degree of serenity upon the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty.

I must confess that the Sovereignty of God is a great mountain whose top we cannot scale. I often marvel at the coldness with which some men talk of the Sovereignty of God, as though it were of small concern whether men were lost or saved. They seem to take these things as easily as if they were only talking of blocks of wood, or fields filled with tares. I do not think that we can equitably plead the Divine Sovereignty as a counterpart to our futile efforts, till we can say, “I have done all that was possible to bring that soul to God. I have prayed over him and wept over him, and now if he perishes I must believe that this man willfully rejected Christ, that his iniquities are upon his own head, and that in him, as a vessel of wrath, God will get Glory as well as in vessels of mercy.

The doom of the heathen is a subject in like manner of which it were too painful for any of us to speak unless we can say, “I have, as far as lies in me, sought to do something for them.” This is a thing about which we ought not to think with any ease, unless we feel that we would gladly save them, and give them the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And to carry out this, our cherished purpose, we will do the best we can. The uprisings of error often cause us dismay. Every now and then we see some old form of error spring up that was stamped out, as we supposed, in the days of our ancestors.

Not infrequently a foul old heresy is brought out as a brand new discovery, and all the world admires it, and wonders from where it came. Now, whenever these old heresies crop up, and are brought out as new, and lead men astray, it is a great comfort when you and I are able to say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.”

Let men propagate whatever errors they choose. If we have no share in misleading the people, and are continually engaged in instructing them, we may wrap ourselves in our integrity and lay the matter before our God to vindicate our righteous cause. The apathy of the Church, which has lasted so long, is truly disheartening. With many a deep-drawn sigh do we bewail it. O that we could get the Church to wake up! You might sound the trump of the archangel before you could rouse full many to the appalling destitution by reason of which the people perish for lack of knowledge. Even the cries of lost souls, and the shrieks of the sinners in this metropolis, rushing headlong to the pit that is bottomless, do not startle some of us. Yes, but if we can say, “I have preached righteousness. I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation,” then we may take courage to work nobly and to persevere under terrible difficulties.

Though for awhile we should see no conversions. And though for a season the plowshare should break against the rock, or against even the very adamant itself, yet still if we can say, “I have preached righteousness, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth”—we are exonerated from blame. No, more, we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in the testimony we have delivered.

Yes, Brethren, I apprehend that among the sweetest deathbed recollections, and among the minor comforts, in taking our farewell of the world as it is, not the least will be that of having been constant and faithful all our lives to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Give me a few minutes longer while I turn this sermon into the special direction which it was intended to take. I do not know that there are many more “young men” present tonight than there are usually at our week-day lecture. I generally find when I preach a sermon for any of our societies it so happens that everybody connected with the society seems to stay away. They would be willing enough to come if it were for the Primitive Methodist, or any other denomination.

They are in love with everybody else except their own relations. I do not say this by way of censure, but surely if there is a people under Heaven without a grain of clannishness it is that denomination to which we belong. If it had been a sermon for Jews or Turks the building would have been crowded. But as it is for ourselves it does not matter. However, if they are not present for whom it was intended, they may probably read the sermon—so I will add a few words expressly for them.

Young man, it may be that you are one of those who ought to become a missionary. It may be that you ought to dedicate your life to some work for God either at home or abroad. Well, if it is so, do not mistake your path in life. We do not urge you to rush into the ministry, much less into the foreign ministry, unless you are called to it, for that is the very last place for a man to be in who is not called to the work. Act as a Christian young man for once in your life by asking whether it may not be your vocation to bear the Cross of Christ into lands where as yet it is unknown.

Surely, whatever answer you may feel called upon to give, you will be ready for it. You will at least be willing to give yourself up to the very hardest form of service to which you may be called. I should like you, then, to be sure about this on the outset lest you should in the turn of the road miss the path and so not be able to say at the last—“I have preached righteousness: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart, I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your Truth from the great congregation.”

I should not like you, if meant by the gifts of God for a great missionary, to die a millionaire. I should not like it, were you fitted to be a missionary, that you should drivel down into a king. For what are all your kings, what are all your nobles, what are all your stars, what are all your garters, what are all your diadems and your tiaras, when you put them all together, compared with the dignity of winning souls for Christ? And more—with the special honor of building for Christ, not on another man’s foundation, but preaching Christ’s Gospel in regions yet far beyond? I reckon him to be a man honored of men who can do a foreign work for Christ!

But he who shall go farthest in self-annihilation and in the furtherance of the Glory of Christ, he shall be a king among men, though he wear no crown that carnal eyes can see. Ask yourselves the question then, young Christian men, whether that is your vocation. Should it happen that you feel convinced this is not your calling, remember you may still, in your daily business, be able to say these words.

Some of my friends here never will be able to say them. They have been Church members for twenty years, and during all those twenty years they have not preached righteousness. They have refrained their lips, they have hidden His righteousness. They have not declared His faithfulness and His salvation. They have concealed His loving kindness and His Truth. You, young men and women, have an opportunity of doing what is gone from them. Though they might publish Christ abroad from now till they die, there are twenty years they must forever regret and look back upon as wasteland for which they will have to give an account at the last.

You have, it may be, those twenty years before you. And it is a noble thing to begin working young, and so long as ever you live to go on building on that work. I have heard it said that you should not put young converts to work for which they are not qualified. Ah, say I, put the youngsters in! They will never learn to swim if they are not put in at once. Why should you, young men and women, be received as Church members at all unless you are prepared to do something for Christ? Work becomes you as well as worship.

I mean, of course, if not disqualified by sickness, and even then there is a sphere for testimony. You can make a sick bed a pulpit to preach Christ, while by patience and resignation you show forth His praise. No one should join a Church without seeking out something to do for the glory of Jesus Christ. Do start your lives, young men, with high purpose, that you may close them with holy cheer. In order to do this, you will need much more zeal than you are likely to possess by making resolutions, and much more Divine Grace than you will ordinarily get without much self-denial and devout consecration.

You have need to be baptized into the Holy Spirit and in fire. I do like those converts who are thoroughly purged from the corruptions of the world, and thoroughly converted to God—every faculty of the mind and every member of the body being surrendered to Christ—all of them as instruments of righteousness. We seem to get some people who are not half converted. I hope their hearts are converted, but the effect is not to drain their pockets or to set their hands to work. You need, dear Friends, to go much to Jesus Christ, to live much in communion with Him, for this lifeservice has many expenses, and you have no ready money.

You must go to the great exchequer of the King of kings and draw from its inexhaustible treasury. Do so. Do resolve to live lavishly in the service of Christ, and the Divine storehouse will supply all that you need, be

your ambition as large as it may. There are habits, it is true, to be acquired which must be the result of growth, for they cannot be matured without the manifold experience of sunshine and shower, summer and winter, heat and cold. To all of these you will be exposed.

But when once you have yielded yourselves to those Divine influences which foster life, you will prove that by all these things men live. To this I can bear you witness. Drudgery ceases to be irksome when the ruling passion of laboring for the Lord has begun to ferment in your breasts, and the sweet assurance that your labor is not in vain in the Lord has quickened a sacred enthusiasm in your spirit. It may be that in your apprenticeship you have to encounter many hardships, but it shall be that in the full discharge of your vocation you will reap a harvest of joy.

God help you never to refrain from preaching the Truth of God, never to withhold any part of it. May you be clear in all these matters as before the living God. Oh, yours will be cheerful dying if you familiarize yourselves with such noble living as this! You will have a welcome entrance into Heaven if such has been your life on earth. The pastor, when he can preach the Gospel no more, will say, “I preached when there was time, and now I will sing when sermons are all over.”

You Sunday school teachers cannot teach any longer, but your Sunday recreations below will prove the sweet prelude to your Sabbatical felicities above. Tract distributors—now that all your work is over, you will say, “I did but distribute the leaves of the Tree of Life for the healing of the people, but now I feed myself on all its luscious fruits.”

I do not say that rewards are given as mere rewards of merit, but this I do assuredly know—there are rewards given in respect of service through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I pray you seek the prize. So run that you may obtain it. May you be able to say, “While I was down below where service could be done for my Master—

*‘In works which perfect saints above,  
And holy angels cannot do,’*

with all my might I labored to excel, and now I enter into the bliss of Him who helped and strengthened me, who revealed His Grace in me, and counted me worthy to put me into some part of the ministry of His Church.”

God bless you, dear Friends, and make you earnest to tell others those things He has made known unto you, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.*  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2916 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A MEMORABLE MILESTONE  
NO. 2916

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1904.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1886.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MR. SPURGEON’S FIRST SERMON IN THE TABERNACLE!

**“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation. Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Your loving-kindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”  
Psalm 40:9-11.**

SOMETIMES, dear Friends, we should take a review of life. There are occasions when men feel bound to do so and the retrospect may be full of profit to themselves. I find that many look back in hours of trouble. A dark cloud brings them to a pause. In prosperity they might have run on with very little thought, but sorrow calls them to a halt. They are driven to God in prayer and at such times it is not unusual for them, if God has been gracious to them in the past, to recollect His great goodness and to mention it while they are pleading at the Mercy Seat. They say, “He has dealt well with His servants. The Lord has helped us up to now.” They look back and see the Ebenezers which they have raised in past years and then they cry, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”—

*“And can He have taught me to trust in His name,*

*And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”*Thus they drive their griefs away and the remembrance of past mercy helps them to snatch firewood from the altars of the bygone years, with which to kindle the sacrifice of the present moment.

Men are also accustomed to review their lives when they are brought near to the grave. It is helpful, when we fear that life is about to end, to begin to add it up, to see what the sum total reaches. If God should say to us, “Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live,” the best way to do it is to remember the past—looking at what we have done and what God has done—and then to set one against the other, that we may repent of the sin and may hope because of the mercy. Now, albeit that we may not, ourselves, be brought so near to death’s door as that, yet during the past month or so we have, as a people, been continually going to the sepulcher. I think that there were seven notable Brothers and Sisters who fell asleep last week, so constantly have death’s arrows been flying among us. Therefore, as we are come to the bank of the river and are reminded that we must, ourselves, shortly put off this tabernacle, let us look back a little and remember all the ways the Lord our God has led us.

There are, however, other occasions apart from those of great sorrow or of apprehended departure when wise men are fully warranted in considering the period as peculiarly noteworthy. I have come to such a time today. Twenty-five years have passed over our heads since I preached my first sermon in this house. The sanctuary was opened with songs of joy—many who were with us then are now in Glory—and many of you who are with us today were not even born then. To those who were at the opening of the Tabernacle, it must seem almost an old building now! I hear people talk of “the dear old Tabernacle” and well they may, for a quarter of a century is no mean period in the history of a building or of a Church. There has been a great deal done in those 25 years and we have both personally and as a Church enjoyed abounding mercy. I did not think it right to let the occasion pass over without offering devout thanksgiving to the Lord for all His loving-kindness to us, and endeavoring to say some words that shall perhaps make us feel more our indebtedness to God and cause us to determine to be more than ever consecrated to His service.

This text, though it belongs, first of all, in the most Divine and fullest sense to our gracious Master, also belongs to David—and through David to those whom God has called to bear testimony to the Gospel of His Grace. We can say and we do say, humbly but most earnestly—and I know that there are many Brothers here who can join us, each in his own ministry, and many Brothers and Sisters who, though not in the ministry, can say, in any event in the spirit of the words after their measure—“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation.”

I. Coming, then, to our text, here is, first, A CONTINUAL TESTIMONY. Many of you have borne testimony for God in your homes as well as in your lives. Some of you have borne the testimony in your classes in the Sunday school. Some in the streets, some in cottage meetings—some in larger assemblies. We especially who are called to the public ministry of the Word, have borne this testimony in “the great congregation.” But all of us who are the Lord’s servants have, I hope, borne our testimony according to our opportunities and abilities.

It has been imperfect, but it has been sincere. In looking back upon our testimony for God, we could almost wish to obliterate it because of its imperfections, but we can truthfully say that it has been sincerely borne up to the measure of the capacity given to us. It has been borne without a doubt, without any mental reservation, with intensity of spirit—borne because it could not be silenced. I have preached the Gospel to you, my Brothers and Sisters, because I have believed it—and if what I have preached to you is not true, I am a lost man! For me there is no joy in life and no hope in death except in that Gospel which I have continually expounded here. It is not to me a theory. I would scarcely stop at saying that it is a belief. It has become matter of absolute fact to me! It is interwoven with my consciousness. It is part of my being. Every day makes it dearer to me—my joys bind me to it, my griefs drive me to it! All that is behind me, all that is before me, all that is above me, all that is beneath me—everything compels me to say that my testimony has been borne with my heart, mind, soul and strength—and I am grateful to God that I can say this, putting it as the text puts it, “O Lord, You know.” If others do not know the truth of the matter, I rejoice that my Master knows my heart.

I feel grateful to God that I can say this because of the subjects of the testimony. The first subject of the Psalmist’s testimony had been God’s “righteousness.” That is the main point to be noticed in all testimony for God—God’s positive righteousness in Himself, God’s way of righteousness by which He justifies the ungodly and God’s method of spreading righteousness in the world by the power and energy of His Holy Spirit. I, for one, believe in a God who punishes sin. I have never flattered you with the idea that sin is a trifle and that in some future age it may expiate itself. No, the righteousness of God has seemed to me to be a dark background upon which to draw the bright lines of His everlasting love in Christ Jesus. In the Expiation of Christ, the righteousness of God is vindicated to the fullest. He is “just, and the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus.” I ask for no pardon to be given to me unrighteously. My conscience could not be satisfied with a forgiveness that came to me unjustly, for the Glory of God would be dishonored thereby. There would be a blot upon the Heavenly statutebook if sin were pardoned without atonement. But we have preached the righteousness of God and we feel that, in doing so, we lay a sure foundation upon which to build the comfort and hope of the Believer in Christ Jesus!

In addition to the righteousness of God, the Psalmist had preached His “faithfulness.” The Lord keeps all His promises. He is the Faithful Promiser—what He promises He performs. There is no lie in Him, nor change, nor shadow of a turning. “Has He said and shall He not do?” Which of His promises ever failed? Has He drawn back even in the least degree from His Covenant, or altered the word which has gone forth out of His lips? Our testimony has not been borne to a fickle God and a feeble salvation which saves for a time and after all, does not really save, but allows saints to fall away and perish everlastingly. No, we have given unfaltering utterance to that declaration of our Lord, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” We believe in everlasting love, in an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure and, therefore, righteousness and faithfulness have been the two foundations of our ministry—upon which we have tried to build a Gospel worth our preaching and worth your having.

Then the Psalmist says that he had borne testimony to two things in conjunction with each other: “Your loving-kindness and Your truth.” Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a theme is here! “Your loving-kindness!” God’s generous mercy, His overflowing love, His “kinnedness,” His kindness to His chosen whom He has made to be a people near unto Himself, to whom He manifests His very soul. That word, “loving,” added to the word, “kindness,” makes it a gem doubly precious! Where is there among words any other equal to this—“loving-kindness”? I have exulted to preach to you the loving-kindness of the Lord. I needed not to be driven to this happy task. I have almost needed, sometimes, to be stopped when I have passed the hour and my theme has carried me away! Oh, the loving-kindness of the Lord to those who put their trust under the shadow of His wings! That is a subject on which one might preach forever and yet not exhaust its treasures!

And then His “truth”—God’s Truth—the truth of His Word. The truth of His Son! The truth of the great Doctrines which are given to us in the Gospel. I have not preached to you any sort of speculation. I have never sought to invent new forms of truth. It shall be seen one day whose thoughts shall stand—God’s thoughts or man’s. And it shall be seen which is the true ministry—that which takes up God’s Word and echoes it—or that which boils it down until the very life is extracted from it. I have no sympathy with the preaching which degrades the Truth of God into a hobbyhorse for its own thought and only looks upon Scripture as a kind of pulpit from which it may thunder out its own opinions! No, if I have gone beyond what that Book has taught, may God blot out everything that I have said! I beseech you, never believe me if I go an atom beyond what is plainly taught there. I am content to live and to die as the mere repeater of Scriptural teaching—as a person who has thought out nothing and invented nothing—as one who never thought invention to be any part of his calling, but who concluded that he was to take the message from the lips of God to the best of his ability and simply to be a mouth for God to the people—mourning much that anything of his own should come between—but never thinking that he was somehow to refine the message or to adapt it to the brilliance of this wonderful century and then to hand it out as being so much his own that he might take some share of the glory of it. No, no! We have aimed at nothing of the kind! “I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation.” Nothing have we preached as our own. If there has been anything of our own, we do bitterly take back those words and eat them—and repent that we should have ever been guilty of the sin and folly of uttering them! The things which we have learned of God our Father and of His Son Jesus Christ, by His Holy Spirit, we have sought to speak unto you.

Now, dear Friends, let me say, next, that this text describes a work which has been done under great difficulties. It may seem a very easy thing to simply have a message and to tell it. Yes, it appears so. But it is not as easy as it looks at first sight. I do not suppose that you always find your servants deliver your messages accurately. Did you ever sit around a table and tell one person a story, and ask him to tell it to his neighbor? Let each one whisper it and by the time it gets to the end of the table, you will scarcely recognize your tale, it will have been altered so much! There is a tendency in the minds of all of us to alter what we tell—it is a struggle to keep to the exact truth. Besides, this is an age which likes pretty things—something fresh and new—and it is not always easy to swim upstream, or to go against the tendency of the time and the spirit of the age. We have no particular desire to be thought fools anymore than anybody else—and we know where all the wisdom is—at least we ought to know, for we hear often enough about it. Ask the brethren of the “modern thought” school if they have not all the wisdom that is to be had nowadays! If they do not say that they have, many of them act as if they thought they had! No, Friends, it is not so easy, after all, to keep to the plain Truth of God. There is a Brother who has struck out something wonderfully fresh. We read his book—shall we not at least go with him a little way? You will find, Brothers, that if you determine to hold fast the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, you will have a battle to fight in which you will be beaten unless you rely upon God for strength! If you are willing to let the Truth of God go, you have but to seek to please man and it is soon done! And only then will you be greeted with, “Hail fellow! Well met!” But if you mean to declare God’s Truth, you will need the help of the Most High in the struggle.

But, although this testimony has been borne under difficulties, it has been attended with unutterable pleasure. Oh, the delight of preaching the Gospel! I often say to young men who apply for admission to the College, “Do not become a minister if you can help it.” But if you cannot help it, if a Divine destiny drives you on, thank God that it is so! You are a happier man if you are able to preach the Gospel than if you had been elected to a throne! There is no business like it under Heaven! I have heard some say that our professional study of the Word of God may be a hindrance to our growth in the Divine life. I know what they mean and there is some truth in their words—but to me, the preaching of the Gospel has been a continual means of Grace and I can say with the Apostle Paul, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unreachable riches of Christ.” It really is a Grace to be permitted to preach the Gospel—it brings Grace with it. Brothers in the ministry, have you not read the Bible much more because you have had to preach the blessed Truths revealed in it? Have you not been driven to your knees much more because you have had to deal with anxious souls and to lead the people of God? I am sure that it is so and I thank God for giving me a calling which does not take me away from the Mercy Seat, but drives me to it! I am grateful that I have a message which I am glad to tell, glad to tell anywhere—a message which never needs to be concealed, but which brings joy to me in telling it and salvation to our hearers in listening to it! Blessed be God that we have such a story to proclaim!

I could say much more about this first point, but I must not, for our time is so short. This must suffice upon the subject of our continual testimony.

II. Now, secondly, the text mentions A REMARKABLE AUDIENCE. The Psalmist says, twice over, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.” And yet again, “I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation.”

It is astonishing to the preacher that there should be a great congregation to hear the Gospel! I do not know how you think of it, but if anybody had been set here to speak so many times a week upon politics, I wonder whether he would have had a crowded congregation at the end of 25 years? My friend Mr. Varley speaks right mightily, but if he had been preaching upon total abstinence for 25 years, I am sure that some would have totally abstained from coming to hear him! If I had to preach here upon—well, what topic shall I say?—the object that the Liberation Society has in view, for instance, I am afraid that I should have liberated many of you from attendance long before this. All other subjects are exhaustible, but give us that Book and give us the Holy Spirit—and we may preach on forever! We shall never get to the end of it!

I have heard of two infidels, one of whom said to his fellow, “If you had to go to jail for 12 months and you could only have one book, what book would you choose?” He was very surprised when his companion said, “Oh, I would take the Bible!” The first one said, “But you do not believe in it—I wonder that you should choose that.” “Oh, but,” rejoined his friend, “it is no end of a book.” His record is true—it is “no end of a book.” Jerome used to say, “I adore the infinity of Holy Scripture.” And well he might. I would like you to look at my Bible at home which is marked with all the texts I have preached from. There are thirty-one completed volumes of my sermons and a thirty-second is in the making.

[This sermon begins the 51st volume of Spurgeon’s Sermons. How little the preacher thought, when he praised God for 25 years’ ministry in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, that he would continue to declare God’s faithfulness and salvation week by week to the great company of Sermon readers for so many years after he had put off the tabernacle of the body. The supply of manuscripts is not yet nearly exhausted.]

Of course, in addition to the 32 volumes in the regular weekly series, there are many more volumes printed and I have all the texts marked from which I have preached. I sometimes make the outline of a sermon and then, when I turn to my Bible, I find that I have preached from that text and the sermon has been published—and I say, “That will not do for a Sunday morning.” I do not want to have the same subject again more often than I can help. Sometimes, however, I find that the same text may be taken and a new sermon readily enough made from it, for there is a springing well in Holy Scripture, never exhausted, and the great congregation needs continually to come to hear repetitions of the same great Truths of God, though it is always the preacher’s duty to seek for acceptable words in presenting it. Young man just beginning to preach— do not be afraid to stick to your texts—that is the best way to get variety in your discourses. Saturate your sermons with Bibline, the essence of Bible Truth, and you will always have something new to say!

But when I think of the great congregation, how encouraging it is! It is always good fishing where there are plenty of fish. We are bound to go and angle for a single soul, wherever there is one to be found, and some do great service for the Master who take the fish one by one. But what a delight it is to have the great seine net of the Gospel and throw it into such a lake as this, God guiding the hand of the fisherman all the while! Surely he should be a happy man!

But then, dear Friends, when we think of this great congregation, what solemn thoughts come over our mind! I come down to this platform, sometimes, and when I get another look at this great congregation, I am staggered. Time after time I have felt as if I could run away sooner than face this tremendous throng again and speak to them once more. O Sirs, to think of all these being dying men and dying women—and to think that this Gospel that I preach is needed by them all and may be refused by many with awful consequences—and may be accepted by some (it will be, thank God) with consequences of unutterable joy! To think that we shall have to give an account of how we have preached and how you have heard! To think that we shall all meet again at the Judgment Seat to give an account of every Sunday and every Thursday service! If Xerxes could not restrain a tear at the thought of his myriads of men passing away, who can look at a congregation like this without being moved with compassion? Yes, yes—it is not easy to preach to a great congregation so as to be able to say at the last, “I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

The sight of this great congregation gathered tonight suggests many memories. I recollect some dear ones that used to sit here, and there, and there, and there. I can almost see them now—some dear old saints with gray heads that used to be our glory—who are now with God. Some young and ardent spirits that were taken away before they reached their prime. You sit where sat some who loved your Master well—and served Him faithfully. Worthily occupy their places, beloved Friends!

But excuse me if I say no more upon this topic. My brain seems in a whirl as dissolving views pass before my memory in quick succession. If you want to see life and death, stand here. I feel like the captain of a vessel on the bridge. I am looking down on you who are the passengers and crew but yet, from another point of view, I seem to be looking at great waves that sweep by and more come, and others follow—a succession of changes, nothing abiding. How long shall we remain? How soon shall we, too, also go? Well, it is something to have preached Christ to this great congregation! It is something to believe that those who have not received Him are without excuse. It is much better to believe that many have received Him and that we shall meet them in Heaven, rejoicing in that glorious Sacrifice by which they have been cleansed from sin—in that dear Savior by whose life and death they have been quickened and made heirs of eternal glory! Oh, that this faith may be in us all and that we may all at last join in the general assembly of the Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven!

III. I have only a few minutes left in which to expound upon the last of the points, THE SUGGESTED PRAYER. May I just give you an outline of what I would have said if we could have had more time? The prayer of the Psalmist is—“Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Your loving-kindness and Your truth”—the things which he had preached—“continually preserve me.”

This prayer is suitable for the preacher and he prays it now. Taking David’s words and making them my own, I pray to the Lord at this moment—“Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Your loving-kindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”

The prayer is also suitable for every Christian here. Let me read it and let every Christian pray it now—“Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Your loving-kindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”

With a little alteration, this prayer may suit you who are not yet saved, but who desire to be—“Withhold not Your tender mercies from me, O Lord.” Are you praying it? Is not this a good time in which to pray that prayer? The signs are all propitious. There is “the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees.” There are tokens for good abroad. There is dew about tonight. Now, therefore, pray this prayer if you have never prayed before—and God help you to claim the answer by appropriating faith!

It seems to me that this prayer was suggested to the Psalmist by at least three things.  
First, it was suggested by the great congregation. David seems to say, “O Lord, there are so many others who need Your care. Let me not be lost in the crowd—withhold not Your tender mercies from me.”— *“Lord, I hear of showers of blessing  
You are scattering, full and free.  
Showers, the thirsty land refreshing—  
Let some drops fall on me, Even me.”*

Next, the subject suggested it. “Your truth, Your loving-kindness, O Lord. Let these preserve me. I hear of Your goodness—I cannot bear to miss it. I hear of Your truth—I would not be a stranger to it. Lord, bless me, even me!”

Then, again, the future suggested, it. The Psalmist expected to suffer great trials and serious afflictions and, therefore, he prayed, “Let Your loving-kindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”

Now, as a congregation we have completed 25 years in this building, but we must not reckon that we have reached the end of our struggles, or even the end of our sins! O Brothers and Sisters, this is only a part of the way to Heaven. I think that I told you, once before, that some friends, when they raise an Ebenezer, sit down on the top of it and say, “Here we are going to stop.” When this Tabernacle was opened, I remember that that night I put a sharp iron spike on the top of “the stone of help,” that nobody might sit upon it—and I do the same again on the Ebenezer stone I now raise in remembrance of God’s goodness! Let none of us sit down at the end of this 25th year and say, “We have come this far and here we are going to stay.” Long nights of darkness lie ahead—there are giants to be fought, mountains to be climbed, rivers to be crossed! Who dreams of ease while he is here in the enemy’s country? Out with your sword, man! You have not done with the battle. Awake, you that sleep! You have not come yet to the place of resting! This is the place for watching, praying, wrestling and struggling. Therefore do we cry, “Withhold not Your tender mercies from me.” We are getting older! We are getting weaker! We are, perhaps, getting less wise! Who knows that all our years will bring us good news? They may bring us evil if we trust to our past experience. We need God with us now as much as we ever did! Therefore let us cry to Him, “From this night bless us more and more.”

The poor Psalmist was in great trouble when he prayed this prayer. He says, “Innumerable evils have compassed me about.” Therefore he says, “Withhold not Your tender mercies from me.”

He adds, “My iniquities have taken hold upon me.” If there is one here whose conscience is accusing him and who is guilty before his God, let him pray this prayer because of his iniquities.

He goes on to say, “I am not able to look up.” If that is your case—if you cannot, look up—pray the Lord to look down and cry to Him never to take His mercy from you!

David further says, concerning his iniquities, “They are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me.” Well, when our heart does fail us, let us recollect the mercy which has helped us so long—and let us cast ourselves again upon that mercy for all that lies before us.

I am not going to venture upon any prophecy. I attended, on Wednesday, the funeral of our beloved Brother, Dr. Stanford. You may attend mine before this year is over—or I may attend yours. If you could draw up the curtain that hides the future, you would not wish to do it, would you? Trust the Lord so that if you live, you are prepared to live— but if you die, you are prepared to die1 I think that the best thing you can do is to do the next thing that comes to you and to do it thoroughly well. I was here last Monday. I had no rest from spiritual work from three in the afternoon till half-past nine at night. And about the middle of it I felt, “Well, I do not know how I shall get through this long long afternoon of seeing enquirers and candidates for Church fellowship.” So I said to a Brother, “How am I to do it all?” However, there was a cup of tea in front of me and I said, “I think I will drink that tea—that is the next thing to be done.”

Oftentimes that will be your best course, just do the next thing you can do when you are saying to yourself, “How shall I do if I live to be old?” When you go home tonight, eat your supper and go to bed to the glory of God. And when you get up in the morning, do not think about what you are going to do at night. Do what comes to you when you begin the day’s work and keep right straight on. If you can see a step at a time, that is about as far as you need to see. Do not begin prying into the future, but just go straight on from day to day, depending on God for the mercy and Grace and strength of the day. That is the way to live and I am persuaded that is the way to die! Mr. Wesley said, “If I knew that I was to die tonight and I had an engagement to attend a class meeting, I would go to it. If I had promised to call and see old Betty So-and-So on the way back, I would call in to see her. I have then to go home and have family prayer. I would do that. Then I would take my boots off and I would go to bed, just as I would do if I were not going to die.” Oh, do not let death be a sort of addition to the program which was not calculated upon—but so live that whenever it comes you will be ready for it—even if it comes while we are sitting here tonight! Then yours will be a happy life, a joyful life, a useful life.

Secularism teaches us that we ought to look to this world. Christianity teaches us that the best way to prepare for this world is to be fully prepared for the next. It elevates and glorifies the secular duties which otherwise would trail in the mire if our conversation, our citizenship is in Heaven, even while we are on the earth! God bless you, Beloved! Let us praise His name for all the mercies of the past quarter of a century and trust His Grace for all the future.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 40.**

These are the words of David—they are the words of all God’s tried and believing people, but above all they are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. So complete is the union between Christ and the Believer that it is possible to describe them both at the same time. The experience of a child of God, sin alone excepted, is very much like the experience of the great First-Born. But Christ is always above us, so you will find words in this Psalm which belong to nobody but Jesus in all their fullness. Yet the title of it is, “A Psalm of David.”

Verse 1. I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. You and I can say that and so could our Divine Master. Oh the wondrous patience of the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer! In that agony in the Garden when the bloody sweat showed how great was the wrestling of His spirit, He could say, “I waited patiently for Jehovah, and He inclined unto Me and heard My cry.”

2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. We can say that, too. We remember when we were deep down in the mire, when we found it impossible to rise, for the more we struggled, the more we sank. It was clay under us—miry clay—we could not hope for a rescue, but the arm of Jehovah lifted us out of the deep and set us on a rock and there we stood to sing His praises. Jesus Christ could say the same. He said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” And He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” What a very different frame of mind He was in a few minutes afterwards when He said, “Father, unto Your hands I commend My spirit” and shouted, “It is finished!” All His travail was over. It is a great thing for us to have fellowship with Christ in His suffering which we could not have had if we had not, ourselves, also been brought up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.

3. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Well, God has done that for you and for me. He has put a new song into our mouths which Satan cannot take out of it—and we are singing it today—and others who hear it shall be encouraged to trust in God. But is this true of Christ? Listen to those words at the end of the 22nd Psalm where, beyond all doubt, it is the Savior who speaks—“My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before them that fear Him.” So the Savior is the chief Leader of the holy song which goes up to God on account of redemption! He sings because God has delivered Him and delivered us. Both the Surety and the sinner are now free and the song goes up from both of them! Again you see what sympathy, what fellowship, we have with Christ.

4. Blessed is that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Jesus knew the blessedness of faith. Remember how Paul quotes it, “I will put my trust in Him,” as the language of the Redeemer, Himself. As Man, He had His fears. As Man there was worked in Him a wondrous faith in God. Oh that you and I might have the same trust and have no respect to the proud nor such as turn aside to lies!

5. Many O LORD, my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto You: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. We are not dealing with a God who never deals with us. Faith in God is no fiction. We have already had from God the most wonderful displays of power—we have been the recipients of great mercy springing from His thoughts of love toward us. It ought to be an easy thing for experienced saints to trust in God and I hope it has become so with us.

6-8. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears have You opened: burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart. Now we undoubtedly get the words of Christ. Our Lord said these words and, therefore, He came to fulfill the Father’s will and present on our behalf an acceptable Sacrifice with blood better than that of bulls or of goats. You and I have to say this in a very humble measure. We do not now bring to God any sacrifice of bulls or goats, but we do bring our whole heart to Him, trusting to be accepted, for He has written on those hearts His own Law and it is our delight to now do the will of God. This is the kind of sacrifice that God accepts—true, fervent, obedient hearts! God grant us always to present it.

9, 10. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips, O LORD, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within My heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great congregation. What a preacher Christ was! How He told out what He had learned of the Father! How fully, how constantly was He the Witness for God to men! Some of us following far behind, with unequal footsteps, nevertheless can say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.” It is a great comfort in feeling, if you are called to present the Gospel, that as far as you know, you have preached it and have kept back nothing that God has taught you. It will be a thousand mercies if any of God’s servants shall be found clear at the last. When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants—we have only done what it was our duty to do. But there is still a sweet peace about fidelity when in the integrity of one’s heart we can say that we have not refrained our lips as God knows. Then comes the prayer—

11. Withhold not Your tender mercies from Me, O LORD: let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve Me. If you have dealt honestly with God’s Word, you may expect that God will deal graciously with you. Surely He would not send us to proclaim a message of mercy and then deny mercy to us! That cannot be. But Brothers, when we have done our best for God and before God, yet we cannot boast—we still need mercy and we fall back upon the loving-kindness of God just as the sinner must do when he first of all comes to God. May we always be in that true and humble frame of mind which looks for nothing but mercy.

12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: my iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me. Now here is a passage in which the Master is not to be seen but only the servant! This is the man that said that God had put a new song into his mouth. He is a true child of God to whom God had had respect and whose prayer God had heard, yet see what a plight he has come to! Dear Friends, you and I may have to undergo this trial. Happy shall we be if we have such faith in God that even when innumerable evils compass us about, we shall remember the innumerable mercies of God, such mercies as the Psalmist had spoken of in the fifth verse. When our iniquities take hold upon us, what a mercy it is to think that Christ has taken hold upon us, too, and will never let us go! When our sins seem more than the hairs of our head and our heart is failing us, it is very sweet to feel that the depths of eternal love and of atoning merit have drowned even our innumerable sins—they are cast upon the head of Him that said “Lo, I come to do Your will.” They are carried away and they have ceased to be through Him whose precious blood and glorious righteousness have made us accepted before God!

13. Be pleased O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. You may pray like that and yet be a true Believer. The man that is not in haste to be saved does not need to be saved at all. He that can put it off till tomorrow knows nothing about it! A true Believer, when he is crying for mercy, cries, “My case is urgent! Help me now, make haste to help me.”

14-17. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, “Aha, aha. Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love Your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. But I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinks upon me: You are my Help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. “But I am poor and needy, yet”—oh blessed, “yet”—“Yet the Lord thinks upon me.” He does not throw me a penny and pass on as we often do to the poor and needy! But He stops and thinks. Yet He makes no tarrying. He answers the cry of His people and comes in haste to deliver them!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2535 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SINGULAR PLEA IN PRAYER  
NO. 2535

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1884.

**“I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.”  
Psalm 41:4.**

THIS was one of David’s sayings—“I said.” It was a saying that was worth saying and it is worth re-saying—“I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.” How often he said it, we do not know. The more often, the better. There is no day too bright for saying it and there is no night too dark for saying it. “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.” Every one of David’s sayings was not worth repeating, for he said some things that he had to retract. “I said in my haste,” he said, on one occasion and, possibly, what he said in his haste he repented of at his leisure. But this saying in our text needs no retracting! It only needs repeating and, until we enter Heaven, we may keep on saying it—“I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.” I have never heard of Christ rebuking anybody for speaking thus. He who said, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are,” received no commendation from the Lord Jesus Christ. But he who said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner,” went down to his house justified rather than the other! This is a good saying, a true saying, a humble saying and a gracious saying. And I say again, the more often it is repeated, the better. “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.”

Observe that this is a saying to the Lord—“I said, LORD, be merciful unto me.” You hear people say, when they are talking and gossiping, “I said to her and she said to me,” or, “He said to me and I said to him”— so-and-so and so-and-so. Well, what does it matter what you said or what they said? Very likely it is not worth repeating, nor the answer that was made to it! Much of what is said may be summed up in the Dunottar Castle motto—

*“THEY SAY.  
WHAT DO THEY SAY?  
LET THEM SAY.”*

It all comes to nothing! It is only breath vainly spent, which would be far more wisely expended if it were, as the poet Cowper said—

“ **To Heaven in supplication sent.”**  
How much better it would be if each one of the parties concerned said, “Lord, be merciful unto me!” If we would speak twice to God and only once to men, or if we even reached so happy a proportion as at least to say as much to God as we say to our fellow men, how much healthier, happier, stronger, more heavenly and more holy would we become! You need not try to remember all that you have said to your fellow men— probably much of that is best forgotten—but it is good to remember what you have said to your God, if it is anything like this saying of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.”

Let this be one of our sayings as well as David’s. As he said, “Lord, be merciful unto me,” I am sure I ought to say it, and I think, dear Friends, you ought to say it, too. If there is anybody here who thinks that he has grown so good that he does not need to pray, “Lord, be merciful unto me,” I am very thankful, for once, that I am not as that man is, for he must be eaten up with pride! He cannot be right in his heart who will not pray for mercy and, surely, he has received no mercy who does not feel his need of more mercy. God can scarcely have begun to work in that man who thinks that he needs no longer make confession of sin, or seek mercy from God. David tells us, “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me,” and I advise you to make this one of your sayings, also. People sometimes say, “It is an old saying,” and that is supposed to be its commendation. Well, this, also, is an old saying. A young man says, “My father used to say soand-so,” and I have no doubt that, if you had a godly father, he used to say much that was worth remembering and worth repeating—and you cannot do better than use your father’s words, especially if they were like David’s on this occasion. Let it be reported of you in your biography, if it is ever written, “This was one of his sayings. He often said, ‘Lord, be merciful unto me.’”

Notice, also, that this was the saying of a sick man and of a sick saint. “I said, Lord, Be merciful unto me.” It is not written, “I said, Lord, You are unmerciful to me in chastening me; you deal too severely with me in placing me upon this sickbed and causing me to lie here till the bed grows hard as a rock beneath me.” No, there is no complaining, here, though there is petitioning! There is no murmuring, though there is supplication. “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.” When you get well, again, after an illness, it will be a great comfort if you can look back and feel, “I did not complain, but the chief cry from my sickbed was, ‘Lord, be merciful unto me.’”

I have thus briefly introduced to you one of the sayings of a sick saint—a sick king—and that king was David, the man after God’s own heart. And I believe that this saying of his was after God’s own heart and that this prayer was pleasing in the ears of the Most High. “I said, Lord, be merciful unto me.” So now I will try to show you that our text contains, first, a prayer—“Lord, be merciful unto me.” Next, a confession—“I have sinned against You.” And then, thirdly, a plea, and a very singular plea it is—“I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.”

I. First, here is, A PRAYER—“Lord, me merciful unto me.” It may mean—and I daresay it did mean, at least in part—“Mitigate my pains.” O Beloved, when you feel your heart throbbing and palpitating, or when the swollen limb seems as if it were laid upon an anvil and beaten with redhot hammers. When the pain goes through you again and again, till even the strong man is ready to cry out in his agony and the tears start unwillingly to the eyes, this is a good prayer to present to God, “Lord, be merciful unto me.” I have sometimes found that where medicine has failed and sleep has been chased away, and pain has become unbearable, it has been good to appeal to God directly, and to say, “O Lord, I am Your child! Will You allow Your child to be thus tortured with pain? Is it not written, ‘Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him”? Lord, be merciful unto me.”

I can solemnly assert that I have found immediate respite from convulsions of extreme pain in answer to a simple appeal to the Fatherhood of God and a casting myself upon His mercy. And I do not doubt that I am also describing the experience of many others of God’s afflicted children. When grieved with sore physical pain, you will find, dear Friends, that the quiet resignation, the holy patience and the childlike submissiveness which enable you to just pray, “Lord, be merciful unto me,” will often bring a better relief to you than anything that the most skilled physician can prescribe for you. You are permitted and encouraged to act thus—when the rod falls heavily upon you, look up into your Father’s face and say, “Lord, be merciful unto me.”

But that is not all that David meant, I am quite sure, for, next, he must have meant, “Forgive my sins.” You can see by his prayer that his sins were the heaviest affliction from which he was suffering—“Be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.” And, believe me, there is no pain in the world that at all approximates to a sense of sin. I said to a dear friend who is greatly depressed at this time, “I should like you to have a little rheumatic gout, just to take your thoughts off your mental anxiety.” “Oh,” she said, “it would be a great pleasure to me to have that form of suffering rather than my present depression of spirit!” And I am sure that it is so—and if that depression of spirit is mingled with the thought of sinfulness and you are afraid—although, perhaps, in your case there may be no ground for fear because you really are God’s child—but if you get afraid that you are not pardoned and forgiven, that fear will cut into you worse than a wound from a sword! It will make your blood boil more than would the poison of a cobra in your veins, for there is nothing so venomous as sin. So David meant, “I said, when I felt my sin—I said, when my spirit sank within me—Lord, be merciful unto me. Be merciful unto me.”

Sinners’ prayers suit depressed saints! The prayer of the publican is, after all, my everyday prayer. I have what I may call a Sunday prayer, a prayer for high days and holiday, but my everyday prayer, the one that I can use all through the week, the one that I can pick up when I cannot pick up anything else, is the publican’s prayer, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” That prayer is “the baby’s prayer,” such as you would teach a child to pray. It is the prayer of the poor harlot, the prayer of the dying thief, “O God, be merciful to me!” It is a blessed, blessed prayer and I charge you never to cease from using it in the sense that our Lord taught it to His disciples, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

But that is not all that there is in this prayer. I think that David, when he said, “Lord, be merciful unto me,” also meant, “Fulfill Your promises.” “You have said of the man who considers the poor, ‘The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.’ Lord, be merciful unto me and deliver me in the time of my trouble. You have said, ‘The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive.’ Lord, be merciful unto me, preserve me and keep me alive. You have said that you will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. Lord, be merciful unto me, and guard me from my foes. You will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. Lord, be merciful unto me, and strengthen me. You will make all his bed in his sickness. Lord, make my bed.” It is a very difficult thing to make a sick man’s bed easy and I should think that it was still harder to make the kind of bed that David was accustomed to lie upon. We often have a soft bed with plenty of feathers in it, yet, after we have been lying upon it for a month, it gets very hard. No matter if it is a bed of down, it seems as if it were made of stones and one is apt to think that it is made very badly when it is really made exceedingly well. But I should think that the mattresses they used in the East must have been so hard that it needed God, Himself, to make soft beds for sick people, so the Lord comes in with this gracious promise, “I will make all his bed”—bolster, pillow, covering and all—“I will make all his bed in his sickness. I will help him. I will comfort him. I will make him patient. I will enable him to bear all My will.”

Now, then, you dear saints of God who are in trouble, here is a prayer that is suitable for every one of you, “Lord, be merciful unto me.” Should you get very badly off, then plead the promise, “You have said, ‘Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.’ Lord, be merciful unto me.” Are you going down in the world? Remember that it is written, “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,” and cry, “Lord, be merciful unto me.” This prayer comes in appropriately at the back of every promise!

I know that I am addressing some who are not yet saved, but I wish that this prayer might get into each one of their hearts—“Lord, be merciful unto me.” Keep on praying it until you obtain the mercy! Every five minutes in the day, wherever you are, let your heart go beating—beat, beat, beat, beat—to this tune, “Lord, be merciful unto me. Be merciful unto me. Be merciful unto me.” You cannot have a prayer that will better fit your lips!

So far I have spoken of only half the Psalmist’s prayer. The other half of it is, “Heal my soul.” David does not pray, “Heal my eyes; heal my feet; heal my heart; heal me, whatever my disease may be,” but he goes at once to the root of the whole matter and prays, “Heal my soul.” O you sick ones, be more anxious to have your soul healed than to have your body cured! What does David mean by this portion of his prayer?

He means, I think, first, “ Heal me, Lord, of the distress of my soul! My soul is afflicted with an appalling disease and is brought very low—‘Lord, heal my soul.’ I am so sad, so sorely frightened, such terrors pass before my eyes, my soul is morbid, melancholic, despondent—‘Lord, heal my soul.’” The Lord is the great Soul-healer, therefore go to Him with this prayer, “Lord, heal me of the distress of my soul.”

But also add this meaning to the petition—“ Lord, heal my soul of the effect of sin.” Every sin brings on another sin. And the continuance in sin makes the tendency to sin, stronger. “‘Heal my soul, Lord.’ If I was once a drunk and I have given up the evil thing, yet the thirst will come—heal my soul of it. If I have been a man of the world and have made unrighteous gains, the tendency to do so again will be strong upon me when the opportunity occurs—‘Heal my soul, Lord.’ That I may forget the wanton songs I used to sing, the wanton sights I once delighted in, the wanton lusts that once ate up my life, ‘Heal my soul, Lord.’” It is one thing to be forgiven, it is another thing to be delivered from the result of a long life of sin! Yet God can do even that, so pray, “Lord, be merciful unto me and pardon me. Heal my soul and sanctify me.”

I think that David also meant by this prayer, “ Heal me of my tendency to sin.” He seemed to say, “Lord, I shall sin again if I am not healed. I have an evil tendency in me and an old nature which is inclined to sin. If You do not heal me of this disease, there will be another eruption upon the skin of my life and I shall sin again.” When a man sins outwardly, it is because he has sin inwardly. If there were no sin in us, no sin would come out of us. But there it lies, sometimes concealed. I do not think it is ever a good thing to sin—that cannot be—but I have known a man to be tempted and to fall into sin who has discovered by his fall how much of sin there always was in him. It is something like the breaking out of a disease in the skin—it would not have broken out if it had not been there before. And the outbreak, however grievous it is, may be useful by driving the sufferer to seek a cure and so he becomes thoroughly healed. This is the meaning of David’s prayer, “Heal my soul, for I have sinned. Heal me, that I may not sin again.”

II. The second part of our subject is A CONFESSION. “I have sinned against You.” I do not want to simply have these words in my mouth, to tell them to you. I wish that I could put them into your mouths, O you unconverted ones, that you might say them to God! Let us briefly consider what is meant by this confession, “I have sinned against You.”

First, it is a confession without an excuse. David does not say, “I have sinned against You, but I could not help it,” or, “I was sorely tempted,” or, “I was in trying circumstances.” No, as long as a man can make an excuse for his sin, he will be a lost man. But when he dares not and cannot frame an excuse, there is hope for him. “I have sinned against You,” is a confession without an excuse.

Further, it is a confession without any qualification. He does not say, “Lord, I have sinned to a certain extent, but, still, I have partly balanced my sins by my virtues and I hope to wipe out my faults with my tears.” No. He says, “I have sinned against You,” as if that were a full description of his whole life. He bows his knees and just confesses unto God, “Lord, I give up everything in the way of self-defense or self-justification. ‘I have sinned against You.’”

But notice, also, that this confession is without affectation. When some people say, “We have sinned,” you can tell by their manner that they think they are, by their confession, complimenting God. You talk with them and they say, “Oh, yes, Sir, we are all sinners!” Yes, they are all sinners like the monk who said that he had broken all the commandments, and was the most wicked man in the world. So one of his companions asked him if he had broken the First Commandment. Another asked about the Second, then the Third, the Fourth, the Fifth and all the rest. And to each one he kept saying, “No, I never broken that in my life.” They inquired about the whole ten and he declared that he had never broken one of them—yet this was the man who had confessed that he had broken all ten! And there are men who say that they are sinners, yet they do not mean it. And a sham sinner will only have a sham savior— that is to say, a man who only pretends to be a sinner and does not realize his guilt in the sight of God, will not have a Savior. Christ died for nobody but real sinners, those who feel that their sin is truly sin—

*“A sinner is a sacred thing,  
The Holy Spirit has made him so”*  
and if I am happy enough to meet with a man who puts himself down with real sinners, I bid him believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and expect that, by so doing, he will find a real Savior who will cleanse him from sin

by His precious blood!

I wanted you to notice that there was no affectation about David’s confession of sin, for, in the next verse he says, “My enemies speak evil of me.” He was not going to confess sin which he had not committed—and when men spoke against him, he said, “They speak evil of me.” Well, but, David, how can they speak evil of you when you confess that you are so bad? “Yes,” he says, “but I have not done that with which they charge me. I confess that I have sinned against God, but I have not sinned against Him in the way they say I have. So far as their charges are concerned, I am innocent and pure. What I confess is that I have sinned against God.” I like a man, when he makes a confession of sin, not to be carried away into the use of proud expressions without meaning, but to speak with judgment and to acknowledge and confess only what is true. This is the excellence of David’s confession, that he acknowledges to what no sinner will ever admit till the Grace of God makes him do it—“I have sinned against You.”

Hear him again in the 51st Psalm—“Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight.” Hear the prodigal—“Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son.” The essence of sin is that it is sin against God. It is wrong to do any harm to your neighbor, but, after all, you and he are only two subjects of the great King and Lord of All. It is high treason to sin against God and often that sin, of which men think the least, God thinks the most. That spiritual sin of which some say, “Oh, that is a mere trifle!”—that forgetting of the Creator, that ignoring of the only Redeemer—this is the sin of sins, the damning sin which kindles the flames of Hell! And it is a good thing and a right thing, when a man’s confession of sin has David’s confession as the very core of it, “Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.”

III. Now I close by noticing A PLEA and a very singular plea it is. The Psalmist’s prayer is followed by a confession and, strangely enough, the confession is the argument of the prayer. Listen to the text again—“I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul.” Why? “For I have sinned against You.”

That is a very startling and remarkable way of pleading, but it is the only right one. It is such a plea as no self righteous man would urge. The

Pharisee keeps to this strain, “Lord , be merciful unto me, for I have been obedient, I have kept Your Law.” O foolish, self-righteous man! Do you not see that you are shutting the door in your own face? You say, in effect, “Be merciful unto me, for I do not need any mercy.” That is what it practically comes to and, therefore, you are contradicting your own prayer! If you have kept the Law from your youth up and you have been so good and so obedient, you do not need any mercy from God! Why, therefore, do you ask for it? No man who thinks himself better than his neighbors, strictly upright, honorable and worthy of reward, will ever bow his knees and cry to God, “Have mercy upon me, for I have sinned against You.” He pleads, on the contrary, “Have mercy upon me, for I am a most respectable man. I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound. I have brought up my family most admirably. Have mercy upon me.” I say again, he asks for charity and then says, “I do not need it. Give me of Your charity, O God, but I am not one of the poor beggars that crawl about the street—I am as well-to-do as anybody.” None but the poor will value the charity of men and none but the guilty will value the charity of God. If you are not a sinner, Christ as a Savior has nothing to do with you. He came into the world to save sinners—and as for you who count yourselves righteous, this is what He says about you, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” As Mary sang, “He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent empty away.” Let them feed themselves if they have such an abundance as they say. This, then, is the sort of plea that a self-righteous man would not urge.

This is, further, such a plea as a carnal reasoner could not urge, for he could not spy out any reason or argument in it. “Am I to appeal to my God for mercy and for soul-healing on the ground that I have sinned? Why,” he says, “there is no plea in that.” But he who has been to Christ’s School and learned the logic of the Cross, will know that there is no argument equal in force to this—“Lord, I have sinned, I need mercy. Give it to me, Lord. I have sinned and, therefore, I have no right whatever to expect anything of You—therefore glorify Yourself by the freeness and spontaneity of Your abounding Grace! Lord, I have sinned and this sinning has destroyed me! Have pity upon me. This sinning is like a deadly disease within my soul. Therefore, Great Physician, come and heal me! This sinning has killed me. Make me alive. This sinning has damned me. Come and save me!”

That is the best pleading in all the world and, after all, it is the common pleading that men make use of with their fellow men. When one comes begging of me, what does he say? In nine cases out of ten, he tells me what is not true! That I can vouch for, but I always notice that he never pleads thus—“Now, Sir, I want you to give me help because I do not need it very much. I am not at all badly off—I already have about as much as I need—but I thought that I would take to begging because it is a genteel kind of occupation.” You never hear him talk like that! I remember giving a man, who came begging of me with bare feet, a pair of patent leather boots. They were nearly done with, but I thought that he might make some use of them. He put them on, but he was not so foolish as to go begging in them! At the first gateway he came to, he pulled them off and I met him, ten minutes afterwards, without the boots, except that he had them slung over his back, ready to sell to the first likely customer! He knew that rags are the best clothes for a beggar—if he would succeed in his calling, the fouler and the more ragged he looked, the better for him—for so he appeals to our sense of pity. At any rate, that is the way to beg of God. Do not go and smarten yourself up and say, “Lord, I am pretty decent as I am. Be merciful unto me.” No, but go in your rags—go just as you are, in all your sin, filthiness, weakness, poverty and insignificance—and so appeal to the pity and the mercy of God.

This is sound common sense that I am talking. Suppose there had been a battle and I were a soldier who had been wounded and lay upon the plain? And suppose the surgeon and the men with the ambulance were going round to see who needed their help? If they came to me, I do not think I should say, “Well, Doctor, I have got a bullet in here somewhere, but it has not gone in very far. I daresay it will be all right—you can leave me here.” Oh, no! I would say, “I am afraid, Doctor, that this bullet is very near my heart. You had better let your men pick me up and attend to me quickly, or I may be very soon dead.” I certainly would not try to make myself out to be better than I was! And I would be glad to be attended to at once. And what folly it is when a man tries to comfort himself, as a sinner, by looking up all his filthy rags of self-righteousness and saying, “Lord, I do not think there is very much the matter with me.” O Soul, if you did but know it, your whole head is sick and your whole heart is faint—from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet you are covered with wounds, bruises and putrefying sores! There is but a step between you and death—between you and Hell—if you have never been washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ! Therefore, do not set up your lying pretences! Do not paint yourself up, like Jezebel, for you cannot, in that way, make yourself beautiful in the sight of God! You must go to Him with all your wrinkles, all your foulness and everything else that is hideous, and say, “Lord, I have no beauty, I have no merit, nothing to plead, nothing to urge but my guilt. ‘Heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.’” Then you shall be saved!

When a man cannot pay to God a penny in the pound of all his debts, then he will be frankly forgiven all. But as long as he promises that he will make a composition and do his best to pay what he owes to Divine Justice in the hope that Jesus Christ will make up the rest, there is no hope for him! The Lord Jesus Christ will not be a mere make weight for you! Do you think that you are to get into the scale with your beautiful righteousness and that you are to be accounted somebody of great importance—and that Christ is to do the little that you cannot do—that it is to be “Christ & Co.,” or rather, “Self & Co.”? And that you are to be the head of the firm and Christ to be a kind of silent partner? He will not do it! It would be a disgrace to Christ to yoke you with Him in such a fashion. You might as soon yoke a gnat with an archangel as think of your going in to help Christ to save you! To join a filthy rag from off a dunghill with the golden garments of a king or a queen cannot be permitted! Christ will be everything, or else He will be nothing—you must be saved wholly by mercy, or else not at all! There must not be even a trace of the fingers of self-righteousness upon the acts and documents of Divine Grace. It must be all of Grace—“And if by Grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise Grace is no more Grace.”

There can be no more mingling of the two together as the ground of hope than oil will mix with water, or fire will burn beneath the sea. You cannot be saved by your own merits! Oh, then, I implore you, breathe this prayer to God, “Lord, be merciful unto me; pardon me, for You have mercy upon sinners, and here is one! You heal the sick, and here is one! Lord, by Your Grace I trust You! I lay my sins on Jesus, I lay my soulsickness at his dear feet. Lord, save me.” It is all done if you trust Jesus—you are saved!

Just before I came in to this service, I saw a young Brother whom I mean to propose to the Church and who. last Sunday came to me, after the morning sermon, and said, “Sir, I am saved, and I know I am.” And as I spoke to him, I thought that I knew it, too. Why should there not be many others in the same blessed condition? What is the use of preaching—what is the use of this vast crowd coming together and going away again—unless men and women believe in Christ? Look unto Jesus and be saved! If you look, you shall be saved now! The Lord lead you to look at this very moment, and unto Him be praise forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALMS 41, 42.**

You will see, dear Friends, from these holy songs, that the saints of God in those olden days were not screened from trials and troubles, but were tempted in all points like as we are. If we happen to be in similar trying circumstances, let us take comfort from their experiences. The footsteps of the flock that has gone before should make the sheep feel that it is not lost.

Psalm 41 To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.  
Verse 1. Blessed is he that considers the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. David delivered others and God will deliver him. When he is poor and needy, God will think upon him, even as David considered the poor and the needy when they cried to him.  
2, 3. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: You will make all his bed in his sickness. God will be condescendingly gentle to such as are kind and gentle to the poor. If we love God, first, and then exhibit the result of that love in our care for the poor and the needy, we shall certainly be recompensed, for he that gives to the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will pay him back—sometimes in his own coin, but more often in a coin of heavenly currency. Let us take note of this and let us never harden our heart against the poor and the needy in the time of their extremity.  
4. I said, Lord, be merciful unto me. David had been very kind to the poor at all times, but when he gets into trouble, he does not plead that, he just mentions it. The main stress of his pleading is quite in another direction, namely, for mercy—“I said, Lord be merciful unto me.”  
4, 5. Heal my soul; for I have sinned against You. My enemies speak evil of me. When will he die, and his name perish? But good men do not die to please wicked men. But sometimes, when the good men have been dead, buried and their memory has been insulted by the wicked, they have risen up, again, in their posthumous influence! Good men live too long for the wicked, but they live as long as God wills that they should— they are immortal till their work is done. The story of Wycliffe is but a typical case of what has often happened. When the monks gathered round his bed and expected that their opponent would soon be gone, he said, “I shall not die, but live,” and so he did. And even after he had died, he continued to be a living power in the land. Indeed, we know not how much of the blessings we enjoy is the result of the light that was shed upon England by “the Morning Star of the Reformation.”  
6. And if he comes to see me, he speaks vanity: his heart gathers iniquity to itself; when he goes abroad, he tells it. Those are bad visitors to the sick who, when they speak, talk only nonsense or that which galls the sufferer. And then, when they go out, begin to tell an idle tale against him to his injury.  
7-9. All who hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. An evil disease, say they, cleaves fast unto him: and now that he lies, he shall rise up no more. Yes, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. Many a child of God has had his character whispered down by slanderers. Many a man has had a hard time of it through the evil speaking of men of the world. Yes, even the Lord of saints and the King of pilgrims knew what it was to find a traitor in His most familiar friend and to receive the basest ingratitude from one who had eaten of His bread. Do not be carried away with too much sorrow if you are slandered or betrayed— better men than you have suffered through this fearful evil! Take the trouble to your Lord and bear it with such patience as He will give you.  
10, 11. But You, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. By this I know that You favor me, because my enemy does not triumph over me. “He may think that he shall triumph over me. He may even begin, in his mind, to divide the spoil. But he shall never really get it—‘My enemy does not triumph over me.’”  
12, 13. And as for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and set me before Your face forever. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.  
That is the sick man’s praise—it is full of fervor and full of life. Let us never rob God of the revenue of His praises! Let us not have such a cupboard love for Him that we only praise Him when He gives us good things. Let us bless His name just as much when He takes away, when He afflicts, when He chastises! That is true praise which comes from the bed of affliction and from a heart that is sorely broken with sorrow.  
Now in the next Psalm we find the good man in trouble again.  
Psalm 42:1. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. “As the hart pants” or “brays.” And if such is your soul’s panting after God, you shall have what you pant for. Sooner or later God will manifest Himself in Grace to the man who cries after Him in this fashion!  
2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. “My soul, my very soul, thirsts for God, the living God.”  
2, 3. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is your God? That is another of the taunts of the ungodly. Just now, they said, “When shall he die and his name perish?” Now they cry, “Where is your God? You said that He would help you. You were sure that He would comfort you. You were confident that He would draw near to you—and now you are crying and panting after Him and have not got what you want—‘Where is your God?’”  
4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. That is not a good thing to do. If you pour your soul out, do not pour it into yourself! There is little gain when you merely empty your grief out of yourself into yourself. I have known many a man lay his burden down and then take it up, again, directly. That is poor economy! The way to get rid of the sorrow is to pour out your hearts before God! There is no wisdom in doing what the Psalmist says he did—“I pour out my soul in me.”  
4, 5. For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? You see, the Psalmist, here, talks to himself. Every man is two men—we are duplicates, if not triplicates—and it is well, sometimes, to hold a dialogue with one’s self. “Why are you cast down, O my Soul?” I always notice that as long as I can argue with myself about my depressions, I can get out of them. But when both the men within me go down at once, it is a downfall, indeed! When there is one foot on the solid rock, the other comes up to it pretty soon.  
5*.*Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance. “I know I shall. He will yet look at me. I shall not always be in the dark. Therefore, let me begin at once to praise Him.” It is well, sometimes, to snatch a light from the altars of the future and with it to kindle the sacrifices of the present. “I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance.”  
6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. From the little hill I will think of all Your former love—all the sacred spots where You have met with me, all the lonely places where You have been my Comfort, and all the joyful regions where You have been my glory. I will think of these, and take comfort from them, for You are an unchanging God, and what You did for me before, You will do for me again and yet again.

7. Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterspouts: all Your waves and Your billows are gone over me. Here is a great storm. Here is a man, not merely on the sea, but in the sea with not only some waves beating upon him, but with all of them going over him. And those not common waves, but God’s waves. That is a Hebraism for the biggest waves, Atlantic billows—all these have gone right over him, yet see how he swims! Hope in God always crests the stormiest billow.  
8, 9. Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life will say unto God, my Rock, Why have You forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? See what liberties saints take with God—how they reason with Him, how they argue with Him—and God loves them to do so. Are you not pleased with your child when he urges reasons why you should do this or that for him? You are glad to see that he has mind enough to think of these things and confidence enough in you to expect you to be affected by his pleading. And the Lord loves His people to commune with Him. “Put Me in remembrance,” He says. “Let us plead together.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord.” If we reasoned more with God, we should reason less with ourselves. There is a good reason for reasoning with God, but it is often unreasonable to reason with yourself.  
10, 11. As with a sword in my bones, my enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is your God? Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God. for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. It is curious to see the duplicate man here. He talks to himself as, “you,” and yet he says, “I.” “Hope you in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance.” First, he said, “I shall yet praise Him, for the help of His countenance.” Now it is, “the health of my countenance.” When God helps us with His countenance, then our own countenance soon grows bright and healthy! “Who is the health of my countenance,” says the Psalmist, and then he comes to the sweetest note of all, “and my God.”—  
*“For yet I know I shall him praise, Who graciously to me,  
The health is of my countenance, Yes, my own God is he.”*  
Oh, sweet word, that! May each of us be able to reach it! Amen.

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THE PANTING DEER  
NO. 822

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 20, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As the deer pants after the water brooks,  
so pants my soul after You, O God.”  
Psalm 42:1.**

THERE is something to be lamented in this state of mind, for if the Psalmist had maintained unbroken communion with his God, he would not have been so much panting after Him as enjoying Him. It is deeply to be deplored that we, who sometimes bask in the sunshine of God’s Countenance, cannot live so as always to enjoy it. Why do we wander? Why do we grieve His Holy Spirit? Why do we turn aside from God, our exceeding joy? Why do we provoke Him to jealousy and cause Him to make us grope in darkness, and sigh out of a lonely and desolate heart? There is much of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

If, therefore, we can join in the language of the text, we must not too much congratulate ourselves, for though it is a sign of Divine Grace to pant after God as the deer pants for the water brooks, yet it is an equally certain sign of a need of more Grace, and the loss of a privilege which we should strive always to possess. We are yet but poor in spiritual things when we might be rich. We are thirsting when we might put flagons to our lips. At the same time there is very much which is commendable in the desire expressed in the text—the insatiable desire which burned in the Psalmist’s heart is a heavenly flame enkindled from above.

If I have not my Lord in near and dear communion, it is at least the next best thing to be unutterably wretched until I find Him. If I do not sit at His banquets, yet blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness. If my Beloved is not in my embrace, yet so long as I am not contented without Him—so long as I sigh, and cry, and follow hard after Him—I may be assured that I am in the possession of His love and that before long I shall find Him to the joy of my soul. Our text, then, has a warp and a woof of differing colors—sin and Grace are mingled—the wine is mixed with water, yet it is wine. There is some alloy in the silver, yet silver it assuredly is.

David sighs as none but a Believer can do, and yet if he had not been a sinner, too, such sighs had not been necessary. Brothers and Sisters, such good and such evil are in you—search and look—and pray the great Spirit to remove the ill and nourish the good.

I. Coming straight to the text, we shall notice, in the first place, THE OBJECT OF THE DESIRE which the Psalmist here describes. The deer pants after the water brooks and David pants after his God, the living God. I do not find him expressing a single word of regret as to his absence from his throne. Probably he wrote this Psalm when he had been expelled from his country by his ungrateful son, Absalom. But he does not say, “My soul pants after my royalties and the splendor of the kingdom of Judah.” No, not a word of it. He lets the baubles go. He gives up these uneasy pomps, content to let all go forever if he may but find his God.

Well may we let the chaff go if we retain the wheat. I do not find him even mentioning his home, and yet he was a man of a loving spirit who delighted to bless his household. But here I read not a word concerning his palace, his gardens, or his treasuries—not even for his children can he spare a sigh! Let him be banished from his own house and it will not displease him if he is not banished from the House of God, also. To him his dwelling place was the Lord, and dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, his joys were all complete.

Nor is there even a word about his much loved country. David was a very prince of patriots, yet he sighs not for Jerusalem. He pines not for the well of Bethlehem—neither the roses of Sharon nor the lilies of the valley command his lamentations—for the excellency of Carmel or the glory of Lebanon he utters no cry of desire. His one sigh is for his God, the God of his life, his exceeding joy! When shall he come and appear before God? When shall he join in the assembly and keep the Sabbath?

This one grief, like a huge torrent, swept away all minor streams, absorbing themselves into its own rush and volume. Like an avalanche which binds the snow masses to itself as it descends, so his one desire concentrated all the vehemence and force of his nature. His God, his God—he cannot live without his God! He cries for Him as a lost child for its father. As a bleating lamb he will not be content till he finds his parent. David pined for permission to enjoy, again, the means of Divine Grace. He longed to go up to the Tabernacle once again. He desired to see the priests offering the sacrifices, and himself go unto the altar of God.

But observe, Beloved, that he does not dwell upon the outward worship, nor dilate upon its symbolic pomp and sacred splendor—he passes right through them all, as the priest of old passed through the outer court! Only the innermost court will satisfy him. He penetrates within the shell and desires the inward kernel. The carnal ordinance cannot content him—he must have the spiritual life and substance. He does not so much pine for the sacrifices as for his God—neither for the priest, nor for the altar, nor for the tabernacle does he cry—but for his God! He had learned what modern professors have not learned—that the outward is nothing, and the inward is everything!

“The kingdom of God is within you.” It is not meat, nor drink, nor outward worship. And the God whom you adore is not pleased with your words and your genuflections. He is not pleased with your outward forms of speech and observance. He is only pleased when you press through all this and come to HIM—come into fellowship with Him and speak to Him as a spirit speaking with a Spirit—as one possessing a secret life speaking in the power of that life to the invisible and ever-living God.

This is what David longed after, then. Not his throne, nor his house, nor his country, nor even the outward means of Grace by themselves, but his God he panted after, his God alone! And this was his cry, “When shall I come and appear before God?” I suppose the longing of the Psalmist to have consisted of the following particulars. He longed to appear before his God, that is to say, heartily to unite in the worship of the assembled crowd. He could have worshipped alone, but sympathy has great power over the human mind—and to join with our Brethren of one faith is very helpful to our devotion. Besides, in that age of types there was one spot sacred above all others, and every devout Israelite was bound to go up to the sacred shrine.

David remembered when the great shout went up at the tabernacle gate to Him—“whose mercy endures forever.” In his loneliness his fancy brought to his ears the song of the multitude as they chanted the glorious hallelujah, and he pined to be there to swell the strain. Not, however, because the merely being there would satisfy him, but because he felt if he could join the throng, he was in such a state of soul that he could throw his whole heart into the worship. And, O my Brothers and Sisters, you and I, when we lose, for awhile, the freshness of our spirituality, how we desire to get it back again that we may once more, in vitality of godliness, worship God with His people!

Oh, it is blessed to be here when we can stand and sing unto our WellBeloved a song! When we can kneel with the congregation and join in the common supplication, ourselves getting a grip of the Angel and holding Him fast, and not letting Him go until He blesses us! Is it not delightful to listen to the Word preached in the great congregation, when the morsel is dipped in the honey for you in particular? What joy when I can glean among the sheaves for myself and gather the handfuls that are let fall on purpose for me, and can carry home my part of the day’s provision with humble gratitude!

Is it not so, Beloved? And if you have fallen into such a state of mind that you do not, now, enjoy the services of God’s House as you once did, I would persuade you to ask the Lord to give you the strong desire of David—that you may, again, in spirit in very truth appear before God—for, I beseech you, never let the mere coming together content you! But let your panting be like that of the stag—after the water brook and nothing else—for GOD, for GOD, for GOD Himself, and nothing short of Him!

It is right to pine for the outward services when we feel that they are profitable to us. Or when we have been banished from the Church of God for awhile, or have been confined by sickness, or have been compelled to sit under an unprofitable ministry. We may, then, well sigh for the very walls which enclose the people whom we love, then. Often in France, and Switzerland, and Italy, have I felt the power of this text—

*“As the heart pants after the water brooks,*and I have sung*— So pants my soul after You, O God,”*

***“Might I enjoy the meanest place  
Within Your House, O God of Grace!  
Not tents of ease, nor thrones of power,  
Should tempt my feet to leave Your door.”***

Further than this, David’s desire comprehended a longing after a restored confidence as to his interest in the love of God. He knew that God loved him. Three or four times over in his Psalm he speaks like a man whose faith holds its own. “For I shall yet praise Him,” he says, “who is the health of my countenance and my God.” A man may know his interest in Christ, and yet it may be a matter of some dispute with him—he may derive but little present comfort from it. But oh, how delightful it is when we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him!

When the Lord’s everlasting, unbounded, unchangeable love to us is no more a matter of question than our own existence—when we can say, “My Father, God,” with an unfaltering tongue—this is the cream of life! And as the deer pants after the water brooks, so ought we to pant after this—that we may always know by the Infallible witness of the Holy Spirit that assuredly we are in the love of God—that our name is written in the Book of Life. That we ourselves are forever dear to the eternal Father, and registered in the rolls of the family that He has begotten! Oh, happy they who possess this! Dear Friend, if you do not at this hour enjoy it, seek it, seek it ravenously, beyond all bounds of intensity! Seek it until you find it in sweet dependence upon Jesus.

But David wanted more than this. Not merely, as we have said, to worship God heartily and to have a confidence in the Divine love, but he longed to have that love shed abroad in his heart. You know, Beloved, what this means, this outpouring of Divine love, when it is not merely a belief with you that God loves you, but you even feel that love of God shed abroad within you by the Holy Spirit which is given unto you. Oh, what joy this is! When it is at its full it is ravishing! So that whether in the body or out of the body we can sometimes scarcely tell! The love of God often overpowers the Believer with its delight—he is faint with glory, sick of love!

Have you ever felt as if you were dwelling in the suburbs of Heaven, standing in the border land between the Glory-life and the life that now is, tasting the clusters of Eshcol and drinking from the crystal cups of the marriage supper? Beloved, under these rolling skies there is no bliss like the earnest of the Spirit, that foretaste of celestial feasts, that pledge of joys to come. Oh, yes, Beloved, when we have actual fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, our joy is Divinely crowned with a coronet of loving kindness! There is a floodtide of the River of Life in our spirit—every thought is active, every power is inspired, every passion is elevated—and the whole man is filled with all the fullness of God—

*“Plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea,  
And lost in its immensity.”*

Now, abiding fellowship with God ought to be our daily life. The enjoyment of God’s love ought not to be a thing of yesterday, nor of today, but of all days—forevermore should we walk with God as Enoch did. And if for awhile this holy joy is broken or withdrawn from us, then ought we with incessant importunity to take up the language of the text, and declare that, “as the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants our soul after You, O God.” Beloved, it may be this morning that I am speaking to some of you who, at one time, were very lively and active Christians, making great advances in the Divine life. But, alas, at the present moment you feel yourselves to be very dull and heavy, and you are uneasy that it should be so.

I thank God for that uneasiness! May these waves rise higher within you until they drive you back to your first moorings and drift you to the place where once you had so much joy and peace. I think I know what your experience is—I know it, alas, too well, by having experienced it myself!—

*“What peaceful hours we once enjoyed! How sweet their memory still!  
But they have left an aching void  
The world can never fill.”*

We had just found Jesus, and we did not know how to think enough of Him, or speak well enough of His dear name. Now, alas, day will pass after day and we scarcely say a word to His honor, or try to bring one poor heart to be enamored of Him. Then the services of God’s House were inexpressibly delightful. We wished that Sundays were never over, and when they ended we looked forward to the next occasion when we should meet with the saints of God. But now we come and we go like the door on the hinges. We find no water in the well of ordinances. Time was when we worked much for our Lord, and in all we did, we did it with all our might, throwing heart and soul into every labor. We felt His sweet Presence in all our service, and indeed, at all times.

If we walked by the way, we walked with Him. If we awoke in the night, our soul was still with Him. If we were busy during the day, yet prayers were darted up in the little intervals between our business. But now, alas, it is not so as once it was. We can go day after day—not without prayer, thank God—not without praise, not without the assembling of ourselves together at ordinary times—but, alas, without the life, without the energy, without the joy, without the peace, without the holy anointing which we then knew.

Oh, then, Beloved, let us not settle upon our lees! Let us tremble, for chastisement is near! The rod will surely come upon us! God will not leave His children unchastened when they thus decline from His love. Gray hairs are coming upon us here and there, and now that we are made to see them, let us return unto Him from whom we have backslidden! He, gently, this morning says to us by a Brother’s voice, “Return, you backsliding children.” Let it be our business to return! Meanwhile let our spirits be filled with the earnest desire of the text, for it will give us wings with which to return. “As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God.”

II. We will now change the subject by considering THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESIRE which we have tried to describe. These characteristics are brought out by a metaphor. David compares himself to a stag when tormented with thirst. The comparison brings out, in the first place, as the characteristic of this desire, directness. The deer pants—what for? You need not repeat the question or pause for a reply. Everybody can see, by its smoking flanks, uplifted head, its palpitating heart, its rolling eyes, its thrust-out tongue—that it is panting for the water brooks.

So with David—he is ill at ease, but it is no question with him what he needs to give him rest of heart—“So pants my soul after You, O God,” he says, and so he goes at once to the point. He knew where he was—there is no beating about the bush, no tacking to and fro—he directs his arrow straight at the center of the target. “My soul thirsts for God—for the living God.” Beloved, it is a great mercy when you and I know what we need, for ungodly men do not know. They thirst, but like petulant children, they know not what they are crying for. They long, and they pant, and their question is, “Who will show us any good?”

But you and I know that our great need is the light of God’s Countenance! And we have come to this. And we will stand to this. And we will hold to this, that we will never cease pleading till we really see that face which makes the Heaven of angels, and is all the Heaven we desire. Now, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, is your desire as distinct and direct towards God as was the desire of David in the text? If not, chide yourself. Chide yourself that you should be hovering in circles where the straight line is so much better. Bring out in plain words your soul’s desire. Let it well up from the lowest depths of your spirit, “I need—I need my God. I do not languish for that which others are fascinated with. I do not crave what others are ambitious for—but my God, my God—let me serve You, and enjoy You forevermore! Why have You forsaken me? Return unto me now! Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation! Say unto my soul, I am your salvation! Reveal Your Son in me, and be Yourself my ever-present Friend.”

Notice next in the text the unity of the saint’s desire. The deer longs after nothing else but water brooks. There may have been other times when the poor stag had other natural desires—he may have desired the grassy plains or the shady woods—but now, hunted, wearied, steaming, panting, it must drink or die. It has but one thought—the water brooks, the cool rippling rills, the refreshing pools.

Now, Beloved Brother or Sister, if you are about to get a blessing from the Lord, you will have but one desire—your God, your God! You will have gathered up all your affections into one affection and they will all be ascending towards your Lord! You will make no conditions, no stipulations with Him. If He will but come, even though He brings a rod with Him, you will be contented if He will but come. If you may but have His company, you will accept poverty, or the weary bed of sickness, or bereavement, or anything and everything which He may allot to you—if you may but have fellowship with Jesus!

Let others ask for the bursting wine vat, or the barn that is filled with corn. For you it will be enough if you find your Beloved and may but hold Him and not let Him go, for this is the one and only all-absorbing longing of your hungering and thirsting spirit—that you may find your God—and be comforted with His eternal consolation. Have you ever seen a little child that has lost its way crying in the streets for “Mother”? Now, you shall give that child what you will, but it will not stop its crying for “Mother.” It has lost her, and cannot be content.

Take the little wanderer into your house. Show it many toys. Give it many sweets, but all are of no avail, it wants “Mother,” and its little heart will burst unless it finds her. Now just show the little one its mother, let it fly into her bosom, and what more does it want? How perfectly content it is to be there! So have I felt that if I might but sob myself to sleep on the bosom of my dear God—if I must have all else taken away from me, if so it should please Him, if I could but be with Him—no other desire or longing could ever cross my soul. I know it is so with all the family of the Lord our God. Their love to Him makes His Presence their All in All.

See that dove just taken from the cage to be set free. Tempt it to remain with you! Cast down the seeds it loves to feed upon. No, it will not dwell with you. It mounts, it makes a few circles in the air, and then having turned its eye to the dear familiar dovecote, it is all wing for home. What can stop its flight? Call to it, allure it as you will! Straight as an arrow from a bow it flies to its own beloved home and rests not its weary wings till it rests in the house of its love. Even so is it with the Believer’s soul. Let him but go free and have his desire. Unbind him of his corruptions. Strip him of his cares. Liberate him from his unbelief. Let him have his freedom and he will fly at once to his Lord Jesus! And nothing can tempt him to linger or find solace save in that blessed bosom of infinite love! A saint must have Christ to abide with him as the one thing necessary to him, for this, like Mary, he leaves all Martha’s cares to sit at Jesus’ feet.

Observe next the intensity of this desire. “As the deer pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You.” The panting of a thirsty deer is something terrible to see. It appears to thirst all over—every pore of its body is thirsting. It is not alone that heated tongue, those snorting nostrils, those glaring eyes—but the creature in every part, in every hair thirsts and pants. And so with the Believer when he is without his God! If his soul is in a right state he longs with all the force of his being to get back into his former happy condition. There is no stopping him, there is no making him pause. Surely the Psalmist chose thirst for this reason— because it is a longing not to be appeased.

Men have gone for days without food, but they could not, during the same length of time, abstain from drink. In a long and weary march soldiers have been able to endure much absence of solids, but we find in cases like the marches of Alexander, that soldiers have died by hundreds from lack of drink. It has been said hunger you can palliate for awhile, but thirst is awful. You cannot reason with it. Thirst has no ears. You cannot forget it—the more thirsty the man becomes the more does the need thrust itself before him. O my God, painful as is such a spiritual thirst, yet would I desire to be always in this state when I am not in immediate fellowship with You! I would be so thirsty as to never to find a moment’s peace, nor ease, nor comfort, except when I am near to You.

“Tears have been my meat,” says David, “day and night.” As though he could get nothing from himself by way of comfort, for his soul flowed over at his eyes in briny tears which made him thirstier still. Still his cry went up at morn and midnight, “My God, my God, I must behold You, I must approach You, I must enjoy Your love. Shut me not up in this dungeon. Cast me not from Your presence, take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Bring me to Yourself again, for I long, I groan, I faint, I die for You. O come to me and manifest Your favor.” Such is the strong desire of the text—such let ours be.

Further, we ought to say that the text manifests, as one characteristic of this longing, a vitality. As we have already said, thirst is connected with the very springs of life. Men must drink or die. So the Christian comes to feel that it is not a luxury to walk with God—a luxury with which he may perhaps dispense—but it is an absolute necessity for his spirit. Consider, my Brothers and Sisters, what danger we are in when we live at a distance from God! What danger of backsliding further and further! What danger of being tempted to gross sin! Consider how we are grieving the Holy Spirit! Consider what comforts and mercies we are losing! Consider what dishonor we are likely to bring upon the holy name we profess! Consider how unkind we are to the Husband of our souls—to that dear heavenly Lover who did not spare His heart’s blood that He might buy us for Himself— that He might have all our heart’s love! Consider all this, and we shall make it a vital point to return unto our God. It will not seem to us as though it might be or might not be, but we shall feel that it must be. We cannot be content without the light of Jehovah’s Countenance! O God, as the deer must die without water, so must my soul die without a sense of Your love again restored to me!

It would not appear in our version, but it appears in the Scotch Psalter, and it appears in the margin of our old Bibles, that the text describes an expressive desire. Note the Scotch version*—*

*“Like as the deer for water brooks*

*In thirst does pant and bray.”*  
In the margin of your Bibles you have, “As the deer brays after the water brooks.” It lifts up its voice. It is usually so silent, so all but dumb—but it now begins to bray in awful agony after the water brooks. So the Believer has a desire which forces itself into expression. That expression may often be inarticulate. He may have groans which cannot be uttered, and they are all the deeper for being unutterable. They are all the more sincere and deep because language may not be able to describe them.

In the Psalm before us, you find that David expressed his desire in prayers, and then, if these did not suffice, in tears, and then he turned to prayers again. The child of God will so continue to cry, and pray, and seek, and weep—nor will he be satisfied till by all manner of ways he has expressed before his God the insatiable longing of his thirsty spirit. I do therefore, dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, speak to you now, this morning, and say if you have lost the Presence of God. If the light of Jehovah’s Countenance has been withdrawn from you, and you are desiring to return—cultivate that desire and bring it to the highest pitch of fervor. If it is but like one live coal, put another to it! Pile your desires together till they glow like coals of juniper which have a most vehement heat.

Pray God the Holy Spirit to fill your heart will all-consuming flames till your heart is hot within you with longings after God. Take care that you express your growing desires day by day and hour by hour—in perpetual solicitations that Jesus would come to you and manifest Himself to you as He does not to the world. It is a blessed thing not to need thus to plead because you already rejoice in the smile of the blessed Lover of your souls! But the next best thing is to sigh and cry until your head is once again on your Master’s bosom, and the kisses of His lips are yours. Do you know there is a sweetness about this bitter longing? When the desire is strong the veil is thin, and the longing soul feels some gleams of love even while panting for it.

Oh, it is sweet to pant and hunger after Jesus! It is a sort of Heaven to pine after Jesus! The sweet smell which He leaves behind Him makes it sweet to follow Him. To meditate on Him is precious! To admire Him at a distance is delightful, but oh, to HAVE Him! Angels cannot describe this joy! Yes, Beloved in the Lord, it is a blessed thing to pine after Jesus! And even if the mountains of Bether rise between, it is precious to wait, till, like a roe or a young deer, He comes leaping over the hills to reveal Himself to His languishing ones!

III. We will now, in the third place, turn to another point, THE EXCITING CAUSES of this desire after God. These exciting causes are, first, something inward. When a man pants after God, it is a secret life within which makes him do it—he would not long after God by nature. No man thirsts after God while he is left in his carnal state. The unrenewed man pants after anything sooner than God—he longs to escape from the Presence of the Lord, for to him it is a dreadful thought that there should be a God at all!

He would be glad enough if someone could prove beyond a doubt that there was no God. It proves a renewed nature when you long after God! It is a work of Divine Grace in your soul, and you may be thankful for it. It proves, however, that this renewed nature is not an independent thing which can live on its own resources. A camel does not pant after water brooks because it carries its own water within it. But the deer does because it has no inward resources. After being hunted on a hot day, it has no inward supplies. It is drained of its moisture. So are we. We do not carry a store of Grace within, of our own, upon which we can rely. We need to come again, and again, and again to the Divine fountain and drink again from the eternal spring. Therefore it is because we have a new life and that life is dependent upon God and has all its fresh springs in Him, that we pant and thirst after Him.

O Christian, if you had a sacred life which could be maintained by its own energies within, you might do without your God! But since you are naked, and poor, and miserable apart from Him, you must come and drink day by day of the living springs or else you faint and die. But the causes of the thirst were also

 outward. The stag pants for the water brooks not only from within, but because of the heat of the sun or of the distance it has traveled. It also pants because of the dogs that have hunted it so far.

So the Believer—so David in the text. Enemies said to him, “Where is your God?” They were barking at his heels. His troubles had been multiplied—“All Your waves and Your billows have gone over me.” And this made him turn to his God. I believe a man’s enemies are often his best friends. To be pierced with sharp troubles, now and then, will serve for our enlivening if Divine Grace so sanctifies the pain. Any outward affliction which drives us nearer to our God is a God-send for which we should be devoutly grateful.

Moreover, the source of David’s longings lay partly in the past. The deer pants after the water brooks because it has a recollection of the coolness of the streams from which it has drunk before, and therefore it longs to drink again. So David said, “I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar.” He remembered when he went with the assembly to the House of God, with the multitude who kept the Sabbath. So do we long after God because we have a cheerful recollection of the comforts we have had in years gone by when we have been in His fellowship. Did you ever have such delightful seasons as when you have lived near to God? Were you ever so happy and so blessed as when the Holy Spirit, like a sacred dove, brooded over your spirit? You know that these were the best days of your life! Then, I pray you, remembering these sweet things, pant after them again, and so let the past quicken your desires!

Further, the desire which David had, sprung from the present as well as the past. He was at that present moment in a position of eminent distress. “All Your waves and Your billows,” says he, “have gone over me.” And this, also, should make us fly to God, for what distress is there which He cannot alleviate? What wound is there which the Presence of God cannot heal? Our God is the cordial of our care, the balm of our woe—He is our All in All. Do but get to God and you are like the mariner who has reached his port—the storms are over, now, for him—he cares little how the winds howl, or the waves roar. Believer, rest in your God, and you have obtained all your capacious powers can wish—and your troubles, and your wants, and your needs will be forgotten in your overflowing joy!

Moreover, there was a fourth spring, namely, the future. “Hope in God,” he says, “for I shall yet praise Him.” He panted after his God because he had a keen perception that peaceful times would yet return to him. When a man is despairing and fancies that the sun will never rise, it is hard to cheer him. But once indoctrinate him with the belief that there are happier seasons yet in store—predestinated periods when the light of God’s Countenance shall shine full in his face—and the man plucks up courage! O Beloved, no child of God has any reason to despair! God will appear to His people! He cannot forsake them!

“Can a woman forsake her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I never forget you.” It is not possible that He who counts the stars, and calls them all by names, should pass over one of His elect, His called, His adopted people! Be of good cheer, then, you shipwrecked one! Though each billow should be angrier than the former and drown you deeper in distress, yet the arm of God is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear! Look forward to better times, and looking forward, let your panting and your longings increase! May God give you a hunger because there is a banquet. May He give you a thirst because there are flagons of which you may drink. May He give you great desires, for if you open your mouth ever so wide He will certainly fill it.

I have thus tried to unveil the springs, the inward and outward, the future, the present, and the past from which our desires come. And now, before I conclude, I would ask every deserted Believer whether he does at this time feel such vehement panting? If not, I do think it is a subject for most solemn anxiety. We ought to bestir ourselves lest we sleep ourselves into death. There are certain conditions of the human frame in which sleep becomes absolutely deadly—the poor patient must be kept in motion, must be wounded with needles, roughly treated lest he should sleep. And there are times when, if we are permitted to sleep spiritually, it must end in our eternal ruin. At such times, when we feel the slumbering tendency coming over us, we ought to be alarmed lest we should turn out to be as others who sleep themselves into Hell!

May God awaken us, though it be by thunderbolts! May He shake us, even though it is with His roughest hand and break us with His fiercest tempest sooner than suffer us quietly and calmly to glide down the stream of indifference until we are dashed over the precipice of apostasy and are lost. Of course, the true child of God cannot be cast away. But now, if I should have been a deceiver, even after having preached to others, or united in church fellowship with others, I could come to be, myself, a castaway.

O that such thoughts may possess our minds till we are racked by them and driven with the insatiable desire of the text to long after the Presence of our God!

IV. Lastly, these words suggest, in concluding, a few COMFORTABLE ENCOURAGEMENTS. I do not like, myself, to be in the condition of merely longing after God—I trust I can say I have walked with God and enjoyed the sense of His love for many a day. But ah, there is no thirst like the thirst of the man who has once known what the sweetness of the wine of Heaven is! He that has never eaten manna may be satisfied with the gritty brown bread of earth, but heavenly manna is a hunger-making thing!

If you once get the flavor in your mouth, you will never be content unless you have it always there. It would be an awful thing for a man who has once known spiritual life if he could be eternally cast away, because in Hell no others would have known the joy which he has known and consequently they could not know the misery which he feels in having lost it. Among all the miserable poor in this world, none are so wretched as those who once were rich, because they have acquired habits which make poverty unendurable. A poor king must be poor, indeed. And what would it be for a child of God, if he once had been able to roll under his tongue the sweet morsel, and once had leaned on Jesus’ bosom, if he could, after all, be tormented in the flames of Tophet?

It would be awful, indeed, if, after having drunk of the wines on the lees well-refined, he should be doomed to cry for a drop of water, like Dives! And after having eaten of fat things full of marrow, he should be cast into the land of drought and famine! Thank God it cannot be—it shall not be while God lives, for the strong hands of Christ and of the Father will protect the chosen people! This shall not be, but still to lose a sense of the Lord’s love, even for an hour, is dreadful enough.

Yet there are one or two comforts which arise out of a longing and panting for the Lord. They are these—in the first place, if you have a longing after your God, where does it come from? Certainly it is not rooted in the dunghill of human nature! This is too fair a flower to have been blown here by the winds of chance, or to have sprung up naturally from your own corruptions. The Eternal Spirit gave you that desire! Thank Him for it! He has not quite given you up! This desire is a gift from God—accept it gratefully and see the Father’s love reflected from the jewel. Secondly, if God has given me this desire, will He not fulfill it? Is it after the manner of men to excite a desire and not fulfill it? And if we, being evil, could not be so unkind, much less shall our God!

He will not tantalize His child, He will not make him hungry and refuse to feed him. Oh, no! My God, if You have made me thus to thirst and pant, I may rest assured You will give me the water brooks to drink from, and I shall be refreshed with Your love! Let me remember, in the next place, that if I have wandered from my God, He is very willing to forgive. Oh, how ready is our Father to receive His wandering children! It is a part of the consequences of our sin that we think harshly of Him whom we have grieved. We offend our loving Husband, the Lord Jesus, and then we think He will not take us back again into those dear arms.

But He will—“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for My anger is turned away from them.” He tells us that if our brother offend us 70 times seven, we are yet to forgive him—and will not He forgive us? Recollect how often He forgave His people in the wilderness. Remember, to come closer home, how often He has borne with us! How often when He might have swept us away with the besom of destruction, He has said, “They are My children,” and He has again been a Father to us. Nevertheless, He has saved us for His name’s sake. When we have been foolish and ignorant, and have been as beasts before Him, nevertheless we have been continually with Him and He has held us with His right hand.

Let us return to Him, then, since He is so ready and so willing to forgive. Let us return to Him this morning and let us remember that when we return out of the sadness and sorrow of our present estate, we shall very soon be uplifted into the light! It does not take the Lord long to make summer time in a wintry heart. One glance of His love turns the darkness of the soul’s night into the brightest day! Come to Him, Christian, and before you are aware of it, your soul shall be like the chariots of Amminadab—He will strike down Dagon in the temple of your heart and set up the Ark of the Covenant in his place. He will turn your captivity as the streams in the south—you who were bound with chains shall be emancipated—you who were clothed with sackcloth shall wear fine linen and beauteous apparel! You shall anoint your faces with fresh oil and you shall go forth in the dance with them that make merry in the Lord.

Remember, time is not a thing to be taken into consideration with God. In an instant He wills it and it is done! He commands and it stands fast. To the dark earth He said, “Let there be light,” and light flashed forth at once. And this very afternoon you may become among the very happiest of His people though you came here this morning heavily burdened. I have been crying today, “Lord, You know what a dry, parched-up plant my soul is, like yonder poor brown grass which has only a little root left, and no more, for it is all burnt up. Lord, there seems to be no dew nor rain these months for my soul, and therefore, O Lord, Your poor, pining plant is ready to die! Have You forgotten it? Will Your loving mercy never return?”

Beloved, the rain will come upon us! Perhaps even during this sermon the dew has fallen and you who were like the heath in the desert are beginning to blossom and bring forth fruit unto His name. O may it be so, and may you who thought that the Lord had forgotten you find that He remembers you in the fullness of His loving kindness and in the plenitude of His Grace. So may God do to each one of us, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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Sermon #1226 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SECRET OF HEALTH  
NO. 1226

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I shall yet praise Him who is the health of  
my countenance and my God.”  
Psalm 42:11.**

ANOTHER verse in this Psalm so attracts me that, though it is not my text, I cannot pass it by without a moment’s notice. In the 5th verse the Psalmist says, “I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance,” and then follows the expression of the text, “who is the health of my countenance and my God.” God’s Countenance is our help and He, Himself is the health of our countenance! The best help a man can have in time of trouble is the Countenance of God! If he feels that he enjoys the Divine Love and that he is acceptable with the Lord, he becomes, at once, strong to bear, or dare, or do. Ask the Presence of God to be with you, child of God, and you may then descend into a lion’s den, traverse a fiery furnace, or pass through the iron gates of death! A look from the Lord is life and strength to His people!

So much for the 5th verse. Now let us weave our text with it. This help of God’s Countenance usually comes to Believers by their obtaining health for their countenances. It may not please God to lessen the burden, but it comes to the same thing if He strengthens the back. He may not recall the soldier from the battle, but if He gives him a greater stomach for the fight, and increased strength for its toils, it may be better, still, for him. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Give a man health in his countenance and he laughs at that which would have crushed him had he been in another mood.

There are times when the grasshopper becomes a burden and there are other seasons, when, with undaunted spirit we can say, “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” Everything depends upon the man’s personal condition. For the diseased eyes, beauty does not exist. For the disordered palate, sweetness is no longer to be found. And to a deaf ear, harmony is silent. Our happiness depends more upon our own personal condition than upon our surroundings. The great thing to be desired by all of us is that we may, in spirit, soul and body, be whole, that is, to be holy, for holiness is, in very truth, wholeness of our entire manhood!

Sin is disease. Righteousness is health. We all need to be healed, that being healed, we may be healthy—that receiving the Divine restoration, our nature may arrive at perfect soundness. Through the Fall and our own sins we have become the prey of manifold maladies and need the exercise of Divine power to bring us back into that sacred sanity of nature in which God first created man—when He made him in His own image and saw, concerning him and the world in which He had placed him—that it

was very good.

Of our complete manhood’s health I shall speak this morning. And while I speak of it may the Lord be pleased to make all of us see that He is the health of our countenance and our God.

I. Our first remark is one which naturally grows out of the text, though it may seem a very trite one, namely, that PERFECT HEALTH IS A GREAT BLESSING. Do not misunderstand me by narrowing my words in their application. I am not speaking of the health of the body, alone, for to say that bodily health is a blessing were but to assert what no one disputes. Man, however, is something more than a body. He is also a living soul. Yes, more—there is in the regenerate man, a triple nature, consisting of body, soul and spirit.

Even in you, who are unregenerate, there is a double nature of body and soul. I would hope you have been born again and have reached the triple nature, and possessed that higher principle which is born of God, but even you are not all comprised in mere flesh. And when I speak of your health, I mean the health of your entire being. Perfect health lies in the right condition of spirit, soul and body. Complete health in Heaven will be ours when our body has been raised from the dead, incorruptible— our soul has been cleansed from all defilement, our new-born spirit has come to its full development—our entire manhood shall be glorified!

This universal health of our manhood is invaluable, for it was that which made our first Paradise. Man was not happy in Eden merely because the fruits were luscious and delicious as were the odors of the flowers which grew in the garden of delights, but because no disease of sin had tainted any part of his nature. His bodily appetites had not gained predominance over his mental faculties, neither had he suffered any of his mental powers to override the rest, or permitted the pride of knowledge to stay the childlike spirit which adored the great Father. His being was well balanced and all its powers were in a perfect condition.

Adam was in all respects such as God would have man to be, for he was such as God had actually made him. As in a perfect machine which comes fresh from the maker’s hand, every wheel acts upon its fellow and the whole is obedient to the central mainspring—and so was Adam’s nature in complete order. Alas for us that it ever became otherwise! As perfect health was our first happiness, so it will be our last and eternal happiness, for Heaven is not merely streets of gold and harps of melodious music and winged creatures strangely bright—it is perfection realized! The slough of depravity cast off, the soul shall be herself again, and of manhood it shall be said, “his flesh is fresher than a child’s, and he has returned to the days of his youth.”

Spiritual health, then, was the first Paradise and we can never reach the second except by its recovery. No forgiveness of sin, no imputation of righteousness, no justification by faith, if such could be apart from an inward change—could make a man happy so long as his soul is sick of. Health must reign within, or a throne in Heaven would be a mockery! Today, a measure of health is essential to our happiness. If any man here burns with the fever of lust he cannot be a happy man. In the fierce heat of passion he may think himself blessed, but he dares not deny that in those intervals of chill remorse which alternate with the heat of passion, woe and anguish are his portion! Anger, envy, revenge, covetousness, discontent, pride and self-will are all diseases fatal to happiness.

Perhaps some man before me is utterly given up to worldliness and lethargy has seized upon him. And in the deadness of that lethargy he complains of no pain whatever, but finds a happiness in the numbness of spiritual death. May God deliver you from this hideous peace, this horrible stupefaction, for it is not true happiness but the herald of eternal death! Absolute happiness, that which will bear close examination—real joy, peace, felicity—can never come to a man while one part of his nature jars with the other! He must be right with himself. The little universe of our nature cannot sing in harmony till its central sun of faith, its planetary affections and even those imaginations which are comparable to the comets, are each and all in their fit spheres and orbits. Then, as they all, like the heavens, declare the Glory of God, all will be well. We must be spiritually healthy or we cannot be happy.

The need of this health is the cause of a thousand ills . This world we complain of full often, but it were no longer the prison of sorrow if it ceased to be the theater of sin. If man were man as God made him, the earth would soon regain her excellency and her deserts would blossom as the rose. If men were not sinners, neither would they be sufferers. Thorns and thistles would be no longer a curse, but would be counted among flowers, if men had not thorns within their bosoms and thistles in their hearts. On the way of holiness no lion or ravenous beast could go up, for of the perfect man it is written, “You shall be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be in peace with you.” Cast out sin and you have cast out the serpent whose slime has made this world so foul. Cut down this upas tree and numberless griefs and torments will no more drip upon mankind.

We may judge of the value of health when we remember that it cannot be purchased. You cannot buy deliverance from bodily disease. What would we not give if we could? We would seek out, at any expense, the physician whose fee is highest, and we would not refuse to fill his hands with gold could he but give us ease. But no, when God chastens, the rod will not be quiet. As for the health of the soul and spirit, the miser’s bags, if they were emptied out, could not purchase it for a moment! No, the very fact that he hoped so to win it would be, in itself, a disease, for what are trust in riches and reliance upon self-righteousness but forms of pride, which is one of the most deadly of our sicknesses?

You cannot buy health for your nature! Your tears cannot procure it! Your works, your repentances, your prayers cannot find it apart from God! He is the health of your countenance. Bless Him that He is so. Were it not for this, your whole head would continue sick, and your whole heart faint. There is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there. God, alone, is the Healer of the Soul and freely does He bestow what India, with its gems, and California, with its gold, cannot procure. If we are without this health, nothing can compensate us for the loss of it. You who have been

sick know that nothing can make up for the agony of pain or the misery of inability to move your limbs. Those weary nights and long days of anguish can not be recompensed by gold and silver.

So, unless you become right in soul and spirit with your God, nothing can help you. You may put on the garb of religion. You may learn the tones and mannerisms of Christians. You may sing the songs of saints. You may think that you could play the music of angels, but, “you must be born again!” You must be recovered from sin’s mortal malady! You must be purged from the foul leprosy of evil, for you are polluted, and until you are recovered you cannot come into the tabernacles of the Lord, nor stand in His holy place. Without holiness, which is another word for wholeness or health, no man can see the Lord.

If this health of ours is not found, let us be warned that it will be eternal Hell, for what is Hell? Is it not consummated sin? What are the fetters of the condemned but their own tyrant passions? The fires that burn and yet do not consume, will they not be ungratified desires? The worm that never dies, will it not be a tormenting conscience? The man, himself, is his own Hell! True, there may be, over and above this, penalties from the hand of the Lord, for what are we that we should pretend to know the secrets of the dreadful prison? There may be positive inflictions from the Divine hand, but without these there is misery enough in despair and torment abundant in remorse.

If a man were taken up to Heaven, itself, and were surrounded with all the circumstances which assist the blessed to express their joy, yet there he would burn and there he would gnash his teeth, and there he would weep and wail, if still his breast was cankered with enmity to God and his heart palpitated with fierce and strong passions. Within ourselves must ever be the essential Heaven, or the actual Hell.

There lies the main business, Sir. You are sick and must be cured, or you are damned, for your sickness is incipient damnation. Sir, you were born with a cancer in your bosom which will one day flood your whole nature with its horrible loathsomeness! And then will come the time of your misery! You must be cured, or else a doom awaits you which language cannot describe. Assuredly I have said enough to show that manhood’s perfect health is the greatest of blessings, and I proceed to the next point.

II. Our text joyfully asserts, secondly, that GOD IS OUR HEALTH. “Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.” God is our health! He is so in these senses, that, first of all, He is the originator of health which once was enjoyed by man. There was, in the primeval days, one perfect man, no, there was one perfect pair, upon the face of the earth. And these possessed a total sanity because God, who is, Himself, holy, had made them whole or holy, and they were perfect in their ways from the day they were created till iniquity was found in them. They were made a little lower than the angels, but they wore a glory and honor about them which made all the lower creatures obedient to their command. That beauty of holiness was the work of God who made man upright and caused his countenance to beam with health. He who made the first man pure must make us pure, or we shall never be pure.

But again, God is the health of our countenance because our relation to Him is the test of our health. Just what you are to God, that you really are. It is good to stand well with your fellow men. To love your neighbor as yourself is right and just. But He who made us has the first claim upon us. Our Creator should, first of all, have the love and loyalty of our hearts. If He is not the chief Object of our thoughts, depend upon it, we are wrong. Whatever we may be in our relation to others, we are sadly wrong if we are disarranged towards God. If you do not love God, you do not love Him who is the holiest, the purest and the best. If you do not love God, it is certain that you do not love essential goodness, truth, justice, and purity.

You complain that the Character of God is so much above you—then how low must you be? You assert that you cannot think of Him as your Father—but we would have you remember that when a child cannot think of its father as its father, its heart must be alienated, indeed. Do you ever judge yourselves in relation to God? Men seldom do, and when they use expressions which concern this relationship they generally misuse them. I have noted in this place, before, that if we call a man, a sinner, he is not offended with us, for that only means that he disobeys the Law of God. But if we call him a criminal, he is indignant, because that means that he has broken the laws of man. Alas, that our relation to man should seem to be so much more important than our connection with God!

To set man before God is unrighteous and shows the essential injustice of unrenewed hearts, for when their hearts are set right, men feel that they would sooner a thousand times offend their fellow men than once offend their God. So that you may judge of your spiritual health by your relation to God. Do you love Him? Do you trust Him? Do you speak with Him? Do you pray to Him? Is He your Friend? Is He your delight? Is His will your will? Do you take pleasure in that which pleases Him? Does your life run parallel with the life of God? It is well with you if things are so—it is on the way to being well with you if you desire to have them so. But if, on the contrary, God’s will draws one way and you the other, the Lord cannot be wrong and you are clearly proven to be in an ill case. The Lord is holy. “Holy, holy, holy,” say the angels, and if you are not like He is, you are unholy—that is you are not whole, you are not spiritually in health— your nature is diseased. God is our health, then, because our relation to Him is the test of it.

Remember again, that the Lord is the very model of health. All perfections meet in Him. In God’s Nature no single attribute ever intrudes upon another. You cannot find in God’s Character any one point of which you can say—“He is this, alone, to the exclusion or overshadowing of other excellencies.” God is Love, but God is also a consuming fire. God is Merciful, but God is true. God is great, but God is good. All excellencies are in Him in perfection. See whether you are like God then, for if you are not, you are not like the model of health. If the symptoms of your condition differ from the characteristics of God, you are unhealthy, for God is the standard of perfect holiness.

The text intends to teach us that God must be to each one of us the Restorer of our spiritual health. If ever we recover soundness, He must restore us. The Sun of Righteousness must bring us healing, the heavenly wind of the Holy Spirit must drive away the pestilence of sin. The Water of Life must work our cure, the plant of renown must yield us balm. Man’s malady demands a Divine Physician. Only Omnipotent Wisdom can make a man healthy, or keep him so. This body of ours is so complex and contains so many bones, cells, muscles, nerves, tissues and blood vessels that, perhaps, it is the greatest miracle on the face of the earth that we live, or if there is a greater, it must be that we live at all in health. Dr. Watts well said—

*“Strange that a harp of thousand strings, Should keep in tune so long.”*

But when I think of the soul, it is so much more mysterious than the body, that to put a soul into proper conformity to God, and keep it right, would appear to be a greater wonder than anything which can be discovered by the physiologist in the anatomy of the body! O God, You alone made man, and You alone can deliver him from the evils which have unmade him, and bring him back to be what You would have him be. No hand but Yours must venture upon the task. They do but blunder who boast of regenerating with water. Blunder? No, they lie! God, alone, can regenerate a soul, and His Spirit must do it by that same mighty power which raised the Redeemer from the dead! Nothing short of Omnipotence at its full can raise us from our natural sickness to spiritual health.

Spiritual health is produced by God’s coming to us , for the only medicine for a sick soul is not something out of God, but God Himself! He could not cure us till He gave us His Son and His Son could not heal us till He gave us Himself. Today the food of spiritual health is the flesh and blood of Jesus, and nothing keeps us from relapsing into sin but the in-dwelling of the eternal Spirit! Our health is our God, our God Incarnate, our God dwelling in us, our God looking down from the Throne of Glory, and saying, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people.” Jehovah Rophi, The Lord That Heals You, this is Your name, O Lord, and by it we adore You!

III. But I must pass on to the third matter, namely, that THIS HEALTH HAS VISIBLE SIGNS. “He is the health of my countenance.” The health of a man is mainly judged of by his face. Truly, you can tell something of it by his gait, and every limb of the body, more or less, evidences his condition—but the countenance is the window of the soul—the mirror which reflects the nature. True sanity towards God, or at any rate, the beginning of it in the work of Grace, can be seen. It is not a close secret hidden from observation—it displays itself!

A notion is abroad that perhaps a man may be saved and not know it. He may be alive unto God unconsciously. He may be washed in the blood of Jesus without knowing it, so that he may live without discovering his own salvation and only find it out by the help of a priest as he is dying. There is nothing like that in the Word of God! Nothing of the kind! That may be the version of the Vatican, but it is not the version of the New Jerusalem. Read the Scriptures and you find men talk about, “us who are saved.” You find them declaring that being justified by faith they have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When the Lord Jesus Christ takes a man in hand to heal him, He makes a difference in his countenance, by which, of course, I do not mean the countenance of the body merely, but that countenance which David meant, that part of our nature which is visible to others. The Lord gives outward evidences of His inward work! And what sort of signs are those? He takes away from the countenance of our manhood the blotches of sin. I look into a man’s spiritual face and I discover that he is a drunk, that he is a man of lust, that he is a man of anger, that he is a hard, cruel man, a mean, miserly man—these are so many blotches. And when the Grace of God enters the heart it takes away these disfigurements and beautifies the character!

When the Lord Jesus begins to heal us, He removes from our countenance the blankness of despair. Did you ever see it? I have seen it in the actual bodily visage and a dreadful sight it is! But oh, when those charming bells are heard to ring, the bells of “free Grace and dying Love,” and the man knows that his sin is forgiven and that he is accepted in Christ Jesus, then despair flies away! The shadow of the dragon’s wing is taken from the face and the dove of peace passes by and casts a brightness as of silver upon the countenance! When the Great Physician heals men, He removes the paleness of fear, for men are pale when they dread the wrath to come! And they tremble with fear, lest they die in their sins.

Once pardoned that pallor is gone and the ruddiness of confidence comes back to the cheeks! The gloom of sorrow also goes from the man whom Christ makes whole—

*“Why should I sorrow more?  
I trust a Savior slain,  
And safe beneath His sheltering Cross,  
Unmoved I shall remain.”*

And when the Lord goes on working the cures of Grace, it is wonderful how He removes from the countenance the lines and furrows of need. The lantern jaws of hunger are seen in many who are pining after Christ and Grace, and cannot find either. But when Christ comes, He satiates the soul and makes fat the bones—and the countenance of the heart is glad.

Let me tell you, though, I am afraid some Christians do not prove it, that the Lord Jesus smoothes out the wrinkles of care from the foreheads of His patients. When Christians are under the influence of Divine Grace, they know no care. They cast their care on Him who cares for them! They do the little they can do and leave the rest with their Lord, and all goes well, and their life is peace. O happy man who has been thus healed. “Well,” says one, “I trust I am healed of sin, but I am not so healed as that.” Brother, the Good Physician is proceeding with His operations, and if you have not yet all the cure, it is your fault and not His, for it is in His power, if you trust Him, to take away sorrow, fear, despair, doubt and even care—so that you shall say as our hymn puts it—

*“All that remains for me  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come  
To bear me to their King.”*

It will not be long before they will come if you are in that condition! Only bad farmers leave their wheat out in the field too long, but my Lord never did so yet. Whenever His sheaves are ready for the garner, He is sure to reap them. A perfect man is on the threshold of Heaven. When you are spiritually healthy and have undergone your spiritual quarantine, and there is no more sickness in you, do you think your Lord will keep you out of Heaven? Not He, He is too desirous to have you with Him where He is!

The health which our Lord Jesus works in us is seen in the spiritual countenance in many ways. First, it makes the eyes bright. A man full of doubts and fears, or vexed with ambition or love of the world, has no bright transporting hopes. But the man who believes in Jesus has a hope that when days and years are past he shall be in Heaven where Jesus is. I must confess that sometimes, when I try to realize that hope, my physical eyes grow dim because the tears begin to flow and almost blind me. Shall I, shall I ever see His face and cast a crown at His feet? I shall, I know I shall! But oh, it does seem too good to be true! While the physical eyes are thus dimmed, how bright the spiritual eyes become with such a hope to cheer them!

Spiritual health imparts a beauty to the entire visage. Think how the spouse describes her beauty. She says, “I am black”—she could not help saying that, for she was sunburned with exposure to the world—but she adds, “I am comely.” Her Lord looked at her in such a way that she felt He could see her comeliness though she could not—

*“Though in ourselves denied we are,  
And black as Kedar’s tents appear,  
Yet, when we put Your beauty on,  
Fair as the courts of Solomon.”*

There is no more beautiful object in the world to Christ than His own Church! What a passage that is in the Song, where the king exclaims, “You are all fair, My Love, there is no spot in you.” He sees with eyes of love, indeed, who sees such beauty. Yet fair beyond conception will Grace make the Christian! Altogether lovely will Glory make the Christian! We shall bear neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but be without fault before the Throne of God.

What a difference Grace makes to the spiritual forehead when it works with power. By nature our forehead is as brass—hard, bold, presumptuous—but see what Grace makes it. “Your temples are like a piece of pomegranate within your locks.” Now, the pomegranate, when you open it, is red and white, and the Christian’s brow is full of the blushes of a sacred shamefacedness. “Within your locks,” says the Song, as though concealed with holy fear, but what you did see of her brow was red and white with blushing with bashfulness and holy love in the Presence of her Lord. I pray that all of you who are converted in these days may know what holy shamefacedness means.  
Confidence in Christ is admirable, but not effrontery and selfconfidence. I am afraid of those people who are so very sure, so very confident all of a sudden, and yet have never felt the burden of sin. Be ashamed and be confounded while you lay hold on Christ, for the more He does for you the less you must think of yourself. You may very accurately measure the reality of your Grace by the reality of your self-loathing. The Bridegroom also describes the lips of His Beloved, “Your lips are like a thread of scarlet and your speech is comely.” Before her health returned, her lips were livid. Before she had received comfort, they were white with fear. But now they wear a healthy redness and are lovely to her Lord.

How about your lips, beloved Friends? Are they praying lips, singing lips, confessing lips? Do you speak well of the Redeemer and rejoice whenever you tell what His love has done for you? Well is it with us when to our Lord our “cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, and our neck with chains of gold,” while our whole countenance shines with holiness. When God is our health, our whole countenance becomes bright. According to the words of the Song, “Who is she that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.”

The Believer’s countenance becomes bright with clearness, as far as he, himself, is concerned—he is saved and he knows it! It becomes fair, as far as others are concerned, for they see the excellence of his character and wonder at it. And then it becomes dazzling to his adversaries, as the sun vanquishes rash gazers by its effulgence. Holiness is to opposers “terrible as an army with banners.” I desire that those of you who have been under the Great Physician’s hand of late may shine forth and proclaim the power of Jesus. Your Beloved cries, “Let Me see your face, for sweet is your face, and your countenance is comely.”

If Christ has cured you, why do you conceal His work? I feel inclined to do with you as the watchmen did with the spouse in the Song—“They smote me and took away my veil from me.” I would not smite you, severely, but I would gladly remove the veil from some of you—that you might be seen, that the Church may see you—and the saints may rejoice in what the Savior has done for you. David says, “He is the health of my countenance.” He does not say, “the health of my heart, merely”—“the health of my inward parts,” though that is true, but, “of my countenance.” Therefore, if the Lord has done great things for you, proclaim it abroad, and make the streets of Jerusalem ring with grateful song!

IV. The last observation is this. THIS PASSAGE ENTITLES THE MOST SICK SOULS AMONG US TO HOPE. “Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance.” Look at the Source of spiritual health. If David had said, “I shall yet recover, for I have a splendid constitution. My stamina is such that it will throw off this sickness.” Such boasting would not encourage you, would it? Because in your case the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, how could it? You have no stamina except for evil. The disease has smitten you to the very core and your heart has melted like wax. Then bless God that your healing does not depend on any constitutional strength in yourself!  
Next, notice David does not expect healing from anything he can do.

He not say, “Certain actions of mine will yet recover me of my disease.” Not at all. If it were so, you, my Friend, would be in despair, for you cannot do anything! What good work can you do? Why, you have smutty fingers, and if you were to try and produce a piece of fair white linen you would blacken it in the weaving of it! You cannot achieve your own salvation, nor need you do it. The health of David’s countenance lay where yours must lie, not in

 your works or merit, but in the salvation of God!

And mark, he does not speak of undergoing a long process. “I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance.” Here is nothing about waiting, tarrying, lingering and loitering, as some preachers seem to make out. No, David understood, as I trust we understand, the doctrine of, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ receives, by that look of faith, the principle of health which will begin at once to work—and will ultimately cast out all spiritual disease. Blessed is it to know that our hope lies in God and not in ourselves! I want you, just for a moment, especially you who wish to be healed, to think who He is, and what there is in Him which you have to look to as your spiritual health.

Sin is your disease and here is mercy without limit to meet it. You have done evil in all ways and what is worse, your very nature is evil! But here is God who delights to forgive, infinitely gracious, finding a happiness in passing by transgression and sin—look to Him, then! Here shall all your sins be drowned, for God’s love in Christ Jesus is a sea without a bottom, and without a shore. Here is assured healing for your sickness, for Infinite Mercy cannot be baffled in its design. Again here is Infinite Atonement, also. God is not only willing to pardon, but He can do it consistently with justice, for His own dear Son has bled and died.

When I turn my eyes to the Son of God bleeding upon the Cross, so glorious is His Sacrifice in my eyes that I conclude that if there were ten thousand, thousand worlds full of sinners there must be merit enough in the death of Christ to save them all if God had so willed it! We cannot conceive any boundary to the merit of the dying Son of God. Incarnate Deity smarts beneath the lash of Justice, is pierced to the heart, is slain, is laid for three days in the grave! Why, there must be a splendor of power about that majestic Sacrifice, illimitable, inconceivable! Come, Soul, if this is your healing, no disease can stand against it! Infinite Mercy armed with an Infinite Atonement can accomplish all things! O God, You are, indeed, the health of my countenance! By You I am brought back from my death in sin.

Then remember that Divine energy is ready to work our healing, and Omnipotence works all things. “Can these dry bones live?” said one of old, but live they did! The dead have been raised and even at this hour things impossible with men are possible with God! The Eternal Spirit waits to work His miracles of love even now. No propensity of depraved nature is too strong for the Almighty. Man, have you a lion of anger within you? This Samson can tear that lion as though it were a kid! Have you a host of evil passions within you, and fears strong like the Midianites of old? Behold, this sacred torrent of Divine Love, mightier than Kishon of old, can sweep them all away!

Has Satan, himself, entered you and brought a legion of devils with him? Has Hell vomited forth all its spawn to hold a horrid carnival in your nature? There was one out of whom Jesus cast seven devils—no, another out of whom He drove a legion! Come to Jesus, Man, for devils still tremble at His power! Jesus can chase away the enemy from you. All God’s energy waits to heal you. “Seek Him that makes the seven stars and Orion, and turns the shadow of death into the morning, that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the earth; the Lord is His name,” for nothing can stand against the mighty arm of His Irresistible Grace.

To complete this I must add there is, in God, who is the health of our countenance, Immutable Love. If God begins to heal you, He will never give up the work till He has achieved it. There is not recorded in the life of Christ a solitary half cure. I read of none into whom the devils returned after Jesus drove them out, nor of any lepers who had the leprosy again. I have not to preach to you a salvation that can be lost and dependent upon your good behavior! Lo, I preach a pardon never to be reversed, acceptance in the Beloved never to be cancelled, adoption which makes you sons forever! Give yourselves up to Jesus and He will give you garments of mercy that will never wear out, treasures of love which neither moth nor rust shall consume and health which will introduce you into a city in which the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick,” for the people that dwell therein have been forgiven their iniquity.

Healing by God, Himself, presents a ground of hope to the worst among us and, blessed be God, many of us have realized it as David did! Now if we, as honest men, tell you that God in Christ Jesus is the health of our countenance, we trust you will believe us and that you will seek the Lord for yourselves. The healing which God gives in Jesus Christ is available to every sin-sick soul. Whoever you may be, if you are sick, today, God is able and willing to heal you through Jesus Christ His Son! I pray you, linger not through any fear of His ability or His willingness, but come and welcome, come and welcome! Come right now!

It is of no use my preaching about healing to those who are not sick. Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. But to those who are sick this will be a gladsome message! I would like to put it in such an unmistakable shape that they must comprehend it, the Holy Spirit instructing them. You have a deadly disease in your nature, every one of you. In some of you, it has taken a very hideous form, but the disease is at the heart of every one of you ladies and gentlemen, even the same which festers in the bosom of the harlot and the thief. True, it has come out differently in them. Circumstances have helped to bring it out. Perhaps if you had been in their circumstances it might have been as foully developed as in them.

Now, if today you feel the terrible ravages of this disease, I am glad of it, for it is a hopeful sign. When the high priest examined men who were suspected of being lepers, I can suppose that one would say, “I have a very bad spot on my forehead, but there is just near my breast a piece of clean flesh where there are no white scales. I am right at heart, though

bad elsewhere.” “Ah!” the priest would say, “You are unclean and I must put you away.” Another would say, “It is true I have a whiteness on my lips, but if you examine me, you will find half my body quite free from the disease,” “Ah, I must shut you out of the camp,” said the priest. But last of all, there came one who said tremblingly to the priest, “I am leprous altogether, I cannot point to a spot as big as a pin’s head that is clean. I am a leper from the soles of my feet to the crown of my head.”

The priest would put his hands on that man and say, “you are clean.” How astonished he must have been! Be you also astonished, O despairing Soul! If you are a sinner and nothing but a sinner, condemned, lost, ruined—and you will admit it and look to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation—you are clean every whit! Whenever we are brought to perfect soul poverty and absolute bankruptcy of spirit so that we turn our purses inside out, and cannot find one rusty farthing left, then Christ and all the treasures of His Grace are ours! Oh to be brought down to the lowest depth of self-despair, for that is the door of hope!

While your cup is half full, Christ will not pour His wine into it. Now bring your cups and say, “Lord, there is a little good at the bottom, does not that recommend me?” No, no, no! He will never pour in the new wine of the kingdom until you are turned bottom upwards and wiped out as a man wipes a dish! But when you are quite emptied, then He will pour in the stream of His love until it brims the vessel of your nature! The Lord make you to feel sick, even unto death, and then you will find Jesus to be the Resurrection and the Life.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 42 and Jeremiah 30:4-17.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—908, 715, 103.

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SWEET STIMULANTS FOR THE FAINTING SOUL  
NO. 2798

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORD’S-DAY EVENING, IN THE WINTER OF 1860.

**“O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar.” Psalm 42:6.**

HERE is a common complaint of God’s people and here are two remedies which David, wisely guided of God, administers with discretion. Let us direct our meditation in this order—first, let us talk of the complaint. And then, secondly, let us look into the Divine medicine chest and use the remedies provided there.

I. LET US TALK OF THE COMPLAINT “O my God, my soul is cast down within me.”  
We do not know what was the precise reason why David’s soul was cast down. Perhaps it was because he had been driven out of the royal city by his own son—the son whom he had petted and pampered and, thereby, made a rod for his own back. We are pretty sure that he was now denied the privilege of going up to the House of God—he could not now join with the multitude that kept holy day. These two things probably worked together to cast down his spirit—his absence from the tabernacle and the cause of that absence.  
I am not sure, however, that these two things combined would have been enough to cast down David’s spirit if it had not been for a more bitter ingredient in his cup of sadness. There have been good men in circumstances similar to David’s at that time who, even then, could gird up the loins of their mind and hope to the end. When bitten by that which is sharper than a serpent’s tooth—an ungrateful child—and debarred from the House of God, they have, even then, been able to stay themselves upon the Lord and to rejoice in the Most High God. The real reason of the Psalmist’s distress was, no doubt, that God had, at least to some degree, hidden His face from him and, therefore, the flowers of David’s graces all drooped and his joy, which formerly sparkled in the sunlight of God’s Countenance, was now dim and dark. Troubles may distress the outward man, but they cannot distress the soul of the child of God while he feels the Lord Jehovah to be his everlasting strength. Yes, it sometimes happens that the very pressure which weighs down the scale of his earthly hopes tends to lift up the opposite scale of his spiritual peace! As long as God is with him, trials are nothing, for he casts them upon Jehovah. But once let God withdraw from him for a while and he is troubled—that mountain which seemed to stand fast begins to rock and shake—and to prove the instability and insufficiency of all mortal grounds of confidence.

The causes of our being cast down are very numerous. Sometimes it is pain of body—perhaps a wearing pain which tries the nerves, prevents sleep, distracts our attention, drives away comfort and hides contentment from our eyes. Often, too, has it been debility of body—some secret disease has been sapping and undermining the very strength of our life and we knew not that it was there while we have been drawing insensibly near to the gates of death. We have wondered that we were low in spirits, whereas it would have been a thousand wonders if we had not been depressed! We have marveled that we have been cast down, whereas a physician would tell us that this was but one of many symptoms which proved that we were not right as to our bodily health.  
Not infrequently has some crushing calamity been the cause of depression of spirit. Trial has succeeded trial. All your hopes have been blasted, your very means of sustenance have been suddenly snatched from you. While all your needs have remained, the supplies have been withdrawn from you. At other times, it has been bereavement that has brought you down very low. The axe has been at work in the forest of your domestic joys. Tree after tree has fallen—those from whom you plucked the ripest fruits of sweet society and kindred fellowship have been cut down by the ruthless woodsman—you have seen them taken away from you forever so far as this world is concerned. Or else it may be that you have been slandered. Your good has been evilly spoken of, your holiest motives have been misinterpreted, your most Divine aspirations have been misrepresented and you have gone about as with a sword in your bones while the malicious have taunted you, saying, “Where is your God now?” The cases of depression of spirit are so various that it must be, indeed, a rare panacea, a marvelous remedy, which would suit them all! Yet, when we come to speak of the remedies mentioned in our text, we shall find them suitable to most of these cases, if not to all—and to all in a degree, if not to the fullest extent.  
Let us pass now, from the most obvious, to the more subtle causes of soul-dejection. This complaint is very common among God’s people. When the young Believer has first to suffer from it, he thinks that he cannot be a child of God, “For,” he says, “if I were a child of God, would I be like this?” What fine dreams some of us have when we are just converted! We fancy that we are going to sail straight away to Heaven and to have a prosperous voyage all the way! The wind is always to blow fairly for us, there is never to be a rough wave, no storm-cloud is to hover over the ship all the day long—and if there are any nights, the stars will be so brilliant that it will be as bright as day! Or, possibly, we imagine that we have come into a country where everybody will be kind to us, where all circumstances will be propitious to us, where everything will tend to nurture our piety and our own hearts—indeed, will forever get rid of legal terrors and perilous alarms! Oh, silly creatures that we are if we dream thus foolishly! We know not what we are born to in our second birth, for, as a man is born to trouble by his first birth—when he is born a second time, he is born to a double share of trouble! Then, he was born to physical and mental trouble, but now that he is born-again, he is born to spiritual trouble and as he shall have new joys, so shall he also have a long list of new sorrows.  
All that, however, is unknown to us at the first. And when it comes upon us, it surprises us. Am I now addressing one who is ready to exclaim, “I give up all hope. I am sure I cannot be a child of God because I am so cast down”? O you simple soul, the most advanced saints suffer in just the same way! Men who have been for forty, fifty, 60 years followers of Christ complain that, sometimes, it is a question with them whether they have ever known Christ at all! There are seasons with them when they would, if they could, creep into any mouse hole and hide their heads rather than be seen among God’s people because they fear that they are hypocrites—and that the root of the matter is not in them. Why, I tell you, young Christians, that the most experienced Believers, the men who have great doctrinal knowledge and much experimental wisdom, the men who have lived very near to God and have had the most rapt and intimate fellowship with their Lord and Savior are the very men who have their ebbs, their winters and their times when it is a moot point with them whether they really love the Lord or not! Even the Apostle Paul was not exempt from doubts and fears, for he wrote, “We were troubled on every side; without were fights, within were fears.” And, on another occasion, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” The man after God’s own heart, even David, a man of experience so deep that none of us can fully decipher, much less rival it—a man of love so fervent that few of us can do more than aspire to catch the hallowed flame—nevertheless, had to cry aloud, and that very often, “O my God, my soul is cast down within me!”  
“But,” says one, “this death-like faintness comes upon me so often that, certainly I cannot be a child of God.” Yes, but let me tell you that, possibly, it will come even more! Or, should it come more seldom, if you shall have weeks of pleasure, or even months of enjoyment, it is possible that your doubts will then be doubled in intensity and your soul will yet have greater trials to experience! So great a Savior is provided for our deliverance that we must expect to have great castings down from which we need to be delivered. Why, Believer, what are one half of the promises worth if we are not the subjects of doubts and fears? Why has Jehovah given us so many shalls and wills but because He knew that we should have so many accursed ifs and perhapses? He would never have given us such a well-filled storehouse of comfort if He had not foreseen that we would have a full measure of sorrow. God never makes greater provision than will be needed, so, as there is an abundance of consolations, we may rest assured that there will also be an abundance of tribulations! There will be much fear and casting down to each of us before we see the face of God in Heaven! This disease of soul-dejection is common to all the saints—there are none of God’s people who altogether escape it.  
Let me go a step further and say that the disease mentioned in our text, although it is exceedingly painful, is not at all dangerous. When a man has a toothache, it is often very distressing, but it does not kill him. There have been some who have foolishly and peevishly wished to die to escape from the pain, but nobody does die of it. The bills of mortality are not swelled by its victims. And, in like manner, God’s children are much vexed with their doubts and fears, but they are never killed by them. They are a great trouble, but they are not like a mortal disease. They are sorely vexatious, but they are not destructive. Why, it is possible for you to have real faith and yet to have the most grievous unbelief! “Oh,” you say, “how can faith and unbelief live together?” They cannot live together in peace, but they may dwell together in the same heart. Remember what our Lord Jesus said to Peter “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” He did not say, “O you of no faith,” but, “of little faith.” Thus there was some faith, though there was also much doubt. So, in the Psalmist, there was some faith—there was, indeed, a great deal of faith—for he said, “O my God,” and it takes great faith to truly say, “my God.” Yet is there not also great unbelief here? Otherwise, would his soul have been cast down at all? But, meanwhile, had he not the yearnings of lively hope in God? If not, would he have dared to say, “Therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar?  
The fact is, we are the strangest mixture of contradictions that ever was known. We shall never be able to understand ourselves. God knows us altogether, but we shall never, at least in this life, completely comprehend ourselves. You remember that verse about the holy women at the sepulcher of Christ? After they had heard the angel’s message, “they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy.” What a strange mixture! On the one hand, we have the golden fruit of joy—and on the other hand, the black fruit of fear. So it makes a kind of checkerwork—there are blacks and whites, joys and sorrows, bliss and mourning mingled together! The highest joy and the deepest sorrow may be found in the Christian and the truest faith and yet the most grievous doubts may meet together in the child of God. Of course, they only meet there to make his heart a battlefield—but there they may meet—and his faith may be real while his doubts are grievous.  
I would remark, yet further, that it is not only possible for a man to thus be cast down and yet to have true faith all the while, but he may actually be growing in Grace while he is cast down! Yes, and he may really be standing higher when he is cast down than he did when he stood upright. Strange riddle! But we who have passed through this experience know that it is true. When we are flat on our faces, we are generally the nearest to Heaven. When we sink the lowest in our own esteem, we rise the highest in fellowship with Christ and in knowledge of Him. Someone said, “The way to Heaven is not upward, but downward.” There is some truth in the saying, though it is upward in Christ, it is downward in self. As Dr. Watts sings—

*“The more Your glories strike my eyes,  
The humbler I shall lie.”*

The inverse is equally true—  
*“The humbler I lie at my Savior’s feet,  
The more His glories strike my eyes.”*

This very casting down into the dust sometimes enables the Christian to bear a blessing from God which he could not have carried if he had been standing upright. There is such a thing as being crushed with a load of Grace—bowed down with a tremendous weight of benedictions— having such blessings from God that if our soul were not cast down by them, they would be the ruin of us. It is a good thing for us, sometimes, when fears frighten us and prosperity distresses us. Some of you may not understand what I am saying. You will not until you have this experience of which I have been speaking, but it does so happen that bitters often cleanse and sweeten the spiritual palate of God’s children, while there are sweets which make their mouth full of bitters! I know that I have had songs in the night after I have had groaning during the day and, often, a salutary blow from God’s loving hand, though it has made me smart, has cured me of some other far more baneful smart. Where kisses wounded, blows have healed.

The Christian life is a riddle and most surely are God’s people familiar with that riddle in their experience. They must work it out before they can understand it. So I say again that this casting down is consistent with the most elevated degree of piety. Depression of spirit is no index of declining Grace—the very loss of joy and the absence of assurance may be accompanied by the greatest advancement in the spiritual life. Mark you, if it continues month after month, and even year after year, then it is a sign of great weakness of faith—but if it comes only occasionally, as clouds pass over our sky, it is well. We do not want rain all the days of the week and all the weeks of the year, but if the rain comes sometimes, it makes the fields fertile and fills the brooks—and after the shower has fallen and the sun shines again, it puts a new brightness upon the face of Nature and makes the birds clear their throats and sing a new song! The earth never looks so beautiful as when she rises up like one that has washed his face in the brook and, in the shining water, shows the freshness of her verdure and tells of the wondrous skill with which God has been pleased to adorn her. Even so is it with the Christian when he comes forth from great and sore troubles with his harp returned, his psaltery vocal with praise and his lips gratefully confessing to his God, “You have increased my greatness and comforted me on every side.”

Painful as is this disease of soul—dejection—it is often very helpful to our spirit when we are obliged to cry, with David, “O my God, my soul is cast down within me.” To be cast down is often the best thing that could happen to us. Do you ask, “Why?” Because, when we are cast down, it checks our pride. We are very apt to grow too big. It is a good thing for us to be taken down a notch or two. We sometimes rise so high, in our own estimation, that unless the Lord took away some of our joy, we would be utterly destroyed by pride. Were it not for this thorn in the flesh, we would be exalted beyond measure.  
Besides, when this downcasting comes, it gets us to work at selfexamination. That religion which has begun to be a matter of form and ritual to us, becomes a thing to be considered in deeper earnest. We look at it as a real thing because of our real doubts. Often, I am sure, when your house has been made to shake, it has caused you to see whether it was founded upon a rock. While your ship had nothing but fine weather, you sailed along too presumptuously. But when the storm threatened, then it was that you reefed your sails and turned to your chart to find your latitude and longitude, fearing that there might be danger ahead. So you get good to your soul by being made to examine yourself. A great loss in business has sometimes helped a man to become rich, for he has been more careful in his dealings afterwards. He has begun to change a system of trade which, perhaps, might have brought him to insolvency—and thus his business has been put upon a firmer footing than before. Even so, this downcasting of spirit, by leading us to search ourselves, may help, in the end, to make us all the richer in Divine Grace. When our soul is cast down within us we begin to have closer dealings with Christ than we had before. A long continuance of calm induces listlessness. There is a way of being wanton towards Christ. We begin to think that we can do without Him—we imagine that we have such a store of ready money that we can trade on our own account. But when gloomy doubts arise, we go back to the place where our spiritual life commenced and we sing again—

*“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”*

There is such a tendency in all the branches of the living and true Vine to try to bring forth fruit without deriving nourishment from the stem, so the Lord, every now and then, takes away the visible flowing of Divine consolation in order that we may consciously realize our entire dependence upon Him. When you and I were little and we were out at eventide walking with our father, we sometimes used to run on a long way ahead, but, by-and-by, there was a big dog loose on the road and it is astonishing how closely we then clung to our father! You remember how John Bunyan depicts that trait in the character of the children who went on pilgrimage with their mother, Christiana. “When they were come up to the place where the lions were, the boys that went before were glad to cringe behind, for they were afraid of the lions and so they stepped back and went behind. At this their guide smiled and said, ‘How now, my boys, do you love to go before when no danger does approach, and love to come behind as soon as the lions appear?’” Just so is it with our doubts and fears. We run so far ahead that we lose sight of Christ—frightful things alarm us—and then we flee back again to the shadow of His Cross! This experience is good and healthful for us.

One other benefit that we derive from being cast down is that it qualifies us to sympathize with others. If we had never been in trouble we would be very poor comforters of others. It would do most physicians good if they were required, occasionally, to drink some of their own medicine. It would be no disadvantage to a surgeon if he once knew what it was to have a broken bone. You may depend upon it that his touch would be more tender afterwards! He would not be so rough with his patients as he might have been if he had never felt such pain himself.

Show me a man who has never had a trial and I will show you a man who has no heart. Above all things, save me from the man who has never had any trouble all his life—let me not go into his house, or be near him anywhere else. If I am sick, let him not even pass by my window lest his shadow should fall upon me and make me worse, for he must be a coldhearted, unsympathetic man if he has never known a trial and has never had to pass through the furnace of affliction!

I know that whenever God chooses a man for the ministry and means to make him useful, if that man hopes to have an easy life of it, he will be the most disappointed mortal in the world! From the day when God calls him to be one of His captains and says to him, “See, I have made you to be a leader of the hosts of Israel,” he must accept all that his commission includes—even if that involves a sevenfold measure of abuse, misrepresentation and slander. We need greater soul-exercise than any of our flock, or else we shall not keep ahead of them. We shall not be able to teach others unless God thus teaches us. We must have fellowship with Christ in suffering as well a fellowship in faith. Still, with all its drawbacks, it is a blessed service and we would not retire from it. Did we not accept all this with our commission? Then we would be cowards and deserters if we were to turn back! These castings down of the spirit are part of our calling! If you are to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, you must endure hardness. You will have to lie in the trenches, sometimes, with a bullet lodged here or there, with a saber cut on your forehead, or an arm or a leg shot away—where there is war, there must be wounds—and there must be war where there is to be victory!

II. I shall not say more about our being cast down. I have probably said enough about the disease, so now let us open the great medicine chest, and examine THE TWO REMEDIES here mentioned. “O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the Hill Mizar.”

The first remedy for soul-dejection is, a reference of ourselves to God, as David says, “O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember You.” If you have a trouble to bear, the best thing for you to do is not to try to bear it at all, but to cast it upon the shoulders of the Eternal! If you have anything that perplexes you, the simplest plan for you will be not to try to solve the difficulty, but to seek direction from Heaven concerning it. If you have, at this moment, some doubt that is troubling you, your wisest plan will be not to combat the doubt, but to come to Christ just as you are and to refer the doubt to Him. Remember how men act when they are concerned in a lawsuit—if they are wise, they do not undertake the case themselves. They know our familiar proverb, “He who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client.” So they take their case to someone who is able to deal with it and leave it with him. Well, now, if men have not sufficient skill to deal with matters that come before our courts of law, do you think that you have skill enough to plead in the court of Heaven against such a cunning old attorney as the devil who has earned the name of “the accuser of the brethren,” and well deserves the title? Never try to plead against him, but put your case into the hands of our great Advocate, for, “if any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” So, refer your case to Him—He will plead for you and win the day! If you should attempt to plead for yourself, it will cause you a vast amount of trouble and then you will lose the day after all.

Often, when I call to see a troubled Christian, do you know what he is almost sure to say? “Oh, Sir, I do not feel this—and I do fear that—and I cannot help thinking the other!” That great “I” is the root of all our sorrows—what I feel, or what I do not feel—that is enough to make anyone miserable! It is a wise plan to say to such an one, “Oh, yes! I know that all you say about yourself is only too true, but, now, let me hear what you have to say about Christ. For the next 24 hours at least, leave off thinking about yourself and think only of Christ.” O my dear Friends, what a change would come over our spirits if we were all to act thus! For when we have done with self and cast all our cares upon Christ, there remains no reason for us to care, or trouble, or fret! That saying of Jack the Huckster, which I have often repeated—

*“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All”—*  
describes the highest experience, though it is also the lowest. It is so simple and yet so safe, to live day by day by faith upon the Son of God

who loved me, and gave Himself for me—to be a little child—not a strong man, but a little child who cannot fight his own battles, but who gets Jesus to fight them for him! To be a little weak one who cannot run alone, but who must be carried in the arms of the Good Shepherd. We are never so strong as when we are weak, as Paul wrote, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” And we are never so weak as when we are strong, never so foolish as when we are wise in our own conceit and never so dark as when we think we are full of the Light of God. We are generally best when we think we are worst! When we are empty, we are full—when we are full, we are empty. When we have nothing, we have all things, but when we fancy that we are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” we are like the Laodiceans and know not that we are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Oh, for Grace to solve these riddles and so to live, day by day, out of self and upon the Lord Jesus Christ!

Let me give you an illustration. It is the easily-imagined case of a poor old woman who has no money of her own, but who has a rich friend who says to her, “Come to my house every Saturday and I will give you so much for a regular allowance. And if there is anything else that you need, I will pay for it—all your needs shall be supplied.” He does not give her a large sum of money to keep, for she might not know how to spend it wisely, or she might be robbed of it—he gives it to her week by week. One Saturday morning the old lady is full of fear and alarm. If you happen to call upon her just then, you will hear her complaining, “I have not a farthing in the world! I have just spent my last sixpence. I have no money in the bank, no houses from which I can collect rent! I have nothing but these few things that you see here—how am I to live with only this?” If you did not know anything more about the woman, you would sit down and pity her, would you not?

As it gets to be nearly twelve o’clock, she says, “I must be going.” You ask, “Where?” She replies, “I am going to my friend who tells me to go to him every Saturday and he will give me all I need.” “Why,” you exclaim, “you silly old soul, you have been telling me all this tale of need and exciting my pity, when you are really a rich woman! Just because you do not happen to have it in hand, you have been telling me this pitiful story which is really not true.” In like manner, when I see an heir of Heaven sitting down and mourning and weeping because he has not got this, and he has not got that—and when I turn to the Scriptures, and read, “All things are yours; and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” And I find promises like this, “All things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” Or this, “The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give Grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” If I do not say this to the one who is murmuring without cause, I say it to myself, for I have often been as foolish as the old woman of whom I spoke just now, “O you foolish self, how slow of heart you are to believe! How foolish you are to be thus sitting down and bemoaning your own emptiness when Christ is yours, with all His boundless fullness, when the Father’s love and the Spirit’s power and the Savior’s Grace are all engaged to bring you safely through your trials, to rid you of your troubles and to land you triumphantly in Heaven!”

Be of good cheer, then, tried and depressed Believer, and apply this sacred remedy to yourself! Remember the Lord! Refer your case to Him and look to Him for all that you need!

David’s other remedy for his soul, when it was cast down within him, was the grateful remembrance of the past when, by the Lord’s tender mercies, it was lifted up—“therefore will I remember You from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar.” Look up your old diary—many of you have gray hair—so your notebooks go back a long way. Let us read one or two of the entries. Why, here is a bright page! Though the one preceding it is black and full of sorrow, this page is bright with joy and jubilant with song! What do I read? I see written here—

*“I will praise You every day!  
Now Your anger’s turned away,  
Comfortable thoughts arise  
From the bleeding Sacrifice.”*

You wrote that verse in your diary just after you had found the Savior and your sins had been forgiven you for His sake. Well, then, although your harp is now unstrung and you are not praising your Lord today, I pray you to remember that hour when first you knew His love and to say, “If I had never received more than that one mercy from Him, I must bless Him for it in time and bless Him for it throughout eternity!” Here is another page in your diary. I see that you had been enduring some temporal trouble and that your earthly friends had forsaken you. But, in the middle of your trouble, just where I might have expected to find these words, “I am utterly cast down, for God has forsaken me,” I find written here—

*“When trouble, like a gloomy cloud  
Has gathered thick and thundered loud, He near my soul has always stood,  
His loving kindness, oh, how good!”*

Do you think that He is not standing by your side now? If there is a loud thundering and if there is a thick darkness, will He leave you? Surely these reflections upon what you have experienced in the past should lead you to trust in Christ for the present! And, as you think of all His dealings with your soul, You may well say—

*“Can He have taught me to trust in His name,*

*And thus far have brought me to put me to shame?”*God forbid that we should ever think that He was so cruel as to enlighten, comfort, cheer and help us so long and then leave us, at last, to sink and perish!

In this diary of yours, I also find one sweet record which is a great contrast to your present sad and gloomy state. You must have had a vision of Christ Crucified, for you have written—

*“Here I’ll sit forever viewing  
Mercy’s streams, in streams of blood.  
Precious drops! My soul bedewing,  
Plead and claim my peace with God.  
Truly blessed is this station,  
Low before His Cross to lie—  
While I see Divine compassion  
Floating in His languid eyes.”*

Yet you, who have been at the foot of the Cross, are afraid that you will be cast away at the last! You have known the sweetness of Jesus’ love, yet you are cast down! He has kissed you with the kisses of His lips—His left hand has been under your head and His right hand has embraced you—yet you think He will leave you to sink, at last, in your trouble! You have been in His banqueting house and you have had such food as angels never tasted, yet you dream that you shall be cast into Hell! Shame on you! Pluck off those robes of mourning! Lay aside that sackcloth and those ashes! Snatch your harps down from the willows and let us together sing praises unto Him whose love, power, faithfulness and goodness shall always be the same!

If there are any here who are strangers to all these things, I can only wish that they might even know our sorrows, in order that they might have an experience of our joys to treasure up in remembrance. Believers in Jesus are not a miserable crew—they have songs to sing and they have good reason to sing them! They have enough to make them blessed on earth and to make them blessed forever and ever!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 119:17-28.**

Verse 17. Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live, and keep Your word. O Lord, I am Your servant, yet, I pray You, do not pay me wages according to my deserts, but according to the greatness of Your mercy! “Deal bountifully with Your servant.” Little mercy will not be enough for such great sins and such great needs as mine. Deal very generously with Your poor servant who is so full of necessities, “that I may live,” for, if You will only let me live, it will be of Your bounty since I deserve not even that gift. Only to have my life still spared shall be regarded by me as a great favor from You. I want not to live to please myself, for that would not be living at all, but “that I may live, and keep Your word.” A holy life is the only true life, the only life that is really worth having— and he that has it has been dealt bountifully with by his God. I commend this verse to each servant of the Lord as a prayer that may be continually presented to Him.

18. Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law. This is one of the first parts of God’s bountiful dealings with us. There is no mercy that is so great as mercy to one’s own person, to one’s own eyes, for instance, which are such essential parts of ourselves. Lord, when You are dealing bountifully with me, I do not ask for riches, but I do ask that my eyes may be opened. I do not ask You to give me more than You have given in Your Word, but I do ask for opened eyes with which I may perceive what You have put there, otherwise the beauties of Your Word may be useless to me by reason of my blindness. This blessed Book teems with marvels—it is a world of wonders. It records many miracles, but every page of it is itself a miracle and a mass of miracles—yet we must have them revealed to us or we shall not discover them. Revelation, itself, must be revealed to every person individually by the Spirit of God, or else he will never see it.

19. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Your commandments from me. Humane men deal kindly with exiles. God has commanded us to be generous to strangers and He will certainly be so Himself. Lord, because of Your love, I find myself like an exile among the sons of men. But be not a stranger to me. What should I do, in this world, without You, and without Your Word? “Hide not Your commandments from me.”

20, 21. My soul breaks for the longing that it has unto Your judgments at all times. You have rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from Your commandments. God cannot stand the proud—it is very seldom that they can stand one another! And if proud men loathe pride as they see it in others, you may rest assured that the good and great God will not endure it. How sternly He rebuked it in the angels that kept not their first estate. How He rebuked it in Pharaoh! All through history it may be seen how God has been continually abasing the proud and giving Grace to the humble.

22. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept Your testimonies. He had lived honestly and uprightly and yet men slandered him. Was there ever a man upon earth who was good and true, who was not slandered? God Himself was slandered in Paradise by the old serpent— and the Lord Jesus was constantly being slandered by wicked men—so can any of us hope to escape the envenomed tongue of the slanderer? Yet it is very painful and we may well pray to be delivered from it, especially if we can add, with the Psalmist, “for I have kept Your testimonies.”

23. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but Your servant did meditate on Your statutes. Sometimes men can bear what the commonalty say, but to have the great ones of the earth speaking against them is thought by some to be very hard. The Psalmist says, “Princes also did sit and speak against me.” What did he do under such circumstances? Did he rise up in anger and answer them? Or did he sit down and consider how he could defend himself against them? Far from it—“Your servant did meditate on Your statutes.” He seems to say, “I did not think it was worth my while to leave the Scriptures, even for a moment, so as to speak to them, but I went on studying Your Word and left them to say what they pleased.” We shall be wise if we do likewise.

24. Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors. While these princes were taking counsel against the Psalmist, he also went and took Counsel’s advice against them! But that Counsel’s advice was the advice of the Word of God. He stuck to the Scriptures! Little as he had of them, yet that little he greatly prized. The Pentateuch furnished him with five Inspired Counselors to whom he resorted in his time of need. Let us imitate his example, especially as we have the complete Canon of revelation to advise and counsel us!

25-28. My soul cleaves unto the dust: quicken You me according to Your word. I have declared my ways, and You heard me: teach me Your statutes. Make me to understand the way of Your precepts: so shall I talk of Your wondrous works. My soul melts for heaviness: strengthen You me according unto Your word. The Word of the Lord is available for quickening, teaching and strengthening. As Paul wrote to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” May that gracious Spirit, who Inspired it, always teach us its inner meaning!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—34, 634, 622.  
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DEEP CALLS UNTO DEEP  
NO. 865

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 11, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Deep calls unto deep.”  
Psalm 42:7.**

IN the grandeur of Nature there are awful harmonies. When the storm agitates the ocean below, the heavens above hear the tumult and answer to the clamor. Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail or swift-descending rain, attended with peals of thunder and flashes of flame. Frequently the waterspout, of which David speaks in the next sentence, evidences the sympathy of the two great waters above and beneath the firmament—the great deep above stretches out its hands to the great deep below and in voice of thunder their old relationship is recognized. It is almost as if the twin seas remembered how once they lay together in the same cradle of confusion till the decree of the Eternal appointed each his bounds and place.

“Deep calls unto deep”—one splendor of creation holds fellowship with another. Amazed and overwhelmed by the spectacle of some tremendous tempest upon land, you have yet been able to observe how the clouds appear to be emptying themselves each into each and the successive volleys of Heaven’s artillery are answered by rival clamors, the whole chorus of sublimities lifting up their voices. It has seemed to me that a strange wild joy was moving all the elements and that the angels of wind and tempest were clapping their awful hands in glorious glee. Among the Alps, in the day of tempest, the solemnly silent peaks break through their sacred quiet and speak to each other in that dread language which is echoing the voice of God—

*“Far along,  
From peak to peak the rattling crags among, Leaps the live thunder!  
Not from one lone cloud,  
But every mountain now has found a tongue, And Jura answers, through her misty shroud, Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.”*

Height calls unto height even as “deep calls unto deep.” David, perceiving these solemn harmonies, uses the metaphor to describe his own unhappy experience. I suppose that when he wrote this Psalm he was an exile from his throne and country, driven out by the rebellion of his favorite son. He crossed the brook Jabbok in fear and hastened by night over Jordan and withdrew to a dry and thirsty land where there was no water. He was saddened, most of all, at the remembrance of the sacred shrine to which he had so often gone with the multitude that kept holy day, because he was now unable to join with that hallowed throng in worship so refreshing to his soul.

Everything around the Psalmist was like an ocean tossed with tempest—his outlook was unmingled trouble. His sorrows were like Job’s messengers followed on one another’s heels. His griefs came wave upon wave. There was no intermission to his woe. At the same time his heart sank within him. The deep outside called to the deep within. Conscience, as with a lightning flash, lit up the abyss of the sufferer’s inward depravity and made him see the darkness of the sin into which he had fallen with the wife of Uriah in days gone by and filled him with despondency and sad forebodings.

While outside everything was comfortless, within him there was nothing to cheer him. Bitterly did he enquire, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? Why are you disquieted within me?” Externally and internally, rest was removed far from him. Outside were fights, within were fears. Deep called unto deep at the noise of God’s waterspouts—all the waves and billows of God’s Providence had gone over him.

But now, no longer confining so grand a thought to the mere manner in which David employed it, namely, to the double trouble of many of God’s saints when two seas meet and when internal and external sorrows combine, I purpose to use the general principle in other directions and to show that everywhere where there is one deep it calls to another and that especially in the moral and spiritual world every vast and sublime truth has its correspondent, which, like another deep, calls to it responsively.

I. First, we shall consider this fact in connection with THE ETERNAL PURPOSES OF GOD AND THEIR FULFILMENT IN FACT. The eternal purpose—what a deep! He who pretends to understand predestination, misunderstands himself! We have no unit for measurement when we strive to fathom the decrees of God. We are like the astronomers in attempting to measure the distances of those stars which are as remote from the ordinary fixed stars as the fixed stars are from us—they fail from lack of a measuring-line which may serve as a unit—scarcely does the diameter of the earth’s orbit suffice for a basis of numeration. They have no unit by which to estimate.

What do you and I know of infinity, Omnipresence, and self-existence? We are far beyond our depth when we come to the ocean of Divine purposes. We may gaze into the mystery with awe, but to profess to comprehend it is vanity itself. What a depth! What an inscrutable mystery, that the infinitely pure and holy God should have determined to allow the intrusion of sin into His universe! That He should allow evil to drag down an angel and debase him into a devil! That the adoring hosts of Heaven should be thinned by sinful desertion from a loyalty so well deserved! How came it that moral evil was suffered to come into this fair world, to spoil Eden, to pollute mankind, to fill the grave and populate Hell?

Why was it that after sin had broken out in the universe, it was permitted to remain in existence? Why not shut up the first devil as in a plague ward, build a jail in Tophet—surround it with walls of flame and never let the demon wander forth? Why should the Evil One be permitted, like a roaring lion, to roam abroad seeking whom he may devour? When sin infected the race of men, why not destroy them all and stamp out the disease, as we did lately when the disease came among our cattle? Why not purge it with fire till the last speck of the leprosy was burned out? What mattered the destruction of a race if sin were destroyed with them?

Strange decree that sin should be tolerated—permitted first, to enter— and then allowed afterwards to spread its mischievous poison. What a depth, my Brethren, is revealed in the Divine decree of election, that there should be vessels unto honor, fitted for the Master’s use—men chosen to show forth the riches of His Grace, not for any good thing in them—but because the Lord will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion! And what a more solemn depth, still, is revealed in those whom He passed by—that there should be vessels of wrath fitted to destruction—men permitted to continue in sin and to harden themselves against the Gospel and so to illustrate the awful wrath of God throughout eternity!

Brothers and Sisters, I cannot contemplate the doctrines connected with predestination, true as they are, without a shudder of reverential awe! Read that ninth chapter of Romans and while you are silenced by the voice of Paul, “No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have You made me thus?” Yet a thrill of awe passes through your souls and you whisper—

*“Great God, how infinite are You,  
What worthless worms are we!”*

If we could turn over those awful pages in which every event has been recorded. If it were permitted to us to see that book of fate chained to the Throne of God, in which every angel’s form and size is drawn by the eternal pen. In which everything is written down—from the falling of a sere leaf from an oak to the tumbling of an avalanche from its Alp—in which God has as much arranged the course of yonder dust blown in the wind as of the planet which He steers in its mighty orbit. If we could see it all, we should exclaim, “O wondrous depth, how can I measure you? My plummet utterly fails. I will adore, for I cannot comprehend.”

Beloved Friends, we need not allow ourselves to be depressed by the mystery of the doctrine of Eternal Decrees, for even if these decrees were not in existence, there would still remain the other deep, the mystery of fact. It is a fact that sin is in the world. It is a fact that sorrow is here. It is a fact that death is here—and how can you understand these things? Shut your eyes to the depth above the firmament if you will, but here is depth nearer home which will still amaze you! Remember that all men are not saved. It is a dreadful Truth of God that multitudes tread the broad road and reach eternal destruction! Why is this when God is good and Omnipotent? Can you understand Providence?

Is not Providence, as we see it, quite as mysterious as predestination? Are not the mysteries rather in the facts, themselves, than in the purposes which ordained them? Are they not, both the facts and the decrees, mysteries and equal mysteries? But what a wonderful harmony there is between the two depths! And to this it is I call your attention. Observe how deep has called unto deep! Whatever God ordained has been accomplished! His will has been done! You will tell me that this is nothing amazing, since God is Omnipotent. I reply, yes, but you will remember that He was pleased to create beings who should be free agents and to that extent actors independent of Himself.

Therefore, it is not to the solitary attribute of Omnipotence that you can refer the fact that Providence coincides with predestination. Here were angels free in their will and yet they sinned. Here are men upon this stage of action willful and resolute and yet fulfilling the unknown foreordination. Herein lies the marvel—that with voluntary agents, who do as they will— yet the eternal purpose in every jot and tittle has to this moment been fulfilled! And as the impression answers to the die, so has the history of the universe answered to the eternal purpose and to the solemn decree of the Most High.

My Brothers and Sisters, listen in solemn awe to the voices of these twin depths as they call to one another. Famine, plague, pestilence, devastated nations, fallen empires, wars and bloodsheds—who shall understand why these are permitted? How shall we reconcile our souls to them at all, until we look up to the great Father sitting on the Throne of Wisdom and Love, and say, “You know what the end will be. You have ordained all things and from the seeming evil You will bring forth good and from the good a something better and from the better a something better still, in infinite progression, to the praise and glory of Your name”? “Deep calls unto deep.” The deep of Predestination answers to the deep of Providence and both together magnify the name of God!

II. We now come to another case somewhat akin to this, more nearly concerning ourselves and perhaps more practical. Brethren, SOME OF YOU ARE ENDURING DEEP AFFLICTION. All are not tried alike. God has not been pleased to deal out the wormwood and the gall to all in a cup of the same fashion and the same measure. There are some whose pathway to the skies is comparatively smooth. Others go through fire and through water—men ride over their heads.

My Brethren who have done business in the great waters, I speak to you. Yours has been a stormy and tried life. Well, I can sympathize with you, for with all the mercy of God, the preacher has not been free from many and severe trials and, oh, they are deep, indeed—when a depressed spirit unites with our outward afflictions—when Church troubles, family troubles, personal troubles and the world’s troubles, all aided and abetted by Satanic temptation and by an evil heart of unbelief. Do not, however, think yourselves harshly dealt with, my dear Brothers and Sisters, in being singled out as a special target for the arrows of grief.

Do not wish that you could be the obscurest of all the saints, to find some quiet nook in which you might be left alone to rest in forgetfulness! Rather let me remind you that if in your experience there is a deep of extraordinary trial, there is most surely another deep answering to it. Open now your ears and your hearts to hear the calling of this deep unto its brother deep. Hearken while I translate the echoes of the Truth of God. Inasmuch as you have many trials, remember the depth of the Divine faithfulness. You have not been able to comprehend the reason for your trials, but I beseech you believe in the firmness and stability of the Divine affection towards you.

In proportion to your tribulations shall be your consolations! If you have shallow sorrows, you shall receive but shallow Graces. But if you have deep afflictions, you shall obtain the deeper proofs of the faithfulness of God! I could gladly lay down and die when I think of the trials of this life, but I recover myself and laugh at them all, even as the daughter of Zion shook her head and laughed at her foes, when I remember that the mighty God of Jacob is our refuge and that He will not fail us, nor take away His hand till He has effected His purpose concerning us! Great deeps of trial bring with them great deeps of promise!

For you much afflicted ones, there are words, great and mighty, which are not meant for other saints of easier experience. You shall drink from deep golden goblets reserved for those giants who can drink great potions of wormwood and are men of capacity enough to quaff deep draughts of the wines on the lees well refined. Trials are mighty enlargers of the soul! We are contracted, narrowed, pent up and we rightly pray, “Lord, enlarge my heart.” Yes, but the opening of capacious reservoirs within us can only be effected by the spade of daily tribulation, and then, being dug out by pain and trouble, there becomes room for the overflowing promise!

A great adversity will, to the Believer, bring with it great Grace. Whenever the Lord sets His servants to do extraordinary work He always gives them extraordinary strength. Or if He puts them to unusual suffering He will give them unusual patience. When we enter upon war with some petty New Zealand chief, our troops expect to have their charges defrayed and accordingly we pay them gold by the thousands, as their expenses may require. But when an army marches against a grim monarch in an unknown country who has insulted the British flag, we pay, as we know to our cost, not by thousands but by millions!

There is a difference in the payment of an attack upon petty chieftains and a war against an emperor. And so, my Brethren, if God calls you to common and ordinary trials, He will pay the charges of your warfare by thousands, but if He commands you to an unusual struggle with some tremendous foe, He will discharge the liabilities of your war by millions— according to the riches of His Grace in which He has abounded towards us through Christ Jesus! I would not, then, in my better mind, if I could, escape great labors or great trials since they involve great Graces! If one deep calls to the other deep, let the Lord lay on the strokes and let Him add to the burden! If as my days so shall my strength be, then let the days be long and dark, for so the strength shall be mighty and God shall be glorified and His servants shall be blessed!

I would earnestly urge every tried Christian to dwell upon this Truth, for it may be of great comfort to you. You may, perhaps, have had a comparatively easy life until just lately, but you have reached a turning point where disaster has befallen you. You are fallen into poverty, or else that time for the break-up of your family has lately come upon you. Your father is gone. Your mother is on the verge of the grave. Your friends have one by one been taken from you. Yes, feel the loneliness of life! Here is a dreadful deep for you to sail on and a tempestuous deep much to be feared, for your little boat may easily be wrecked.

But don’t forget that there is another deep, whose remembrance will remove from you the bitterness of your present sorrow—there is love in Heaven towards you which will never grow cold—immortal and unchanging love! And besides, there is a royal oath which never can be broken, a Covenant ratified with blood that never can be dishonored! You must be helped through—you cannot be left. God might sooner cease to be than cease to be faithful! You must be borne up amid the billows and safely landed. Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart this day!

III. We have not time to linger. We must pass on to a third point. “Deep calls unto deep.” HUMAN WRETCHEDSESS IS PARALLELED BY DIVINE GRACE. Brothers and Sisters, into what an awful state our race fell! We were tainted with high treason through the sin of our father, Adam. The dignity and honor of our race were forfeited. We were, each one of us, born in sin and shaped in iniquity—with a natural tendency towards evil we came into this world—and since we have been in this world, we have wickedly and willfully rebelled against God.

We have rendered ourselves obnoxious to the Divine justice. We deserve to be driven from the Glory of His Presence by the power of His wrath! And beside all this, we are desperately set upon rejecting any offers of mercy on the part of God. Our will has become stubborn, our heart is hard. There are no known human means which can bring a soul to God. Man is such an enemy to God that he will not be reconciled to Him. Human eloquence and human sympathy are, alike, powerless against human depravity.

This leviathan laughs at our sword and spear. Oh, sad, sad, sad case is that of fallen man! Sinner, sad, sad is your case—lost, utterly, hopelessly, everlastingly lost are you by nature! As in yourselves considered, there is no remedy for the disease which rages within you! There is no escape from that eternal fire which must consume you! I would never, for a moment, attempt to make out the abyss of the Fall to be less deep than it is—it is bottomless! The miseries of mankind cannot be exaggerated. Could our tears forever flow—could we be turned each one into a Jeremiah—yet could we never weep enough for the slain of the daughter of our people. Human misery is deep beyond expression.

But what shall I say? How shall I speak? Where shall I find words to express the delight of my soul that I have such a Truth to tell you? There is a deep which answers to the deep of human ruin and it is the deep of Divine Grace. There can be no evil in man which the infinite mercy of God cannot overcome! Behold, God Himself, Incarnate in the Person of the Nazarene! Behold the Son of God spending on earth a life of service and of condescension! Behold Him dying a death of ignominy and pain! The Atonement of Christ is such a Red Sea that all the Egyptians of a Believer’s sins shall be drowned in it! There is such virtue in the redemption offered up by Christ, that it meets the full extent of the guilt which any sinner who seeks Him may have incurred!

Moreover, to meet the obstinacy and depravity of our hearts, behold how deep calls unto deep! God’s Eternal Spirit has deigned to dwell in these hearts of ours! He quickens death into life! He fills the thirsty soul with rivers of Divine Grace! He turns the stone to flesh and makes the adamant palpitate with tenderness. Blessed be His name, He has done wonders in our souls! He has brought Christ home to our hearts and made us willing to rejoice in Christ and to be saved by Him! Myriads of spirits now before the Throne attest to the fact that the Grace of God is deeper than the depths of our sin, higher than the heights of our rebellion, broader and longer than the breadths and lengths of our depravity! Oh, the exceeding riches of the Grace of God!

“Oh, the depth,” says the Apostle, and we may well say the same. My Hearer, ought not this to encourage you? Are you a burdened, consciencestricken sinner, brought so low as to be all but a damned sinner? You are only just this side of Hell! You almost smoke like a brand in the fire, yet is there mercy enough to rescue you and to give you a place among them that are glorified at the right hand of God! The deep of your misery calls to the deep of sacred mercy and faith shall hear a favorable answer.

IV. Fourthly and with brevity, THE DEPTH OF DIVINE LOVE TO THE SAINTS CALLS FOR A DEEP OF CONSECRATION IN EVERY BELIEVING HEART. Study, my dear Brothers and Sisters, quietly, the depth of the love of God to you, His people. He loved you without a cause—

*“What was there in you that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?  
‘Twas even so, Father,’ you ever must sing, For so it seemed good in Your sight.’ ”*

He loved you without beginning. Before years and centuries and millenniums began to be counted, your name was on His heart. Eternal thoughts of love have been in God’s bosom towards you! He has loved you without a pause—there never was a minute in which He did not love you. Your name, once engraved upon His hands has never been erased, nor has He ever blotted it out of the Book of Life.

Since you have been in this world He has loved you most patiently. You have often provoked Him. You have rebelled against Him times without number, yet He has never stopped the outflow of His heart towards you. And, blessed be His name, He never will! You are His and you always shall be His. Jesus says, “Because I live, you shall live also.” God’s love to you is without boundary. He could not love you more, for He loves you like a God—and He never will love you less. All His heart belongs to you. “As the Father has loved Me,” says Jesus, “even so have I loved you.”

Contemplate for a moment what you have received as the result of this love. You have received, first of all, the gift of the only begotten Son. He left the Throne of honor for the Cross of shame, the brightness of Glory for the darkness of the tomb. Oh, the depths of the love which is revealed in Calvary! You will never, never be able to fathom the depth of the love of God towards you in the gift of His dear Son to be your Redeemer! Think, now—the Holy Spirit brought Jesus Christ to you! And what were you then? It is a shame to speak of some of the things which you then loved, but you are washed, you are cleansed and sanctified. Oh, that blessed bath filled with blood!

Oh, the depth of love there is in the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace! What a work of Divine Grace was that which changed your nature to make you love what once you hated! And what a work it has been to keep the helm of your vessel right—oftentimes the current would have drifted you back again to the old rock and wrecked you—but a strong hand has kept the head of the vessel heavenward. A blessed wind has filled the sail. And though you have made but slow progress, you are still on the way to the fair haven. The love of God which has been manifested in you is a very Heaven of love.

I cannot measure the love which God has shown towards me, poor me, though I am only one of His family. I feel as if it were deeper than Hell and higher than Heaven—as long as eternity and wide as immensity. I cannot understand it. But what does this love say to me and to you but this—it calls to another deep! Oh, how I ought to love my God who has so loved me! Oh, how I ought to hate the sin which made my Savior bleed! Deeps of the Savior’s grief, you call to deeps of spiritual repentance. The agonies of Christ call us to the slaughter of our sins. Brethren, if God so loved us, it calls to another deep—we ought also so to love one another! If God forgave us, behold another deep of obligation to forgive all those who have offended us!

How can I love the saints of God enough who are the Brethren of Him who loved me even to the death? As for poor sinners, if God saved me, how I ought to lay out my life to try and save them! If I have, indeed, found peace with God through the blood of the Cross, how I ought to seek the lost sheep, still lost and wandering, as I also once was! If Jesus has so loved me, how I ought to love Him! Brethren, I dare not, at this hour, say a word against other Christian people, though I might fairly do so. But I will accuse myself and admit that I have hardly caught so much as an idea of what a consecrated man ought to be.

I have read the lives of those of God’s servants whose enthusiasm has been fervent and whose consecration has been complete and I have felt that they were like a huge Colossus and I a dwarf walking under their huge legs. Oh, but to serve Christ as He ought to be served does not mean giving Him a trifle, now and then, out of our estate and never knowing that we have given it! It means pinching ourselves right cheerfully to serve His cause. It does not mean saying a good word, sometimes, for Him when it would be shameful to be silent! It means making our whole life a testimony to His dear love. It does not mean giving Him the candle ends and cheese parings of our soul, stingingly doling out to Him what we would give a beggar at the door. It means the rendering up of body, soul and spirit—the surrender of our entire nature to be offered in sacrifice!

As the bullock was brought to the altar—bound to the horns thereof, killed and offered up—with the fat and the inwards, so must we be entirely given up to our Lord! O for more real consecration! Jesus has done so much for us—let us endeavor to do more for Him! And this morning let the deeps of Divine Love call to the deeps within our grateful souls and let those deeps cry to the deeps of the Eternal Spirit as we ask to be perfectly given up to the cause and honor of our Lord!

V. Time fails me, therefore I must notice another deep. There is a depth in this world, A DEPTH OF DIVINE FORBEARANCE towards impenitent and graceless men. And depend upon it, it answers to another deep, A DEEP OF IMMEASURABLE AND NEVER-ENDING WRATH IN THE WORLD TO COME. It is a very solemn subject and I desire to speak most solemnly. Therefore I entreat you to hear most earnestly, especially you unconverted ones.

It is a very great mystery that God permits the ungodly to go on as they do. Walk down some of our streets at night, if you dare, and mark what you see. You inwardly exclaim, “I wonder why God permits it! Here is a reeking Sodom in the heart of a so-called Christian city.” Step into some of the dens of infamy and you will feel, “God could, if He would, suppress this in a minute—why doesn’t He?” Hearken for a moment to the talk of blasphemers—what atrocious insults they perpetrate upon the Majesty of Heaven. They go out of their way to imprecate curses upon themselves, their limbs, their eyes, their souls. What are they doing? If they will not obey God, could they not at least let Him alone and not insult Him to His face?

We have heard in these days a blasphemer stand upon a public platform and say, “There is no God and if there is a God,” taking out his watch, “let him strike me dead in five minutes.” When he still found himself alive, he argued that there was no God. The fact was, God was much too great to be put out of patience by such an insignificant wretch as he! Had God been less than God He would have struck him dead, but being God He passed him by with sublime indifference, as a hero would pass by the chirping of a grasshopper. Yet the Divine forbearance is certainly very wonderful, very marvelous.

I have heard say that when Mr. John Ryland was present at a certain meeting when the slave-trade question was first agitated, a story was told in that meeting of atrocities perpetrated in the middle passage between Africa and the States. And those atrocities were so enormous that John Ryland, in the exuberance of his wrath, knelt down and said to God, “Lift up Your thunderbolt and damn these wretches, O righteous God.” I know that in sight of oppression and cruelty I have felt a longing for speedy vengeance on the tyrant and have been very thankful to think that I had not the handling of the thunderbolts. But God has looked on,

 calmly looked on, and suffered infamies which were nothing less than infernal to be perpetrated, again and again! He appears to wink at men’s sins.

Ah, my Brethren, can you think for a minute what you and I would do if some cruel wretches should take our children and torture them and burn them alive? How would our wrath be up and how would we strike in their defense! But remember that from the days of Christ until now the dear children of God, dearer to Him than our children are to us, have been shut up in prison to rot. They have been sawn asunder. They have wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins. They have been burned at Smithfield and a thousand other places and have crimsoned the snows of the Alps with their blood. And yet God, in the great deeps of His forbearance, has been still.

There has been, it is true, a vengeance in Providence in the long run— the reader of history knows how God has avenged every persecution. Still, the recompense was slow. There were no fiery arrows to pierce Bishop Bonner when he condemned Anne Askew. There were no immediate lightning flashes to wither Domitian or Nero when they insultingly put the people of God to death. No, the Lord bears long with them and His longsuffering is a deep—a great deep! In this house, to come back to ourselves, what deeps of forbearance have been shown in the cases of some of you! You have often heard of Jesus Christ, my dear Hearers, but you have not received Him. You have known the way of salvation, but you have not run in it.

I have pleaded with you—I hope with all honesty and earnestness—and you have been awakened, too, and aroused, but you have stifled your convictions! You have deliberately chosen your sins and you have presumptuously turned away from the blood of Christ. O my unconverted Hearers, those of you, especially, who still continue regularly to come to these seats until I almost wonder to see you here—I cannot imagine what pleasure you can derive from having your consciences continually whipped up! I beg you to consider that men, and women, too, among you have chosen the lusts of the flesh and ungodly gain, or drunkenness, when you know better, know much better! Some of you have had a degree of Divine light shed across your souls and yet you have deliberately chosen to rebel against God! I fear you have, some of you, done so to the hardening of your hearts even to final impenitence!

Listen, now, I pray you! As surely as God has shown towards you a great deep of forbearance, He will show an equal depth of justice. He may pay slowly, but He will pay in full! God’s mill grinds slowly, but it grinds most surely and thoroughly, even to powder. The feet of the avenging angels are shod with wool, but they never turn aside from their path. According to this Book there is a Hell into which those who reject Christ will be cast, the misery of which is dimly to be guessed at, but can never be fully described—a misery of which it is said, “Their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched”—a misery which will last as long as the enjoyments of Heaven shall last! For while the saints shall go away into everlasting joy, the punishment of the ungodly has, according to the testimony of Jesus, the same eternal duration.  
Do not deceive yourselves by any dream of annihilation! Do not imagine there shall come an end to your woe! If there were the shadow of a ground for that statement, Hell would cease to be Hell, for hopelessness is of the essence of Hell. O, by the boundless love treasured up in Christ Jesus, remember there is equal terror in His wrath! The hand that is mighty to save is equally mighty to destroy! All Omnipotence has been put out to save, but this rejected, an equal Omnipotence shall be put out to crush. Tempt not the Lord! The deeps of your sin are already challenging the deeps of His justice. “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?”

Awaken not the fury which you cannot endure, overcome, or avoid! Kindle not the fire which, like flames among stubble, will burn furiously and cannot be stopped! O dash not your souls upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler! Cast not yourselves upon the point of His glittering spear! God grant of His eternal mercy that you may not tempt those deeps.

VI. Now to close with a more cheerful theme. There is, Brethren, A BLESSED DEEP OF HOLY HAPPINESS AND BLISS FOR THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN, AND TODAY IT CALLS TO THE DEEP OF JOY AND THANKFULNESS WITHIN SAINTLY HEARTS who are lingering here below. Yes, the day is coming and all the wings of time are bringing it nearer, when we shall be emancipated from the body of this death! We are not forever to be sickly, sinful and sorrowing. We shall soon be set free from everything that encumbers us.

If Christ come not in our lifetime to take us to Himself, we shall go to Him to dwell with Him where He is. And what are the delights of being in Heaven! To be with Christ! The spouse forever with the Bridegroom! The child forever in His Father’s bosom! What must it be to dwell above! Forever pure! Forever beyond the danger of temptation! Safe and blessed! Shielded from all fear! Enriched with all blessedness! Christian, you shall soon be like Jesus as well as with Him. You shall be crowned as He is and blessed as He is. Oh, how satisfied shall you be when you wake up in His likeness!

I cannot go further, for though I were to talk of the harps of gold, of the streets that shine with unearthly light, of gates of pearl, of the neverending song and of the gentle flowing river of the Water of Life amidst the trees that yield their 12 manner of fruits, yet all would be less than what I have said already. You shall be with Christ and you shall be like He is! Indeed, Heaven is a great deep! The glorious history of the Church of God in years to come is a great deep, too. That reigning of Christ on the earth. That judging of the angels. That being caught up together with the Lord in the air. That resurrection of the body in the likeness of His glorious body. That being forever with the Lord—why, these are things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard! Heaven is a blessed deep.

I see it as a sea of glass mingled with fire and almost hear the harpers who stand forever harping on that glassy sea. O let the thought of it awaken the deeps of your souls! Heaven is yours, for He has said, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands.” I blush to think that I should ever be downcast! I am ashamed to think that I should dare to be sad! Oh, it is blessed work to anticipate that joy, yet it makes one ashamed of the depression which our present light afflictions so easily cause to our feeble minds!

O you mourning saints, you have been putting on your sackcloth today, and you arranged it so carefully, for there is a kind of foppery about grief that makes it strew its ashes with deliberation. O Sirs, could you not have spent some of your time at another wardrobe and in putting on another dress? Come, you afflicted one, array yourself, for a minute, with the robe of whiteness, without spot or blemish! How well it will become you! How soon you will wear it! Now, put that unfading crown upon your head. You are a poor servant or a working man, and, ah, that head has often ached with weariness and woe—but put on the crown now! How royally it adorns your brow! It would not fit any other head, it was made for you—and you will soon have it! In a few days, or a few months, you will go by the way of the sepulcher, or else by the way of the second coming up to your throne and your kingdom!

Now hold that palm branch in your hand! How delightful it looks! How your eyes gleam at the thought of the victory which it betokens! Arise, I say, and put the silver sandals upon those weary feet! Bedeck yourself with the jewels and ornaments prepared for your wedding. Take down the harp and try your fingers among its celestial strings. “Wake up, my glory! Wake, psaltery and harp! I myself will awake right early.” Blessed be the Lord who has prepared for His people rivers of pleasure at His right hand forevermore!

Our souls anticipate the day of enjoyment! And at this hour, by faith, we eat the fruit of the trees of life and drink from the living fountains of waters. O clap your hands, you righteous! Sound the cymbals, even the high-sounding cymbals, and give praise unto your God even forever, who has prepared for you the rest that knows no end!

Thus “deep calls unto deep.” May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you forever. Amen and Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 77.*  
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THE STORY OF GOD’S MIGHTY ACTS  
NO. 263

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 17, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work  
you did in their days, in the times of old.”  
Psalm 44:1.**

PERHAPS there are no stories that stick by us so long as those which we hear in our childhood, those tales which are told us by our fathers and in our nurseries. It is a sad reflection that too many of these stories are idle and vain, so that our minds in early infancy are tinctured with fables and inoculated with strange and lying narratives. Now, among the early Christians and the old Believers in the far-off times, nursery tales were far different from what they are now, and the stories with which their children were amused were of a far different class from those which fascinated us in the days of our babyhood.

No doubt Abraham would talk to young children about the flood and tell them how the waters overspread the earth and how Noah, alone, was saved in the ark. The ancient Israelites, when they dwelt in their own land, would all of them tell their children about the Red Sea and the plagues which God worked in Egypt when He brought His people out of the house of bondage. Among the early Christians we know that it was the custom of parents to recount to their children everything concerning the life of Christ, the acts of the Apostles and the like interesting narratives. No, among our Puritan ancestors such were the stories that regaled their childhood. Sitting down by the fireside, before those old Dutch tiles with the quaint eccentric drawings upon them of the history of Christ, mothers would teach their children about Jesus walking on the water, or of His multiplying the loaves of bread, or of His marvelous transfiguration, or of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Oh, how I would that the tales of the present age were like the stories of our childhood—the stories of Christ and that we would, each of us, believe that, after all, there can be nothing as interesting as that which is true— and nothing more striking than those stories which are written in Sacred Writ—nothing that can more truly move the heart of a child than the marvelous works of God which He did in the olden times. It seems that the Psalmist who wrote this most musical ode had heard from his father, handed to him by tradition, the stories of the wondrous things which God had done in his day. And afterwards, this sweet singer in Israel taught it to his children and so was one generation after another led to call God blessed, remembering His mighty acts.

Now, my dear Friends, this morning I intend to recall to your minds some of the wondrous things which God has done in the olden times. My aim and object will be to excite your minds to seek after the like. That looking back upon what God has done, you may be induced to look forward with the eyes of expectation, hoping that He will again stretch forth His potent hand and His holy arm and repeat those mighty acts He performed in ancient days.

First, I shall speak of the marvelous stories which our fathers have told us and which we have heard of the olden times. Secondly, I shall mention some disadvantages under which these old stories labor with regard to the effect upon our minds. And, then, I shall draw the proper inferences from those marvelous things which we have heard, that the Lord did in the days of yore.

I. To begin then, with THE WONDERFUL STORIES WE HAVE HEARD OF THE LORD’S ANCIENT DOINGS.  
We have heard that God has at times done very mighty acts. The plain everyday course of the world has been disturbed with wonders at which men have been exceedingly amazed. God has not always permitted His Church to go on climbing by slow degrees to victory, but He has been pleased at times to smite one terrible blow and lay His enemies down upon the earth and bid His children march over their prostrate bodies. Turn back, then, to ancient records and remember what God has done. Will you not remember what He did at the Red Sea, how He smote Egypt and all its chivalry and covered Pharaoh’s chariot and horse in the Red Sea? Have you not heard tell how God smote Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, because they withstood the progress of His people? Have you not learned how He proved that His mercy endures forever, when He slew those great kings and cast the mighty ones down from their thrones?  
Have you not read, too, how God smote the children of Canaan and drove out the inhabitants thereof and gave the land to His people, to be a possession by lot forever? Have you not heard how, when the hosts of Jabin came against them, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera—the river of Kishon swept them away, “that ancient river, the river Kishon,” and there was none of them left. Has it not been told you, too, how by the hand of David, God smote the Philistines and how by His right hand He smote the children of Ammon? Have you not heard how Midian was put to confusion and the myriads of Arabia were scattered by Asa in the day of his faith? And have you not heard, too, how the Lord sent a blast upon the hosts of Sennacherib, so that in the morning they were all dead men? Tell—tell you of these, His wonders! Speak of them in your streets! Teach them to your children. Let them not be forgotten, for the right hand of the Lord has done marvelous things—His name is known in all the earth.  
The wonders, however, which most concern us, are those of the Christian era. And surely these are not second to those under the Old Testament. Have you never read how God won to himself great renown on the day of Pentecost? Turn to this book of the record of the wonders of the Lord and read. Peter the fisherman stood up and preached in the name of the Lord his God. A multitude assembled and the Spirit of God fell upon them—and it came to pass that three thousand in one day were pricked in their hearts by the hand of God and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And know you not how the twelve Apostles with the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word and the idols fell from their thrones? The cities opened wide their gates and the messengers of Christ walked through the streets and preached.  
It is true that at first they were driven here and there and hunted like partridges upon the mountains—but do you not remember how the Lord did get unto Himself a victory, so that in a hundred years after the nailing of Christ to the Cross, the Gospel had been preached in every nation and the isles of the sea had heard the sound thereof? And have you forgotten how the heathen were baptized, thousands at a time, in every river? What stream is there in Europe that cannot testify to the majesty of the Gospel? What city is there in the land that cannot tell how God’s Truth has triumphed and how the heathen has forsaken his false gods and bowed his knee to Jesus the Crucified? The first spread of the Gospel is a miracle never to be eclipsed. Whatever God may have done at the Red Sea, He has done still more within a hundred years after the time when Christ first came into the world. It seemed as if a fire from Heaven ran along the ground. Nothing could resist its force. The lightning shaft of Truth shivered every pinnacle of the idol temple and Jesus was worshipped from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.  
This is one of the things we have heard of the olden times. And have you never heard of the mighty things which God did by preachers some hundreds of years from that date? Has it not been told you concerning Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed—how, whenever he preached, the Church was thronged with attentive hearers? And there, standing and lifting up holy hands, he spoke with a majesty unparalleled, the Word of God in truth and righteousness. The people listening, hanging forward to catch every word and now and then breaking the silence with the clapping of their hands and the stamping of their feet. Then silent again for a while, spell-bound by the mighty orator, and again carried away with enthusiasm, springing to their feet, clapping their hands and shouting for joy again? Numberless were the conversions in his day. God was exceedingly magnified, for sinners were abundantly saved.  
And have your fathers never told you of the wondrous things that were done afterwards, when the black darkness of superstition covered the earth—when Popery sat upon her throne and stretched her iron rod across the nations and shut the windows of Heaven and quenched the very stars of God and made thick darkness cover the people? Have you never heard how Martin Luther arose and preached the Gospel of the Grace of God and how the nations trembled and the world heard the voice of God and lived? Have you not heard of Zwingli among the Swiss and of Calvin in the city of Geneva and of the mighty works that God did by them?  
No, as Britons, have you forgotten the mighty preacher of the Truth of God—have your ears ceased to tingle with the wondrous tale of the preachers that Wickliffe sent forth into every market town and every hamlet of England, preaching the Gospel of God? Oh, does not history tell us that these men were like fire-brands in the midst of the dry stubble? That their voice was as the roaring of a lion and their going forth like the springing of a young lion. Their glory was as the firstling of a bullock. They did push the nation before them and as for the enemies, they said, “Destroy them.” None could stand before them, for the Lord, their God, had girded them with might.  
To come down a little nearer to our own times, truly our fathers have told us the wondrous things which God did in the days of Wesley and of Whitefield. The Churches were all asleep. Irreligion was the rule of the day. The very streets seemed to run with iniquity and the gutters were filled full with the iniquity of sin. Up rose Whitefield and Wesley—men whose hearts the Lord had touched—and they dared to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God. Suddenly, as in a moment, there was heard the rush as of wings and the Church said—“Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?” They come! They come! Numberless as the birds of Heaven, with a rushing like mighty winds that are not to be withstood.  
Within a few years, from the preaching of there two men, England was permeated with evangelical truth. The Word of God was known in every town and there was scarcely a hamlet into which the Methodists had not penetrated—even in those days of the slow coach. Today, while business runs on steam, religion often creeps along with its belly of the earth. We are astonished at these tales and we think them wonders. Yet let us believe them. They come to us as substantial matters of history. And the wondrous things which God did in the olden times, by His grace He will yet do again. He that is mighty has done great things and holy is His name.  
There is a special feature to which I would call your attention with regard to the works of God in the olden times. They derive increasing interest and wonder from the fact that they were all sudden things. The old stagers in our Churches believe that things must grow gently, by degrees. We must go step by step onward. Concentrated action and continued labor, they say, will ultimately bring success. But the marvel is, all God’s works have been sudden. When Peter stood up to preach, it did not take six weeks to convert the three thousand. They were converted at once and baptized that very day. They were that hour turned to God and become as truly disciples of Christ as they could have been if their conversion had taken seventy years.  
So was it in the day of Martin Luther—it did not take Luther centuries to break through the thick darkness of Rome. God lit the candle and the candle burned and there was the light in an instant—God works suddenly. If anyone could have stood in Württemberg and have said—“Can Popery be made to quail, can the Vatican be made to shake?” The answer would have been—“No. It will take at least a thousand years to do it. Popery, the great serpent, has so twisted itself about the nations and bound them so fast in its coil, that they cannot be delivered except by a long process.” “Not so,” however, did God say. He smote the dragon sorely and the nations went free. He cut the gates of brass and broke in sunder the bars of iron and the people were delivered in an hour. Freedom came not in the course of years, but in an instant.

The people that walked in darkness saw a great light and upon them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, did the light shine. So was it in Whitefield’s day. The rebuking of a slumbering Church was not the work of ages. It was done at once. Have you never heard of the great revival under Whitefield? Take as an instance that at Camslang. He was preaching in the Church yard to a great congregation, that could not get into any edifice. And while preaching, the power of God came upon the people and one after another fell down as if they were smitten. And it was estimated that not less than three thousand persons were crying out at one time under the conviction of sin.  
He preached on, now thundering like Boanerges and then comforting like Barnabas and the work spread and no tongue can tell the great things that God did under that one sermon of Whitefield. Not even the sermon of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was equal to it. So has it been in all revivals—God’s work has been done suddenly. As with a clap of thunder has God descended from on high. Not slowly, but on cherubim right royally does He ride—on the wings of the mighty wind does He fly. Sudden has been the work. Men could scarce believe it true, it was done in so short a space of time. Witness the great revival which is going on in and around Belfast. After carefully looking at the matter and after seeing some trusty and well-beloved Brothers who lived in that neighborhood, I am convinced, notwithstanding what enemies may say, that it is a genuine work of Grace and that God is doing wonders there. A friend who called to see me yesterday tells me that the lowest and vilest men, the most depraved females in Belfast, have been visited with this extraordinary epilepsy, as the world calls it. But with this strange rushing of the Spirit, as we have it.  
Men who have been drunkards have suddenly felt an impulse compelling them to pray. They have resisted. They have sought their cups in order to put it out. But when they have been swearing, seeking to quench the Spirit by their blasphemy, God has at last brought them on their knees and they have been compelled to cry for mercy with piercing shrieks and to agonize in prayer. And then after a time, the Evil One seems to have been cast out of them and in a quiet, holy, happy frame of mind, they have made a profession of their faith in Christ and have walked in His fear and love. Roman Catholics have been converted. I thought that an extraordinary thing. But they have been converted very frequently, indeed, in Ballymena and in Belfast. In fact, I am told the priests are now selling small bottles of holy water for people to take, in order that they may be preserved from this desperate contagion of the Holy Spirit.  
This holy water is said to have such efficacy, that those who do not attend any of the meetings are not likely to be meddled with by the Holy Spirit—so the priests tell them. But if they go to the meetings, even this holy water cannot preserve them—they are as liable to fall prey to the Divine influence. I think they are just as likely to do so without as with it. All this has been brought about suddenly and although we may expect to find some portion of natural excitement, yet I am persuaded it is in the main a real, spiritual and abiding work. There is a little froth on the surface, but there is a deep running current that is not to be resisted, sweeping underneath and carrying everything before it.  
At least there is something to awaken our interest, when we understand that in the small town of Ballymena on market day, the publicans have always taken one hundred pounds for whiskey and now they cannot take a sovereign all day long in all the public houses. Men who were once drunkards now meet for prayer and people, after hearing one sermon, will not go until the minister has preached another and sometimes a third. And at last he is obliged to say—“You must go, I am exhausted.” Then they will break up into groups in their streets and in their houses, crying out to God to let this mighty work spread, that sinners may be converted unto Him. “Well,” says one, “we cannot believe it.” Very likely you cannot, but some of us can, for we have heard it with our ears and our fathers have told us the mighty works that God did in their days and we are prepared to believe that God can do the same works now.  
I must here remark again, in all these old stories there is one very plain feature. Whenever God has done a mighty work it has been by some very insignificant instrument. When He slew Goliath it was by little David, who was but a ruddy youth. Lay not up the sword of Goliath—I always thought that a mistake of David—lay up, not Goliath’s sword, but lay up the stone and treasure up the sling in God’s armory forever. When God would slay Sisera, it was a woman that must do it with a hammer and a nail. God has done His mightiest works by the meanest instruments—that is a fact most true of all God’s works—Peter the fisherman at Pentecost, Luther the humble monk at the Reformation, Whitefield the potboy of the Old Bell Inn at Gloucester in the time of the last century’s revival.  
And so it must be to the end. God works not by Pharaoh’s horses or chariot, but He works by Moses’ rod. He does not His wonders with the whirlwind and the storm. He does them by the still small voice, that the glory may be His and the honor all His own. Does not this open a field of encouragement to you and to me? Why may not we be employed in doing some mighty work for God here? Moreover, we have noticed in all these stories of God’s mighty works in the olden times, that wherever He has done any great thing it has been by someone who has had very great faith. I do verily believe at this moment that, if God willed it, every soul in this hall would be converted now. If God chose to put forth the operations of His own mighty Spirit, not the most obdurate heart would be able to stand against it. “He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy.” He will do as He pleases—none can stay His hand.  
“Well,” says one, “but I do not expect to see any great things.” Then, my dear Friend, you will not be disappointed, for you will not see them. But those that expect them shall see them. Men of great faith do great things. It was Elijah’s faith that slew the priests of Baal. If he had the little heart that some of you have, Baal’s priests had still ruled over the people and would never have been smitten with the sword. It was Elijah’s faith that bade him say—“If the Lord is God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him.” And again—“Choose one bullock for yourselves, cut it in pieces, lay it on wood and put no fire under, call you on the name of your gods and I will call on the name of Jehovah.” It was his noble faith that bade him say—“Take the Prophets of Baal. Let not one of them escape.” And he brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there—a holocaust to God. The reason why God’s name was so magnified was because Elijah’s faith in God was so mighty and heroic.  
When the Pope sent his bull to Luther, Luther burned it. Standing up in the midst of the crowd with the blazing paper in his hand he said—“See here, this is the Pope’s bull.” What cared he for all the Popes that were ever in or out of Hell? And when he went to Worms to meet the grand Diet, his followers said—“You are in danger, stand back.” “No,” said Luther, “if there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would not fear. I will go”—and into Worms he went, confident in the Lord his God. It was the same with Whitefield. He believed and he expected that God would do great things. When he went into his pulpit he believed that God would bless the people and God did do so. Little faith may do little things, but great faith shall be greatly honored. O God! Our fathers have told us this, that whenever they had great faith You have always honored it by doing mighty works!  
I will detain you no longer on this point, except to make one observation. All the mighty works of God have been attended with great prayer, as well as with great faith. Have you ever heard of the commencement of the great American revival? A man unknown and obscure, laid it up in his heart to pray that God would bless his country. After praying and wrestling and making the soul-stirring enquiry—“Lord, what will You have me to do? Lord, what will You have me to do?” he hired a room and put up an announcement that there would be a Prayer Meeting held there at such-and-such an hour of the day. He went at the proper hour and there was not a single person there. He began to pray and prayed for half an hour alone. One came in at the end of the half-hour and then two more and I think he closed with six.  
The next week came around and there might have been fifty dropped in at different times. At last the Prayer Meeting grew to a hundred, then others began to start Prayer Meetings. At last there was scarcely a street in New York that was without a Prayer Meeting. Merchants found time to run in, in the middle of the day, to pray. The Prayer Meetings became daily ones, lasting for about an hour. Petitions and requests were sent up—these were simply asked and offered before God—and the answers came. And many were the happy hearts that stood up and testified that the prayer offered last week had been already fulfilled. Then it was when they were all earnest in prayer, suddenly the Spirit of God fell upon the people and it was rumored that in a certain village a preacher had been preaching in thorough earnest and there had been hundreds converted in a week.  
The matter spread into and through the Northern States—these revivals of religion became universal and it has been sometimes said that a quarter of a million people were converted to God through the short space of two or three months. Now the same effect was produced in Ballymena and Belfast by the same means. The Brother thought that it lay at his heart to pray and he did. Then he held a regular Prayer Meeting—day after day they met together to entreat the blessing and fire descended and the work was done. Sinners were converted, not by ones or twos but by hundreds and thousands and the Lord’s name was greatly magnified by the progress of His Gospel. Beloved, I am only telling you facts. Make each of you your own estimate of them if you please.

II. Agreeable to my division,, I have now to make a few observations upon THE DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH THESE OLD STORIES FREQUENTLY LABOR. When people hear about what God used to do, one of the things they say is—“Oh, that was a very long while ago.” They imagine that times have altered since then. Says one—“I can believe anything about the Reformation—the largest accounts that can possibly be given, I can take in.” “And so could I concerning Whitefield and Wesley,” says another, “all that is quite true, they did labor vigorously and successfully—but that was many years ago. Things were in a different state then from what they are now.” Granted. But I want to know what the things have to do with it. I thought it was God that did it. Has God changed? Is He not an immutable God, the same yesterday, today and forever?  
Does not that furnish an argument to prove that what God has done at one time He can do at another? No, I think I may push it a little further and say what He has done once, is a prophecy of what He intends to do again— that the mighty works which have been accomplished in the olden times shall all be repeated and the Lord’s song shall be sung again in Zion and He shall again be greatly glorified. Others among you say, “Oh, well I look upon these things as great prodigies—miracles. We are not to expect them every day.” That is the very reason why we do not get them. If we had learned to expect them, we should no doubt obtain them—but we put them up on the shelf, as being out of the common order of our moderate religion—as being mere curiosities of Scripture history. We imagine such things, however true, to be prodigies of Providence. We cannot imagine them to be according to the ordinary working of his mighty power. I beseech you, my Friends, abjure that idea, put it out of your mind.  
Whatever God has done in the way of converting sinners is to be looked upon as a precedent, for “His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that He cannot hear.” If we are straitened at all, we are not straitened in ourselves. Let us with earnestness seek that God would restore to us the faith of the men of old, that we may richly enjoy His grace as in the days of old. Yet there is yet another disadvantage under which these old stories labor. The fact is, we have not seen them. Why, I may talk to you ever so long about revivals, but you won’t believe them half as much, nor half as truly, as if one were to occur in your very midst. If you saw it with your own eyes, then you would see the power of it. If you had lived in Whitefield’s day, or had heard Grimshaw preach, you would believe anything.  
Grimshaw would preach twenty-four times a week—he would preach many times in the course of a sultry day, going from place on horseback. That man did preach. It seemed as if Heaven would come down to earth to listen to him. He spoke with a real earnestness, with all the fire of zeal that ever burned in mortal breast and the people trembled while they listened to him and said, “Certainly this is the voice of God.” It was the same with Whitefield. The people would seem to move to and fro while he spoke, even as the harvest field is moved with the wind. So mighty was the energy of God that after hearing such a sermon the hardest-hearted men would go away and say—“There must be something in it, I never heard the like.” Can you not realize these as literal facts? Do they stand up in all their brightness before your eyes? Then I think the stories you have heard with your ears should have a true and proper effect upon your lives.  
III. This brings me, in the third place, to the PROPER INFERENCES THAT ARE TO BE DRAWN FROM THE OLD STORIES OF GOD’S MIGHTY DEEDS. I would that I could speak with the fire of some of those men whose names I have mentioned. Pray for me, that the Spirit of God may rest upon me, that I may plead with you for a little time with all my might—seeking to exhort and stir you up—that you may get a like revival in your midst.  
My dear Friends, the first effect which the reading of the history of God’s mighty works should have upon us, is that of gratitude and praise. Have we nothing to sing about today?—Then let us sing concerning days of yore. If we cannot sing to our well-beloved a song concerning what He is doing in our midst, let us, nevertheless, take down our harps from the willows and sing an old song and bless and praise His holy name for the things which He did to His ancient Church, for the wonders which He worked in Egypt and in all the lands wherein He led His people and from which He brought them out with a high hand and with an outstretched arm.  
When we have thus begun to praise God for what He has done, I think I may venture to impress upon you one other great duty. Let what God has done suggest to you the prayer that He would repeat the like signs and wonders among us. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival of religion—men whose faith is large enough and love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise unceasing intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here, as in the times of former generations? Why, look here in this present assembly—what objects there are for our compassion. Glancing round, I observe one and another whose history I may happen to know, but how many are there still unconverted—men who trembled and who know they have, but have shaken off their fears and once more are daring their destiny, determined to be suicides to their own souls and to put away from them that Grace which once seemed as if it were striving in their hearts. They are turning away from the gates of Heaven and running post-haste to the doors of Hell. And will not you stretch out your hands to God to stop them in this desperate resolve?  
If in this congregation there were but one unconverted man and I could point him out and say—“There he sits, one soul that has never felt the love of God and never has been moved to repentance,” with what anxious curiosity would every eye regard him? I think out of thousands of Christians here, there is not one who would refuse to go home and pray for that solitary unconverted individual. But, oh, My Brethren, it is not one that is in danger of Hell fire—here are hundreds and thousands of our fellow creatures!  
Shall I give you yet another reason why you should pray? Up to now all other means have been used without effect. God is my witness how often I have strived in this pulpit to be the means of the conversion of men. I have preached my very heart out. I could say no more than I have said and I hope the secrecy of my chamber is a witness to the fact that I do not cease to feel when I cease to speak. I have a heart to pray for those of you who are never affected, or who, if affected, still quench the Spirit of God. I have done my utmost. Will not you come to the help of the Lord against the lost? Will not your prayers accomplish that which my preaching fails to do? Here they are. I commend them to you. Men and women whose hearts refuse to melt, whose stubborn knees will not bend. I give them up to you and ask you to pray for them. Carry their cases on your knees before God. Wife! Never cease to pray for your unconverted husband. Husband! Never stop your supplication till you see your wife converted.  
And, O fathers and mothers! Have you no unconverted children? Have you not brought them here many and many a Sunday and they remain just as they have been? You have sent them first to one Chapel and then to another and they are just what they were. The wrath of God abides on them. Die they must. And should they die now, to a certainty you are aware that the flames of Hell must engulf them. And do you refuse to pray for them? Hard hearts, brutish souls—knowing Christ yourself—you still will not pray for those who come of your own loins—your own children according to the flesh?  
Dear Friends, we do not know what God may do for us if we but pray for a blessing. Look at the movement we have already seen. We have witnessed Exeter Hall, St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, crammed to the doors—but we have seen no effect as yet of all these mighty gatherings. Have we not tried to preach without trying to pray? Is it not likely that the Church has been putting forth its preaching hand but not its praying hand? O dear Friends! Let us agonize in prayer and it shall come to pass that this Music Hall shall witness the sighs and groans of the penitent and the songs of the converted. It shall yet happen that this vast host shall not come and go as now it does—men shall go out of this hall, praising God and saying—“It was good to be there. It was none other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven.” Thus much to stir you up to prayer.  
Another inference we should draw is that all the stories we have heard should correct any self-dependence which may have crept into our treacherous hearts. Perhaps we as a congregation have begun to depend upon our numbers and so forth. We may have thought—“Surely God must bless us through the ministry.” Now let the stories which our fathers have told us remind you and remind me that God saves not by many nor by few. That it is not in us to do this but God must do it all. It may be that some hidden preacher, whose name has never been known, will yet start up in this city of London and preach the Lord with greater power than bishops or ministers have ever know before. I will welcome him—God be with him! Let him come from where he may—only let God speed him and let the work be done. Perhaps, however, God intends to bless the agency used in this place for your good and for your conversion. If so, I am thrice happy to think such should be the case. But place no dependence upon the instrument.  
No, when men laughed at us and mocked us most, God blessed us most. And now it is not a disreputable thing to attend the Music Hall. We are not so much despised as we once were, but I question whether we have so great a blessing as once we had. We would be willing to endure another pelting in the pillory, to go through another ordeal with every newspaper against us and with every man hissing and abusing us, if God so pleases, if He will but give us a blessing. Only let Him cast out of us any idea that our own bow and sword will get us victory. We shall never get a revival here unless we believe that it is the Lord and the Lord alone, that can do it.

Having made this statement, I will endeavor to stir you up with confidence that the result may be obtained that I have pictured, and that the stories we have heard of the olden times, may become true in our day. Why should not everyone of my Hearers be converted? Is there any limitation in the Spirit of God? Why should not the feeblest minister become the means of salvation to thousands? Is God’s arm shortened? My Brethren, when I bid you pray that God would make the ministry quick and powerful, like a two-edged sword, for the salvation of sinners, I am not setting you a hard, much less an impossible, task. We have but to ask and to get. Before we call, God will answer. And while we are yet speaking He will hear. God alone can know what may come of this morning’s sermon, if He chooses to bless it.  
From this moment you may pray more. From this moment God may bless the ministry more. From this hour other pulpits may become more full of life and vigor than before. From this same moment the Word of God may flow and run and rush and get to itself an amazing and boundless victory. Only wrestle in prayer—meet together in your houses, go to your closets, be instant, be earnest in season and out of season—agonize for souls and all that you have heard shall be forgotten in what you shall see. And all that others have told you shall be as nothing compared with what you shall hear with your ears and behold with your eyes in your own midst.  
Oh you, to whom all this is as an idle tale, who love not God, neither serve Him, I beseech you stop and think for a moment. Oh, Spirit of God, rest on Your servant while a few sentences are uttered and make them mighty. God has strived with some of you. You have had your times of conviction. You are trying now, perhaps, to be infidels. You are trying to say now—“There is no Hell—there is no hereafter.” It will not do. You know there is a Hell and all the laughter of those who seek to ruin your souls cannot make you believe that there is not. You sometimes try to think so, but you know that God is true. I do not argue with you now. Conscience tells you that God will punish you for sin. Depend upon it—you will find no happiness in trying to stifle God’s Spirit. This is not the path to bliss—to quench those thoughts which would lead you to Christ.  
I beseech you, take your hands off of God’s arm—resist not His Spirit. Bow the knee and lay hold of Christ and believe on Him. It will come to this yet—God the Holy Spirit will have you. I do trust that in answer to many prayers He intends to save you, yet. Give way now, but oh, remember, if you are successful in quenching the Spirit, your success will be the most awful disaster that can ever occur to you—for if the Spirit forsakes you—you are lost. It may be that this is the last warning you will ever have. The conviction you are now trying to put down and stifle may be the last you will have and the angel standing with the black seal and the wax may be now about to drop it upon your destiny and say, “Let him alone. He chooses drunkenness—he chooses lust—let him have them. And let him reap the wages in the everlasting fires of Hell.”  
Sinners, believe on the Lord Jesus—repent and be converted, every one of you. I am bold to say what Peter did. Breaking through every bond of every kind that could bind my lip, I exhort you in God’s name—Repent and escape from damnation! A few more months and years and you shall know what damnation means, except you repent. Oh, fly to Christ while yet the lamp holds out and burns and mercy is still preached to you. Grace is still presented—accept Christ—resist Him no longer. Come to Him now! The gates of mercy are wide open today. Come now, poor Sinner, and have your sins forgiven.  
When the old Romans used to attack a city, it was sometimes their custom to set up at the gate a white flag and if the garrison surrendered while that white flag was there, their lives were spared. After that the black flag was put up and then every man was put to the sword. The white flag is up today—perhaps tomorrow the black flag will be elevated upon the pole of the Law. And then there is no repentance or salvation either in this world or in that which is to come.  
An old eastern conqueror, when he came to a city used to light a brazier of coals and, setting it high upon a pole, he would, with sound of trumpet, proclaim that if they surrendered while the lamp held out and burned he would have mercy upon them—but that when the coals were out he would storm the city, pull it stone from stone, sow it with salt—and put men, women and children to a bloody death.  
Today the thunders of God bid you to take the same warning. There is your light, the lamp, the brazier of hot coals. Year after year the fire is dying out, nevertheless there is coal left. Even now the wind of death is trying to blow out the last live coal. Oh, Sinner, turn while the lamp continues to blaze. Turn now, for when the last coal is dead your repentance cannot help you. Your everlasting yelling in torment will not move the heart of God. Your groans and briny tears will not move Him to pity you. Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Oh, today lay hold on Christ, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

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THEOCRACY  
NO. 2848

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 23, 1877.

**“I will be your King.” “You are my King, O God.” Hosea 13:10. Psalm 44:4.**

THOSE of you who were present, this morning, will remember that I preached upon the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ and that I earnestly entreated my hearers to submit themselves to His Kingly authority. [Ser

mon #1375, Volume 23—“NOW THEN, DO IT”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at

http://www.spurgeongems.org .] I hope that many who were with us felt that an Almighty force was operating upon them, making them willing to surrender themselves to the control of the great King of kings. I dwelt, then, mainly upon the need of decision for Christ and upon our duty to yield ourselves up wholly to Him. That is the human side of the question and is, by no means, to be kept in the background, but, on this occasion I want to speak to you upon the privilege of having Christ for our King and upon the graciousness of Christ in allowing Himself to be our King and permitting us to become His subjects. My purpose, at this time, is rather to set forth what God does for us in this matter than what He demands of us. To me it seems inexpressibly beautiful that while we are, in one place, bid to “kiss the Son” and accept Him as our King, we have, in another portion of Scripture, such a delightful declaration as this, “I will be your King.” It is always interesting to trace great rivers to their sources. You usually find that their springs lie far up among the mountains and, if you trace back to their springs certain practical subjects that you find in the Word of God, you get to the eternal hills of Everlasting Love!

I am going, first, to run away from my text and to take another. If you look in the 10th verse of the 13th Chapter of Hosea, which contains our text, you will see these words near the end of the verse—“Give me a King.” So, our first head is the need of nature. Then, in the second part of my discourse, I shall keep strictly to my first text—“I will be your King.” That is the answer of Grace. And then, thirdly, we shall go back to the 44th Psalm, and at the 4th verse we shall find the acknowledgment of faith—“You are my King, O God.” That is our program—may we be helped by the Spirit to carry it out and may we be able, in our hearts, to go from step to step all through!

I. First, then, we are to consider THE NEED OF NATURE—“Give me a king.”  
Man was once happy in Eden, for God was his King. But when he cast off his allegiance to God and became a rebel and a traitor, then he lost both his Paradise and his peace. Ever since then, man has, morally and spiritually, needed a king—and the deep groaning of the natural man is, “Give me a king.”  
Now, first, this is the cry of weakness. Man finds himself to be a poor puny creature and he feels that he needs to look up to someone greater, stronger, wiser, more enduring than himself. There are some plants that cannot grow much unless they can get something stronger than themselves to which they can cling and around which they can twine. You may, perhaps, have seen them when they have been away from a wall or a tree, stretching out their tendrils and seeking for something to climb upon. And if they do not find it, they fall to the ground till, in the damp weather, their leaves grow wet and rot—and the plant is in a sickly state in which it can barely exist. Such is human nature. It is a trailing thing and it gladly would be a climbing thing, and a clinging thing. In some persons, this trait is very conspicuous. They are always needing somebody to whom they can cling—and this tendency is the source of the greatest possible danger and sorrow to them. They select wrong objects for their love and trust and, consequently, they are betrayed, they are disappointed and they sadly learn the meaning of that text, “Cursed is the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” That is the result when this clinging tendency is wrongly used, but many people have this tendency. Man is weak and he knows that he is weak and, therefore, he cries, “‘Give me a king’— someone who will guide me, direct me, govern me, rule me, take care of me.”  
Besides being the cry of weakness, it is also, oftentimes, the sigh of distress. In the 9th verse of this Chapter, we read, “O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help.” Then follows my first text, “I will be your King.” Do you see the connection of the two passages? A King is promised to them because they had destroyed themselves. When a man feels that he has destroyed himself, brought himself down to destruction by his sin and folly, then he, too, cries, “Give me a king.” He needs help that he may be brought up out of his sad condition. When a soul is really convinced of its sin and made to see that it is brought under the sentence of God’s righteous Law, it naturally cries out for something, or someone, that can give it the help which it does not find in itself. And this craving is often the cause of our being duped—for a socalled “priest” comes in and he says, “I can help you. I am ordained of God to rescue you from destruction.” Many people are willing to trust in anything that has certain robes upon it, but, for my part, I will trust neither in chasubles, nor albs, nor stoles, nor any decorations or dresses, whether they are on linen-horses or on men-milliners!

What can there be in man, or in his clothes, that can be of help to his fellow man in such a case as this? Besides, God has not entrusted such a ministry as that to any man! God has bid His servants preach the Gospel—and that Gospel conveys help, light and power to all who believe it— but as for forms and ceremonies, musical performances, ornate ritual, masses and the like, they are sheer deceptions through and through! Trust not the weight of a feather to them—much less your souls! But again I remind you that there is in man a craving which makes him long for someone who can rescue him from destruction—and the mercy is that God meets that craving by setting before us His dear Son, who is Prophet, Priest and King! Prophet to reveal to us the mind of God. Priest to cleanse us by His own blood and to make us acceptable to His Father. And King to rule and control us and bring us into conformity to His own will. I know that cry right well and for years I sent it up from the very depths of my soul, “‘Give me a king,’ one who is wise enough, strong enough and willing enough to help my soul in its greatest extremity.”  
Further, dear Friends, if sinners were wise, this would also be the prayer of thoughtfulness. I will suppose that I am addressing a young man to whom God has given a wise and understanding heart. He has passed his majority and is just about to leave his father’s roof. And he now feels that everything must depend upon himself and his own character. He cannot depend upon others as he has done in the past. Now, if he is a wise young man, he will say to God, “Give me a King,” for he will know from observation, I hope, rather than from experience, that anarchy in the soul is a truly terrible thing. There have been men of great talents, who, it seems to me, in the Providence of God, have been permitted to live on purpose to show what a man is when there is no King in his soul—when every passion that rules him, leads the mob of his faculties to tumult and revolt. If his thirst said, “Drink,” the man drank till he was drunk! If his natural appetite and taste said to him, “Gratify us,” he gratified them even though, thereby, he plunged into all manner of licentiousness and excess!  
There have been men, I say again, of great talents, who have blazed in the moral firmament like meteors and have astonished many with the brilliance, yet luridness, of their light—yet their influence has been baleful to the nation and mischievous to all men except those who learned from them not to try to govern their own passions in their own strength. To let all the powers within us be without a supreme Ruler is the most terrible thing that can happen to any man! Young man, never believe that it can be for your good to follow the leading of your own evil passions. No, it is in restraining yourself that your welfare and your happiness will lie, not in throwing the reins upon the neck of carnal desires, but in reining in these fiery steeds and keeping them well in hand. And, to do that, you need to pray, “Give me a King.”  
It is a dreadful thing to lead an aimless life. I know no person, in the whole world, who is more wretched than a man who has no true objective in life. His father, perhaps, left him all the wealth that he could desire and now the sole occupation of his being is to kill time—and to dig its grave and his own, also—as quickly as he can! He does not live to benefit others, he has no high and noble objective as his guiding star—he simply squanders his time till it is all gone. Now that is the most miserable man I know. A man who is toiling hard to bring up a large family may be, and very often is, among the happiest of men. A man who has an objective in life, especially if it is an unselfish one and who strains all his faculties in order that he may attain it, is sure to be happy! Possibly happier while he is pursuing that goal, than after he has attained it. Trying to win a race warms a man and produces in him joy, the joy of activity, the joy of competition and, often, the joy of success. But there are some young men who start out in life intending to do nothing and they do it very thoroughly—they are great consumers of bread, meat, wine and such-like things, but, beyond that, I know not what is to be said about them! Such poor, aimless beings are always unhappy. They pretend to be merry and they make a great noise which is supposed to imply joy, but it is only like “the crackling of thorns under a pot.” They know nothing of what substantial pleasure means. I would as gladly never have been born as live without an objective and, long ago, I said, “‘Give me a King.’ Give me something to live for, something to die for, something that commands all my faculties and wakens up all my powers, something that stirs my spirit and makes a man of me. ‘Give me a King.’ I must have a King, or else what is life worth to me?”  
Any thoughtful man will also have noticed that selfishness, if it controls our life, is a mean thing. Look over there! Do not tell me that Soand-So is a man—tell me that he is one of a herd of swine greedily devouring all that he can grasp. He simply lives that he may be rich, that he may be famous, that he may be called respectable—he lives only for himself. His soul is so small that it is trooped up within his own ribs. His heart, if he has one, is so cramped that it never goes out on behalf of others, but only beats one tune and that is, “Take care of Number One.” That is a wretched kind of life and any thoughtful young man must say, “I don’t want to live like that, ‘Give me a King.’ Let me keep clear of all selfishness. I do not want to be under the sway of the tyrant, Self. Let me have something that will rule and govern me. Give me a constitutional monarchy. Give me someone who is worthy to have the control of my whole life.”  
I recollect that the thoughts which passed through my mind, when I was starting in life, were something like these. I distrusted self-guidance, for I saw how unsafe it was. I have told you before that I knew one who was at school with me, who used to be held up as a pattern and example to me, such a good boy, such an excellent young man. He came to London and within a few weeks, London was too much for him—I saw him come home in disgrace, his employer would not have such a fellow in his house! I then said to myself, “That may be my experience if I trust to myself. I should not like to begin life, away from home, in disgrace, to continue it in dishonor and to die with everybody feeling that it was a relief to the world when I was gone.” So I said to myself, “By what means can I ensure my character? Can I get a guarantee that I shall be kept?” And when I turned to this blessed Book and found that the Lord Jesus Christ had promised to keep those who committed themselves unto Him, I accepted Him upon this ground, as well as upon others, that He was able to keep that which I had committed unto Him until the Great Day of His appearing. In that sense, my prayer was, “‘Give me a King,’ somebody who will take charge of me, care for me and protect me.” And I believe that such a cry as that is a very wise one for any young man to utter— and also for anyone else who has not yet acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ as King.  
Once more concerning this cry of nature, it often comes up as the result of experience. Ah, how little do we learn except as we go to the school of Dame Experience, who raps us on the knuckles very hard! When a man discovers, to his surprise, that he has played the fool—as soon as he becomes wiser, he says, “Give me a King.” How many a man, who has made shipwreck of his life and has only discovered it when he has been upon the rocks, has at last cried, “Oh, that some strength greater than my own had saved me from this ruin!” I have known men, when they have been under a sense of danger, when they have seen death approaching, begin to cry, “‘Give me a King’—one who can fight the last enemy for me, one who can ensure my safety when I pass through the Valley of Death Shade.”  
This experience, too, sometimes makes a man feel the weight of responsibility. He says, “How can I bear it?” And he wants someone who is his superior, someone who will tell him what to do so that, when he does it, the responsibility will no longer be with himself. Have not many of you who are without Christ felt a desire to have somebody with whom you could leave your responsibilities? Well, this is just what the Christian finds in Christ—that he can bring all the difficulties in his life to his great Lord and King, and leave them there—and find in his King, when he obeys Him, the promise that in obedience shall be the path of safety. It is a blessed thing to have such a King! When we have once yielded ourselves to Him, our care is ended and we are at peace.  
So much about the need of nature.  
II. Now, secondly, and but briefly, I have to speak upon THE ANSWER OF GRACE—“I will be your King.” Listen to this short sentence, you who are longing for a Master-Spirit to rule your spirits—“I will be your King.”  
Notice the condescension of this promise. Here is a ruined Kingdom— “O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help. I will be your King.” Who will care to wear the battered crown of a desolate kingdom, whose metropolis is destroyed and whose land is sown with salt? The great Lord and King of Mercy says, “I will. Lost and ruined as you are, I will accept the monarchy of your soul. I will be your King. You have had many lords who have had dominion over you, yet I will be your King. And I know those pretenders are yet alive and seek to set up their old claims over you and to get the mastery over you again. It is an uneasy throne, yet I will occupy it. I will be your King. Besides this, you are very unruly subjects. In this Kingdom there are many thoughts, forgings and lusting that are in rebellion against Me, yet I will be your King. Many disloyal subjects are there within My town of Mansoul, yet I will be the Prince of it and drive out all the followers of Diabolus. Enemies are threatening on the right hand and on the left, and whoever becomes king must carry on a long and serious war, yet I will take this crown of thorns and wear it—I will be your King.” Is not this wonderful condescension on God’s part? Do not you, Beloved, feel ready to spring up and say, “Blessed Lord, if You will be our King, we will gladly be Your subjects, rejoicing that we may have such a King as You”?

Notice next, how suitable and satisfactory such a King as this is to be! If a man must have a king and yet can have his choice as to which king shall be his, it is well for him to have the One whom Wisdom, itself, would select, for there is none to equal Him! He is a King who is able to subdue the whole territory of our nature through His Almighty power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. O blessed King, we are glad to have You to rule over us and to have our stubborn and rebellious passions brought under the power of Your Grace! This gracious King is in every way worthy to rule over us. Think, Beloved, what your God is, what your Savior is. Ought He not to be King over you? Yes, verily, then let us set Him up on a glorious high throne and let us rejoice that we can bow down before One whom it is an honor to obey! What wisdom He has to govern us aright! Fools should not be kings, but Infinite Wisdom is fully qualified to rule us altogether! Then, what perfect goodness there is in the Lord Jesus Christ! What unspeakable goodness in the Divine Father and in the ever-blessed Spirit! Happy are the people whose King is the Lord of Hosts! Besides, think what love He has shown to His subjects! Behold His head, His hands, His feet! Look upon the spear-mark in His side, for it was by those wounds that He bought us! Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to be crowned as our King and to receive the loyal homage of our hearts—  
*“Let Him be crowned with majesty  
Who bowed His head to death.  
And be His honors sounded high  
By all things that have breath!  
Jesus, our Lord, how wondrous great  
Is Your exalted name!  
The glories of Your heavenly state  
Let the whole earth proclaim.”*  
So, it is a proof of Infinite Condescension, on God’s part, for Him to say, “I will be your King,” and we realize what a suitable King He is for us and how satisfactory it is for us to have such a blessed Master and Lord!  
Then, Brothers and Sisters, how unspeakably consoling it is that the Lord should be our King! I say, “consoling,” for who could feel unsafe or uneasy when Jehovah becomes his King? If the Eternal and Invincible God becomes our King, what foe can harm us? His shield can protect us from all the arrows that fly by night or by day! How consolatory it is for us to submit to such a God—no longer to stand up in opposition to Him, but to lie down at His feet as His loyal subjects—no longer to have a will and a way of our own, but to submit unreservedly to the will of God, to lie passive in His hands and let Him be our King! Have you ever experienced this kind of consolation in a time of deep affliction or bereavement? You have lost the delight of your heart, the joy of your eyes, the dearest one you ever had—and you have somewhat rebelled. In that rebellion has been the very bitterness of your grief, but you have said, “The Lord has done it. He is my King, so He has the right to do with me just as He wills.” That is the great source of your consolation—you never get relief from the anguish of your spirit till you see Jesus as your crowned King and only Lord and lay your hand upon your mouth and, in the silence of your soul say, ‘It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him.”  
And, oftentimes, this same precious Truth has consoled you when you have been in great difficulties and embarrassments. I often sing to my Lord those lines by F. T. Faber—  
*“When obstacles and trials seem  
Like prison walls to be,  
I do the little I can do,  
And leave the rest to Thee.  
And when it seems no chance nor change From grief can set me free,  
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,  
And patiently waits on Thee.”*  
I do not know a stronger force in all the world than utter helplessness— for that is the end of all care. Many and many a time I have tried till my head has ached, to work out a problem in Church government, but have not discovered the solution—I could not see any way out of it. So I have just done as a schoolboy would who shuts up the two parts of his slate and puts it on the shelf. I have said to myself, “I will never have anything more to do with the matter, but will leave it for the Lord to solve.” And I have found that the proposition has been worked out for me in due time.  
So, dear Friends, your strength is to sit still and to feel that you have a King who can settle all your difficulties! When the servant at the door is puzzled by the many questions that are put to her, she says, if she is wise, “I cannot answer you, but I will go and ask my master.” And when she has received the message from her master, she has no further trouble about the matter—she simply says, “I have told you what my master says. If you do not like it, I cannot help that, for I am only his messenger.” That is the way to end all controversy! A young man, or anyone else who has a number of questions put to him by various persons, will be wise if he says, “Well, I have searched my Bible and found what the King says about these points. If that does not satisfy you, I am sure I cannot. Your quarrel is no longer with me, but with my Master—you must settle the matter with Him.” This is a blessed consolation! It gives joy to the spirit to have God for your King. No man is so free, no man is so happy as he who loyally bows before the King of kings—to serve God is to reign! He who has God for his King, is, himself, a king!  
Further, think how gloriously inspiring it is to have God as our King. I should not like to be a soldier in the armies of certain kings whom I might mention. If I were in their service, I would try to run away as soon as I could, for I would feel ashamed to have anything to do with them. If you were a soldier in the army of some little, mean, beggarly tyrant, I think that you would be glad to leave your regimentals at home whenever you could. It is strange that any man could be found to fight for some of the miserable miscreants who have been found in the ranks of kings. But, with Alexander as leader, every Greek became a hero! He was so great a warrior that each man in his army felt that he was, himself, great. Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ becomes our King, it is most inspiring to us, for He leads us on to fight with sin, to fight with selfishness, to overcome evil by love and to conquer hate by kindness! It is a grand thing to serve the King whose fights are all of that sort and to have Him for a King who never shirked a battle, but who was always to the front, the bravest of the brave!  
It is grand, even, to unloose the laces of His shoes. To be trodden on by Him would be a high honor. To do anything, however little, in His cause, makes us feel ourselves elevated! My dear young Friend, if you have God in Christ Jesus to be your King, your life will be sublime! With Him for your Example, with His Grace to lead you on, you shall continually rise higher and yet still higher until even your common life shall be made sublime! Oh, blessed, blessed, blessed, thrice blessed, is everyone to whom Jesus Christ is King and Lord! If we are linked with Him, we are ready either to live or to die!  
III. Now turn with me to my second text, which you will find in the 44th Psalm, and the 4th verse—“You are my King, O God.” That is THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FAITH.  
Let me just pause a moment and ask each one of you here, “Can you say that?” Can you say that, my Brother? Can you say that, my Sister? At the close of this morning’s service, we sang—  
*“‘Tis done, the real transaction’s done! I am my Lord’s, and He is mine,”*  
and it was noticed by careful observers that there were some persons in the congregation who did not sing that verse. They shut their mouths quite firmly while others around them were singing. I was glad that they were honest enough to do so and that they would not sing what they could not truthfully sing. At the same time, I was very sorry that their honesty compelled them to make such a silent confession of their lack of subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not your King, then? He is your Creator, but not your King? He is your Preserver, but not your King? He will be the Judge of the quick and the dead, yet He is not your King? He is the one and only Savior of the lost, yet He is not your King? Sadly, sorrowfully, let this thought eat into your spirit, “Then, I am a rebel against the Lord Jesus Christ.” For He is, lawfully and rightly, your King—and you are a traitor, for your heart plots against Him! Remember, also, that if you die without accepting Him as your King, there is a text which I scarcely dare to quote, yet I must—and, as I do so, let it fall like fiery hail upon your spirit—“But those My enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before Me.” God grant that none of you may ever know what that terrible verse means!  
But now, having given you that word of warning, I ask you to think of the blessedness of having the Lord to be your King. If you look at this 44thPsalm, you will see that when God is our King, we may confidently expect to enter upon our inheritance in the skies—“You did drive out the heathen with Your hand, and planted them.” That is to say, each one of the tribes that entered Canaan under Joshua, obtained its proper portion in the Covenant-given land of promise. And we who are under the leadership of King Jesus, the true Joshua, the one and only Savior, shall win the heritage above—and each one of us shall stand in his lot at the end of the days, blessed forever and ever in our portion in the heavenly Canaan!  
Notice, next, that, if the Lord is our King, we may expect help in the time of trouble. Read the whole of verse four— “You are my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” If ever you are in poverty. If ever you are in sickness. If ever you are under slander and reproach, if ever your spirit is depressed—if ever family trials affect you, if ever the clouds in your sky are heavy and the days are dark—you may go to your King and tell Him all and expect Him to “command deliverances” for you, for, if He is your King, He will see you through, bear you up and make what appears to be evil to work for your good and cause your troubles to prove to be the best of blessings to you! Who would not have such a King as this?

Next, notice that if the Lord is our King, we should repose entirely in Him, as the Psalmist says, “For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.” What a mercy it is to be able to put up your weapons away—to feel that there is Another who fights for you—to have done with care, worry, distress and just to feel that you have left everything with Jesus your King! If He cannot do it, then it must be left undone. Oh, it is blessed to feel that you have put the affairs of your soul into your King’s hands and that you have left the whole of them with Him, in the utmost confidence! Who would not have a King upon whom it is perfectly safe to rely?  
More than this, he who has God for his King knows that he is saved. Read the 7th verse—“But You have saved us from our enemies, and have put them to shame that hated us.” He who acknowledges Christ as his Lord and Master knows that he is saved. His salvation is not a thing that is to be accomplished tomorrow—it is done now. It is not a privilege to be enjoyed only in the last few moments of our life, but it is to be enjoyed now, for our King has covered us with the garments of salvation! “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,” even now. Our salvation is finished! Our great Messiah said so on the Cross and He spoke the Truth. “He that believes on Him is not condemned.”  
And, last of all, he who takes Christ to be his King has cause for great joy and rejoicing. In the 8th verse, the Psalmist says, “In God we boast all the day long, and praise Your name forever.” He who has Christ for his King need never be ashamed of his Monarch, or of his Monarch’s livery, or of his Monarch’s laws, or of his Monarch’s friends. He may, rather, adopt the high strain of boasting in his God and triumphing in Him all the day long.  
So I end by repeating the question I asked earlier in my discourse— can each of you say, “You are my King, O God”? If not, what is your position with regard to Him? If you do not acknowledge Him as your King, you are a rebel! Yet, if you are ready to acknowledge that fact, you come under the act of amnesty which is available for regicides—for you rebels are just that, and even Deicides in having conspired to put the King of Glory to death by your sin—and you shall have even this high crime of God-killing blotted out from the King’s records! You shall be just as though you had never sinned at all if you are willing to take Christ to be your King and Savior! “Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”  
Will you have Him? I mean, the Son of God, who was also the Son of Mary. I mean the Man of Nazareth, who is also very God of very God. Trust to the Atonement which flowed from His wounds! Accept the power which God has given to Him, for all power in Heaven and in earth is given to Him! God has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as His Father has given Him. Only trust Him! Cast your souls upon Him! Yield yourselves to His sway! Repent of your sin! If you lay hold upon His perfect righteousness at once, the guilt of the past is gone and you shall be admitted into the full privileges appertaining to citizens of the heavenly Kingdom and subjects of the great King of kings! I trust that even before this service closes, some of you will say. “By the Grace of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit, I yield myself to Jesus, my Lord and King, to be His loyal subject and faithful servant forever and ever.” God grant it, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 44:1-8; PSALM 45.**

Psalm 44:1. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work You did in their days, in the times of old. Now Israel was restored to Canaan and the Canaanite and Perizzite were driven out, that God’s chosen people might occupy their appointed place.

2, 3. How You did drive out the heathen with Your hand, and planted them: how You did afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Your right hand, and Your arm, and the light of Your Countenance, because You did favor them. They did use their own arm and sword but, for all that, it was God who won the victory for them. It was His might that made them brave and a consciousness of His gracious purpose that made them strong, so that they routed all their foes until, from Dan to Beersheba, the land was all their own.

4-6. You are my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob. Through You will we push down our enemies: through Your name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. See how the lesson from ancient history was turned to practical account in the Psalmist’s own experience? “As our forefathers were delivered, not by their own bow or sword, but by the right hand of the Most High, so I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.” Brothers and Sisters, let us always labor to reproduce in ourselves, by God’s Grace, the best experiences of His saints. Wherever we see the hand of the Lord displayed in others of His people, let us pray that the same hand may be manifested to us and in us.

7, 8. But You have saved us from our enemies, and have put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise Your name forever. Selah.

Psalm 45:1. My heart is overflowing with a good thing: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King. You know what King is referred to here, it is He of whom the Psalmist said, in the 4th verse of the previous Psalm, “You are my King, O God.” “I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.”

1, 2. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are fairer than the children of men. The Psalmist writes as if he had been actually looking upon Him. Faith has a wonderful realizing power—and when the soul is deeply meditative, it seems to be full of eyes—“‘You are fairer than the children of men.’ Though You are one of them, yet You are fairer than all the rest of them. There is a beauty about You, O Lord, that is not to be perceived in the brightest and best of the sons of Adam!”

2-5. Grace is poured into Your lips: therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty, with Your Glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under You. There is no other conqueror who is equal to Christ, whether He smites with His sword, His foes who are near at hand, or shoots His arrows from His bow at those who are far away. Whether the Gospel is preached to us who have long heard it, or is proclaimed to the heathen in distant lands, it has the same Almighty Power in it to work the glorious purposes of God’s Grace.

6, 7. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of Your Kingdom is a right scepter. You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows. Note the connection here between God and Man—the very same Person who is addressed as God, is also spoken of as anointed by God above His fellows. God and yet Man are You, O blessed Jesus Christ! You are very God of very God, yet just as truly Man, the God-Man, the Mediator between God and man!

8-10. All Your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad. King’s daughters were among Your honorable women: at Your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider. Listen, each one of you who are a part of this matchless bride of Christ, you who are part of her whom Christ has looked upon with infinite and eternal love— “Hearken, O daughter, and consider,”

10. And incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father’s house. God’s message to His people in the world, today, is just what it was when the Spirit bade Paul write to the Corinthians, “Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord almighty.”

11. So shall the king greatly desire your beauty: for He is your lord; and worship Him. Our Savior is our King and He must be both loved and adored—“He is your Lord; and worship Him.”

12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor. When Christ’s Church really has her Lord in the midst of her, and when she is strong in the power of His might, there will never be any lack of wealth for the carrying on of His cause—“Even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor.”

13. The King’s daughter is all glorious within. Other daughters are often far too glorious without, but that is the best beauty which is inward. “The King’s daughter is all glorious within.”

13-16. Her clothing is of worked gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto You. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King’s palace. Instead of Your fathers shall be Your children. We often see the hoary head laid low, and the ripe saint taken home to Heaven—but the ranks of Christ’s retinue are not thereby thinned, for the sons shall stand in the place of their fathers. God be thanked for this cheering promise! “Instead of Your fathers shall be Your children,”

16, 17. Whom You may make princes in all the earth. I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise You forever and ever.

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THE UNBROKEN LINE OF TRUE NOBLES  
NO. 1260

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 17, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Instead of your fathers shall be your children,  
whom you may make princes in all the earth.”  
Psalm 45:16.**

WERE you ever perplexed by being drawn with almost equal force in two directions? I have been so. There is a bond which reaches from the cemetery which holds me very fast and, therefore, I desired again, this morning, to have made use of the solemn visitation which so suddenly removed one of our friends from us. But this is the beginning of the week set apart for prayer for the young, and I have felt duty bound to take a part in the celebration and to assist to stir up Sunday school teachers and the members of the Church in general to pray for the blessing of God upon the rising generation.

Now these mourning friends expect a consoling word from me—and these children demand that I plead for them, also! I realized the scene in my study. What was I to do? Between two subjects I might arrive at none and that was not a desirable conclusion. I watched, looked and prayed, and at last I resolved to yield myself to both influences, and I have as nearly as possible done so by selecting this text—“Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.”

The text begins with, “ Instead.” It is a sad word. I do not enjoy the sound of it. “In stead”—well, then, we must expect to lose some if others are to come in their stead. Alas, these funerals will be repeated, new graves must be dug! New friends will arise, but we dread the exchange. Would it not be more pleasant to keep the old workers? Would it not be safer to have the same comrades in the day of battle? What a grand Old Guard the veterans would make! “Instead”! It is a prophecy that some must go that others may come! That some must decay, that others may flourish! That some must die that others may succeed them!

Our trembling faith hardly likes the change here hinted at, for we are apt to think that those who are to stand “instead” will be very slow in coming. Where are we to find men to fill the vacant places? By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? Indeed, there are some saints so eminently blessed of God that we ask ourselves the question, “Who can stand in their stead?” Moses! May Moses live forever, for who but he can rule and guide so great a multitude and, with mingled meekness and authority, conduct so great an army through the wilderness? Who but he can have such power with God as to stand between Israel and the Divine anger?

We hear a whisper of Joshua as his successor, but good as Joshua may be, we can hardly endure to see the leadership change hands. And Elijah, too, that bold iron Prophet, that man of fire and thunder. “I, only,” said he, “am left.” Shall we lose him? From where shall there come another?

No, if it pleases the Lord, we would rather keep Elijah. We do not like that word, “instead,” even though we hear that there is an Elisha to follow Elijah. Too frequent is the fear that the one who comes instead will be a poor substitute and succeed only in name! After high hills come deep valleys, the second crop seldom equals the first and so great Grace and ability seldom continue long either in a family or in an office.

We know that Solomon died and was succeeded by Rehoboam—a wise man by a fool! We know, also, that Eli, good man and true priest of God, had most ungodly Phineas to succeed him. We would, therefore, keep Eli, if possible, and see Solomon forever on the throne. But it cannot be so and, therefore, it is of no use sitting down idly to fret over the future and lament the past! All our sorrow over changes caused by the mortality of our race will not alter it, for God has ordained that one must depart and another come in his place.

But, listen, I think that the word instead, if we listen to it with another ear, will sound out a note of gladness! If one falls, there is another to fill up the gap in our ranks. Comrades, is not this good news? If one laborer is taken from the vineyard, there is still a man in reserve to supply his place—does not this cheer you? We are encouraged by the belief that when the Lord supplants one set of servants by others He does not, after all, diminish the display of His love and Grace and power! No, rather He shows His independence of any one company of men and His power to use whom He pleases! After all, He puts the same spirit upon the newcomers and the power remains the same though the weapon wielded differs.

Sometimes the change is manifestly for good. Eli was followed by Samuel, a great improvement upon Eli, after all. We remember, too, that Moses, albeit there was never a man born of woman greater than he, was yet followed by a hero more fitted for the new phase of Israel’s history than Moses would have been. I can hardly conceive of Moses, sword in hand, slaying Canaanites at his advanced age! That was fitter work for Joshua and though, in some respects, Joshua was an inferior man to Moses, yet he was more suitable for his times and more adapted for the peculiar work which the armies of the living God had to do.

Courage, my Brothers and Sisters, our sons may be superior to ourselves! There is room for them and let us hope they will be. Our sons, at any rate, may be fitter for the work which they will have to do than we should be if our lives could be extended into another age. I doubt not we may say without personal vanity that we have been better men for this age than our grandchildren would have been had their lives been protracted into this present time—and so shall our children and grandchildren go beyond us, if the Lord enable them—in fulfilling the growing demands of the ripening ages. God knows best and when He puts one man instead of another, I have no doubt that His infinite wisdom perceives that there is abundant cause for the change.

For life to display fresh developments instead of the old is the law both of nature and of Grace—whether we are glad or sad, it must be so. Therefore let us accept the Divine arrangement and act accordingly. To help us in this matter, let us consider the promise before us—“Instead of your fathers shall be your children.” This may be viewed in a light which will reveal its gracious recompense. Secondly, we shall regard its eminent fulfillment. Thirdly, we shall look at its happy encouragement, for it has a very bright side. And fourthly, we shall remember its practical requirements. Into this last we shall throw our strength, in the hope that, by the Divine blessing, holy effort for the coming generation may be awakened.

I. First, in the promise of our text let us observe ITS GRACIOUS RECOMPENSE. I read you the Psalm just now. Now, in this sweet song you noticed that the bride is commanded to forget her own people and her father’s house. Very naturally this would be painful to her and, therefore, the rest of the Psalm is occupied with cheering her by a sight of the recompenses which she may expect. Instead of your fathers, whom you, O bride of Christ are to forget and to forsake, shall be your children, equally dear to you, who shall occupy that place in your heart which has been left empty by your forgetting your father’s house.

Do you not see that her husband’s heart is so full of love to her that while he takes her right away from old connections and makes it a condition of his desiring her beauty, that all these shall be forgotten? Yet he assures her that new associations shall be formed which shall yield more than equal solace to her. “Instead of your fathers shall be your children.” The practical lesson is this—many Christians, when they are converted to God, are members of irreligious families—and from the moment of their conversion they cease to have any real heart-fellowship with their relatives, who in many cases treat them unkindly and give them the cold shoulder or worse.

Dwelling with them after the flesh, they have to come out from among them after the Spirit and be separate, and no longer touch the unclean thing. However kindly disposed they may be, and Grace will make them more so, and induce in them a double affection to their kin, yet they feel that the possession of Grace by them and the non-possession of it by their friends, sets a great gulf between them. Let them not lament nor sigh, though their foes should be the men of their own household, for there are abundant recompenses available. You are to be introduced, my Friend, into another household and you are there to form other acquaintances and other intimate connections, for to you shall be fulfilled the promise of the Savior, “No man has left father or mother or children that shall not receive in this life a hundredfold, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

Do not look back to those evil companionships and ensnaring loves! Forget the fleshpots of Egypt and the associations of Goshen. Let them go, they will do you no good! And now throw yourself into the work of Christ. In the converts whom you shall lead to Jesus, in the desponding saints whom you shall cheer, in the disciples whom you shall instruct and in the brotherhood of which you shall become a member—you will find ample room for all the affections of your soul, till you shall be able to say of the Church of God—

*“My soul shall pray for Zion still, While life or breath remains, There my best friends, my kindred dwell,  
There God my Savior reigns.”*

The law of recompense works, also, in another quarter and comes in to compensate for the separations caused by death. As the fathers die, one after another, those of like years feel that they are left almost alone. To them, then, shall it be true, “instead of your fathers shall be your children.” Do not give way to idle regrets and say, “All who joined the Church with me are gone, all those who were the companions of my manhood are now taken away. I am left alone and the cause is weakened.” No, my Brothers and Sisters, keep your hearts young and make yourselves indispensable to the young people around you! The old soldier must let his heart go out towards the recruits and he must make friends of the young warriors. Instead of lamenting that you are lonely, as I have known some do, and looking down upon everything that is of the present time as though it could not possibly be so good as in your own days, throw yourself into the present, project yourself into the future and love the children for the fathers’ sake!

I know when I was much younger than I am now, I used to think the men in office were such marvelous saints, but then I did not mix with them, I only looked up to them from a distance. At Prayer Meetings and communions I thought there never were such excellent people in the world as those pillars of the Church. Somebody said to me the other day that he did not meet with such good old men now as we used to know in our youth, and I told him that the men were quite as good, but we were in among them and, therefore, had less of the superstitious awe of our youth. And I added that I was, myself, surprised to find them as good as they now are since our view of them is so much nearer and so much more daring.

No Prophet has honor in his own country, nor among men of his own age! Distance lends enchantment in many cases. We have as good men among us now as ever lived, but we know more about them than of those who have departed, and we criticize them more severely. We are, none of us, able to fully compare the past generations with this present one, because we were not in those generations as we are in this. Men at a great distance may appear to be absolutely perfect, but when we get close to them, spots are manifest and our judgement changes. Never let us fall into that silly state of mind in which we say, “the dear good men are all gone. The faithful are all dead.” There are dear good men still alive and there are more coming!

Do not let us fear that the Almighty will run short of servants! Let us not dream that He with whom is the residue of the Spirit will allow His cause to droop for lack of qualified ministers, elders, deacons, or other workers. On the contrary, let us say, “Bless the Lord, whose mercy endures forever!” We have learned that instead of the fathers shall be the children. And we will take as much delight in the young saints who are growing up as in former years we took in those mature, judicious, wellinstructed saints whom the Lord, our heavenly Father, has taken Home. Let this suffice to show that the text promises a recompense! II. Secondly, let us view our text historically in ITS EMINENT FULFILMENT. Brothers and Sisters, as long as God has had a people in the world there have been changes. In God’s garden as in ours, plants of this year have been succeeded by those of the next. “As the days of a tree are the days of My people, says the Lord.” As soon as the leaf is formed in the spring, if you watch it, there is a new leaf beneath it for the next spring. This year’s leaf opened gradually, grew, came to perfection and then it began to decay. And there is now on the branch a new leaf-bud which is pushing it off and that is what our sons are doing with us. We must drop off from the tree of mortal existence and it is right we should—and we need not complain—for God has provided some better things for us.

It has been the law in the world and the law in the Church that one set of laborers should follow the other—and they have done so without fail. It is with the Church as with the sea—each wave dies, but there is another wave behind it. Sometimes the wave appears to retreat rather than advance, but frequently the next wave rolls up gloriously. So must it always be and we must not despair that the waves die, for the sea does not die and the tide is still advancing. You may, perhaps, have seen an olive tree in growth. I have studied it carefully, for it has the charm of Gethsemane about it. It looks like an embodiment of sorrow and fruitfulness.

An olive is twisted like a thousand snakes. It seems as if in an agony, yet it has a cheerfulness about it, too, for when the tree grows old the young shoots spring up from its roots, keeping it always young. I have no doubt it is to this that the Psalmist refers when he says, “Your children round your table like olive plants.” The shoots spring up around the old olive and so it lives again! And when these die, fresh shoots appear and the tree still brings forth fruit in old age! The Church of God never dies, for when one, after another, we finish our course, others spring out of the ever-living root and so the blessed succession of Grace is kept up in the world.

Now, look back a moment. That was a grand age when Patriarchs walked through the earth, when Abraham and Isaac and Jacob towered above the sons of men. They died and the Church was in captivity in Egypt, downtrodden and afflicted, yet were there among them those who sighed and cried unto the Lord and, therefore, He looked down upon the tribes with pitying eyes. Then there came great rulers like Moses and Joshua to deliver the chosen Seed—and when these departed the Judges were raised up! Time would fail us to tell of Gideon, Barak and Samson, who each one, in his turn, delivered Israel.

When the judges passed away, God exalted the man after his own heart to lead His people and the kings ruled in righteousness. When these turned aside, the light of Israel was not quenched, for the Prophets bore witness and when the lamp of Prophecy burned dim, there were confessors who, all through the period between the Old and the New Testament, still remained faithful to the commands of God. Then blazed forth the light of our Lord Jesus and His Apostles! And before the last Apostle had been taken away, the martyr flames lit up the world. When persecution had ceased and heathenism had conquered Christianity by debasing her doctrines, the Reformers shone out with their gracious brilliance and these

have been succeeded constantly by Evangelists, one after the other, who have moved the people and maintained, through the Divine Spirit, the Gospel testimony to this day.

Brethren, I believe that the history of the Church in modern times is like that of olden times. The Apostles were our Patriarchs, the Reformers were our Moses and Joshua and the great preachers since have been as judges! And now we look for the King, Himself, even He that shall sit upon the throne of David and shall reign forever and ever! View history as you will, there is a continuity in it. In the darkest times there has shone forth some bright, particular star, yes, and in secret places, in holy hearts and gracious families there has remained more of the Divine life and light than the pages of historians have recorded.

There has always been a remnant according to the election of Grace. When the Church moaned and said, “God has forsaken me, my God has forgotten me. The fathers, where are they?” God had not forsaken her—He had kept for Himself His thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And there has arisen a leader just in the nick of time to seize the banner and to rally the wavering host, for as God lives and the Spirit still abides in the Church, and Jesus is with us always, even to the world’s end, the succession of Grace shall never cease! Glory be to the name of the Most High!

III. Thirdly, having seen, concerning our text, its eminent fulfillment, let us for a second or so view it in ITS HAPPY ENCOURAGEMENT. Brothers and Sisters, God’s promise is the ultimate hope of the Christian and of the Church at large, and here we have it—“Instead of your fathers shall be your children.” Lean on the Divine shall, for it is as sure as the Everlasting Covenant. As you have to leave the Ark of the Lord behind you and you can no longer carry it upon your shoulder, God will provide successors. “Jehovahjireh, the Lord Will Provide.”

You have believed that word in reference to your family and your own livelihood—believe it in reference to God’s family and His cause. God has provided, already, for Himself a Lamb for His Passover—you may depend upon it He will provide what is a vastly smaller thing—a line of men who shall ever keep that Passover Lamb before the eyes of His people! We are sure, O Lord, that You will do as You have said—

*“Fathers to sons shall teach Your name,  
And children learn Your ways;  
Ages to come Your truth proclaim,  
And nations sound Your praise.”*

Do not give way to distrust about the present or the future, for Jesus lives and walks among the golden candlesticks, trimming all the lamps and shining through them! The stars are in His right hand, by Him kindled and by Him renewed with immortal flame. You have the Spirit of God still dwelling in the Church to call whomever Jesus wills and to anoint them with holy oil that they may go forth in the Master’s name.

My Brethren, to have doubt about this would be unpardonable because we are coming towards an epoch where all the promises declare a victory. Do they not all travail with a glorious day of Grace? We are bound to exert ourselves for the spread of the Gospel, for we know that Christ must have the pre-eminence everywhere. “As truly as I live, says the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord.” We have received the Word from God’s mouth, “He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.” We are not taking a leap into the dark! We are not “shooting Niagara”—we are marching into light—the day has broken, the shadows are fleeing, the brightness is increasing, the noontide is at hand and, perhaps, before this century ends, we may have passed into the supreme brilliance of that millennial period in which Christ Jesus shall reign gloriously among His ancients!

If He bids us wait and wait we may, we would cheerfully march on, for our faces are to the sunrise and every hour brings Glory nearer. At any rate, in such an hour as we think not, behold, the Bridegroom comes! And when He comes our victory has come with Him. Let us not yield to despondency. If the line of battle wavers, or our ranks are broken by the enemy, remember the reserves, the grand reserves which our Captain is holding back! And remember the King, Himself, is coming who never fights but to conquer! He, whose Presence means triumph, is on His way! Mark the signal and “Hold the fort, for He is coming,” whose coming shall close your warfare and commence your triumph!

IV. I must now come to view the text, as to ITS PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS. “Instead of your fathers shall be your children.” Well then,

 if we stand instead of our fathers, what manner of persons ought we to be? I will not call to mind your immediate sires, though it were no dishonor to many of you if I did so. I will not recount the family ancestry with which God has blessed us. No imperial blood is in our veins nor blue blood of nobility. Descended from the King of kings, each saint possesses a nobler pedigree than earthly princes! To be the child of godly parents is one of the greatest honors in the world.

But I ask you to look back to your spiritual ancestry, your fathers after the spirit, your predecessors in the faith of the Lord Jesus. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, what manner of people ought we to be, who as Christian men and women have succeeded the heritage of martyrs? Who have taken up a cause pleaded by Apostolic lips? Who have followed upon men of whom the world was not worthy? Our ancestors were made what they were by the Grace of God and the Church of God may well glorify God in them! Their sufferings and heroic fortitude, their labors and their dauntless courage have left us under solemn obligations. Shall we be coward sons of heroic sires? Shall we be sluggards and slovenly in a work which they carried out so well?

They built with gold, silver and precious stones—shall we degrade their work by heaping thereon wood, hay and stubble? I charge you, Brethren, take good heed unto your ways by the remembrance of where you came. Thus would I speak to all Believers, for the Church is one and indivisible. Each tribe of the one Seed has its own history and I leave my Brethren of various denominations to speak to their own. I will now address myself specially to those who are known as Baptists. As for us, the baptized followers of Christ, our ancestry as a body of Christian men is not to be despised. Albeit that the name of Anabaptist has been made the football of

reproach because it was wrongfully associated with fanatical opinions, we may rest assured that the more history is understood, the more apparent will it be that those who were the most humiliated were thus treated because they were before their times. They bore the brunt of battle because they led the way!

God forbid that I should induce you to glory in them and so to wear borrowed laurels! Of all pride, I think that to be the most idle which hides its own nakedness beneath the tattered banners of ancestry. I do but dwell for a moment upon our past history to excite you to yet more earnest deeds! Prove yourselves to be these men’s sons by doing their deeds! Otherwise you are bastards and not sons. In every effort for civil and religious liberty, our fathers were at the front! In the utterance of those Divine Truths of God which have made tyrants and priests quake for fear, they have been among the boldest! Our fathers, for holding to Baptism as the Lord ordained it, suffered at the hands of men who knew no mercy. Their beliefs were misrepresented and themselves regarded as monsters rather than men.

In this country they were, in the matter of time, both first and last at the stake! On this very spot where you now sit, long before there were any Lutherans or Calvinists, we read that, “three Anabaptists were burnt at the Butts at Newington.” Our sires were Protestants before the Protestants! They were part of a long line of men who stood firm when the mass of the Church turned this way and that! They were, in fact, the most bold and thoroughgoing of all the adherents of the Apostolic and Scriptural Church and, therefore, they were persecuted by prelates and abhorred by priests. When I hear Ritualists talking of their ancient Church, I blush to think that Englishmen should claim kinship with the Roman Antichrist, whose yoke our fathers tore from off their necks!

The pedigree of every Anglican priest must, of necessity, have flowed through the Dead Sea of Popery. Our limpid streamlet runs not through that slough of filthiness, but comes down pure from earliest ages! Our doctrines and ordinances remain as they were delivered unto us by our Lord! Neither have we desired to add the traditions of men to them. “Hold fast, therefore, your confidence which has great recompense of reward.” Do not give up your principles, my Brothers and Sisters, for the Church and the world will need them. Nobody can fight the battle against Sacramentarianism like the man who puts the ordinances in their Scriptural position as belonging to Believers and to Believers only. As long as Baptism is given to those who are unregenerate, the figment of baptismal regeneration will find a foothold!

We must unflinchingly keep to our testimony that religion is a personal thing and that only those who have faith in Jesus can partake in the privileges of His House. Birthright membership and vows of sponsors must, alike, be the subjects of our protest. By your sires who were drowned by the hundreds for refusing homage to a superstitious rite, men who neither feared Luther nor the Pope, and were hated of all men and even by Reformers because they occupied a standpoint still bolder, clearer, and more advanced than all others, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, hold fast your Christian liberty and never cease to testify to all the Truth which God has taught you!

May our Brothers and Sisters who differ from us, come to us in this matter, for we cannot go to them—we are spellbound by the plain teaching of Scripture and dare not move so much as a hair’s breadth. May the Lord yet give to all His saints to know the “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.” If we are instead of our fathers, let us endeavor to continue their testimony undiminished in force and untarnished in clearness. Our Brethren of other denominations must bear their testimony to what truth they know and we are the last to deny them this liberty or to despise their cooperation. But, after all, our own duty is that which we must look to— that we may be found faithful “in that day.”

The next practical point is this— if others are to come instead of us, what are we doing for them? Looking at ourselves as occupying the present time, how far are we good links between the present and the future? Others are to come instead of us—are we taking care as much as lies in us that those who come in the place of us shall be fit men to maintain the interests of God’s Truth? Oh, Brethren, let us, as a Church, love the young! Let us labor, by God’s Grace, to gather in a multitude of young converts! Let us pray God to bless our schools of every sort and the teaching among the rising youth, as far as that teaching is according to His mind and will! A Church which does not believe in the conversion of children, a Church that, in fact, scarcely believes in the conversion of anybody, is likely to die out! But a Church that lives for converts, even as parents live for their children, will be the joyous mother of a numerous progeny and become stronger and stronger.

I would to God we were all stirred up, not merely the teachers in the school, but all of us, to seek the conversion of the young and to aim by every means in our power to set God’s Truth before them and lead them in His way. The Church ought to look to the tuition, the training and the culture of her children. All those who are brought to Christ in youth should be peculiarly watched over by us. It is said that Alexander gathered together his valiant army principally through training children from their very birth to the pursuits of war. He took little children as soon as they could run alone and placed them in a camp where their playthings were swords and their amusements were found among armor, spears and shields.

These born soldiers grew up knowing of nothing and caring for nothing but for Alexander, Macedon and fighting. Thus would we, by God’s Grace, train our sons to live alone for Christ, His Truth and the souls whom He has redeemed. O that our sons might be men of war from their youth for Jesus! We need workers who have been in the vineyard from the first hour of the day—these are the backbone of successful Christian husbandry. There is necessity for far more attention to training and Christian edification than has, until this time, been usual—and the sooner this is felt, the better. We need men whose earliest feats of mental strength are shown in the gymnasium of the Church, young athletes trained for war, ready for exploits and waiting to take their place in the Lord’s battles at their fathers’ side! We shall have a grand era when the Church learns to train her youth in holy enterprises and to employ them early for the Lord.

We know, too, that if we are to have good successors, our young friends must acquire a noble carriage from their childhood. That is a great word— “whom you may make princes in all the earth,” and we must not be content to come short of it. What? Make our young converts princes? Yes, so says the text—and it is to be done, by God’s Grace, if they are imbued with heavenly principles by the Holy Spirit—and if we set before them the example of our princely Savior and if each one of us shall try to make his own life right royal in dignity of purpose and aim.

The nobility of the text is of a rare sort—“princes in all the earth.” Why, a man may be a prince in his own country, and have no power out of it— but a man of high Christian character is a prince in all the earth and we would have all our children such! That ancient schoolmaster, Jacob Treboniue, whenever he went into his school, was accustomed to take off his hat to his boys. When asked why he did so, he replied, “Because, Sir, I do not know what learned doctors and great men I may be teaching.” He was quite right, for Martin Luther was one of the boys in his school and I would have taken off my hat to Martin Luther if I had been his schoolmaster! I, perhaps, would have chastised him as well, but taken off my hat, at any rate, out of respect to the man concealed in such a boy!

Who knows but among those whom we teach for Jesus, right royal spirits may be concealed? And it is ours to try, by the Grace of God, to train those choice spirits that they may be yet more noble. I have read a story which shows how poor, ragged children may be nobles. A minister was once called in to examine a school. The master said to him, “Question the boys all through the Catechism, for they know it thoroughly.” “But,” he said, “do you think they

 understand it?” The schoolmaster smiled and bowed his head in assent. “Try them, Sir.” The minister asked one of the shoeless little boys to repeat the commandment, “Honor your father and your mother,” and he did so promptly. “Do you understand it, my lad?” said the minister.

“Yes, Sir, I think I do.” “What does it mean?” “Well, Sir, last week I went over the mountain with some gentlemen to show them the way and I had no shoes. And the stones were so sharp that they made my feet bleed and the gentlemen gave me some money to buy a pair of shoes. When I went home I recollected that mother needed shoes, too, and so I gave her the money to buy a pair for herself.” That lad was surely one of the princes in all the earth! And if children, by the Grace of God, are taught to do the same and if we, ourselves, shall each one cultivate a noble spirit of disinterested love, we shall give proof that the Holy Spirit has made us princes in all the earth!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, when I think of what the Church of God can do for her young converts when God helps her, I am amazed and full of delight! She is a mother whose sons are, each one, born in king’s palaces and each one joint heirs with the Prince Emanuel! All her children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be their peace. To make a man a prince you ought to give him not only a noble carriage but a rich enment. He will be wretched unless he has some means with which to exercise the liberality which dwells in his heart. If I were addressing the young man who has lately been converted, I would say, “My Son, take this Bible in your hands. It is the best treasure and you will be a prince if you will make it your own by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Here is an endowment for you which shall make you richer than Croesus of old!

“Give to your children the Gospel, the glorious Doctrines of Grace. Give to them the Precepts of Christ and the blessed inspiring example which He has left behind Him. Give them a hallowed example in your own life and you have done infinitely more for them than if you had left them an annual income to be measured by millions. You shall make them princes in all the earth if, by God’s Grace, you lead them to Jesus and He endows them with the Spirit of all Grace, so that they are rich in faith and zealous for good works.”

I was so glad last Monday that I do not know whenever I have been as glad—there were two young sisters and two young brothers of this Church, two of them connected with this Sunday school, who were going abroad as missionaries! The Prince of Wales set out on his journey on Monday and so did two princes and two princesses out of this Church! I felt more confidence in sending my princes out, I am bound to say, than the Royal mother did in sending her son! Perhaps in the last day of account India will have more to say of our princes than even of our future king. It is a grand thing for a Church to have missionaries bred and born in her! We aspire to it and already the blessing is coming! Young men, young women in the Tabernacle, we are looking for more of you to be our princes in all the earth!

We have some in India, we have some in Spain, we have some in other lands who are preaching Christ, but we want to have princes in all the earth! I shall never be completely satisfied till, looking over a map, I shall recollect, “Brother So-and-So is there. Sister So-and-So is there turning the heathen to Christ and conquering the land for Jesus!” To the utmost bounds of the habitable globe may a princely offspring go forth from all the Churches of the living God! And may we take our full share of the blessed privilege!

The last word is this—looking to my young friends who may be present this morning, as I have already looked back to our sires and down upon ourselves, I say to them, are you prepared to take your fathers’ places? It was with great joy that, at the cemetery last Friday, when I buried my beloved Brother, Henry Olney, I saw so many of our young men present. The hope of the Church—honorable men, too—I believe worthy to succeed their sires. I thanked God and I took courage as I came out of the cemetery gate as I saw many of them walking together in Christian brotherhood. Younger Brothers and Sisters, I trust you will be worthy of your sires, even if you do not excel them. I beseech you, since you are the Church’s hope, do not disappoint us!

Young men and young women, consecrate yourselves early to God and let it be thorough, out-and-out consecration—you will never regret it.

There sits behind me a Brother who could tell you, if he were well enough, how his early days were happy in his Master’s service and how, now, when he speaks with somewhat trembling accents, his heart rejoices in the Lord whom he has loved so long. Young men, follow in his footsteps! Young women, be you, also, fully devoted to Christ! By way of warning, I must add, let none of you suppose that because you come of pious parents you will be saved. Remember Abraham had for his son an Ishmael.

The line does not run according to blood and natural descent, but according to the will of God. Alas, there are some, too—I met one the other day, I feel the arrow in my heart at this moment—there are some who utterly forsake the Lord God of their fathers and turn aside to skepticism and sin. When a young man glories in infidelity and chooses for his companions loose fellows of the baser sort, his descent from saintly fathers will bring upon him sevenfold guilt. It were better for him that he had never been born, than leave an ancestry which God has blessed, to turn aside to be an enemy of the Cross of Christ!

Perhaps someone may say, “Ah, but Ishmael had not a good mother— she was Hagar, the bondwoman.” My solemn answer is—Esau had the same mother as Jacob and was born at the same birth—yet Esau shared not in spiritual privileges as Jacob did. Trust not in your descent! Rely not upon a mother’s tears or a father’s piety. Seek the Lord, my sons, my daughters, or you will not taste His love. “My son, give Me your heart,” says Jesus—not your father’s heart, but your own! Yield yourselves as living sacrifices unto God and then, instead of the fathers, shall be the children! I stand among you like an officer in the midst of his regiment and, as one and another falls, I entreat you to close up your ranks!

My Brothers and Sisters, my Children! Do not permit the good cause at the Tabernacle to fail! You will not, I am sure. I am persuaded better things of you though I thus speak. Whoever dies, stand ready, you younger men, to take their places! As you get older, ask for more Grace to qualify you, not merely to be private members, but to be leaders among us, that to this Church may be fulfilled forevermore the promise of the text, “Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.” God bless you, my beloved companions in the army of the Lord, young and old, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 45.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—45, 422, 145.  
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THE TRUE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION  
NO. 424

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 15, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Instead of Your fathers shall be Your children, whom You may make princes in all the earth.”  
Psalm 45:16.**

THE overwhelming national calamity announced to the citizens of London at midnight by the solemn tolling of the great bell of St. Paul’s was unknown to most of us until we entered this sanctuary. It was, therefore, impossible to drape the building with the tokens of our sorrow. Nor can the preacher adapt his discourse to this most melancholy occasion. We have already prayed most earnestly for our beloved Sovereign, the widowed Queen of England—may the God of all consolation cheer her lonely heart with that Divine comfort which He alone can give.

With reverent sympathy we all mourn in her mourning and weep in her weeping. We are all bereaved in her bereavement. And we wish that by some means she could really know how intense and how universal is the grief of her loyal and loving subjects who view her in this hour more as their mother than as their Queen. To God again, we commend the Royal Widow and household. O Lord, be You a present help in this their time of need.

Excuse me, Brethren, if I find it imperative to address you from my selected text and to turn your mind to subjects of another kind. My text was suggested by certain events which have transpired in our own Church— the Lord having removed from us during the past week a valued elder of the Church. And having, at the same time given us a singular increase from the families of the Church, I thought the two events together were a notable exposition of this verse, “Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.”

The forty-fifth Psalm is a sort of marriage song, proclaiming the glories of Christ, the Husband and the beauties—the God-given beauties of the Church, His bride. The bride is described as attired in her garments of needlework and clothing of worked gold, attended by her royal maidens. While the King Himself is portrayed as being doubly fair, “fairer than the children of men,” having grace poured into His lips. According to the Eastern custom, at the marriage ceremony there were many good wishes expressed and the benediction was also pronounced upon the newly married pair—that they might become as fruitful as Isaac and Rebecca— hence the blessing of children in our text.

It was the custom with great kings, when they had many sons, to allot to them different parts of their dominions. The young princes were made satraps over certain provinces, hence the blessing pronounced, “whom you may make princes in all the earth.” A continuous One is promised and perennial honor is secured. Christ is to be the spiritual parent of many sons—“He shall see His seed”—these sons are to be illustrious and partake in the kingdom of their Divine Lord, for “He shall bring many sons unto glory.”

I shall try this morning, first of all, to expound the text in its different import in different periods of the Church history. Then endeavor to interpret it by our present experience. And then, thirdly, make an inquiry as to how far in our midst we have seen it proved, that “instead of Your fathers shall be Your children.”

I. First of all then, we are to interpret the text in the light of THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PAST. And we think we can bring out different shades of meaning while interpreting the promise by its fulfillment. For we may rest assured that is the safest way of reading promise and prophecy in the light of actual events.

First, let us take our stand at the end of Old Testament history just where the New Testament begins. The Church stands with her records in her hands. She turns to the first page and reads of the proto-martyr Abel. In following years she views the glittering names of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob. Onward to Moses and Aaron. Farther on still to the time of her judges, her kings, her Prophets until she sees the roll closed by the failing hand of Malachi.

She drops a tear and she cries, “Alas, the book is closed! The fathers, where are they? The Elijahs have mounted in their fiery chariots to Heaven and the Elishas have gone down to their tombs.” “Not so,” says Christ, her Husband, “no, not so, Beloved. Your roll of children has not ended. The glories of your descendants have not yet come to their close.” “Instead of your fathers shall be your children.”

John the Baptist rises up instead of Elijah and even excels him, for among them that had been born of women there was not a greater than John the Baptist. Then came her Husband Himself, even Jesus, who was better than many sons since He gathered up in His own Person all the perfections of those mighty men who had been His types before. But it seemed as if the Lord would supply in New Testament history the vacuum which was caused by the departure of Old Testament saints. Have we in the Old Testament a far-seeing Ezekiel who can read the rolls of the future by the river Chebar? Ah, then we shall have a John, who in the gloomy Isle of Patmos shall behold bright revelations of God.

Have we a clear outspoken practical Daniel who loves Truth and righteousness? We shall have a James who shall expound the Law of faith which works, which proves its truthfulness by holiness. Have we an eloquent Elijah, who pours forth from his lips streams of evangelical doctrine, speaking more of Christ than all the rest? Lo, Paul the Apostle, “not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles,” takes his place. Have we in the Old Testament a young Josiah who purged the temple and had his heart perfect towards God? So have we in our history a young Timothy whose heart is right before his God.

Have we a bold and dashing Haggai, who in rough strains reproves the people for their sins? So have we a Peter, who, nothing daunted, lays to the charge of an immense multitude the murder of Jesus, the Son of David. No, even in women we have no failure. For if under the Old Testament dispensation, they sang of Sarah, the mother of the faithful, what shall we say of Mary? “Blessed among women shall she be; from henceforth all generations shall call her blessed.” If they had their Rahab, as a trophy of grace Divine, we have that woman which was a sinner.

And if they had their Deborahs, mothers in Israel, we have Lydia and Dorcas and Priscilla and of honorable women not a few. Stephen is not inferior to Abel nor is Philip less in honor than Nathan. The glorious company of the Apostles is not a whit behind the goodly fellowship of the Apostles. We say that our New Testament host of heroes is superior to that of the past and that most manifestly God did make the children of His Church princes in all the earth. Right royally in faith did they divide the nations and sway the specters of kingdoms though in the world’s eye they were like their Master, “despised and rejected of men.” So, it seems to me, we may read this text.

We proceed a little further in history to the time when, after Christ had ascended on high, His disciples went everywhere preaching the Word. And as they went they sought out, first of all, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But both Providence and grace conspired to compel them to preach the Word to the Gentiles also that they might be saved. More than this, the Jews, moved with anger, opposed the Truth. And on a certain memorable occasion one of the Apostles said to them, “Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles”—a blessed turning for you and for me!

Now I think I see the Church weeping again and again. “Alas,” she says, “the fathers have rejected me. The Pharisees in their self-righteousness, the Sadducees in their licentiousness, the Herodians in their worldliness, the mass of the people in their superstition have despised and rejected the Truth of Christ my Lord. Alas,” says she, “that the olive has been despoiled of her boughs! What shall I do? The natural branches have been lopped away till the stem stands bare and leafless.” Her Master appears to her and comfortably repeats His assurance, “Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.”

“Lo,” says He, “I have given you the heathen for your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.” I think I see her tender and triumphant Husband pointing with joyous finger to the different countries that should afterwards receive the Truth—glancing over Alpine ranges to the valleys of Switzerland and beyond the pillars of Hercules to these Isles of the Sea in which His name has so long been honored—and then expanding His hands as though He would enclasp the whole, saying to her, “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Me. My enemies shall lick the dust. All kings shall bow down before Me. All generations shall call Me blessed. Have I taken from you Palestine? Lo, I have given you all the nations of men that are upon the face of the earth.

“Shall the Hebrews discard Me? Lo, I have given you ten thousand times ten thousand—so many as the stars of Heaven for number—who shall be the spiritual seed of Abraham who was the father of the faithful.” Verily Christ has fulfilled this promise to His Church and is fulfilling it at this very day. Ethiopia stretches out her hands in prayer. Europe rejoices in His name. Asia yields her converts and America adores His name. We are hoping that the Jew will be ingathered with the fullness of the Gentile. But, meanwhile, the children are taking the place of the fathers and we who were the children of the desolate and of the barren woman are now far more in number than those who were the children of “the married wife.”

I shall beg you to run your eye through history a little further to the time when the Apostles, one by one, yielded up their ministry and their immediate successors followers them to their tombs. It must have been a day of great lamentation to the Church of Christ, when at last, John, the last of the twelve stars, gave forth no more light on earth but was translated to God in another firmament—in Heaven above. We think we hear the news, as it spreads through all the churches that were scattered about Asia, Bithynia and Cappadocia, Africa, Spain, Italy, Gaul and perhaps Britain itself—“John is dead!”

The last spark of the Apostolic fire has died out. The last of the live coals that glowed with the miraculous flame of Apostolic fire has been taken with the golden tongs from off the altar of earth and removed by seraphic wings to blaze upon the golden altar in Heaven. Then there followed grievous martyrdoms and Polycarp and Ignatius and men of that order who had been the companions of the Apostles. And some of whom may even have seen our Lord departed from among the sons of men.

The lions’ jaws were busy grinding the bones of the confessors. The dungeons were swollen with the captive martyrs of Christ. The blood of the Church flowed in one perpetual stream of crimson and the Church might have wept and said “Alas, alas! The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! You have barked my fig tree. You have cut down my cedar. You have laid desolate my vineyards and broken down my hedges. You have taken away the heroes from the battle and the standard-bearers from the strife. My young men have fallen by the sword and their fathers have gone into captivity. What shall the Church do?”  
She was like Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they were not. She said as she saw her new converts, call them Benoni. Even those that were born of her in what she thought to be her expiring pangs she named, “Sons of sorrow.” But her Lord said concerning who were born unto her, “Call them Benjamin, the sons of My right hand.” For in the place of the fathers that have perished, the children shall rise up. And they did so. And there was a long succession of men as bold to dare, as clear to testify and as holy to live as those who had departed to their God.

We do not believe in that fiction of Apostolic succession by the laying on of hands of men. But we do believe in that glorious Truth of Apostolic succession—the laying on of the hands of God, when He Himself calls out one by one from the midst of mankind—men who shall grasp the standard when the standard-bearer falls—men who shall bear the great two-edged sword and fight God’s battles when those who fought them before have gone down to their graves triumphant. The Lord supplied the lack of His Church at every hour. To use that sentence which has been worn long but is never threadbare—the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. And so, instead of your fathers, your children arise to praise their God.

Further down in history there came the time of the Church’s most awful dearth. She had sinned. Led by the princely hand of Constantine to the altar of infamous adultery, she prostituted herself to a connection with the State and committed fornication with the kings of the earth. From that day forth the Spirit of God forsook her and in the brightness of His splendor He shone not upon her. Her vigor died when the imperial hand was laid upon her. Whatever a royal hand may do to diseased men—it always brings the king’s evil upon the Church.

No ills of poverty or persecution can equal the injurious effects of State alliance upon the Church of God. Her freedom is evaporated, her discipline becomes a pretense, her faults cannot be remedied, her progress in reformation is prohibited, her glory is departed. The Christian Church when linked with the Roman power, soon declined till Truth became dim and holiness was stained. Then the much fine gold was changed. Then the light of her sun was as the light of eventide, if not as the darkness of midnight itself. And she stood—clouds and darkness being round about her— and sorrow her portion.

By the lapse of years the good died and only the evil lived. The curse of the State had engendered priestcraft, popedom—and what if I say Helldom?—in all lands. The Church stood and wept and she said, “Chrysostom, where is he? His golden mouth is silent. Augustine, where is he? We can no more tell of the Gospel of the Grace of God. The angelic doctor has departed. Athanasius, where is he?—that rock in the midst of the billows?” And she wept, for she seemed to have no men left—no eye pitied and no arm helped her.

But lo, her God spoke and said, “instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.” And two imperial spirits, chief among the sons of men, sprung up—Luther and Calvin— worthy to stand side-by-side with any fathers that even the Old Testament or Apostolic times could produce. They had their bright compeers who stood firmly with them and shone like a divine constellation in the midst of the dark night of popery. God seemed to say to the Church, “I will give you back Apostles. I will give you back your Prophets. I will send to you a new host of warriors. There shall be giants in those days and you shall make them princes in all the earth.”

Then, to come later and end our historical review—there came a period when the Church had again, a second time, sold herself to the State— when she who should be the Lord’s chaste virgin became once more the mistress and harlot of kings. She wore her bondage readily enough until, happily for her, the princes made her yoke heavy and her life bitter. Then came a sifting season when the chaff and the wheat could no more abide together, when the lovers of God and His Truth must break their alliance with death and their covenant with Hell.

There rose up in the midst of the Church a company of men who would not endure to have the Word of God altered and fashioned by princes— who saw that God’s Truth was not to be molded like a nose of wax by committee-men, or bishops, or judges. They came forth from the mass to join those few who like the few in Sardis had not defiled their garments. The Church wept and mourned, for she said, “Wycliffe has departed. The mighty Lollards, those shakers of the nation, have gone their way. The fathers have departed.” But God said to her, “instead of your fathers shall be your children.”

And up rose such men as Bunyan, Charnock, Howe, Goodwin, Owen, Manton, Caryl and multitudes more of like gigantic mind. That mighty host whose names are two thousand who left the harlot church and came out from her impurities were the children who worthily made up for the apostasy of the fathers. These mighty two thousand men are heroes, whose names are fit to match with Martin Luther and with Calvin, yes, and I dare to say it, with any of the martyrs who have gone before. They stood alone.

And now it seems to me at this day, when any say to us, “You, as a denomination, what great names can you mention? What fathers can you speak of?” We may reply, “More than any other under Heaven, for we are the old Apostolic Church that has never bowed to the yoke of princes yet. We, known among men in all ages by various names, such as Donatists, Novatians, Paulicians, Petrobrussians, Cathari, Arnoldists, Hussites, Waldenses, Lollards and Anabaptists have always contended for the purity of the Church and her distinctness and separation from human government.

“Our fathers were men accustomed to hardships and unused to ease. They present to us, their children, an unbroken line which comes legitimately from the Apostles—not through the filth of Rome, not by the manipulations of Prelates—but by the Divine life, the Spirit’s anointing, the fellowship of the Son in suffering and of the Father in Truth.” But where shall I wander? I go upon a needless errand—for what are our fathers to us unless we prove ourselves their worthy sons? Let us forego our pedigree and see if we have present grace by which to prove the succession of which we boast.

Neander has said “There is a future for you Baptists.” Let us not be slow to ensure it! I say, let us instead of doing as many will do during the next year, instead of boasting descent from the two thousand who came out on Bartholomew’s Day, let us pray that we may be able to glory more in our children than in our fathers. Let us say, “No, we will not think of the past to be proud of it. But we will think of the present to labor for it that we may show to the world that the old life is not extinct. That ours is not a roll of wonders which have all been completed and finished—but it contains the prophecy of wonders yet to come—wherein God shall show forth His mighty acts unto the sons of men.”

May it be so in all the Churches of Christ! May it be abundantly so in our own Church and denomination to the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

II. We have to interpret our text, secondly, in its APPLICATION TO OUR OWN CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE PRESENT TIME. “Instead of your fathers shall be your children.”

It seems clear enough from the text, as well as from observation, that the fathers must be taken from us. Yes, it is the delight of a pastor to look upon the reverend heads of those who have served the Church—some of them for more than half a century with integrity, with uprightness and with success. But they must leave us. The hands of affection cannot retain them among us, however firmly they may make the grasp. Our earnest prayers cannot immortalize them in the land of mortality and our greatest kindness cannot preserve their bodies from moldering back to their native dust in the land of decay.

The fathers must go—as we look upon their snow-white heads, often the painful reflection crosses our mind—“We cannot expect to have them with us long. David must sleep with his fathers. Hezekiah, though his life is lengthened for awhile, must at last yield to the inexorable decree, for ‘there is no discharge in this war.’ ”

Now, the loss of the fathers must be to the Church always painful for we lose the maturity of their judgment. When, having passed through many difficulties they begin to see their way through the ordinary trials of life. When, having tested and proved many things they have come to hold fast that which is good and have become meet to be instructors of babes and guides of those that wander—just then, the eye that sees so clearly is

filmed, the hand which could point so plainly is paralyzed and the foot which so firmly in the way of wisdom totters—and the man falls to his last home.

We lose besides the maturity of their judgment, their blessed living testimony just when they had begun to tell us that for threescore years and ten they had found God’s Word to be faithful and true. Just when they could give their viva voce testimony to the faithfulness and goodness of an immutable God, their lips are silenced. They bequeath to us the legacy of their living example and their dying witness—but we have them not alive among us as pillars in the house of our God and witnesses for the faith.

And just, too, when we thought that their holy efforts were almost necessary to the Church’s success, it usually happens that then they are taken away. Hushed is the voice which could instruct. Still is the heart that was always anxiously beating with a desire for Zion’s prosperity. They are gone and they leave a gap in our defenses. They pull down a tower from our battlements. The shields of the mighty are taken away and the chariots are burned in the fire. They are removed from us, too, when their prayers were more than usually valuable, when the mellowness of their piety gave a blessed fragrance to their supplications.

They are taken from us when their hoary heads added dignity in our eyes to their supplications and when their righteous lives seemed to prevail with God for the fulfillment of His Word that the effectual fervent prayer of righteous man should avail much. Yes, as I look around, as a young pastor upon my Brethren in arms—those who have stood by me these eight years in all our conflicts and our struggles—who have been with me in the wilderness of my temptation, by the bed of my sickness— my helpers in council, my assistants in labor, my comforters in trial, my ready friends in the Church and my protectors in the midst of the rioting crowd—those who for these many years have borne the burden and heat of the day—I cannot refrain from emotions of the deepest grief at the thought that the fathers must not live forever but that one by one, as the stars set beneath the horizon line, so must they set on earth, to go in another and better sphere—not lost, thank God, but gone before.

We have this week lost one who was, I think, the first person I received into Church fellowship here—he having been for many years a useful member of other Baptist Churches. He served his Master well—as well as continual weakness and increasing feebleness of health would permit him. And now he is gone—who next shall follow God only knows. But one by one, the young may go, but the old must. The young are as in a siege where the bullet may cut them down. But the old are as in the breach, where the attack is being made and death is storming the ramparts. The fathers must depart.

We dwell no longer on that lest we indulge in dreary apprehensions as to our Church’s future—though that were folly and sin—for in looking back on the past we have seen such a marvelous succession in the ministry and also in all the offices of the Church, that we cannot but thank God that He does walk still among the golden candlesticks and trims the lamps!

But let us turn to the pleasing reflection, “Instead of your fathers shall be your children.” When the fathers die, God shall find other men who, trained while their fathers yet lived, shall be ready and ripe to take their places. Very often we hear the question, “If such-and-such a minister should die, who could occupy his pulpit? What would be the use of suchand-such a building, if So-and-So were taken to his rest?” Ah, you know not what you ask, nor what you say—“Instead of the fathers shall be the children.” Men of faith are followed by men of faith.

They who trust God, when they die shall be succeeded by others who shall walk in the same Divine life and shall see the same promises fulfilled. The love which burned in the heart of one, when quenched there by death, shall burn in the breast of another. The hope that gleamed from one joyous eye shall soon gleam from the eyes of another whom God has raised up to be his successor. The work shall not stop for want of a workman—supplication shall not cease for want of righteous men to pray. The offering of praise shall not be stayed from the absence of grateful hearts to offer joyous songs. God shall be pleased to raise up one after another, according as it is written, “Moses My servant is dead, but behold, Joshua shall go before you.”

What a blessed thing it is, that in this Church we have seen the promise fulfilled in olden times. And we can look round upon our denomination and other Churches can do the same and remember families that have been connected with our struggles and our strifes from the very earliest periods of history. If you look down the hand-book of Baptist ministers you will see there names which have appeared for these last three or four centuries. And if you could turn to the Church-rolls of some of our different Churches you would see that there are certain family-names which constantly recur—not written now and then—but in one direct line, as though the God of Abraham were the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and the God of all the families, even to the last generation.

I pray that such a succession as this may fall upon many families here and that as you have known the Lord, so your house may never lack a man to stand and to do service in the temple before the Lord God of Israel!

III. But I come to the last point, which is the most important—that is, TO MAKE AN INQUIRY AS TO THE MATTER OF FACT HOW FAR THIS TEXT HAS BEEN TRUE IN OUR EXPERIENCE AS A CHURCH.

We will put this matter in the form of questions. How many are there here today of the usual worshippers in our midst whose parents were in

Christ and who are themselves in Christ, too? When I was thinking over this subject in my study, my eye in vision glanced over the pews and I thought of the different families. I could remember one or two, perhaps, where there are children arrived at years of maturity, who were yet unconverted. But for the most part, I think, there is hardly an exception to the rule in this place—that where there are parents who serve God, there are some children who serve Him also.

If it were right, we might glance our eye to the right hand and to the left and we might say, “There is a household yonder, where one, two, three, four, five, six, seven fear the Lord. The father and the mother are walking in the faith and their children going on pilgrimage with them.” We might turn to another family and say, “There are two who have arrived at years of maturity, who have made a profession of their faith in Christ and are walking in their parents’ footsteps. And their parents hope that as the others grow up it will be to ask the Redeemer blessed.”

I might look down below and look with joy, too, upon many families! With some of you God has dealt very graciously, for He has brought all your children in. With others He has begun to do His gracious work. He has brought one or two of your household. And though there are some few solemn and sad exceptions, yet, blessed be God, these are few, very few indeed. Here we have seen that “the promise is to us and to our descendants, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Here we have had the words of Paul and Silas richly and abundantly fulfilled—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your house.”

Besides this, to go a little further, how many are there in this Church who have been raised up by God to fill similar positions in the Church to those which their forefathers had? I hope there will always be a succession unto God in the eldership and in the deaconship. And what if I were egotistical enough to say so, in the ministry, too? I would to God there might be in every single position in this Church, as soon as one dies, another allied and descended from the departed to take his place! That, too, has been fulfilled in several instances in our midst. In the Church of God at large it is really surprising to see how constantly the mantle of Elijah falls upon Elisha.

If you read through the list of our ministers you will see certain names like Angus, Pearce and Fuller which run right on. Some of us can look back to four or five generations in which our parents have always been preachers of the Word. It is the happiness of one here present to know that while he himself and his beloved brother preach the Word, his father and his grandfather, too, are uttering the selfsame Gospel that is preached here today. And so has it been with many a household. We are not solitary instances.

There are very many such, where there has been a succession, a positive succession—not grace running in the blood—but grace running sideby-side with the blood, so that instead of the fathers the children have been raised up who have been illustrious in the Church and distinguished in the world as kings and priests unto our God.

We have asked two questions and some of us have had great pleasure in answering them, but a pang has rent the heart of some others. We must enlarge upon that—not to increase the pang—but that God may graciously remove it. Are there not sons and daughters here, descended from holy men and women who today are careless? Your mother’s God is not your God. She dropped her holy tears upon your infant forehead and devoted you from the very breast to God. She prayed for you. She is now a saint of God in Heaven and you are on your way to being an heir of wrath in Hell.

Perhaps you are remembering now some hymn which was a favorite with her, which you saw this very morning in the hymn-book. And the Psalm that was read, you remember its solemn reading at her grave and you have remembered her—but you have not remembered your God. She is not the mother of saints, in your case, but the mother of a careless soul who knows the Truth and cares not for it. Who hears the invitation of the Gospel and wantonly and wickedly rejects it. Young men and women! Would you bring down your parents gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? You can do it speedily by open iniquities. You can do it gradually by a silent careless rejection of Christ Jesus.

Some of you have yourselves grown old—still your parents are to you traditions of the past. They have long since moldered in the grave. But you are ungodly. You took not up the standard when your father’s arm failed to hold it—not you. You stood not in the ranks of God’s mighties when your parent fell—not you. You are today a hearer only and not a doer of the Word—listening to the outward sound but not receiving the inward sense. O Soul! what will you do when you shall leave your body and stand before your God? What will you do when, looking upward from the awful gulf, you see your mother, your father, glorified?

Oh, there will be weeping, there will be weeping at the Judgment Seat of Christ! There will be sorrow beyond all sorrow in that valley of decision, when the multitude shall be gathered together, to be sent in two forever. Oh, it will be doleful, it will be doleful when we part to meet no more! No more the kiss of affection, or even the tie of relationship. Shut up in Heaven shall they be, yon beatified spirits. Shut up in Hell shall you be, you Impenitent, if you come to the Judgment Seat of God. This is the more sorrowful because it relates to some of you—you that are here this morning—some of you who are always sitting in these seats. You come as God’s people come and hear as they hear, but are not blessed as they are.

Lastly, it may be I speak to some who have strayed in here this morning accidentally who are even worse than this. And so, Man, you have lived to curse your God! What was that oath this morning before you did leave your house—an oath in which your mother’s Savior was blasphemed?

And you have grown up and you ill-use your wife for desiring to worship your father’s God! You were baptized of old in your father’s prayers and immersed in your mother’s affectionate yearnings. When she brought you forth and first looked upon your infant form, she blessed God that she was the mother of a man-child, in the hope that he might be devoted unto God from his youth up.

Alas, poor mother! It were better for him that he had never been born. When your father heard the tidings of your birth, he said, “Let him serve his God and my heart is glad.” He had no thoughts of begetting you to be a fiend in Hell, or a slave of the devil. And yet, Stranger, would it be too hard to say that is what you are this morning? “No,” you say, “not quite a blasphemer.” Well, an infidel. And what is an infidel but a blasphemer who has not courage to say out what he thinks in his heart? And so you doubt the Deity of that precious Savior on whom your mother’s soul reposed? And so you despise that religion which was her comfort in her last expiring hour?

And so, I say, you are an enemy to that God in whose eternal bosom your own sire rests forever. Well, shall it always be so? Angel of destiny! Shall it always be so? Shall the wax of human life cool and shall the doom be sealed forever? No, angel of mercy! Intervene and now, oh, NOW reverse the man’s condition! Turn his heart to flesh! Melt the adamant in the precious blood of Jesus and make it soft! “There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared.” Come unto Him! Come unto Him! He will receive you still. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.”

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” May the Spirit of God find you out this morning! May He prick you in the heart! May He make you feel and tremble!—more than that—may He make you fly to Christ, the City of our Refuge! May He constrain you to put your trust in the Atonement which He made for many! May you now find in Him a Savior, “able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God through Him!” Let every parent say, “Amen!”

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THE GRACIOUS LIPS OF JESUS  
NO. 3081

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1908. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK. “Grace is poured into Your lips.”  
Psalm 45:2.

WHAT a never-ending theme there is in the name and Person of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! The poets of Scripture never mention His Person but they fall into rhapsodies at once! They never sing of His name, or of His glories, but at once they seem to be so enchanted by the spirit of poetry that they soar up with ecstasies of joy and their love scarcely knows how to find language to express itself. Love sometimes leaps over language among sensitive men—and so it does more palpably in Sacred Scripture. Take, for instance, the Canticles. There, love has strained language to the uttermost in order to embody its vehement passion. Yes, so strained it, that some of us, not so filled with love to God, can scarcely appreciate its glowing utterance. Here, too, you see, the Psalmist, with harp in hand, no sooner begins to meditate on the Person of the Messiah, than he cries, “My heart bubbles up with a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are fairer than the children of men: Grace is poured into Your lips.”

We shall have no time for a preface, but must proceed at once to the discussion of our text. Grace is poured into the lips of Christ. Let us consider, first, the plenitude of this Grace. Secondly, the nature of this Grace. And thirdly, endeavor to show you in what offices Jesus Christ proves that Grace is poured into His lips.

I. We commence with the word, “POURED,” as suggesting THE PLENITUDE OF GRACE. “Grace is poured into Your lips.”  
Others among the children of men have had “Grace.” Poets have spoken gracious words and Prophets of old have uttered wondrous sayings which were Divinely Inspired. So that it might be said that their doctrine “dropped” as the rain, and their speech “distilled” like the dew. Such imagery, however, is too faint to describe our Lord Jesus! Not merely did He speak as the dew, nor did His message simply drop as the small rain, it “POURED” from His lips! Whenever He spoke, a copious stream of gracious words flowed from Him like a very cataract of eloquence. Jesus Christ had not a little Grace, but it was “poured into” Him. Not a vial of oil on His head, but He had a cruse and a horn of oil emptied upon Him. Grace was poured into His lips!  
I notice that Calvin translates this passage thus, “Grace is shed from Your lips.” Not only did God give to His Son Grace on His lips, but the Son, whenever He speaks, whether He addresses the people in Doctrine and exhortation, or whether He pleads with His Father on their behalf— whenever His lips are open to speak to God for men, or from God to men, He always has “Grace shed from His lips.” And when I turn to the Septuagint translation of this passage, I find that it has the idea of the very exhaustion of Grace, “Grace is poured from Your lips,” as though emptied out till there is none left. Jesus Christ had Grace exhausted in His Person. In Him “dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” All Grace was given to Him. The very exhaustion of the inexhaustible store, as much as to say that God could give no more and that Jesus Christ, Himself, could not receive or possess more Grace. It was all poured into His Person—and when He speaks, He seems to exhaust Grace itself! Imagination’s utmost stretch cannot conceive of anything more gracious—and the contemplation of the most devoted Christian cannot think of any words more majestic in goodness, more tender in sympathy, more full of honey and more luscious in their sweetness than the gracious words that proceeded out of the lips of Jesus Christ!  
“Grace is poured into Your lips.” Ah, Christian, you may have some Grace on your lips, but you have not got it “poured” into them! You may have some Grace in your heart, but it is dropped there like small rain from Heaven—you have not got it “poured” there! You may be ever so full of Grace, but Christ is more full than you are—and when you are ever so reduced in Grace, it is a consolation that with Him is plenteous Grace, plenty that knows no lack, for Grace is poured into His lips! Be not afraid to go to Him in every time of need, nor think that He will fail to comfort you. His comforts are not like water spilled on the earth that cannot be gathered up—they yield perpetual streams, for Grace is poured into His lips! He has no stinted supply, no short allowance to give you, but ask what you will, you shall have as much as your faith can desire and your heart can hold, for Grace is poured into His lips in the richest plenitude!  
II. Not to speak further on this, let us pass on to consider THE KIND OF GRACE THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS WHICH IS THUS POURED INTO HIS LIPS AND SHED FORTH FROM HIS LIPS.  
It is important to remark that Jesus Christ has what none of the sons of men ever had—He has inherent Grace. Adam, when he was created by God, had some inherent Grace which God gave him, yet not so much of God’s Grace as to preserve the uprightness of his character. He had but the Grace of purity, as it could be displayed in the innocence of his intelligent nature. There must have been much Grace in the constitution of the man, seeing he was originally created in the likeness of God, yet there could not have been perfect Grace in him, for he did not keep his first estate. But Jesus Christ had all the Grace that Adam had and all the Grace that any innocent man could have had, in the most sublime perfection! And that Divine Grace was always in Him. You and I have none of that intelligent Grace. We have heard men say that children are not born in sin, nor shaped in iniquity, but that they have inherent Grace—but we have never yet met with the man who has found so wonderful a child! At any rate, the children have been mightily spoiled in growing to maturity, for they have not given much proof of Grace afterwards. No, Beloved, we are naturally graceless, a seed of evil-doers— all our inherent Grace was spoiled by Adam. However full the pitcher might have been originally, it has been emptied out by the Fall. Adam broke the earthen vessel and spilt every drop of its contents—and we have none left. But in Jesus there was no sin—He had inherent Grace in Himself.  
And next, He had Grace which He derived from the constitution of His Person, being God as well as Man. The Manhood of Christ derived Grace from the Godhead of Christ. I do not doubt that His two Natures were united in such wonderful union that what the Man did, the God confirmed, and what the God willed, that the Man did. Nor did the Man Christ Jesus ever act without the God Christ Jesus. Nor did He ever speak without the God—the God within Him—the God whom He is as truly as He is Man. We speak but as men, save when the Spirit of God speaks through us. The greatest and mightiest of all Prophets have but spoken as Inspired men—but Jesus spoke as Man and God conjoined. “Grace”—this unutterably Divine Grace—His own Grace of Godhead was poured into His lips and shed forth from His lips.  
But more. I conceive that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He spoke, had also, as well as His ministers, the assistance of God the Holy Spirit. In fact, we are told that God gave not the Spirit unto Him by measure. It is a most remarkable fact and I believe it is put in Scripture on purpose to make us honor the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ as a Preacher—so far as we can judge from the Word of God—was not so successful in conversion as some of His followers have been. If you turn to the life of Paul, you will notice how many thousands were brought through His preaching to know the Lord. And if you read the account of Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, you will see that three thousand were converted on that one day. You never hear of such an instance in the life of Christ. When He died, He left only about 500 disciples behind Him. The reason was this—Jesus said, “I will honor the Holy Spirit. I will let the world know that it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord. And though I speak as never man spoke, and have more eloquence than mortal ever again can attain, yet I will, in My Sovereignty, restrain Myself from the exercise of that Spirit. The people’s eyes shall be dull and they shall slumber—their hearts shall wax fat and they shall be gross. Then, in later years I will speak more through a humble fisherman than I did Myself. I will honor more the weakest instrument than I have done even Myself as a Preacher.”  
Yet Jesus Christ had the Spirit without measure, for every sentence of His was instinct with Divine energy. “The words,” said Jesus, “that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.” Thus, you see, His words are not merely of the Spirit, but they are Spirit. It seems to me that as he that has seen Christ has seen the Father, so he that has heard Christ, has heard the Holy Spirit. Still, the fruits of His ministry, like the homage due to His Person, lay beyond the brief term of His sojourn on earth. He was rejected of His generation but afterwards “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” In like manner, His words, though not seemingly productive at the time, were so full of the Spirit’s quickening power that they were afterwards the means of conversion to millions of millions beyond the capacity of mortals to count! All conversions under Peter, Paul and the other Apostles were by Jesus Christ. The words that He spoke in secret, they published far and wide. All conversions

 now are in His name and by His Word! “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” If an Apostle spoke of himself, his words fell to the ground, but what his Master told him to say was abundantly successful! Jesus Christ has the Spirit without measure and herein is another kind of Grace, of which it can be said, “Grace is poured into Your lips.  
III. We have very hastily passed over these two divisions, that we may dilate on the third. We are now to consider THE VARIOUS OFFICES IN WHICH WE MAY DISCERN “GRACE” AS BEING “POURED INTO THE LIPS” OF CHRIST AND SHED AGAIN FROM HIS LIPS.  
First, let us regard our Savior as the eternal Surety of the Covenant and we shall see that Grace was poured into His lips. When God the Father originally made the Covenant, it stood somewhat in this form, “My Son, You desire, and I also agree with You, to save a multitude that no man can number, whom I have elected in You. But, in order to their salvation, that I may be just, and yet the Justifier of them that believe, it is necessary that someone should be their Representative, to stand responsible for their obedience to My Laws, and their Substitute to suffer whatever penalties they incur. If You, My Son, will agree to bear their punishment and endure the penalty of their crimes, I on My part will agree that You shall see Your seed, shall prolong Your days, and that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in Your hands. If You are prepared to promise that You will bear the punishment of all the people whom You would save, I on my part am prepared to swear by Myself, because I can swear by no greater, that all for whom You shall atone shall Infallibly be delivered from death and Hell, and that all for whom You bear the punishment shall hence go free, nor shall My wrath rise against them, however great may be their sins.” Jesus spoke the word and He said, “My Father! Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God.”  
Now, that was spoken in eternity, farther back than faith on eagle wings can soar and such Grace was poured into the lips of Christ when He made that simple declaration, that tens of thousands of saints entered Heaven simply on the ground of His solemn pledge! Such Grace was shed from the lips of Jesus that, from the days of Adam, when one transgression involved the race in ruin, down to the times when the Second Adam made reconciliation for iniquity, the saints all entered Heaven upon the faith of Christ’s promise alone! Not one drop of blood had been shed, not one agony suffered—the contract was not performed, the stipulation not yet fulfilled, but the Surety’s oath was quite enough— in the Father’s ears there needed no other confirmation. His heart was satisfied. Yes, more—in that same moment when Jesus spoke that word in His Father’s ear, all the saints were in Him justified and rendered complete—their salvation was secure! As soon as ever Jesus Christ said, “My Father, I will pay the penalty, they shall have My righteousness and I will have their sin,” their acceptance was an eternal fact! He would never go back from His agreement, nor ever turn aside from His Covenant. This is the first aspect in which we behold Grace shed forth from Christ’s lips.  
Secondly, Grace is poured into His lips as the greatest of all Prophets and Teachers. The Law was given by Moses and there was some Grace on his lips, for Moses, even when he preached the Law, preached the Gospel, privileged as he was to look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished. When he taught the offering of the lamb, the bullock and the turtledove, there was Gospel couched in the Law itself, in the Law of Levitical ceremonies. But the beams that shone on the face of Moses were but beams of Grace, they were not “the Glory as of the OnlyBegotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth.” And when other Prophets rose at different periods of the first dispensation of the Law, they each had some measure of Grace. Whether we consider the heroic Elijah, or the plaintive Jeremiah, or Isaiah, that seraphic Seer who spoke more of Christ than all the rest, we find that each and all had some Grace in their lips. What they preached was gracious Doctrine and well worthy to be received, but who ever taught such Doctrines as those of Jesus? Where, among the writings of the Prophets and sages of antiquity, can we find such words as those which Jesus uttered? Who taught the people that they should love all men? Who taught the people such wondrous Doctrines as those which you find in all His sermons? Who could have been so great a Teacher? Who could so blessedly have prophesied to His people but Jesus Christ Himself? My Soul, contemplate Jesus as the only Rabbi of the Church! View Him as the only Lord and Master! Take your Doctrines and articles of faith from His lips, and His lips alone! Study His Word and make that alone your guide! Interpret all the rest by His light. When you have done so, you will say, “O Prophet of my salvation, You Teacher of Israel, verily Grace is poured into Your lips! No books afford me such instruction as Yours, no ministers address me in such words as my Shepherd speaks. No learning has in it such depths of wisdom as the wisdom of Christ!” More to be desired are His words than gold, yes, than much fine gold. Grace was poured into His lips as the greatest of all Prophets!  
Thirdly, Christ had Grace poured into His lips as the most eloquent of all preachers. One of the joys I anticipate in Heaven is to hear Christ speak to His people. I conceive that there was such a majesty about Jesus Christ when He spoke on earth, as not Demosthenes, Cicero, nor Pericles—nor all the orators of ancient or modern times could ever approach! He had a voice, I suppose, more sweet than even the music which came from the harps of angels! He had eyes expressive of sympathy with those whom He addressed. He had a heart which animated every feature of His Countenance. His was pathos which could break the stony heart. His was sublimity which could elevate the sensual mind. Each word of His was a pearl, each sentence was of pure gold. “Never man spoke like this Man.” No poet, in his most rapt ecstasy, could have grasped such sublime thoughts as those the Savior delivered to His hearers and when, stooping from His flights, He condescends to speak in plain and simple words to His fellows, there is naked, ungarnished simplicity in the familiar discourse of Christ to which man cannot in the least approach! Jesus Christ was the greatest and the plainest of all preachers. We could put aside every other in comparison with Him. We have known men who could curb the restless multitude and hold them spellbound. Some of us have listened to some mighty man of God who chained our ears, held us fast, and constrained our attention all the while he spoke. Justice, sin, righteousness and judgment to come have absorbed us while they enlisted our sympathies. But had you heard the Savior, you would have heard more wondrous things than any mere man ever could have spoken!  
I think if the wild winds could have heard Him, they would have ceased their blustering. If the waves could have listened to Him they would have hushed their tumult and the rough back of the ocean would have been smoothed! If the stars could have heard Him, they would have stopped their hurried march. If the sun and moon had heard Him whose voice is more potent than that of Joshua, they would have stood still. If Creation could have heard Him, then charmed, it would have stopped its ceaseless motions and the wheels of the universe would have stood still, that all ears might listen, that all hearts might beat and that all eyes might glisten! And that so souls might be elevated while Jesus Christ spoke. It was fabled of Hercules that he had golden chains in his mouth with which he chained the ears of men. It is true of Jesus that He had golden chains in His mouth that chained men’s ears and hearts too! He had no need to ask attention, for Grace was poured into His lips. Happy day! Happy day when I shall sit down at the feet of Jesus Christ and hear Him preach! O Beloved, what we shall then think of our poor preaching, I cannot tell! It is a mercy that Jesus Christ does not preach here now, for, after hearing Him, none of us would preach again, so ashamed would we be of ourselves. Sometimes, when we try to preach, and afterwards hear a more able minister, we feel so outdone that our preaching seems nothing—we hardly dare try again. It is a mercy there is a veil between us and Christ. We cannot hear Him preach, or else we should all vacate our pulpits! But in Heaven I hope to sit enchanted at His feet. And if He will speak for a million years, I would ask Him to speak yet another million! And if He will still speak, even then, for the sweet redundance of that Grace which is poured into His lips, my raptured soul would sit and love, and smile itself away in ecstasies of joy to hear my Savior speak!  
Fourthly, Grace was poured into the lips of Christ as the faithful Promiser. I look upon all the promises of God’s Word as being the promises of Jesus as well as the promises of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. All the promises of God, we are told, are yes and Amen in Christ Jesus, unto the Glory of God by us. And as the promises are all made in Him, so they are all spoken by Him. Now, will you not concur with me when I say that, verily, Grace is poured into His lips as the faithful Promiser? We have sometimes read His promises. We have heard them with our ears, and oh, what Grace there is in them! Take, for instance, that great honeycomb promise—“The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you.” Turn to another—“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you.” “Fear not, you worm, Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Listen to such sweet words as these—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.” Beloved, you do not need that I tell you how precious these promises are! The best way to preach of the faithful Promiser is to tell you some of His promises. I will not tell you what treasures there are in Christ’s cabinet—I will break the door open and let you look at some more of the treasures for yourselves. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.” “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” “Even to hoar hairs will I carry you.” “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Is He not indeed full of Grace as the faithful Promiser? You, poor Souls, who have been drinking from the wells of promise, well know His faithfulness and the Grace therein! You have come sick and weary oftentimes to this well and your strength has been renewed till you were like giants refreshed with new wine! Your spirits have been depressed and your souls have been melancholy, but when you have come here, you have tasted that wine which makes glad the heart of man! Oh, did ever man speak like this Man when He speaks as the faithful Promiser?

Fifthly, Grace is poured into His lips as the Wooer and the Winner of His people’s hearts. O Beloved, Christ has hard work to win His people’s love! He prepares His feast, the fatlings are killed, but those that are bidden will not come, so He says to His messengers, “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may

be filled.” [See Sermon #227, Volume 5—COMPEL THEM TO COME IN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Yet what a hard matter it is to

bring poor souls to be in love with Jesus! In vain does the minister dilate upon His charms! In vain does he try to paint His features as well as he can. We are poor daubers and we mar the beauty which we attempt to portray! Sinners say, “Is that Jesus? Then there is no beauty in Him that we should desire Him.” And they turn away and hide their faces from Him. With tears streaming from our eyes, we seek “to find out acceptable words,” and we use the best language our hearts can dictate, but we cannot win your souls! Sometimes we address you in rough words that we have borrowed from some ancient Boanerges. At other times, with smooth words such as a Chrysostom might approve—yet they are alike in vain. But oh, when Jesus pleads His own cause, how sweetly does He plead it! Have you never watched the heart when Jesus Christ begins to woo it, when He opens the ear and says, “Poor soul, I love you and because I love you, I will tell you what you are. You are cast out into the open field, you are lying in your blood; you are dead in trespasses and sins; yet I love you, will you not love Me?” “No,” says the heart, “I will not.” “But,” says Jesus, “My love is deep as Hell, it is insatiable as the grave. I will be yours and you shall be Mine.” And have you noted how soon the stubborn soul begins to yield and the hard rock begins to flow like Niobe’s tears till, at last the heart says, “O Jesus! Love you? Yes I do, because You did first love me!”

Why is it that some here have not given their hearts to Jesus? Perhaps it is because Jesus has not revealed Himself to them in Person. But when He does, they cannot deny Him! I challenge any man or woman to hold his heart back when Jesus comes for it. When He displays Himself, when He takes the veil off our eyes and lets us look at His lovely face. When He shows us His wounded hands and His bleeding side, I think there is no heart but must be drawn forth to Him. Ah, Christian! Do you not remember the hour when He pleaded with you? He knocked at the door and you would not let Him in. But how sweetly did He tell you of your sinnership and with the next word made known to you your redemption! Then He told you of your death—and with the next word made you alive! Then He told you that you were powerless, and with the next word made you strong! Then He told you of your unbelief and with the next sentence gave you faith! Oh, is He not filled with Grace as He wins the hearts and affections of His people?!

Sixthly, Jesus Christ has His lips filled with Grace as the great consolation of Israel, the comfort of all His people. There is no comfort except that which comes from the Lord Jesus. At no brook can you slake the thirst of the soul but at that stream of Grace which flows from Christ and can never run dry. Let us rehearse His mighty acts. Let us go back over our life and see the various Ebenezers we have raised to His Sovereign Grace and Mercy. Do you not remember how He appeared to you in the solitude of the wilderness and said to you, “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love”? Do you not remember when, torn with the thorns and briars of this world, you were despairing and ready to die, how He came and touched you and said to you, “Live,” when He bade you turn your eye upwards to Him—and you could then say, “Since Jesus is mine, I will fear nothing”? O you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, go again to the banqueting house where the Savior comforted you with flagons and fed you with apples, where He gave you the sweet fruits of the Kingdom of God and took of the clusters of Eshcol and squeezed them into your mouth! Do you not remember when He gave you something better than angels’ food at the Lord’s Table, or how He manifested Himself to you in the use of the means while you were waiting upon Him? And will you not say, “O Jesus, verily Grace was poured into Your lips”? Desponding soul, if Jesus speaks to you today, you will not be desponding any longer! There is such potency in the word, “Jesus,” that I think it ought to be sung in all hospitals to charm away diseases! Wherever there are diseased hearts and troubled spirits, I would always go and sing, “Jesus!” When He draws near to comfort His people, midnight becomes noon and the thickest darkness becomes a blaze of meridian splendor, for Grace is poured into His lips!

Seventhly, Grace is poured into Christ’s lips as the great Intercessor for His people before the Throne of God. Before Jesus ascended up on high and led captivity captive, as Toplady says, “With cries and tears He offered up His humble suit below.” But now that Jesus Christ has gone up on high, “with authority,” He pleads before His Father. It must have been wonderful to hear the prayers of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, but oh, if we might see our blessed Lord this morning pleading in Heaven! He stands before His Father’s Throne, points to His pierced side and shows His wounded hands. When our prayers rise to Heaven, they are broken prayers, but Jesus knows how to mend them. There are things in them that should not be there, so He corrects them and then He takes the amended edition of our prayers and says, “My Father, another petition I have come to lay before You.” Says the Father, “From whom is it?” “From one of My people.” And then Jesus Christ says, “Father, I will it must be done. Look, here is the price!” And He holds up His hands and shows His side. And then the Father says “My Son, it shall be done. Whatever You ask in prayer, for Your sake it shall be bestowed.”

Do you see yonder poor man? His name is Peter. At no great distance is Satan, who wants to destroy his soul. He has a large sieve in which he desires to sift Peter. Can you imagine Satan presenting himself before the Lord, as in days of yore? He says, “O Lord, let me have Peter in my sieve, that I may sift him as wheat!” Down goes Jesus before the Throne and says, “My Father, I beseech You let not this grain of wheat fall to the ground.” Satan goes and catches Peter and begins to sift him. The first time, he is a little frightened. The second time, he says, “Man, I know not what you say!” The third time, he says, “I know not the Man.” And he begins to curse and swear. How terrible is that sifting! But Christ looks at him and out goes Peter—the prayer of Jesus availed for him, the look of Jesus prevailed with him! “He went out and wept bitterly” and his soul was saved. Oh, the mighty power of intercession! I do not think our prayers would ever be heard in Heaven if it were not for Jesus Christ. He is the great Mediator by whom our prayers must be presented.

Eighthly, Jesus Christ has Grace poured into His lips as the Counselor for His people. You may have seen a special pleader rise with a brief in his hand. He shows the case against the prisoner to be a very bad one. Then witnesses are called. Afterwards another advocate gets up to plead the prisoner’s cause—to rebut, if possible, the accusation, or to set forth extenuating circumstances in mitigation of punishment. Now, when we stand before the judgment bar of God, Satan will rise up—that old accuser of the brethren—and will gather together the evidences of our guilt and the reasons why we should be condemned. I think I hear him say that we were born in sin and shaped in iniquity and, therefore, we deserve to be lost! That we have a corrupt nature, that we had the sin of Adam laid to us. And then, with malicious spleen, he will allege that we transgressed at such-and-such a time when we were young—following up our career from youth to manhood and even down to hoar hairs— clenching all his arguments by an appeal to our unbelief, declaring that though we have professed to believe, we have doubted the promises and could not, therefore, be children of God! Well might we, as transgressors, tremble when, with a bad case, the grounds of judgment against us are so maliciously stated!

But there stands forth on our behalf The Wonderful, The Counselor! And He takes His brief in His hand and begins to plead. Hark what He says and see how all opinion is turned at once! “I confess,” says He, “that every word is true that the accuser has uttered. My client pleads guilty to every charge, but I have a full pardon signed by God’s own hand, purchased by My own blood.” And stripping Himself, He shows His wounds and says “These people were given to Me of My Father before the foundation of the world! I bore their sins in My own body on the tree.” And then, mounting to the highest point, He reaches the climax of Grace as He exclaims, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? Can You, O God? Have You not justified them? I cannot, for I died for them.” Then He sits down in triumph, saying, “Whom He justified, them He also glorified. Nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God.”

And now, lastly, Grace is poured into the lips of Jesus as the great Judge of all at last. That will be a gracious judgment which Jesus Christ shall dispense. It will be gracious because it will be at once merciful and just. Sinners, ungodly men and women, now in this House of Prayer, you have never heard the voice of Jesus and you have never known what it is to confess that Grace was poured into His lips. But let me tell you, the time will come when you will be made to confess that Grace is poured into His lips. You will stand there and hear Him say to His own people, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” When you hear it, you will think within yourselves, “Never did such music break on our ears before. Oh what precious words!” Yes, but you will fall down and ask rocks to hide you, and mountains to cover you because the words were not spoken to you! You will tremble as, one by one, the faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ come before Him. He will say to one, “Verily, you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.” To another He will say, “You have fought a good fight, you have kept the faith, receive the crown laid up for you from the foundation of the world.” You will then say, “Oh, what Grace was poured into His lips! How graciously He speaks!” And you, all the while, will feel that He is not speaking to you. You will stand there and know that your turn will never come when He shall speak gracious words to you. You will stand fixed to the spot petrified as you listen while you hear those matchless syllables. You laugh at the saints now—you will envy them then! You despise them now, but you will be ready to kiss the dust of their feet if you might but get into Heaven! You would not ask to sit on a Throne with them, but to lie at their feet would be enough for you if you might but hear Christ say to you, “Come, you blessed.”

But, in a moment, instead of gracious words, my Hearers—I am not telling you a dream, but a reality—in a moment—O believe me, for God speaks it! Instead of words of Grace, there shall come words of terror and there shall be found no blessed place for you. These are the words— “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” You would not wish to hear those gracious lips utter such a sentence as that to you. I am sure you are, none of you, anxious to make your bed in Hell and find your abode in damnation! But, my Hearers, I must warn you faithfully. There are some of you who, if you die as you are, will never go to Heaven. There are many of you, my regular attendants, and some of you who have just strayed in here this morning, who know and your heart confesses it, that you are “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” Christians, weep for them! Let your tears flow in rivers! It were sad if they were sick, but this is worse, for they are sick unto the second death! It were painful if they were condemned to die by the Law, but they are “condemned already.” My Beloved Brothers and Sisters, there are some of you now—start not— there are some sitting side by side with you in the pews who are condemned criminals! How would you feel this morning if, as you sat in your pew, there was a man beside you who was to be hanged tomorrow? You would say, “Oh, that God might bless the Word to that poor creature’s soul! Oh, that God might send it into his heart, for he is a condemned man!” Do you not know that it is so? There is a saint of God and sitting by his side is a child of Hell! Here is an heir of Glory and immortality—and the neighbor who touched his arm this morning is dead in sins and condemned to die! What? Will you not weep and feel for them? Will your hearts be like stone and steel? Will you let them perish without a sigh, without a prayer, without a tear? No! We will pray for them, that God in His mercy may yet give them Grace to save them from the wrath to come!

Poor Sinners, do not despise my blessed Master, I beseech you! If you knew Him, you would love Him, I know! O poor wicked Sinner, you who feel self-condemned, conscience-stricken—have you no love to Jesus? Ah, if you did but know how much Jesus Christ loves you, you would love Him at once! I know a man who said he never was so struck by anything in all his life as when he heard that line—

*“Jesus, Lover of my soul!”*  
“Oh,” he said, “I did not recollect anything of the sermon, but only those words at the beginning of a hymn—

*“Jesus, Lover of my soul!”*  
He went to a friend of mine and he said, “Do you think Jesus Christ is the ‘Lover of my soul?’ If I thought He was, I think I could love Him at once.” The friend said, “Ah, well, if you feel like that, Jesus is the Lover of your soul.” O Beloved, what would you give if you might but call Jesus Christ your Lover and your Friend? If you could but know that He loved you? Do you sigh for an interest in His love? Ah, then He does love you, for you would not have wanted Him to love you if He had not set His heart upon you! Have you a desire for Jesus? Then Jesus has a thousand times as much desire for you! I tell you Christ is more pleased to save poor sinners than poor sinners are to be saved. The Shepherd is more ready to reclaim the lost sheep than the sheep is to be reclaimed. So let me tell you, poor Soul, that Jesus has no pleasure in the death of him that dies—but He has a pleasure deep as the sea, high as Heaven, wide as the East is from the West, and as unsearchable as His own Divinity, in saving souls! Only believe in His name, Sinner! To you I preach, you actual, bona fide sinner! You real sinner, to you I preach! Jesus Christ says, “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” Do you Believe this? Will you put your trust in Him? Will you drop into His arms and let Him carry you? Will you fall flat upon the Rock of Ages and let that sustain you? If you do it now, this moment, you shall become in this happy moment a changed man or woman! You shall be no longer an heir of wrath, but a child of Grace! And your salvation shall become as inevitably secure as if you were even now among the glorified!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE ALMIGHTY WARRIOR  
NO. 3292

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 18, 1866.

**“Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty One, with Your Glory and Your Majesty. And in Your Majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness: and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under You.” Psalm 45:3-5.**

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon verse five, is #3039, Volume 53—THE KING’S SHARP ARROWS— read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]

THIS Psalm has been thought by some to be a marriage song for Solomon on the occasion of his wedding with the daughter of Pharaoh. It may be so, though I should be very loath to believe it. But even if that should be true, we will find in the Psalm a distinct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to His marriage union with His Church. Under the Mosaic dispensation, when a man had married a wife, he was not to go out to war for a year, but when the Lord Jesus Christ entered into a marriage union with His people, that very union made it necessary that He should wage war on their behalf. He had to meet all their spiritual foes in terrible conflict—the Prince of Darkness and all the powers of evil set themselves in array against Him—and we know how He fought with them, overcame them and trampled them beneath His feet as the treader of grapes crushes the purple clusters in the winepress. And now, even though in Heaven, He is in a state of rest. Yet here, as the Head of the Church Militant, His mystical body, He is still warring against sin, struggling most strenuously to drive sin out of the world and to make the earth His own dominion wherein He shall reign in righteousness and peace.

The prayer of the Psalmist, as we have it in our text, is also a most suitable petition for us to present. We desire to stir up our almighty Champion to go forth to the war against evil. How gloriously He went forth with His first disciples in the brave days of old! They rode forth to battle and to death under His leadership, but it was to victory, too, in those glorious times of conflict and conquest. But we seem to have fallen upon days of peace—that false peace which arises from stagnation, lethargy and death. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have need to cry mightily to the great Captain of our salvation to gird His sword upon His thigh, to order His great war chariot to be brought to the front, again— that He may again ride forth to battle with all His attendant hosts—that His enemies may know that His power is as great as ever it was in the ages that are gone! While I am speaking upon the text, I trust that all Believers here will turn it into a prayer and that while you are praying, God will give you the answer and bless the message to the salvation of sinners—which will be a true victory for Christ!

I am going to invite your attention, first, to the armed Warrior. Secondly, to His filled chariot. And thirdly, to His victory won.  
I. So, first, I ask you to think of THE ARMED WARRIOR—“Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty One, with Your Glory and Your Majesty.”  
Then Christ has a sword. What is it? Certainly not the sword of which soldiers and princes are proud, for it was concerning that kind of sword that Jesus said to Peter, “Put up again your sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” It was concerning that sort of weapon that Jesus said to Pilate, “My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight.” Christ could truly say that the weapons of His warfare were not carnal, but that they were mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. His was not the kind of fighting that needs sword and spear and shield and buckler such as the world’s warriors use. His wrestling was “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wilderness in high places.” The main weapon which Christ wielded was “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”  
The Psalmist prayed, “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh.” But in the Book of the Revelation we read concerning Christ, “out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” You know how constantly Jesus quoted the Scriptures in resisting Satan’s temptations or the assaults of His human adversaries. “It is written,” was His unanswerable argument at all times. This sword, which Christ wields, is not made of steel to cut heads, or arms, or legs—it is the sword of the Truth of God to pierce the hearts and consciousness of sinners. It is said to be sharp—“sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” No other sword wounds as the Sword of the Spirit does! It wounds so that none but God can heal. You may bring it down upon a heart that is harder than a millstone, but its edge will never be turned and it will cut the stone in two. It is a sharp, wounding sword— and it is a killing sword. Wherever it goes, it kills sin, cuts iniquity in pieces, slays self-righteousness and destroys the infirmities of the flesh! This sword is also “two-edged.” A sword with only one edge to it has a blunt back, but there is no blunt back to the Sword of the Spirit—it has a front stroke and a back stroke—in fact, it cuts all ways and every part of it is keen as a razor’s edge! Promises, precepts, Doctrines, threats are all sharp and penetrating—there is no part of the Word of God that is ineffective to produce the result for which it was given.

Notice that the Psalmist prays, “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh.” The Bible is not your Bible or mine, alone. It is God’s Bible, it is Christ’s Bible, it is the Holy Spirit’s Bible. Truth is no monopoly—it is not the priest’s truth—it is the people’s truth! It is everybody’s truth, but it is most of all Christ’s truth. Why is it that the Word of God is Christ’s sword? Surely it is because that Word tells us about Him—He is the text of which the Bible is the sermon! The Bible is like a script pointing to Him and saying, “This is the way to Jesus Christ.” Holy Scripture gives you a wardrobe full of choice garments and they all smell of myrrh and aloe and cassia because Christ has worn them! The Word of God is especially Christ’s because He has used it and still uses it. My use of the Word or any other preacher’s use of it will have very little effect unless Christ uses us as the instruments by which He shows what He can do with it. Someone looked at the sword of a famous conqueror and, after examining it closely, said, I do not see anything particular about it.” “No,” was the answer, “perhaps not, but if you could see the brawny arm that wielded it, you would understand why it is so notable.” So is it with the Sword of the Spirit—this Divinely-Inspired Book—it may not seem to you as though it could work such wonders as it is continually doing, but if you could see the hand of Christ that wields that sword, then you would understand where the Glory and the Majesty of the Truth of God are found—and where it derives its power to convince and convert the sons of men!  
The Psalmist’s petition is, “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty One.” When a soldier intends to use his sword, he puts it where he can easily get at it. He hangs it by his side so that he can readily draw it from its scabbard when he needs it either for attack or defense. So the prayer of our text means, “Lord, use Your Word! Put power and energy into the Truth as it is proclaimed.” The preaching of a sermon may be like the drawing of a sword from its scabbard, yet it will not be really effective until Christ puts His hand to the work! The soldier’s sword kills nobody until he grasps its hilt with a firm grip and deals the deadly blow with it. Here is the Sword of the Spirit, like some ancient weapon hanging on the wall of an old castle, but O You blessed King of kings, will You not take it in Your almighty hand and prove again what You can do with it? Right and left will You not cut and thrust with it and so get to Yourself a glorious victory over all the powers of evil? Ah, Sinner, if Christ shall send His Word home to Your heart, you will soon perceive that is a very different thing from what it is when we poor mortals only preach it in your ears! When we blow the Gospel trumpet at Ear-Gate, you take no notice. But if the Prince Emmanuel shall bring the great battering ram of His Cross up to Heart-Castle and smite it, blow after blow, the posts will rock, the bars will snap, the gate will fall and the Prince will ride in and reign forever over the soul that He has won by His Grace—as long ago He bought it with His blood! Oh, that He would do it this very night!  
Notice the title that the Psalmist gives to the Almighty Warrior—“Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty One.” Christ is not only mighty, but He is most mighty. There have been mighty men in prayer, but He is the most mighty Advocate with His Father on His people’s behalf. There have been mighty preachers of the Word, but “never man spoke like this Man.” There have been many friends of sinners, but there has never been such a Friend of sinners as Jesus is! Your sins are mighty to destroy, but He is more mighty to save. I will grant you that your passions are mighty—that is positive! I will grant you that they are more mighty than you are—that is comparative! But Jesus is most mighty to overcome them and that is superlative! The superlative might of the love of Christ as exhibited in His death upon the Cross is infinitely greater than the positive and comparative might of our actual sin—and the depravity of our nature. May He prove Himself most mighty in winning many of you unto Himself!  
The Psalmist not only prays to the Lord to gird His sword upon His thigh, but he also adds, “with Your Glory and Your Majesty.” Did you ever see Christ in His Glory and His Majesty? I know that you have never seen Him thus unless you have first seen yourself in your degradation and shame. There, where the poor broken-hearted sinner lies prostrate in the dust, feeling himself to be less than nothing, the great Conqueror comes in His Glory and Majesty, and says to him, “I am Your salvation. I have loved you with an everlasting love and laid down My life that I might save you.” You remember how John Bunyan pictures Prince Emmanuel’s entry into Mansoul after He had captured it from Diabolus?—“This was the manner of going up there. He was clad in His golden armor. He rode in His royal chariot, the trumpets sounded about Him, the colors were displayed, His ten thousands went up at His feet and the elders of Mansoul danced before Him.” They might well rejoice at His coming in Glory and Majesty to take up His abode in their midst, and to prove to them how fully He had forgiven their rebellion now that they had repented of their sin and accepted Him as their rightful Lord and Savior! So will it be with all here who welcome Christ into their hearts and no longer yield allegiance to the Prince of Darkness!  
II. Having thus shown you the armed Warrior, I am now going to bid you look upon THE FILLED CHARIOT—“And in Your Majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.”  
The Eastern monarch stood erect in his war chariot and rode forth in great splendor in the midst of his troops. To my mind, the preaching of the Gospel is the chariot of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel itself is His sword and the preaching of the Gospel, the distribution of the Word, by which Christ is made known to the sons of men, may be likened to His chariot of salvation! This chariot appears to have four wheels or, if you like, you can call them the four milk-white steeds that draw the Gospel chariot. Their names, according to our text, are Majesty, Truth, Meekness and Righteousness. These are the four supports of the Gospel, or the four motive powers by which the Gospel of Christ is brought into the hearts of sinners!  
The power of the Gospel lies first, then, in the Majesty of Christ. Sinner, Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, is also the Son of God, who could truly say, “I and My Father are One.” He who died on Calvary’s Cross is the King of kings and Lord of lords! That very Man who cried in agony, “I thirst,” is the Almighty God who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand! Does not this move you to trust Him? The Majesty of Christ ought to win not only your admiration, but also your affection. He whose face was more marred than that of any other man, was the One of whom Isaiah said, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Oh, does not this fact melt your heart and woo and win you to Him, that He, against whom you have sinned, should have suffered for your sins and borne the curse and penalty that were due to you? Surely the Majesty of Christ should lead you to trust Him!  
Then, the next wheel of the chariot, or the second of the noble steeds drawing it, is Truth. Sinner, the Gospel which is preached to you is true! Whatever there is in the world that is false, this certainly is a positive fact—“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” It is also true that He will receive you if you come to Him—come and trust Him and see if He will not welcome you! It is true that He can forgive the blackest offenses and that He does forgive all who sincerely repent of their sin and trust in His atoning Sacrifice. It is true that He can uproot sin from the heart, make the unholy holy, and cause the disobedient to become obedient to God’s commands! This is not a matter of conjecture on our part—it is no guesswork, no dream of an excited imagination—many of us have proved the sanctifying power of the Doctrines of the Cross and we, therefore, urge you to prove this for yourselves so that the Truth of the Gospel may commend itself to you.  
The next wheel or steed of the chariot is Meekness. Jesus said, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” It is no proud Savior who invites you to come to Him! Let me remind you working men that Jesus Christ belonged to your rank in life and probably toiled at the carpenter’s bench with Joseph, the husband of His mother, Mary. He was no domineering aristocrat, looking down with contempt upon men and women in a lower stratum of society. The Lord says concerning Him, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” He is the people’s Christ. [See Sermon #11, Vo

lume 1—THE PEOPLE’S CHRIST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He is a condescending Savior who took little children up in His arms and blessed them, and said, “Allow the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God.” Notwithstanding all His Glory and Majesty, He disdains not the poor and needy, and His ears are always open to the cry of the humble and contrite! He takes pity upon the prisoner, He hearkens to the wail of the sorrowful, He has respect unto the broken in heart and is always tender and compassionate to any who seek His aid. Surely this meekness of the Savior must commend the Gospel to you!

Then the fourth wheel —or the fourth steed if you prefer that metaphor—is Righteousness. O Brothers and Sisters, what a righteous Savior Jesus is and what a righteous Gospel His Gospel is! A man might well fall in love with the Gospel for this reason, if for no other—that it sets forth so clearly the Majesty of Divine Justice. God determined to save sinners, yet He would not save them at the expense of justice. He delights in mercy, but He would not indulge even His darling attribute to the detriment of His righteous Law! Christ gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He yielded up His hands and His feet to the cruel nails, His body to indescribable pangs and His soul to agonies so terrible that He cried, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” He bore

—

*“All that Incarnate God could bear,*

*With strength enough but none to spare”—*in order that He might fully vindicate the justice of God. Righteousness well completed the number of the wheels of the chariot of salvation, or the steeds that draw that chariot wherever God wills it to go! May they, by His Grace, draw it just where you are, poor Sinner, and may that same Grace compel you to enter that chariot, that you may ride in it to everlasting Glory!

But dear Friends, a Gospel without Christ is like a chariot without a rider in it—and of what use is an empty chariot? In the front of the chariot of the Gospel stands Jesus Christ in all His Glory and His Majesty! I wish that all preachers would always remember this. Some of them seem to me to preach the Doctrines of the Gospel, and others of them proclaim its precepts—and in that way they bring out the chariot, but there is no rider in it! They have left out the Christ who is its Chief—indeed, its only Glory! But whatever else the preacher may forget, he should never forget his Master, but always give Him His rightful place. He should say to his Lord as the Psalmist said to Jerusalem, “If I forget you, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cleave to the roof my mouth.” What is there for any man to preach about if he leaves Jesus Christ out of his sermon? A discourse without Christ in it is delusion and a sham—a mere playing with immortal souls, a mockery both of God and man! Jesus Christ and Him Crucified should be the Alpha and the Omega of every sermon! Even if the preacher is not preaching Christ directly, he ought to be preaching Him indirectly, proclaiming the Truths of God in such a way that it shall either draw the sinner or else drive him to the heart of Christ! In the chariot of our ministry I hope that we all, without hesitation, say that Jesus Christ rides in His Glory and in His Majesty.

But, although Christ may thus ride in the chariot of our teaching, He must always be there in His Omnipotent might and in the power of the ever-blessed Spirit. So I want you who love Him to pray the Psalmist’s prayer, “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty One, with Your Glory and Your Majesty. And in Your Majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.” There is a fine old Welsh hymn which I wish I could turn into English without spoiling it—it runs somewhat to this effect—“O Jesus, come forth! Leave the ivory palaces! Your chariot waits for You, Come forth, come forth! Hell trembles before You, all Heaven adores You, earth owns Your sway, men’s hearts cannot resist You. Come forth, come forth! Bars of brass You break, gates of iron give way before You; come forth, come forth, O Jesus for Your chariot awaits You now!”

III. Now we are to close with our third head, THE VICTORY WON. “Your right hand shall teach You terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; whereby the people fall under You.”

Many representations of Eastern monarchs picture them not only as wearing a sword upon the thigh when riding in the great war chariot, but also as bearing a battle bow. And the artists, wishing to flatter their royal masters, represented the king’s arrows as going right through the hearts of the king’s enemies! Our Almighty Warrior has a sure aim—He never misses the heart at which He shoots His arrows! That same Gospel which is like a two-edged sword is, in another aspect, like sharp arrows shot from the bow of a mighty archer. Arrows, you know, can do nothing until they are shot. The arrow is useless without the bow—and the bow, itself, is useless without the hand and arm of the man who bends it and speeds the arrow to the mark he wants to hit! It used to be said of William the Conqueror that no man in England except himself could bend his bow— and so is it with the bow that belongs to our Great Conqueror—no one but He can bend it. When He fits the arrows to the string and draws the bow with His Almighty hand, the missile flies with irresistible force and buries itself in the heart at which the King took such unerring aim!

I take it that these arrows are not so much intended to represent the whole Bible as certain texts out of the Bible—sharp arrow from the quiver of Revelation. Sometimes one arrow will be shot and sometimes another, but they are all sharp. Have you, my Hearers, ever felt the pang that goes through the heart when one of these sharp arrows strikes it? So long as it lasts, there is no pain as keen as that produced by conviction of sin! And there is no cure for that pain except from that very hand which shot the arrow that caused it!

These arrows are spoken of in the plural because while there are arrows of conviction, arrows of justice, arrows of terror, there are also arrows of mercy, arrows of consolation. While there are arrows that kill sin, there are also arrows that kill despair, which also is a sin—and as there are arrows that smite and slay our carnal hopes, so there are other arrows that effectually destroy our sinful fears. And all these arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies—there is not a blunt one in the whole quiver.

Notice that all these arrows belong to the King. It is to the “Most Mighty” that the Psalmist says, “Your arrows.” The Truth of God never comes home to our heart and conscience until the Holy Spirit convinces us that it is God’s Truth. There are some Doctrines in the Scriptures which many are unwilling to accept as Divine although they are very clearly revealed in the Word and they are Truths which God has over and over again blessed to the salvation of souls. People have often said that the Doctrine of Election ought not to be preached lest it should prove to be a stumbling block in the way of sinners coming to Christ, yet I can testify that we have had scores of souls brought to the Savior and added to this Church through sermons upon Election, Predestination and those other great Truths of God in which many of us believe and rejoice! They are certainly among the sharp arrows of our King!

Observe, too, where the King’s arrows go. They all pierce the heart. “Your arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king’s enemies.” Some of you have been struck by an arrow in your head. Well, that would kill you if it were literally an arrow—but the King’s arrows, when they metaphorically strike the head, that is, when there is a merely intellectual assent to the Truth of the Gospel, are not effective as they are when they enter the heart. Some of you have been struck by these arrows in your legs—that is to say you have gone limping upstairs to pray for a little while, yet there has been no such killing work as there is when the King’s arrows pierce the heart. When they strike the sinner there, they inflict a mortal wound, for out of the heart are the issues of life. O Lord, smite the sinners heart! Kill his old life and give him a new life! Slay him as Your enemy, but cause him to live as Your friend! Shoot Your arrows right through the heart that loves sin and hates You, the heart that loves drunkenness, that loves lust, that loves Sabbath-breaking, that loves evil in any form! Kill that heart, O Lord, and then give a new heart and a right spirit!

Let me remind you that there is a time coming when Christ will go forth to war with all His armor on—that is the time of which we read in the Revelation, “out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it, He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron. . .In righteousness He does judge and make war.” It will be a terrible thing for all who are the enemies of the King in that day! His arrows will indeed be swift and sharp to slay them. Do not long for that day to come, you unconverted ones, for to you it will be a day of darkness and not of light! It will be a dreadful day for those of you who have despised and rejected the Christ of God when He shall fit His sharp arrows to the string, draw the bow and pierce you to the heart. Where will you flee from the glance of His all-seeing eyes? Up to the loftiest mountains His shafts shall fly after you! In the trackless deserts, in the densest forests, far out upon the mighty ocean His arrows shall find you out! Try not to flee from Him, but flee to Him! If a man wanted to shoot me with a bow and arrow, I would try to clasp him in my arms and hold him to my heart, for how could he shoot me then? Close in with Christ in this fashion! Run not from Him, but run to Him and clasp Him to your heart and never let Him go!

If you yield to Christ, you will find that He will no longer be angry with you. He is loving and gracious and He delights to welcome penitents to His heart. Oh that He might receive you this very hour! He will if you only trust Him and then you will see Him riding in His chariot in quite another fashion. Perhaps at first you will be afraid of Him and ask, “Lord, what have You come here to do?” And He will reply, “I have come to kill your sins with My sharp arrows.” One after another He will fit them to His bow and shoot at all He means to slay. He will kill your profanity. He will kill your self-righteousness. He will kill your self-trust. All of those will be pierced through and through by His unerring darts! Then He will shoot at your pride and kill it, outright, and make you humble as a little child. He will shoot at your love of the world. He will shoot at all your pleasures which are not holy pleasures. He will shoot at every lust and every evil propensity within you—and down they will fall— everyone slain by His sharp arrows and blessed will it be for you when they are all slain! Who would wish to spare any one of these King’s enemies? Rather rise up and help the King to slay them! Surely you will give no quarter to those that are your foes as well as His!

Finally, Sinner, trust the Savior. He died for sinners, bearing their sins in His own body on the tree. He died for all who trust Him—and they who trust Him shall find Him faithful and true! And He shall bring them Home to His Father’s House to dwell with Him forever! Oh, that all of us might be in that blessed company! God grant it for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 103.**

Verse 1. Bless the LORD, O my soul—Come, my Soul, wake up, bestir yourself, for you have a great work to do! Such work as angels do forever before the Throne of God on high!

1. And all that is within in me, bless His holy name. [See Sermons #1078, Vo  
lume 18—THE SAINTS BLESSING THE LORD and #2121, Volume 36—THE KEYNOTE OF THE YEAR—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org] Let no

power or faculty exempt itself from this blessed service! Come, my memory, my will, my judgment, my intellect, my heart—all that is in me is to be stirred up by His holy name to magnify and bless. “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” for the music must begin deep down in the center of my being—it must be myself, my inmost self that praises God!

2. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. This shall be the first note of our grateful song, “We love Him because He first loved us.” We have not to go abroad for materials for praise—they are all around us at home. “Forget not all His benefits” to you, my Soul! His overwhelming, His innumerable benefits, which have to be summed up in the gross as “all His benefits,” forget them not!

3. Who forgives all your iniquities. Come, my Soul, can you not praise God for forgiven sin? This is the sweetest note in our song of praise— “Who forgives all your iniquities,” not merely some of them! The blessed Scapegoat has carried the whole mass into that “No man’s land” where they shall never be found!

3. Who heals all your diseases. He is the Physician who can heal you, my Soul. Your diseases are the worst diseases of all, for they would drag you down to Hell if they remained unhealed! But He “heals all your diseases.”

4. Who redeems your life from destruction. O my Soul, praise God for redemption! If you cannot sing about anything else, sing of “free Grace and dying love.” Keep on ringing “those charming bells.”

4. Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. What? Can you wear such a crown as this, which is made up of loving kindness and tender mercies, and yet not bless Him who put it upon your head? Oh, let it not be so, but let us, each one, break forth in spirit in Mary’s song, “My soul does magnify the Lord.”

5. Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. This is heavenly feasting on heavenly fare! There is Divine satisfaction to be derived from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ! O my Soul, pray to God to give you this satisfying food so that your youth may be renewed, so that your wing feathers may grow again, that you may mount as eagles do! Surely, dear Friends, this little list of mercies, though such a short one, comprises an immensity of mercy far beyond utmost comprehension! Let us bless the Lord for it all.

6. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Let the poor and the down-trodden praise the Lord who so graciously takes care of them! He is the Executor of the needy, and He is the Executioner of those that oppress them!

7. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. Therefore let us bless the God of Revelation who does not hide Himself from His creatures, but who makes known both His ways and His acts unto His chosen people. An unknown God is not a praised God, but when He reveals Himself to His people, they cannot refrain from blessing His holy name!

8. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Praise Him for all this! At every mention of any one of His Divine attributes let your hearts beat to the music of praise.

9. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever. Therefore let the afflicted praise Him, let the downcast and the despondent sing praises unto His holy name! If they cannot sing because of anything else, let them bless the name of the Lord that He will not keep His anger forever!

10. He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Let us all thank God that we are not in Hell and that we are yet on praying ground and on pleading terms with Him—and some of us can praise Him that we shall never come into Hell, for He has saved us with an everlasting salvation! Truly, if we did not bless Him, every timber in this building and every iron column that supports this roof would burst out in rebukes for our ingratitude!

11. For as the Heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. Look up to the blue sky. Try to imagine what is beyond the stars and then say to yourself, “So great is His mercy toward them that fear Him”—and try to praise Him as He deserves to be praised.

12. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Let us therefore praise Him for such boundless loving kindness and tender mercy!

13. Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that

fear Him. [See Sermons #941, Volume 16—THE TENDER PITY OF THE LORD; #1650, Volume 28— GOD’S FATHERLY PITY and #2639, Volume 45—OUR HEAVENLY FATHER’S PITY—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He has an infinitely

tender heart. He never strikes without regret, but His love always flows most freely. No earthly father or mother is half as full of pity as God is to His children.

14. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Our bodies are just animated dust and our souls are so weak and feeble that even they might be compared to dust in His sight—not iron or granite, but simply dust. What men call “the laws of Nature” are so stern that it is a wonder that men live as long as they do, for earthquakes and tornadoes and volcanoes are found that no man can bind! And when so many men are constantly crossing the sea it is a wonder that so many of them ever come to land again.

15. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. You are like the primrose by the river’s brink, or the buttercup and the daisy in the meadow that is mown with the scythe. That is all we mortals are—not mighty cedars, not solid rocks, but just flowers of the field or as so much grass!

16. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. The hot winds of the East blow over a meadow and it is immediately burned up. Even in the South of France, when the Sirocco has blown across from Africa I have seen the fairest flowers look in a short time as if they had been burned with hot iron—and such are we when pestilence, as we call it, comes. It is but a breath of poisonous wind and we are soon gone.

17. But—This is a blessed, “but”—  
17. The mercy of the LORD*—*That is not a fading flower, that is not a withering wind! “But the mercy of the Lord”—

17. Is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children—Here are innumerable mercies all enclosed in the one mercy of the Lord! Everlasting mercy, Covenant mercy. If we do not praise God whenever we think of the Covenant of Grace, what are we doing? We must be possessed by a dumb devil if we do not praise Him whose mercy “is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him.”

18, 19. To such as keep His Covenant, and to those that remember His commandment, to do them. The LORD has prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom rules over all. Now, children of the King, will you go mourning all your days? You who dwell in the light of His Throne, will you not be glad? Rejoice, O Believer, for your King lives and reigns forever!

20. Bless the LORD, you His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. “Bless the Lord, you His angels.” We cannot do it well enough, yet, so help us, you angels, “that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word.” Your actions are our praises, O you mighty angels of God! Oh, that we had learned to do His commandments as you do them! We are praying for this, “Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.”

21. Bless you the LORD, all you His hosts; you ministers of His, that do His pleasure. All living things and all the forces and powers of Nature are calling upon men to praise the Lord! And we cry to all the hosts of God, the ministers of His, that do His pleasure, “Bless you the Lord.”

22. Bless the LORD, all His works in all place of dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul. While all these glorious anthems are ascending to Heaven, I must not be silent! But I, too, must praise the Lord with my whole heart—“Bless the Lord, O my Soul.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3039 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE KING’S SHARP ARROWS  
NO. 3039

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 16, 1870.

**“Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; whereby the people fall under You.”  
Psalm 45:5.**

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as a King, we delight to think of Him as the Prince of Peace whose dominion shall put an end to all war and make it unnecessary for the nations of the earth to learn the arts of war any longer. Meanwhile, however, in this present state, evil is in the world, sin is all around us and thus sin is the curse of mankind. Christ, therefore, for our good, is a fighting King, combating evil and contending against sin in every shape and form and, in that aspect, we regard Him as standing in His glorious war chariot, riding through the world in the power of His Gospel, smiting right and left with the great sword of the Spirit and, at the same time, shooting His sharp arrows of Gospel Truth to the very ends of the earth! The Truth of God is the weapon that Christ uses. The weapons of His warfare are not carnal any more than are ours. The Truth of God is His sword and the Truth of God is His arrow!

There are some Truths which Jesus Christ proclaims in the Gospel and which He bids us also proclaim, which are like sharp arrows— wounding, piercing, killing—and of these I am about to speak, hoping and trusting that those arrows may, in all their sharpness, pierce all hearts that have not felt them yet! And that where they go, they may kill sin and that He may then come in to heal who has wounded them and to give life to those whom He has slain.

First, we shall ask and answer the question, what are those Truths which are like sharp arrows? Secondly, why are they arrows? And thirdly, how come they stick fast in human hearts?

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THOSE TRUTHS WHICH ARE SHARP AS ARROWS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN?  
There are many of them, but I shall only mention such as are most usually felt when men are convinced of sin. One arrow that is always sharp is this—the spirituality and holiness of the Law of God. Many men read the Law of the Ten Commandments, or hear it read in their churches on the Sabbath, but they do not know that that Law means a great deal more than the mere words seem to convey. For instance, it is written, “You shall not commit adultery,” but Christ tells us that even though no act of unchastity is committed, the very thought of it is condemned and he who indulges an unclean look has already broken the command. The Law of God not only deals with the overt acts, but also with desires—and even with those imaginations which scarcely amount to desires, in which a man pictures the sin and feels a pleasure in the picture, though he has not actually committed the sin. Now, when a man comes to understand in his heart, as well as to hear with his ears that God looks thus at his thoughts, imaginations, desires and words as well as at his actions, then he stands in awe and amazement of the Law and says, “I cannot keep this Law of God, for I am already condemned by it— and being condemned, what way of escape is there for me? How can I get my sins forgiven? By what means can I be reconciled to God?”  
This Truth of God is, indeed, a sharp arrow, and well do I remember when first it pierced my heart and conscience. I felt that I could not stand the test of such a Law for a single moment and that if called to stand before God’s bar to be tried on such grounds, I would not require a trial, but must plead guilty at once, or stand there in silence to hear His righteous sentence of condemnation—  
*“How long beneath the Law I lay  
In bondage and distress!  
I toiled the precepts to obey,  
But toiled without success.  
Then, to abstain from outward sin,  
Was more than I could do.  
Now, if I feel its power within,  
I feel I hate it too.”*

Another of the Truths connected with Christ’s Gospel that is like a sharp arrow is this—the utter impossibility of self-justification. This is one of the Truths of the Gospel that we must never fail to proclaim—“By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” Having offended against God, you cannot expiate the past by any actions of yours. If you should henceforth keep the Law without a single breach or slip, the fact remains that the sentence of condemnation has already gone forth against you! It is often said that this life is a life of probation, but that is not true. We have passed our probation! We have been proved guilty and we are already condemned! And we shall abide under that sentence of condemnation unless we have help outside of ourselves to rescue us from it. Lost, lost, lost—utterly lost is the entire human race apart from the Divine and supreme power which has been put forth in the Person of Jesus Christ! Well do I remember when I first learned that no works of mine—no repentance, no prayers, and no tears could deliver me from the horrible pit into which I was cast through sin! Then was I pierced, indeed, as with a barbed shaft that went right through my soul to the killing of all my proud hopes and boasts! May such an arrow from the King now pierce to the heart anyone here who still cherishes any hope of self-justification!

A third shaft from the King’s bow is this— the certainty of the judgment. If there is any one Truth that Christ proclaimed more often than another, it seems to me to be this—that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. And that the actions of this life will be reviewed in another life, and that rewards and punishments will be meted out by the Great Judge who cannot err. Kind and gracious as the mighty Prophet of Nazareth was, who has described in more graphic words than He did, the separation of the sheep from the goats—and the blessing of those on the right hand and the cursing of those on the left? What words could there be more terrible than His when He spoke of the worm that dies not and of the fire that never shall be quenched? O Sinner, your sin is immortal! And there is only One who can kill it and put it away—even Christ Jesus! You shall live again, Sir! It shall not be the end of you when you are carried to your grave and green grass grows above you. You shall live again and your thoughts, words and actions shall also live! Let them now live in your conscience. Let the recollection of them alarm you even before they arise and accuse you before Him who shall sit on the Great White Throne at the last tremendous Judgment Day! I know this—let a man be thoroughly convinced that he has sinned against God, that he cannot deliver himself from his sin and that as surely as he lives, there is a Day of Judgment awaiting him—he has an arrow sticking fast in his heart which he will be compelled to say is sharp as long as he is one of the King’s enemies!

Another sharp arrow is the sense of the need of an entire renewal of our nature if we are not to be condemned at that Judgment— *“Not all the outward forms on earth,  
Nor rites that God has given,  
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,  
Can raise a soul to Heaven!  
The Sovereign will of God alone  
Creates us heirs of Grace—  
Born in the image of His Son,  
A new peculiar race.”*

Christ’s words are clear and positive, “You must be born-again.” Some perhaps ask, “But Master, may we not reform and amend?” Yes, you may as far as you can, but that will not suffice. “But, Master, may we not observe certain ceremonies which You have ordained, may we not attend to Your precepts and so modify our present nature, and make ourselves fit for Heaven?” Jesus says to them, as He said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born from above,” (for so stands the original), “he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” The Holy Spirit must come upon you and create in you new hearts and right spirits. There must be as total a change in you as though you actually became new creatures! Otherwise from Hell you can never escape and into Heaven you can never enter—and this is true not only of the debauched, the dissolute and the depraved, but also of the most moral, amiable and honorable of the whole human race! “You must be born-again,” or you cannot enter into Heaven. I remember how this sharp arrow stuck in my heart and how I wandered to and fro, hoping that I might yet be bornagain—and sighing and crying in my soul because I lacked the one thing necessary—which I could not give to myself, but for which I must look up to that great God whom I had offended and who, I feared, would never deign to grant so great a gift to so unworthy a rebel! May that sharp arrow pierce other hearts just now!

Another arrow from the bow of King Jesus is the Sovereignty of God. God has the right to bestow His mercy where He wills, or to withhold it if He so pleases. His Grace is in no sense the discharge of a debt which He owes to us. If He had determined to destroy the whole race of men, we must admit that they had deserved such a doom. As He has chosen to save some, it is His Grace that has done it, so let Him be forever adored for it! The Apostle Paul, writing under Inspiration, quotes God’s words to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” and adds, “So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” What humbling words are these! They make the sinner lie all broken and helpless at the feet of the God whom he has offended. They tell him that he cannot save himself, and that now his only hope lies absolutely in the Sovereign will of that God who can destroy him in a moment if He so wills! Men do not like this sharp arrow and will do anything to get rid of it. They will try to deny the truth of it if they can, but let the Lord once drive this arrow right home through the heart and conscience and I do not know any shaft out of the Divine quiver that is more killing to human pride and more deadly to self-righteousness than this eternal Truth of God which has already brought many to Christ and will bring many more, God blessing it—

*“Praise the God of all creation,  
Praise the Father’s boundless love!  
Praise the Lamb, our expiation,  
Priest and King enthroned above!  
Praise the Fountain of salvation,  
Him by whom our spirits live—  
Undivided adoration  
To the one Jehovah give.”*

Further, the Lord Jesus Christ often drives the arrow of conviction home in this form—the aggravation of the sin of men when they sin against light and against love. It is no little evil to break God’s Law at all, but to do it knowingly is far worse than to do it ignorantly. To do it after many admonitions to the contrary, to continue to offend God after being frequently rebuked, to refuse all the invitations of His mercy, to resist the strivings of His Spirit, to be resolved to be lost, to be resolute upon damnation—this is the very worst form of sin! There are some of you in whose hearts this arrow might well find a place, for you were brought up by godly parents, you were dandled upon the knees of piety, you heard the name of Jesus among the first sounds that saluted your infant ears. You were carried to the House of God before you were old enough to walk there—and your mother’s tears have fallen upon your infant brow as she has wept out her prayers to God that the soul of her child might be precious in His sight.

Some of you remember when the Word used to prick your conscience as you heard it preached—you would go home and shut your bedroom door and kneel down and pray—and there was a time when, for weeks or months together, you could not sin as you used to, but felt obliged to give up one evil and another. Yet you resisted the conviction that was then upon you. You struggled against it, you overcame it and you went back into sin. You have never had so severe a contest with Grace since then—still, you have had some struggles and by dint of awful perseverance—oh, that we had half the perseverance to be saved that some have to be lost! By dint, I say, of awful perseverance, you have managed to remain a servant of Satan until now! Nor can we bring you to accept the Gospel of Christ. If you remain as you are, the Lord Jesus tells you, as He told the people of Capernaum and Bethsaida of old, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the Day of Judgment than for you! It would have been better for you if you had never been born. It would have been better for you, Sir, if, when you were yet a babe, unconscious of right and wrong, a millstone had been hung about your neck and you had been cast into the depths of the sea! O man, I pray that this sharp arrow may strike you, now, and wound you and that God may bless it to you! If you and I should be lost after having such mothers and fathers as we had. If you and I should perish after such Christian training as we have had—when we meet each other in the lowest depths of Hell, our miserable salutation would surely be something of this kind, “What fools we were, with so much light to prefer the darkness, with so much love from God to resolve to hate Him! Knowing so well as we did our duty, what arrant fools we were to have neglected it! Knowing that sin was folly, how could we choose it? And knowing that holiness was happiness, for we saw it reflected in the faces of our dearest relatives and friends, how was it that we did not seek it for ourselves?” How we shall wring our hands in unutterable anguish if this should ever be our portion! The Lord prevent it, by His Grace!

The last sharp arrow that I shall mention is one which Christ Himself has often shot, it is this—that condemnation for sin is a matter of this present time. Dear Hearers, if you have never heard this Truth of God before, hear it now and tremble at it! You have not to wait until you rise from the dead to receive your condemnation—“He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the onlybegotten Son of God.” And as “there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” so we may solemnly say, “There is, therefore, now a most weighty condemnation upon you who are not in Christ Jesus, who are walking not after the Spirit, but after the flesh.” Your sentence is already passed, like that of the poor wretch who is now lying in the condemned cell, tomorrow to suffer the extreme penalty of the law! Such is your lot—“condemned already.”

All these Truths of God are the sharp arrows from the bow of King Jesus!  
II. Now, secondly, let us inquire, WHY ARE THEY CALLED ARROWS?  
First, they are called arrows because they are far-reaching. Some people who have never heard the Gospel have, nevertheless, unexpectedly found one or other of these arrows rankling in their hearts. We have known men who have been at their ordinary work when one of these arrows has suddenly struck them. Where the voice of the minister could not go, there the arrow of Christ could find its mark! Never give up hope for the world, even in its darkest days. The world was once in a very midnight and there was a monk, named Luther, on his knees, going up the so-called staircase of Pilate at Rome—and repeating a prayer on every step in order to try to win his way to Heaven. And there came to him, while on those very stairs, an arrow from the King that pierced him right to his heart! The arrow bore this inscription, “The just shall live by faith”—a sentence which had previously been discovered by Luther in a Bible in the monastery at Erfurt. He was attempting to justify himself by works like that of climbing the so-called holy stairs. But he found that it was of no use and, through faith in Jesus, he became the great leader of the Reformers of his day! Perhaps at this very moment, while we are assembled here worshipping God, there may be men, similarly deluded, in places where an idolatrous system has usurped the name and place of Christianity, yet the Gospel may reach them even amidst the mummeries of the “mass”! Yes, and at the ale-bench, and in still worse places, if God so wills it, the arrow from the Prince’s bow may find its target and reach the human heart! Pray, my Brothers and Sisters, that the King may be profuse with His sharp arrows, so that many may fall under His power!  
They are called arrows, again, because they are penetrating. These Truths of God enter a man’s heart whether he likes them or not. There are some of these arrows that are aimed at a man, but he seems to be clad in steel and they cannot gain an entrance for a time. But, by-andby, they pierce him to the heart and cut him to the very quick. We have known some sinners to be very angry when this has been the case with them. That is of very little consequence so long as they do but get wounded by the arrows of King Jesus! Because these Truths wound people, penetrating their hearts, they are rightly called arrows.  
They are also called arrows because if they once get in, they rankle, and you cannot get them out. Often have I heard something like this said by those who have come here to make a profession of their faith in Christ, “I was utterly godless and never went to any place of worship. But one evening I stole in here and listened to a sermon. I was angry to the last degree at what I heard—I could have cursed the preacher to his face! Yet, I do not know how it was, I soon found myself in this place again, wanting to know more about this religion that I detested all the time.” I have often heard a man say, “I could not help thinking of it, Sir. It haunted my dreams. It stayed with me at my work. I loathed it, yet there it was always near me! Certain questions arose within me that I could not answer and difficulties came up which I could not solve. So I was obliged to let this strange new influence which had got hold of me, still rankle within my heart.” I have sometimes likened an unconverted man to a wild giraffe in an African forest—and Christ’s Gospel, like a mighty lion, leaps upon him from the thicket, fastens its powerful fangs in his flesh and begins to tear away his very life. He strives and struggles, dashes here and there, and tries to rid himself of the awful load that he bears upon his back, but all his efforts are in vain. The poor giraffe in the grip of the lion is distracted—and the man under conviction of sin cannot imagine what is to become of him. He thinks that he is lost and that he must feel the full force of Divine Wrath against sin—yet this is the way of Mercy—it is thus that men are saved! At last the man falls down and then He who seemed to be his enemy stoops down and nobly gives back the life that appeared to have gone from him. Or, rather, gives him an infinitely nobler life and so the forgiven sinner lives forever! Oh, that the power of the Gospel may thus be exerted upon some wild, untamable spirit that may be here just now!  
The Gospel message is especially called an arrow because it kills. What does it kill? It kills many things. Gospel preaching, when applied by the Holy Spirit, kills carnal ease in men. A man, when he first hears the Gospel, may perhaps say, “What is the need to bother oneself about that? It will all come right, I have no doubt.” Ah, but let one of these Truths that I have mentioned—that Truth of God, for instance, about the Judgment to come—get into his heart and rankle there—the man will not talk any longer about not bothering himself! He must care. “Why,” he says, “tomorrow I may be before God’s Judgment Throne and I am unprepared to meet Him! My brother died only last week and my sister was taken away only a fortnight ago—and I may be called away at any moment. I cannot bear the thought of being in Hell forever! I must begin to think. I must begin to care about my soul.” Carnal ease is one of the first things that is killed by the arrows of Christ!  
I will tell you another thing that is killed by these sharp arrows, and that is the foolish skepticism which some people think we ought to nurse and cuddle up in our places of worship. I do not believe that the skepticism of this age has so much to do with people’s heads as with their hearts. If they were not wicked, they would not doubt, but because they will not be holy, they will not believe. To answer many of their questions would be as foolish as to do what a boy did, according to a fable which I read in an old book the other day. A boy, in a scavenger’s cart, was so badly disposed that he said he would throw dirt in the face of the moon. And another boy, who, I suppose, was a great deal better, but certainly not any wiser, fetched a basin of water and a piece of sponge to wash the moon’s face. When I read that story, I thought of those who are always finding out some reason to doubt the authenticity of the Bible, or who throw dirt in the face of the Gospel in some other way. And then there is some well-meaning but foolish Divine who leaves off preaching the Truth of God and runs with his sponge and his basin of water to wash the face of the blessed Gospel which is as clean as the sun or the moon and needs none of his washing, for it is not defiled with the dirt that any fool may choose to fling at it! I believe that at the bottom of your hearts, you do not really doubt, for you know that God will bring you before His Judgment bar to give an account of your actions! And when the King’s sharp arrows pierce your hearts, all your whimsies die, your idle fancies flee away and your cry is, “Do I not believe? Indeed I do! Oh, that I could but doubt in order to get a little rest to my troubled spirit, or, rather, Blessed Spirit, come and teach me if there is not something to be believed by which a lost and condemned spirit may find peace with God!”

The arrows of Christ, wherever they come, always kill selfrighteousness. There was never a shaft shot from Christ’s bow that was not fatal to all trust in our own goodness! Christ abhors that abomination and kills it wherever He finds it. Hardness of heart, lack of feeling—this is also slain wherever Christ’s sharp arrows come. So also is procrastination, that great ruiner of the souls of men. Oh, that some sharp arrow might fly from Christ’s bow into the heart of any sinner here who is saying, “There is time enough yet!” Instead of talking like that, he would say, “I want to be forgiven tonight! I cannot bear this terrible burden of guilt any longer. If there were no future, my present agony is so great that I long for immediate deliverance from it.” Jesus, You blessed Divine Archer, shoot forth Your arrows now into men’s hearts, that all these ills that they have—unbelief, hardness of heart, love of sin and delay, may fall down slain at Your glorious feet. And then come and save the sinners, by Your Grace, and Your head shall wear the crown forever and ever!  
How gladly would I, if I could, say anything that might encourage any of you to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, but I know that my feeble voice is not sufficient to help you. It is the almighty Spirit who alone can do this—and I earnestly pray that He may. My grief is not so much concerning you who are seeking the Savior, as concerning you who are not seeking Him. You may think that it is a trifling matter to preach the Gospel, or to listen to preaching. But the hour comes—and every moment brings it nearer—when you will know that the Truths of which I have been speaking are the only real things this side of Heaven and Hell! When you lie dying and are brought face to face with the mysteries of the next world, you will count all your money, your amusements and all else to be but foolery. Oh, do not trifle any longer with your eternal interests! If any of you must play the fool, do it with your money, or your estates, or your bodies, but do not do it with your immortal souls, for these, if once lost, can never be recovered! Once let the Divine sentence go forth, “Depart, you cursed,” and it can never be reversed and changed into a benediction! Once let the iron bar that shuts up lost spirits in Hell be driven home by the hand of Infinite Justice, and there is no hand in Heaven, or earth, or Hell, that can ever slide that iron bar back! Once done, ‘tis done forever! So, Sirs, I beseech you, escape to the Cross while you may! Look to Him who died upon it! Trust yourselves wholly to Him. Forsake your sins, walk in His ways and live as His followers should—for then, but not till then will you be safe!  
III. And now, to conclude, having examined the King’s sharp arrows and seen why they are called by that name, let us inquire, HOW DO THEY GET INTO MEN’S HEARTS?  
Many are the times that I have handled these arrows of the King. And many are the times that from this, my watch-tower, I have shot them from my bow. And the Lord knows with what intense desire I have longed that they might enter the hearts of those at whom I have aimed them! I could, with my finger—but I shall not—indicate some of the targets at which I have aimed. I will mention no names—there is no need for me to do that—you know very well to whom these personal messages have been addressed. I suppose I cannot have been a good shot, for, with many of you, I have not yet found the joint in your harness through which I could reach your heart. Oh, that I might speedily be able to do so!  
But, according to my text, the arrows which are there spoken of and which are shot by the King, do get right into the hearts of His enemies— and I suppose this is for two reasons—first, because the Lord Jesus Christ always takes good aim. We cannot do this except as He puts His hands on our hands, for then the aim will be His rather than ours, like the shots of certain eminent people in great public occasions who have the sighting done for them by experts. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ does this for us that the arrow of the Truth of God goes home to the heart and conscience of the hearer! Christ’s aim is always true. If the Truth of God should come home to any of you, believe that it was meant for you! Do not be vexed, or think that there has been a mistake. It was meant for you and although it may pain you, bless God for the pain! It will be better for you thus to be pained and afterwards be fitted to enter into Heaven, than to be left to get a seared and hardened conscience— and to be cast into Hell.  
The other reason why these arrows of the King get into the hearts of his enemies is that together with the good aim, there is always almighty strength at the back of the bow. It is said that the bow of William the Conqueror was so strong that no man in England, except himself, could bend it. And the great bow of King Jesus is such as none of us can bend! It has the power of the Holy Spirit in it—it is the Holy Spirit, Himself, who gives force and power to the Word so that it pierces through all the sinner’s armor, the most vital part of his being and smites him even in the heart. Bearing this last thought in mind, I say to you who love the Lord, do you not see how dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit? There lie the arrows, but they will kill nobody till the Holy Spirit gets them into the hearts of sinners! There is much precious Truth in this blessed Book, but there it will lie till the Holy Spirit takes it and shoots it right into the hearts of men. So, what is our duty as Christian men and women? Why, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us never grieve the Holy Spirit! You know that we can do it by neglecting to honor Him, by falling out among ourselves, by cherishing unlovely dispositions, by being unholy. As church members, we can easily drive the Holy Spirit away from us, but, instead of grieving Him, let us honor Him and let us entreat Him to work with us.  
Brothers and Sisters, pray for us. I believe I am the constant subject of the prayers of the different members of this Church—to whom I feel the deepest gratitude. But I also beg you to pray for all the ministers of Christ and for one another, and for all work that is being done for Christ. Remember the Sunday school teachers. Think of those good men who, all week, are doing the hard work of City Missionaries—and those good women who are working as Bible women—pray for all such laborers and for all who are doing anything for Christ—ask that the Holy Spirit may be with them to make their labors a means of blessing to the people. Whenever you seek to do anything for Christ—as you begin and as you go on, and when you conclude—let it all be done in real dependence upon the Holy Spirit! Blessed be God, the Holy Spirit is not far away from us, nor is He hard to find, for He dwells within the true Church of Christ. We are not to think of Him as if He were some mysterious Being, very far distant from us and not easily to be brought to us, to whom we need to cry as Baal’s priests cried to their idol god, “O Baal, hear us!” The Holy Spirit is always at work in the Church and it is a wonder that He does so much while the Church often does so little. Oh, if we were but all awake, all alive, all full of zeal, all full of love, all full of self-sacrifice, then, depending upon Him, we might expect to see the King’s sharp arrows flying from His bow to the right and to the left, behind and in the front, while tens of thousands would fall down before Him! And London, and Great Britain, and the world at large would behold the King riding in triumph in His glorious chariot of salvation!  
The Lord send it! The Lord send it! I know your hearts say, “Amen!” But you must work for it and watch for it and pray for it—and then it will come! And unto Christ shall be the Glory forever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 45.**

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, (or, upon the lilies), for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of Loves. We may look upon the 45th Psalm as being a sort of compendium of the Song of Solomon. It is written, too, upon the same subject. And that is not the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh’s daughter—only the strangest and most whimsical fancy could ever have found Pharaoh’s daughter either in this Psalm or in the Book of the Canticles! It is a description of Christ and His Church! A song of love between that pair forever affianced and soon to sit down together at the marriage supper in Glory!

Verse 1. My heart is inditing a good matter. Or, as the margin has it, “My heart boils or bubbles up with good matter.” It is said of Origen, one of the ancient fathers of the Church, that whenever he preached, he preached with great earnestness and fervor—but that when he spoke of Christ, he seemed to be all on fire. So, whenever our hearts speak of the good matter which concerns Christ, our souls should be all on fire—we should be boiling over with love to Him!

1. I speak of the things which I have made touching the King. A man can never speak so well of the things which he has learned, or heard, as of the things which he has made, that is, the things which he has experienced. Indeed, this is your life-work and mine, Beloved, to tell others the things which we have made our own touching the King!

1. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. A ready writer writes what he has thought of beforehand, what he has well meditated upon and digested. So the Psalmist declares that this rapturous song is as certainly true as the verba scripta of a thoughtful accomplished penman.

2. You are fairer than the children of men. The Hebrew word here is doubled, as much as to say, “You are doubly fair. You are fair, fair. Twice fairer than the children of men.” Both in outward appearance—although His visage was so sadly marred while He was here—and in personal Character, our Lord Jesus Christ is “fairer than the children of men.”

2. Grace is poured into Your lips. Grace has, in the most copious manner, been poured upon Christ and now there pours from His lips a very cataract of Grace—floods of love, tenderness and holy eloquence stream from His lips.

2, 3. Therefore God has blessed You forever. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. Put Your sword where it will be ready for use. Come forth and let us see You appear in Your strength, O most Mighty! For this is one of the names of Christ—“I have laid help upon One That Is Mighty—I have exalted One Chosen Out of the people.”

4, 5. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; whereby the people fall under You. You may see, on some of the ancient slabs, representations of Oriental monarchs riding in their chariots, perhaps engaged in hunting, or pursuing their enemies with their bow and arrow in their hands and their sword upon their thigh. So is our Savior thus graphically described. His Word is His sword, and the testimony of His ministers He makes to be like sharp arrows sticking in the hearts of His enemies. May it be so this day and every day. May Christ thus ride prosperously!

6. Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of Your Kingdom is a right scepter. This could not have been said of Solomon, for he was never called God. It refers to none other than Christ the King, whose Throne is forever and ever!

7-9. You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows. All Your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad. Kings’ daughters were among Your honorable women. Your maids of honor, for all those who truly wait on Christ become at once the King’s daughters. It is more noble to serve God than to sit as king upon a throne. The day shall come when all the honor of earthly kings’ daughters will have passed away, but the glory of those who are in Christ’s court as honorable women shall abide forever.

9. At Your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. In the best and purest gold. Every member of the Church of Christ may well say, with Dr. Watts—

*“Strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed  
By the great Sacred Three!”*

10, 11. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for He is your Lord; and worship you Him. Though the Church has been brought up in the world, she is to be separated from it. The more distinction there can be between Christians and worldlings, the better will it be for both. Christ greatly admires the beauty of His Church when she is separated from the world—and it is nothing but an adulterous alliance when the Church becomes united to the State. We never can expect any great and permanent blessing to any church which thus degrades and dishonors itself. If a church cannot stand without the support of the civil power, let it fall! But happy is that Church which relies alone upon the King, Himself, and is content with the dowry which He gives her.

12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor. The day is coming when the Church of Christ shall be honored by all men. The merchant princes, who now esteem her as a thing of naught, shall come with their tribute to her—and those who once despised her shall entreat her favor.

13, 14. The king’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of worked gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto You. Happy was John the Baptist to be “the friend of the Bridegroom” to Christ, and happy are the hearts of those who are the bridesmaids to His Church—“the virgins her companions that follow her”—you, whose pure hearts are set upon the Lord alone, and who follow wherever He leads. You, too, “shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework” with His Church.

15, 16. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King’s palace. Instead of Your fathers shall be Your children, whom You may make princes in all the earth. There is such a thing as an Apostolic succession, though not the fiction which usually goes by that name. The Lord is constantly raising up fresh disciples, fresh preachers and fresh teachers whom He makes to be princes in His earthly courts, and who shall be princes in His heavenly courts forever and ever.

17. I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise You forever and ever—  
*“Jesus shall reign wherever the sun  
Does its successive journeys run.  
His Kingdom stretches from shore to shore Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”*

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1273 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE OIL OF GLADNESS  
NO. 1273

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 16, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.” Psalm 45:7.**

WE know that the anointing received by our Lord Jesus Christ was the resting of the Spirit of God upon Him without measure. We are not left to any guesswork about this, for in Isaiah 61:1 we are told, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me.” Our Lord appropriated these very words to Himself when He went into the synagogue at Nazareth and opened the book at the place wherein these words are written and said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” The Apostle Peter, also, in Acts 10:38, speaks of, “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,” so that we know, both on Old and New Testament authority, that the anointing which rested upon the Lord Jesus Christ was the unction of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, by the “oil of gladness” which we have before us in the text, it is intended the Holy Spirit, Himself, or one of the gracious results of His sacred Presence. The Divine Spirit has many attributes and His benign influences operate in different ways, bestowing upon us benefits of various kinds, too numerous for us to attempt to catalog them! Among these is His comforting and cheering influence. “The fruit of the Spirit is joy.” In Acts 13:52, we read, “The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” Wherever He comes as an Anointing, whether upon the Lord or upon His people—upon the Christ or the Christians, upon the Anointed or upon those whom He anoints—in every case the ultimate result is joy and peace.

On the head of our great High Priest, He is joy, and this oil of gladness flows down to the skirts of His garments. To the Comforter, therefore, we ascribe “the oil of gladness.” From this great Truth we learn another, namely, the perfect co-operation of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity in the work of our redemption. The Father sends the Son, the Son, with eagerness comes to redeem us, and the Spirit of God is in Him, so that Father, Son and Spirit have each a part in the saving work—and the one God of Heaven and earth is the God of salvation!

A very interesting subject is the work of the Spirit upon the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see the Holy Spirit mysteriously operating in the formation and birth of the holy Child, Jesus, for by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit was He born of a woman. This work of the Holy Spirit was manifested to all believing eyes when the Lord Jesus came out of the waters of the Jordan after His Baptism and the Holy Spirit descended, like a dove, and rested upon Him. Before, He was said to “wax strong in spirit,” but afterwards He is described as, “full of the Holy Spirit.” Then

was He led of the Spirit and inspired by His Divine energy.

And this was shown throughout the whole of His life, for the Spirit was with Him in innumerable miracles and in the demonstration and power which followed His Words, so that He spoke as One having authority and not as the Scribes. In Him was abundantly fulfilled the prophecy which said, “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.”

The Holy Spirit had, also, a peculiar interest in His Resurrection, for He was, “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” He was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” That same Spirit worked even more fully when the Lord ascended up on high and led captivity captive. Then, succeeding His Ascension, the gifts of the cloven tongues of fire and the rushing mighty wind were witnessed by His disciples, for the Spirit of God was given abundantly to the Church in connection with the Ascension of the Redeemer.

Oh, how sweetly does the Spirit co-operate with Christ at this very day, for it is He that takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to us! He is the abiding Witness in the Church to the truth of the Gospel and the Worker of all our gifts and Graces. Jesus gives repentance, but the Spirit works it! Faith fixes upon Christ, but the Spirit of God first creates faith and opens the eye which looks to Jesus! The whole of this dispensation, through it, is the peculiar office of the Spirit of God to be revealing Christ to His people, Christ in His people and Christ in the midst of an ungodly and gainsaying generation for a testimony against them. Blessed be the name of the Holy Spirit, that He is the Divine Anointing and so proves His hearty assent to the great plan of redemption.

We now come, however, more closely to the text. The Spirit of God is here considered in one of His influences or operations as, “the oil of gladness.” We shall speak of this in the following way. First, the Savior’s anointing with gladness. Secondly, the reason for the bestowal of this oil of joy upon Him. And, thirdly, the manner of the operation of this sacred anointing upon ourselves.

I. Let us carefully consider THE SAVIOR’S ANOINTING WITH GLADNESS. We are, perhaps, surprised to read of our Lord in connection with gladness. Truly He was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet this sorrowful aspect was that which He presented to the superficial outside observer. Those who look within the veil of His flesh know well that a mystic Glory shone within His soul. Did not David say of Him as the King of Israel—“He is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon Him. For You have made Him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your Countenance”?

I fully believe that there was never on the face of the earth a Man who knew so profound and true a gladness as our blessed Lord. Did He not desire that His joy might be in His people, that their joy might be full? Does not benevolence beget joy—and who so kind as He? Is it not a great joy to suffer self-sacrifice for beloved ones? And who so disinterested as He? Is there not sure to be happiness in the heart where the noblest motives are paramount and the sweetest Graces bear sway? And was not this preeminently the case with our Lord?

Let us see. The gladness of our Lord Jesus may be viewed, first, as the gladness which He had in His work. The Son of God delighted in the work which His Father had given Him to do. This delight He declared as God in the old eternity! “Lo I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O God.” This delight He had shown as Man even before His great public anointing, for when He was yet a child He said, “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” Evidently, even while yet a youth, He anticipated with delight the great business which He had to do for His Father and, commencing, in a measure, to do it among the doctors in the temple at Jerusalem.

But the day came in which He had reached the appointed age and He at once went forth to John to be baptized by Him in the Jordan, being eager to fulfill all righteousness. Then the Spirit of God came down upon Him and He was openly and visibly anointed—and you see from that moment He began to stand before the public eye and with what eagerness He pursued His lifework. We find Him fasting, but He has been speaking to a woman by the well’s brink—and the joy which He has felt, while blessing her, has made Him quite forget the necessity for food, for He tells His disciples, “I have meat to eat that you know not of.”

He felt great gladness in that woman’s joy as she believed in Him and in the expectation of yet more numerous converts from those who were flocking from Samaria, of whom He said, “Lift up, now, your eyes, for behold the fields are white already unto the harvest.” That joy in His work made Him abhor all idea of turning from its awful consummation and led Him to say to Peter’s suggestion, “Get you behind Me, Satan.” We see it, also, in such expressions as this, “I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it is accomplished.” We read that when the time came that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

His frequent allusions to His own decease by a shameful death all showed that He viewed with intense satisfaction the great objective after which He was reaching. Once, indeed, His joy flowed over so that others could see it, when He said, “I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes.” “At that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit.” Let it never be forgotten that we must not expect to see, in the life of Christ, great outpourings of manifest exultation. Remember, He was sent on purpose to bear our sicknesses and to be “stricken of God and afflicted.” His deep joy was concealed by His many griefs, even as the inner

Glory of the Tabernacle of old was hidden beneath coverings of badgers’ skins. He was the Sun under a cloud, but He was still the Sun.

If you have a small burden to carry, you may have an excess of strength which you can display in leaping or running. But if you have an enormous load to sustain, your steady bearing of it may be an equally sure proof of your strength. So also, if your trials are light, your joyous spirits may vent themselves in smiles and songs, but if you are severely afflicted it will need all your joyfulness to keep you from sinking. Our blessed Lord had a load upon Him infinitely transcending any weight of sorrow ever borne by the most burdened of His people. And it needed the wonderful joy which I feel sure we are justified in ascribing to Him to balance the marvelous grief which He had to endure. The uplifting influence of this joy sufficed to bring Him into a condition of calm, quiet, serene majesty of spirit. Nothing strikes you more in the Savior than the quiet peacefulness with which He pursues the even tenor of His way.

Now, if He had not possessed great stores of secret joy, His spirit would have been famished for need of sustenance. You would have found Him constantly sighing and weeping. His words and tones would have become a terror to those around Him and His whole appearance would have appeared melancholy and depressing to the last degree, whereas His manner was cheerful and attractive—let the little children who thronged around Him bear witness to that. He was the Man of Sorrows, but He was not a preacher of sorrows, neither do his life or his discourses leave an unhappy impression upon the mind. The fact probably is that He was both the greatest rejoicer and the greatest mourner that ever lived—and between these two there was an equilibrium of mind kept up so that wherever you meet Him, with the exception of His agony in the Garden—He is peaceful and serene.

You neither see Him dancing like David before the Ark, nor yet like David bewailing the loss of one he loved with a, “Would God I had died for you.” He does not, like Elijah, run before the king’s chariot, nor lie down under the juniper to die. He neither strives nor cries, nor causes His voice to be heard in the streets. His peace is like a river and His heart abides in the Sabbath of God. We see, then, that in His work our great High Priest was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, but we also note that those who are His fellows do, in their degree, partake in this oil of gladness and are enabled to feel joy in the work which is appointed them of the Lord.

While our King is anointed with the oil of gladness it is also written of the virgin souls who wait upon His Church, “With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the King’s palace.” If any professing Christian man here is engaged in a work which he does not feel glad to do, I question if he is in his right place. Occasional fits of depression there may be, but these are not because we do not love the work, but because we cannot do it so well as we would desire. We are tired in the work, but not tired of it. The Lord loves to employ willing workmen. His army is not made up of pressed men, but of those whom Grace has made volunteers. “Serve the Lord with gladness.”

Our Lord does not set us task work and treat us like prisoners in jail, or slaves under the lash. I sometimes hear our lifework called a task. Well, the expression may be tolerated, but I confess I do not like it to be applied to Christian men. It is no task to me, at any rate, to preach my Master’s Gospel or to serve Him in any way. I thank God every day that, “to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” You teachers in the school, I hope your labor of love is not a bondage to you! An unwilling teacher will soon make unwilling scholars.

Yes, I know that those of you who serve the Lord find a reward in the work itself and gladly pursue it. I am sure you will not prosper in it if it is not so. If you follow your work unwillingly and regret that you ever undertook it and feel encumbered by it, you will do no good. No man wins a race who has no heart in the running. In this respect, the joy of the Lord is your strength—and as your Master was anointed with the oil of gladness in His work—so must you be. Yet, beloved fellow laborer, you will never be so glad in your work as He was in His, nor will you ever be able to prove that gladness by such self-denials, by such agonies and such a death! He has proved how glad He was to save sinners because, “for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” Blessed Emanuel, You are justly anointed with the oil of gladness above Your fellows!

We further note that our Lord had this oil of gladness from His work. Even while He was engaged in it, He derived some joy from it, though it was but as the gleanings of the vintage compared with the results. He did reap in joy as well as sow in tears, for many became His disciples and over each one of these He rejoiced. It was impossible that the Good Shepherd should have saved so many sheep as He did without rejoicing when He threw them on His shoulders to bear them to the fold. Assuredly He rejoiced that He had found the sheep which He had lost. But the fullness of His joy was left till after He had ascended on high. Then, indeed, was He anointed with the oil of gladness and the voice was heard, “Go forth, O you daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.”

My Brothers and Sisters, the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ, now that He knows His beloved are securely His and no longer the slaves of sin and heirs of wrath, is too great to be measured! He has redeemed unto Himself a people in whom His soul delights! For them the price is fully paid! For them the penalty has been completely endured! For them all chains are broken and for them the prison is razed to its foundation! For them has He bruised the serpent’s head! For them has He, by death, destroyed Death and led captive him that had the power of death, even the devil—

*“All his work and warfare done,  
He into His Heaven is gone,  
And before His Father’s Throne  
Now is pleading for His own.”*

He now continues to receive into His joy the multitudes whom the Spirit brings to Him, for whom of old He shed His precious blood. You cannot estimate the gladness of Christ. If you have ever brought one soul to Christ you have had a drop of it, but His gladness lies not only in receiving them, but in actually being the Author of salvation to every one of them.

The Savior looks upon the redeemed with an unspeakable delight. He thinks of what they used to be—He thinks of what they would have been but for His interposition—He thinks of what they now are. He thinks of what He means to make them in that great day when they shall rise from the dead and as His heart is full of love to them, He joys in their joy and exults in their exultation! Their heavens swell their Mediator’s Heaven and their myriad embodiments of bliss, each one, reflects His own felicity! And so, (speaking after the manner of men), increases it, for He lives thousands of lives by living in them and joys unnumbered joys in their joys. I speak with humblest fear lest in any word I should speak amiss, for He is God as well as Man, but this is certain, that there is a joy of our Lord into which He will give His faithful ones to enter—a joy which He has won by passing through the shame and grief by which He has redeemed mankind. The oil of gladness is abundantly poured on that head which once was crowned with thorns!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, you, also, can be partakers in this joy! When He makes you, in your little measure, to be instrumentally, saviors of others, then you, also, partake of His gladness. But as I have said before, you cannot know its fullness, for He is, in this respect, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. I have trodden the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Me.” Returning from the battle and the spoil He has a joy with which none can intermeddle, for His own right hand and His holy arm has gotten unto Him the victory.

Again, our Lord Jesus has the oil of gladness poured upon Him in another sense, namely, because His Person and His work are the cause of ineffable gladness in others. Oh, I wish I had a week in which to talk upon this point—a week?—one could scarcely enter upon the theme in that time! We sang just now—

*“Jesus, the very thought of You*

*With sweetness fills my breast.”*  
The oil of gladness upon Him is so sweet that we have only to think upon it and it fills us with delight! There is gladness in His very name—

*“Exult all hearts with gladness  
At sound of Jesus’ name;  
What other has such sweetness,  
Or such delight can claim?”*

What gladness He created when here below! His birth set the skies ringing with heavenly music and made the hearts of expectant saints leap for joy! In later days a touch of the hem of His garment made a woman’s heart glad when she felt the issue of her blood staunched! And a word from His lips made the tongue of the dumb to sing! For Him to lay His hand upon the sick was to raise them from their beds of sickness and deliver them from pain and disease! His touch was gladness, then, and a spiritual touch is the same now.

Today to preach of Him is gladness! To sing of Him is gladness! To trust Him is gladness! To work for Him is gladness! To have communion with Him is gladness! To come to His table and there to feast with Him is gladness! To see His image in the eyes of His saints is gladness! To see that image only as yet begun to form in the heart of a young convert is gladness! EVERYTHING about Him is gladness! All His garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. Nothing comes within a mile of Him but what it makes you glad to think that He has been so near it. The very print of His feet has comfort in it and the wounds in His hands are windows of hope!

I have known some who have had to carry a cross for His dear sake and they have kissed and hugged that cross and gloried in their tribulations because they were borne for Him. Fellowship with Him has turned the bitterest potion into generous wine. Beloved, if these distant glimpses are so precious, what must it be to see Him face to face? I have tried to conceive it and I declare that even in attempting the conception, my spirit seems to swoon at the prospect of such supreme delight! Only to hear the music of His footsteps on the other side the partition wall raises longings in my heart too strong, too eager to be long endured!

What? Death, are you all that divides me from seeing my Lord? I would gladly die a million deaths to see Him as He is and to be like He! What? A slumber in the grave for this poor body! Is that all I have to dread? Then let it slumber and let the worms consume it, for, “I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth— and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” Oh, what will it be to see Him!? To see HIM that loved us so! To mark the wounds with which He purchased our redemption! To behold His Glory! To listen to that dear voice of His and to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” To lie in His bosom forever—truly neither eye has seen, nor ear heard the likes of this bliss!

More than the bride longs for the marriage day do we expect the bridal feast of Heaven, but of all the dainties on that royal table there will not be one that will be equal to Himself, for to see Him will be all the Heaven we desire! He is better than Heaven’s harps or angels and the cause of greater gladness than streets of gold or walls of jasper! Brothers and Sisters, can we share this power to distribute joy? Assuredly we can! If the Lord Jesus is with us, we can give joy to others. I know some whose very presence comforts their fellows! Their words are so full of consolation and their hearts so overflowing with sympathy that they make gladness wherever they go!

Yes, but the best of you, you sons of consolation, are not anointed with the oil of gladness to the same extent as He was. Above His fellows, even above Barnabas, the son of consolation—above the best and the most tender sympathizers is He thus anointed. And from Him there pours forth a continuous stream of effectual consolation which becomes the oil of joy to those who wear the garments of heaviness. Thus much upon the first point, the Savior’s anointing of gladness.  
II. Let us now consider THE REASON FOR THE BESTOWAL OF THIS

ANOINTING UPON HIM. It is given in the text. He is anointed above His fellows, because it is said of Him, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness.” The perfect righteousness of Christ has brought to Him this gladness, because there must be perfect holiness before there can be perfect happiness. Sin is the enemy of joy. Let the sinner say what he likes, sin can no more dwell with real joy than the lion will lie down with the lamb. To be perfectly glad you must be perfectly cleansed from sin, for until you are so cleansed you cannot possess the oil of gladness to the measure that Christ possessed it. As the Believer is delivered from the power of sin he is brought into a condition in which the joy of the Lord can more and more abide in him.

Now, in every way Jesus loved righteousness intensely and hated wickedness intensely. He died that He might establish righteousness and that He might destroy wickedness from off the face of the earth. Therefore it is that He has greater gladness, because He had greater holiness. Moreover, you know that in any holy enterprise, if the business succeeds, the joy of the worker is proportionate to the trial it has cost him. In the great battle of righteousness, our Lord has led the van. In the great fight against wickedness, our Savior has borne the brunt of the battle, therefore, because He to the death loved righteousness and to the agony and bloody sweat strove against sin, the accomplished conquest brings Him the greatest joy. He has done the most for the good cause and, therefore, He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Now, note there is another reason why He is anointed and there is another view of the anointing. He is anointed above His fellows which shows that those who are in fellowship with Him are anointed, too. You observed in our reading that the high priest had the oil poured on his head, but the sons of Aaron who were minor priests were sprinkled with this same oil mixed with the blood of the sacrifice. On Christ this anointing is poured above His fellows and then upon His fellows in communion with Himself, there comes the sprinkling of the oil. We have our measure—He has it without measure. Now, beloved, Christ is anointed above His fellows that His fellows may be anointed with Him. Even as He ascended above all things that He might fill all things, so is He anointed above His fellows that He may anoint His fellows—and through the power of the anointing we are told that His people come into the same condition of righteousness as Himself.

Turn to Isaiah 61:3, which passage we have already had before us, and you find as follows—“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that”—mark this!—“that they might be called trees of righteousness.” Now, observe, that we first read, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness, therefore God has anointed You with the oil of gladness,” and then we meet with the parallel with reference to ourselves, “The oil of joy for mourning, that they may be called trees of righteousness.” He is anointed because He is righteous! We are anointed that we may be righteous, and thus in Christ we come into the condition in which it is safe for us to be glad and possible for joy to dwell in us!

To the unrighteous the oil of gladness does not come, but to the righteous there arises light even in darkness. “There is no peace, said my God, unto the wicked.” The holy oil was forbidden to be placed upon a stranger to God’s holy house and upon man’s flesh it could not be poured, because man’s flesh is a corrupt, polluted thing. This oil of gladness comes only on those who are born into God’s Israel by regeneration and are delivered from walking after the flesh. These the Lord makes to be as “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

See, then, the two reasons why Christ has received the anointing—first because He is righteous, Himself. And secondly, that He may make others righteous. Therefore is the Spirit of the Lord God upon Him that He may give the oil of joy to His own chosen and make them righteous, even as He is righteous, glad as He is glad!

III. We will now meditate upon THE MANNER OF THE OPERATION OF THIS OIL OF GLADNESS UPON US. Jesus is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Now, we have to show that His fellows are anointed with the oil of gladness, too. Did not David say, “You anointed my head with oil; my cup runs over”? So that we can say of ourselves what we say of our Lord, we are anointed, for He was anointed. Now, in what respects does the anointing of the Holy Spirit give us gladness? I shall notice eight things, and touch but very briefly on each.

First, we, too, through Jesus Christ, are anointed to an office, “for He has made us”—whisper it to one another in the joy of delight—“He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever.” When the oil went on Aaron’s head, you know how it ran down his beard, even Aaron’s beard, unto the skirts of his garments and now, this day, this anointing oil, which made the king and the priest, has fallen upon us, too! Blessed be His name, shall we not be glad? It is very inconsistent with our position if we are not. Are you a king and do you not rejoice?—

*“Why should the children of our King  
Go mourning all their days?  
Sweet Comforter, descend and bring  
Some unction of your Grace.”*

May the gladness now come to you. You are priests to God. Shall the anointed priests serve their Lord with gloomy countenances? No! Rejoice in the Lord always, all you priests of His that are anointed to this blessed work. “Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron.” We, too, are consecrated to the Lord, for the oil poured upon the priest was the oil of consecration. From that time forward he was a dedicated man. He could not serve anyone but God. He, above all the rest of the congregation, was the man of God forever as long as ever he lived. So, Beloved, we have been consecrated—the Spirit of God has sanctified us and set us apart unto the Lord, as it is written, “You are not your own; you are bought with a price.”

Our Lord said in His matchless prayer, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” “Sanctify them,” said He, “by Your truth, Your Word is truth.” Yes, blessed be God, we are consecrated men and women—we belong to the Lord and are vessels for the Master’s use—

hallowed from all other uses to be the Lord’s. “For I will be to them a God, they shall be to Me a people.” Does not this make you glad? Are you really set apart to be the Lord’s own sons and daughters, and hallowed to be used by Him in His service both here and hereafter, and do you not rejoice? O my Soul, do you not feel the trickling of the consecrating oil down your brow even now, and does it not make your face shine and make your heart happy because you are now the Lord’s?

Thirdly, by this oil we are also qualified for our office. You see, the Spirit descended upon Christ that He might have the Spirit of wisdom and power and so be strengthened and qualified to discharge His sacred work. Now, the Spirit of God is upon every Believer in this sense. Remember how in his first Epistle, second chapter, and 20th verse, John says, “You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things,” or “You are able to discern all things.” And further on, in that same chapter, he says, “This anointing teaches you all things.” Well, if we are to serve the Lord, a main gift is knowledge, for how can we instruct the ignorant, or guide the perplexed, unless we know, ourselves? And it is this anointing which teaches us and makes us fit for the service to which the Master has called us.

Oh, does the Holy Spirit, then, lead us into all truth and give us knowledge, and shall we not rejoice? Ignorance means sorrow, but the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ means joy! O Brothers and Sisters, will you not bless God, today, for what the Spirit of God has taught you? If you do not, what must you be made of, for He has taught you such wonderful lessons so full of joy? Even if He has never taught you more than this, that whereas you were once blind now you see, He has taught you enough to make your heart rejoice as long as you live! Is He not the oil of gladness?

Fourthly, the Spirit of God heals us of our diseases. The Eastern mode of medicine was generally the application of oil, and I should not wonder if, in the course of years, it should be discovered that the modern pharmacy, with all its drugs, is not worth so much as the old-fashioned method. Certainly, when the Holy Spirit spoke concerning sick men and advised that medicines should be used, and prayer for their restoration, He prescribed anointing with oil. I suppose that anointing with oil was mentioned because it was the current medicine of the times, but it could not have been injurious or altogether absurd, or the Holy Spirit would not, in any measure, have sanctioned it.

I will not raise the question, however. But a frequent medicine of the olden time was, undoubtedly, anointing with oil and it is well known that olive oil does possess very remarkable healing qualities. I have read in books of one or two instances of the bites of serpents having the venom effectually removed by the use of olive oil. It is more commonly used in countries where it grows than here, and it is, in many ways, a very useful medicine. Certainly the Holy Spirit is that to us! What wounds and bruises have been healed with this oil! Before the Spirit came, they were putrefying—they had not been bound up nor mollified with ointment—but now this ointment, mixed after the art of the apothecary, with the costliest spices, has effectually healed us and what remains of the old sores and wounds it continues, still, to heal!

And so wonderful is its power, it will ultimately take out every scar and we shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing through its healing power. Shall we not, therefore, be glad and rejoice in the Lord, for if restoration to health makes us happy, surely the renewal of our spiritual health should make our hearts jump for joy? Thus, also, we are made flexible and softened. Oil applied to the body softens and, believe me, Brothers and Sisters, nothing is more akin to joy than softness and tenderness of heart.

If ever you meet with a hard-hearted, proud man, he is not a happy man. And if he should seem to be happy in his pride it is a dangerous and deadly happiness—the sooner it is taken away the better. Where God dwells is Heaven and where does He dwell? With the humble and the contrite heart! That is a beautiful expression of David’s, I have drank joy out of it, “Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which you have broken may rejoice.” Oh, there is never a bone in manhood’s system that knows how to rejoice till God has broken it! And when it is broken, then comes the mighty Physician and applies the oil and restores the bone to infinitely more than its former strength—and then the bones which had been broken become, each one, so many new arguments for gratitude— and all our healed wounds become mouths of praise unto the Most High. We are thus softened and gladdened.

By the oil of the Holy Spirit we are also strengthened. Oil well rubbed into the system was anciently assumed to be a great strengthener and I suppose it was. Certainly the Holy Spirit is the strength of Christians and where He is the strength there is sure to be joy. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” Oil, too, is a beautifier. The Easterns did not think themselves fit for their banquets till they had washed their face and anointed themselves with perfumed oil. They were very fond of locks dripping with oil and faces shining with oil. Certainly there is a beauty which the Spirit gives to men which they can never obtain in any other way.

Oh, the excellence of the character that is formed by the hand of the Spirit of God! It is a beautiful thing which even God, Himself, delights to look upon! It is a thing of beauty and in the most emphatic sense, a joy forever. He that is made comely with the comeliness which the Holy Spirit gives must be a happy man! Other beauty may bring sorrow, but the beauty of holiness makes us akin to angels! Once more, it becomes a perfume. When oil was poured on a man, his presence scented the air around him, and when the Spirit of God is given to us it is perceived by other spiritual minds. Cannot you detect, in a Brother’s prayer, that he has been with Jesus? Do you not know, by the lives of some of Christ’s dear saints, that He is very familiar with them? Do you not perceive that they have had a special anointing?

The ungodly world cannot tell it, but saints discern it. The nostril of the wicked is only pleased by the leeks, the garlic and the onions of Egypt, but the believing nostril has been sanctified—it perceives the delicate myrrh, cinnamon and sweet calamus and cassia which make up the

anointing oil. The rare combination of sacred qualities which make up a holy character will be seen in the Believer in whom the Holy Spirit displays His power and, as a consequence, he will be glad at heart.

Furthermore, I have many things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now, for the time is spent. Therefore I will only say, I pray, Brothers and Sisters, that the anointing may be ours in all the various senses I have mentioned. I should like all of you to go away happy. You children of God, be as glad as ever you can be! I would to God that a sacred gladness rang through this house like a marriage peal! Yet, for all that, do not forget that Jesus has joy above you all. You may be very glad, but

 He is gladder, still! You may sing His praises, but He leads the sacred orchestra of Heaven. “In the midst of the congregation will I praise You,” He said. Rejoice in His joy!

I have often thought it did not matter any more what became of me so long as He is victorious. A soldier in battle, sorely wounded, lies bleeding in a ditch, but he hears the sound of the trumpets and they tell him the commander is coming along, the King for whom his loyal heart is willing to bleed, and he enquires, “Have they won the day?” “Oh, yes,” they say, “he has won the day, and the enemy are fleeing before him.” The soldier exclaims, “Thank God, I can die.” It is the soldier’s joy to die with victory ringing in his ears! Our Lord is glad, and therefore we are glad—

*“Let Him be crowned with majesty  
Who bowed His head to death,  
And be His honor sounded high  
By all things that have breath.”*

If it is so, we will be content to say, like David, “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.” We have no more to pray for. We have done with the world, done with wishing, done with everything if Christ reigns and all things are under His feet. May this joy be yours. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Exodus 30:22-33; 29:5-7, 21; Psalm 45:1-8; Isaiah 61:1-3.**(**The reader is earnestly requested to read these passages**)**.**

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—Psalm 45: (VERS. I), 438, 786.**  
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THE GLADNESS OF THE MAN OF SORROWS  
NO. 498

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 8, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You love righteousness and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows. All Your garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad.”  
Psalm 45:7, 8.**

DURING the last few Sundays we have been considering the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We followed Him through the agony of the garden, the sorrows of the betrayal, the weariness and slander of His various trials, the shame and mockery of the soldiery, and the sorrows of His Cross-bearing progress along the streets of the city. It seems fit this morning to make a pause, that we may take a breath in this, our pilgrimage of sorrow, and be comforted by a view of the land of Glory to which the thorny pathway leads.

A festive occasion like the present may have unfitted your minds for deep contemplations upon the Passion, and it may be more congenial with our present mood of gladness, to meditate upon the Glory which followed the shame. The same Person will be before our eyes, but we shall view Him in a brighter light. We shall see the silver lining of the black cloud of anguish, the rich pearls hidden in the stormy deep of His sufferings, and the days of Heaven which were conceived in the womb of the black night of His agony. The Man of Sorrows is the Fountain of all joy to others, and is the possessor of all the joys of Heaven and earth by virtue of His triumphs.

He has experienced joys in proportion to His sorrows. As He once waded through deep waters of grief, He has now climbed to the highest mountains of happiness. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame. And now, having sat down at his Father’s right hand, He enjoys pleasures forevermore. We have seen our David crossing the brook Kedron weeping as He went. Shall we not gaze upon Him as He dances for joy before the ark? We saw Him crowned with thorns—shall we not go forth to meet Him, and behold Him with the crown which His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart?

Oh that while we muse upon these things, our heavenly Father may hear the prayer of our great Advocate who once cried on our behalf—“And now I come to you. And these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

Our text describes the joy poured forth upon our glorious King in a twofold manner. Our Lord is first made joyous by His Father—“You love righteousness and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.” But there is another joy, which He gets not from one person, but from many. Read the next verse—“All Your garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out

of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad.”

Here both saints and angels unite to swell the ever-deepening and widening river of the Savior’s gladness. When we shall have walked by these still waters and trod these green pastures, perhaps we shall be prepared to say with the Apostle, “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” And we shall be qualified to sing with the spouse, “We will rejoice and be glad in You. You will remember Your love more than wine. The upright love You.”

I. Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us ponder that part of OUR SAVIOR’S JOY WHICH IS GIVEN HIM BY HIS FATHER.  
To a degree the Redeemer possessed this joy even while He was here on earth. We are not sure that the early life of the Savior was full of sorrow. As He grew in wisdom and in stature, He also grew in favor both with God and man. And favor with God and man would probably give the youthful Jesus an unusual degree of holy happiness. When He entered upon His public ministry, sorrows in troops beset Him, so that the countenance once fairer than the children of men, became more marred than that of any man. At the age of thirty-two or thirty-three He was taken to be near fifty, from the effect of labor, hardship and woe.  
Yet, even in the days of His affliction, the Great Mourner was not utterly wretched. Even amid the wormwood and the gall there were drops of joy. When, in His Baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended, did that Divine Dove bring no peace, no comfort upon His wings? When the Father bore witness, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” did those approving words from the opening heavens afford no satisfaction to the mind of the obedient Son?  
Brethren, the perfect nature of our Redeemer could not but rejoice exceedingly in the smile of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit. When in the wilderness, after the forty days of fasting and of temptation, the angels ministered unto Him—did they bring Him no celestial joys, no consolations of God? Did He know no secret joys upon the mountaintops, where He communed with God at midnight? Was it no delight to Him to utter sweet invitations and loving words of mercy? Surely those lips were blessed which poured forth benedictions, and there must have been some comfort in the hands which bound up the broken-hearted and opened the prisons of the captives.  
We read that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, “Father, I thank You, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” The doctrine of electing love stirred the deeps of His great soul, and made the floods clap their hands. “The King shall joy in Your strength, O Lord. And in Your salvation how greatly shall He rejoice.” Do you think, Brothers and Sisters, our Savior lived in this world, doing so much good, without receiving some joy in His acts of mercy? To teach, to labor, and to make men holy, must give joy to a benevolent mind. It could not be otherwise than pleasant to a good man to do good.  
If God delights in mercy, surely His express image must do the same. To restore the dead to their sorrowing relations, was this no satisfaction? Did the widow’s grateful eyes in the gates of Nain kindle no flashes of joy in His heart? Did the thankfulness of Mary, and Martha inspire no comfort in the Life giver? Do you think that it was not gladsome work to feed the famishing multitudes? Who could look upon the feasting thousands without rejoicing? To heal the leper, to restore the lame, to give eyes to the blind, and ears to the deaf—who could do all this, and not be happy in distributing the gifts?  
Surely, Brothers and Sisters, there were some hosannas in Jesus’ ears, and though He could always hear the cry of, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” yet He must have felt the wondrous joy of doing good, which is one of the delights entailed on all self-sacrificing lovers of others.  
Think, Beloved, of His Character, and surely He must have known the joy of being good. For there is a deep gladness in holiness, a blessed peacefulness in righteousness. The holiness of angels is their happiness, and although to a large degree the Savior laid His peace aside, yet there is a rest of soul from which virtue cannot separate. Distractions of conscience He never knew. Disturbances of mind on account of sin He did not feel on His own account, although as our Substitute He was made sin for us. He suffered.  
Mark, I am not for a moment detracting from His sufferings—high mountains of grief I see. The eagle’s wing cannot reach their summit, nor foot of angel climb their brows. But lo, I see leaping streams of pleasure running down the rugged steeps, and amid the hollows of the desolate hills I gaze upon deep lakes of joy unfathomable by mortals.  
Brethren, we have every reason to believe that our Savior permanently found a solace while on earth, in the consideration that He was doing His Father’s will. He said, “It is My meat and my drink to do the will of Him that sent me.” “Know you not that I must be about My Father’s business?” On several occasions the Voice from Heaven proclaimed the Father’s good pleasure in His only Begotten—once the Glory of Heaven enwraps Him on the holy mount. And during His whole life He had the Presence of God until the moment of necessary desertion, when we find Him, for the first and only time, crying, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?!”  
To do a work which He had contemplated from all eternity. To engage in an occupation which had always been most delightful in prospect, could not have been altogether, and only, sorrowful. It was a Passover with many bitter herbs, but with desire had He desired to eat of it. It was a Baptism, and a Baptism of blood, but He was straitened until it was accomplished. Of old, in expectation, His delights were with the sons of men. Were there none in the

 work? Brethren, let your Lord speak for Himself— “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your law is within My heart.”  
In the glorious prospect which this great work opened to Him, when it should be completed, I am absolutely sure our Savior found comfort. Think not I speak too strongly. I have Scriptural warrant. Turn to the twenty-second Psalm, which is the soliloquy of Christ upon the Cross, and you find Him, after He bemoaned His desolate condition, comforting Himself thus, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord—and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before You. All they that are fat upon earth shall eat and worship—all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him—and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him. It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He has done this.”  
He saw with prescient eyes through the thick darkness which enveloped the Cross, the rising of the bright sun of Heaven’s eternal noon. He saw, when He hung upon the Cross, not only the mocking eyes of multitudes of enemies, but the loving eyes of millions of souls whom He should redeem from Hell. He heard not only the shouts of the ribald mob, but the songs of blood-redeemed spirits. When He saw the lions and heard them roar, was it not a comfort to the Shepherd that He had kept the sheep, and none of them had perished? Indeed, my Brothers and Sisters, there is more than enough evidence to prove that a rich anointing of gladness rested on the head of the Man of Sorrows.  
Still, dear Friends, this may be viewed by some as a moot point. We allow that there is room for differences of opinion, but not so as to the great joy which Christ obtained after He had endured the Cross, despising the shame. Let us enter into the secret joys of our Beloved. Consider, my Brothers and Sisters, the work accomplished. Christ has borne the wrath of God. God is reconciled to His people. Death has been destroyed—Christ is risen from the dead. The dragon’s head has been broken, the powers of sin have been subdued.  
Our Lord ascends to Heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel. The glorified spirits accord Him a triumphal entry. “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!” He sits down upon His Throne at His Father’s right hand, and then it is that He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.  
I should not have failed to remark that, as God, our Redeemer always possessed fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. We are speaking of Him in His complex Person as Man and God, and in His official role as Mediator—it is His delight in this capacity which we now consider. The joy of the risen Mediator laid, first of all, in this—that He had now accomplished a work which He had meditated upon from all eternity.  
Before the daystar marked the dawn, before the calm of space had ever been stirred by wings of angels, or the solemnity of silence had been startled with song of seraph, Christ had purposed to redeem His people. It was in the eternal purpose of the great Second Person in the Divine Unity, from before all worlds, to redeem unto Himself a people by price. What joy must it give Him now that He can say, “I have finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.”  
His heart had not only meditated, but had been mightily set upon His work. He had bound His people’s names upon His breast. He had engraved them upon the palms of His hands. His ears were bored, for He intended to serve even until death. What if I say that, from before all worlds, He thirsted and panted that He might do His Father’s will, and redeem His people from their ruin? Now, Brothers and Sisters, that desire which had been in Him like coals of juniper, unquenchable, is now fulfilled to the uttermost—how can He be otherwise than anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, since none other ever purposed so firmly or succeeded so perfectly?  
Consider, too, how great the pains which He endured, and we must believe the joy to be commensurate with the pain in the accomplishing of His great life-purpose. He descended to the Cross of deepest woe. Have I not tried to paint in my poor way the mysterious agonies of our blessed Savior? But I feel that I have failed. Now when all this had been suffered, what joy to look back upon it! Never day so bright as that which follows black darkness. Never calm so sweet as that which succeeds hurricane and tempest. Never native place so delightful as to the long exiled pilgrim. So deep the sorrow, so high the joy—so unspeakable the grief, so unutterable the bliss!  
Remember, beloved Brothers and Sisters, the enemies He had overcome, and you will not marvel that His joy was matchless. Had He not defeated Death—grim tyrant—vanquisher of all mankind? Had He not broken the head of the old serpent, who in his crushing coils had bound and pressed a universe of souls? Did He not defeat in battle all the fiends in Hell? Was not evil forever dethroned? Did not goodness sit upon a glorious high throne? Was not virtue exalted to the highest Heaven, and sin cast down to the lowest Hell in that day of the judgment of this world, when the Prince of Darkness was cast out?  
“Behold,” He might have said, “I see Satan falling like lightning from Heaven. The dragon bound with a great chain. Lo, Hell’s gates are shut upon the saints, the grave is rifled of its spoils, Heaven is crowded with the saved, and earth purified from sin.” O Jesus, You mighty conqueror! Your glorious victories must surely give to You, as they do to us, a blessed anointing with the oil of gladness!  
Our Lord possesses in Heaven, now, as perfect Man, the joy of looking back upon a life without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. He has the satisfaction of seeing this perfect obedience covering all His people, till they stand lovely in His loveliness. He has the equal delight of observing the efficacy of His blood to wash the foulest, and make them whiter than snow—while His intercession scatters mercy in one everlasting shower upon the sons of men. Since His heart was love, His joy must be in deeds of love. And as He has become a fountain always welling up with loving gifts towards the chosen sons of men, His delight must be unchanging like His nature, and unbounded like His Divinity. “God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.”  
We pause a moment, having tried to dwell upon the joy, to notice the cause of it. “You love righteousness, and hate wickedness, therefore God has anointed You.” It seems, then, that the first cause why Jesus Christ has received fullness of joy lies in His having loved righteousness. This He did necessarily because of the spotless purity of His Nature. This He did practically in the hallowed sincerity and integrity of His life. Of whom could it be said so truly as of our Lord, that the Law of God was in His heart? How abundantly did He prove His love to righteousness, by vindicating it in His death, fulfilling in His own Person all the sentence of Divine wrath, and taking upon Himself all the curses which fell upon offenders!  
You cannot suppose righteousness to be more clearly manifested than in the living works of Jesus, nor more completely avenged than in His dying throes. How sovereign is that righteousness to which even the Son of God bowed His head and gave up the ghost? The world deluged with water, the plains of Sodom smoking with brimstone, the land of Egypt vexed with plagues—all these terrible things in righteousness manifest the justice of God—but none of them so solemnly as the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus. Our Beloved loved righteousness, indeed, when He emptied out all His heart that He might make us righteous.  
Moreover, as in His life and death we see that He loved righteousness, we discern it, too, in the constant effect of His work. His Gospel makes men righteous. Does it not give them a legal righteousness by imputation, a real righteousness by infusion, a righteousness which covers them with fine linen without, and makes them all glorious within? The spirit of the Gospel which we preach is to magnify that which is pure, and lovely, and of good repute. Wherever the Lord Jesus displays His gracious power, sins yield the throne, purity wins the scepter, Divine Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through the perfect Sacrifice—the living power of Jesus.  
The text adds, “You hate wickedness.” A man’s character is not complete without a perfect hatred of sin. “Be you angry and sin not.” There can hardly be goodness in a man if he is not angry at sin. He who loves the Truth of God must hate every false way. How our Lord Jesus hated it when the temptation came! Thrice it assailed Him in different forms, but always it was, “Get behind Me, Satan.” How He hated it when He saw it in others—none the less fervently because He showed His hate more often in tears of pity, than in words of rebuke. Yet what language could be more stern, more Elijah-like, than the words, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer.”  
He hated wickedness so much that He bled that He might wound it to the heart. He died that it might die—He was buried that He might bury it in His tomb. And He rose that He might forever trample it beneath His feet. Christ is in the Gospel, my Brothers and Sisters, and you all know how utterly that Gospel is opposed to wickedness in every shape. No matter how wickedness may array itself in fair garments, and imitate the language of holiness—the precepts of Jesus, like His famous scourge of small cords—chase wickedness out of the Temple, and will not let it have peaceful lodging in the Church.  
So too, in the heart where Jesus reigns, what war there is between Christ and Belial! And when our Redeemer shall come to be our Judge, in those thundering words, “Depart, you cursed,” which are, indeed, but a prolongation of His life-teaching concerning sin, then shall it be seen, I say, that He hated wickedness. As warm as is His love to sinners, so hot is His hatred of sin. As perfect as is the righteousness which He completed, so perfect shall be the destruction of every form of wickedness. Oh You glorious champion of right, and destroyer of wrong, for this cause has God, even Your God, anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows!

But, Beloved, we must dwell for one moment upon another thought supplied by the text, the character of this joy is hinted at by way of comparison—“God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.” And who are His fellows? Suppose His fellows to be the kings and princes of this world, for the Psalm is descriptive of Christ in His royalty? Well, is He not anointed with gladness above them all? Kings rejoice in their dominions, their extent and population—our King looks from shore to shore, and from the river even to the ends of the earth—and of His dominion there is no end.  
Princes delight in the fame and honor which their office and deeds may bring them. But before the Lord Jesus Christ, the fame of monarchs dwindles into nothing. His name shall endure forever—throughout all generations the people shall praise Him. Monarchs delight in the riches and treasure which their dominions yield. Christ receives a wealth of love and homage from His people, before which the riches of Croesus become poverty itself. “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift. Even the rich among the people shall entreat Your favor.” Kings are accustomed to rejoice in the victories they have achieved. He that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of His strength, has more joy than they.  
They boast the sureness of their throne, but, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” The inward thought of some kings may be that they are invincible in power, and that their will is law. But at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and His enemies shall become as the fat of rams. Into smoke shall they consume, yes, into smoke shall they consume away. Good kings rejoice in the beneficence of their rule, and the happiness of their subjects. Our King may surely glory in the favors which He has scattered from His scepter. But time would fail us if we were to complete the contrast here. Kings of the earth, you may take off your crowns and remain uncrowned in the presence of King Jesus, for on His head are many crowns. O you lords and mighty men, you may lay down your dignities and honors, for you are unhonored and undignified in the presence of Him who is above His fellows!  
My Brothers and Sisters, where shall His fellows be found? Search among the wise, and who shall match the gladness of incarnate wisdom, for man’s wisdom brings sorrow. Go and travel among the famous, and who shall be compared with His illustrious name? Where else is there a name so full of joy? Search out the mighty, who has an arm like His? Go and search among the good and excellent, who have blessed their kind by philanthropy—who among them is so anointed as the Man of Nazareth?  
As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. Standing as high above all the rest of men as the heavens are above the earth! He is, indeed, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. I find that some interpreters read it—“The oil of gladness for His fellows.” The rendering is probably incorrect, but it bears a very truthful, sweet, and comfortable thought in it. If the saints are His fellows and He is not ashamed to call them Brothers and Sisters, then the oil of gladness was first poured on His head that it might descend even to the skirts of His garments, and that all the saints might be made partakers of His joy.  
We have said enough, we think, on this first point—here is the material for much meditation. Search, my Brothers and Sisters, and learn how the Lord, even our God, has glorified His Son Jesus.  
II. Now we turn to THE GLADNESS AFFORDED BY THE CHURCH. “All Your garments smell of myrrh and cassia and aloes, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad.” His garments have been saturated with very precious and fragrant odors. This is the work of His Church in the phrase, “ivory palaces,” the allusion is to certain costly structures which some Oriental kings erected, plated within and without with ivory. We read of Ahab that he built an ivory house. And it was a solemn threat from the lips of Amos, “the houses of ivory shall perish.”  
These ivory houses relate, I suppose, either to the courts of glory, or, more consistently with our interpretation this morning, to the hearts of Believers. Or, better still, to the Churches, which are like palaces of ivory, both for glory, and majesty—for richness, and for purity. The saints’ Graces—their love, their praise, their prayers, their faith—are like myrrh, cassia and aloes. The Savior’s garments are so perfumed, that when He rides in His triumphal chariot, He scatters sweet odors all around. It is a great and certain Truth of God, that Christ finds an intense satisfaction in His Church. “He will rejoice over You with joy. He will rest in His love. He will joy over You with singing.”  
In His people, as the objects of His choice, He finds satisfaction. It is true there is nothing in them naturally. They are by nature heirs of wrath, even as others. But having set His love upon them, having determined to make them His people, He takes a delight in the objects of His choice because of that choice. Nothing in us could have been the origin of the Savior’s first delight in us. Now, doubtless, that we are His workmanship, He takes a delight in the works of His own hands. But when we were like broken potsherds, thrown away upon the dunghill of the Fall, if He saw anything in us it must have been in His own eyes.  
But, dear Friends, as men always take a deep interest in that which has cost them dearly, so since that triumphant day when Jesus stretched out His hands upon the tree, and paid the price for His people, He has found an infinite solace and delight in them. He sees in every Believer’s face a memento of His groans. He looks into the eyes of every penitent and sees His own tears there. He hears the cry of every mourner, and there hears His own groans over again. He beholds the reward of His soul’s travail in every regenerate heart, and therefore, as the purchase of His blood, we make Him glad.  
Again, as His workmanship, as He sees us day by day more conformed to His image, He rejoices in us. Just as you see the sculptor with his chisel etching out the statue which lies hidden in the block of marble, taking off a corner here, and a chip there, and a piece here—see how he smiles when he brings out the features of the form Divine—so our Savior, as He proceeds with His engraving tool, working through the operation of the Spirit, and making us like unto Himself, finds much delight in us.  
The painter makes rough drafts at first, and lays on the colors roughly. Some do not understand what he is doing, and for three or four sittings the portrait is much unlike the man it aims at representing. But the painter can discern the features in the canvass—he sees it looming through that mist and haze of color—he knows that beauty will yet beam forth from yonder daubs and blotches. So Jesus, though we are yet but mere outlines of His image, can discover His own perfection in us where no eyes but His own, as the Mighty Artist, can perceive it. Dear Friends, it is for this reason—because we are the work of His hands—that He takes delight in us.  
Don’t you know that we are His brothers and sisters? And brothers should delight in brothers. No, we are His spouse—and where should the husband find his comfort but in his bride? We are His body—shall not the head be content with the members? We are one with Him, vitally, personally, everlastingly one. And it is little marvel, therefore, if we have a mutual joy in each other, so that His garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces of His Church, wherein He has been made glad.  
Let us think how we can make Him glad. Brethren, our love to Christ— oh, we think it so cold, so little, and so, indeed, we must sorrowfully confess it to be—but it is very sweet to Christ. We can never compare our love to Christ with His love to us, and yet He does not despise it. Hear His own eulogy of His Church in the Song, “You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse. You have ravished My heart with one of your eyes, with one chain of your neck. How fair is your love, My sister, My spouse! How much better is your love than wine! And the smell of your ointments than all spices!” “You are beautiful, O My love, as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away your eyes from Me, for they have overcome Me.”  
See, see, my Brothers and Sisters! His delight is in you! When you lean your head on His bosom, you not only receive, but you give Him joy. When you gaze with love upon His beauteous face, you not only receive comfort, but give delight. Our praise, too, gives Him joy, when from our hearts we sing His name, and when gratefully, though silently, we breathe a song up to His Throne. As princes are delighted with incense, so is Christ delighted with the praise of His people. And our gifts, too, delight Him.  
As the son of our good Queen accepts rich tokens of kindness from the people of his land, so our Lord Jesus is charmed with the offerings of His people. He loves to see us lay our time, our talents, our substance upon His altar—not for the value of what we give—but for the sake of the motive from which the gift springs. He takes far more delight in what we do for Him than our Queen’s son could take in splendid arches, or in the glorious pageantry of yesterday. To Christ the shouts of His people are better than the cheers of the most enthusiastic populace, and to Him the lowly offerings of His saints are more acceptable than thousands of gold and silver.  
Forgive your enemy and you make Christ glad! Distribute of your substance to the poor, and He rejoices! Be the means of saving souls, and you give Him to see of the travail of His soul. Preach His Gospel, and you are a sweet savor unto Him. Go among the ignorant, and among the hopeless, and try to lift them up, for His sake, and you have given Him satisfaction. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, it is in your power this very day to break the alabaster box and pour the precious ointment on His head, as did the woman of old, whose memorial is to this day set forth.

 You can anoint Him above all His fellows with the oil of gladness.  
I think I see a great procession. It is Jesus Christ riding alone through the tens of thousands of souls whom He has redeemed with His own blood. I think I see Him looking to the right and to the left as He rides along the centuries. See how every window of every age is crowded! Glorified spirits look down from the housetops of Heaven—the Church militant looks up from the streets of earth—multitudes upon multitudes of souls that love Him and call Him King, salute Him as their Redeemer. I notice that, as He goes along in this great procession, His eyes are bright with joy.  
We liked to see the Prince and Princess happy yesterday, but their joy could be nothing compared with that of Christ as He rides along in triumph. How the multitudes delight Him. The ten thousand times ten thousand—who shall tell how many Christ has redeemed? Their number is beyond all human count. So many are they that, as they clap their hands, and shout to His name, I hear a voice like many waters, or like great thunders, while they cry, “Hallelujah, Sweet Prince! Ride on triumphantly! And reign forever and ever!”  
There is one thing Christ feels as He looks upon the crowd around Him, which our Prince could not feel yesterday. He knows that every one of these would lay down their lives for Him. Of all those whom Jesus bought with blood—among those who are renewed in heart—there is not one who would not bleed for Him. To the stake they would walk, and sing amidst the flames. To the dungeon they would go, and praise Him while they rot in darkness. They would be dragged at the heels of horses, they would be stoned, they would be sawn in sunder, they would wander about in sheepskins and in goatskins, and they would glory in all these things that they may show their love to Christ.  
Every eye in the vast throng which gathers about the triumphal chariot of Christ beams with intense love for Him. And when they shout, each one shouts louder than his fellow! Each one in the whole throng feels he owes more to the great King than anyone else. There is something special about each face the King looks on, and as He remembers the special circumstances, He perceives the reason for that special love. Either it is much forgiven, or else it is much trial averted, or much strength conferred by which to perform labor. I am sure that when you and I are in that throng looking upon Him, we may truly say—  
*“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,  
While Heaven’s resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of Sovereign Grace.”*  
You did well to applaud your Prince yesterday, but what had he ever done for you? What debt did you owe to him? Owed he not far more to you? But our King, as He rides along in the midst of the joyful hosts of the blood-bought, has this upon his mind—“I bought all these souls with My blood.” He recollects, as He looks upon them, where they would have been but for His Grace, and the very pangs of Hell must add joy to His soul when He remembers that He saved them from passing into the pit. He recollects, too, what they once were—how full of sin, what enemies to God— how they crucified Him, how they trampled on His precious blood.  
And now He sees them bowing before Him, too glad to catch but a glimpse of Him as He rides by. They are more than happy to be as the dust of His feet if He will but honor them by treading upon them—that He might be lifted the higher! O my Brothers and Sisters, we love the Lord Jesus Christ, and our hearts give Him a reception such as never was accorded to an earthly Prince. Pile the arches! Pile the arches! Let hearts pour forth their life-blood, if in no other way the banners can be dyed red! Strew the streets! Strip off your garments if in no other way the pageant can be made illustrious! Bring forth the royal diadem, and let every saint renounce wealth, and comfort, if by no other means Jesus can be crowned!  
Empty Heaven, if by no other way Jesus can be attended with guards of honor. Come, all you sons and daughters of His great family, and offer yourselves a living sacrifice, if there can be no other incense! We are all prepared—I speak for the sacramental host of God’s elect—we are all prepared, by His Grace, to follow Him through floods and through flames! We are prepared to give Him all the honor that heart can conceive. We are prepared to kiss His feet as well as to crown His head. Bring forth the royal diadem today and crown Him Lord of All! And each day as He rides along, till He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, let Him be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.  
III. Now for another text, but not another sermon. It is in the fourth verse of the first chapter of the Song of Solomon—“WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN YOU.”  
God has made the King glad, and His saints make Him glad. Let us be glad, too. But let us take care that our gladness is of the right sort. “We will rejoice and be glad in You.” That man is glad in his farm. That other in his merchandise. That one yonder in his wealth—that woman in her jewels. That other in her beauty. “We will rejoice and be glad in You.” But in what? We will rejoice, more especially, in His love to us. You remember Jesus Christ said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?” Interpreters read that two ways. Some think he meant, “Do you love me more than you love these nets, and this fishery, and your earthly calling, and these friends?”  
I think I hear Jesus Christ speaking this morning, and He says, “My people, I love you more than these.” He points to spirits that once stood around His Throne, angels that have sinned—they fell like lightning from Heaven, and there they lie in flames. And Christ says, “I love you more than these. I let these perish, but I saved you.” Pointing to the kings and princes of this world, the great, the mighty, and the learned men—and to all the nations that sit in darkness—He says, “I love you more than these. I gave Ethiopia and Seba for you.” Then taking a higher range He points to Heaven.  
There sit the angels before the Throne, and He says, “I love you more than these. I left their company for yours.” He bids you listen to their harps, and to their songs, and He says, “I love you more than these. I left all these melodies that I might be able to meet your groans.” Yes, He points to His own Throne, so bright with glory that mortal eyes scarcely dare to rest upon it, and He says, “I love you more than these, for I left the glory of My Throne that I might redeem you with My blood.” Saint, will you not join with me? Shall we not both say, “Savior, blessed be Your unexampled love! We rill rejoice and be glad in You”?  
But some interpreters read the text—“Do you love Me more than these?”—“Do you love me more than these others love Me?” Jesus speaks today to us, “I have loved you more than these. Your mother loved you. Strong were her pangs when you were born, and anxious her cares when she nursed you at her bosom. But I have loved you more than these, and more than your brothers and sisters loved you—born of the same parents, they watched over you with delight, and they have been ready to help you in your time of need. But I have loved you more than these. And more than your husband loved you, loved you as his own soul. He has cherished you, and has been ready to lay down his life to give you back health when you have been sick—I have loved you more than he.  
“Your children, too, have loved you. They have climbed your knee, and smiled upon you for all your kindness to them, and they have strengthened your old age, and you have leaned upon them, as upon a staff, when you have been tottering with weakness. But I have loved you more than these. And you have had a joyous companion, a dear friend who has been with you from your youth up, and has never lifted his heel against you. And you have had your confidantes and your Brethren who went up to the House of God with you and talked cheerfully by the way, but I have loved you more than these.”  
I think I hear Him say to me—“There are some in this congregation who would pluck out their own eyes to give them to you. They love you, for you are their spiritual father—but I have loved you more than these.” And He points to all the good men that have ever tried to teach you, to all the comforters who have given you joy, to all the helpers that have aided you on the road to immortality. And He says, “I have loved you more than these.” Well, if His love is matchless like this, we will rejoice and be glad in Him. The Lord knows I have nothing else to rejoice in. I cannot rejoice in myself—there are so many sins and so many doubts—but I will rejoice, and be glad in Him if He loves me like this.  
He has finished the work for me, given me a perfect righteousness, washed me in His blood, taken off His robe to clothe me, given His life that He may make me live. He has entered the grave to bring me out of it, and said that I shall shortly be enthroned with Him above the sky. I will rejoice and be glad in Him. When King Solomon was crowned, all the people rejoiced. And shall we be mourners when Christ sits upon His Throne? Let the heaviest heart begin to leap! And if you have to bear your burdens tomorrow, yet throw them off today. “We will rejoice and be glad in You.” I should not like one Christian to go down these aisles this morning without some light of Heaven’s brightness on his cheek—without some note of Heaven’s music in his ears.  
“Oh,” says the Christian, “Yes. I will. The Cross is heavy, but I will hope beneath it. The furnace is hot, but I will sing in it. The way is rough, but I will tread it with light footsteps, for I will rejoice and be glad in Him who has loved me, and given Himself for me.” Well, you see, there is a glad Christ in Heaven, and here is a glad Church on earth! There is Christ anointed by His Father, here are His people sharing that anointing! Here is Christ giving you joy, and you giving Christ joy! Belt the world with happiness—fire zodiac with joy! Lift up the ladder of your songs! While the bottom rests on earth, let the top reach to Heaven!

And you angels of God, hold fellowship today with God, and with us through the joy and peace which God the Father gives us, while we rejoice and are glad in Him! I would you all understood this subject, but some of you are strangers to it altogether! Remember, there is no joy anywhere but in Christ. It is all poor mockery which you get elsewhere. Jesus Christ is to be had, and whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. The Lord give you His benediction, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1950 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EARTHQUAKE BUT NOT HEARTQUAKE  
NO. 1950

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 27, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.”  
Psalm 46:1-3.**

THIS Psalm is a song for all Israel—for all who are truly the chosen of God, called to be His own people—should exhibit a fearless courage. The peace of God which passes all understanding should keep the hearts and minds of all who rest in God. If, indeed, the Lord is our refuge and strength, we are entitled to seek after a spirit which shall bear us above the dreads of common men. It is not every man that can sing this Psalm— he must belong to the believing company, he must have God to be his God—and he must, like Israel, have learned the art of prevailing prayer, or else he cannot sing the song of peace amid commotion and calamity. No man can truly sing this Psalm but those who are redeemed from the earth.

While this is a Psalm for all Israel, it is specially marked as committed to the charge of the sons of Korah. Korah, Dathan and Abiram perished because of their presumption—they went down alive into the pit—and the earth closed upon them. They and all that appertained unto them were swallowed up. But we are astonished to read, “Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.” I attribute their singular escape to the Sovereign Grace of God who spared them when their kinsmen were destroyed. They were made singers in the courts of the Lord and surely they would sing with peculiar emphasis these words, “Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed.” They saw the earth open her mouth and swallow up the offenders of their household while they were preserved by Sovereign Grace. Surely the tears must have stood in their eyes when they sang this verse and thought of the opening gulf at their feet. The circumstance under which a man is saved will influence the rest of his life. To be saved of God from between the teeth of judgment is a rescue so special and vivid that the subject of it learns to sing aloud unto the preserving Lord! Delivered from so great a death, Believers learn to trust that the Lord will yet deliver them. When conversion is especially remarkable, the music of gratitude is pitched in a high key and the converts reach notes which are impossible to others. It is for sons of Korah to sing, “Therefore we will not fear.”

It is significant, also, that this Psalm was to be sung “upon Alamoth,” which, in all probability, means that it was to be set to music suitable for virgin voices. The hallelujah at the Red Sea was chiefly in the hands of Miriam and the maidens of Israel—she took her timbrel and the daughters of Israel followed after her, singing unto the Lord. This is a Psalm of the same sort. You virgin souls, arise and sing unto God, your refuge and strength! Awake, you hearts that follow the Lord fully in the fervor of your first love, and lift your voices to the Lord! Come, you that have been kept pure and undefiled in your words and ways, you whose hearts are chaste to the love of Jesus Christ—you are called upon above all others to sing, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

It was because Luther’s heart was chaste towards God and his whole mind virgin towards Divine Truth that he delighted to sing this Psalm. In the days of the most furious opposition he was known to say to Melancthon, “Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm and let the devil do his worst.” So, too, when Luther was dead, Melancthon heard a girl singing this Psalm and he said to her, “Sing on, dear daughter, mine, you know not what comfort you bring to my heart.” We read of the armies of Gustavus Adolphus singing this Psalm before their victory at Leipsic. So, you see, the young, the simple, the guileless may sing that which nerves warriors for the battle—

*“God is our refuge and our strength,  
In straits a present aid;  
Therefore, although the earth remove,  
We will not be afraid.”*

This morning, as I shall be enabled, I shall say a little, first, upon the confidence of the saints— “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Then I will speak upon the courage which grows out of it—“Therefore we will not fear.” We shall close with a brief survey of the conflicts to which that courage will be sure to be exposed—“Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling.”

I. First, then, let us carefully consider THE CONFIDENCE OF THE SAINTS.  
God’s people have a sure confidence. Other men build as best they may, but true Believers rest upon the Rock of Ages. Their confidence is altogether beyond themselves. In this song there is nothing about their own virtue, valor, or wisdom. The heathen moralist boasted that if the globe, itself, should break, his integrity would make him stand fearless amid the wreck. But the Believer has a humbler, though a truer reliance. Though the earth is removed, he is undismayed. And this does not arise from his own personal self-sufficiency, but from God, who is his refuge and strength. He is fearless, not because of his original stoutness of heart and natural firmness of will, but because he has a God to shelter and uphold him. If he does not fear calamity, it is because he fears God and God, alone.  
Our Psalm begins with God, and with God it ends—“The God of Jacob is our refuge.” We may be as timid by nature as the conies, but God is our refuge. We are as weak by nature as bruised reeds, but God is our strength. We never know what strength is till our own weakness drives us to trust Omnipotence. We never understand how safe our refuge is till all other refuges fail us. When the earth is removed and the waters of the sea roar and are troubled, being driven both from land and sea, we hide ourselves in God. You who are strong in yourselves imagine strength where only weakness can be found—you seek the living among the dead and substantial confidences amid the “vanity of vanities.” If we look to ourselves for courage, we shall fail in the hour of trial. When the earth is removed, the mightiest men are the first to shudder! The greatest boasters become the worst cowards. For confidence and peace we must say unto the Lord, “All my fresh springs are in You.”  
This confidence is gained by an appropriating faith. Peace comes to me not only by what God is, but by what God is to me. “God is our refuge and strength.” “This God is our God.” You never enjoy the goodness and greatness of God if you view them in an abstract manner. You must grasp them as your own. It seems a daring act for a man to appropriate God, but the Lord invites us to do it! He says, “Let him take hold of My strength.”  
Why hesitate to make the appropriation? Look at the men of the world—they would appropriate the whole earth if they could—continents are not too wide! It is no fault of theirs if they do not hedge in the stars and monopolize the sun. And shall not the Christian appropriate those heavenly things of which he is made the heir—an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ Jesus? Let us join with the Prophet Jeremiah in his comfortable soliloquy—“The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.” As with Thomas, we behold the print of the nails! Let us say with him, unto our blessed Redeemer—“My Lord and my God.” The deep peace which is our right and privilege will not be ours unless, with assured faith, we take the Lord to be ours in all the fullness of His love. Come, let us now say—“God is our refuge and strength.”  
This confidence will be greatly sustained by a clear knowledge of God. “Acquaint yourself with God, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto you.” If we were greater students of God, how much happier we would be! Pope said, “The proper study of mankind is man.” It is a deplorably barren subject! Say, rather, “The proper study of mankind is God.” When men of God make God their study, then they discover in Him those things which make Him a refuge for their hours of danger; a strength for days of labor and a help for emergencies of every kind. We ought to be able to say more of God today than we could a few years ago. Our general notion should now branch out into instructive particulars. We ought to now see the varied blessings which come to us from God and to speak of Him under a threefold description as “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”  
We notice under the Old Testament dispensation that certain sacrifices, like the doves and pigeons which were brought by poor Israelites, were simply cut in two and were laid on the altar. But other offerings which were brought by richer Israelites were more carefully divided. Take the offering of the rich to represent, as a type, the ideas of those who are well taught in knowledge and have a greater experience of the things of God and then you see how matters of detail were mentioned. When bullocks were presented we read of the fat, the head, the legs and the inwards—so here we read of refuge, strength and help. The more we know the Lord, the more shall we perceive that He is full of blessings to us. “They that know Your name will put their trust in You.” You shall be

 saved by the little knowledge which trusts God—but your peace shall be far fuller and deeper if you know the deep things of God and understand His secrets, for then you shall not be afraid of evil tidings since your heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.  
If you are, as yet, a timid Believer, seek to grow in the knowledge of God, for thus shall you learn to say, “Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed.” Half our fears are the result of ignorance. Truth as yet unknown would greatly encourage us if we did but perceive it. If we knew more of God we would be bold as lions. Therefore I exhort all true Believers here to dwell much in the Presence of God and ask to be instructed in the Nature, the Character, the attributes of God—yes, the purpose, the promise and the Providence of the Covenant God of Israel. To know Him is eternal life! Solid peace which no calamity can destroy must come from God—from God appropriated and from God growingly known.  
All this will be certified to us by our experience. This Psalm is best sung by men and women who know what they are singing because they have felt the preserving and delivering Grace of God. I shall put it to you this morning, you that know the Lord, can you not say by experience, “God is our refuge”? You have fled to Him—have you not found a shelter in Him? There have been times of trial so severe that you could not endure its force, but were compelled to flee from it. You fled to God—was His door closed against you? Did He bid you go elsewhere? Did He upbraid you for your presumption? And when you have hidden yourself in God, let me ask you, has He not afforded you a very blessed retreat? When you have entered into your chamber, shut your door and hidden yourself with God, have you not been at perfect peace? Yes, you have been as safe and as happy as Noah when the Lord shut him in!  
Look at the little chicks yonder, under the hen! See how they bury their little heads in the feathers of her warm bosom! Hear their little chirps of perfect happiness as they nestle beneath the mother’s wings! “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust—His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” Have you not found it so? My happiest hours have not been in the days of my mirth, but in the nights of my sorrow! When all waters are bitter, the cup of Divine Consolation is all the sweeter. For brightness, give me not the sunlight, but that superior Glory with which the Lord lights up the darkness of affliction! It is not necessary for happiness that a man should be prosperous in business, or applauded by mankind—it is only necessary that the Lord should smile on him! It is not essential to happiness that he should be in good health, or even that he should be naturally of cheerful spirit—God gives us the truest health in sickness and the most tender joy amid depression. Brothers and Sisters, “God is our refuge.” It is many a day since first we went to Him and we have been many times since, but He has never failed us once. I appeal to the aged and the experienced here—and I know that the older they are and the more tried they have been, the more steadfast will they bear their witness that “God is a refuge for us.”  
We can also say that God has been our strength. When we have not been afflicted, but have had arduous labor to perform for God, we have been made to feel and mourn our weakness—and then the Lord has made us to glory in infirmity because His power has rested on us. What multiform shapes that strength has taken! Many of you have had strength for the daily battle of business life, others for domestic life. Under fierce temptations you remain unconquered; under stern duties you remain unwearied; you have had strength for exhausting service or crushing suffering. Had you been left to your own wit and wisdom, they alone could never have sufficed you—strength of mind has been given from above. See the widow, left penniless, who has brought up a family of children! Can she tell how she did it? See the girl placed amid coarse and brutal men of licentious character—she remains pure—but can she tell you how? God is our strength in ways unknown to ourselves. Our trials are all different. No two of us have proved the Lord in exactly the same way, but yet our testimony is uniform—the Lord has been all-sufficient, His strength is perfect! Thus far we find that promise good, “Your shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your days, so shall your strength be.”  
We have also proved another thing, namely, that God is “a very present help in trouble.” We have had helpers after the flesh who have not been present when we needed them—perhaps they have studiously kept out of the way—at any rate, just at the pinch when we have said, “Oh, that soand-so were here,” our friend has been at the end of the earth. But it has never been so with God. Has He not said, “Before they call I will answer them and while they are yet speaking I will hear”? Just there where the burden pressed, God has been immediately present to lighten the load! He is not only present, but very present. More present than our nearest friend when most present. God’s Presence permeates us. He is not only by our side, but He is within us, in the heart of our thoughts, at the springs of our life. Beloved, you have sometimes complained that God was absent from you. Because of your sin He has hidden His face from you. But let me ask you, did you ever find the Lord absent in your hour of trial? In the burning furnace, if ever anywhere, you shall see “one like unto the Son of God.” He has said, “When you pass through the waters I will be with you.” Wherever else He may supposed to be absent, He will be sure to be present in trouble.  
Now, this is matter of experience and because we have experienced it, therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed. Having already tried and tested God, we are not going to doubt Him, now! We feel something of the mind of Sir Francis Drake, who, after he had sailed round the world, was buffeted with a storm in the Thames. “What?” he asked, “have we sailed round the world safely and shall we be drowned in a ditch?” So do we say at this day! Helped so long and helped so often! God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, why should we fear? How dare we fear?  
Once more, dear Friends, in order to realize the fearlessness of which this text so sweetly sings, we must not only have a past experience at our back, but an immediate enjoyment of the Divine help. If you can truly sing in your soul, “God is my refuge and my strength,” then it will be impossible for you to be afraid. A sense of the nearness and graciousness of God will be an antidote to fear. I know that it is so in alarms and distresses which come under my observation. I have often stood at the bedsides of dear Brothers and Sisters, members of this Church, when they have come to die, and I have, without exception, always found them perfectly restful and free from fear. It is a sorrow to see friends full of pain and to know that they are dying, but the various interviews that I have had with the departing have left no impression of gloom on my mind, but the very reverse!  
I came this week out of a quiet bedchamber where I saw a Sunday school teacher passing away. It was a little sanctuary. Everything so quiet, peaceful, happy. Death cast no shadow over the sweet face. Heaven lighted the features. It seemed more like a marriage day than a death day. Why are these dying beds so happy? Because these people have any goodness of their own? Far from it! Without exception they disown it. Because they are strong and self-contained? No! I might speak of young and old Believers, greatly emaciated by long sickness, and yet as greatly strong in faith. What brings this peace? Truly, the Lord was there! His realized Presence makes death a small matter. Do we not sing—  
*“Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,  
My soul should stretch her wings in haste, Fly fearless through death’s iron gate,  
Nor feel the terrors as she passed”?*  
The Presence of God with the soul of a Believer swallows up death in victory! Anything else that is terrible in time or in eternity loses its terror in the Presence of the mighty God of Jacob. Thus have I shown you where the confidence of the Christian really lies.  
II. I come, secondly, to notice THE COURAGE WHICH GROWS OUT OF IT.  
This courage is very full and complete. “Therefore we will not fear.” It does not say, “Therefore we will not run away,” but, “therefore we will not fear.” It does not even say, “Therefore we will not faint and swoon in dread,” but, “Therefore we will not fear.” The Presence of God does so stay the soul and quiet the heart, that fear, which has torment, is driven away. Nature fears, it could not be otherwise. But through Grace, the Heavenborn spirit triumphs over nature and its fear. God does not take away from us those natural fears which lead us to seek the preservation of life, but He masters them by a serene security of heart produced by His Presence. We are perplexed, but not in despair. We see the position to be full of danger and yet we know that we are in no danger, the Lord being near. “Therefore we will not fear.” It is a most delightful thing when the heart is placid because we believe in God and in His Christ. This peace is the peace of God which passes all understanding—no pretence of peace—but a Divine reality which the world can neither create nor destroy!  
Then, further, this courage is logically justifiable. It is not the courage of nature, which may be a mere brute virtue, such as dogs and bulls possess. Neither does it grow out of lack of feeling. The courage of the Christian is not the hardness of the stoic. The stoic boasts that he does not feel. The Christian does feel—feels as keenly as anybody and much more than most. And yet, for all that, the conscious love of God lifts him above fear! The Believer’s fearlessness is founded upon argument and so the Psalmist words it, “

Therefore we will not fear.” Because God is present as the refuge of His people, it is unreasonable for them to fear.  
Observe, then, dear Friends, that whatever happens to the man who has God to be his God, he need not fear because none of these things will affect the ground of his confidence. No calamity will change God’s love to us. Suppose we should witness an earthquake, a tempest, a famine, pestilence, a war—none of these would separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! These temporal calamities do not touch the vital matter—such things have no influence upon the unchangeable love of God except to make it more clear!  
Suppose, again, that the most awful things were to occur. Would they not occur according to God’s decree? We believe in a God who has arranged all things according to the counsel of His will. Do you believe that anything is left to chance? Is any event outside the circle of the Divine Predestination? No, my Brothers and Sisters—with God there are no contingencies! The mighty Charioteer of Providence has gathered up all the reins of all the horses and He guides them all according to His infallible wisdom! There is a foreknowledge and predestination which concerns all things—from the motion of a grain of dust on the threshing floor to that of the flaming comet which blazes across the sky. Nothing can happen but what God ordains and, therefore, why should we fear?  
Again, nothing happens without the Divine Power being in it. The Lord says, “Behold, I have created the smith that blows the coals in the fire. I have created the waster to destroy.” The most violent and wicked men could not move a finger if strength were not lent them by the Lord. As for the catastrophes of Nature, is not the Lord distinctly in them? Who shakes the earth? Is it not God that looks on it and it trembles? When the mountains vomit fire, is it not because He touches the hills and they smoke? Our Father works all things—therefore should His children be afraid?  
Furthermore, do not you and I believe that God overrules everything— that even that which naturally might be called evil is turned to good account? The Lord’s goodness extracts the viper’s tooth and supplies an antidote to the poison. It was evil, but God transmuted it into good by the alchemy of His Divine wisdom. Who is he that can harm you? “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.”  
Furthermore, we know that nothing that can happen, however tremendous it may be, can shake the Kingdom of God. Our chief possession lies in that Kingdom and if that is secure, all is safe. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against that Kingdom and, therefore, whatever is imperiled, our highest, best and most vital interests are safe beyond the shadow of harm. Suppose an accident should take away our lives? I smile as I think that the worst thing that could happen would be the best thing that could happen! If we should die, we should but the sooner be “forever with the Lord.” If in the quiver of God’s Providence there should lie an arrow which shall bring us death today, it would also bring us Glory! So, if the very worst that can befall us is the best that can come, why should we fear? I think this is good reasoning, is it not? If you are, indeed, a Believer, and if God is your refuge and your strength, there is a logical reason why you should not yield to alarm.  
Now, this fearlessness is exceedingly profitable. If a man is able to contain himself and possess his soul in patience through the Presence of God, he will not do that which is foolish. Men, when they are frightened, are in hot haste and hurry themselves into folly. As if they were turned to children, men in their alarm will act without reason! In fact, terror is a kind of madness. Many absurd actions have been performed under the influence of panic. In times of danger the man who is calm is the most ready to use the proper means of escape. Presence of mind is invaluable and the best way to secure presence of mind is to believe in the Presence of God! In cases of sickness, the patient who does not fret is the most likely to be cured. We have had among us, just now, instances of dear friends in this Church who have been called to undergo most serious operations. And it has been a wonderful help to them that they have known no dread, but have been passive in the Lord’s hands.  
Our Lord Jesus was always sweetly serene and this was one element of the wisdom of His behavior. In the struggle of life, a cheerful fearlessness is a grand assistance. Here is a man on the Exchange and things are going heavily against him. Prices are falling and all that he can do appears to make bad worse. If that man gives way to fear, he may plunge into utter ruin. But if he can step aside a minute or two and breathe a prayer to God, he will pull himself together, and when he comes back he will coolly survey the situation and act with discretion. Lose your head and you lose the battle! Lose your heart and you have lost all. To him who knows no fear there is no fear, provided that his forgetfulness of fear arises out of his memory of God! For the prudent government of life as well as for its enjoyment, the overcoming of fear is a great help.  
Fearlessness also assists in keeping us from doing wrong. The man who can trust God with consequences will not do wrong in order to escape from losses. The man who yields to the fear of man is apt to conceal his convictions and if he does not deny the faith, he is apt to attempt a compromise—and that is the most dangerous operation which a Christian man can enter! If faith in God lifts us up above the fear of losses and sufferings, we shall say to every form of temptation, “Get you behind me, Satan.”  
One thing more I desire to say about this fearlessness, namely, that it brings great glory to God. If you are enabled to rise above fear in times of alarm, then those who see you will say, “This is a man of God, and this is God’s work upon his soul.” I knew a youth, [Brother Spurgeon is speaking of himself] near 40 years ago, who was staying with relations when a thunderstorm of unusual violence came on at nightfall. A stack was struck by lightning and set on fire within sight of the door. The grown-up people in the house, both men and women, were utterly overcome with fright. The strong men seemed even more afraid than the women. All the inmates of the house sat huddled together. Only this youth was quietly happy. There was a little child upstairs in bed and the mother was anxious about it, but even her love could not give her courage enough to pass the staircase windows to bring that child down.  
The babe cried, and this youth, whom I knew right well, who was then but newly converted, went upstairs alone, took the child and, without hurry or alarm, brought it down to its mother. He needed no candle, for the lightning was so continuous that he could see his way right well. He felt that the Lord was wonderfully near that night and so no fear was possible to his heart. He sat down and read a Psalm aloud to his trembling relatives who looked on the lad with loving wonder. That night he was master of the situation and those in the house believed that there was something in the religion which he had so lately professed. I believe that if all of us can, by God’s Grace, get such a sense of God’s nearness to us in times of danger and trouble, that we will remain calm and we shall bring much honor to the cause of God and the name of Jesus. Holy confidence sings Psalms by its spirit and acts. It is well to sing in the language of David, “God is our refuge and strength.” But it is better, still, so to act that all can see that we do not fear though the earth is removed!  
III. Time has fled and I must ask your patience while I now dwell for a little while upon the third point, THE CONFLICTS TO WHICH THIS FEARLESSNESS WILL BE EXPOSED. If you become fearless through the Presence of God, that courage will be tested.  
It will be tried in ways novel and unusual. “Though the earth be removed.” This is a terrible novelty. Those who have been in earthquakes tell me that the feeling is most singular. It does not seem like a common shake, but as if everything had given way at once. You do not know what to do—the very foundations of everything have slipped from under you. Suppose that the Lord is about to try us in new and unheard of ways? Yet, having the Lord to be our refuge, strength and present help, we will not fear. New trials will bring new Graces and prove the value of old promises.  
Certain trials are very mysterious and threatening. It would be a great mystery if we were to see “the mountains carried into the midst of the sea.” There they have stood for ages and should they take a leap, we should be at our wits’ end to account for their motion! If some giant force plucked them up by their roots and hurled them into the center of the ocean, we would be amazed. But some afflictions are of that order—you cannot understand them. The sting of sorrow often lies in the unseen. What we cannot comprehend astounds and appalls us. Yet, my Brethren, we need not fear if God is with us, though the mountains were hurled into the midst of the sea! The Lord could put them back into their places again. If all the devils in Hell had a hand in your trouble, you need not, therefore, be alarmed, for one God is greater than millions of demons! If all the legions of the pit rushed forth in hosts innumerable as flying locusts, all armed to the teeth and eager for your blood, yet the Lord of Hosts being with you, you would march through them as a man goes through a field of grass! One lion does not fear a flock of sheep and one man who trusts in God is master of armies of adversaries. Therefore, we will not fear, “though hills amid the seas be cast.” Our God is mightier than all mysterious forces whatever.  
Some trials also seem to be utterly ungovernable—“Though its waters roar and be troubled.” You cannot do anything with the sea when it rages. It hurls itself aloft in great masses! It yawns in fathomless abysses! It rushes, it whirls, it sinks. As for its noise, it drowns your thoughts. The water is here, there, everywhere when the deep once begins to break loose! And certain troubles seem to be of like nature—they rush upon you all of a sudden, they multiply like swelling waves, they drive furiously, they carry all before them—and yet, even then, we need not fear! If God is with us, He is mightier than the noise of many waters, yes, than the mighty waves of the sea! There is no reason to fear noise and none, even, to fear the sea, for, “the Lord sits upon the flood; yes, the Lord sits King forever.” Let the sea roar and let its waters be troubled—our faith shall never yield to fear.

Sometimes we get afraid through sympathy with the fear of others. Observe, “Though the mountains shake with its swelling,” as though when the sea had taken to roaring and trembling, the mountains followed it in sympathy! So, when we see the strongest people giving way and panic seizing upon them, we are apt to yield. But if God is with us and we can hold firm to the Truth that He is our refuge and our strength, we shall not fear.  
“Well,” says one, “what is the practical run of all this?” Why, just this. There may come to you and to me great and unexpected trouble—and it will then be well to rise out of the reach of fear. War may soon burst upon us. The political atmosphere is charged with war and we may be surrounded by it before the year grows old. We have enjoyed, as a nation, so much of rest within our own island that we have grown somewhat secure—but even if war were at our gates—those who have made the Most High their refuge need not fear.  
Something worse than war is threatening. Anarchy seeks to make havoc in the streets. There are plenty of signs and tokens that a breakup of social order is desired by not a few. Fierce spirits are eager to repeat among us the horrors of the French Revolution. To break down, divide, destroy, disintegrate is the policy of many. The earthquake of society is more to be dreaded than the quaking of the globe and we are within measurable distance of such a catastrophe. Shall we lie down and die? No, verily, we will not fear, though the earth is removed. If God is our confidence we need not be afraid, though the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The unloosing of the bond of society is a thing to be dreaded more than an incursion of wild beasts, but the Lord reigns and, therefore, right will prevail.  
Perhaps some of you feel this sad depression of trade weighing upon your spirits. “I do not know what is coming of it,” says one. “I do not think I shall long be able to provide for my family.” Yes, but if God is your refuge and strength, I beseech you, do not lose heart. “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” This depression is to you what the earthquake has been to the Riviera—but yet you must not be buried in despair. Hope on, hope always.  
“Ah,” says one, “but I fear the return of persecution. Popery is making rapid strides and may come into power again.” I am not quite so much alarmed about that as some are, but even if it were so, we must not show the white feather. Do not be afraid! He that helps His people is stronger than their adversaries. He can deliver from the jaws of the lion and He will deliver without fail.  
As for myself, I am often sadly tossed about because of the heresies and false doctrines of this present age. It grieves me to the heart to see the lack of spirituality among ministers and of holiness among professing Christians. It cuts me to the quick to see the utter rubbish and poison which is preached instead of Christianity. At times it looks as if all things were going wrong! The men to whom one looked as pillars, forsake the faith, and the staunchest give way for the sake of peace. We are apt to cry, “What will become of us?” But if God is our refuge and strength, we need not be afraid, even amid general apostasy! While God lives, Truth is in the ascendant. I remember years ago meeting with that blessed servant of God, the late Earl of Shaftesbury. He was at Mentone with a dying daughter and he happened, that day, to be very much downcast, as, indeed, I have frequently seen him and as, I am sorry to confess, he has also frequently seen me.  
That day he was particularly cast down about the general state of society. He thought that the powers of darkness in this country were having it all their own way and that, before long, the worst elements of society would gain power and trample out all virtue. Looking up into his face, I said to him, “And is God dead? Do you believe that while God lives the devil will conquer Him?” He smiled and we walked along by the Mediterranean communing together in a far more hopeful tone. The Lord lives and blessed be my Rock! As long as the Lord lives, our hope also lives! Gospel Truth will yet prevail! We shall live to see the old faith to the front again! The Church, like Noah’s dove, will come back to her rest and bring something with her which shall prophesy eternal peace.  
Now, my beloved Friend, think about yourself a minute and all the trials which may yet beset you. If you are to be afflicted with incurable sickness and gradually to pine away amid multiplied pains, yet you need not fear! If you are to be an invalid from this time forth to the end of your days, yet be not greatly depressed in spirit, for the Lord’s Presence will sustain you. If heart and flesh both fail, God will be the strength of your heart and your portion forever! By-and-by you and I will have to die unless the Lord should suddenly come. What then? Then will the earth be removed, so far as we are concerned! And then, as far as our experience goes, our mountain will be carried into the midst of the sea! But since God is our refuge and strength we ought not to dread the day.  
Look into the Book of Revelation and you will see that tremendous events are foretold. All things shall be shaken; all the glories of earth shall melt away. Confusion, like the first chaos, shall cover all things; the earth shall rock and reel and the stars shall fall from Heaven. But even then we will not fear, since God will be our very present help. Some people dine on horrors. They are not content unless a future is set before them spiced with dread. I confess that I am not of their mind. The Lord Jesus has made an end of horrors for me. Whether we live or die, we shall be “forever with the Lord.” And to be where He is, is to be far away from fear! There will come a day when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise— but we fear not resurrection! There shall be a day of days for which all other days were made, with its Great White Throne, pomp of angels and judgment of the quick and the dead, but, Beloved, though that day shall burn as an oven, we will not fear because we are secure in Christ Jesus! Therefore let us stand at the window and look out at the storm—and see the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds without a trace of fear!  
I thought, as I read my text, what an awful case the ungodly must be in, for the very things which men most dread, namely, the falling of mountains and the gaping open of the earth, will become the desire of terrified sinners at the last! How great must be that horror which will altogether eclipse the horror which sends myriads flying in panic from their homes! When sinners shall see the face of Christ in His Glory, they will beg the mountains to fall upon them and the rocks to cover them, to hide them from the dreadful vision! The face of Love is terrible to those who have rejected it! Oh Sinners, what will be your anguish when you shall seek death and not find it?! What will be your dismay when even a tottering mountain, reeling with earthquake, shall be regarded as a friend?! Oh, that you would escape from the wrath to come! Oh, that you would, by faith, take Jesus to be your refuge and your strength!—  
*“You sinners, seek His Grace,  
Whose wrath you cannot bear;  
Fly to the shelter of His Cross,  
And find salvation there.”*

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 46, 47, 48.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—46 (VERS I), 673, 686. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #190 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE DESOLATIONS OF THE LORD, THE CONSOLATION OF HIS SAINTS  
NO. 190

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 28, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS, ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

**“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth. He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder, He burns the chariot in the fire.” Psalm 46:8, 9.**

IT seems that everything Christ-like must have a history like that of Christ. His beginnings were small—the manger and the stable. So with the beginnings of that society which we love and which we believe to be the very incarnation of the Spirit of Christ. Its beginnings also were small. But its latter end shall doubtless greatly increase—for, has not the end of Christ become exceedingly glorious? He has ascended up on high. He sits at the right hand of God, our Father. And doubtless this agency which God now employs for the conversion of the world shall have its ascension and God shall greatly magnify it.

But as Christ was called to suffer, so must everything Christ-like suffer with Him. The Christian who is the most like his Master will understand the most of the meaning of that term, “fellowship with Him in His sufferings.” And inasmuch as the Missionary Society is like Christ and has Christ’s heart and Christ’s aim, it also must suffer like Jesus. This year we have been made to sip of that cup. The blood of our martyrs has been shed. Our confessors have witnessed to the faith of the Lord Jesus. At the hands of bloodthirsty and cruel men they have met their fate and again the seed of the Church has been sown in the blood of the martyred saint.

I felt that in addressing you this day it would be far from me to offer you any advice or counsel when I am but the youngest among you all. But, by God’s grace, I pray I might be permitted, as sometimes the child does comfort its parents, to utter some few words of consolation which might cheer you in the present distress and nerve your arm for future combat with the great enemy of souls. And upon what subject could I address you which could be more full of consolation than the present? “Come, behold the works of the Lord.” Turn from man’s bloodshed and behold your God at work. And from the desolations of rebellion and carnage and anarchy, turn your eyes here to the

 desolations which the Lord has made in the earth. You see how, though the battle bow still does twang with the arrow and though the spear is still imbrued in the heart’s blood

of men, yet He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder and burns the chariot in the fire.

We shall regard this text this morning, first, as a declaration of what has happened, and secondly, as a promise of what shall be achieved.  
I. First of all, we shall look upon it AS A DECLARATION OF WHAT HAS ALREADY OCCURRED. “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth.”  
1. And now let us commence the discussion of this part of our subject by inviting you to the sad spectacle of the desolations which God in His Providence has in different ages brought upon many nations. As it is said of man, that he is full of trouble, so it is with nations. They also are full of sorrows and some of them exceedingly bitter. Wars have devastated countries. Plagues have thinned our populations. All kinds of evil have swept from side to side across the most potent empires and many of them have been compelled, at last, to yield to the destroying angel and they slumber with the mighty dead.  
Doubtless there has a wail gone up from the face of the earth when the invasions of barbarians have put an end to the promise of civilization— when cities, renowned for the culture of the arts and sciences, have suddenly become sacked and burned—when nations that had made great advances in knowledge have been carried away captive and the sun has been made to go back many a degree on the dial of the earth’s history.  
I beg you now turn your eyes and read the page of history and mark the various catastrophes which have happened to this world. And I appeal to you, as persons who have understanding, and who can trace the Lord’s hand in these matters—have not all these things worked together for good? And so far have not the revolutions, the destructions of empires and the falls of dynasties been eminent helps to the progress of the Gospel? Far be it from us to lay the blood of men at God’s door. Let us not for one moment be guilty of any thought that the sin and the iniquity which have brought war into the world is of God—but, at the same time, as firm believers in the doctrine of predestination and as firmly holding the great Truth of a Divine Providence, we must hold that God is the Author of the darkness as well as of the light—that He creates the providential evil as well as the good—that while He sends the shower from on high, He also is the Father of the devastating storm.  
Oh, I say, then, come and see the Lord’s hand in “Aceldama, the field of blood.” Come and behold the Lord’s hand in every shake of the pillars of the constitutions of the monarchies of earth. See the Lord’s hand in the crumbling of every tower and the tumbling down of every pinnacle which had aspired to Heaven. For He has done it—He has done it! God is present everywhere.  
And now, I again ask—can you not see in all these things a gracious as well as a terrible God? Can you not feel that everything that has yet happened to the world has really been for its good? Wars, contusions and tumults are but the rough physic wherewith God will purge the diseased body of this earth from its innumerable ills. They are but a terrible tornado with which God shall sweep away the pestilence and fever that lurk in the moral atmosphere. They are but the great hammers with which He breaks in pieces the gates of brass to make a way for His people. They are but the threshing wagons with which He does thresh the mountains and beat them small and make the hills as chaff—that Israel may rejoice in the Lord and that the sons of Jacob may triumph in their God. As it has been in the beginning, so it shall be even unto the end. The noise and the tumult of war in India shall produce good.  
The blood of our sisters shall be avenged, not by the sword, but by the Gospel. On India’s blood red gods, the arm of the Lord shall yet be felt. The might of Him that sits upon the Throne shall be acknowledged by the very men, who, first in the fray, have blasphemed the God of Israel. Let us not fear, let us not tremble. The end of all things comes at last and that end shall certainly be the desired one and all the wrath of man shall not frustrate the designs of God. The past troubles assure us for the present and console us for the future. “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolation He has made in the earth.”  
2. But now, turning from this somewhat dreary subject, I must invite you next to look at some desolations which will ever be fair in the eye of the follower of Jesus—the desolations of false worship. What a pleasant theme! O that we had but power truly to enlarge upon it! Will you turn your minds back to the origin of idolatry and tell me, if you can, what were the names of the first gods whom men profanely worshipped? Are they known? Are not their names blotted out from history? Or, if any of them are mentioned, are they not a byword, a hissing and a reproach?  
What shall we say of idolatries which are of later date—those which have been noted in Holy Scripture and therefore handed down to infamy? Who is he that now bows before the god of Egypt? Has the sacred Ibis now a worshipper? Do any prostrate themselves before the Nile and drink her sweet waters and think her a deity? Has not that idolatry passed away? And are not the temple and the obelisk still standing—“the desolations which the Lord has made in the earth”? Talk we of the gods of Philistia? Do we mention Baal and Dagon? Where are they?  
We hear their names—they are but the records of the past. But who is he that does them homage? Who does now kiss his hands to the queen of Heaven? Who bows himself in the grove of Ashtaroth, or who worships the hosts of Heaven and the chariots of the sun? They are gone! They are gone! Jehovah still stands, “the same yesterday, today and forever.” One generation of idols has passed away and another comes and the desolations stand—memorials of the might of God.  
Turn now your eyes to Assyria, that mighty empire. Did she not sit alone? She said she should see no sorrow. Remember Babylon, too, who boasted with her. But where are they and where are now their gods? With ropes about their necks they have been dragged in triumph by our discoverers. And now in the halls of our land they stand as memorials of the ignorance of a race that is long since extinct.  
And then, turn to the fairer idolatries of Greece and Rome. Fine poetic conceptions were their gods! Theirs was a grand idolatry, one that never shall be forgotten. Despite all its vice and lust, there was such a high mixture of the purest poetry in it that the mind of man, though it will ever recollect it with sorrow, will still think of it with respect. But where are their gods? Where are the names of their gods? Are not the stars the last memorials of Jupiter, Saturn and Venus? As if God would make His universe the monument of His destroyed enemy! Where else are their names to be found? Where shall we find a worshipper who adores their false deity? They are past, they are gone! To the moles and to the bats are their images cast—while many an unroofed temple, many a dilapidated shrine stand as memorials of that which was, but is not—and is passed away forever.  
I suppose there is scarcely a kingdom of the world where you do not see God’s handiwork in crushing His enemies. It is to the shame of the idolater that he worships a god that his fathers knew not. Although there are some hoary systems of iniquity, in most cases the system is still new— new compared with the giant mountains, the firstborn of nature—new compared with these old idolatries that have long since died away in the clouds of forgetfulness. It seems to me to be a very pleasing theme for us to speak of these desolations that God has made. For mark this—again we say it—as it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be.  
The false gods shall yet yield their sway. The temples shall yet be unroofed. Their houses shall be burned with fire and their names shall be left for a reproach. Their dignity shall not be honored, neither shall homage be given unto their name. O you that fear for the ark of the Lord. You that tremble at the firmness with which falsehood keeps its throne—look on these desolations and be of good cheer—God has done mighty things and He will do them again.  
One can never pass, even in our own country, a ruined abbey, or a destroyed priory, or an old broken down cathedral, without a sweet satisfaction. They are fair ruins, all the fairer because they are ruined, because their inhabitants are forgotten, because the monk no longer prowls our streets. Because the nun, though she is here and there to be found, yet is no more honored. Because the apostate Church to which they belong has ceased to have power among us, as once it had. We will, therefore, seek to honor God and in all our journeys we will think of this text—“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth.”  
3. And now, in the next place, let me ask you to remember what desolations God has made with false philosophies. As for stones and timbers, they are things that must decay in the common course of nature. One might be apt to think that some of the desolate temples we behold were rather the trophies of the tooth of time, than of the hand of God—but thought is a lasting thing. A bold philosophy that shapes into words the wandering thoughts which have taken possession of the hearts of men is an enduring thing. And how have some philosophers believed that they were writing books which would be read for ages!  
They believed that their philosophy most certainly was eternal and that to the last day their disciples would be had in reverence. Let any classical student remember how many systems of philosophy have passed away before the progress of the kingdom of Christ. The mighty Stagyrite, once the great master of all minds, who even held in sway many a Christian spirit, at last lost his empire before a purer Truth.

But I forbear to mention these things. I would rather allude to the passing away of false systems of philosophy in modern times. For there are some of our fathers here whose hairs have but just turned gray, who can remember the rise and fall of some seven or eight theories of infidelity. You can look back and you can remember when it was a cursing obscenity with Tom Paine, having just also been the leering, scowling thing that Voltaire made it. You remember how it was the soaring, airy, speculating, scheming thing of Robert Owen. And then you recollect how it became the base, groveling thing called Secularism.  
Men have trembled at that and have thought it will last. I believe I shall live to see the last Secularist buried and that at the funeral there will be attending the leader of some new system of infidelity, who, despite his hatred of God, will have to say over the tomb, out of very spite against the one who precedes him, “Here lies a fool, except a Secularist.” You need not be afraid of these things. They live each a very little while. A near moon brings a new phase of the system.  
The thing that they have fashioned with the utmost diligence and which they deliver with the most earnest declamation, which they think they have proved with the sureness of logic, which they have built, as they think, upon a rock, against which the gates of Heaven shall not prevail— how soon it is crumbled to dust and not a vestige of it is left—scarce a remembrance of it—but all is past away and gone. And even so shall it be. As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be. “Every tongue that rises against You in judgment You shall condemn.” The words of the wise are like the leaves of the tree of life and they fade not. But the words of the wicked are like the autumn leaves, all withered, soon to become skeletons and be blown away by the blast, to be heard of no more.  
Planted by the rivers of water, the tree of the Church still grows, like a young cedar, fresh and green. But these things are like the desert bush— they see not when good comes. From earth itself they fail to draw their nourishment and Heaven denies to the cursed thing its genial shower and therefore soon it dies and without a memorial it passes away. Be of good cheer, Beloved! It matters not where the enemy attacks our entrenchments, they have been and they shall be routed. We tell the enemies of Christ to look to the thousand defeats that they have suffered beforehand. We warn them of their folly in attacking us again.  
Woe unto you! Woe unto you! Though you quit yourselves like men, you Philistines, you must, you shall be servants unto Israel. Woe unto you, for the voice of a king is in our midst! Your fathers felt our might. Remember who it was that cut Rahab and wounded the dragon. Your sires have trembled before us. Our fathers put ten thousand of your sires to flight and we will do the same with you. And when we have done it we will say of you, “Aha! Aha! Aha!” And will make you a byword with our children and a proverb with our menials forever.  
4. But my text has a special reference to war—the desolation of war. Have you not noticed how magnificently peace wins its reprisals at the hand of war? Look through this country. Methinks if the angel of peace should go with us, as we journey through it and stop at the various ancient towns where there are dismantled castles and high mounds from which every vestige of a building has long been swept, the angel would look us in the face and say, “I have done all this—war scattered my peaceful subjects, burned down my cottages, ravaged my temples and laid my mansions with the dust. But I have attacked War in his own strongholds and I have routed him. Walk through his halls. Can you hear now the tramp of the warrior? Where now the sound of the clarion and the drum?”  
The sheep is feeding from the cannon’s mouth and the bird builds his nest where once the warrior did hang his helmet. As rare curiosities we dig up the swords and spears of our forefathers and little do we reckon that in this we are doing tribute to Peace. For Peace is the conqueror. It has been a long duel and much blood has been shed, but Peace has been the victor. War, after all, has but spasmodic triumphs. And again it sinks—it dies, but Peace ever reigns. If she be driven from one part of the earth, yet she dwells in another. And while War, with busy hand, is piling up here a wall and there a rampart and there a tower—Peace with her gentle finger is covering over the castle with the moss and the ivy and eating the stone from the top and letting it lie level with the earth.  
I think this is a fine thought for the lover of peace. And who among us is not? Who among us ought not to be? Is not the Gospel all peace? And do we not believe that when the Gospel is fully preached and has its day, wars must cease to the end of the earth? I therefore say, beloved Brothers and Sisters, may we not console ourselves under all the recent outbreaks of a most bloodthirsty and cruel massacre, in the fact that God has made desolations, even in war? He has made desolations in the earth and, as it has been, so shall it be even unto the end. There is not now a rampart which shall not be sealed by peace. O you hoary bastions, you shall yet be destroyed—not by the cannon ball—but by something mightier still.  
Charged with love, this day we shoot against you the great guns of the Gospel of Christ, and we believe that they shall move and shake you to your deep foundations and you shall crumble. Or if you stand, you shall be uninhabited, except by the owl and the bittern. I have a fond belief that the day is coming when Nelson, on the top of his monument, shall be upset and Mr. Whitfield set there, or the Apostle Paul. I believe that Napier, who stands in the square there, will lose his station. We shall say about these men, “They were very respectable men in the days of our forefathers, who did not know better than to kill one another. But we do not care for them now!”  
Up goes John Wesley where stood Napier! Away goes someone else, who was an earnest preacher of the Gospel, to occupy the place high over the gate where another warrior rides upon his horse. All these things, the trickery of an ignorant age, the gewgaws of a people who loved bloodshed despite their profession of religion must yet be broken up for old iron and old brass. Every statue that stands in London shall yet be sold and the price thereof cast at the Apostles’ feet that they may make distribution as every man has need. Wars must cease and every place where war reigns and has now its glory must yet pass away and fade and wither.  
We give all honor to these men now, for these are the days of our ignorance and God in some degree winks at us. But when the Gospel spreads we shall then find that when every heart is full of it, it will be impossible for us to tolerate the very name of war. For when God has broken the bow and burned the chariot we shall break the image and dash the sculpture into a thousand atoms. We shall think, when the trade is done, the men that did it may well be forgotten.  
II. I think there is enough to cheer our hearts and nerve us all for the great battle of Christ. The desolations of the past should lead us to hope that there shall be the like and greater in the future. And now I am to look upon my text and very briefly, AS A PROPHECY WHICH IS TO BE FULFILLED.  
I should only needlessly occupy your time, if I were to go over all my heads again, because really, every person will be quite as competent as I am to discern how what has been shall be in a yet higher sense. But we must observe once more, in noticing this as a prophecy, the figure of our text. It was usual, after a great battle and especially if peace was then firmly established, for the conquerors to gather up the arms of the vanquished into one great heap and then setting fire to it all, as Israel did to the spoils of Jericho, everything was consumed.  
One of these days, when Christ shall come in His glory, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ—not to say anything which would look like proclaiming the second coming here today—although I most firmly believe it and am sorry that we should ever have allowed in any of our missionary meetings any discussion upon a point which involves the faith of a great proportion of us. There are those of us who hold this to be as dear and precious a doctrine as any other in the Word of God and we therefore think it unfair that we should at any time have anything said against it.  
When we meet together in the common bond of union for the spread of the Gospel of Christ, we think it a sore thing that we should be attacked. However, leaving all that, whether it be by a spiritual or by a personal coming—we believe that one of these days we shall be roused from our beds by one who shall say to us, “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth.” And when we arrive at the spot appointed, it may be, as the old Ephesians brought out all their books and burned them in the street, we shall see our soldiers marching rank and file and lay down their arms and all that they have of murderous implements, piling them into one heap. And happy is that mother’s child who shall be there to see it! But see it someone shall, when it shall be truly said, as the fire is kindled over all these things, “He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder. He burns the chariot in the fire.”  
Happy the day, when every warhorse shall be hobbled, when every spear shall become a pruning-hook and every sword shall be made to till the soil which once it stained with blood. It is of that my text prophecies and my text naturally brings me to that as the great climax of the Gospel. This will be the last triumph of Christ, before death itself shall be dead. Death’s great jackal, War, must die also and then shall there be peace on earth and the angel shall say, “I have gone up and down through the earth and the earth sits still and is at rest. I heard no tumult of war, nor noise of battle.” This is what we hope for. Let us fight on with diligence and earnestness.

And now, having thus enlarged upon my text, you will permit me to offer a few remarks on a more practical subject. The question naturally arises, “Why has not this Promise been more abundantly fulfilled in our own times?” Many say, “This is Divine sovereignty.” Well, we believe Divine sovereignty with all our hearts. It is a doctrine which we delight to dwell upon and ever to acknowledge. But we cannot make Divine sovereignty the great sepulcher for our sins.  
We cannot have it that everything is to be laid at the door of Divine sovereignty. We believe there is a sovereignty that ever overrules the sins of the Church, as well as of the world. We hold that in the highest and purest sense—but we think it is a very gross mistake for us always to be saving, if we are defeated, “It is Divine sovereignty.” Israel of old did not say so. They looked for the accursed thing that was in the camp. They did not say, “Divine sovereignty,” when they were beaten by Benjamin. But they enquired of the Lord. They were not content to say it was sovereignty. It was sovereignty, no doubt, but they desired to find another reason which, when discovered, might help them to remove the difficulty and enable them to conquer.  
And now, Beloved, there are many reasons, I think, why we do not prosper as we would desire in the missionary field. And permit me very briefly to hint at one or two. I shall mean no offense to any.  
One reason is because we have not a thorough and entire unanimity with regard to the matter. Now, I know something of the Baptist denomination. I have wandered through every county of England, pretty well, and been to a great number of the Churches and I grieve to see that there are many of our Churches still standing totally aloof from the missionary field. If they stood aloof from our particular Society, I might not so much regret, if they chose to have one of their own. But they have not one of their own either.  
There is this great thing for which I would blame them. That they should have some objection to unite with those whom they think to be different from them in doctrinal opinions would not only be excusable, but possibly there might be occasions when it would be praiseworthy. That any of us who hold strongly the doctrines of the Grace of God and who, perhaps, give greater prominence than others to the truth as it was taught by Calvin and, as we believe, taught by Christ—should therefore have no missionary society—is a great and crying sin.  
And I really think that a defection of a large part of our body, however it may be caused, may be one reason why we have not had such an abundant blessing from God. For, look here! You say you can do without them. Very well—so said the people to Joshua, when he led his troops to attack Ai. They said, “Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai. And make not all the people to labor there. For they are but few.” They thought it would be unnecessary and Joshua left behind him a large part and only took with him his strong, able-bodied men. But, together with “the accursed thing” that Achan had concealed, I believe that the want of all the army of Israel was a partcause of the defeat at Ai. So it is with us.  
Ah, if there is a means whereby we can get every Brother who calls himself a Baptist to unite himself with this Society, if there is any method of love, if there is any way of making concessions, if there is any mode or any means whereby we all could be bound together in the holy brotherhood as a denomination—I think we are each of us bound to make it. As far as I am concerned, I may say that there is not to be found upon the surface of the world one more strongly attached to the old faith, as I believe it to be—the old, strong, doctrinal faith—coupled with the earnest preaching of the Gospel to every creature.  
Yet I find myself not out of place in preaching for a Baptist Mission, nor out of place in helping it and throwing my whole heart into it. It seems to me it was founded by ourselves—the very men who held these truths were the first leaders in it. And it seems to me the most strange and marvelous thing that any Brother should, from his love to sound doctrine, stand aloof from missions. I am sure it is a stab against our prosperity as Churches at home if we do not come forward to help the missions at large.  
I am saying this because it may reach the ears of many of the Brethren who are possibly not present today. I trust they will think the matter over. We do not ask them to come with us—we will be very glad if they will—but let them at the very least have a society of their own. Let them be doing something and do not let it be said that there is a Baptist existing who does not love to send the Gospel to the utmost ends of the earth. That nonsense about God doing His own work and our sitting still and doing nothing ought to have been buried long ago.  
I know not how to characterize it—it has done us immense damage. We know that God has accomplished His own work. But He always has worked and always will work with means. The men who do not approve of working by means and stand by and say, “I do not sympathize with it,” I do not wonder that God does not work with them—they do not deserve to be worked with. Let us cast away that and let us say, “If we can agree with these Brethren who associate in missions we will do so. If we cannot agree with those who associate in one society, we will do it somewhere else. But do it we will, for it is our anxious wish that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”  
But again, it is not all that, my Brethren. It is a want of real love to missions in all our Churches—and if this should sound critical and if any should say, “It is not so of the Church of which I am a member,” let it be so. I do not mean, when I speak generally, to include each individual. It is, I believe, one reason of our want of success, or of that measure of want of success that we have, that there is not a true love of missions in the Churches that really help them. Many love missions. They love the cause of Christ. But they do not love Zion better than their own households.  
But as far as I can judge there are many whose attention to the mission field is confined to that one day in the year when the sermon is preached. Some of them confine that day very closely, too. For the very smallest three penny piece that can be discovered is appropriated to the collection on that occasion. They love the mission, yes, they do—but their love is that old sort—of which it is said, “She never told her love.” They never tell it by any contribution. They keep it very still in their hearts. We cannot think but that they do desire that the Gospel should fly abroad, for they sing it with lusty lungs and with voices vociferous.  
But when there is anything to be done, they pinch and screw—the purse string is made half the ordinary circumference and it cannot be loosed. There is little to be given for Christ. Christ must take the dregs, the sweepings of their wealth. Ah, if our Churches loved missions, if we had more of the true Spirit in our midst, we should find scores of our young men rising up to go out and preach the Gospel to the heathen. And then the Church, taking an interest in the young men who sprang from its own heart, would think it its duty to maintain its missionary and send him forth preaching the Gospel to every creature.  
I remember Edward Irving once preached a sermon to a vast congregation, upon missions. I think he preached for four hours. And the object of the sermon was to prove that we were all wrong—that we ought to send out our missionaries without purse or scrip, giving them nothing! Edward never volunteered to go himself! If he had done so at the end of the sermon, we might have endorsed his philosophy. But he stayed at home and did not go.  
Now, we are no believers in that. We think that if a man cannot have help, it is his business to go without it. If a man loves the ministry, if he can only preach Christ’s Gospel in poverty, God bless him in his poverty. But as a Church we cannot have that. “No, no,” we say, “Brother, if you are going to a foreign land and you give your life and health and if you renounce the comforts of your family, we cannot let you go without anything. The least we can do is to provide for your needs.” And one says, “There, though you go without purse or scrip, you cannot get across the sea except you have a ship, I will pay your passage-money.”  
Another says, “You cannot preach to these people without learning the language. And while you are learning the language you must eat and drink. It is quite impossible that you can live by faith, unless you have something that you can nourish your body with. Here is the fund to support you, that you may give all your time to the preaching of the Word.”  
Ah, if we did but love Christ better, my Brothers and Sisters—if we lived nearer to the Cross, if we knew more of the value of His blood. If we wept like He did over Jerusalem, if we felt more what it was for souls to perish and what it was for men to be saved. If we did but rejoice with Christ in the prospect of His seeing the travail of His soul and being abundantly satisfied. If we did but delight more in the Divine decree that the kingdoms of this world shall be given to Christ, I am sure we should all of us find more ways and more means for the sending forth the Gospel of Christ.  
But to conclude. Perhaps, I may say and some of you may with tears confess it is true, it is a want of a revived godliness in our Church at home which prevents our hoping for any great success abroad. Ah, Brethren, we must till our own vineyards better or else God will not make us successful in driving the plow across the broad acres of the continents. We want to have our Brethren more earnest in prayer. Look at our Prayer Meetings— a miserable handful of people, compared with the congregation. We want to have them more earnest in labor. Look at many of our agencies dying for want of effective laborers—when they are to be found—but they are not willing to come forth.

Where is the zeal of olden times? We are not among those that say, “The former times were better than now.” In some respects they were, in others not so good. But if they were better, it is not ours to bemoan, but ours to labor to make them better still. We want—gathering up all things into one—we want the outpouring of the Divine Spirit in our Churches at home. Just as the anointing oil was first poured on Aaron’s head and then went to the skirts of the garment, so must the Holy Spirit be poured on England and then shall it go to the utmost borders of the habitable earth. We want to have Pentecost at home and then, Hedes and Parthians and Elamites shall hear the Word.  
“Begin at Jerusalem,” is Christ’s ordinance and it is Christ’s method. We must begin there. And as we begin there, in circles wider and wider and wider, the Gospel shall spread, till, “like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole.”  
Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, in repairing to our homes this morning, let us carry away at least one thought. Let us believe firmly that God’s purpose shall be accomplished. Let us hope joyously that we may be the instruments of its accomplishment. And then let us labor prayerfully, that our wishes may be consummated. What is there that you can do today for Christ?  
Oh, if you love Christ, do not let this day pass till you have done something for Him. Speak for Him. Give to Him. But let each day be spent as a mission day and be each day a missionary for Christ. Begin at home. Enlarge your charity. But begin first at home. Let your own houses be cared for and then your own synagogues. And then, after that, you may send your missionaries to every part of the earth. I beg for a good collection today. It is the first time we have met together in this place and there is a large number of us. If we do not give a right good collection today, we shall not save our own credit. That is a poor way of putting it. It will be a disgrace to us if we do not give well today. But besides that, if we save our own credit, we shall not approve our love to Jesus. Give as God has given to you.

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A WISE DESIRE  
NO. 33

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 8, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

**“He shall choose our inheritance for us.”  
Psalm 47:4.**

The Christian is always pleased and delighted when he can see Christ in the Scriptures. If he can but detect the footstep of his Lord and discover that the sacred writers are making some reference to Him, however indistinct or dark, he will rejoice—for all the Scriptures are nothing except as we find Christ in them. St. Austin says, “The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the Man-Child, Christ Jesus, and were all intended to be hallowed garments in which to wrap Him.” So they are. And it is our pleasant duty to lift the veil, or remove the garment of Jesus and so behold Him in His Person, in His nature, or His offices. Now this text is concerning Jesus Christ—He it is who is to “choose our inheritance for us.” He in whom dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge is the great Being who is selected as the Head of predestination—to choose our lot and our portion and fix our destiny. Verily, Beloved, you and I can rejoice in this great fact, that our Savior chooses for us. For were we all to be assembled together in some great plain, as Israel was of old, to elect for ourselves a king, we would not propose a second candidate. There would be one who stands like Saul, the son of Kish, head and shoulders taller than all the rest, whom we would at once select to be our King and Ruler of Providence for us. We would not ask for some prudent sage or deeply taught philosopher. We would not choose the most experienced senior. Without a single moment’s hesitation, directly we saw Jesus Christ, in the majesty of His Person, we would say, in the words of the Psalmist, He who redeemed us, He who ransomed us, He who loved us—“He shall choose our inheritance for us.”

I remember once going to a Chapel where this happened to be the text and the good man who occupied the pulpit was more than a little of an Arminian. Therefore, when he commenced, he said, “This passage refers entirely to our temporal inheritance. It has nothing whatever to do with our everlasting destiny—for,” he said, “we do not need Christ to choose for us in the matter of Heaven or Hell. It is so plain and easy that every man who has a grain of common sense will choose Heaven. And any person would know better than to choose Hell. We have no need of any superior intelligence, or any greater Being to choose Heaven or Hell for us. It is left to our own free will,” he said, “and we have enough wisdom given us, sufficiently correct means to judge for ourselves,” and therefore, as he very logically inferred, “there was no necessity for Jesus Christ, or anyone, to make a choice for us. We could choose the inheritance for ourselves without any assistance.” Ah, but my good Brother, it may be very true that we could, but I think we should need something more than common sense before we would choose aright! For you must remember that it is not simply the choosing of Heaven or Hell—it is the choosing of pleasure on earth, of pain, of honor or of persecution. And very often the man is bewildered. If it were just simply Hell that a man had to choose, none would prefer it. But since it is sin which engenders Hell and the lust which brings him on to punishment—there comes the difficulty. For by nature we are all inclined to follow the way which leads downwards. We are naturally willing to walk the road which leads to the pit of Hell—we do not seek the pit, itself, but the road that leads to it—and were it not for Sovereign Grace, none of us would ever have followed the path to Heaven! I am daily more and more convinced that the difference between one man and another is not the difference between his use of his will, but the difference of Divine Grace that has been bestowed upon him. So that if one man has his “inheritance in Heaven,” it will be because Christ chose his inheritance for him. And if another man has his place in Hell, it will be because he chose his inheritance himself. We do need someone to choose for us in that matter. We need our Father to fix our eternal destiny and write our names in the Book of Life. Otherwise, if left to ourselves, the road to Hell would be as naturally our choice as for a piece of inanimate matter to roll downwards, instead of assisting itself upwards.

However, to come at once to our text and leave every other person’s observations alone, “He shall choose our inheritance for us.” First, I shall speak of the text as being a glorious fact—“He shall choose our inheritance for us.” And, secondly, I will speak of it as being a very just and wise prayer—“He shall choose our inheritance for us.”

I. First, then, I shall speak of this as being A GLORIOUS FACT. It is a great Truth that God does choose the inheritance for His people. It is a very high honor conferred upon God’s servants, that it is said of them, “He shall choose their inheritance.” As for the worldling, God gives him anything, but for the Christian, God selects the best portion and chooses his inheritance for him. Says a good Divine, “It is one of the greatest glories of the Church of Christ, that our mighty Maker and our Friend always chooses our inheritance for us.” He gives the worldling husks. But he stops to find out the sweet fruits for His people. He gathers out the fruits from among the leaves, that His people might have the best food and enjoy the richest pleasures. Oh, It is the satisfaction of God’s people to believe in this exalting Truth that He chooses their inheritance for them. But since there are many who dispute it, allow me just to stir up your minds by way of remembrance by mentioning certain facts which will lead you to see clearly that, verily, God does choose our lot and apportions for us our inheritance.

And, first, let me ask, must we not all of us admit an overruling Providence and the appointment of Jehovah’s hands as to the means whereby we came into this world? These men who think that afterwards we are left to our own free will by choosing this or the other to direct our steps, must admit that our entrance into the world was not of our own will, but that God, there, had His hand upon us. What circumstances were those in our power which led us to elect a certain person to be our parent? Had we anything to do with it? Did not God, Himself, appoint our parents, native place and friends? Could He not have caused me to be born with the skin of the Hottentot, brought forth by a filthy mother who would nurse me in her “kraal,” and teach me to bow down to Pagan gods, quite as easily as to have given me a pious mother who, each morning and night bends her knees in prayer on my behalf? Or, might He not, if He had pleased, have given me some profligate to have been my parent, from whose lips I might have early heard fearful, filthy and obscene language? Might He not have placed me where I would have had a drunken father, who would have confined me in a very dungeon of ignorance and brought me up in the chains of crime? Was it not God’s Providence that I had so happy a lot that both my parents were His children and endeavored to train me up in the fear of the Lord? To whom do any of you owe your parentage—be it good, or be it bad? Is it not to be traced to the decree of God? Did not His predestination put you where you were? Was it not the Lord who appointed the place of your birth and the hour thereof?

Look again at your bodies, do you not see the doings of God there? How many children are born into the world deformed? How many come into it deficient in some one or other of their faculties? But look at yourself. You are, perhaps, comely in person, or if not, you have all your limbs. Your bones are well set and you are strong—must you not trace this up to God? Do you not see that He arranged the commencement of your life for you? You might have opened your career there, or there, or there. But He placed you there in that particular spot, without asking your leave. Did He turn to you and say, O clay! in what shape shall I fashion you? Or, did He who begat you ask you what you would be? No— He made you what He pleased and if you have now the possession of your faculties and limbs, you must acknowledge and confess that there was the decree of God in it. And, still further, how much of the finger of God must we discern in our temper and constitution? I suppose no one will be foolish enough to say that we are all born with the same natural temperament and constitution. I am sure there are some persons who differ a great deal from others, at least I should like to differ a little from them—some of those with whom you could not sit a single moment without feeling that you would rather stand in a shower of rain and get dripping wet than sit on a sofa by their side. Some persons are so exceedingly warm in their tempers that they actually burn a hole in their manners and conversation—they cannot speak without being cross, testy and angry. Now, although such persons often indulge their temper, we must allow that, in some measure, they are excusable. Perhaps they can trace it to the nature which their mother gave them, (as the worldly poet would say), or that temperament with which they were born. And there are others here who are naturally amiable—who have a kind, loving spirit—who are not so easily moved to wrath and passion—in whom there is not so much of that absurd pride which makes man exalt himself above his fellows. Who has formed them aright or fashioned them so well? Has not God done it and proved Himself a Sovereign? And must we not see in this that God, in some way or other, has fixed our destiny from the very fact that the opening bud of life is entirely in His hands? It does seem rational that since God appointed the commencement of our existence, there should be some evidence of His control in the future parts of it!

But now a second observation. I will ask any sensible man, above all, any serious Christian, here, whether there have not been certain times in his life when he could most distinctly see that, indeed, God did “choose his inheritance for him”? You are a young man—you are asked what will be your pursuit—you choose such-and-such a thing. You are about to be apprenticed to that peculiar trade—a misfortune happens—it cannot be done. Without your consent, or will, you are placed in another position. Your will was scarcely consulted. Your parents exercised some authority, while the hand of Providence seemed to say to you, “it must be so”—and you could not help yourself. Take another case—you had established a house of business—suddenly there came a crushing misfortune which you no more could avoid than an ant could stop an avalanche. You were driven from your business and now you occupy your present position because there was nothing else to which you could betake yourself. Was not that the hand of God? You cannot trace it to yourself. You were positively compelled to change your plan. You were driven to it. Perhaps you once had friends on whom you depended. You had no thought of launching out into the world and being independent of the assistance of others. Suddenly, by a stroke of Providence, one friend dies. Then another. Then another. And, without your own volition, you were placed in such circumstances that like a leaf in the whirlpool, you were whirled round and round and the employment you now follow, or the engagement that now occupies you, is not of your own choosing, but is that of God.

I do not know whether all of you can go with me here, but I think you must in some instance or other be forced to see that God has, indeed, ordained your inheritance for you. If you cannot, I can. I can see a thousand chances—as men would call them—all working together like wheels in a great piece of machinery, to fix me just where I am. And I can look back to a hundred places where, if one of those little wheels had run awry—if one of those little atoms in the great whirlpool of my existence had started aside—I might have been anywhere but here, occupying a very different position. If you cannot say this, I know I can with emphasis. I can trace God’s hand back to the period of my birth through every step I have taken! I can feel that, indeed, God has allotted my inheritance for me. Some of you are so willfully beclouded that you will not see the hand of God in your being and will insist that all has been done by your will without Providence. That you have been left to steer your own course across the ocean of existence. That you are where you are because your own hands guided the tiller and your own arms directed the rudder. All I can say is, my own experience belies the fact. And the experience of many now in this place would rise in testimony against you and say, “Verily, it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.” “Man proposes, but God disposes,” and the God of Heaven is not unoccupied, but is engaged in overruling, ordering, altering, working all things according to the good pleasure of His will!

A third fact let me mention. If you turn to the pages of Inspiration and read the lives of some of the most eminent saints, I think you will be obliged to see the marks of God’s Providence in their histories too plainly to be mistaken. Take, for instance, the life of Joseph. There is a young man who from early life serves God. Read that life till its latest period when he gave commandment concerning his bones and you cannot help marveling at the wondrous dealings of Providence. Did Joseph choose to be hated by his brothers? But yet, was not their envy a material circumstance in his destiny? Did he choose to be put into the pit? But was not the putting into the pit as necessary to his being made a king in Egypt as Pharaoh’s dream? Did Joseph desire to be tempted by his mistress? He chose to reject the temptation, by God’s Grace, but did he choose the trial? No, God sent it! Did he choose to be put into the dungeon? No. And had he anything to do with the baker’s dream, or with Pharaoh’s? Can you not see, all the way through, from first to last—even in the forgetfulness of the butler, who forgot to speak of Joseph till the appointed time came, when Pharaoh would need an interpreter—that there was, verily, the hand of God? Joseph’s brothers did just as they liked when they put him into the pit. Potiphar’s wife followed the dictates of her own abandoned lust in tempting him. And yet, notwithstanding all the freedom of their will, it was ordained of God and worked together for one great end— to place Joseph on the throne of Egypt! For as he said, himself, “you meant it for evil, but God intended it for good, that He might save your souls alive!” There was the ordinance of God’s Providence in it as clearly as there is light in the sun! Or take again the life of such a man as Moses. I suppose no one will deny that there was a Providence in his being placed in the ark, just in the particular spot where Pharaoh’s daughter came to wash. And who will deny that it was Providence that she would say, “Go and fetch me a woman to nurse this child,” and his mother, Jochebed, should come to nurse him? I imagine that no one would consider that there was an absence of Providence in the fact that the child was comely, that he grew in all the wisdom of Egypt, and that he had a mind capacious enough to receive knowledge. Nor will you deny the Providence that led him to the side of Horeb’s mountain, or to Jethro’s daughter. Nor can you for an instant deny that there was Providence which afterwards brought him before King Pharaoh and helped him all his way through. The man was God’s man. God seems to be stamped upon his brow in all his acts. In all the three forties of his life, whether the forty spent in the palace, the forty in the wilderness, or the forty that he was king in Jeshurun—in all this there seems to be so manifestly God overruling the man’s acts, that you cannot help saying, “Here is the Almighty! Here is the hand of God in everything the man does!” And you turn from the history of Moses and say, “Truly God was in this place though I knew it not.”

I might refer you to the life of Daniel, fraught with interest as it were, and in that book you would see how his steps were first of all sadly guided to Babylon by being carried captive. And yet from the degradation of his banishment, there arises the grandeur of Daniel’s visions and Daniel’s character is displayed in all its clearness! You must see that a wise hand was dealing with him and developing his virtues and his excellencies. More I shall not say, here, because I like you to refer to the Scripture yourselves. Scripture is the best book of Providence we have ever read. If anyone should ask me for a book of anecdotes illustrative of Providence, I would refer him to the Bible.

There he might find the marvelous story of the woman who went out into a distant country and during her absence lost her inheritance. On a certain day she went to the king to ask him for it and just as she came there, Gehazi was telling the king concerning a woman whose son Elijah had raised to life—and he said, “O, my Lord! This is the woman and this is the son!” There were Gehazi and the king talking on the subject and the woman came in just at the moment. And yet there are some fools who call that a “chance.” Why, Sirs, it is an appointment as clearly as anything could be! And that is just one out of myriads of instances you could find in Scripture—where you can see God present in the affairs of man!

But as the Bible, after all, is the best proof of any Doctrine we can advance, I beg to refer you to one or two texts. First, let me ask you to direct your attention to a passage in Isaiah 45:6, 7—“I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.” Now here is a most direct assertion of the power of God in everything—that He makes peace and that He makes evil—that he creates light and that he creates darkness. We may ask as the Prophet did of old, “Is there evil in the city and the Lord has not done it?” Even Providential evil is to be ascribed to God. And in some marvelous sense which we understand not and cannot comprehend, the ordinance of God has even reference to the sins of men—“He has made even the wicked for the day of His wrath.” “The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, even these shall show forth His praise.” Good and evil in your condition you must ever regard as the work of God. Whatever your circumstances are this morning—are you sick, are you in poverty or are you much troubled—the evil as well as the good is the work of God! And shall a man receive good at the hands of the Lord and shall he not in equal patience receive evil? Will you not take everything from God which He is pleased to give, seeing that He, Himself, asserts, “I create light, I create darkness. I make good and I make evil.” Turn now to a passage in Job 14:5—“his days are determined, the number of his months are with You. You have appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.” What a solemn thought! God has “appointed our bounds.” One of the Prophets says, “You have hedged up my way with thorns and made a wall so that I cannot find my paths.” And that is first the Truth in regard to man’s life. The “bounds” of it are “appointed!” Man only walks within these “bounds.” Out of these limits he cannot get. If this does not imply the hand of God in everything, I do not know what does. Turn now to a Proverb from the wise man—Proverbs 16:33—“The lot is cast into the lap but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” And if the disposal of the lot is the Lord’s, whose is the arrangement of our whole life? You know when Achan had committed a great sin, the tribes were assembled and the lot fell upon Achan. When Jonah was in the ship, they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah. And when Jonathan had tasted the honey, they cast lots and Jonathan was taken. When they cast lots for an Apostle who should succeed the fallen Judas, the lot fell upon Matthias and he was separated to the work. The lot is directed of God. And if the simple casting of a lot is guided by Him, how much more the events of our entire life—especially when we are told by our blessed Savior—“The very hairs of your head are all numbered: not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father.” If it is so. If these hairs are counted. If an inventory is written of each one of them. And if the existence of each of these hairs is marked and mapped, how much more precious in the sight of the Lord shall our lives be? Take one more passage in Jeremiah 10:23—“O Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walks to direct his steps.” Jeremiah said, “I know” and he was an Inspired man and that satisfies us. “I know.”

I have sometimes, when quoting a passage out of the Apostle Paul, been met by somebody replying that they really did not think Paul so great an authority as other Scripture writers. I was astonished at hearing of the following dialogue between two young persons. One remarked, “Mr. Spurgeon is too high in Doctrine.” Said her friend—“He is not higher than St. Paul.” “No” she said, “But St. Paul was not quite right according to my opinion.” I was very glad to sink in the same boat as Paul, for if Paul was not right in the view of poor pitiful creatures, verily Spurgeon should not care! I would rather be wrong with Paul than right with anybody else because Paul was Inspired! But will they cut out some of the Old Testament, too? Will they dare to accuse Jeremiah of mistake? Jeremiah says, “I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walks to direct his steps.”

I may not have proved my point to any person who is an antagonist to this Doctrine—but to you who believe, I do not doubt that I have somewhat confirmed it. Let me say one word. Perhaps some who hear me will say, “Then, Sir, in the case of Christians, you make God the author of sin if you believe that their lives were ordained of Him!” I never said so! Prove that I said it and then I will come before your bar and try to excuse myself. But until you hear these lips say that God is the author of sin, go your way and prove, first of all, what it means to speak the Truth. I have not asserted any such vile Doctrine! But I will tell you who does say that God is the author of sin—and that is the man who does not believe in natural depravity—that man makes God the author of sin. I remember the case of a minister who most fearfully split on this rock. When a child had been doing something that was far from right, a friend said, “See there Brother, there is original sin in the child. For at its early age see how it sins.” “No” he said, “it is only certain powers God has placed in the child developing themselves. It is the nature which God has given it originally. It is one of God’s perfect creatures.”

These gentlemen make God the author of sin because they throw the nature upon God, whereas had we not fallen, everyone of us would have been born with a perfect nature. But since we have fallen, anything good in us is the gift of God and that which is evil springs naturally from our parents, by carnal descent from Adam. I never said God was the author of sin! I thank you, Sir—take the accusation yourself!

II. And now having thus spoken upon the Doctrine, we shall have a few minutes concerning this as A PRAYER. “He shall choose our inheritance for us.” Dry Doctrine, my Friends, is of little use. It is not the Doctrine which helps us, it is our assent to the Doctrine. And now I have been preaching, this morning, concerning God’s ordaining our lives. Some do not like it. To them the Truth of God will be of no service. But there are some of you, who if it were not the Truth, would say you wish to have it so. You would say in your prayers, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.”

First, “You shall choose my mercies for me.” You and I, Beloved, often get to choosing our own mercies. God in His wisdom, may have made one man rich. “Ah,” says he at night, “would God I had not all this wealth to tease my mind and worry me. I believe any peasant who toils for me has far more rest than I have.” Another who is a poor man wipes the hot sweat from his brow and says, “O my Father, I have asked You to give me neither poverty nor riches. But here am I so poor that I am obliged to toil incessantly for my bread. Would God I could have my mercies there among the rich.” One has been born with abilities. He has improved them by education and this improvement of his natural powers has entailed upon him fearful responsibilities so that he has to exercise his thoughts and his brain from morning till night. Sometimes he sits down and says, “Now if I am not the most hard-worked of all mortals. Those who keep a shop can shut it up. But I am open at all times and I am always under this responsibility. What shall I do and how shall I rest myself?” Another who has to toil with his hands is thinking, “Oh, if I could lead such a gentlemanly life as that minister. He never has to work hard. He only has to think and read—of course that is not hard work. He has, perhaps, to sit up till twelve o’clock at night to prepare his sermon, that is not work, of course. I wish I had his situation.” So we all cry out about our mercies and want to choose our allotments. “Oh,” says one, “I have health, but I think I could do without that if I had wealth.” Another says, “I have wealth, but I could give all my gold to have a good constitution.” One says, “Here am I stowed away in this dirty London. I would give anything if I could go and live in the country.” Another, who resides in the country, says, “There is no convenience here, you have to go so many miles for the doctor and one thing and the other. I wish I dwelt in London.” So that we are, none of us, satisfied with our mercies! But the true Christian says, or ought to say, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.” High or low, rich or poor, town or country, wealth or poverty, ability or ignorance, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.”

Again—we must leave to God the choice of our employment. “Oh,” says the preacher—and I have been wicked enough to say so myself—“how would I like to have all my employment in the week that I might sit in the pew on the Sabbath and hear a sermon and be refreshed.” I am sure I would be glad to hear a sermon. It is a long time since I heard one. But when I do attend one, it always tires me—I want to be improving on it. How would I like to sit down and have a little of the feast in God’s House, myself, instead of always being the serving man in God’s household. Thank God! I can steal a crumb for myself sometimes. But then we fancy, O that I were not in that employment! O that like Jonah we might flee to Tarshish, to avoid going to that great Nineveh. Another is a Sunday school teacher. He says, “I would rather visit the sick than sit with those troublesome boys and girls. And then the teachers do not seem to be so friendly with me as they should be.” The Sunday school teacher thinks he can do anything better than teach. But there is his friend who visits the sick coming down the stairs and he says, “I could teach little children, or preach a little but really I cannot visit the sick. There is nothing so hard and that requires so much self-denial.” Another says, “I am a tract distributor. It is not easy work to have your tracts refused at this door and then at another. And persons looking at you as if you came to rob them. I could stand up before the congregation and speak, but I cannot do this.” And so we get to selecting our employments. Ah, but we ought to say, “You shall choose my inheritance for me,” and leave our employment to God! “If there were two angels in Heaven,” said a good man, “supposing there were two works to be done and one work was to rule a city and the other to sweep a street crossing—the angels would not stop a moment to say which they would do. They would do whichever God told them to do. “Gabriel would shoulder his broom and sweep the crossing cheerfully and Michael would not be a bit prouder in taking the scepter to govern the city.” So with a Christian.

But there is nothing that we more often want to choose than our crosses. None of us like crosses at all. But all of us think everybody else’s trials lighter than our own. Crosses we must have. But we often want to be choosing them. “Oh,” says one, “my trouble is in my family. It is the worst cross in the world—my business is successful—but if I might have a cross in my business and get rid of this cross in my family, I should not mind.” Then, my beloved Hearers, in reference to your mercies, your employments and your afflictions, say—“Lord, You shall choose my inheritance for me! I have been a silly child. I have often tried to meddle with my lot. Now I leave it. I cast myself on the stream of Providence, hoping to float along. I give myself up to the influence of Your will.” He that kicks and struggles in the water, they say, will be sure to sink. But he who lies still will, float—so with Providence. He that struggles against it, goes down. But he who resigns everything to it, will float along quietly, calmly and happily.

Having thus spoken upon the extent of the surrender very briefly, I might hint at the wisdom of it and show you it is not only good for you to offer this prayer, but it is better for you than to control yourself. I might tell you that it is good for you to give yourself up to God’s hands because He understands your needs. He knows your case and He will so pity your necessities that He will give you the best supplies. It is better for you than if you trusted in yourself, for if you had the choosing of your troubles or your employments, you would always have this bitter thought, “Now, I chose it, myself, and, therefore, I must blame my own folly.”

But now another thought. What was the cause of the Psalmist saying this? How came he to be able to feel it? There are few Christians who can really affirm it and stand to it—“You shall choose my inheritance for me.” I think the cause is to be found in this—that he had a true experience of God’s wisdom. Poor David could, indeed, thank God for having chosen his inheritance for him for He had given him a very goodly one. He had put him in a king’s mansion. He had made him conqueror over Goliath and had raised him to be ruler over a great people. David, by a practical experience, could say, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.” Some of you cannot say it, can you? What is the reason? Because you have never witnessed Divine guidance. You have never looked to see the hand that supplies your mercies. Some of us who have seen that hand in a few instances are obliged to say from the very force of circumstances—

*“Here I raise my Ebenezer.”*

Then, again—  
*“Here by Your help I’ve come.”*  
I hope and trust in that same good pleasure which has guided me up to  
now, that it will bring me safely home.  
Again—it was a true faith that made the Psalmist say he relied upon  
God. He knew Him to be worthy of his trust, so he said, “You shall  
choose my inheritance for me.” And, again, it was true love, for love can  
trust—affection can put confidence in the one it loves. And since David  
loved his God, he took the unwritten roll of his life and he said, “Write  
what You will, my Lord.” “You shall choose my inheritance for me.” I might finish, if I had time, by telling you the good effects that this  
produced upon the Psalmist’s mind and what it would produce upon  
yours. How it would bring a holy calm continually if you were always to  
pray this prayer. And how it would so relieve your mind from anxiety that  
you would be better able to walk as a Christian should. For when a man  
is anxious he cannot pray. When he is troubled about the world he cannot serve his Master—he is serving himself. If you could “seek first the  
Kingdom of God and His righteousness,” Beloved, “all things would then  
be added to you.” What a noble Christian you would be—how much more  
honorable you would be to Christ’s religion! And how much better you  
could serve Him.  
And now you who have been meddling with Christ’s business, I have  
been preaching this to you. You know you sometimes sing— *“‘Tis mine to obey, ‘tis His to provide,”*  
but you have been meddling with Christ’s business, you have been leaving your own. You have been trying the “providing” part and leaving the  
“obeying” to somebody else. Now take the obeying part and let Christ  
manage the providing. Come then, Brothers and Sisters, doubting and  
fearful ones, come and see your Father’s storehouse and ask whether He  
will let you starve while He has stored away such plenty in His garner!  
Come and look at His heart of mercy and see if that will ever fail! Come  
and look at His inscrutable wisdom and see if that will ever go amiss.  
Above all, look up there to Jesus Christ, your Intercessor, and ask yourself, “while He pleads, can my Father forget me?” And if He remembers  
even sparrows, will He forget one of the least of His poor children? “Cast  
your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you.” “He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.”  
This I have preached to God’s children—and now one word to the other portion of this crowded assembly. The other day there was a very singular scene in the House of Commons. There is a certain enclosure there  
set apart for the members. Into this place a gentleman ignorantly  
strayed. By-and-by someone raised the cry, “A stranger in the House!” The sergeant of the House went up to him, took him by the shoulder and reminded him that he had no business there—not being a member—not one of the elect—not having been elected by the country. The man, of course, looked very foolish. But, as he had made a mistake, he was let go. Had he willfully strayed within the enclosure and taken a seat he might not have gotten off so easily. When I saw that, I thought, “A stranger in the House!” This morning is there not a stranger in the house? There are some here who are strangers to the subject we have been discussing—strangers to God—strangers to true religion. “There’s a stranger in the house.” It led me to think of that great “assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven.” And I thought of the people who, last Sabbath night, sat down at the Lord’s Table to partake of the Sacrament. And the idea struck me, “There’s a stranger in the house.” Now, in the House of Commons, a stranger cannot sit five minutes without being detected, for all eyes are so soon fixed upon him. But in Christ’s Church—in this Church—a stranger can sit in the house without being found out. Ah, there are strangers sitting here, looking as religious as other people—some that are not children, some that are not chosen—some that are not heirs of God. They are “strangers in the house.” Shall I tell you what will happen, by-and-by? Though I cannot detect you under the cloak of your profession. Though God’s people may not find you out, the grim “sergeant of the house” is coming. Death is coming—and he will discover you! What will be the penalty of your intrusion, as a professor, into Christ’s Church? What will be your lot if you have been a stranger in His House, below, when you find that, though you may have sat for a little while in this House of Commons below, you cannot sit in the House of Lords above? What will be your lot when it shall be said, “Depart you accused”? And you may exclaim, “Lord! Lord! Have we not eaten and drunk in Your Presence and taught in Your streets?” And yet He will say, “Verily, I never knew you!” “You are a stranger in the house!”—“Depart, accursed one!”  
How can I tell who is a stranger in these pews and who are strangers upstairs? Some of us are not strangers! “We are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” To such of you as are strangers, I pray you think of it and go to Christ’s Throne and beg Him that yet you may be His children and numbered with His people. Then, after that, I will talk with you about my text, but not now. Now I bid you pray to God, “You shall choose my inheritance for me.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3423 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BEHOLDING GOD’S CHURCH  
NO. 3423

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 14, 1870.

**“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: count the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.” Psalm 48:12-14.**

THE proper study of the Christian is Christ. Next to that subject is the Church. And though I would by no means ever urge you to think of the Church as, for a moment, to put her in comparison with her Lord, yet think of her in relation to Him. You will not dishonor the sun by remembering that there is a moon! You will not lessen the glory of “the King in His beauty” by remembering that the Queen, His Spouse, is “all glorious within.” You will not think any less of Christ for thinking much of His Church. So tonight I shall invite you to a consideration of the honor, and glory, and dignity of the Church of God as set forth in these verses. And our first point will be the survey which should be taken of the Church— “Walk about Zion, and go round about her: count the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider well her palaces.” Secondly, here is the objective of this survey—“That you may tell it to the generation following.” And here is, thirdly, a very excellent reason given for our seeking to accomplish this objective—“For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.” So, then, let us think awhile of—

I. THE SURVEY WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE if we would become practically useful to coming generations—the survey we ought to take of the Church of God.

And let us begin by saying it should be complete. “Walk about Zion, and go round about her”—go completely round the wall. The Church is set forth as a walled city. The description calls to my mind the city of Chester. There you have the old wall standing, with here and there a most picturesque tower or turret. Now Jerusalem stood in that way, and the Church of God is likened to Jerusalem. “Go round about her”—make a complete circuit of all her walls, try to be acquainted with all of Church history, with that which concerns Apostolic times, and that which had to do with the ages of the first Christian persecution. With the Reformation, with the sufferings of our fathers and covenanting sires. And then on to the present day. Let your survey of the Church, as far as possible, include all portions of it. Remember that your denomination is not the whole of Zion—that although you do well to look carefully to the quarter in which your house is situated, yet there are other houses of God’s servants in other parts of the city—and you should take a survey of those regions as well as those in which you immediately dwell. See how your Brothers and Sisters in Christ fare and take their pledge and report. Let it never be a joy to a Baptist if he hears that some Congregational Church does not prosper. Let it always be a joy to a Presbyterian when he hears that a Wesleyan is doing good. Let it be a great joy to us if any part of the Church of God prospers! And if in any place there is decay or decline, let us bear in our prayers that particular portion of the Church of God, and pray Him to strengthen that part of the city wall against the foe. Let your survey of the Church be as complete as you can make it. “Go round about her.”

Let it also be frequent . I am afraid that some persons think very little, indeed, of the Church of God. I mean that while they know how the shop, and the State, and the world generally are getting on, they could scarcely tell how many members were added to the one Church to which they belong. Certainly they know little about other sections of the Church and, perhaps, care as little as they know! It should not be so with the citizens of Zion! The time to favor Zion will come when God’s servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof—when the very least thing that concerns the Church of God shall be important to the citizens of Zion! Frequently, my dear Friends, look not only on your own things, but also on the things of others. Does not the text say, first, “Walk about Zion”? Then it adds, “Go round about her,” as if, after having done it once, you were to do it again, and yet again, and again—always caring for the Church and constantly making an earnest, enthusiastic inspection as to the prosperity of the great cause of Christ in the land.

And let your inspection and survey be deliberate. “Count the towers thereof.” Look at the detail, count the towers, bring your careful pondering into the business. Do not give a mere glance, hurrying round and then saying, “I saw the city, but really do not know how many towers there were.” Study the details of the Church of which you are a member. Try to look after the individual interests of your Brothers and Sisters. There may be a backslider to recover and rejoice over. There may be a mourner to comfort, a seeker to direct, or a faint heart to encourage. Mark well the towers! “Set your heart towards them,” says the Hebrew— do not regard the interests of the Church of God as secondary to anything! If the Church prospers and Christ is glorified, all things else are little—but if there is defeat to the armies of Israel, nothing can console the Christian!

And let your inspection of the Church of God be always earnest. “Consider her palaces”—not a mere superficial look at the Church—reading the weekly paper—the weekly religious paper—which recounts the little events in your Zion, but consider well. I would to God we had many who in secret would so consider as to sigh and groan over the lack of love and earnestness that there is just now. The wave of revival seems, now, to have passed over us—and we are now like the shore when the sea retreats from it with the fullness of its strength. There needs to be some men of wisdom to discern the times and, “to know what Israel ought to do.” Each one of us who loves the Lord, and has a stake in the city as citizens, should seek to consider well its interests and endeavor to promote them earnestly and strenuously—seeking first to know thoroughly what they are—that we may render our share towards their serving. Although this exhortation may seem to some to be very tame and tritely commonplace, yet how much I wish we were all obedient to it—and surely, then, great practical results would follow! There are some who manifest a keen interest in all that happens in the Church. If there is a missionary going abroad, their prayers go with him. If there is a new voice lifted up for Christ, they are much more pleased than if they found a bag of gold! These same persons are often mourners in Zion when the Gospel is not fully preached, when Prayer Meetings are thinly attended, when no conversions are made, when worldliness sweeps over the Church. And the more we have of such men, the better—they are sure to be the very pick and cream of the Church, those who walk round Jerusalem, who go round about her—who mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces!

But now let us be obedient to one of our own rules, namely, to take a matter in detail. So, taking the text in detail, we have, first, to walk about Zion, which I take to mean let us inspect the Church herself—let it often be a theme with us—a theme of study. What is the Church of God? On what is it founded? It is built upon a Rock and “the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.” The Church of God stands fast in the Immutable Love of God according to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. The Church of God was designed by Infinite Wisdom. It is not a corporation of men that come together according to their own agreement and will, and so at haphazard. It is not an organization framed by the shrewd wit and wisdom of man. God designed the true Church in Eternity! He is the Architect and Builder of the Temple in which He is, Himself, to dwell. Not only the great outline of that plan did He mark and settle, but every line of it! Yes, and every stone of it—and when that stone shall be quarried and how it shall be quarried—and where it shall be placed, and when it shall be placed in the appointed spot! The Divine Will of God and the Eternal purpose may be seen running through the whole of the Church, and it is well for us to look often to her foundations and look to the Designer, the great Artifice, who builds all things! This Church of God, as far as it is already built, has been built by Divine Power alone. Instruments have been used but all the power is of God! There have been builders and wise master-builders, but still, these have been the servants employed by the great Builder of all! He that built all things is God. That is especially true in the Church of God. If there are any other buildings which have been put up by human might, they will assuredly crumble from their place. Only that which God built will endure. All men’s work will pass away and, perhaps, the sooner the better, for wood, and hay, and stubble would but destroy the beauty and the completeness of that building whose foundations are of precious stones, and whose walls shall glisten with gems in that day when the top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of, “Grace, Grace unto it!” The Church is a wonderful piece of architecture and well worth our walking round because, unlike any other, her strength is not merely material. The Church is built up of living stones. Life flows through the whole. We have seen marvelous buildings. As I have looked at the cathedral at Milan, I could hardly help thinking that it looked as if it had sprung up from the earth, watered by some miraculous shower! It seemed a thing of such beauty, but every stone was, after all, a stone. But the Church of God has grown under a Divine, miraculous hand, and every stone, from the foundation to the pinnacle glows with life! Wondrous Temple for a living God to dwell in! How should He dwell in temples made with hands, and pillars of iron, dust and ashes—things that were created but for baser uses? But He can live where hearts glow with emotion—where intelligence brightens with instruction, where holiness, peace and joy are the polished stones—the glory with which they glitter! It is a Temple of living stones—you may well go round about it!

The Temple has a glorious history, too. Strange histories have been connected with buildings. What would the stones of Stonehenge tell us if they could speak? What secrets might not the Pyramids reveal if for once they could break their solitary and solemn silence? Those far away temples of Carnac and Baalbec—what have they beheld? What armies have marched by them? What nations and generations have perished and passed beneath their shade? But this Zion, this habitation of the living God—her history how grand! When does it begin? In old Eternity God has ordained her. Along the whole page of human history you trace her most distinctly. How gloriously does she shine forth at the Red Sea, when God works plagues on Zoan and breaks the dragon in the midst of the sea! How brightly does the Church shine when you mention such names as David and all his victories, or Sennacherib and his hosts slain by the avenging angel! The history of the Church of God is an aggregation of histories, all of them miraculous, for the Christian Church is a miracle so far as its life is concerned—it is life in the midst of death—not only life in the sepulcher, but life in the very midst of death itself. Spiritual life in these poor bodies is just such, but oh, Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid that we are too silent about the history of the Church! We hear continually of patriots singing of the brave days of old when their fathers fought the foe. We ought to sing more often the songs of Moses and the Lamb—that the Lord God has gotten to Himself the victory, and given to His people rest and conquest. The Church is worth going round, for her history is so bright.

But best of all, the Church should be surveyed by us, because of Him who dwells within. It shall be said of no other place, “Here Jehovah specially and radiantly resides.” I know men think of their ridged roofs and of their lofty pillars in their cathedrals, and think these ensure the Divine indwelling, but He is no more inside that building than outside! God is to be found on the loftiest mountain, as well as in the valley—and where the preacher stands upon a log of wood upon the village green, the place is just as consecrated as though a thousand years it had heard nothing but the song of praise and the voice of prayer! There are no holy places now— these are done with! They are the beggarly elements of the Law—in the living Church, built up of men and women who have been born unto God by His Spirit—there, Jehovah peculiarly dwells—in Heaven and in the little Heaven below in the midst of His elect people, whom He has ordained according to His purpose! There might be whole hours spent in talking about the Church, but enough of that first word, “Walk about Zion.”

Brothers and Sisters, I shall invite you next, in your survey of Zion, to observe her conspicuous towers. “Count the towers thereof.” Shall I be counted fanciful if I say that these towers may guard the Doctrines of the Gospel which stand prominently round the Church of God, for the protection and succor of the citizens? I shall not, certainly. The enemy have always looked upon these as towers, for attacks have been made one after another upon the different parts of our most holy faith. For a long time our Reformers stood like a wall round the tower of Justification by Faith, and the whole battle seemed to be waged around that particular portion. After a while the conflict shifted—and it continues to do so from year to year and day to day. Sometimes we have had to contend for the true Deity of our blessed Lord. Sometimes for the full and Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture. There is not a tower in the whole compass of the walls that guard the Church, but what has had to maintain siege after siege, and bear upon it the brunt of the attack! And what is better, the shields of the mighty have been vilely cast away when Zion’s troops have put the enemy to rout!

May not these towers also represent the place of observation of the Church? “Count the towers thereof.” Where do God’s watchmen go to observe the times, and to see what is coming? Do they not go to the chamber of communion, to the place of prayer, to the teaching of Holy Scripture and get near to God? Then are they not able to see afar off and to mark where the foe will make his next assault? Surely I shall not be wrong if I say that in our times the pulpit has to become the tower of the watchmen. While that is well and faithfully maintained, no assaults of the foe shall prevail! As the Roman Catholic priests once said to Krummacher, “Unless you take the pulpit out of the way, we shall never be able to put you down.” Let the Christian, then, go and count the towers of the Church! Let him watch the doctrines! Let him learn them! Let him understand them! Let him know how to defend them! Let every Christian pray for the minister of the Gospel! Brothers and Sisters, pray for him! Count the towers and if you see one that seems to be badly manned with watchmen, ask that God’s Grace would raise up other and mightier men for the defense of Holy Zion! And if there is anything else, if there is any place that may not have a tower, think of it—think of it prayerfully—and carefully regard it in your prayers before God as an object of your solicitude!

But I must conduct you on, for our time flies. You are invited to an inspection of the ramparts of defense. “Mark you well her bulwarks.” The bulwarks go entirely around the city—they are lines of ridges, ditches, trenches and fortifications. Now mark well the fortifications of the Church of God. God the eternal Father has thrown up a line of ramparts—the Eternal Purpose—who shall frustrate it? The Everlasting Covenant—who shall make it void? The promise and the oath, the two Immutable things by which it is impossible for God to lie—who shall storm these two? Who shall break upon these two? We are safely defended behind them! The Power of God—who shall defeat it? The Wisdom of God— who shall outwit it? The Presence of God—who shall deprive us of it? The Love of God—who shall separate us from it? All these are the entrenchments of our Zion. When our foes have once looked upon them, they may well turn back with dismay. God, the Blessed One, has been pleased to make lines of fortifications, too. He has offered His precious Sacrifice— and between the Church and destruction there is the full stream of His atoning blood! Who, by any means, shall make the Atonement void, or the Cross of no effect? Between the Church and the foe stands the brass wall of the righteousness of Jesus Christ! God is not unfaithful, to forget the work of His dear Son. Stronger than iron is the intercession of Jesus Christ! For Zion’s sake He will never cease or hold His peace, but will plead day and night for His people when they are tempted, that their faith fail not. And there is the mediatorial work of Christ, like a wall of fire about them. “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” Who shall break through, upon the Church, through all power? Surely these—

*“Munitions of stupendous rock,*

*Our dwelling place shall be!”*  
And then there is the Kingdom of Christ in the latter day promised to come—the promise of God to come with power and take His people to Himself. That is a sure guarantee of the security of the Church until the day of manifestation and the appearing of the Son of God!

Around the Church of God, too, the Holy Spirit has thrown up His rampart. He was pleased, first of all, to create the Church, and since that day He has preserved it safely. It is His to provide spiritual teaching. It is His to take of the things of Christ and show them unto it. It is His to comfort. It is His to sanctify. It is His to perfect. And all His gracious influences and operations are so many protections against the attacks off the foe. Aha! Aha, you enemy of Zion! If you had to do with poor puny men like us, you might soon put us to the rout! Your sophistries and worldly wisdom might soon bring us to the non-plus, but the Holy Spirit is with us and is in us—and we shall answer you with a wisdom that you shall not be able to counter!

“The best of all is,” said John Wesley, “that God is with us.” “God with us! God with us” is the shout of our victorious host! “Emmanuel”—in this name we conquer—by this name we overcome! So you see, Brothers and Sisters, you may mark well her bulwarks—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have securely garrisoned and bulwarked the Church of the living God! You are called to notice, in the fourth place, her palaces. On which, but a word. Of course, the houses of Zion were inside the walls, and so the dwelling places, the meeting places of Believers are inside the line of defense. What kind of dwelling places are these that belong to the citizens of Zion? Are they cottages? Is it, “Mark you well her cottages”? No, not so. Is it, “Consider her alms houses”? No! It is, “Consider her palaces.” Palaces are the abodes of those of the greatest wealth, of those having rank and dignity in life. Then am I to understand that the people of God are rich? They are not in earth’s wealth very often—not in perishable gold and silver—but in what is infinitely better! They are rich in faith, rich in favor, rich in the loving kindness of the Lord. Then am I to understand that the people of God are honorable? They are not with worldly honor, but God has said, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable.” And am I to remember that the people of God are royal? They are kings and priests! They are the true blood-royal of the universe. The blood-imperial is not in the veins of those who claim it, but in the veins of the descendants of the King of Kings! Their ancestry is the highest under Heaven! They are God’s aristocracy. Consider, then, her palaces. Where are the palaces and what are they? Consider then, my Brothers and Sisters, the place where the saints worship, for where the saints meet together for prayer and praise, there are the palaces! Consider them and mark them well, to love them and say, “How amiable are Your tabernacles, oh, Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.” Consider the palaces of Christian fellowship, for if it is in a barn—when Christians meet together, they make a palace of it! Consider the palace of fellowship with Christ. Wherever we meet with Him, we are at once in a palace! Consider the palaces of the promises—that it is better than a promise which is spoken of in that word, “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust.” These will be our dwelling places in all ages, and it is infinitely better than any earthly palace can possibly be!

“Consider her palaces.” Thus I have gone into detail round the walls of Zion. Now, the second thing, very briefly, is—  
II. THE OBJECTIVE TO BE ATTAINED BY OUR MAKING OURSELVES THUS ACQUAINTED WITH THE CHURCH OF GOD.

It is this—“That you may tell it to the generation following.” The Church of God should take care that what God has done for one generation is told to the next. How much have you and I been helped by what our fathers told us? Those wonderful deeds that are kept on record— what God did in the days of old—have ministered great consolation to us in this present age. Let us take care that we hand down to our sons and daughters a record of what God has done. The pith of the matter is just this—each Christian ought to take a deep interest in the work of God in his time, that he may know how to teach his children, and especially to teach those who are born unto the family of God. Teach the young Christian what God has done, is doing and will yet do for His Church! I am very thankful that I have around me a number of Christian people who take a deep interest in the Cross of Jesus Christ. I believe that you are the people who will be sure to be succeeded by a generation who will take an equal interest in the same work. But if you were not, yourselves, interested, I could not suppose that it would be any concern to you to hand down the sacred traditions of your experience to the next generation. But now I trust that you will take care that there shall be kept alive in the world the record, the experimental record, of God’s mighty acts towards His people in our day, even as in olden times! They speak of what the Lord did. Go you, each of you, and tell others what God has told you! Never hide the precious things that God reveals to you. What He speaks to you in the closet, proclaim upon housetops! Of course, it is well to learn first—do not try to teach before you have learned—but when you have learned, it is well to teach it immediately. Always mark well— “consider,” says the text—“that you may tell it to others.” May we train up in all our Churches studious Christians, intelligent Christians, wellversed in all that concerns the Church of the living God! I believe that in proportion as Christian people are well-instructed, the attacks of the adversary will be repelled and defeated. But if we only gather together undisciplined bodies of men and women who merely come to hear preaching, but receive little or no instruction, they will become like flocks of sheep—the prey of the wolf whenever he shall come. Mark well, then the bulwarks of Zion, that when your turn comes to defend them, you may be at home in the battle—not come into the Church like a stranger, knowing nothing of what it is to do for Christ, or what Christ is doing for it. And now, lastly—

III. THERE IS A REASON GIVEN WHY WE SHOULD SEEK TO TRANSMIT THE RECORDS OF THE CHURCH TO OTHER GENERATIONS.

The story of God’s love to His Church is to be told from one generation to another, and the reason is this—because “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.” Observe, if Israel could change their God, it could as well forget what had occurred, but as she will have the same God forever and ever, let her remember what God did for her of old! And as that God will be the same to us, let each of us treasure up memories of what He has worked for us—for these are instructive as to what we may hope for in the future! He that helped you in years past will not fail you now. He that proved Himself faithful 20 years ago is faithful today. Is God All-Sufficient in your childhood? Is God AllSufficient in your old age? With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Remember, then, the past mercies are as forge ashes, from which you may gather the spark that may light the fire of today, and that even the future may be indebted to the same blaze!

Besides, we may well recollect what God has done, for if we tell it to others, we shall never have to retract, for God will continue to do the same as He always did. I am afraid that the Church has grown very fainthearted as to the dealings of the Lord with her. We hardly expect to see such things done, as in the first age of the Church. “That was the heroic period,” it is said, “but now we are in our decline.” It is not so with this God of the Apostles! This God of the martyrs! This God of the Reformers! This God of Wesley and of Whitfield—this God is our God not for time only, but forever and ever—and I dare not give you any restricted sense of “forever and ever.” There are some people who expect the Lord will want to turn us out of Heaven at the end of a certain time, or they must think, so to carry out their belief, that “forever and ever” may mean only for a limited time! That is one of the modern heresies of these boasted times. But for my part I believe, “forever,” means forever and ever! And this God is our God, not for ages and ages, but forever and ever, world without end—beyond any possibility of coming to a conclusion! And He will be the same God right through the ages, onward. “And He will be our guide even unto death.” Now, the text is not altogether correct in the translation of the Hebrew, for, “unto death,” might very well be rendered “out of—

beyond—death.” He will be our guide to the River Jordan, and He will be our guide through it! He will be our guide into Canaan, where we shall rest forever, and never more be driven out! Well, then, may we talk of what He has done, because He will always go on to do the same! We may keep on talking even to Eternity, about what the Lord has done, for no period in Eternity (if periods there can be) can ever witness any change in the Most High! He will still be the same just God to the ungodly, and the same gracious God to His own people forever and forever!

Oh, talk you, then, of His mighty acts! Study them, and learn them! And then speak of them with the tongue, like the pen of a ready writer, or if you go stammering, let the tongue of the dumb sing with you! Oh, to speak of the everlasting mercy of our God! On such a theme as this, they who have been heretofore silent may grow into orators, for the history of the Church of God and the story of God’s love might well unloose our stammering tongues and make us tell of His immense, unsearchable love! Would to God that all the Church were orators for Him! Would that you who belong to this Church were! Many, I know, belong to divers sections of it, but alas, some are, perhaps, members of this Church, yet not members of the Church of God! And some of you are not even professedly members of God’s Church. May you be converted! May you listen to the Gospel, whose message you doubt! It is a message even to you—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” This is the Gospel that He has sent us to preach, saying these words, “Go you into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned.” God bless and save you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 58:1-12, JEREMIAH 30.**

Verses 1, 2. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching God. And what a strange thing this is, that there are some people who take delight in the ordinances of God and yet they are living in the most shameful sin. I must confess this remains a mystery to me. But I hear of some who will attend Prayer Meetings and seem to enjoy them—who are to be found in the House of God whenever the doors are opened, and yet, their characters will not bear the Light of God. One would think that they would not wish to be told of their sins, and to come under a faithful ministry—and yet they do—and the more faithful that ministry is, the more they seem to like it, and yet go on in their sins! Oh, what strange blindness is this which loves the Light and yet will not see by it—men that take to themselves niter and much soap, and yet will not wash—that heap up the bread about them as if they built a house with bread, and yet do not eat of it! Oh, infatuation most strange, to apparently love the Gospel and yet not to receive it into the heart so as to be changed by it. See how God talks to this religious people.

3. Why have we fasted, say they, and You see not? Why have we afflicted our soul, and You take no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure, and exact all your labors. They fasted and then they said, “Why did not God accept our fasting?” Why, because they made their poor servants work up to the very last all that they could do! They never gave them any rest. They exacted all their labors and they, themselves, while they pretended to faint, were taking their pleasure!

4. Behold you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: you shall not fast as you do this day so make your voice to be heard on high. They were fond of getting into religious disputes. And when they had a fast day they fell to loggerheads about different doctrines, and they got angry with one another, till they began to smite with the fist of wickedness! And they thought that a day spent in that manner would be acceptable to God? What kind of a God would He be?

5, 6. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loosen the bands of wickedness. That is, if by any dishonesty you have got a man in your power, set him free—if you have oppressed him, give him his rights. This in God’s kind of fasting!

6. To undo the heavy burden. Not to exact from a man what you have no right to have, but what, perhaps, the law may allow you to get out of him. This is God’s fasting—“to undo the heavy burdens.”

6, 7. And to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke. Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry? It is God’s kind of fasting to give what you would have eaten yourselves to the other’s feast. “To deal your bread to the hungry.”

7. And that you bring the poor that are cast out of your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him: and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? When you know that there are poor persons, perhaps of your own kith and kin—and, in one respect, we are all of one flesh— when we know that there are such, and yet refuse to help them, it is idle to talk about fasting! But if we would see to this, then comes this promise.

8, 9. Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the Glory of the LORD shall be your reward. Then shall you call, and the LORD shall answer: you shall cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger. That is, the scorning the poor man.

9-11. And speaking vanity. And if you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall your light rise in obscurity, and your darkness be as the noon day. And the LORD shall guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones. You see, by giving comes getting! According to the philosophy of God, it is by watering others that we get watered ourselves! God feeds the man that feeds others. He made fat the bones of the hungry. Now God says He will make fat his bones. He satisfied the souls of those that were in drought as best he could, and now God will satisfy his soul in drought and make him—

11, 12. And you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of you shall build the old waste places: you shall raise up the foundations of many generations and you shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. God help us to obey His precept that we may partake in His promise!

*JEREMIAH 30.*

12. For thus says the LORD, Your bruise is incurable and your wound is grievous. See here is the bass again. We have got down into the sorrowful notes—all to make us sick of self and ready to receive the Grace of God.

13, 14. There is none to plead your cause, that you may be bound up. You have no healing medicines. All your lovers have forgotten you. Out of sight, out of mind. They have forgotten you. Oh, when God wounds, it is a wound, indeed! When He breaks the heart, who can comfort? If He does but speak, the earth trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke—

*“When He shuts up in long despair,  
Who can remove the iron bar?”*

14, 15. They seek you not; for I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one for the multitude of your iniquity; because your sins were increased. Why cry you for your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable for the multitude of your iniquity. “These are dark words,” says one. If they are incurable, what more need be said? Ah, the things incurable with men are curable with God! Sin is the malady that none can cure but God alone.

15, 16. Because your sins were increased, I have done these things unto you. Therefore—Now I read this, this morning, and I could not help dwelling upon this, “therefore.” It looks like a non sequitur, but there is a real argument in it. Therefore, because you have now come to the worst, because you cannot help yourself, because you are ruined and undone—

16, 17. All they that devour you shall be devoured: and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil you shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon you will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto you. Oh, the Sovereignty of Divine Grace! How it comes in when every hope is gone! Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity! An incurable sinner and, therefore, God comes to cure him! If you are brought so low that you cannot go any lower, God will put His everlasting arms underneath you. I speak to some, tonight, who are about to enter into peace, joy and rest. “I will restore health unto you; I will heal you of your wounds, says the Lord.”

17. And I will heal you of your wounds, says the LORD; because they called you an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeks after. They said, “There is no hope for that man, there is no relief for that woman. Therefore God means to give up all relief.” Nothing pleases Him better than to undertake a desperate case! God is great at a dead lift. When all the world is palsied, then is God Omnipotent.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2014 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“AS WE HAVE HEARD, SO HAVE WE SEEN”  
NO. 2014

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever.” Psalm 48:8.**

“As we have heard, so have we seen”—this is seldom true. In many places we see what we have not heard and what we have heard we do not see. Time was when many simpletons believed that the streets of London were paved with gold. I am sure I do not know any part of London in which a single lump of that metal can be found in the footway. Ten thousand idle tales there are in every country of mines where fortunes may be dug out of the earth and plains where wealth forces itself on the immigrant. But how seldom do we hear the good news, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

But when you come into the “City of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God,” the reports about it are true and the truth exceeds the report. For, like the Queen of Sheba, we cry, “The half was not told me.” When we speak of the privileges of the Church of God on earth it is impossible to exaggerate. “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Behold, what blessings, what riches, what royalties the Lord Jesus bestows upon His chosen! How cleansed they are by His blood! How quickened by His life! How honored by His glorious enthronement at the right hand of the Father!

You cannot speak of Zion and her prosperity in too exulting a style. Happy are you, O Israel! And if we speak of the city of God as it shines in full splendor above, words fail us to set it forth. I doubt not when we arrive at its blessed abodes and tread its golden streets and wear our crowns of immortality, we shall not only say, “As we have heard, so have we seen,” but we shall be lost in wonder and surprise at the overwhelming revelations of Divine love.

It is always true of the things of God and of the Church of God—“As we have heard, so have we seen.” What His Word promises His work performs. This thought will be the clue of my sermon and my line of discourse will be guided by the text. May the Holy Spirit make it useful to us all!

I. Our first observation upon the text is this—IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT WE LISTEN TO TRUE WITNESSES. Otherwise we shall not be able to say, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” If we listen to false witnesses, the more we believe them the worse for us—it will not be faith but credulity and in due time there will be a sad awakening from idle dreams. It is of the first importance to you all that you should hear the Word of God

and receive the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. So that both in the throng of life, and when you stand upon the borders of death and in the changeless state of eternity, you may be able to say, “We thank God for the Gospel which we heard. For what we heard with our ears has been verified in our lives.”

The Israelites who sang this forty-eighth Psalm had heard of Jerusalem and its Temple, of Jehovah and of His sure defense of His chosen city— how had they heard of it? They had heard of it by reading for themselves, or listening to the reading of the Word of God. They had five books of Moses and other writings. In these books they read marvelous stories of what Jehovah had done for His people. They would remember well how the Lord worked for His chosen in Egypt and how He brought them out of the house of bondage with a high hand and an outstretched arm. They would read the record of God’s merciful provision for the tribes in the wilderness, of His victories over their enemies, such as Og, king of Bashan and Sihon, king of the Amorites.

They would read with wonder the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the overthrow of tyrants by Gideon and Barak and Jephthah. They would see what the Lord worked by His servant, David, and by others who trusted Him in the old times. All this would raise high their confidence in Jehovah—and now it had come to pass that while Jehoshaphat was king, the holy city had been beleaguered by confederate Moabites and Edomites and Ammonites. And once more the Lord had made bare His holy arm and given a glorious triumph to Judah—without it being necessary for His people to strike a single blow. The adversaries, moved with mutual jealousy, had fallen upon one another and become their own executioners. When the men of Judah saw this, they cried, “The old Book is true. Jehovah has worked wonders before our eyes. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts.”

My Brethren, attend carefully to what this Book records and reveals. It is now enlarged for your greater edification. Let this record be the report which you hear concerning the Lord our God and His ways of Divine Grace. Let us give earnest heed to Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists who wrote in the name of the Lord. For in that case we shall hear the Truths of God which shall be so verified by experience as to make us joyfully exclaim, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

These good people had also listened to the ministers of God. The priests, when they were not engaged in actual attendance at the Temple, were expected to teach the people. It is said of the tribe of Levi, “They shall teach Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your Law.” Prophets also went through the land declaring the mind of God and when the people heard these messengers whom the Lord had sent to speak in His name, they heard that which the Lord fulfilled. For none of the words of His servants were suffered to fall to the ground. How necessary it is that you should hear the Truth of God spoken by those that are sent of God.

Many false Prophets have gone forth into the world. That which a man fetches out of his own mind may or may not be true. In any case you have a right to criticize and discuss it. But he that speaks with, “Thus says the Lord,” at the back of his words stands on another platform. God’s Word demands our reverent faith and he that speaks it faithfully speaks with authority and not as the scribes. Conscience within the breast of man echoes to the voice of Divine Truth and owns its power, even when the will refuses to obey. Oh, that you may not, because of itching ears, heap to yourselves teachers. But may you hear the faithful messenger of God so that you may say at the end, “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God”!

No doubt, also, these good people had listened to their fathers. In these days the proud notion is abroad that our fathers cannot have been so wise as their highly cultured sons. Yet in the long run, these same youths will alter their opinions as their years increase. Wisdom is neither in age nor in youth but in God alone. I love to hear what gray-headed men have to say who are further advanced in the journey of life than I am. For there is weight in their testimony. They may not speak with all the brilliance and fire of youth, but their speech has salt in it, derived from the certainty of actual experience. I love to think of those things which we have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us. Even the wondrous things which the Lord did in their day and in the old time before them.

The singers of our Psalm had listened to their gracious fathers and when they saw the adversary round about the City of God and afterwards marched forth to that strange battle in which there was no clash of arms but only a joyful division of the spoil—then, I say they knew that what their fathers had told them was really true and they cried out in wonder, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”—

*“In Zion God is known,  
A refuge in distress.  
How bright has His salvation shone  
Through all her palaces!  
Often have our fathers told,  
Our eyes have often seen,  
How well our God secures the fold  
Where His own sheep have been.”*

Those who were not actually in Jerusalem would hear the descriptions of those who had been there. They had heard of the Temple which was so “exceedingly magnificent.” They had heard of Jachin and Boaz, the two famous pillars—of the great altar and the smoking sacrifices of the morning and the evening lamb, and the priests in their white attire ministering at the altar. They had heard of the high priest himself, when he came forth in his garments of glory and of beauty and of the blessing which he blessed the assembled people. In the cottage homes on the far-off hills they had heard of all these things and heard a truthful report, so that when they came to the holy city and their feet stood within the gates of Jerusalem, their hearts beat high and they said within themselves, “We have not listened to cunningly devised fables. But as we have heard, so

have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts.”

It is well, dear Friends, for us to form our associations with a view to lasting benefit. Let the friends of God be your friends. Speak to those who speak well of God and of His holy name. Cultivate the acquaintance of those who, by experience, are able to inform you whether these things are so. “He that walks with wise men shall be wise.” He that talks much with experienced Christians will acquire much assurance in the things of God. It is most important for us that we receive the recorded witness of ancient saints and the hearty testimony of living worthies—that afterwards we may be able to say—“As we have heard, so have we seen.”

Some, nowadays, are inclined to hear everything, bad, good and indifferent. I believe that hearing everything will end in hearing nothing. That text is often quoted and misunderstood, which says, “Prove all things.” If men really mean what they say and are going to prove all things, I would persuade them to begin with their bodies and not at first to run great risks with their souls. Gentlemen, I invite you to begin with more common things than the Gospel. For instance—commence with proving all the patent medicines and next prove all the drugs of the chemist. If you survive the process, it will then be time to go round and prove all the ministers and all the different doctrines of this wretched period.

If you survive the drugs and poisons, you will not survive the false doctrines. False doctrines cannot be proved and you need not make the attempt. It is only the Truth of God which is capable of proof. The text does not mean “experiment upon everything”—but receive nothing until it has been proved to be true and good. The most of us are not appointed to the office of Universal Taster—we are not commissioned to taste all deadly things that we may know their precise effect—we are far better employed in holding fast that which is good. The truths which we have already proved to be the Truths of God, we hold as with a death grip. And, as we hold them fast, we also hold them forth.

That which we accept for ourselves we commend to others—this is a far safer and healthier exercise than imitating the Athenians in their desire to be forever hearing some new thing. Take heed what you hear, lest you be not able to say, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

II. Secondly, GOOD HEARING LEADS ON TO SEEING—“As we have heard, so have we seen.” You cannot all use those words. Some of you have heard and heard but have never yet seen. The man who is content with one inlet to his mind, namely, his ears—but never uses his eyes, must imagine that God has made a mistake and has given him more senses than he needs. Surely this argues a want of sense. Dear Friends, you are not only invited to hear the Gospel, but the Lord Jesus says to you, as He said to His first disciples, “Come and see.” “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” You are invited to see for yourselves whether these things are so. You will ask how can a hearer of the Gospel become a seer of it?

Note first, that he can do this by examining the facts which he hears stated, and judging whether they are really so. The Scripture tells you that your heart is deceitful—see whether it is not so. It tells you that there is a natural inclination in man towards evil—study yourself and see whether this is not the case. It tells you that there is in human nature an impotence towards that which is truly good and an aversion to God. Seriously consider whether your own life, as a natural man, does not prove the truth of these charges. There are some things about yourself, while as yet you are unconverted, which you have heard of in the Scriptures and I would urge you to see whether they are not true in your own case. It will be a great help to you if you will examine these things in reference to your own self. The subject for consideration is near at hand and it will be, in many ways, useful to yourself to know whether Holy Scripture gives a true description of human nature, as you find it in yourself.

We further see what we hear when we obey the commands and receive the blessings promised upon obedience. For instance, you are bid to confess your sins. Now see whether this is true—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins”—not only hear the precept but see whether the promise is true. Here is another test—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” You have heard it hundreds of times—come and see for yourself whether such a rest is given. Obey the precept so that you may receive the promise which hangs upon the precept.

We also turn hearing into sight when, receiving the blessings which are promised to faith, we enter into a new life. Some of us can bear witness that we have entered into a new world. That things which are now everything to us were nothing to us a little while ago. As to a deaf man there is no sound, as to a blind man there is no light, so to us a few years ago there were no spiritual things. We were devoid of those spiritual faculties by which spiritual things are discerned. But now that we have believed in Jesus we have passed into another universe. And we now possess a life as much above the life of our former state as the mental life is above that of the brute which perishes. We know that there is a heavenly life, for we possess it. And in the power of it we see a thousand things not dreamed of in the common man’s philosophy. We heartily wish that all of you who hear the Gospel would see its Truths, so that you might say with the singers in this Psalm, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

The promises of God are of little service to a man if he merely hears them or reads them and has no further dealing with them. They are like a check which is kept for months and years in a drawer and never presented at the bank. The promises of God must be presented by prayerful faith to the Lord Himself. The sacred promises, though in themselves most sure and precious, are of no avail for the comfort and sustenance of the soul unless you grasp them by faith, plead them in prayer, expect them by hope and receive them with gratitude. Oh, that you might say of every promise of God, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”  
The best hearing is that which leads to seeing. When a man says, “The

Word of God tells me so and I will test it for myself”—that man is in a very hopeful state. To this we invite our hearers. The banquet is spread and rich are the provisions. But do not so trust our testimony as to stay away. Come and see for yourselves. We tell you that there is a great atonement made by the blood of Jesus which will at once wash out the most scarlet sins. Believe our message so far as to come and try it for yourselves and you will soon exclaim, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

III. I beg your attention to the third point, which is this—that SEEING WONDERFULLY CONFIRMS THE TRUTH OF WHAT WE HEAR. We are bound to believe God, even when we cannot see. That the Lord has said it would be quite enough for us if we reverenced Him as we ought. But it does help us very much when, having implicitly believed in God’s testimony, He grants us grace to see that what we have believed is most surely true. Let me show how the experience of a believing man confirms the truth of what he has heard.

To go back to where I was just now, all that Holy Scripture says about our ruin may be seen to be true. Many of us have not only heard but we have felt the evil result of sin upon our minds and hearts. We know that sin dwells in us and strives for the mastery. We can never doubt that our natural tendencies are faulty and that our best desires are imperfect. Since the Holy Spirit convinced us of sin the existence of a foul fountain within our nature is a fact which we cannot doubt. Sin’s infinite demerit is, also, a Truth of God to which our conscience gives solemn assent. I remember when I learned this lesson, with the Law as my schoolmaster. If anyone had asked me whether I deserved to be sent to the lowest Hell my tears would have owned that no punishment could be too severe for sin like mine.

Whenever I read a terrible threat in Scripture, I gave an inward assent to it in my quickened conscience—yes—and I do so now. Apart from my Lord on the Cross, a deep damnation would be mine. It does not matter what modern deceivers preach—you may depend upon it—that men when they come to die, if their consciences are at all awake, are persuaded that the threats of Holy Scripture are true. Sentiment kicks against eternal punishment. But conscience cries, “Amen” to the righteous sentence of the Law. When the Spirit of God awakens conscience, it ceases to trifle with sin and no longer denies that an awful penalty must surely be its consequence.

I am sure I can appeal to those of you who have seen the Lord in His glory, so as to abhor yourselves in dust and ashes and to those of you who have seen yourselves, so that you have been ashamed and confounded at your own ways. I say I can appeal to you to confirm the most solemn statements of Holy Scripture. However much its denunciations may make you shudder, your inmost soul consents to the truth of them. When the Holy Spirit opens up before us the bottomless pit of our natural depravity, we admit that, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” We believe in the Fall, for we are fallen. We are sure we are not as the Lord made us. We believe in the hereditary taint of natural depravity—for we mourn it in ourselves. We believe in the impotence of fallen humanity—for we are ourselves without strength.

We believe in our personal desert of the wrath of God, for we are sure it is so and our only comfort is that the sentence of death has been fulfilled in us in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Substitute. All that the Holy Scripture says about sin and its results we do from our heart of hearts confirm, for, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

Brighter things, however, have we heard and seen. Brethren, we heard that there is a calling of God whereby He separates His chosen from the rest of mankind. And we know that there is such an effectual calling by the Spirit of God for we have been so called. We heard the general call by which men were invited to come to Christ. But we refused that call. We learned that there was a special effectual call of the Holy Spirit by which men are sweetly drawn to Jesus and we found this report to be true for we have been so drawn. The Spirit of God did not drag us to Christ by our ears but He drew us with bands of love. We came to Jesus with the full consent of our renewed wills and yet against our old wills. Without violating one single delicate Law of our mind, the Lord constrained us to run in the way of salvation. As we have heard concerning the effectual calling of the Spirit of God so have we seen and we cannot but bear witness of it this day.

We heard, too, that if we came to Jesus as we were, He would receive us—and He did receive us. We heard that He would graciously forgive. And He did forgive. We heard that in forgiveness He would give us peace and we have found it so. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We heard that poor sinners, justified by faith, received a joy unspeakable and we have received that joy. We bear our testimony that, “This Man receives sinners”—we bear witness that He casts out none that come to Him. We declare to you that in the fullness of His grace He puts rebels in the children’s place. Yes, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” The bravest preacher of the Gospel has never preached more Gospel than is true. The boldest testifier to the free grace of God has never said more for the freedom and fullness of Divine Grace than he ought to have said. Exaggeration is impossible. When you would describe Divine Grace you may lay the reins upon the neck of thought.

Then we heard that there was such a thing as regeneration. We used to hear with wonder that declaration, “You must be born again.” We were told that we must pass from death unto life—that old things must pass away and all things must become new. We heard it attentively and believingly. But now we have gone further—we have

 seen it. Many of you know the great and radical change because you have experienced it. You can say, “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” We have passed out of a dead world into a living world. Having been buried with Christ we have also risen with Him and our life dwells and flourishes in a new world. We are conscious that a new heart beats within us. A new life looks out of our eyes and moves in our members. The new birth is a

fact—“As we have heard, so have we seen.”

We used to hear of the Holy Spirit and it seemed to us when we heard it that His operations and indwelling were mysteries incomprehensible. How could God the Holy Spirit dwell in men and make their bodies His temples? We marveled as we heard of His convincing men of sin, withering their self-righteousness, enkindling hope in their bosoms, leading them to Jesus, renewing them, comforting them, sanctifying them, illuminating them, preserving them. We used to hear of all this. But now with delight we can stand before you and say, “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God.”

The Holy Spirit has convinced us of sin. What a “spirit of bondage” He was to us for a time! He seemed to fetter hand and foot and shut us up under the Law! Then He broke our chains asunder and taught us that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. What a liberty it is! How joyfully did we leap when we were set free from the tyranny of sin. Since then the blessed Spirit has continually quickened, guided and strengthened us. Speak, sons and daughters of mourning, and tell how the Comforter has graciously consoled you! He has also taught us and led us into all Truth. He has been in us life and light and fire. He has moved upon our minds and He has ever given us in the same hour what we should speak!

What a permeating influence is that of the Holy Spirit! How He makes us mourn for sin! How He constrains us to follow after holiness! How He uplifts and elevates the heart, causing our conversation to be in Heaven while our body is still on earth. “As we have heard, so have we seen.” And we have never heard more of the glorious power of the Holy Spirit than is absolutely true—our own joyful experience leads us to believe that He can work all gracious things in us.

Further, to show you how experience supports the Word of God, we were told many times over that God hears prayer. We were reminded of the Savior’s words, “Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Brothers and Sisters, how have you found it? Has prayer been a mere pious amusement? Have you found it to be a reality? Have you not prayed yourselves out of the dark into the sunlight? Prayed yourselves out of the low dungeon of despondency to the mountaintop of communion? Prayed yourselves out of the depths of despair up to the Throne of God? “Out of the belly of Hell, cried I,” said one, “and You heard my voice.” Oh, the omnipotence of prayer! The facts which prove the prevalence of prayer would convince anybody unless he is determined not to be convinced.

There are numbers of persons here whom any lawyer would be glad to put in the witness box on any matter of fact. For their statements would be questioned by nobody, since they are well known for integrity and truth. These persons are prepared to bear solemn witness, as in the Presence of God, that many a time God has as distinctly heard their prayers as if He had thrust His hand through yonder skies. As we have heard about prayer, so have we seen. And none can drive this faith out of us since it is confirmed by what we have seen over and over again in actual experience. So long as reason holds her seat we must, and will, believe in prayer.

Yes, let me remind you, also, that we heard with our ears, that there is a God of Providence who rules and overrules all things. We were glad to sing, “The Lord will provide.” We used joyfully to hear the congregation say—

*“Though cisterns are broken and creatures all fail,*

*The Word He has spoken will surely prevail.”*We believe in a gracious Providence and we have also seen it! Time does not suffice this morning for us to narrate personal incidents but assuredly my own experience teems with them. In times of need the Lord has showed Himself quite as able and willing to supply the needs of His servant in these days as He was to feed the nation in the wilderness when He rained manna from Heaven for them daily.

All things have worked together for good to them that love God, even until now. We can look back upon experiences which, at the time, were especially bewildering and perplexing. And of those very experiences we can now say, “Blessed be God for them!” If I were to ask those to stand up who have seen undoubted proofs of Providential care, I believe thousands of you would rise from your seats and bear witness that the hand of the Lord still works wisely and powerfully for those who trust in Him. We heard that it was so and we have seen that the report was true to the letter. Even as to temporal things, the Lord is gracious. And as to eternal things, He is beyond conception kind.

One thing more I will notice and have done with these verifications which sight gives to hearing. We have often heard that those who believe in God have hope in their deaths. We have been told over and over again, that—

*“Jesus can make a dying bed*

*Feel soft as downy pillows.”*  
Now, we have not seen this for ourselves, for we have not yet forded the last river. But we have seen it in others. I suppose that the most of you have distinctly seen that the end of the righteous man is peace. I, from my calling, have many scores of times seen saints in their last hours. This is the witness I put on record—the very happiest persons I have ever met with have been departing Believers.

I have not met at weddings, nor at jubilee feasts, nor in moments of singular prosperity such joyful persons as I have seen amid weakness and pain upon their dying beds. The only sons of men for whom I have felt any envy have been dying members of this very Church whose hands I have grasped in their passing away. Almost without any exception I have seen in them holy delight and triumph. And in the exceptions to this exceeding joy I have seen deep peace exhibited in a calm and deliberate readiness to enter into the presence of their God. They have been as ready for the eternal world as they would have been to rise from their beds and return to their daily callings on the Monday morning. “The peace of God, which

passes all understanding” has kept their hearts and minds even when the joy of the Lord has not lifted them into transports or ecstasies.

Saintly deathbeds are grand evidences of Christianity. It is something to say in our last hours, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” I can truly say that up to now my own experience and observation have confirmed the teachings of the Word of God. I have not yet met with anything which could shake my confidence in the Divine Revelation. I trust I am neither an absolute fool nor a blind bigot who would shut his eyes to reason—I would not ignore a certified fact, either in science, or history, or in the world of mental life. And yet I know of no fact which can disprove so much as one of the solemn declarations of God—nor even cast a shadow of suspicion upon a doctrine of Holy Scripture. I have heard much but I have seen nothing of the science which disproves the Scriptures—there is no such science—it is an impostor which has stolen the name.

Our knowing is far better than our theorizing. And whatever our theorizing may have done, our actual knowledge has never been on the side of the baptized infidelity of the advanced school. All our experience makes us say, “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts.” On this point I have spent the strength of my discourse. The remaining two heads shall be treated briefly, although they are of great practical value.

IV. WHEN HEARING TURNS TO SEEING AND IS CONFIRMED BY IT, THEN IT LEADS TO WITNESSING.  
The text, you see, is itself a testimony—“As we have heard, so have we seen.” In these days every man that can witness for the Truth of God ought to do so—even if he stammers, he must not be silent. So many are decrying the Truth of God that, if in your heart and conscience you have proved it true, you are bound to give to the Lord the testimony of even a stammerer. I suppose Moses could do no more than that for he was a man slow in speech. But when he would have preferred to be quiet the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth?” Your mouth is as God made it—use it as best you can, and speak up for His name and cause.  
Such testimony as that of our text is sometimes involuntary and is none the less precious on that account. When these good people had seen the Moabites and Ammonites and Edomites marching round Jerusalem in their pride and a few days afterwards had beheld them cold in death, they could not help crying, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” You could not have kept them quiet in the presence of such a marvel. You could not have muzzled them into silence. They were so taken aback, so astounded at what God had done, that they cried aloud, “As we have heard, so have we seen.” So when you have tasted and handled of the good things of God, I am sure you will have to tell others of your glorious discoveries! Your mouth will be filled with laughter and your tongue with singing till those who are round about you will be compelled to say, “The Lord has done great things for them,” and you will answer, “Yes, the Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad.”  
Jesus said, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength,” when the children were shouting in the Temple. Young converts, if they have newly tasted that the Lord is gracious, must sound out their joys. Who would stop them? If these should hold their peace, the stones would cry out. But your involuntary witnessing must lead up to constant voluntary witnessing for your Lord and His holy cause. O you who are on the Lord’s side, awake, arise, or be condemned as traitors!

Our testimony should be very frequent. Believers would do a thousand times more good if they were not so particularly careful to avoid offending men of the world. If Christ Jesus offends people, they ought to be offended. For he is sure to be a “stumbling stone and rock of offense” to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient. We have heard of a great warrior who was more at home on the field of battle than amid the ceremonies of courts. His sword nearly tripped him up when walking backwards from the throne and his majesty remarked that his sword seemed very much in the way. “Yes,” said the brave man, “and your majesty’s enemies find it so.”  
If we give offense by the Gospel to those who take no active part in holy warfare, let us not be put out of countenance—we are soldiers of the Cross and we do not regret that our religion does trouble certain people, for they ought to be troubled. The man who has never offended anybody by his religion has none worth having—rest assured of that. There are times and places when it must be seen that we are the friends of God and, consequently, cannot be in league with His enemies. Silence when the Truth of God is questioned will prove us to be recreant to Christ and false to our profession. Let us speak when it may bring upon us sneers and slanders. Why, what matters if they sneer? We shall survive that. We do not live on the breath of other men’s nostrils. We ask not leave of mortal man to be true to our convictions. But we will often and far more often than we have done, bear witness that, “As we have heard, so have we seen.”  
This we should be sure to do more earnestly if we were more thoughtful. Read the ninth verse—“We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your temple.” As a true man thinks in his heart, he will speak with his lips. That which lies in the well of your thought, will come up in the bucket of your speech. Think much of what the Lord has done for you and then you will bear witness for Him. This needs to be done on a far larger scale than at present. Read the rest of the Psalm and see how the Psalmist puts it—“According to Your name, O God, so is Your praise unto the ends of the earth.” Oh, for more of the missionary spirit, more telling out to the ends of the earth of what the Lord has done! What were the stars if they did not shine? What were the sun if it did not make our day? What were the rivers if they did not water the lands? What were the sea itself if it did not act as the pulsing heart of the world?  
What are Christians, if they do not shine as lights? Piety bottled up is dead. Religion put into a tin and hermetically sealed is useless. Why not go to Heaven at once if you do no good on earth? No, but would they have you among the angels? He that is of no use in the world is not fit for Heaven. He who does not glorify God on earth would not glorify Him in Heaven. Where shall we put useless people? What shall be done with salt that has lost its savor? I know not where it can be put, for Jesus says it is not fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill. And, if men cast it out, what will God do with it? If even men cannot use dead religionists, what will God do with them? If a vine does not bear fruit it is good for nothing—you cannot boil a pot with it nor even make out of its wood a hook by which to hang the pot over the fire.  
Without fruitfulness the vine becomes the most worthless of all trees. And without testimony for the Truth of God, the professing Christian is of no use whatever. Creation’s blot, creation’s blank, is the best description of a dead professor. Think what you will of yourselves, O you savorless Professors—your religion is mere emptiness, a vain pretense. O children of God, stand up and bear your witness—  
*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus!”*  
in this day of blasphemy and rebuke.  
V. AND LASTLY, HEARING, SEEING, WITNESSING—GOD WILL GIVE YOU A FULLER ASSURANCE THAN YOU HAVE AS YET. Permit me to read the text again—“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever.” That is the conclusion which the saint comes to when he has tried the Truth of God for himself and borne witness to the result of his trial. God will never leave His Church. God will never forfeit His Word. God will never desert His Gospel. He is Jehovah of Hosts and changes not and has all power at His disposal. He is our Lord, our God in Covenant. He cannot desert the work of His own hands, nor leave the people of His love.  
Because His honor is bound up in the whole enterprise that Christ undertook, He must go through with it and He must arrive at a glorious conclusion. God will establish it forever. Come, my Brethren, let us cast aside all doubts about what the future is to be. The battle rages, the foe is as furious as he is subtle—while we are weak as water and can do nothing by ourselves. But let us not despair. If the Gospel is God’s Gospel, He will take care of it. If the Church is Christ’s Church, the gates of Hell cannot prevail against her. The battle is not ours but the Lord’s—in His name let us set up our banners and cry with full confidence of victory, “The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge.” Hallelujah, hallelujah. Amen.

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EXPERIENCING CONFIRMING TESTIMONY  
NO. 3396

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 27, 1869.

**“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God.”  
Psalm 48:8.**

“As we have heard, so have we seen.” This is not always the case, but frequently it is the very reverse. Things are exaggerated. The imagination is largely drawn upon and we hear great things, but when we come to look at them, or try to practically enjoy them, the great things have become very small! It is so in the world generally. We have heard and were told in our youthful days by those who have been before us, that the paths of sin are pleasant, that there are great enjoyments to be found in the indulgences of evil passions, and that if we will give ourselves up to the general run and current, we shall find ourselves very smoothly floating along on a stream of happiness! Ah, how many who have sown their wild oats and looked for a happy harvest, have discovered that nothing but mischief comes of this! Jaded by the satiety of their lusts, and at last utterly destroyed by their own wickedness, they have sat down and wrung their hands in despair at finding out that things are not what they heard they were. As they have heard, so do they not see, but the very opposite—for pleasure, pain, for happiness, misery—even here, remorse— and afterwards an anguish that shall know no end!

Nor is it any better with the teachers of false doctrine. As we have heard, so have we not seen. We have sometimes been told that philosophy will civilize a nation—that the spread of education will most certainly cure the human heart and that the bias and propensity to sin will be put down by an increase of mental light. But as we have heard, so have we not seen, for philosophy has thrown many burdens upon men—but it has not touched those burdens to remove them with so much as its little finger! We hear a great deal of what is to be done for society by this scheme and by that, but nothing is done! Theories are propounded— windbags are blown out and brought forth—bubbles are blown, but we do not see much that is solid and valuable, produced! One after another of these eminent theorizers have arisen who were about to revolutionize and reconstruct society! Instead of making the causes of evil in the world to increase, they were to uproot them and turn the desert into the Garden of the Lord! But so it has not been—our eyes have never seen it. Rather has the bad been made worse and the good has been impeded by those who were so pretentious and loud in their professed benevolence! Take any of the false doctrines which are often affiliated to our holy faith and you will find that when you come to examine them and put them to the test, they do not hold water!

How often have we heard about “the dignity of human nature.” How congenial the heart of man is to that which is noble, and to that which is Christ-like! We are told that we have only to hold up Christ and there is such a beauty in Him that all the world will be sure to love Him! But as we have heard, so have we not seen, but we have seen men to be as God saw them—corrupt! There is none that does good, no, not one, and in the perfect light of Calvary, we have seen that even the perfections of Jesus will not be seen by a blind world, nor will they attract a corrupt world. “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” will be the verdict of humanity even upon the perfections of the Incarnate God. We have heard a great deal about the power of free will. We have heard sometimes that men come to Christ by themselves. That there is no power of Irresistible Grace which turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God. Ah, we have heard this, but we have never seen it! To this moment, though we have mingled with all classes of Christians, we did never yet meet with a single Believer who declared that his conversion was the result of his own efforts and that his coming to Christ was entirely through the power of his own free will! We have been told, too, that God forsakes His people, that real saints, after all, turn back and perish! But we bless God that, though we have often heard this, we have never, never seen it—

*“If ever it should come to pass,  
One of His sheep should fall away!  
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,  
Would fall a thousand times a day!”*

But being kept in safety by another and greater power than our own, and preserved in the midst of appalling temptations, we still hold to it that He does keep His people! We have heard it, and we have seen it, but the other doctrine we have heard, but, thank God, we have never seen! And so there are many other things that pass current in certain sections of Christendom as being true, which, if they were brought to a practical test, might be seen not to be so. We have heard them—heard them delivered with a glowing eloquence that might have convinced us, if we were to be convinced, but we have referred to the Old Book—and the Old Book has been more to us than all the siren-songs that sweetest oratory could raise! We have nailed our colors to the mast and could not take them down! We have found all here in this blessed Bible to be true, but man’s word, when it has come into conflict or even competition with God’s Word, we have found to be light as chaff and as easily consumed as the fat of rams upon the altar’s fire!

Now, just for a little time I thought we would illustrate this general Truth of God that in the things of God, and in the Church of God,” as we have heard, so have we seen.” Now, mark—

I. IT HAS BEEN SO ALL DOWN THE LINE OF REVELATION. Could a man have lived a sevenfold Methuselah life and have stood at the gates of Paradise, and listened to the first promise that the Seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head. If he could have beheld Noah shut in in the ark and marked the Covenant rainbow when for the first time it spanned the clouds. If he could have lived in Abraham’s day and have seen the father of that seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Could he have marked all the types and ceremonies which Israel saw in the wilderness, all pointing onwards to a coming Savior. If he could have listened to the prophetic utterances of David in some of those matchless Psalms which are full of the Messiah. Could he have heard the notes of Isaiah when he spoke of Him who was despised and rejected of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yes, could he have heard every prophecy and beheld every symbol, and listened to every sacred portent—when he came to behold the Person of Christ, to see Him living, dying, rising, ascending and to mark the Pentecost, and to see the history of the Church right down until now—such a grave and revered man—revered and venerable above all other men through the long lapse of years that had passed over his snowy head, would say, “As I heard during the first portion of my life, so have I seen in the latter days thereof—God has always kept His promise—as was the shadow, so was the substance! As the type, so was the antitype! As the word that flowed from prophetic lips, so was the Christ who, in the fullness of time, came into this world to bless and redeem mankind!”  
This is not merely a great general Truth of God, but, mark you, it is true in every jot and tittle! We do not expect men, when they speak frequently, so to speak that every particle of what they say may be correct. We admit them to be fallible—we always make some allowance for some slips of the tongue. But all through these thousands of years in which God spoke of Christ and of the Gospel Kingdom, there never was a single trifling word that was not fulfilled!  
There have been no slips of the tongue, no drops that blot the page. Everything has been accurately, minutely, precisely—what if I say, microscopically—fulfilled in Christ! As the casket key exactly fits the wards of the lock, so the life of Christ and the history of the Church exactly fits all the types and all the prophecies! Sometimes it has been said that if anybody doubts the Inspiration of the four Gospels, it would be a very pretty puzzle for him to try to write a fifth gospel which should have in it some new details that would be congruous to the rest and that would fit in with the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. That is a task we give to those wits who seem to need something to do in these days, since they are impugning everything that is held sacred by us! Let them attempt that. If this problem could have been put to the wise in all ages— here is the Old Testament and, whether it is true or not, construct the life of a Man who shall fit all that. Use your poetic powers, or whatever other abilities you choose to employ. Imagine a Man that shall fit the lamb, the scapegoat, the Passover, Noah’s ark, the Psalms of David, the prophecies of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel—why the puzzle would have been given up in despair! It would not have been possible for the united abilities of men and angels to have discovered an ideal Messiah that would have exactly met all this! But our Lord did in every jot and in every tittle, so that as we read some parts of the Old Testament, we often say to ourselves, “This looks as if it were written after the event.” We read the 22nd Psalm and if we did not know that it had been composed many, many years before our Lord came, we would look at it as history, rather than as prophecy! One can only comprehend this by admitting Inspiration, and by rejoicing in the wondrous truthfulness of God! Even such little points as the casting of lots for the vesture of Christ—things which seem insignificant—God took care should be fulfilled. And though our Lord died, and as yet He had not been pierced as to His heart, at any rate, yet after death there must be a piercing of Him that they “may look on Him whom they have pierced,” and weep and wail because of Him. “As we have heard, so have we seen.” The life of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, certainly carry out the prophecies which God had uttered before concerning Him! But now, we shall go on to speak of—  
II. THE CHURCH OF GOD—CHRISTWARD AND GODWARD—AS TO OUR OWN EXPERIENCE.  
Some of you have thoughts of Christ—but as dead or as far away. We have come to deal with Him as a living Savior. Now the question is, whether in so dealing with Him, we have found all true that we were told concerning Him?  
Now, when we first enlisted in the Christian army, we were told from Christ’s own Word that we must count the cost and we would have to suffer a degree of persecution. We were warned not to take upon ourselves, hastily, to carry out that for which we should have no power unless we sought it from above. We were warned, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” Have we found it so? “Oh,” says one, “that has been abundantly true to me! From those of my own household I first met with opposition! The Gospel has set those against me that were once my fondest friends.” Just so, but now that it has come to pass, you will see how sincerely He dealt with you, that He would not entrap you into His service as though it would be altogether a thing of pleasure, but He warned you that it was a conflict, that it was a pilgrimage. You have found it so and now that it has come to pass, let this help you to trust Him for the future!  
But you were also told that if you trusted Him, you who were burdened with many sins, you would have them all forgiven and that this forgiveness would bring about a solid peace of mind. Have you found it so? Can you not stand up and add your name to the long roll of witnesses who say, “We looked unto Him and were lightened, and our faces were not ashamed! This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and delivered him from all his fears”? I bless the Lord I can say that the joy of the pardoned sinner is a sweeter and a better thing than I ever dreamed it to be. And the peace of conscience, which reflection upon the Atonement always brings, is better and more enduring than one could have fancied have fallen to the lot of so unworthy an one as he whom Christ had called!  
Our Lord Jesus told us, too, that if we came and trusted Him, He would give us the victory over our sins. Now, has He done that? I know you will sometimes confess that you have not conquered your sins as you would desire.  
The battle is still raging—there is still a need for yonder watchtower. But, Brothers and Sisters, if a sin has not been conquered, has that ever been Christ’s fault? Has it not been ours? “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb,” is true of all the saints with regard to their struggles with sin. There is no sin that we cannot pray down and weep down if we live at the foot of the Cross. The worst temper that ever a soul was plagued with is to be controlled and softened if one looks to the griefs of Christ and becomes like He in temper. It matters not how constitutional the sin may be, though you may say, “It is my easily-besetting sin”—you may be delivered from it! Christ Jesus, when He comes into the island of our nature, can drive out all the cruel and deadly reptiles that are there. Or if they remain there, He can give us abundant Grace so that they can make no headway and we shall be kept as “holiness unto the Lord.” Now, you and I have read and heard from the saints of God that our Lord Jesus, when He is really known and understood, is inexpressible sweetness itself. They have told us, some of them—writing like Rutherford of his wonderful Master—that the joy of Heaven is to be possessed, in a measure, even here below! That in contemplation on and communion with Christ, the heart can be made to dance with eternal joy and full of glory! Now, Brothers and Sisters, have we found it so? Oh, some of us can set to our seal that in this thing the saints of God have been true! He has ravished our souls with His Presence and made our hearts to melt while He spoke into our ears the marvelous story of His love! Perhaps in our unbelief we think that this is fancy, or fanaticism, or some high-strained sentimentalism, but it is not so! It is a sober fact that when a man gets to lean upon the arm of Christ, he laughs at trouble, defies persecution—he passes through temptation all unhurt. He walks here below, but his conversation is in Heaven! He sits down with the sons of men and yet he is “raised up and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” I would say to you saints who have not proceeded far in the College of Christ, who have only just begun to study His precious Character and the Divine Virtues that flow out of Him, never be content until you have! As you have heard from the song of the Canticles. As you have heard from the saints who out of their experience have told you of Christ’s love, so will you find it! Do not harbor the idea that the further you go, the less will you have of enjoyment in religion. Oh, no! It has deep draughts of great bliss! The shallow draughts will sustain, but oh, it is sacred intoxication with the love of Christ which brings the highest joy and the most Divine mirth!  
To go in up to the ankles in the sea of Christ’s love is well, but oh, to pass up to the loins and to get still further until you find it “a river to swim in”—this is to know the true delights of godliness!  
As you have heard of these things, though they seem to be too high for you and you tremble at them, yet if you will but ask for more Grace that you may press forward, so you shall! There are no exceptions about Christ! He offers nothing in the market that has been proffered to catch the eye, but is not worth the purchase. His diamonds are never trashy paste. His gold is not mere gilt. You may buy bread from Him and put it in the scales and find it ounce for ounce. The water that He gives turns neither stale nor sour—it is always fresh and cool—the further you shall go in the enjoyment of it, the more shall you prize the well of water springing up in your souls unto everlasting life!

Now, I might just turn this same point around in another form and say that, as we have heard of Christ in His life upon earth, so have we found it in dealing with Him. When Christ was here on earth, He was all tenderness and love—and so we have found Him. We went to Him covered with the leprosy of our sin and ready to die of our iniquities. But one touch of His hand was freely given and that touch healed us! When He was on earth He was holiness, itself, and so He is now, for He will not walk with us if we fall in love with sin. He is quick to see our faults and He gently chides us till conscience awakens us and we turn from the evil with abhorrence. Christ was in this world as a very faithful friend. Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. And we have found Him just such until now. There was never an hour in which He left us naked to our enemies. When we have been tempted, His intercession has always been like a bronze wall around us to keep us from being devoured by the foe. When we have been bewildered, He has, like a good shepherd, led us by ways that we knew not, but that He well understood. In the days of famine we have been fed. In the times of need we have been satisfied. We can speak well of His name. If any of His saints have anything to say of Him that is high and comely, that will exalt Him and set Him on high, and we, after our measure, can endorse it all! So far as our experience has gone, He is a better Christ than we thought Him to be! Oh, He is altogether precious, altogether lovely! Up to this day we have never discovered a spot in Him. We have tried Him—oh how, sadly, and our sins have tried Him—oh, how heavily! But He is always true—the same yesterday, today, and forever! We can only bless Him and praise Him, for “as we have heard, so have we seen.”  
How my heart desires that some of you who are here would just now, at this very moment, come to my Lord and try Him! Oh, I so remember when I first came to Him. They told me He was ready to pardon and that a look at Him would move the crushing burden from my weary heart. I could not think it true, but—  
*“I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad.”*  
And did He disappoint me? Ah, no! I can happily join in with the rest of that verse—  
*“I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad!”*  
If any of you think that Christ will cast you out when you come, I wish you would come and try Him. It would be the beginning of a new method with Him—the turning over of a new black leaf. “Him that comes unto Me,” He says, “I will in no wise cast out.” He never did find it in His heart to do so to any sinner that has sought His mercy! And I will not believe it, though all the angels in Heaven swear it, that He ever cast away a soul! I’d call them liars! It cannot be! It never shall be! While the heavens are above the earth and God is true, and Christ is God, no sinner that comes and puts His trust in Him, shall find Him unable or unwilling to save Him! Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! And as you have heard, so shall you see! Now, in the next place, I think—  
III. THIS ALL STANDS GOOD WITH REGARD TO THE CHURCH OF GOD ITSELF.  
Some have been apt to find fault with the Church and some Christians seem to act on the principle of getting to Heaven, one by one. “Sheep,” God’s people are called, and I suppose one reason is because sheep are gregarious and go in flocks. But there are Christian professors who seem to like the one by one principle. Well now, speaking of the Church of God as we have seen her, she has many faults—many faults—but Jesus Christ loves her and she is His Bride. And I dare not find fault with her! If she is the Princess Royal, if she is His Imperial Highness’s own betrothed one, I would rather see her with His eyes than with my own! And while it may be very striking to rail about ministers and their defects, to sneer at Church members and all sorts of other things—and there may be sometimes good reason for it—yet we may say much on the other side, too. “As we have heard, so have we seen.”  
When we first joined the Christian Church, we were told very plainly in the Scripture that there would be tares among the wheat. That there would be some among us who would go out from us, because they were not of us. Christ taught us that among His 12 disciples, there was one Judas, and if some hypocrites intrude among us, it need not astonish us! We knew it would be so. He forewarned us and admonished us of it. We have heard it and so have we seen—and if the seeing of it has been painful—we can at least say that God was truthful and frank in warning us that so it would be.

Well, there were good things spoken of the Church of God and we have found them true, too. I expected to find in the Christian Church some holy, prayerful, devout Christian men and women—and I have found them. And I have rejoiced to be among them, to mingle with them, and to be of their company, joining with them in holy worship, the washing in the blood that has washed them! I can truly say that I have found a Peter—many a bold earnest Brother like Peter. Many a loving John! Many a busy Martha and some communing Marys. The Church of God always seems to me, as I have seen it, to be a vast deal too good for me to be a member of it, if I did but judge myself. And, instead of finding fault, I would join with David and say, “You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to You, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.” I know the world will often find fault and rail and tell us there are no such things as ancient Christians. I have seen as glorious Christianity as even the Apostles saw, and as good works of the Holy Spirit in members of this Church as ever gladdened the eyes of those Apostles! I have seen suffering endured with an astonishing patience, labor done with a perseverance that was most commendable, liberality evinced with a freedom that showed that the love of Christ constrained, prayer kept up with a fervency that marked the indwelling Spirit and souls cared for, sought after and won, too, with an indefatigable love that only the love of Christ could inspire! I know we always think we live in the worst times, but we do not!

There were worse times than these and there will be again. These may not be the best, but they are a long way off from being the worst. I think it was when Dr. Newton died that the good divine who preached the funeral sermon took some such text as this, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,” and he deplored that now this eminent saint was gone, they had no great divines left like the great preachers of the olden time. That went on very prettily for some time, but it was too much—for an old Methodist woman, who stood in the aisle cried out—“Glory to God, that’s a lie!” And oftentimes when I hear people crying down the times and saying there are no good people left, and that Christianity is at a low ebb, and that there remains no true zeal, I can say from what I, myself, see in the people among whom I dwell, “Glory be to God, that is a lie! It is a slander upon the Church of God!” For as we have heard, so have we seen—we have seen the gracious, fair fruits of the Spirit—and we honor God by testifying to that fact!

I would, however, dear Brothers and Sisters, that we were always conscientiously concerned never to give the lie in any degree to statements made in Scripture concerning the holy living of the saints. Alas, there are some professors who, if you could track them to their business, are so much given to loose trading that as we have heard—so can we cannot see! If you go into their houses—their maidservants, their children and their wives are obliged to say, “We have heard what Christian fathers, and mothers, and masters ought to be, but as we have heard so, we do not see.” It all ends in talk, in profession. Now, while I stand up for it that there are many that do adorn the Doctrine of God their Savior in all things and so prove that they are God’s true people, yet do we sorrowfully confess that many walk “of whom” we would say with the Apostle, “We have told you often, and now tell you even with weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” Though they are professed members of the Church of Christ, their lips honor God, but their inconsistent lives degrade the Church and bring upon it much loss of spiritual power. “As we have heard, so have we seen.”

I think some of us can say that we have heard of the Church’s glorious assemblies. We have heard that they said they were glad when they went up to the House of the Lord. We have heard that the people of God are happy in their assemblies and that they long for the place where God’s honor dwells. Well, and so have we seen, for our Sabbaths have been our happiest days and we have often said—

*“My willing soul would stay,  
In such a frame as this,  
And sit, and sing herself away  
To everlasting bliss.”*

It has been so.

We have heard that the preaching of the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation and the great means of comfort and edification to the saints. And “as we have heard, so have we seen,” for oftentimes when the Truth of God has been preached in our hearing, it has been as marrow and fatness—and other times a rebuke has come just as we needed it to quicken us from our spiritual sloth!

We have heard that the ordinances of God’s House have a blessing connected with them. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—that in the keeping of His commandments there is great reward—and as we have heard, so have we seen. I am sure that the blessed Supper of the Lord, though many of His people come to the Table every week, never seems to grow stale.

There is always a freshness in it. Oh, that blessed ordinance! Some, I know, make a god of it and an idolatrous mystery of it, but because they misuse it, we dare not depreciate it! It is to us none other than the very gate of Heaven full often. “As we have heard, so have we seen.” Let us press on in our Church fellowship and increase in our love and earnestness—and then as we have heard of the Zion that travails and becomes like the mother of children—so shall we see! As we have heard that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy—so shall we see! As we have heard that there is great pleasure connected with the winning of souls for Christ—so shall we see. In a word, all the glorious things that are spoken of Zion, we shall have fulfilled to ourselves!

Brothers and Sisters, before I close, I want to say that there is a dreadful side to this Truth of God. As we have heard, so have we seen. There are some of you here who are not saved. You have hitherto loved your sins and have not repented. You have heard of Christ, but you have put off all thoughts of Him. Now you have heard oftentimes that He that believes not shall be condemned—and from this Book you have heard that condemnation is something terrible and overwhelming, for there are words like these, “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” And these, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” And these, “Where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” Now as you have heard, so will you see! Depend upon it, you shall not find the pit of Hell to be less awful than this Book describes! God sets up no bugbear to frighten souls! They are all realities of which He speaks—and that they are realities, many dying sinners have been made to know before they have been dead, for their horror, their alarms their fears have been premonitions of that wrath to which they were drawing near! I have seen some death scenes which I dare not try to picture before you—and the memory of which would unman me if I were to continue to contemplate them—hearers of the Gospel who had neglected Christ and who died conscious of their sins, unable, however, to seek mercy. And while we prayed with them, telling us that our prayers would never be heard, for they were given over and now they were cursing God, even while they were feeling the anguish of lost souls! Yes, and though there are some that become the advocates for evil by trying to make out the punishment of sin to be little—settle it in your souls that as it took the blood of the dying Son of God to wash out the sin of those who were pardoned—it will take an anguish such as no heart can conceive before the sinner shall have suffered for his sin what God will certainly pour upon him! Think not lightly of the doom of the lost, lest you think lightly of sin, and lightly of Christ, for as you have heard and infinitely more than you have heard, shall you see, oh, unhappy spirit, unless you will turn to Christ and believe on Him and live! Oh, that you may do so tonight, for another night may never come to you—but one long, endless night may be your portion.

But there is a bright side to it, too. The saints in Heaven might all say, “As we have heard, so have we seen,” only that I think they would make a great improvement in our text! ‘Tis true, you heard that Heaven was full of joy and mercy and so have you seen. You heard of its pearly gates and its streets of shining gold. You heard of its foundations of jasper and its walls of chrysolite and all manner of precious stones. You heard of its eternal rest and of the Presence of God and the glory of the overflowing bliss—and all you heard you have seen! But I say they would make an improvement upon this, for, like the Queen of Sheba, I think their glorified spirits would say, “The half has not been told.” Yes, Brothers and Sisters, we have heard things, but, “what must it be to be there”—to be there?! The enjoyments transcend description and though the words of Scripture portray the bliss that remains, we, alas, are dull of understanding and cannot find out all the meaning of the golden sentences! But we shall soon be there and once there we shall, as I have said before, declare, “As we have heard, so have we seen, only that the half was not told us of the splendor and the glory of the court of our heavenly Solomon.” May we be there to find all true and join in the everlasting song of, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 45:1-9.**

The Lily Psalm—a Psalm of loves. Oh, that our hearts might be full of love, tonight, and while we read, may our hearts be singing to the praise of the Well-Beloved!

Verse 1. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Sometimes the heart could speak if it could move the tongue, but it is a blessed time with us when, first of all, the heart is fully warmed with love and then the fire within burns the strings that tie the tongue—and the tongue begins to move right joyously in expressing the heart’s love! May it be so with us tonight who have to preach! May it be so with all our Brothers who have, in public, either to preach or to pray!

2. You are fairer than the children of men: Grace is poured into Your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever. No sooner does he begin to write about Christ than he sees Him! A warm heart soon kindles the imagination. The eye of faith is soon opened when once the heart is right. We feel the Presence of Christ. We begin to speak of Him and to Him. “You are fairer than the children of men.” Oh, I would, tonight, that Christ would but lift the corner of His veil and show you but one of His eyes! Your hearts would be ravished with His infinite beauty! “You are fairer than the children of men.” Would God He would but speak half a word into our weary ear, and we should say, “Grace is poured into Your lips.” Oh, for some sense and sight of Him! Do not our hearts hunger after this tonight?

3, 4. Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Most Mighty with Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. The heart never glows with love to Christ unless, in consequence, there is a longing that His Kingdom may be extended. It is an instinct of a loving heart, that it desires the honor of its object. We long for Christ to rule and reign simply because we love Him. Oh, that He would lay His right hand to His work in these slow times! How little is being done comparatively! Oh, for an hour of the right arm of Jesus! If He would but come Himself to the battle, and the shout of a King were heard in our camps, what victories would be won! Cry unto Him, O you that love Him. He will come to your call!

5. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies, whereby the people fall under You. Christ has not only power near at hand with his right hand, but far off He darts the arrows of His bow and heathens are made to feel that the Gospel is mighty! Would God it were so now! Cry for it!

6. Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of Your Kingdom is a right scepter. And this we know to be spoken concerning Jesus Christ for this was quoted by the Apostle, “Your Throne, O God.” Let those who will, deny His Deity. It shall be the joy of our heart to worship Him and, in express terms, to address Him who is our Brother as “very God of very God.” “Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of Your Kingdom is a right scepter.”

7. You love righteousness and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows. Fellow with us and yet equal with God! Man anointed, the Christ, yet still the reigning God! Glory be to His name!

8. All your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad. Not only is Christ precious, but everything that touches Him! There is not a garment that hangs upon His shoulder but becomes sweet by contact with Him. “All Your garments smell of myrrh.” There is myrrh about the priestly robe that falls down to His feet, and about the golden belt of His faithfulness that is girt about His waist. There are myrrh, and aloes, and cassia about His crown, though it is of thorns! About every garment that He puts on, there is a sweet perfume.

9. King’s daughters were among Your honorable women: at Your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Blessed queen of Christ—His Church. Let us never think little of her. There are some that are always crying up “the church,” “the church,” “the church”—but that is not the true Church, that tries to take the place of Christ. It is anti-Christ! The true Church has her place, however, and that is at her Husband’s own right hand, where she sits in the best of the best—in gold—and that the gold of Ophir, for He spares nothing for her beauty and her glory.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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A WORTHY THEME FOR THOUGHT  
NO. 2783

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 15, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 5, 1878.

**“We have thought of Your loving kindness,  
O God, in the midst of Your Temple.”  
Psalm 48:9.**

WHO were these people who declared to the Lord that they had thought of His loving kindness in the midst of His Temple? According to the title of the Psalm, they were the sons of Korah. And who were the sons of Korah? They were the singers in the house of the Lord, those who took the principal part in sounding forth the praises of Jehovah. I think it is suggestive that they did not say, “We have sung of Your loving kindness.” They had done that and it was their constant employment, but they said, “We have thought.” And there are some singers who have not done that, for they have sung solemn words thoughtlessly, caring only for the music and not for the meaning. One who is not a skilled musician, or trained vocalist, can tell when his ear is pleased with what he hears and I think that such a person will say that the very sweetest music he has ever heard has come from sincere hearts, even if the voices have not been in complete harmony.

If you hear Christians sing when they are in the spirit and sing what they really feel, their singing may not be artistic and it may not be accurate, but, if your own heart is right with God, it will have such an effect upon you as no other music can have. Singing from the heart is the noblest form of praise to God! Some people would not shout so loudly where the words should be uttered softly, or sing so harshly where pathos is required, if they were thinking while they were singing. But it is quite possible for us to be uttering sweet sounds without our mind and heart being really occupied in the exercise. Let it not be so with us, dear Friends, but, whenever we sing, may we so praise God in our spirit that at the close of every Psalm and hymn we may be able to say, with these sons of Korah, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.”

But why did they write this? For, according to the title, it is “A Psalm of (or for) the sons of Korah.” It was, probably, written by them because this fact was so refreshing to their memory. Possibly, at the time the Psalm was written, they were not in the House of the Lord, nor able to go there to sing, so they recorded their past experience to cheer them under their present trial—“We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God. There have been, in days gone by, happy times when we have rejoiced in Your great love to us and although we are now debarred the privilege of sounding forth Your praise in the midst of Your Temple, our memory recalls the glad seasons of the past and our soul is, for a while, content to sup upon these cold meats and to look forward to the day when once more we shall be banqueted in the House of the Lord.”

Sometimes, dear Friends, when you get into the wilderness, it is sweet to remember that you were once an inhabitant of Zion—especially when you feel such an inward longing to get back, again, that you can say with the Psalmist, “As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God!” In this very House of Prayer, have not our hearts burned within us, many a time, as we have praised our great and gracious God? Have not our souls then been ready to dance with ecstasy? If so, we may well pray to the Lord and say, “Renew Your former mercies to us. Quicken us again, we pray You. O restore unto us the joy of Your salvation and cause our hearts, again, to shout aloud with grateful thanksgiving for all Your loving kindness towards us!”

To help us to receive an answer to the prayer which I have just uttered on your behalf, as well as for myself, let us look at our text very carefully and seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance in explaining it. Doing so, I think we shall learn, first, that the occupation of these sons of Korah was gracious—“We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.” Then, secondly, the place was appropriate. Where better could they be to think of the loving kindness of the Lord than in His Temple? When I have spoken on these two points, I will try to show you, thirdly, that the result was beneficial. The Psalm itself shows us how much they were profited by thinking upon the loving kindness of the Lord—and it also reveals to us the blessing which came to others through them.

I. So, first, we learn that THEIR OCCUPATION WAS GRACIOUS—“We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.”  
Thought is a noble faculty. The power to exercise it distinguishes men from the brute beasts. We grovel when we are under necessity to perform the acts that relate only to the body. We rise as we are able to perform the functions of the mind and heart. To really think is an ennobling employment, yet it is not everybody who cares to think. There are many who regard themselves as religious people, who like to pay somebody else to do their thinking for them, so it is theirs only second-hand. They are not like the noble Bereans who, “received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so”— thus going to the fountainhead, instead of drinking of the streams which have, probably, been polluted in their course. You may rest assured of this that you do not really know anything until you have thoroughly thought it out. You say, perhaps, “I believe such-and-such a creed,” yet you hardly know what is stated in that creed and you certainly do not know what the words mean—and, therefore, you do not really believe it in the right fashion. If you would truly know it, you must study and labor to understand it. In fact, you must think it over.  
But the amazing thing is that many people will do almost anything except think. A pretty service to which the flowers from Covent Garden lend the chief attraction, or in which the millinery makes the greatest show, pleases a great many! And to have the ears charmed with the melodious sounds of vocal or instrumental music producing a sensuous feeling which they suppose to be true devotion—but is not—how many there are who will give almost anything for this! But as for thinking, they cannot do that. Such work is too hard for their mental constitution. They do not think and they cannot think. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, no man can be a strong Christian unless he is able to say, in the words of our text, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.” What is needed is that we should believingly think in harmony with the great thoughts of God, thinking them over again after Him, as it were—not endeavoring to think anything contrary to what is revealed, or seeking to be inventors of truth—which we can never be—but reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting what we find recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. This is the kind of thought that we must exercise if we are to grow in Grace and to make advances in the Divine life.  
Not only, however, is thought a noble faculty, but God’s loving kindness is a theme that is especially worthy of thought. If there is any subject that may be neglected in our meditations, this must never be. The most common ties of gratitude bind us to at least think about the great goodness of God to us. It is an amazing thing that He should ever have so highly favored such unworthy persons as we are—and favored us so long, so tenderly and so perseveringly. Truly, the mercies He has bestowed upon us should never be—  
*“Forgotten in unthankfulness  
And without praises die.”*  
Besides, if we do not at least think about God’s loving kindness to us, we may well tremble lest He should no more think upon us for good and find more grateful recipients of His loving kindness. Not think of His loving kindness? Why, there are some of us who cannot help doing so, for it continues to be manifested to us every day! We cannot forget the past mercies, for the present ones are so abundant. Fresh oil to anoint us is always flowing from the good olive tree which is one of the symbols of our Savior. How can we forget what the Lord has done for us? I might slightly alter that striking expression of captive Israel and say, “If I forget you, O loving kindness of the Lord, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.” The beam out of the wall and the stones on which we rest our feet might well cry out against us if we did not think of the loving kindness of the Lord! If we cannot tell all about it. If we cannot properly weigh and value it. If we cannot give any adequate return for it, yet let us at least think of it! Let everyone of us think of it now, so that we may be able to say at the close of the service, or even before, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.”  
Further, such thought as our test describes is essential to all true worship. Be not startled if I say that it is very much in proportion to our thought that we really worship and, without thought, there is no true worship. Suppose we sing the praises of God without thinking what we are doing—is that praising Him? No, no more than if we could have taught a parrot to make the same set of sounds! Suppose we preach without thought—of what value is such preaching? I am afraid there is much of that sort of preaching to be heard. One minister said, some time ago, that he could preach two sermons a day, six days in the week and think nothing of it. And somebody who knew his style of speech said that he was quite right in thinking nothing of it, for there was nothing in it to think of! If the preacher shall talk, and talk, and talk, but does not, himself, think, his words will not be acceptable even to his hearers—much less can he hope that they will be accepted by God! If you say that you worship God without thought, I answer that you worship not God at all, and that you rather mock Him than worship Him. If you kneel down to pray before you retire to rest, and when you rise up, you say to yourself, “I never thought of what I was saying,” then, Sir, you did not really pray! There was no true prayer in the act—it was all a mockery and a sham. We must make the whole of our devotion an exercise of the inward spirit—not so much an act of the vocal organs as of the thoughtful part of our being—so that we may truly be able to say, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.”  
Now, this task of thinking of God’s loving kindness ought to be a very easy one, for there is abundance of material to think of in God’s loving kindness.” Well did Joseph Addison sing—  
*“When all Your mercies, O my God  
My rising soul surveys—  
Transported with the view, I’m lost  
In wonder, love and praise.”*  
Each one of us who has been the subject of saving Grace may say to the Lord, “I have thought of Your loving kindness to me in Your eternal counsels, before the earth was, and of Your loving kindness to me long before the members of my body were curiously worked by Your mysterious power.” Some of us can say to the Lord, “I have thought of Your loving kindness in having committed me to the care of a godly mother and a Christian father. I have thought of Your loving kindness to me in my infant days when I could not protect myself. I have thought of Your loving kindness to me in my wayward youth when I ran into divers follies, knowing not myself or You. And I have thought of Your loving kindness to me when I grew up to manhood and, alas, my folly ripened into sin. I have thought of Your pitying, restraining, forgiving loving kindness that watched over me in all my wanderings, always tracking the lost sheep that the Good Shepherd might always know where it was and, in due time, bring it home. I have thought of that loving kindness which, at last, lovingly grasped me, laid me upon Your shoulders and bore me home rejoicing! Your loving kindness, O my God, where shall I end the story of it? Surely it shall last, not only as long as my existence here, but it shall be continued throughout eternity! Since the new birth of Your servant, how great have been Your loving kindnesses in instruction, in deliverance, in forgiveness, in comforting, in strengthening, in guiding, in answering prayer, in removing temptation, in conquering infirmity, in leading on from strength to strength!”

Oh, if we had to write the complete record, the roll would need to be written within and without to hold the list of all the Lord’s loving kindnesses—and it would need to be long enough to belt the whole Heaven as with a zodiac of light—for His loving kindness is without end and altogether untellable! No man can truly say, “I have thought that subject dry. I have worked it threadbare.” Oh, no! We have thought and we will still think of God’s loving kindness to us! That is a theme not only worthy of thought, but beyond all thought. If any of you, Brothers and Sisters, think there is likely to be any lack of material for thought, I beg you to consider the various acts of Divine Grace, all of which are full of the loving kindness of the Lord—the Everlasting Covenant, personal election, redemption, effectual calling, adoption, sanctification, final perseverance. Touch on any point you please and you may think with joy and gratitude of God’s marvelous loving kindness!  
Then, each one of you turn to your own personal experience. I need not again remind you how gracious God has been to you. I have already given you a sort of outline sketch of it. But, oh, there are some of you who could tell—no, you would not like to tell—but you know some wonderful things about the Lord’s loving kindness to you! As for myself, I know that my Master has done for me that which, if I were to tell it, would never be believed and, therefore, I shall keep the story of it till I get where doubt and incredulity will never be admitted. The loving kindness of the Lord is amazing! Oh, what blessed secrets there have been between Him and some of His most highly favored people! When they have been locked up in the darkest dungeons of the prison, then they have discovered that they were in the King’s wine cellar and He has said to them, “Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved.” When they have been shut out from all natural light, they have found that they did not need the sunlight, for their Lord’s Presence has given them all the brightness they have needed! I guarantee you that the Covenanters and our Puritan forefathers knew more of the loving kindness of the Lord than many of us do, though some of us know so much of it that we shall need all eternity to tell the wondrous story! Oh, He is a good and gracious God! If you do not think so, it is because you do not know Him. Perhaps you have not yet seen Him in the right light. Possibly, you have been living under the Law—if you were living under Grace, you would understand Him better.  
Or perhaps you have been trying to live with just a little Grace, whereas, if you had more Grace, you would know the Lord better and then you would adore Him more. It is never with Him as it is with certain earthly masters—the less they are known, the better they are liked—and the shorter the service under them is, the sweeter is it considered. Oh, no, our blessed Lord is better loved the better He is known! And the longer we serve Him, the easier does His yoke prove to be to our shoulders. Personally, I can testify that I find it an ever-increasing joy to be His servant and it is to me the source of pardonable pride that my two sons are in the service of the same Master—and I could not say that if I had found Him to be a bad Master. I know what some of you say, “I have such a hard taskmaster that I will never bring my boy to him, to be apprenticed—not I.” But when you serve the Lord Jesus Christ, if you do but know Him as He really is, you will wish to have all whom you love to be beloved of Him—and it will be your heart’s delight to see them all earnestly engaged in His blessed service!  
Talking thus of the Lord’s loving kindness to any one of you personally, we might, in time, get to the end of the story. But, Beloved, there are thousands of you here, who, unless you have grossly deceived yourselves, have a similar story to tell! The loving kindness of the Lord to any one of His children is a theme of wonder, but, to hundreds, to thousands, to millions, to a multitude that no man can number, O my blessed Lord, Your loving kindnesses are like the sand upon the seashore, or like the innumerable stars of Heaven! None but Yourself can fully understand Yourself—  
*“God only knows the love of God.”*  
It is beyond all the bounds of human thought, or speech, or calculation, or imagination!  
I think, dear Friends, that I have now shown you that there is plenty of room for thought upon the subject of the Lord’s loving kindness. So now let me go on to say that this is a kind of worship in which all of you who are God’s people may engage. When I go home, after this service, I shall be able to say, “I have preached Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.” You will not all be able to say that, for, if we were all preachers, where would be the hearers? But I hope you will be able to say, “I have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.” Perhaps your singing does not count for much, like mine—more of a growl than a song, our musical friends say. Never mind if it is so—if you cannot sing, you can say to the Lord, “I have thought of Your loving kindness” and that, after all, being the very essence and soul of worship, will be more profitable to you than if, without thought, you had spoken with the greatest eloquence, or sung only with your lips the sweetest notes of music!  
Ah, my dear sick Sister over yonder, hardly fit to be out of your room, I hope you will be able to say, “I have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.” My poor old friend up there in the gallery, who cannot even read the Scriptures, you, also, can join with us, my Brother, in saying, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.” Yes, my Friend, though you have not the talent of communicating anything to others, for you feel so bashful and are almost hiding your head even now while I am speaking—and although you scarcely think yourself worthy to come to the Communion Table with the Lord’s people, yet you know that you can chime in with us when we say, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God.” I delight in any form of worship in which everybody can join—and this is such that no one who really loves the Lord need keep himself out of the happy united assembly!  
Yet, Brothers and Sisters, this practice of thinking of God’s loving kindness is not universally followed. I am afraid that in all congregations there are many people who do not think at all—and many others who do think, but they think about almost anything except the loving kindness of the Lord! You missed your ring from your finger! You say to yourself, “Where did I leave those keys?” You are wondering how that sick child is! You are thinking about that pair of horses to be sold tomorrow! Oh, yes, under the most faithful ministries, these odds and ends of daily life will force their way in if they can. But they must be rigidly excluded when they take the place of that one theme that is really worthy of our thought. When the birds came down to eat the sacrifice that Abraham was offering, he drove them away. Try, dear Friends, to do the same with all that is carnal, frivolous, worldly—that your sacrifices unto the Lord may be well pleasing in His sight, and that you may be able to join with the sons of Korah in saying, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.”  
II. Now, secondly, I want to show you that the place was appropriate— “in the midst of Your Temple.”  
The Temple at Jerusalem no longer stands. It is gone, but are there not temples of God now? Yes, a good many. Of what are they composed? They are composed of living men and women—there are no other temples of God! The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Know you not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” But those handsome buildings with spires and towers, and those barn-looking structures called Non-conformist places of worship, are they not temples? No. Or if they are called temples, then to them Stephen’s words may be applied, “The Most High dwells not in temples made with hands.” So let us cast aside the superstition which regards any particular place, or any set of bricks, mortar, stones and iron, as being in any sense or degree, holy! Holiness is not an attribute attaching to material substances. God says, “Heaven is My Throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will you build Me? Or what is the place of My rest? Have not My hands made all these things?”  
But there is still a Temple of the living God and that Temple is made up of the aggregate of all the temples—the temples are the bodies of His people—and the whole Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is the Temple of God. By the term, the Church, I mean the whole body of Believers throughout the world and in Heaven, too, for they together form the one “general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.” This is the Temple of the living God and I hope that many of us can say that we are in the midst of it. If we are numbered among God’s people—the tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands all over the world who love the Lord—we are surely in the most appropriate place to think of the loving kindness of the Lord!  
And first, if we are in the midst of God’s spiritual Temple, His true Church, we may well think of His loving kindness in permitting us to be there. “What,” says one, “am I really one of the Lord’s chosen people? Dare I hope that I have a part and a lot with His saints? Who would have thought that such a thing was possible? Who would have dreamed that it could ever be so?” Ah, Beloved, of all the wonders you will ever see in the Church of God, if you really know yourself, the greatest wonder of all will be to find yourself there! I am never tired of singing, with good Dr. Watts—  
*“Why was I made to hear Your voice,  
And enter while there’s room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?  
‘Twas the same love that spread the feast, That sweetly forced us in—  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.”*  
Cannot many of you say the same thing? Some of your old companions are not here—perhaps they even ridicule the idea of coming to such a place as this. Possibly some of your former associates are now where hope and mercy can never reach them. Why was it not your lot to reject Christ and to perish in your sin? What but the Sovereign Grace of God has made the difference between you and them? So well may you say, “We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple; we have thought of Your loving kindness in putting us into Your Temple, and even making some of us to be pillars in that Temple.”

Standing in the midst of that Temple, which is the true Church of God, we cannot help thinking of the loving kindness of the Lord, for every stone in that Temple testifies to His loving kindness. These are the living stones that are “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy Temple in the Lord.” And, Brothers and Sisters, the very quarrying of every stone out of the pit of nature, and the squaring of every stone so as to make it fit to be built into God’s Temple is such a work of loving kindness that as we look upon our Brothers and Sisters—the living stones that lie in the same course with ourselves, we may well think of God’s loving kindness!  
We may also think of the loving kindness of the Lord in the midst of His Temple because everything in that Temple reminds us of His loving kindness. There was, for instance, the altar of burnt offering. And we can say, “Thank God for the loving kindness which has provided for us the one great atoning Sacrifice by which our sin is forever put away.” There stood, too, the golden altar of incense and every thoughtful Believer says, “Thank God for the loving kindness which has given us Christ to be our Intercessor before the Throne of God on high, where His prevailing prayers are continually ascending on our behalf.” There also stood the showbread upon the sacred table and we say, “Thank God for Him who, as the Bread of Life, is the ever-present and ever-satisfying food for His people.” There, too, was the golden candlestick, or lamp stand, and we can say, “Thank God for His loving kindness in having provided the all-sufficient Light of God for His people.”  
There was nothing on which the intelligent, thoughtful eyes of a Believer could rest, in the tabernacle or the Temple, that would not remind him of the loving kindness of the Lord. And I think I may say the same concerning the Church of Christ to which we belong. Look where you will, everything speaks of the loving kindness of the Lord. There is, first of all, the great Head of the Church, your Lord and Savior, and mine. Oh, what loving kindness there is in Him! His Incarnation, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession, His promised Second Advent—all these are full of loving kindness! Then look at the feet of that same mystical body, for the very poorest of the saints will also tell you of the loving kindness of the Lord. See how, in our Baptism, the Lord shows us His loving kindness by teaching us that the way to life lies through death and burial. Then see how, in that sacred Supper which we are about to celebrate, the Lord further shows His loving kindness by teaching us how the Divine life that He has imparted to us is to be nourished by the very body and blood of Christ received into us in a spiritual sense. It is loving kindness everywhere, Brothers and Sisters, in the Temple of the Lord! Turn which way you will, it is all loving kindness and nothing else!  
Will you kindly pick that long word to pieces for a minute? It is a most expressive and instructive word—loving kindness. Not only kindness or kinneddness—God acting towards us as if He were near akin to us—but, loving kindness—the kindness of a brother to his brothers and sisters, the love of a father towards his children—no, these are poor things compared with the loving kindness of the Lord! Sing of it! Tell of it! And, as the sons of Korah did, think of it in the midst of the Temple of the Lord!  
III. The third thing I was to prove to you was that the result was beneficial—“We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple.” Having done so, what was the result?  
First, according to the context, they were made joyous—“Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad because of Your judgments.” You know how you may think over a subject until you can produce within yourself the state of mind which naturally grows out of it. You may take your troubles and pore over them again, and again, and again, and again, until you make yourself as thoroughly miserable as a human being can be! I recollect someone writing to me to say that he had attended the Tabernacle, on one occasion, but that he would never do such a thing again, for he was certain that the tried and afflicted people of God did not meet there. He said, “As I looked around and saw the happy faces of the congregation, I said to myself, ‘These are not the tried people of God.’” Then he went on to inform me that he had found a brother, under whose preaching he could profit, for there were only eight people gathered to listen to him and they all looked so wretched—and the preacher unfolded such a deep and sorrowful experience, that the brother felt himself quite at home. I was glad that he did, for I like everybody to be where he feels at home. And if anyone is most happy when he is most miserable, I hope he will enjoy himself all he can! That state of mind would not suit me, yet there are persons of that sort who never are content till they are dissatisfied—who never are pleased with anything unless they can grumble and growl at it—and who never seem able to sing—  
*“My willing soul would stay  
In such a frame as this”*  
—until they feel that they cannot stay in it any longer!  
But, Brothers and Sisters, I trust we are not “cut on the cross” after that fashion. We delight in being joyful in our God and we wish that our countenances could always shine as the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount. So, Beloved, think of the loving kindness of the Lord to you and see if that does not make melody in your heart unto Him and cause the big bells in your soul to ring carillons of praise so full of jubilant gladness that your very body shall seem as if it could hardly bear the joy! I have sometimes seen an old church steeple rock and reel when a marriage peal has been rung out from the ancient belfry and, in like manner, at times, one has felt so happy that the poor physical frame seemed as if it could scarcely endure such excess of bliss as the soul was delighting in the loving kindness of the Lord!  
Now, my dear Sister, you have talked about that rheumatism of yours to at least 50 people who have been to see you. Suppose you tell your next visitor about the loving kindness of the Lord to you? Yes, my dear Brother, we all know that trade is bad, for you have told us so, every day, for I do not know how many years! And you have always been losing money, though you had no capital when you started, yet, somehow or other, you have managed to have something left even now. Well, we know that old story—could you not change your note just a little and talk about the loving kindness of the Lord? Yes, my Friend, I know that many professing Christian people are not all that they profess to be. I have heard you say so ever so many times! You also say, “There is no love in the church.” Well, so far as we can see, you are not overstocked with it. You say, “There is no zeal among the members,” but have you any to give away to those who need it? Now, henceforward, instead of always harping on the faults and failing of God’s people—which, certainly, are numerous enough, but have not become any fewer since you talked so much about them—would it not be better to think and talk of the loving kindness of the Lord?  
I would like to have this for my theme until I die. If there could be such a sentence as this passed upon me now, “You are never to preach again except upon the loving kindness of the Lord,” my soul would be delighted to have such a commission! I am sure that I would never exhaust the subject, though I would try my hardest to do so. When I had gone as far as I could, I would call on some of you to tell what God had done for you and so I would start a fresh band of preachers, for each one of you would have a new story to tell of the loving kindness of the Lord—and the telling of that story would make your souls glad!  
I have partly anticipated what I was going to say upon the next point, which is that thinking upon the loving kindness of the Lord would unloose our tongues. Notice what it says in the 12th and 13th verses—“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following.” If you have really tasted of God’s loving kindness, you must tell others about it! You cannot keep the love of God to you a secret. The first instinct of a new-born soul is to tell its joy to somebody else. Think over this theme and you will find a tongue that you thought you had not. “While I was musing,” said David, “the fire burned: then spoke I with my tongue.” My Sister, you will yet take a Sunday school class if you will only think upon God’s loving kindness to you! My dear Brother, you can talk to those few poor people in that hamlet where you live. You have been afraid to try to speak to them and so you have let them remain uninstructed. But you will not be able to be silent if you think upon God’s loving kindness to you! There is a string that ties your tongue—get your heart so red-hot that it will burn that string and then, off you will go! And when once your tongue is unloosed by such a process as that, it will be said of you as it was of Naphtali, the hind let loose, “He gives goodly words.” Tell to all around you that the Lord is good and that His mercy endures forever!  
Does someone ask, “Is there any need to tell that?” Yes, there is, for it has got abroad that our Master is strict and hard to His servants. I should not wonder if there are some young people, even here, who imagine that religion is a very dull, dreary, miserable thing—and who say that they do not want to be Christians, for they would rather see a little life. They would not mind being converted afterwards, but they would like to have a little happiness first. Well, young people, it is a very good resolution—only let me tell you that it is a pity to look for life in the outskirts of death, for there is none there! It is advisable to have a little happiness and more advisable to have a good deal of it! And it is most of all advisable to have the greatest happiness possible. I, for one, will speak of the loving kindness of the Lord and I do not think any Believer here will contradict me. And I can say that I never knew what real happiness meant till I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. I have had plenty of trouble since then, and much pain of body and depression of spirit, but I can testify that my Master’s service is the grandest possible service on earth and His love to me, and His tenderness and gentleness to me make me feel that if I had even to die for Him, I would rejoice to do it! And if I had to live as long as Methuselah did, I would only pray that during every hour and minute of the time, I might consecrate every faculty I had entirely to His praise! We must tell to the generation following the Truth of God about the loving kindness of the Lord that they may not be deceived by the great enemy of souls and be made to think that Christ’s service is a bondage to the soul.

Last of all, as we think of God’s loving kindness, we shall be confirmed in our loyalty to Him. How does the Psalm finish? “For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death.” There are some here who have known my Master for 50 years. I have preached Him to you for nearly 25 years and I knew Him a good while before that. Do I want to change my Master for a better one? Yes, if you can find a better one for me, but that you never will be able to do! Christian, do you believe that you will ever have a better Master than Christ, and a better service than His? No. I know what you will say, “I only want to know Him more, and to serve Him better. He has bored my ear to His door-post and I shall never go away from His service, for He is mine and I am His, forever and forever.” “This God is our God.” He was our father’s God and our mother’s God, and the God of the dear ones whom He took from us to be with Him in Heaven. And “this God is our God.” He is the God to whom we looked in the day of our soul’s distress, when we saw Him in Christ Jesus, reconciled unto us through the death of His Son. “This God is our God forever and ever.” He is the God who wiped our tears away and filled our hearts with gladness, and started us on our pilgrimage to Heaven with new life in our souls and new songs on our lips! “This God is our God.”  
He is the God who has heard our prayers, the God who has been with us in our direst extremity, the God who spoke to us words of healing, words of peace and words of salvation when we lay on the verge of death and looked into eternity. He is the God on whom we have cast our unworthy selves, trusting Him with our souls and our all, for this world and the world to come, “this God is our God forever and ever.” Place your hand on the altar’s horn, my Brothers and Sisters, and say, “I am His forever and forever; never to draw back, never to backslide, never to apostatize, never, His Grace enabling me to be steadfast, to dishonor His sacred name, or to do despite to the precious blood of His Son, or to the purity of the indwelling Spirit. Your loving kindness, O God, has bound the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.” So let it be, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen and Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3464 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TRUE WORSHIP  
NO. 3464

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1870.

**“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay your vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”  
Psalm 50:14, 15.**

EVEN in the Christian Church we have great diversities of opinion as to what is the true form of worship. One stoutly cries, “Lo here,” and another as earnestly says, “Lo there!” There are some who think that the more simple and plain the outward worship can be, the better. Others think the more gorgeous and resplendent it can be, the better. Some are for the quietude of the Friends’ meeting house—some are for the stormy music of the cathedral. Some will have it that God is best praised in silence—others that He is best honored with flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and I know not what kinds of music! Is it so difficult, then, to know what kind of worship God will accept? It is very difficult if it is left to the guesses of men, but it is not at all difficult if we turn to the Word of God. There we shall find, I think, great room for diversities of mode, but we shall find ourselves shut up by a consecrated intolerance to a few matters of spirit. We shall there be told what is not essential, but we shall certainly be assured of what is essential to the true worship of God. And I suppose it will be enough for any of us who are sincerely anxious to worship God, ourselves, if we find out for ourselves, by the teaching of God’s Spirit, the way to do it. And we shall be content to let others, also, find out the way for themselves, satisfied if we, ourselves, are approved of God—for we have very little to do with sitting on the throne of judgment and either condemning or approving others. Now, on turning to this Psalm we shall find out what worship is not acceptable with God. And we shall find out what is. And these will make the main points of our sermon this evening. In reading this Psalm to you, you must all have noticed—

I. WHAT SORT OF OFFERINGS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. You noticed with me, I dare say, that first, those are not accepted in which men place the reliance upon the form, itself, and are contented when they have gone through the form, though their hearts have had no communion with God. And they have brought to the Most High no spiritual sacrifice whatever. Lay it down, then, beyond all question, that formal worship which is not attended with the heart—which is not the worship of the spirit—can never be acceptable with the Most High!  
And here we will remind ourselves, too, that even when the form is actually prescribed of God, yet without the heart, it is not a worship of God at all in the true sense of language. With what indignation of eloquence does God here speak to the Israelite people who imagined that when they had brought their bulls and their goats—when they had kept their holy days, consecrated their priests, presented their offerings, been obedient to the ritual—then that all this was enough. He puts it to them—He inquires of them whether they can be so foolish as to think that there is anything in sacrifices of bulls and rams that could content the mind of the Most High! If He wanted bullocks and rams, He says, He has enough of them—all living creatures are His—and He has infinite power to make as many more as He would! Do they fancy that if He wanted bulls and goats, He would come to them for them? That the Creator would crave and turn beggar to His own creatures and ask for bullocks out of their houses and goats out of their field? He puts it to them, do they really think that He, the Infinite God, who made the heavens and the earth, the great I AM, actually eats the flesh of bulls and drinks the blood of goats? And yet their idea was that the mere outward sacrifice contented Him! Was God as gross as that? And what was involved in that? Now I shall put it to you, you who profess to be Christians and yet in your worship, whatever it may be, rest in it. Do you really believe that God is honored by your eating a piece of bread and drinking a few drops of wine? The thousands of creatures that He has in the world eat more bread and drink more wine. Do you really believe that your sitting at a table brings any satisfaction to Him who is in the company of angels, and who has choicer spirits than you are to enter into fellowship with Him? No, Sirs, if you rest in the outward form, what you do can bring no amount of entertainment to Him! He might say to those priests who think that they offer unto God a sacrifice in the “Mass,” “Do I eat bread that is made by the baker, leavened or unleavened? Do you think that I drink wine pressed from the grape?” Fancy you, you that find satisfaction in these things— oh, fools, and slow of heart—that the Infinite Jehovah takes any delight in these matters? And if you come to Baptism as God, Himself, commands it—if you trust in that, might He not say to you, “Do you think that I am pleased with water, when the rivers, the lakes, the seas, and the deeps that lie beneath are all My own? Does that immersion in water bring any satisfaction to Me, in itself considered? What can there be in it that can delight My infinite mind or satisfy My soul? If we rest in any outward form, though God prescribes it, we must have a very gross and carnal idea of God, indeed, if we conceive that He is served or glorified thereby! It cannot be so. If men were not idiotic, they would shake off from themselves all idea of sacramental efficacy and everything that is akin to it! They would see that what God wants is the heart, the soul, the love, the trust, the confidence of rational, intelligent beings—not the going through of certain forms! The forms are useful enough when they teach us the Truth of God of which they are the emblems. The forms are precious and, as ordained of God, to be reverently used by those who can see what they mean and who are helped by the emblem to see the inner meaning, but by none besides. The mere outward thing is but the shell, the husk—useless unless there is within it the living kernel, the embryo which the shell protects! The mere form of outward worship is nothing— it is not acceptable with God!  
Now if this is true—and we know it is—of even ordinances ordained of God, how much more must it be true of ceremonies that are not of God’s ordaining? I am not about to judge, but I will say of all ceremonies and absence of ceremony, if there is no Divine prescription, we feel certain that there cannot be a Divine acceptance! And even if that could be supposed, yet if the heart were not there, and there were reliance in these outward things of man’s devising, it were utter folly to suppose that God accepts them! For instance, there are certain people who think that God is glorified by banners, by processions, by acolytes, by persons in white, in blue, in scarlet—(I know not what colors)—by golden crucifixes, or brass, or ivory—by very sweet music, by painting, by incense. Now what an idea they must have of God! What a thought they must have of Him! I remember standing on Monte Cenis one afternoon on a very broiling summer’s day, in a cool place where I could look all over the wide plains of Italy and see the blue sky—such a blue as we never see, and the innumerable flowers, and all the land fair as a dream—and then I Looked to my right and there stood a shrine—a shrine to which there came a worshipper. There was a doll. They called it “the Blessed Virgin.” It was adorned with all sorts of trinkets—just such things as I have seen sold at a country fair for children. It had little sprigs of faded artificial flowers— little bits of paint. And I said to myself, “The God that made this glorious landscape in which everything is true and real—do they fancy that He is honored by this kind of thing—these baubles? What an idea they must have of God.” Sirs, if He wanted banners, He would deck His escutcheon with the stars! If He wanted incense, ten thousand thousand flowers would shed their sweet perfume upon the air! If He wants music, the wind shall sound it, the woods shall clap their hands, every forest tree shall give out its note and angelic harpers standing on the glassy sea shall give such music as your ears and mine have never conceived! If He wants an alb, behold the snow! If He wants your many-colored raiments, see how He decks the meadows with flowers and strews, with both His hands, rainbow hues on every side! If He wanted garments, He would bind the sky’s azure round Him with a belt of rainbows and come forth in His Glory! But your dolls and your boys and men, and all their millinery—Sirs, do you know what you are doing? Have you got souls? If you worshipped a calf, calves, like you, might well worship him in such in style, but the great I AM that built Heaven and earth dwells not in temples made with hands! That is to say, in these buildings—and He is not worshipped by such trumpery as this. All this, of men’s inventing, can never be acceptable to the Most High. Common sense tells us so—much more the Revelation of God!

But, mark you, my censure does not count alone against them. Suppose a man should say, “Well, I am far enough from that. On the morning of the first day of the week I resort to a meeting house—whitewashed, a few forms, a raised desk at the end of it—and I sit down there. I have not any minister—nobody to speak unless he believes the Spirit moves him. We all sit still. Many times we sit still the whole morning. We worship God.” Do you believe you have? If your heart was there—if your soul was there—I am the last man to complain of the absence of form. I love your simplicity, I admire it. But if you trust it, I believe your simplicity will as certainly ruin you as the gorgeousness that goes to the opposite extreme, for if there is any reliance in that sitting still—if there is any reliance in that waiting—(take our own case) if there is any reliance in your coming up to these pews and listening to me—do you think you have served God merely by coming here to sing hymns, and cover your faces during prayer, and so on? I tell you, you have not worshipped God! You are mistaken if you suppose the mere act counts for anything! You know not what you think—you know not what your mind is drifting to. It is the heart that gets to God—it is the eye that pours out penitential tears—it is the soul that loves and blesses and praises—this is the sacrifice! But all the outward, whether God, Himself, ordained it, or man devised it—or whether it is a matter of mere convenience—it cannot be received by the Most High!  
So let me add, beloved Friends, a matter which may touch some of you. The mere repetition of holy words can never be acceptable sacrifices to God. There are some who from their childhood have been taught to say a form of prayer. I shall neither commend nor censure, but I will say this—you may repeat that form of prayer for twenty, forty, 50 years, and yet never have prayed a single word in all your life! I am not judging the words. They may be the best you could possibly put together. They may be the words of Inspiration, but the mere saying of words is not prayer, neither does God receive it as such! You might just as well say the Lord’s Prayer backwards as forwards for the matter of its acceptance with God, except you say it with your heart! I believe some people fancy that the reading of prayers in the family, and especially that the reading of prayers at the bedside of the sick, has a kind of charm—that it somehow or other has a mysterious influence and helps to prepare men for life or for death. Believe me, no grosser error could exist! When the soul talks with God, it matters not what language it uses. If it finds a convenient form and it uses it with its heart, let it use it if so it wills. But if, on the other hand, the words come bubbling up and come ever so strangely and irregularly, yet if the heart speaks, God accepts the prayer—and that is worship! So, too, in singing. If we have the sweetest hymn that ever was written—yes, though it were an Inspired hymn, and if we sang it to the noblest tune that ever composer wrote, yet we do not praise God by the mere repetition of the words and the production of those sounds! Ah, no—the whole of it lies in the soul after all! “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” Let there be good music, by all means, and noble words, for these are congruous to noble thoughts—but oh, let the thoughts be there! Let the song be there! Let the flames of love burn on the altar of the heart! Be the outward expression what it may, let the praise be winged by the ardent affections of the soul—otherwise far from you be the thought that you have worshipped God when you have used solemn words with thoughtless hearts! Does not this touch some of you? You have never prayed in all your lives! You have said a prayer, but never talked with God. You have been to the House of God, perhaps, from your infancy, but never worshipped God! Though oftentimes the preacher said, “Let us worship God,” yet you have never done so. O Sirs! What? All these formalities, all these routines, all these outward forms and yet no heart, no soul?—nothing acceptable with God? Alas for you! And will you go on so forever? You will, so long as you rest contented with the outward! I pray that God may put in you a sacred discontent with the merely outward worship and make you long and cry that you may offer unto Him the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart through Jesus Christ the Savior, by the power of the Eternal Spirit—for that will the Lord accept!  
Thus I have mentioned one form of sacrifice that God does not accept, namely, that of formalists. Now this Psalm shows us that—  
II. THERE ARE OTHER SACRIFICES WHICH GOD REJECTS, namely, those offered by persons who continue their wicked lives. Now some will preach and yet live in an ungodly manner. Some can lead prayers in the Prayer Meeting and yet can lie and steal. There are those who, for a pretense, make long prayers. Their minds are occupied upon the widow’s house, and how they shall devour it, while their lips are uttering consecrated words! Now observe no man’s praying is accepted with God who is a hater of instruction. Turn to the 17th verse of the Psalm—“Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My Words behind your back.” Let me look a man in the face who never reads the Bible—who does not want to know what is in it—who has no care about what God’s Word is—I see there a man that cannot worship God! If he says, “Oh, I am sincere in my own way”—Sir, your “own way”—but that way is sure to be the way of rebellion! A servant does not have his own way, but his master’s way! You are not a servant of God while you think that your will and your fancy are to settle what God would have you do. “To the Law and to the Testimony.” Every devout mind should say, “I will search and see what God would have me do.” What does He say to me? Does He tell me that I am, by nature, lost and ruined? Lord, help me to feel it! Does He tell me that only by faith in a crucified Savior can I be saved? Lord, work that faith in me! Does He tell me that they who are justified must also be sanctified and made pure in life? Lord, sanctify me by Your Spirit and work in me purity of life! The really accepted man desires to know the Divine Will and to that man there is not one part of Scripture that he would wish not to know, nor one part of God’s teaching that he would wish to be ignorant of! The Lord does not expect you, Beloved, while you are in this world at, any rate, to know everything, but He does expect that you who call yourselves His people should also be as little children, who are quite willing to learn! Oh, it is an ill sign with us when there are some Chapters that we would like to see pasted over—when there are some passages of Scripture that grate on our ears—when we do not want to be too wise in what is written—do not want to know too well what the Lord’s will is! If you willfully shut your ear to God’s instruction and will not listen to His will, neither will He listen to your prayer, nor can you expect that your sacrifice will be received by the Most High! Such things are not acceptable, and yet, how large a proportion of Christendom has never recognized the duty of learning the will of God from God’s own Spirit! They take it from their party leaders—one borrows from this body of divinity, another from his Prayer Book! One borrows from his parents and must be what his father was—and another borrows from his friend, or thinks that the National Church must necessarily be the right one! But the genuine spirit says, “Lord, I would have that which is Your mind—not mine, nor man’s. Oh, teach me!” And though he judges not others, he desires always to be judged of God, Himself—to stand before the Most High and say, “Search me, O God, and try me, and know my way, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the right way everlasting.”  
The Psalm goes on to say that God does not accept the sacrifices of dishonest men. “When you saw the thief, you consented with him.” When a man’s common trade is dishonesty—when frequently he excuses himself, as some servants do, in little pilfering—as some masters do in false markings of their goods. When the man knows he is not walking uprightly before his fellow men, he comes to the altar of God and brings a sacrifice which he pollutes with every touch of his hand! No, Sir! No! Say not that you have fellowship with God when your fellowship is with a thief! Do you think you can have God on one side, and the thief on the other? Surely you know not who He is! If we are not perfect, yet at least let us be sincere! And if there are sins into which we fall through inadvertence and surprise, yet at least uprightness before our fellow men is one thing that must not be lacking—cannot be lacking in a gracious soul—in a true child of God whom God accepts.  
So next, the sin of impurity prevents our worshipping God. You come and say, “Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us!” Or you say, “We praise You, O God. We acknowledge You to be the Lord.” Or you stand up here and sing, “All hail the power of Jesus’ name,” and you have come from lascivious talking—perhaps from worse than talking! You have even, now, upon your mind some scheme of what is called, “pleasure,” and you think that “life” means what in this assembly and in the assembly of God’s people it were best not to mention, for you count it no shame to do what Believers count it shame even to think of! Polluted hands! Polluted hands! How can they be lifted up before God? Use what forms you may, your praises are an abomination! Your prayers, while you continue as you are, are a loathing and a stench in the nostrils of God! Turn! Repent! Seek washing in the Savior’s blood—and then you may offer acceptable praises, but not till then!  
The Psalmist goes on to say that so it is with slanderers. Slanderers cannot be accepted with God—those (and oh, how many there are) who count it sport to ruin other people’s characters—who seem to take a joy and a delight in finding fault with the people of God! How can you expect that God will bless you when you are cursing your fellow men! And while your mouth is full of bitterness, how can it also be full of praise? Now these are not things that will cheer and comfort the people of God. I trust it is a main point in my own ministry to comfort God’s people, but the axe also must be laid to the root of the tree! And let it be known to all who come into these courts that if they come here with defilement in their spirits and with lust or unrighteousness in their daily practice, and love to have it so, from this pulpit they shall find no apologies and gather no comfort! And from God’s Word, too, they shall have denunciation, but not consolation! They shall have threats and judgment, but not the promised blessing! Now we must have a few minutes on the next part of our subject, on which I hope to enlarge on another occasion, which is—

III. WHAT SACRIFICES ARE ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD?  
The text tells us, first, thanksgiving. “Offer unto God thanksgiving.” Let us come and worship, then, Brothers and Sisters—let us come and worship! We were lost, but Jesus came to seek the lost. Blessed be His name! We were foul and filthy, but His mercy brought us to the fountain filled with blood. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor, and glory, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might.” Since that very day in which He washed us, He has given us all things richly in His Covenant. “He makes us to lie down in green pastures. He leads us beside the still waters.” “Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” Now if that is your spirit. If you can keep up that spirit even when the husband sickens, when the child dies, when the property melts away—if you can say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord”—what if there is no hymn from your lips? What if there is no bull on the altar? Yet these are the calves of your lips—the offering of your heart—and they are a sacrifice of a sweet smell if they are presented through Jesus Christ, the great atoning High Priest! This is a sacrifice that God accepts, and I dare say it is often offered to Him in an attic—often presented to Him in a cellar— often, I hope, by you when your hands are grimy at your work and, perhaps, even when your cheeks are scalding with tears! You can yet say, “I am His child. I have innumerable mercies. When He smites me, yet it is in tenderness. Glory be to His name! Blessed be His name!” That is the sacrifice for a spiritual God! That is spiritual worship! Have you ever offered it, dear Hearer, or have you been living on God’s favor and yet never thanked Him? Have you had your life preserved and your daily food constantly given, and yet have you never blessed God for it? Oh, then you have never worshipped Him! I do not care though you are a good singer— although you put on a vestment, or whatever else you have done—if you have not thanked Him from your soul, devoutly and intensely, you know not what the worship of Jehovah is!  
Next the text tells us that performance of our vows is worship. “Pay your vows unto the Most High.” Now I shall interpret that not after the Jewish form, but adapt it to our own. You, Beloved, profess to be a Christian. Live as a Christian! Say, “The vows of the Lord are upon me. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? I am a servant of Jesus. I am not my own—I am bought with a price. What can I do to praise Him today? How can I win another soul for Him who bought me with His precious blood? I declared myself, when I joined His Church, to be one of His and, therefore, a cross-bearer. Let me take up my cross, today, whatever it is, though I may be ridiculed, separated and laughed at. Let me do it—bear it cheerfully for His truth! And let me say— *“If on my face, for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproach shall be,  
I’ll hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If You will remember me.”*  
Let me do everything as in His sight. I was in outward form buried in Baptism—I profess, then, to be dead to the world. Oh, let me try to be so! Let not its pleasures cheat me! Let not its gains enchant me! I even profess to be risen with Christ. Oh, God, help me to lead a risen life—the life of one who is risen from the dead with Jesus Christ and quickened with His spirit! Now if that is your thought, that is true worship! That is real sacrifice to the Most High—when a soul desires to walk before the Lord in conformity with its vows and gracious obligations, not with a view of merit—for it lays all its hope upon Jesus and finds all its merit there, and simply cries, “I am His, and I wish to live as one that bears a bloodbought name.”  
We are told, too, in the text—and that is a very sweet part of it—(I wish I had an hour or two to talk of it)—that prayer in time of trouble is also a very sweet form of worship. Men are looking for rubrics, and they are contending whether the rubric is “so-and-so according to the use of Sarum.” Now here is a rubric according to the use of the whole Church of God bought with Jesus’ blood—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” You are in great distress of mind— now you have an opportunity of worshipping God! Trust Him with your distress! Call to Him as a child calls to its mother! Show how you honor Him—how you love Him—how you trust Him! You shall honor Him even in that—but when you get the answer to your prayer, which will be a sure proof that God has accepted your offering—then you will honor Him again a second time by devoutly thanking Him that He has heard your prayer! O Sinner, this is a way in which you can worship God! Does your sin lie heavy upon your conscience? Call upon God in the day of trouble, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” That is true worship! Have you brought yourself to poverty for your sin? Say, “Lord, help me.” That is prayer! Worship, then, can never go up from all the pealing organs in the world if men’s hearts go not with them! Are you a Christian just now under a cloud? Have you lost the light of Jesus’ face? Call upon Him now in the day of trouble. Believe that He will appear for you. Say, “I shall praise Him. His Countenance is my aid,” and you will be bringing better sacrifice than if you brought he-goats, bullocks and rams! This is what the Lord loves—the trust, the child-like confidence, the loving seeking after sympathy which is in His children’s hearts. Oh, bring Him this!  
Then he adds—if you will turn to the last part of the Psalm, which I must incorporate in the text—“Whoever offers praise, glorifies Him.” True praise glorifies God. I must confess that I do not particularly like to hear voices that are off-key in the singing, but I should not like to stop one voice, certainly not if it stopped one heart! I think it is said of Mr. Rowland Hill, that an old lady once sat upon his pulpit stairs who sang so very badly—she had a voice that the good gentleman really could not feel that he could worship while he heard her voice in his ears—and he said, “Do be quiet, my good Soul.” She answered, “I sing from my heart, Mr. Hill.” “Sing away!” he said, “and I beg your pardon. I will not stop you.” And I think I would beg the pardon of the most cracked voice I ever heard if it is really accompanied with a real loving, grateful heart! God gets some of His richest praise amidst dying groans—and He gets delightful music from His people’s triumphant cries. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory?” To praise God—to sing an excelsis in extremis—to give Him the highest praise when we are in the deepest waters—this is acceptable with Him! The best worship comes from the Christian that is most tried—at least in this case. When the soul is most bowed down with trouble, if he can say, “I will praise Him: I will praise Him in the fire: I will praise Him in the jaws of Death, itself”—ah, these are sacrifices better than hecatombs of bulls, and better than the blood of fed beasts! Not your architecture, not your music, not your costumes, not your ordinations or your forms, but your prostrate hearts, your souls with veiled faces, worshipping the mysterious, the unseen but everywhere present—the great I AM—this is worship! Through Jesus Christ, it is accepted. It is of the Spirit’s own creation. It only comes from truly spiritual, regenerate men and women, boys and girls—and wherever it comes, it reaches the Majesty on high—and God smiles and accepts it!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I send you home with this reflection. Some of you have never worshipped God. Then think of that, and God help you to begin! Others of us who have worshipped Him ought to consider how large a proportion of our worship is good for nothing. Oh, how often you come and hear now on Thursday night! Why, have not you sometimes built a ship in the pew—mended a plow—darned your husband’s stockings—seen to the sick child—done all sorts of things when you should be worshipping God? Now these distracting thoughts mar worship! And I do pray God that you, as a people, may never get to think that coming here is of any use if you do not bring your hearts with you! Thomas Manton said that if we sent on the Sabbath a man stuffed with straw to sit in our pews for us, and thought that was worshipping God, it would be very absurd! But not one whit more than when we bring ourselves stuffed with evil thoughts or dead, cold thoughts that cannot rise to God! I cannot always get to God, I know, but I at least hope I may groan until I do. Oh, it does seem an awful thought that some of us may have no more feelings than the pews we sit on—no more worship of God than those iron columns and those lamps! Oh, may you never be that sort of slumbering congregation with whom it is all form! We have read a strange poem of one who has pictured a ship manned by all dead men. Dead men pulled the sails. A dead man steered and a skeleton eye kept a look-out. I am afraid there are congregations like that—where all is dead and all is form. Oh, may it not be so with you or me, but may we all realize, through Jesus Christ, who stands at the Throne of God, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we “have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ,” and that evermore to God’s glory! Amen.  
I speak on this theme but very feebly, but I do feel it from my very heart. I do pray that we may all be accepted worshippers because the heart is found in us. It was always a bad sign—by the Roman seers it was pretended to be the worst sign—when they found no heart in the victim. It is a dreadful sign when in all our worship there is no heart. God forbid that it may be so! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 50:1-10.  
A Psalm of Asaph.**

Whether this means that Asaph wrote it, or that it was committed to him to sing, we do not know. Certainly Asaph did write some Psalms. There are 12 ascribed to him in the Book of Psalms. He wrote some and it is equally certain that some others were dedicated to him. He had the leadership of the choir who sang the Psalms in the Temple. This is a very marvelous Psalm. If we only consider the poetry of it, it is one of the chief of the Psalms, but its matter is very deep—august. It should be read with great reverence of spirit. The Psalm begins with a prologue in which the scene is introduced. God is represented as coming forth out of Zion to judge those who profess to be His people—to discern between the precious and the vile—to separate between mere professors and pretenders. The first six verses represent God as coming.

Verse 1. The mighty God, even the LORD, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. The Hebrew has it, “El Elohim, Jehovah has spoken”—three names of God—great and mysterious—the strong God, the only God, the self-existent God. He speaks—calls upon the whole earth from the east to the west to listen to His voice.

2. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. There He dwelt. Now in this scene He is represented as shining forth from it. As he had described the earth as being lighted by the sun from the east to the west, so now God, Himself, who at first speaks and demands a hearing, now shines forth with beams of Glory which altogether eclipse the brightness of the sun. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.”

3. Our God shall come and shall not keep silent: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. The voice was heard saying that God would come and then the beams of Glory which warned men that He was coming—and here His people stand attentive, expecting Him to come. “They expect Him to speak.” Fire and rushing wind are usually used in Scripture as attendants of the Throne of God—fire representing justice in action, and the tempest representing His power when it is displayed. Think of God’s coming thus. The poet here pictures it, but it will be so in very deed. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon you that know not God.” He will even come after this manner, “for our God is a consuming fire.”

4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Do you catch the thought? There comes the great Judge with the fire burning before Him. He rides upon a cherub—yes, rides upon the wings of the wind, and then He calls Heaven, with all the angels and glorified spirits—and He calls to earth, with all its inhabitants, to stand and witness what He does while He judges His people.

5. Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. God has a separated and chosen people. It will be a part of the proceedings at the Last Great Day to gather these together unto God. There will be a day when He will make up His jewels—a time when He will gather His wheat into His garner. And as this Psalm stands, this is a large gathering. It refers to a picture of all professing saints being brought before the Throne of God—true saints that made a covenant with God by sacrifice. They see Jesus Christ, who ratifies the Covenant of Grace by blood, and they have laid their hands on Chris, and the covenant made between them and God. But there were others in the Psalmist’s day who had offered sacrifice and pretended to have made a covenant with God—and there are their representatives in these days. They are now to be gathered before the Throne of Judgment, for God has come to judge them.

6. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge, Himself. Selah. The very heavens, as they look down upon the august assize where God, Himself, not by deputy, but in the Person of His dear Son, shall sit and judge—the heavens shall declare His righteousness. Now I doubt not the heavens often wonder how it is that God permits the ungodly to be mixed with the righteous in His Church. But ah, when the fan shall be in His hand and He shall thoroughly purge His floor—when He shall lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet—the angels shall wonder at the exactness and accuracy of the Divine Judgment! “Selah.” Pause, rest, consider, admire, adore, humble yourself, pray. It is good to have a pause when such a scene as this is before us. Now from the 5th verse down to the 15th verse you have God’s dealing with His people. The Judge is sitting on the Throne. He begins to speak thus—

7. Hear, O My people, and I will speak: O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, even your God. It is with His nominal people, the Jews. It is with His visible Church, God is now dealing. He Himself has seen the ways of His professing people—He need not, therefore, call any witnesses. He who cannot err will testify against us! And He declares, Himself, here not only as God, but under that name, “Your God.” It was thus the Law began. “I am the Lord Your God that brought you up out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage.” It is thus the judgment and rebuke begin—“I am God, even Your God.”

8. I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. He is going to deal with weightier matters than that! Whether they have, or have not, offered abundant sacrifices, that is not the thing which God looks at. “I will not reprove you for your sacrifices. No, I have done with your sacrifices.”

9. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he goats out of your folds. “Do you think that these things in themselves are of any value to Me, O you formalists? I will not even take them.”

10. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Though men call them theirs, yet they are your God’s.  
—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1505 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAYER TO GOD IN TROUBLE AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE  
NO. 1505

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 9, 1879 BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”  
Psalm 50:15.**

THE Lord God in this Psalm is described as having a controversy with His people. He summons Heaven and earth to hear Him while He utters His reproof. This indictment will show us what it is that the Lord sets the greatest store by, for His complaint will evidently touch upon that point. We are informed most plainly that the Lord had no controversy with His people concerning the externals of His worship. He does not reprove them for their sacrifices and burnt offerings. He even speaks of these symbolic sacrifices and says—“I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he goats out of your folds.” His complaint was not concerning visible ceremony and outward ritual and this shows that He does not attach so much importance to outward things as most men suppose Him to do.

His complaint was concerning inner worship, soul worship, spiritual worship! His reproof was that His people did not offer thanksgiving and prayer and that their conduct was so inconsistent with their professions that, clearly, their hearts went not with their outward formalities. This was the essence of the charge against them. They were faulty, not in visible religiousness, but in the internal and vital part of godliness—they had no true communion with God though they kept up the appearance of it. We see, then, that heart worship is the most precious thing in the sight of the Lord. We learn what is that priceless jewel which must be set in the gold ring of religion if the Lord is to accept it.

Nor is it hard to see why it is so, for it is plain that if a man had kept the ritual of the old Law to the very fullest, he still might not be, in sincerity, a worshipper of God at all. He might drive whole flocks of his sheep to the Temple door for sacrifice and yet he might feel no spiritual reverence for the Most High. It has been proven times without number that the most careful and zealous attention to external ceremonies is quite consistent with the absolute absence of any true apprehension of God and hearty love for Him. Habit may keep a man outwardly religious long after his mind has forgotten the Lord! Yes, the conscious lack of inward and vital Grace may drive a man to a more intense zeal in formalities in order to conceal his defect.

It is written, “Israel has forsaken his Maker and builds temples.” You would think if he built temples he must recognize his God, but it was not so. Within those buildings he hid himself from Him who dwells not in temples made with hands. Beneath the folds of vestments, men smother up their hearts so that they come not to God. Fine music drowns the cry

of the contrite soul and the smoke of incense becomes a cloud which conceals the face of the Most High! Great sacrifices might often be an offering made to a rich man’s personal pride. No doubt certain kings that gave great contributions to the house of God did it to show their wealth or to display their generosity, somewhat in the spirit of Jehu, who said to Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.”

A great sacrifice might be nothing more than a bid for popularity and so an offering to selfishness and vanity. With such sacrifices God would not be well pleased. Alas, how easy it is to defile the worship of God and nullify its quality till, like milk which is soured, it may be utterly rejected. I am sure you know right well that it may be so in the simplest form of public worship such as our own. Bare as is our mode of service, there is room for self. Singers may lift up their sweet voices that others may hear how charmingly they sing. Ministers may preach with graceful eloquence that they may be admired as men who are models of exquisite speech. Believers may even pray devoutly that their fellow Christians may see how gracious they are.

Alas, this blight of self may come into any and every part of outward service and turn the worship of God into an occasion for self-glorification! Thus does Belshazzar drink out of the vessels of the sanctuary while the buyers and sellers turn the temple into a den of thieves. Wonder not, therefore, that God looks with but scant complacency—I was about to say with bare tolerance—upon the abundance of outward worship because He sees how easy it is for it not to be His worship at all, but a mere exhibition of man’s carnal glorying. Many, too, have performed outward worship with a view to merit somewhat of the Lord—they have supposed that God would be their

 debtor if they were zealous in furnishing His altars and frequenting His courts. If they have not put it in that coarse form, it has certainly come to that, that they hoped to be held worthy of particular regard if they were zealous above others.

Some have superstitiously dreamed of obtaining prosperity in this world by observing holy days and seasons. And many more have hoped to have it set to their account at the Last Great Day that they have heaped up the offertory, or given a painted window, or built an almshouse, or attended daily service year by year! Now, what is this but an offering to selfishness? The man performs pious and charitable deeds for his own good and this motive flavors the whole of his life so that the taint of self is in every particle of it! The Jew might offer bullocks or sheep for his own salvation and what would this be but the manifest worship of self? It brought no glory to God and did not mean His praise. Wonder not, therefore, if the Lord speaks thus slightingly of it all.

What the Lord missed in His people was not temple rites and offerings, for in those they abounded. He missed the fruit of the lips giving glory to His name! He missed, first, their thankfulness, for He says unto them, “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay your vows unto the Most High.” And next He missed in them that holy, trustful confidence which would lead them to resort to Him in the hour of their need—therefore He says, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” Brothers and Sisters, have you failed in these two precious things? Do you fail in thankfulness? The Lord multiplies His favors to many of us—do we multiply our thanks? The earth gives back a flower for every dewdrop—are we, alike, responsive to plenteous mercy? Do the bounties of His Providence and the favors of His Grace teach us how to sing Psalms unto the Ever-Merciful?

Do we not too often permit Divine mercies to come and go in silence as if they were not worthy of a thankful word? Have we a time and season for God’s praise? Is it not too often huddled into a corner? We have a closet for our prayers, but no chamber for our praises! Do we make it a point in life that whatever is neglected, the praises of God shall have full expression? Do you, my Brothers and Sisters, give thanks in everything? Do you carry out to the fullest this sentence—“From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised”? May I also venture to ask whether you pay your vows to Him? In times of sickness and sorrow you say, “Gracious Lord, if I am recovered, or if I am brought out of this condition, I will be more believing, I will be more consecrated. I will devote myself only to You, O my Savior, if You will now restore me.”

Are you mindful of these vows? It is a delicate question, but I put it pointedly because a vow unredeemed is a wound in the heart. If you have failed in your grateful acknowledgments, remember that these are the things which God looks for more than for any ceremonial observance or religions service. He would have you bring your daily thankfulness and your faithful vows to Him, for He is worthy to be praised and it is meet that unto Him should the vow be performed. It is not to thankfulness, however, that I am going to ask attention, this morning, as much as to the other sacrifice—namely, prayer in the day of trouble.

Let me say at the outset that I am struck with wonder that God should regard it as being one of the most acceptable forms of worship—that we should call upon Him in the day of trouble! Such prayers seem to be all for ourselves and are forced from us by our necessities—and yet such is His condescending love that He puts them down as being choice sacrifices and places them side by side with the thankful paying of our vows. He tells us that our call for His help in the hour of distress will be more acceptable to Him than the oblations which His own Law ordained—more pleasing than all the bullocks and rams which liberal princes could present at His altars! Be not backward then, Beloved, to cry to Him in your hour of need! If it pleases Him and profits you, you ought not to need a single word from me to excite you to do what seems so natural, so comforting, so beneficial!

Are our cries of anguish and our appeals of hope acceptable to God? Then let us cry mightily to Him! Are any of you in the black waters? Call upon Him! Are you in the hungry desert? Call upon Him! Are you in the lions’ dens and among the mountains of the leopards? Call upon Him! Whether you are in peril as to your souls or your bodies, do not hesitate to pray at once, but say to yourself, “Why should I linger? Let me tell the Lord of my grief right speedily, for if He counts my call a worthy sacrifice, assuredly I will present it with my whole heart!” Let us look to this matter

and see the value of this form of adoration.

Our first head shall be that calling upon God in the day of trouble brings honor to God in the very act. Secondly, it brings honor to God in His answer, for there is coupled with such a prayer the blessed assurance, “I will deliver you.” And thirdly, it brings honor to God in our later conduct, for it is written, “You shall glorify Me.”

I. May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, enable us to see that CALLING UPON GOD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE BRINGS GLORY TO HIM IN ITSELF. I beg you to notice the time that is specially mentioned. Calling upon God at any time honors Him, but calling upon Him in the day of trouble has a special mark set against it as peculiarly pleasing to the Lord because it yields peculiar Glory to His name. Note then, first, that when a man calls upon God, sincerely, in the day of trouble, it is a truthful recognition of God.

Outward devotions suppose a God, but prayer in the day of trouble proves that God is a fact to the supplicant. The tried pleader has no doubt that there is a God, for he is calling upon Him when mere form can yield no comfort. He wants practical matter-of-fact help and he so realizes God that he treats Him as real and appeals to Him to be his Helper. God is not a mere name or a superstition to him—he is sure that there is a God, for he is calling upon Him in an hour when a farce would be a tragedy and an imposture would be a bitter mockery. The afflicted supplicant perceives that God is near him, for he would not call upon one who was not within hearing. He has a perception of God’s Omnipotence by which He can help and of God’s goodness which will lead Him to help.

You can see that he believes in God’s hearing prayer, for a man does not call upon one whom he judges to be a deaf Deity, or upon one whose palsied hand is never outstretched to help. The man who calls upon God in the day of trouble evidently possesses a real and sincere belief in the existence of God, in His personality, in His power, in His condescension and in His continual active interposition in the affairs of men. Otherwise he would not call upon Him! Many of your beliefs in God are a sort of religious parade and not the actual walk of faith. Many have a holiday faith which enables them to repeat the creed and say with the congregation, “I believe in God the Father Almighty,” but in very deed they have no such belief.

Do you, my Hearer, believe in God, the Father Almighty, when you are in trouble? Do you go to the great Father at such times and expect help from Him? This is real work and not hypocritical play! There is solid metal about the faith which follows the Lord in the dark, cries to Him when the rod is in His hand and looks to Him, not for sentimental comforts in prosperity, but for substantial help in bitter adversities! What we need are facts—and trial is the test of fact. Sharp furnace work does away with mere pretense and this is one of its great uses, for that Grace which, like the salamander, lives in the fire, is Grace, indeed. I say again, that very many publicly declared creed faiths are mere shams which, like the leaves of autumn’s trees, would wither and fall if one sharp winter’s frost should pass over them.

It is not so when a man, in the dire hour of his distress, casts himself upon God and believes He is able to succor and to help him. Then there is evidence of true reliance and real confidence in a real God, whom the mind’s eye sees and rejoices in. It is this actuality, this making God real to the soul which makes our calling upon God in the day of trouble so acceptable to Him. There is more here, however, than this first good thing. When a man calls upon God in the day of trouble it is because he seeks and, in some measure, enjoys a spiritual communion with God.

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble.” That call is heart language addressed to God! It is the soul really speaking to the great Father beyond all question! How easy it is to say a prayer without coming into any contact with God! Year after year the tongue repeats pious language, just as a barrel organ grinds out the old tunes—but there may be no more converse with the Lord than if the man had muttered to the ghosts of the slain! Many prayers might as well be said backwards as forwards, for there would be as much in them one way as the other. The abracadabra of the magician has quite as much virtue in it as any other set of mere words. The Lord’s Prayer, if it is merely rehearsed as a form, may be a solemn mockery. But prayer in the day of trouble is honest speech with God, or at least a sincere desire in that direction.

Many are the words which pass between the Lord and the afflicted saint. He cries, “Make haste to help me, O Lord, my Salvation. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. Hide not Your face from me, for I am in trouble. Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer!” With multiplied entreaties does the heart thus hold converse with the Lord and the Lord takes pleasure in it. He loves to have His people draw near to Him in spirit and in truth. And, because calling upon Him in the day of trouble is an undoubted form of fellowship, therefore He regards it with complacency. Now, as I have already said, in the sacrifice of bullocks there was no communion with God in the case of a great many—and in external devotion, whether it is performed in a cathedral or in a humble barn—there is frequently no coming near to God.

But when we believingly call upon God in the day of trouble, then there is no mistake in the matter—we are holding converse with God—“the righteous cry and the Lord hears.” Union with the unseen, spiritual Father, is genuine, indeed, when it is carried on against wind and tide, under pressure of sorrow and weight of distress. May the Lord give us Divine Grace to carry it on whatever may happen to us! Yet is there more than this, for the soul not only comes into God’s Presence, but in calling upon God in the day of trouble it is filled with a manifest hope in God. It hopes in God for His goodness, for it is a belief in that goodness which is the reason why it feels able to pray at all. The soul hopes in His mercy, or it would dwell in silence and never lift up another cry to Heaven.

Amid a sense of deserved wrath, the heart has a trust in infinite Grace and therefore its call. A soul calling upon God honors His condescension. The troubled one says within himself, “I am less than the least of all His creatures, yet He will regard me. When I consider the heavens, the work of His fingers, I am amazed that He should visit man, but I believe that He will do so and that He will condescend to look upon the contrite and humble and deliver them out of their distresses.” There is a hope, then, in

such a prayer which honors God’s goodness and condescension and equally pays tribute to His faithfulness and His all-sufficiency. He has promised to help those that call upon Him, therefore do we call upon Him! And He has all power to keep His promise, therefore do we come to Him and spread our case before Him.

Little as the act of calling upon God in the day of trouble seems to be, it puts crowns upon all the attributes of God in proportion to the spiritual knowledge of the supplicant. I venture to say that if the greatest king of Israel had presented before God, on some solemn day, 10,000 of the fattest of fed beasts and poured out rivers of oil, it might be highly possible that God would not be so well pleased with all that royal zeal as with the cry of a poor humble woman whose husband was dead and whose two sons were about to be taken for slaves—who had nothing in the house except a little oil and then in her extremity cried—“O God, the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of the widow, out of the depths deliver me!”

There may be more honoring of the Lord in a plowboy’s tears than in a princely endowment! More homage to the Lord in the humble hope of a dying pauper than in the pealing anthems of the cathedral or the great shout of our own mighty congregation! The publican’s confession and his hope in the mercy of God had more worship in it than the blast of the silver trumpets and the ringing out of the golden harps! And the songs of the white-robed choristers who stood in the courts of the Lord’s house and led the far-sounding hallelujahs of Israel could not match the publican’s prayer! This calling upon God in the day of trouble, again, pleases the Lord because it exhibits a clinging affection to Him. When an ungodly man professes religion, as such men often do, he is all very well with God as long as God pleases him.

Sunshiny weather makes such a man bless the sun. If God smiles upon him, he says that God is good. Yes, but a true child of God loves a chastening God. He does not turn his back when the Lord seems angry with him—it is then that he falls prostrate in humble supplication and cries, “Show me why You contend with me! I will not believe You to have any real spite against me. If You smite me there must be some wise and good cause for it, therefore show me, I beseech You.” It is very sweet, Brothers and Sisters, when God sends you a great deal of trouble, to love Him all the more for it. This is a sure way of proving that ours is not a hireling love which abides while it gets its price and disappears when wages fail.

God forbid that we should have Balaam’s love of reward and Judas’s treacherous greed! A dog will follow a man as long as he throws him a bone, but that is a man’s own dog which will follow him when he strikes him with the whip and will even wag its tail when he speaks roughly to him! Such Christians ought we to be who will keep close to God when He is robed in thunder. It is ours to will that God shall do what He wills and ours to call upon Him in the day of trouble and not to call out against Him when times are hard.

I would trust my God as unreservedly as Alexander trusted his friend who was also his physician. The physician had mixed a medicine for Alexander, who was sick, and the potion stood by Alexander’s bed for him to drink. Just before he was to drink, a letter was delivered to him in which he was warned that his physician had been bribed to poison him and had mingled poison with the medicine. Alexander read the letter and summoned the physician into his presence. When he came in, Alexander at once drank up the cup of medicine and then handed his friend the letter. What grand confidence was this! To risk his life upon his friend’s fidelity! Such a man might well have friends! He would not let the accused know of the libel till he had proved beyond all disputes that he did not believe a word of it!

Is not our heavenly Father in Christ Jesus worthy of even a grander faith? Shall I always mistrust Him? The devil tells me, O Master, that this affliction which I am suffering will work me ill. I do not believe it! Not for a moment do I believe it and to prove that I have no suspicion, I accept it joyfully at Your hands. I joy and rejoice in it because You have ordained it and I call upon You to make it work to my lasting good. I will take bitter at Your hand as well as sweet and the gall shall be honey to me! If we act thus we shall be imitating the patience of Job. When his wife told him to curse God and die, what did he say? “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?” It seems to me we cannot glorify God better than by thus calling upon Him in the day of trouble and thus showing that we do not believe ill of Him, or suspect Him of error or unkindness. We go further and are assured that Infallible Wisdom and Infinite Love are at the bottom of every trial which afflicts our spirit—thus we glorify the Lord.

There is in connection with this clinging affection a most steadfast confidence. They who call upon God in the day of trouble become quiet, unshaken and abide in full assurance as to the Lord on whom they rely. O troubled one, do not be agitated! Do not run away to others, but call upon God in calm faith! Do not sit down in silent despair and fretfulness, but call upon God! Do not be soured into a morose state of mind, nor go into the sulks, but call upon the Lord as one who cannot be driven to curse or to be in a passion, but gives himself to prayer. It is a blessed thing when we can say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” and can feel that whatever happens to us, we never will start aside from our firm conviction that the Lord is good and His mercy endures forever.

It was a brave speech of Zwingli when, amid furious persecutions, he said, “Had I not perceived that the Lord was preserving the vessel, I should long ago have abandoned the helm. I behold Him through the tempest strengthening the cordage, adjusting the yards, spreading the sails and commanding the very winds. Should I not, then, be a coward and unworthy the name of a man, were I to abandon my post? I commit myself wholly to His sovereign goodness. Let Him govern. Let Him hasten or delay. Let Him plunge us into the bottom of the abyss—we will fear nothing.” Those are the words which I admire—“Let Him plunge us into the bottom of the abyss—we will fear nothing.” This is the bravery of a child who knows no dread because he is in his father’s hands and his trust in his father cannot admit a fear.

Calling upon God enables men to face trouble and play the man since they doubt not of a blessed outcome from all things, however contrary they may seem to be. Our business is to be as confident in God at one

time as at another since He is the same evermore and mere changes in circumstances are matters unworthy to be taken into the estimate. What are circumstances while Almighty God has the rule of them? In fine, this it is which God accepts as honoring Him, that in the day of trouble we should take all our troubles to Him, pour out our hearts before Him and then leave the whole case in His hands! The childlike uncovering of the heart to God, alone, is very precious to Him.

There are times when it is wise to advise a troubled heart to be quiet before men—  
*“Bear and forbear and silent be,  
Tell no man your misery.”*

But it is always wise to bare the bosom to the Lord’s eyes. Is the slander too vile to be communicated even to a single friend? Then follow the example of Hezekiah and spread Rabshakeh’s letter before the Lord! Is the trial too severe, inasmuch as others are obliged to suffer with you and are, therefore, turned to speak bitterly against you? Then imitate David at Ziklag and encourage yourself in the Lord your God! Hide nothing! Reserve nothing! Tell it all and then trust about it all. When you have once put the burden before the Lord, leave it with Him. Do all that lies in you, that prudence can dictate, or common sense suggest, or industry effect—but still make the Lord your mainstay, your buckler, your shield, your fortress and high tower. Say to yourself, “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.”

If you can do this, not once and again, but throughout your whole life, you will glorify the Lord greatly and in your holy confidence and childlike faith the Lord will take as much delight as in the golden harps which ring out His perfect praises before His eternal Throne! If we could reproduce Job and Enoch in one person, the patient saint continually walking with God, we should, indeed, show forth the Glory of our heavenly Father. And why not? Blessed Spirit of God, You can work us to this thing! A critic may sneeringly say, “It is a very natural thing for a man to cry out to God in the day of trouble. And certainly a selfish thing to run to the Lord because you need His help.” “Besides,” says another, “it must be a very distracted prayer that such a person offers. And anyway, faith under troublous circumstances is a very elementary virtue.”

But, my good Sirs, listen! Surely the Lord knows best what pleases Him and if He declares His delight in our calling upon Him in the day of trouble, why should we dispute Him? It is so, for He has said it! As for us who dare not raise such quibbles, let us not be moved by them, but continue to call upon Him in the day of trouble and we shall certainly glorify His name.

II. When we call upon God in the day of trouble IT BRINGS HONOR TO GOD THROUGH THE ANSWER which the prayer obtains. “I will deliver you.” I ask you, troubled saints, to follow me while I repeat the text with variations, for that is about all I shall attempt. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble”—there is the prayer commanded. “I will deliver you”—there is the answer promised. In these words we have a practical answer. It is not merely, “I will think about you, I will hear you, I will propose plans for you and somewhat aid you in working them out.” No, it is, “I will deliver you. You shall have solid, substantial aid. Either I will keep you out of the trouble of which you are afraid—you shall be delivered by never having to endure it—the Egyptians that you see today you shall see no more forever. You dread the stone at the mouth of the sepulcher, but you shall find it rolled away.

“Or else, if you must come into the trouble, I will deliver you while you are in it. Like Noah, you shall be surrounded by the deluge, but the floods shall not overflow you. Like the three holy children, you shall be in the furnace, but the fire shall not burn you. You shall go through the trouble triumphantly, as Israel went through the Red Sea on foot. You shall have such sustaining Grace that you shall glory in tribulation and rejoice in affliction. I will also bring you out of it altogether—for these things have an appointed end. Like Joseph, you shall come forth out of prison to sit upon the throne. Like David, you shall leave the caves and the rocks of the wild goats and I will set your feet in a large room. Like Daniel, you shall be taken from among lions and set among princes.” The promise may be kept in several forms, but in one shape or another it must be carried out, for He who cannot lie has said, “I will deliver you.”

Dear Friend, grips those words and never let them go! You troubled ones, the Lord says, “Call upon Me.” Have you already been in much supplication? Now, then, take to yourselves what the Lord Himself gives you— “I will deliver you.” Somehow or other a way of escape must be made, for God’s Word never fails and He has said, “I will deliver you.” Notice, next, that it is a positive answer. It is not, “I may, perhaps, deliver you,” but, “I will.” It is not, “I will endeavor to do it,” but, “I will deliver you.” Did unbelief say, “But how?” Friend, leave the “how” with God! Ways and means are with Him! He says, “I will deliver you.” To turn round and ask, “How?” is to forget that He is God All Sufficient!—

*“Remember that Omnipotence  
Has servants everywhere.”*

Unbelief is very ready with its questions and too often it enquires, “When?” Friend, leave the “when” with God! He does not tell us when, but the deliverance must come at the right time because if He were not to deliver us till after we had perished, it would be no deliverance at all! If deliverance came too late, it would be a mere mockery. The promise comprehends within itself the implied condition that it shall be a timely deliverance, for otherwise how should the delivered one live to glorify the name of the Lord? Again I would say to you, dear Friend, get a grip of this promise, “I will deliver you.” Do not let my Master’s promise be blown away like the sere leaves from the trees, but hold it fast as for life! Wave this before you and your foes will flee as from a two-edged sword! Quote the Divine words, “I will deliver you,” and legions of devils will flee before you! Remember how Paul put it—“Who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver: in whom we trust; that He will yet deliver us.”

Notice next, that the promise is personal. “I will deliver you.” It is not said, “My angels shall do it,” but, “I will deliver you.” The Lord God Himself undertakes to rescue His people. “I will be a wall of fire round about them.” “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it,

I will keep it night and day.” Then, too, it is personal to its object—it is the same man who calls upon God in trouble who shall be a partaker of the blessing! “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you.” It is personal, personal to you! Therefore, dear Friend, personally believe in this personal promise of your God!

Remember, also, that it is permanent. You pleaded this promise, some of you, 50 years ago—it is as sure today as it was then. If you have a banknote and take it to the bank and get the cash, it is done with. But my Master’s banknotes are self-renewing. You can plead His promise hundreds of times over, for His Word abides forever. It is fulfilled only to be fulfilled again! Like a springing well, which is always full and flowing, so my Lord’s Grace-words abide and continue in all their wealth of blessing. God’s promise made 2,000 years ago is as valid as if it had been uttered this morning and never yet expended upon a single soul. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you” is a word for this very hour.

Where are you at this moment, you troubled, downcast one? You said just now, “I shall never be happy any more.” Recall those words. Eat them with bitter herbs of repentance—“Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” You said, “That blow has crushed me. I could have borne anything else, but this trial I cannot bear.” Tush! Do you know what you can bear? What did the Apostle say? “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Only have faith in God and obey and believe the text—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.”

Can you not take God at His Word? If you can, you shall find His promise true and God will be glorified in delivering you. What praise will come to His name if He lifts you up out of the low dungeon! If He snaps your fetters! If He tears away your entanglements! If He makes plain your intricate path! If He brings you through difficulties which now seem to be impossibilities and gives you to rejoice in Him through them all! Why, then, His name will be glorified far more than by the offering of 10,000 bullocks and rivers of oil!

III. Lastly, if you trust your God in your distress and are, therefore, delivered, THE LORD WILL BE GLORIFIED IN YOUR CONDUCT AFTERWARDS. When a man prays to God in the hour of trouble and gets deliverance, as he is sure to get it, then he honors his great Helper by admiring the way in which the promise has been kept and by adoring and blessing the loving Lord for such a gracious interposition. I know some of you have seen enough of the hand of the Lord in your own cases to make you wonder and admire forever and ever.

Next, you will honor Him by the gratitude of your heart in which the memory of His goodness will forever be recorded. This devout gratitude of yours will lead you, in due season, to bear testimony to His faithfulness. You will be indignant at unbelief and will war against it by personal witnessing. You will be very tender towards those who are now in trouble, as you once were, and you will long to tell them of the blessed rescue which God is prepared to perform for them as He did for you. Your mouth will be open; your witness will be enlarged; you will speak as a man who has tasted and handled these things for himself. Others will be impressed as you tell the story of what the Lord has done for your soul.

At the same time, you will personally grow in faith by the experience of your heavenly Father’s love and power. And in days to come you will glorify Him by increased patience and confidence. You will say, “He has been with me in six troubles and He will be with me in the seventh. I have tried and proven my God and I dare not doubt Him.” Your serenity of mind will be more deep and lasting and you will be able to defy the power of Satan to drive you out of your joy in God. I know, also, that you will try to live more to His praise. As you see Him bring you out of one difficulty and then another you will feel bound to His service by fresh bonds. You will become a more consecrated man than you ever have been. You will jealously protect your remaining days from being wasted by sloth or desecrated by sin.

And let me tell you that even when you die and come up the banks of Jordan on the other side, you will long to glorify your God! When the angels meet you, I should not wonder but what one of the first things you will do will be to say, “Bright spirits, I long to tell you what the Lord has done for me!” Even as you are going up towards the celestial gates, as Bunyan pictures, I should not wonder if you began to say to your guide, “Help me to sing! I cannot be silent. I feel I must—

*“Sing with rapture and surprise  
His loving kindness in the skies.”*

Should the bright spirit remind you that you are climbing to the choirs where all the singers meet, you may answer, “Yes, but I am a special case! I came through such deep waters! I was greatly afflicted. If one in Heaven can praise Him more than another, I am just that one.” The angel will smile and say, “I have escorted many a score up to Glory who said just the same thing.”

We each one owe most to God’s Grace and hope to praise Him best. Some of you may think that you are love’s deepest debtors, but I know better. I am not going to quarrel with you, but I know one who is so undeserving and yet receives such mercy that he claims to take the lowest place and most humbly to reverence boundless Grace. Yes, I myself, less than the least of all saints, claim to have received most at His hands! I would gladly love Him most, for towards me He has shown the utmost love in treating me as He has done.

Am I not saying for myself that which you each would say for yourself? I know it is so and, therefore, it is that God is glorified by the reverence and love of those whom He delivers in answer to prayer. I want you to notice with care the persons mentioned in the first clause of the text. You do not see yourself—you only

 hear of yourself. It is “Call upon Me.” God is there. There is no direct mention of you—you are hidden. You are such a poor, broken, dispirited creature that all you can do is to utter a cry and lie in the dust! There stands the mighty God and you call upon Him! Now, look at the next clause, “I will deliver you.”

Here are two persons! The Lord stands first, the Ever Glorious and Blessed “I.” And way down there are you. “I will deliver you,” poor, humble, but grateful “you.” Thus we see the Lord unites with His poor servant and the link is deliverance. When you come to the third clause, do you see where you are? You are placed first, for the Lord now calls you into action—“You shall glorify Me.” What a wonderful thing it is! For God to put glory upon us is easy enough, but for us to put glory upon Him? This is a miracle of condescension on the part of our God! “You shall glorify Me.” “But,” says one in this place, “I love the Lord, but I cannot glorify Him. I wish I could preach, I wish I could write sweet hymns, I wish I had a clear voice with which to sing out the Redeemer’s praises—but I have no gifts or talents and, therefore, I shall never be able to glorify Him.”

Listen! You will be cast into trouble one of these days and when you are in trouble you will find out how to glorify Him! Your extremity will be your opportunity! Like a lamp which shines not by day, you will blaze up in the dark! When the day of trouble is come you will cry, “Lord, I could not do anything for You, but You can do everything for me. I am nothing, but Lord, in my nothingness, I, poor I, do trust You and fling myself upon You.” Then you shall find that you have glorified Him by your faith! I think you might almost be content to have the trouble, might you not? It seems as if you could not glorify Him any other way and to glorify Him is the main object of your existence.

Some Christians would scarcely have brought any glory to God if they had not been led by paths of sorrow and made to wade through seas of grief. God gets very little glory out of many professors and He would have still less if they had been allowed to rust their souls away in comfort. The brightest of the saints owe much of their clearness to the fire and the file. It is by the sharp needle of sorrow that we are embroidered with the praises of the Lord. We must be tried that the Lord may be glorified! We cannot call upon Him in the day of trouble if we have no such day—and He cannot deliver us if we have no trouble to be delivered from! And we cannot glorify Him if we are not made to see the danger and the need in which He displays His love.

I leave the blessed subject of the text with you, as a souvenir, till we meet again. The Lord be with you till the day breaks and the shadows flee away. Pray, also, that He may abide with me and with all my Brothers in the ministry. And may we all, in yonder world of rest, glorify Him who will then have delivered us completely from all evil, to whom be glory forever! Amen.

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ROBINSON CRUSOE’S TEXT

NO. 1876

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 27, 1885.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON AUGUST 30, 1885.

**“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver  
you and you shall glorify Me.”  
Psalm 50:15.**

ONE book charmed us all in the days of our youth. Is there a boy alive who has not read it? “Robinson Crusoe” was a wealth of wonders to me—I could have read it over a dozen times and never have wearied. I am not ashamed to confess that I can read it, even now, with fresh delight. Robinson and his man, Friday, though mere inventions of fiction, are wonderfully real to the most of us. But why am I running on in this way on a Sabbath evening? Is not this talk altogether out of order? I hope not. A passage in that book comes vividly before my remembrance tonight as I read my text and, in it I find something more than an excuse. Robinson Crusoe has been wrecked. He is left on the desert island all alone. His case is a very pitiable one. He goes to his bed and he is smitten with fever. This fever lasts upon him long and he has no one to wait upon him—none even to bring him a drink of cold water. He is ready to perish. He had been accustomed to sin and had all the vices of a sailor, but his hard case brought him to think. He opens a Bible which he finds in his chest and he lights upon this passage, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” That night he prayed for the first time in his life and there was in him, always after, a hope in God which marked the birth of the heavenly life!

De Foe, who composed the story, was, as you know, a Presbyterian minister. And though not overdone with spirituality, he knew enough of religion to be able to describe very vividly the experience of a man who is in despair and who finds peace by casting himself upon his God. As a novelist, he had a keen eye for the probable, and he could think of no passage more likely to impress a poor broken spirit than this. Instinctively he perceived the mine of comfort which lies within these words.

Now I have everybody’s attention and this is one reason why I thus commenced my discourse. But I have a further purpose, for although Robinson Crusoe is not here, nor his man, Friday, either, yet there may be somebody here very like he—a person who has suffered shipwreck in life and who has now become a drifting, solitary creature. He remembers better days, but by his sins he has become a castaway whom no man seeks after. He is here, tonight, washed up on shore without a friend, suffering in body, broken in estate and crushed in spirit. In the midst of a city full of people, he has not a friend, nor one who would wish to admit that he has ever known him. He has now come to the bare bones of existence. Nothing lies before him but poverty, misery and death.

Thus says the Lord unto you, my Friend, this night, “ Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” You have come here half hoping that there might be a word from God to your soul— “half hoping,” I said—for you are as much under the influence of dread as of hope. You are filled with despair. To you it seems that God has forgotten to be gracious and that He has, in anger, shut up the heart of His compassion. The lying fiend has persuaded you that there is no hope on purpose, so that he may bind you with the fetters of despair and hold you as a captive to work in the mill of ungodliness as you live. You write bitter things against yourself, but they are as false as they are bitter. The Lord’s mercies fail not. His mercy endures forever and thus in mercy does He speak to you, poor troubled spirit, even to you—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.”

I have the feeling upon me that I shall, at this time, speak home, God helping me, to some poor burdened spirit. In such a congregation as this, it is not everybody that can receive a blessing by the Word that is spoken, but certain minds are prepared for it by the Lord. He prepares the Seed to be sown and the ground to receive it! He gives a sense of need and this is the best preparation for the promise. Of what use is comfort to those who are not in distress? The Word of God, tonight, will be of no use and have but little interest in it to those who have no distress of heart. But, however badly I may speak, those hearts will dance for joy which need the cheering assurance of a gracious God and are enabled to receive it as it shines forth in this golden text, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” It is a text which I would have written in stars across the sky, or sounded forth with trumpet at noon from the top of every tower, or printed on every sheet of paper which shines through the post! It should be known and read by all of mankind!

Four things suggest themselves to me. May the Holy Spirit bless what I am able to say upon them!  
I. The first observation is not so much in my text, alone, as in this text and the context. REALISM IS PREFERRED TO RITUALISM. If you will carefully read the rest of the Psalm, you will see that the Lord is speaking of the rites and ceremonies of Israel and is showing that He has little care about formalities of worship when the heart is absent from them. I think we must read the whole passage—“I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay your vows unto the Most High: and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” Thus praise and prayer are accepted in preference to every form of offering which it was possible for the Jew to present before the Lord. Why is this?  
First of all I would answer, real prayer is far better than mere ritual because there a meaning in it—and when Grace is absent, there is no meaning in ritual—it is as senseless as an idiot’s game.  
Did you ever stand in some Romish cathedral and see the daily service, especially if it happened to be upon a high day? What with the boys in white and the men in violet, or pink, or red, or black, there were performers enough to stock a decent village! What with those who carried candlesticks and those who carried crosses, and those who carried pots and pans, and cushions and books, and those who rang bells, and those who made a smoke, and those who sprinkled water, and those who bobbed their heads and those who bowed their knees, the whole concern was very amazing to look at—very amazing, very amusing, very childish! One wonders, when he sees it, what it is all about and what kind of people those must be who are really made better by it! One marvels, also, what an idea pious Romanists must have of God if they imagine that He is pleased with such performances! Do you not wonder how the good Lord endures it? What must His glorious mind think of it all?

Albeit that the incense is sweet, the flowers are pretty, the ornaments are fine and everything is according to ancient rubric—what is there in it? To what purpose that procession? To what end that decorated priest?— that gorgeous altar? Do these things mean anything? Are they not a senseless show?  
The glorious God cares nothing for pomp and show! But when you call upon Him in the day of trouble and ask Him to deliver you, there is meaning in your groan of anguish. This is no empty form—there is heart in it, is there not? There is meaning in the appeal of sorrow and, therefore, God prefers the prayer of a broken heart to the finest service that ever was performed by priests and choirs! There is meaning in the soul’s bitter cry, but there is no meaning in the pompous ceremony. In the poor man’s prayer there are mind, heart and soul and, therefore, it is real to the Lord. Here is a living soul seeking contact with the living God in reality and in truth! Here is a breaking heart crying out to the compassionate Spirit!  
Ah, You may bid the organ peal forth its sweetest and its loudest notes, but what is the meaning of mere wind passing through pipes? A child cries and there is meaning in that. A man standing up in yonder corner groans out, “O God, my heart will break!” There is more force in his moan than in a thousand of the biggest trumpets, drums, cymbals, tambourines or any other instruments of music with which men seek to please God nowadays! What madness to think that God cares for musical sounds, or ordered marching, or variegated garments! In a tear, or a sob, or a cry, there is meaning, but in mere sound there is no sense and God cares not for the meaningless! He cares for that which has thought and feeling in it.  
Why does God prefer realism to Ritualism? It is for this reason, also, that there is something spiritual in the cry of a troubled heart and “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Suppose I were to repeat, tonight, the finest creed for accuracy that was ever composed by learned and orthodox men? Yet, if I had no faith in it and you had none, what were the use of the repetition of the words? There is nothing spiritual in mere orthodox statements if we have no real belief in them—we might as well repeat the alphabet and call it devotion! And if we were to burst forth, tonight, in the grandest hallelujah that ever pealed from mortal lips—and we did not mean it—there would be nothing spiritual in it and it would be nothing to God!  
But when a poor soul gets away into its chamber and bows its knee and cries, “God, be merciful to me! God save me! God help me in this day of trouble!” there is spiritual life in such a cry and, therefore, God approves it and answers it! Spiritual worship is that what He wants and He will have it, or He will have nothing! “They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” He has abolished the Ceremonial Law, destroyed the one altar at Jerusalem, burned the Temple, abolished the Aaronic priesthood and ended, forever, all ritualistic performance—for He seeks only true worshippers who worship Him in spirit and in truth.  
Further, the Lord loves the cry of the broken heart because it distinctly recognizes Him as the living God, in very deed, sought after in prayer. From much of outward devotion God is absent. But how we mock God when we do not discern Him as present and do not come near unto Him! When the heart, the mind and the soul breaks through itself to get to its God, then it is that God is glorified, but not by any bodily exercises in which He is forgotten! Oh, how real God is to a man who is perishing and feels that only God can save him! He believes that God is, or else he would not make so piteous a prayer to him. He said his prayers before and little cared whether God heard or not, but he prays now and God’s hearing is his chief anxiety!  
Besides, dear Friends, God takes great delight in our crying to Him in the day of trouble because there is sincerity in it. I am afraid that in the hour of our mirth and the day of our prosperity many of our prayers and our thanksgivings are hypocrisy. Too many of us are like boys’ tops that cease to spin unless they are whipped. Certainly we pray with a deep intensity when we get into great trouble! A man is very poor. He is out of a job. He has worn his shoes out in trying to find work. He does not know where the next meal is coming from for his children and, if he prays now, it is likely to be a very sincere prayer, for he is in real earnest on account of real trouble. I have sometimes wished for some very gentlemanly Christian people, who seem to treat religion as if it were all kid gloves, that they could have just a little time of the “roughing” of it and really come into actual difficulties. A life of ease breeds hosts of falsehoods and pretences which would soon vanish in the presence of matter-of-fact trials!  
Many a man has been converted to God in the bush of Australia by hunger, weariness and loneliness, who, when he was a wealthy man, surrounded by many flatterers, never thought of God at all! Many a man on board ship on yon Atlantic has learned to pray in the cold chill of an iceberg, or in the horrors of the trough of the wave out of which the vessel could not rise. When the mast has gone by the board, every timber has been strained and the ship has seemed doomed, then have hearts begun to pray in sincerity! And God loves sincerity. When we mean it—when the soul melts in prayer—when it is, “I must have it, or be lost.” When it is no sham, no vain performance, but a real heart-breaking, agonizing cry, then God accepts it. And therefore, He says, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble.” Such a cry is the kind of worship that He cares for because there is sincerity in it—and this is acceptable with the God of Truth.  
Again, in the cry of the troubled one there is humility. We may go through a highly brilliant performance of religion after the rites of some gaudy church, or we may go through our own rites which are as simple as they can be—and we may be, all the while saying to ourselves, “This is very nicely done.” The preacher may be thinking, “Am I not preaching well?” The Brother at the Prayer Meeting may feel within himself, “How delightfully fluent I am!” Whenever there is that spirit in us, God cannot accept our worship! Worship is not acceptable if it is devoid of humility. Now, when in the day of trouble a man goes to God and says, “Lord, help me! I cannot help myself, but interpose for me,” there is humility in that confession and cry and, therefore, the Lord takes delight in it.  
You, poor woman over here, deserted by your husband and ready to wish that you could die, I exhort you to call upon God in the day of trouble, for I know that you will pray a humble prayer. You, poor trembler over yonder, you have done very wrong and are likely to be found out and disgraced for it, but I charge you to cry to God in prayer, for I am sure there will be no pride about your petition! You will be broken in spirit and humble before God—and “a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”  
Once more, the Lord loves such pleadings because there is a measure of faith in them. When the man in trouble cries, “Lord deliver me!” he is looking away from himself. You see, he is driven out of himself because of the famine that is in the land. He cannot find hope or help on earth and, therefore, he looks towards Heaven. Perhaps he has been to friends and they have failed him and, therefore, in sheer despair, he seeks his truest Friend. At last he comes to God and, though he cannot say that he believes in God’s goodness as he ought, yet he has some dim and shadowy faith in it, or else he would not be coming to God in this, his time of extremity. God loves to discover even the shadow of faith in His unbelieving creature! When faith does, as it were, only cross over the field of the camera, so that across the photograph there is a dim trace of its having been there, God can spy it out and He can and will accept prayer for the sake of that little faith. Oh, dear Heart, where are you? Are you torn with anguish? Are you sorely distressed? Are you lonely? Are you cast away? Then cry to God! No one else can help you—now are you shut up to Him. Blessed shutting up! Cry to Him, for He can help you and, I tell you, in that cry of yours there will be a pure and true worship such as God desires far more than the slaughter of 10,000 bullocks, or the pouring out of rivers of oil! It is true, assuredly, from Scripture, that the groan of a burdened spirit is among the sweetest sounds that are ever heard by the ear of the Most High. Plaintive cries are anthems with Him, to whom all mere arrangements of sound must be as child’s play!  
See then, poor, weeping and distracted ones, that it is not Ritualism! It is not the performance of pompous ceremonies! It is not bowing and scraping! It is not using sacred words! No! It is crying to God in the hour of your trouble which is the most acceptable sacrifice your spirit can bring before the Throne of God.  
II. We now come to our second observation. May God impress it upon us all! In our text we have ADVERSITY TURNED TO ADVANTAGE. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.”  
We say it with all reverence, but God Himself cannot deliver a man who is not in trouble and, therefore, it is some advantage to be in distress because God can then deliver you. Even Jesus Christ, the Healer of men, cannot heal a man who is not sick, so that it turns to our advantage to be sick in order that Christ may heal us. Thus, my Hearer, your adversity may prove your advantage by offering occasion and opportunity for the display of Divine Grace. It is great wisdom to learn the art of making honey out of gall and the text teaches us how to do that. It shows how trouble can become gain. When you are in adversity, call upon God and you shall experience a deliverance which will be a richer and sweeter experience for your soul than if you had never known trouble. Here is the art and science of making gains out of losses and advantages out of adversities.

Now let me suppose that there is some person here in trouble. Perhaps another deserted Robinson Crusoe is among us. I am not idly supposing that a tried individual is here, he is so. Well now, when you pray—and oh, I wish you would pray now—do you not see what a plea you have? You have, first, a plea from the time—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble.” You can plead, “Lord, this is a day of trouble! I am in great affliction and my case is urgent at this hour.” Then state what your trouble is—that sick wife, that dying child, that sinking business, that failing health, that employment which you have lost—that poverty which stares you in the face. Say unto the Lord of Mercy, “My Lord, if ever a man was in a day of trouble, I am that man and, therefore, I take leave and license to pray to You, now, because You have said, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble.’ This is the hour which You have appointed for appealing to You, this dark, this stormy day. If ever there was a man that had a right given Him to pray by Your own Word, I am that man, for I am in trouble and, therefore, I will make use of the very time as a plea with You. Do, I beseech You, hear Your servant’s cry in this midnight hour.”  
Next, you can not only make use of the time as a plea, but you may urge the trouble, itself. You may argue thus, “You have said, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble.’ O Lord, You see how great my trouble is. It is a very heavy one. I cannot bear it, or get rid of it. It follows me to bed; it will not let me sleep. When I rise up it is still with me, I cannot shake it off. Lord, my trouble is an unusual one—few are afflicted as I am, therefore give me extraordinary succor! Lord, my trouble is a crushing one! If You do not help me, I shall soon be broken up by it!” That is good reasoning and prevalent pleading.  
Further, turn your adversity to advantage by pleading the command. You can go to the Lord now, at this precise instant, and say, “Lord, hear me, for You have commanded me to pray! I, though I am evil, would not tell a man to ask a thing of me if I intended to deny him. I would not urge him to ask help if I meant to refuse it.” Do you not know, Brothers and Sisters, that we often impute to the good Lord conduct which we would be ashamed of in ourselves? This must not be! If you said to a poor man, “You are in very sad circumstances. Write to me tomorrow and I will see to your affairs for you”—and if he did write to you, you would not treat his letter with contempt. You would be bound to consider his case. When you told him to write, you meant that you would help him if you could. And when God tells you to call upon Him, He does not mock you! He means that He will deal kindly with you. You are not urged to pray in the hour of trouble, that you may experience all the deeper disappointment. God knows that you have trouble enough without the new one of unanswered prayer. The Lord will not unnecessarily add even a quarter of an ounce to your burden. If He bids you call upon Him, you may call upon Him without fear of failure. I do not know who you are. You may be Robinson Crusoe, for all I know, but you may call on the Lord, for He bids you call and, if you do call upon Him, you can put this argument into your prayer— *“Lord, You have bid me seek Your face  
And shall I seek in vain?  
And shall the ear of Sovereign Grace  
Be deaf when I complain?”*  
So plead the time, plead the trouble and plead the command—and then plead with God His own Character. Speak with Him reverently, but believingly, in this fashion, “Lord, it is You Yourself to whom I appeal. You have said, ‘Call upon Me.’ If my neighbor had bid me do so, I might have feared that perhaps he would not hear me, but would change his mind. But You are too great and good to change! Lord, by Your truth and by Your faithfulness, by Your Immutability and by Your love, I, a poor sinner, heartbroken and crushed, call upon You in the day of trouble! Oh, help me and help me soon or else I die!” Surely you that are in trouble have many and mighty pleas. You are on firm ground with the Angel of the Covenant and may bravely seize the blessing!  
I do not feel, tonight, as if the text encouraged me one-half as much as it must encourage others of you, for I am not in trouble just now and you are. I thank God I am full of joy and rest, but I am half inclined to see if I cannot patch up a little bit of trouble for myself—surely if I were in trouble and sitting in those pews, I would open my mouth and drink in this text and pray like David, or Elijah, or Daniel, in the power of this promise, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.”  
O, you troubled ones, leap up at the sound of this Word of God! Believe it! Let it go down into your souls! “The Lord looses the prisoners.” He has come to loose you! I can see my Master arrayed in His silken garments. His countenance is joyous as Heaven, His face is bright as morning without clouds and in His hand He bears a silver key. “Where are You going, my Master, with that silver key of Yours?” “I go,” He says, “to open the door to the captive and to loosen everyone that is bound.” Blessed Master, fulfill Your errand and pass not these prisoners of hope! We will not hinder You for a moment, but do not forget these mourners! Go up these galleries and down these aisles and set free the prisoners of Giant Despair— and make their hearts to sing for joy because they have called upon You in the day of trouble and You have delivered them—and they shall glorify You!  
III. My third head is clearly in the text. Here we have FREE GRACE LAID UNDER BONDS.  
Nothing in Heaven or earth can be freer than Grace, but here is Grace putting itself under bonds of promise and covenant. Listen! “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.” If a person has once said to you, “I will,” you have him—he has placed himself at the command of his own declaration. If he is a true man and has plainly said, “I will,” you have him in your hands! He is not free after giving a promise as he was before it. He has set himself a certain way and he must keep to it. Is it not so? I say so with the deepest reverence towards my Lord and Master—He has bound Himself in the text with cords that He cannot break! He must now hear and help those who call upon Him in the day of trouble. He has solemnly promised and He will fully perform.  
Notice that this text is unconditional as to the persons. It contains the gist of that other promise—“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The people who are specially addressed in the text had mocked God. They had presented their sacrifices without a true heart, but yet the Lord said to each of them, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.” Therefore I gather that He excludes none from the promise. You atheist, you blasphemer, you unchaste and impure one—if you call upon the Lord, now, in this, the day of your trouble, He will deliver you! Come and try Him! “If there is a God,” you say? But there is a God, say I! Come, put Him to the test and see. He says, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.” Will you not prove Him now? Come here, you shackled ones, and see if He does not free you! Come to Christ, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest! In temporals and in spirituals, but specially in spiritual things, call upon Him in the day of trouble and He will deliver you! He is bound by this great unrestricted Word of His, about which He has put neither ditch nor hedge— whoever will call upon Him in the day of trouble shall be delivered!  
Moreover, notice that this “I will” includes all necessary power which may be required for deliverance. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.” “But how can this be?” cries one! Ah, that I cannot tell you and I do not feel bound to tell you—it rests with the Lord to find suitable ways and means. God says, “I will.” Let Him do it in His own way. If He says, “I will,” depend upon it, He will keep His Word! If it is necessary to shake Heaven and earth, He will do it, for He cannot lack power and He certainly does not lack honesty—and an honest man will keep his word at all costs and so will a faithful God! Hear Him say, “I will deliver you,” and ask no more questions. I do not suppose that Daniel knew how God would deliver him out of the den of lions. I do not suppose that Joseph knew how he would be delivered out of the prison when his mistress had slandered his character so shamefully. I do not suppose that these ancient Believers dreamed of the way of the Lord’s deliverance—but they left themselves in God’s hands. They rested upon God and He delivered them in the best possible manner. He will do the same for you—only call upon Him and then stand still—and see the salvation of God!  
Notice, the text does not say exactly when. “I will deliver you” is plain enough, but whether it shall be tomorrow, or next week, or next year, is not so clear. You are in a great hurry, but the Lord is not. Your trial may not yet have worked all the good to you that it was sent to do and, therefore, it must last longer. When the gold is cast into the refining pot, it might cry to the goldsmith, “Let me out.” “No,” he says, “you have not yet lost your dross. You must tarry in the fire till I have purified you.” God may, therefore, subject us to many trials and yet, if He says, “I will deliver you,” depend upon it, He will keep His Word! The Lord’s promise is like a good bill from a substantial firm. A bill may be dated three months ahead, but anybody will discount it if it bears a trusted name. When you get God’s, “I will,” you may always cash it by faith and no discount need be taken from it, for it is current money of the merchant even when it is only, “I will.” God’s promise for the future is good bona fide stuff for the present, if you have but faith to use it! “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you,” is tantamount to deliverance already received! It means, “If I do not deliver you now, I will deliver you at a time that is better than now, when, if you were as wise as I am, you would

 prefer to be delivered rather than now.”  
But promptness is implied, for otherwise deliverance would not be worked. “Ah!” says one, “I am in such a trouble that if I do not get deliverance soon, I shall die.” Rest assured that you shall not die. You shall be delivered and, therefore, you shall be delivered before you quite die of despair. He will deliver you in the best possible time. The Lord is always punctual. You never were kept waiting by Him. You have kept Him waiting long enough, but He is prompt to the instant. He never keeps His servants waiting one single tick of the clock beyond His own appointed, fitting, wise and proper moment. “I will deliver you,” implies that His delays will not be too protracted, lest the spirit of man should fail because of hope deferred. The Lord rides on the wings of the wind when He comes to the rescue of those who seek Him. Therefore, be of good courage!  
Oh, this is a blessed text! And yet, what can I do with it? I cannot carry it home to those of you who need it most. Spirit of the living God, come and apply these rich consolations to those hearts which are bleeding and ready to die!  
Do notice this text once again. Let me repeat it, putting the emphasis in a different way—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.” Pick up the threads of those two words. “I will deliver you; men will not; angels cannot; but I will.” God Himself will set about the rescue of the man that calls upon Him! It is yours to call and it is God’s to answer. Poor trembler, you begin to try to answer your own prayers! Why did you pray to God, then? When you have prayed, leave it to God to fulfill His own promise. He says, “Call upon Me and I will deliver you.”  
Now take up that other word: “I will deliver you.” I know what you are thinking, Mr. John. You murmur, “God will deliver everybody, I believe, but not me.” But the text says, “I will deliver you.” It is the man that calls that shall get the answer. Mary, where are you? If you call upon God, He will answer you. He will give you the blessing even to your own heart and spirit, in your own personal experience. “Call upon Me,” He says, “in the day of trouble: I will deliver you.” Oh, for Grace to take that personal pronoun home to one’s soul and to make sure of it as though you could see it with your own eyes! The Apostle tells us, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.” Assuredly I know that the worlds were made by God. I am sure of it and yet I did not see Him making them! I did not see Him when the light came because He said, “Let there be light.”  
I did not see Him divide the light from the darkness and the waters that are beneath the firmament from the waters that are above the firmament, but I am quite sure that He did all this. All the evolution gentlemen in the world cannot shake my conviction that creation was worked by God— though I was not there to see Him make even a bird or a flower. Why should I not have just the same kind of faith, tonight, about God’s answer to my prayer if I am in trouble? If I cannot see how He will deliver me, why should I wish to see? He created the world well enough without my knowing how He was to do it and He will deliver me without my having a finger in it! It is no business of mine to see how He works. My business is to trust in my God and glorify Him by believing that what He has promised He is able to perform.  
IV. Thus we have had three sweet things to remember and we close with a fourth, which is this—here are GOD AND THE PRAYING MAN TAKING TURNS.  
That is an odd word to close with, but I want you to notice it. Here are the shares. First, it is your turn—“Call upon Me in the day of trouble.” Secondly, it is God’s turn—“I will deliver you.” Again, it is your turn—for you shall be delivered. And then, again, it is the Lord’s turn—“you shall glorify Me.” Here is a compact, a Covenant that God enters into with you who pray to Him and whom He helps. He says, “You shall have the deliverance, but I must have the Glory. You shall pray; I will bless and then you shall honor My holy name.” Here is a delightful partnership—we obtain that which we so greatly need and all that God gets is the Glory which is due unto His name!  
Poor troubled heart! I am sure you do not object to these terms, “Sinners,” says the Lord, “I will give you pardon, but you must give Me the honor of it.” Our only answer is, “Yes, Lord, that we will, forever and ever.”—  
*“Who is a pardoning God like You?  
Or who has Grace so rich and free?”*  
“Come, souls,” He says, “I will justify you, but I must have the Glory for it.” And our answer is, “Where is boasting, then? It is excluded! By the Law of works? No, but by the Law of faith.” God must have the Glory if we are justified by Christ. “Come,” He says, “I will put you into My family, but My Grace must have the Glory for it.” And we say, “Yes, that it shall, good Lord! Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.”  
“Now,” He says, “I will sanctify you, and make you holy, but I must have the Glory for it.” And our answer is, “Yes, we will sing forever—‘We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore will we serve Him day and night in His Temple, giving Him all praise.’”  
“I will take you home to Heaven,” says God. “I will deliver you from sin and death and Hell; but I must have the Glory for it.” “Truly,” we say, “You shall be magnified! Forever and forever we will sing, ‘Blessing and honor, and Glory and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.’”  
Stop, you thief, there! What are you doing? Running away with a portion of God’s Glory? What a villain he must be! Here is a man that was lately a drunk and God has loved him and made him sober—and he is wonderfully proud because he is sober. What folly! Stop it, Sir! Stop it! Give God the Glory of your deliverance from the degrading vice, or else you are still degraded by ingratitude! Here is another man. He used to swear, but he has been praying now. He even delivered a sermon the other night, or at least an open-air address. He has been as proud about this as any peacock! O bird of pride, when you look at your fine feathers, remember your black feet and your hideous voice! O reclaimed sinner, remember your former character and be ashamed! Give God the Glory if you have ceased to be profane. Give God the Glory for every part of your salvation!  
Alas, even some divines will give man a little of the Glory. He has a free will, has he not? Oh, that Dagon of free will! How men will worship it! The man did something towards his salvation, by virtue of which he ought to receive some measure of honor! Do you really think so? Then say as you think. But we will have it from this pulpit and we will declare it to the whole world, that when a man reaches Heaven, there shall not be a particle of the Glory due to himself! He shall in no wise ascribe honor to his own feeble efforts, but unto God, alone, shall be the Glory! “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord, Glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His name.”  
“Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you”—that is your part. But, “you shall glorify Me”—that is God’s part. He must have all the honor from first to last!  
Go out therefore, you saved ones, and tell all what the Lord has done for you! An aged woman once said that if the Lord Jesus Christ really did save her, He should never hear the last of it. Join with her in that resolve! Truly, my soul vows that my delivering Lord shall never hear the last of my salvation—  
*“I’ll praise Him in life, and praise Him in death, And praise Him as long as He lends me breath! And I’ll say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow, If ever I loved You, my Jesus, ‘tis now.’”*  
Come, poor Soul, you that came in here tonight in the deepest of trouble, God means to glorify Himself by you! The day shall yet come when you shall comfort other mourners by the rehearsal of your happy experience. The day may yet come when you that were a castaway shall preach the Gospel to castaways! The day shall yet come, poor fallen woman, when you shall lead other sinners to the Savior’s feet where now you stand weeping! You abandoned of the devil, whom even Satan is tired of, whom the world rejects because you are worn out and stale—the day shall yet come when, renewed in heart and washed in the blood of the Lamb, you shall shine like a star in the firmament to the praise of the Glory of His Grace who has made you to be accepted in the Beloved! O desponding Sinner, come to Jesus! Do call upon Him, I entreat you! Be persuaded to call upon your God and Father. If you can do no more than groan, groan unto God! Drop a tear, heave a sigh and let your heart say to the Lord, “O God, deliver me, for Christ’s sake! Save me from my sin and the consequences of it.” As surely as you thus pray, He will hear you and say, “Your sins are forgiven you. Go in peace.” So may it be. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 50.*  
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END OF VOLUME 31 Sermon #3119 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MISTAKES CONCERNING GOD  
NO. 3119

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1908.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 26, 1874.

**“You thought that I was altogether like you.”  
Psalm 50:21.**

GOD is here speaking to a bad man who had been committing all sorts of evil deeds. Even while professing to declare God’s statutes, he had been casting God’s Words behind him. He had been the accomplice of thieves and had been uttering falsehood and slander, yet all the while God did not interfere with him, but allowed him to run on in his wicked way. And the man gathered from that noninterference that God did not mind what he was doing and that, in fact, He was like he! But if we begin to think in a right manner about God and ourselves, it will strike us at once that there must always have been an Infinite disparity between the eternal God and the very noblest of His creatures! It is true that man was made in the image of God and that when he was in his perfect state, he could have learned more from what he then was as to what God might be than he could learn from all the rest of creation. His moral qualities, before sin had tainted his nature, rendered him akin to the Most High. Yet even then, although man was in the image of God, it must have been a very tiny miniature of the Infinite One. Manhood is not a mirror broad enough or long enough to reflect the majesty of the Eternal. We are like God as a spark of fire is like the sun, or as a tiny raindrop may be like the sea, but the resemblance cannot go any farther than that—and perhaps not as far! We are but creatures of a day, and He is the Everlasting. Even if we had still remained as pure as the holy angels that adore the thrice Holy One, we would have felt ourselves to be less than nothing in His eyes. But now that man has fallen from his first estate, how unlike God he is! Man fallen is only the image of God so far as a miniature dashed to pieces could be said to be a likeness at all. But there are touches of the Divine about man even in his lost estate. Manhood is a palace, but it is like a palace after a siege, or a conflagration, or long decay—a ruin, like some ancient palace or temple that is now the haunt of serpents and owls—with just enough to show us what it once was, but much more to show us how changed it has become! And if fallen man is unlike God, man further debased by gross sin becomes not merely unlike God, but the very opposite of God, so that you may sooner learn, from a man who has degraded himself by vice, what God is

 not than what God is! And it becomes a monstrous mistake, and far worse than a mistake, when such a man as that looks at himself and says, “God is like me.” “You thought”—and it was a most blasphemous thought—“you thought that I was altogether like you.”

It is my sorrowful task to have to show you that this great sin is very common among three classes of persons. First, it is very common for the ungodly to fall into this error. Secondly, returning sinners often make the same mistake. And thirdly, even the children of God are not always free from this error.

I. First, then, IT IS A COMMON THING FOR THE UNGODLY TO FALL INTO THIS ERROR—“You thought that I was altogether like you.”  
God is very long-suffering to men—this is not the place of judgment. Sinners are not, as a general rule, punished here. Their sentence is reserved until the Day of Judgment. Some people regard every accident as a judgment, but we do not agree with them at all, otherwise we would have to very frequently condemn the innocent. Our Lord has very expressly told us that those upon whom the tower in Siloam fell were not greater sinners than the rest of those who dwelt in Jerusalem at that time. And that the Galileans whom Pilate slew and whose blood he mingled with their sacrifices, were no worse than the other Galileans who went up to the Temple and came away unharmed. [See Sermon #408, Volume 7—ACCIDENTS, NOT PUNISHMENTS, a copy of which Dr. Livingstone carried during his African travels, and on which he wrote, “Very good. – D. L.”— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] God does sometimes startle the world with His judgments, but not often. This is not the time of judgment—judgment is yet to come. The objective of God in thus keeping His sword sheathed when, oftentimes, we are inclined to think that it might fairly be drawn and used, is to lead those who are thus spared to repentance and salvation. “I will spare them yet a little while longer,” says the long-suffering Lord. And so the trees that only cumber the ground are not hewn down—and the inference that wicked men draw is not that God wishes them to repent and turn to Him—but that He is like themselves.  
Wicked men imagine that God is like themselves in the following ways. First, in an insensibility to moral emotion. They do not care whether a thing is right or wrong. To have done right gives them no joy. To have done wrong gives their hardened hearts no pain. Some of them can curse and blaspheme—the words that make a child of God shudder with horror seem to be their usual language. In fact, you cannot now stand in our streets, where there are two or three working men, without hearing such filthy language, much of it utterly unmeaning, that you wonder how their companions can endure it! Yet none of them seem to mind it and they will commit deeds which it would be wrong for me to mention, but when they have committed them, they seem to forget all about them. And they suppose because God does not strike them dead, or punish them immediately for their transgressions, that He is just as impervious to moral emotion as they are—that He never grows angry at sin and that He takes no delight whatever in excellence! How grossly do they mistake God in this supposition! He feels sin most sensitively. To Him it is “exceedingly sinful.” It touches the very apple of His eye. It grieves Him at the heart. It vexes His Holy Spirit. Yet the ungodly think not so.  
They also are utterly careless about how they perform their own duties in relation to God and they suppose that God is equally careless as to the discharge of the office which He sustains. If these ungodly men were made judges, they would neither fear God nor regard man—and they suppose that God, the Judge of All, has no respect for His own moral government, no care for the vindication of His Law—that He lets things go just as they please and will not interfere with men, but will let them act as they like. If they are servants, they are only eye-servants and are not careful to do that which is right. If they are masters, they seek only to do the best they can for themselves. The mass of mankind seldom look round to see the general bearings of a question—they only enquire, “How will this affect me?” Each man joins that party in politics, or that particular club, or goes in for the defense of that particular Act of Parliament which he regards as most likely to advance his own interests. As to the general equity of the whole concern, only a few eclectic spirits will be found who will consider that! And that God should always be a God of equity, that He should look into the motives of men’s actions and especially that He should punish every sinful action, word, thought and act with the utmost scrupulousness as a Judge—all this ungodly men do not understand! They think that God is as loose and lax as they are, that He plays battledore and shuttlecock with moralities and will let men do just as they like, never calling them to account. At least they seem to think that if there should be any account to be rendered to God at the last, it will be a very small matter which will soon be over—and that there is for them no everlasting punishment, no dreadful terrors of the wrath to come!  
They think that God is altogether like as they are and they themselves are indifferent to the condition of others. If they hear that a man has become a drunk, it does not greatly concern them. If they hear that a man has been committing an act of uncleanness, very likely they make fun of it, but it never troubles them. If they were informed that hundreds had passed into Hell within the last few days, they would regard it as no matter of concern to them—they suppose that God is just as indifferent as they are. O Sirs, why will you so defame your Maker as to think is possible that He can be like yourselves? God is concerned about the character of the poorest man and woman living on the face of the earth! The honesty of that poor work-girl, or the chastity of that young man whose name will never be published before the world is a matter of intense interest to Him. The right that is done, or the wrong that is perpetrated in every place beneath the sun is a matter of the deepest concern to Him. He knows it all, writes it all down in His Book of Remembrance and feels glad or sad concerning it all. He is not a God of stone or of wood! He is a God—I know not how to speak of Him with due honor, for He is altogether beyond the range of human imagination or description—but I know that He is a God of wondrous sensitiveness with regard to sin! He cannot bear even to look upon iniquity—His whole Being loathes it! We know that He is not indifferent to sin because the Inspired Psalmist tells us that “God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turns not, He will whet His sword. He has bent His bow and made it ready.”  
Ungodly men also seem to imagine that God, like themselves, is easily deceived by appearances. They go to church or to chapel and they seem to think that by doing so, they have wiped off all their old scores. What if they have broken God’s Law in different ways for many years? Have they not been to hear a sermon? Have they not even been to a Prayer Meeting? Have they not repeated, night and morning, a prayer that their mother taught them when they were children? As for sin, they regard that as a small matter. When they are about to die, they can send for some good man to pray with them and so everything can easily be made all right. That is their notion. Ah, but God is not deceived by outward appearances—He looks at the heart and requires that there should be in the heart, purity, a love for the right and a hatred for the wrong, and these beings are never in the heart apart from the new birth which is always accompanied by faith in Jesus Christ!  
We have known some go to the length of thinking, or pretending to think, that God was an accomplice in their sins. Because He sat still and did not at once interfere and smite them, they have said, after the commission of a certain sinful action, that Providence seemed to have put them in circumstances where it was necessary for them to do wrong! We have constantly heard men try to make excuse for their sins by reason of the peculiar position or the very remarkable circumstances in which they were placed. Even a murderer has pleaded his necessities as a reason why he felt that he might steal and even kill to supply his needs! Men will actually say that God has put them where they cannot help doing wrong and that “fate” decreed it and God ordained it! And so they seek to shift the blame from themselves. This is indeed thinking and saying that God is like themselves—and it is the height of impudent blasphemy when a man reaches that point! O You pure and holy God who utterly abhors everything that is evil, how far has the sinner gone in sin when, instead of confessing his iniquity with shamefacedness and humiliation, he dares to speak as if You were as sinful as he is!  
This condition of heart in which men think that God is like themselves prevents their feeling any reverence for Him. Hence, many of them render to Him no kind of worship, set apart no day especially as His and even ridicule the idea of there being any Lord’s-Day in the week! They have a League of their own for the special purpose of desecrating the day that most of His people regard as His beyond all the other days of the week. This takes away from them all desire to pray to God. They say, “If we pray to Him, what profit shall it be to us?” His Inspired Word is to them no more than any other book—indeed, they even venture to criticize it with a severity which they do not show towards the works of their own poets or historians! They utterly reject both God and His salvation.  
This mistaken notion concerning God also keeps sinners from repentance. As long as a man thinks that God is as bad as he is, he will never repent of his sin. It is often the holiness of God that breaks men down under a sense of their own guilt. This mistaken idea of the Character of God also prevents the exercise of faith, for a man cannot have faith in one whose character he does not respect! And if I am wicked enough to drag God down to my level in my estimation of Him, of course I cannot trust Him, for I have enough sense left to enable me to feel that I could not trust Him if He is like myself! If He is, indeed, such as my depraved imagination pictures Him, faith in Him becomes an absurdity and well may the man who thinks this of God say that it is not possible for him to believe in Him! Of course he could not believe in such a god as he sets up in his own imagination! But O, You ever-blessed Jehovah, when we know how holy, pure, good, true and perfect You are—and see how opposite to You we are in every respect, we do, like Job—abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes and we find it easy to put our trust in You! When Your blessed Spirit has opened our eyes to see You, how can we keep from trusting You? When we know You, we must rely upon You! When we see the beauties of everlasting love gleaming in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, every power of our being seems to say, “I must trust in Him and rest in Him alone.” May God bless these words to any ungodly ones who have been thinking that He is like themselves!

II. Now, secondly, I am going to speak of the same sin from another point of view and show you that RETURNING SINNERS OFTEN MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE CONCERNING GOD.  
Numbers of persons are kept from peace of mind through mistaken ideas of God. They think that He is like themselves and so they do not receive the Gospel. For instance, it is not the easiest thing in the world to forgive those who have trespassed against us. There are some people who find this duty to be one of the hardest that they have to perform. Consequently, when a man with such a disposition as that is conscious of having offended God, he thinks it is quite as hard for God to forgive him as it is for him to forgive his fellow man! And judging God by himself, he says, “Surely He cannot forgive me.” Looking at his innumerable provocations, thinking of the twenty, or perhaps forty, fifty, or 60 years or more in which he has hardened his heart against God, he says to himself, “I could not forgive a man who had held out so long against me, so how is it possible for God to forgive me?” Well might the Lord answer him out of the excellent Glory, “You think that I am like you, but as high as the heavens are above the earth so high are My ways above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts.” I have never found a text which says, “Who is a man like unto you, that pardons iniquity and passes by transgression?” for that is not characteristic of man! But I do find this text, “Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?” Yes, the Lord loves to forgive! He delights to pardon. His Justice has been fully vindicated by the death of His Son, the Substitute for sinners. That was necessary, for He could not tarnish His Justice even for the sake of His mercy! But now that the righteous Judge sees that the foundations of His moral government will not be shaken by His forgiveness of repenting sinners, He can freely dispense the mercy in which He delights. His mercy endures forever and whoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall find mercy! It is not difficult for God to forgive though it may be difficult for us to do so.  
The awakened sinner often imagines that since he would not bestow favors upon the undeserving, therefore God will not. He hears of the great blessings that are promised in the Word of God to those who believe in Jesus and he says, “This news is too good to be true.” Contrasting his own deserving with the fullness of this Divine promise, he says, “How can I believe this promise? That one surpasses all credence. How can I accept that other one as true?” The best reply is that given by God in our text, “You thought that I was altogether like you.” What if the gift seems so be too great for you to receive? Is it also too great for God to give? What if it seems to be too lavish to be given by one man to another? It is not too lavish to be given by Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords! Like as a king gives—no, like as a God gives, does He give unto you! The greatness of the Divine promises, instead of staggering our faith, ought to be the evidence of their truthfulness! Is it reasonable to suppose that God would promise to do only little things for those who trust Him? Oh, judge not so! He “does great things past finding out; yes, and wonders without number.” His mercies are high as Heaven, and wide as the East is from the West!  
The convinced sinner is also often troubled with the thought that God cannot mean what He says. “What?” he asks, “can I be pardoned in a moment, be justified in a moment, be saved from Hell and made an heir of Heaven all in a moment?” He thinks it cannot really be so and he thinks so because he often says what he does not mean and he, therefore, thinks that God speaks in the same style. But, Sir, I pray you not to measure God’s corn by your bushel! If you play with words, Jehovah never does! Has He spoken, and will He not do as He has said? Has He promised and shall it not come to pass?  
The sinner next thinks that surely God cannot mean to give him all this mercy freely. He says to himself, “If a man had offended me, I would expect him to make some reparation before I forgave him. I would look for something at his hands—and is God’s mercy to be given to the undeserving and nothing to be asked of him before it is given? How can that be?” He thinks that God cannot mean it and that the Scriptural declaration concerning the freeness of salvation cannot be meant to be taken literally as it stands. When this invitation sounds in a man’s ears, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” he says, “They are beautiful words, but they cannot apply to me, just as I am, without anything to recommend me.” So he practically thinks that God talks as he does, himself, without meaning what He says. But, verily it is not so, for every promise of God is true and shall be fulfilled to the letter!  
This poor convinced sinner next says, “But, surely, you do not mean to say that God will give me all this mercy now.” Yes I do, for He says, “I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Yet, because this sinner has himself been dilly-dallying, and procrastinating and postponing, he thinks that God will act in the same manner and will say to him, “You must wait now—you have waited for your own pleasure, now you may wait for Mine.” But there is nothing in Scripture to warrant such an idea as this! It is only our trying to drag God down to the level of our narrowness and littleness that makes us think so. It is immediate salvation, instantaneous pardon that God delights to give! He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands fast. There stands the sinner in his rags, filthy from head to foot, degraded and debased—but the command comes from the excellent Glory, “Take away his filthy garments from him,” and they are gone in a moment. “Wash him from his defilement,” and he is at once clean. “Array him in white garments,” and he is so arrayed! “Set a fair miter upon his brow,” and the miter is there! What the Lord does requires no time. We need weeks, months, years, to do what we have so do, but when Christ had even to raise the dead, He did it in a moment! He simply said, “Lazarus, come forth,” and there was Lazarus! He touched the bier on which the dead young man lay—and the young man at once sat up and began to speak! He said to the little maiden, “Talitha cumi,” and she opened her eyes at once and rose from her bed ready to eat the refreshment which the Savior commanded her parents to bring her! O poor Sinners, I pray you do not doubt that the great mercy, the free mercy of Jesus Christ is to be given even now, if your hand is but stretched out to receive it!  
I have known some get into their heads the notion that simply to trust in Christ cannot be the right thing for them to do. They say, “Surely, there is a great deal more to do besides that.” Yes, there is much more to do after you have believed, but the Gospel command says, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” One says, “I will go home and pray.” Another says, “I will read the Scriptures.” And there are some who, in their despair of finding peace, resolve to do nothing at all! Some time ago, a young man who had been greatly concerned about his soul, came to the conclusion that he must be lost—and he determined not to read the Bible, nor to attend a place of worship for 12 months. But this very resolve made him still more wretched and, one day, a Christian woman, to whom he told his feelings, was much grieved at his decision and she said to him, “What a pity it is that you cannot take Jesus Christ!” As he walked home, that remark stuck in his mind, “What a pity it is that you cannot take Jesus Christ!” Is that all we have to do—to take Jesus Christ? Yes, that is all. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” comprehends the whole case—and where faith is exercised by us, we are saved. But we think that there must be something behind the promise because we ourselves often keep something behind in our promises, so again the test is true, “You thought that I was altogether like you,” but it is not so. If you come just as you are, with all your sin and hardness of heart—and just rest your guilty soul upon the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, resolved that, if you perish, you will perish trusting alone in Him—your heavenly Father will give you a kiss of acceptance, lift the burden from your weary shoulders and send you home in peace! “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” is no lie, no exaggeration, no straining of the truth! Put it to the test, Sinner! God help you to do so and He shall have all the praise!  
III. Before I close, I must have a few words with you who love the Lord, for THERE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD WHO MAKE THIS SAME MISTAKE. They begin thinking that God is such an one as themselves. Now I am going to find some of you out—I know where you are for I have been that way myself, I am sorry to say.  
Sometimes, we are afraid that God will overlook us because we are so insignificant. If we walk through a forest, possibly we say, “What a lonely place this is—there is nobody here!” Yet, just at our feet, perhaps, there are fifty thousand little ants. “Oh, but we do not count them!” Why not? They are living creatures and God counts them and He takes care to supply their needs as well as the needs of the people in that great city over there! And those birds in the trees, yes, and the tiny insects that hide under the bark that those woodpeckers are seeking after, or those little gnats that dance up and down in the air around you—God takes notice of them all and provides for them all—even as He provides for you! You think, because

 you ignore the insects, that God also ignores them, but He does not! If the Queen were to come down Newington Butts, it would soon be reported in all the papers. But if there is a poor beggar going past our gates just now, with no shoes or stockings on, that will not be noted in “The Times” tomorrow morning. But God takes notice of beggars as well as of queens! You do not know that poor man who is just going into the casual ward at the workhouse—he is of no consequence to you, is he? But he is of consequence to God, for there is not a human being who is beneath God’s notice, nor an animal nor an insect! If you take the tiniest insect in the world and put it under a microscope and examine is carefully, you will see that there are upon it marks of Divine skill and forethought—and if you are able to learn all about that little creature which will only live a single day, you will find that the arrangements concerning it are truly amazing! Yes, God thinks of little things, so you, little one, may believe that God thinks of you! And whenever you harbor the notion that you are too poor and to obscure for God to care about you, say to yourself, “Ah, that is because I am thinking that God is like myself. I step on a beetle and think nothing of it—yet, though I might be far more insignificant in comparison with the great God than a beetle can be in comparison with me—God will not crush me. No, He loves me and He is continually thinking of me!”  
We also are apt to grow weary of the sad and the sorrowful. “Oh,” says one, “I cannot bear to talk to Mr. So-and-So! He has such a gloomy countenance and he speaks in such dolorous tones.” Another says, “Really, my poor sister quite wears me out. I used to nurse her with a great deal more pleasure than I do now, for I think she has less patience than she used to have.” We get weary of those who cannot cheer us, those whose lives are full of sadness and then we think that God gets as weary of us, but He never does! No, O sad ones, the Lord comforts the mourners and cheers those who are cast down. You especially who are sad on account of sin may rest assured that your sadness and dependency will never weary your God—your friends may get tired of you but your God never will!  
We also sometimes forget our promises. In the multiplicity of things that some of us have to do, it is possible that we occasionally fail to keep our promise and we are very grieved when, quite unintentionally, it so happens. But God never forgets any one of His promises, so let no one of us ever say, “My God has forgotten me.” It cannot be! There never was such a thing as a slip of memory with God. Every promise of His will be kept to the second when it comes due.  
We also sometimes find ourselves loath to give to those who ask of us. After we have given to several, we feel that we really cannot give to everybody who asks us for help. But it is never so with God. If we have gone to Him a hundred times, let us be all the bolder to go to Him again! And if we know that He has been helping a thousand other poor saints like ourselves, or poor sinners, too, let us go to Him again and go right boldly, for His bounty of mercy is not exhausted, nor His store of Grace diminished!  
We know, too, dear Friends, that we are often unwise. What man is there on the face of the earth who does not make mistakes? The pope, who is called “infallible,” makes more mistakes than anyone else! We all make mistakes and, therefore, we imagine that God does the same. When we get into a little trouble, we begin to suspect that there is some mistake in the arrangements of Divine Providence. We do not say as much as that—we would be ashamed to say it, especially if anybody heard it—but that is what we think. It seems to us that God has brought us into a difficulty out of which it will not be possible for Him to extricate us. We do not say as much as that, except in our hearts, but, Beloved, when we even think anything like that, we are really imagining that God is such an one as ourselves!  
We know also that we are sometimes harsh in our judgments and that we expect more of people than we ought to and do not make allowances for their infirmities. And we fancy that God is like we are. But to His dear children He is always generous and kind, even as Jesus made allowance for His sleeping disciples when He said, “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.” I think that we sometimes represent God as being even worse than we ourselves are. When I was ill, some little time ago, I found that I could not keep my thoughts fixed upon any subject as I wanted to. When I tried to meditate upon holy themes, my mind rambled because the pain I was suffering quite distracted me. I said to a friend who came to visit me that I wished I could concentrate my thoughts and that I felt as a Christian, I ought to do so. He said, “Well now, if your boy was as ill as you are and he said to you, ‘Father, I cannot think as much about you as I would like to do, my pain is so great,’ you would say, ‘My dear son, I do not expect you to do anything of the kind.’ You would sit down by his bedside and try to comfort him. And you would tell him that while his poor body was so racked with pain, you would not be so unreasonable as to expect him to act in any other way.” I saw at once that my friend was right and then he said to me, “Do you think that you are kinder to your son than God is to us?” If our opinion of God is that He is harsher and sterner to us than we are to our children, it is a very erroneous notion. Some Christian people seem to be afraid to rejoice, yet we love to see our children full of joy, so we may be sure that our heavenly Father loves so see His children happy.  
Further, we know that we ourselves are weak and, therefore, we dream that God is also weak. When the furnace of affliction is very hot and we feel that we cannot endure its heat, we foolishly think that God cannot uphold us under the fiery trial. If our labor is very hard and we feel that we cannot accomplish it, we are very unwise to dream that God cannot give us all the strength we need for our task. How can we be so foolish as to estimate the Omnipotence of Jehovah by our weakness, for I will not venture to call it strength?  
We also know that we constantly change. We are as fickle as the weather—fair today and foul tomorrow—and, therefore, we fancy that God changes as often as we do. Some talk about His loving His children today and hating them tomorrow, but that is not true. Listen to these texts, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent.” “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of burning.” Judge not the Lord, then by your fickleness as if He were such an one as yourselves!  
The mischief of this mistake on the part of Christians is that we narrow the possibility of our attainments. We think that we cannot overcome sin. We think that we cannot walk in the light as God is in the light. We think that we cannot enjoy abiding fellowship with our Lord. We think that we cannot be holy. And all this is because we only think of what we can do, not of what God can do for us and in us! Now, as far as the poles are asunder should be our estimate of ourselves and our estimate of God. Christ not only says to us, “Without Me you can do nothing,” but also, “All things are possible to him that believes,” to him who thus links himself with the Omnipotence of God.  
And I believe, Brothers and Sisters, by thinking that God is like ourselves, we also limit the probabilities of success in His work. If we could have the management of the affairs of the Kingdom of God upon the earth, and the power to convert a hundred thousand sinners tomorrow would be put into our hands, we would be wise if we asked God to take back that power, for I am quite certain that God will save a hundred thousand sinners in a day when things are ripe for it—yes, and He will save a nation in a day when the right time comes! But if there were to be a thousand persons saved under one sermon, or three thousand, as on the day of Pentecost, in any place in London, there is not a Church on the face of the earth that would believe in the reality of the work—and the result would be that those who were converted would not be added to the Church as the three thousand were on the day of Pentecost. Even professing Christians would say, “This is wildfire that will do more harm than good! We do not believe in it.” If they were told that one person, or perhaps two, had been saved, they might believe that—possibly not the two, though they might half believe in the one! But if there were three thousand who professed to be saved, they would say, “Oh, that could not be!” The reason for this unbelief is that members and ministers alike have the mistaken notion that God is like we are. Many ministers feel very happy if they have a dozen conversions in a year and some are quite content if there is one conversion in a dozen years. A brother minister said to me, the other day, “We have had a Baptism at our chapel this year, bless the Lord.” “Oh,” I said, “how many have you baptized?” “There were two,” he replied, “and one of them was my own son.” I said, “Yes, bless the Lord for those two, but what are we to say about those in your congregation who are not converted to God?”  
When we judge the Lord by what we ourselves are, our belief is like that which prevented the Master from doing many mighty works in His own city of Nazareth! May the Lord be pleased to give us a far higher conception of what He really is, for that will enable us to do much more for Him! It is because of this mistaken notion of ours concerning God that we limit our desires, slacken our endeavors, are satisfied to have everything on the pigmy scale when it might be gigantic. We are content with pence when we might have pounds of Grace. We are satisfied with the very imperfect cultivation of a tiny plot of land when the broad acres of God’s bounty lie before us. We win an inch or two of the enemy’s territory and we throw up our caps, and cry, “What mighty conquerors we are!” while whole provinces lie unconquered and whole nations remain ignorant of the Gospel! Then we keep on straitening ourselves more and more, contracting our conceptions and our ideas, the older we grow, till the zealous youth gets to be a “prudent” old man, whose “prudence” consists in chilling everybody he meets, carrying wet blankets to cover up everyone who has a little life in him, snuffing everybody’s candle and generally managing to snuff all the candles out.

We are, most of us, conscious of this chilling process. I seem to myself to be continually feeling it. I think I am not altogether destitute of earnestness even now, but I wish I could keep at blood heat always, for blood heat is the heat of health, the heat of true life! May God keep us up to that mark and it will help to keep us so if we have true notions of what God can do, and will do—and forever give up thinking that He is like ourselves! May God’s blessing rest upon you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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THE TWO GATHERINGS  
NO. 3216

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1910.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 16, 1863.

**“Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”  
Psalm 50:5.**

JUST a few sentences must suffice concerning the first meaning of the text. I think there can be little doubt that we have here a prophecy of our Lord’s Second Advent and of the gathering together in one assembly of all the chosen people of God—both those who shall then be in Heaven and those who shall then be alive and remaining upon the earth. Having made a Covenant with Christ by sacrifice, these shall all be gathered together unto Him, to be partakers of His Glory when He reigns at the latter day in all the splendor of His millennial Kingdom here below.

The text, however, seems to me to have two other meanings. I believe that it relates, first, to the gathering together of all God’s chosen people by the preaching of the Word and by other means. And that, secondly, it also has a bearing upon the great gathering of all the chosen around the Throne of Christ in everlasting Glory.

I. So, first, I have to speak concerning THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF ALL GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE BY THE PREACHING OF THE WORD AND BY OTHER MEANS. The text appears to me to be a message to God’s people from the living lips of Him who redeemed us by His blood. He speaks to the heavens as though He would make all the Providences of God to be His servants for this great work, and to the earth as though the willing hearts of His people, there, would gladly obey the summons, “Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

My first question will be, who are to be gathered? I think we must understand the text as relating to all the chosen people of God, including those who, as yet, have not been called and quickened and have not, in the strict sense of the term, made a personal covenant with God by faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Divinely-appointed Representative of all the elect—whatever He did, He did as their Covenant Head, their Sponsor, Surety and Substitute. When He made a Covenant with God on behalf of His people, they virtually made that Covenant, too. As Adam’s covenant concerned us all, and was practically our covenant with God, so Christ’s Covenant concerns all who are in Him and is reckoned as the Covenant that they, also, have made with His Father. And I believe that the mission of the Gospel is to gather out from among the rest of mankind all those whose names are written on the roll of the Everlasting Covenant— those who were given to Christ by His Father before the foundation of the world!

I know, of course, that the Gospel is to be proclaimed to all. And you know that I have not shunned to declare it in all its freeness and fullness. When we are giving the invitations of the Gospel that we find in the Scriptures, we never think of limiting them! Though we believe the special purpose of Christ’s Atonement was the redemption of His Church, yet we know that His Sacrifice was Infinite in value and, therefore, we set the wicket gate as wide open as we can and we repeat Christ’s own invitation, “Whoever will, let him take the wafer of life freely.” Yet we do not flinch from the solemn Truth of God that none will ever be saved but those whom God foreknew and predestinated, whom in due time He calls, justifies and glorifies—and the great objective of the Gospel, whatever other ends it may have, is to gather together unto Christ these chosen ones who are to be His in the day when He makes up His jewels. I come into this pulpit and I trust that you, dear Friends, go forth to your various spheres of service with the comforting thought that we are not laboring in vain, or spending our strength for nothing—because there are some who must be saved, or, to use the expressive words of Paul concerning the rest which so many missed, “it remains that some must enter therein.” We read concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, “He must go through Samaria,” because there was one poor sinning woman there who was ordained unto eternal life, as well as many others who, through her instrumentality, were to be brought to Christ and to believe on Him! We also must preach, or teach, or serve the Lord in other ways because it is written concerning Christ, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” The Gospel is to be preached to every creature in order that Christ’s chosen ones may be gathered unto Him. We cast the net into the sea, for we do not know where the fish are, but God knows and He guides into the net those He means us to catch for Him. You know that a magnet will attract steel to itself—well, the Gospel attracts souls that have an affinity to itself—and thus Christ draws His chosen ones unto Himself with the cords of a man, and bands of love!

My next enquiry is, Who is to do this work of gathering Christ’s chosen ones unto Himself? Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you know that every true child of God is to be employed in this blessed service! Some seem to think that this work devolves upon only ministers, or upon them and their Brothers in office—their deacons and elders—and that it is to extend no further. We hear much about, “lay agency” nowadays, but we know nothing of any distinction between “clergy” and “laity” in this matter! All God’s people are God’s kleros—God’s clergy—or if there is any laity, any common people, all God’s people are the laity, “a, peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Nothing has been more disastrous to the cause of Christianity than the leaving of the service of Christ to comparatively few of His professed followers! We shall never see the world turned upside down, as it was in Apostolic times until we get back to the Apostolic practice and all the saints are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak for Christ as the Spirit gives them utterance! My dear Brother, surely you will not say, “I pray you have me excused from serving Christ.” Remember your Lord’s own words, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come.” Everyone who has heard and heeded the Gospel invitation is under a solemn obligation to repeat that invitation to others! Every Christian, whatever his talents, or abilities, or circumstances, or opportunities may be, should realize that he has a commission to help in gathering together Christ’s saints unto Him. All are not required to do the same work, but each Believer is bound to do some work for the Master who has done so much for him. And everyone should enquire, “Lord, what will You have me to do.”

Some of you can distribute tracts, and there are some tracts that are worth distributing. I met with two, this afternoon, which will help me in my sermon. And if you get such tracts and give them away discreetly, they may be read and may benefit the readers. Some tracts are never likely to be read, but good, pithy, striking narratives—tracts with much of Christ and the Gospel in them—may be distributed with the prayerful confidence that a blessing will rest upon their perusal. There are some people who have special qualifications for this kind of work for Christ. While travelling last week, I was delighted to see at every station where the train stopped, a gentleman moving from carriage to carriage and offering a tract with the air of a man who was a practiced hand at the business! At a junction where some of us had to change, there were no less than four trains, and he was as busy as he could be giving his tracts to passengers in each train. I watched an American gentleman get out on to the platform and go up to the tract-distributor and begin to talk about the war and other topics—but very soon, the earnest servant of Christ had brought the conversation round to the subject of personal godliness. By-and-by, he came to me. He was glad to see a minister of the Gospel and I was glad to see him—and I hope that I might be as faithful in my sphere of service as that good man was in his!

But some of you can go a little beyond tract-distributing. You can stand up at the corner of the street and preach the Gospel in a simple but earnest style. I thank God every time I remember the scores of young men we have here whose mouths have been opened to speak for Christ. Go, on, my brave sons, bearing your testimony for the Master! Even if the police should sometimes move you off, be content to be moved and go and blow the Gospel trumpet somewhere else! But take care to proclaim the good tidings of salvation, for you have your Lord’s commission to do so! When a man receives a commission from the Queen, he is not a little proud of it. But you have a commission from the King of kings empowering you to gather together unto Him all who are included in the Covenant of His Grace!

Those of you who are not able to preach may find opportunities of talking to individuals one by one. There is great power in “button-holing” people and speaking to them personally about their souls. Some of you can visit the sick and read and pray with them. Or you can look out for those in distress—the brokenhearted and hopeless ones who need to be directed to Him who alone can deliver and heal them. Try to say something for your Master wherever you go, remembering that He has sent even the humblest and feeblest of you to gather together unto Himself those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

My third question is, Where are they to be gathered? The Lord says, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” We are not told to gather them into the Baptist denomination, or into the Presbyterian kirk, or into the Episcopal establishment, or into any particular church! Our Lord’s command is, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” I have never been ashamed of being called a Baptist since I became one. And if I did not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained the immersion of Believers on profession of their faith, I would not preach and practice it. But, dear as Christ’s own ordinances ought always to be to all Christians, our main business is not to bring men and women to Baptism, but to bring them to Christ! Our principal objective is not even to bring people into Church membership, or to communion at the Lord’s Table, but to bring them, by faith, to Calvary where the one great Sacrifice for sin was offered, where the precious blood of Jesus was shed, where His perfect righteousness was forever completed, where the tearful eyes may see the suffering Savior and where the broken heart may find healing and salvation in His grievous wounds! Labor, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in all that you do or say, in your personal dealings with sinners, in your tracts, in your preaching, in your teaching, to set forth the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ—for so will you best obey your Lord’s command, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

Perhaps someone asks, “Where are the chosen ones that are to be gathered unto Christ?” Where are they? Why, some of them may be sitting in the same pew where you now are! If you really want to gather Christ’s saints together unto Him, begin with those who are close beside you now. If you want to bring Christ’s chosen ones to Him, you can find some of them just outside this Tabernacle. You can find some of them as you are walking to your homes. You can find some of them in the streets, the courts and alleys all around us! You can find some of them in Whitechapel and others of them in the West End. I verily believe that missionaries of the Cross are just as much needed in Belgravia as in Shoreditch. And perhaps some who live in the biggest houses in the wealthiest parts of London are less likely to have the message of salvation carried to them than are multitudes of the poorer citizens of this great city! Then there are the people in our suburban towns and villages where so many neglect the ordinances of God’s House, or have not the religious privileges which abound in this metropolis. And beyond them are great masses in the country for whom few or none are caring. And the almost innumerable hosts of heathens, Muslims and others in distant lands who have never yet even heard the name of Jesus and know nothing of the glorious Gospel which He commanded His servants to preach to them in His name! So dear Friends, wherever you may be, seek to gather some to Christ! Begin with those who are in this congregation now, or with those who are in your own household and then cease not from this blessed work as long as you live! As long as there is another jewel to be found to adorn Christ’s crown—as long as there is another wandering sheep to be brought back to the Good Shepherd who bought it with His own blood— keep on at this blessed work in obedience to your Lord’s command, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

II. Now, secondly, I want to show you that the text has a bearing upon THE GREAT GATHERING OF ALL THE CHOSEN AROUND THE THRONE OF CHRIST IN GLORY. In His intercessory prayer before He suffered, our Lord Jesus Christ prayed “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory which You have given Me.”And in the text Christ says to His servants in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

I ask again, as I asked in the previous part of my discourse, Who are to be gathered? They are those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, and here I take the text to mean those who have made a personal covenant with God in Christ Jesus—those who, by an act of faith, have accepted the Covenant which Christ made with His Father on their behalf. This Covenant has been made by Sacrifice and through the mediation of the crucified Savior they have joined hands with the reconciled God. By His one offering, Christ “has perfected forever them that are sanctified,” those who are set apart unto Him to be His sanctified ones, or, as the text calls them, His “saints.” All of us who have been thus sanctified may boldly “enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

Dear Friend, have you entered into this personal Covenant with God in Christ Jesus? Have you, by faith, made a personal appropriation of what Christ did upon the Cross when He suffered and died as the Substitute and Surety of all who trust in Him? If you are one of Christ’s chosen ones, you will accept Him as your Savior. As long as you are content with your own doings and trust in them, you cannot be numbered among His saints. So—

*“Cast your deadly ‘doing’ down,  
Down at Jesus’ feet!  
Stand in Him, in Him alone  
Gloriously complete!”*

“He that believes on Him is not condemned.” Do you believe on Him? If you do, you are not condemned and, therefore, you are justified and you shall, in due time, be glorified and so you shall be among those who shall be gathered together unto Christ at the last. But the Lord expressly says, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” Those who have repented of their sin and turned from it. Those who have been constrained by His Grace to live holy lives and who have entered into a covenant with Him to hate the sin that cost Him so much to redeem them from it!

Now I repeat another question that I asked before, Where are these chosen ones to be gathered? Let me beg you again to look at that little, all-important word, “Me,” in the text, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” The Lord does not say, “Gather My saints together unto Heaven, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born.” They are to be gathered there, but He does not say so here. He says, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” Is it not the very joy of Heaven, the quintessence of its bliss, that we are to be gathered unto Christ? It is very delightful to think of Heaven as the place of the perfect communion of saints, as the place of perfect worship, as the place of perfect rest and at the same time of constant unwearied activity—but, after all, though it may be a great comfort to us to think of Heaven under any of these aspects, yet it is a far sweeter thought to us to remember that Heaven is the place where Jesus is—and where His saints are to be gathered together unto Him! So with delight we sing—

*“There shall we see His face,  
And never, never sin!  
There from the rivers of His Grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.”*

The very glory of Heaven is that we shall see Him—that same Christ who once died upon Calvary’s Cross—that we shall fall down and worship at His feet! No, more—that He shall kiss us with the kisses of His mouth and welcome us to dwell with Him forever! There are ineffable delights in the very name of Jesus! It is indeed like ointment poured forth! Then what unspeakable delights must there be in His Presence in Glory! If all His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, what must Christ, Himself, be? For one glimpse of Him, I would give a life of broken bones, fever and every conceivable pang! No, more—I think I may even venture to say with Rutherford that if there were seven Hells between my soul and Christ—and He should bid me dash through them all, I would count the distance all too short if I might but get to Him at the last, to behold His face, and to dwell with Him forever! I do not know whether there are any degrees in Glory and I do not trouble about whether there are or are not—but this I do know, that all the saints shall be gathered together unto Christ—and that degree is high enough for any of them!

How are these chosen ones to be gathered ? The verse before our text tells us that the Lord shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth beneath, so we may be sure that the work which He commands shall be accomplished! We sometimes say of a man, when he is very determined to do a certain thing, “He will move Heaven and earth to do it.” And Christ will move Heaven and earth to accomplish His great purpose of gathering together unto Himself all those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice! Heaven shall have a part in this great work. The angels are intensely interested in the saints who are to be their companions in Glory forever, for, “are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” God gives the holy angels charge over His saints to keep them in all their ways, and to bear them up in their hands lest they should dash their feet against the stones. And they act at last as a spiritual convoy escorting them to Heaven even as Lazarus “was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Even Satan, himself, and all his hosts are under the supreme control of Christ. And He can use them as He pleases in the accomplishment of His purposes concerning His saints. At all events, they shall not be able to frustrate those purposes, but they shall most certainly be fulfilled. Earth, too, shall have its share in gathering Christ’s chosen ones unto Him. Every wind that blows will speed them to their goal. Every wave shall wash them towards their desired haven. Everything that happens shall be overruled to the same end— the gathering of Christ’s saints together unto Him in Glory!

Sometimes you and I lament when Christ’s saints are gathered unto Him by death, but is not this wrong? They must go Home to Christ at some time or other, so why not go when God pleases and as God pleases? I do not know that I would pray for sudden death, though sudden death is, to a Believer in Christ, sudden Glory—but I certainly would not pray that I might not be called home suddenly. So far as I am personally concerned, I would like to have a similar experience to that of good Dr. Beaumont who was preaching the Word on earth, and just as he finished uttering a sentence of his sermon, was singing the praises of God in Heaven! Or an experience like that of another minister, Brother Flood, whom I knew. He had just given out that verse—

*“Father, I long, I faint to see  
The place of Your abode.  
I’d leave Your earthly courts and flee  
Up to Your seat, My God”—*

when he fell back—for his desire was granted and he had gone from the earthly courts of the Lord’s House up to the seat of God on high! Still, it does not matter how or when the saints are gathered unto Christ— whether by plague, or fever, or long lingering affliction, whether by accident on land or on the sea, or in any other way—they shall all be gathered together unto Him in due time! And when the muster-roll is called at the last, not one will be missing of all those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice!. The great question for all of us is shall we be among them? In order to answer that question, we must ask a few others. Have we entered into personal covenant relationship with God through relying upon Christ’s Sacrifice upon the Cross? Have we repented of sin and trusted in Christ as our own personal Savior? Does He count us among His saints, those who are seeking, by His Grace, to live in righteousness and holiness before Him all our days? If so, then we may rest assured that we, too, shall be gathered unto Him with all those whom He has redeemed with His most precious blood!

But what am I to say to those who cannot answer these questions satisfactorily? Possibly the tracts I mentioned in the earlier part of my discourse will help to give me a message to them. There may be some people here who have no hope, no good hope, concerning the hereafter. Perhaps you do not even believe in any hereafter! If so, just listen to this little narrative. “Some time ago, there lived in a certain market town a watchmaker, an honest, sober and industrious man, but he was an infidel. He did not believe in the Bible. He said that it was a book that was only fit for old women. As for what some said concerning the terrors of Hell, they never alarmed him—and as for what they said concerning the glories of Heaven, he reckoned they were only fancies or dreams. Suddenly, in the midst of life, he was stricken down and it was soon manifest that he was dying, and dying rapidly. On the day of his death, early in the morning, he began to say, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where!’ And then, as rapidly as he could speak, he continued, for the space of twelve or thirteen hours, to say the same words over and over and over again, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where! I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where.’ As his strength failed him, his voice became more weak and tremulous, but still his utterance was just the same, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where.’ And, at last, he died with those words upon his lips, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where!’”

O My dear Hearers, I do pray that this may not be the dying cry of any one of you, for if it is, the dreadful sequel is given in our Lord’s declaration concerning the rich man, “in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” I cannot imagine anything in the whole work of the ministry that is more painful than trying to talk to those who have neglected Christ until the last hours of their lives and who, even then, feel no sorrow for sin, but pass out of this world into the next without the least ray of hope! There is, in my memory, a scene of this character which comes to me very vividly at this moment. Many years ago, when the cholera was raging in London, I was summoned, at three o’clock one morning, to go to a house near London Bridge where a man was very ill. He had been attacked by the cholera and knew that he must die. But although he was a godless, blasphemous man, he could think of no one but me whom he would like to see. So I had to be sent for in hot haste. I went to him, but he could do little more than express his horror at what was before him and his utter despair of any hope of escape. He asked me to pray, and I did so. But before I had finished, he was unconscious and soon he was in the pangs of death. I left him a corpse. I remember that for long afterwards I felt sad and grieved concerning the state of that man’s soul. Yet, by nature, we were the children of wrath even as that man was—and but for Divine Grace, we might have spent our last day on earth as he did, in Sabbath-breaking-and our last hour of life in despair. God grant that we may always feel devoutly thankful for the Sovereign Grace that has made us to differ from others whom once we resembled, at least as far as this— that we were all, alike, the children of wrath!

In the other tract I read about a working man who was passing by an infidel lecture hall. He stepped in, although he was a Christian and, as he entered, someone on the platform, who had the appearance of a gentleman, was saying that it was all nonsense for anyone to say that infidels died a miserable death. He had just been to see one of their number and he could assure them, on the word of a gentleman, that he had died very happily. When the speech was over, the working man asked whether he might be allowed to say something. “Yes,” said the chairman, “certainly you may.” So he rose and said, “I have just heard something that has greatly surprised me—I have heard of an infidel who has died happily. I have never before heard of such a thing as that happening, but as the speaker assured us, on the word of a gentleman, that it is true, I must not question the statement. I am, therefore, under the necessity of admitting that one infidel has died happily, but I feel sure that he must have lived a very miserable life, or else he could not have died so happily. Now I have a dear, loving wife, who makes my home right and cheerful. And when I come back from work, she always receives me with a smiling face and with my meals tastefully prepared. So I am sure that if I had to die and leave her—and to go I know not where—I could not die happily. I have four children—as smiling and happy children as you ever saw—and I love to hear their musical voices and their pretty prattle. But if I had to die and leave them—and to go I know not where—I could not die happily. So the only supposition that I can draw from the life of the man of whom this gentleman has told us is that he and his wife lived a cat-and-dog life, so that he was glad to be free from her at any cost. And that his children must have been so wicked or tiresome that he was glad to get away from them even though he did not know where he was going. My wife and children make me so happy that I do not want to leave them—and the only thing which makes me look forward to death without sorrow is the thought that I am going to a better world than this where there is One who loves me even more than my wife and children do, and where I hope one day to meet my dear ones again, to be parted from them no more forever.”

When I read that tract, I thought that the working man’s reasoning was perfectly sound. And I wish that all of you, dear Friends, had just as good cause as he had to live happily and to die happily! You will have that if you will only trust in the same Savior in whom he trusted! May God the Holy Spirit enable you to do so now! This is the way of salvation. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” He saves all who put their trust in Him! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” All who believe on Him are His chosen ones—His saints, as our text calls them— and those who truly trust Him are known by the holiness and graciousness of their lives! They are gathered unto Him, here, as they are, by His Grace, called out from the mass of mankind and, in God’s good time, they shall all be gathered unto Him in that great general assembly and Church of the First-Born which are written in Heaven! May God grant that everyone of us may be there, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 50.**

*A Psalm of Asaph.*  
It is mentioned, in the life of Hezekiah, that “the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph, the Seer,” so that very likely this Psalm was sung in the Temple after it had been cleansed and reopened for worship. The first part of the Psalm contains a majestic prophecy of the Second Advent.

Verses 1-3. The mighty God, even the LORD, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. Our God shall come and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He came once under the old legal dispensation and then, “there were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mount...Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon in it fire.” And when Christ shall come, in the latter days, with equal splendor, there shall be fire and tempest to swell the pomp of His court.

4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Heaven shall yield up the blessed who are already there, and earth shall give up those that are alive and remain until Christ’s coming. And so “the whole company of the redeemed shall stand in the Presence of their great Lord and Savior when Christ shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe.” This is the summons that is to ring out to the heavens above and the earth beneath—

5, 6. Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge, Himself. Selah. Now the subject of the Psalm changes, but let not the Doctrine of the Second Advent pass from our thoughts. Christ will surely come again, but are we all prepared to meet Him? Shall we behold that glorious Appearance with joy or with sorrow? When He reigns gloriously with His ancients, shall we share in the splendors of that reign? Lord, call us to Yourself now! Help us to suffer with You now! Help us to bear reproach for You among men, now, and then, though—

*“It does not yet appear How great we must be made”—*yet we know that—  
*“When we see our Savior here, We shall be like our Head.”*

Now the Lord addresses His own people—  
7. Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify  
against you: I am God, even your God. Note, then, that with all the faults  
which Christ can find in His people, He is still their God! All the sins of  
the saints cannot separate them from Christ. They may blot the indenture, but it is only a copy of the Covenant made by Christ on their behalf—the real title-deeds are in Heaven beyond all risk of loss. Sinner  
though you are, O child of Israel, yet God is still your God—and all your  
imperfections, follies and backslidings can never rob you of your eternal  
interest in Him!  
8-13. I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to  
have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house,  
nor he goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the  
cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the  
wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for  
the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or  
drink the blood of goats? The Lord puts a slur upon the Levitical sacrifices in comparison with evangelical offerings. He sets prayer and praise before the blood of bulls or the sacrifices of goats! Yet we are not to understand that God despises the gifts of His people. If you give to God as  
though He needed your help, He will have none of it! But our gracious  
God is so condescending that although He needs nothing, He permits His  
people to bring their thank-offerings and to lay them at His feet. My God,  
will You accept a gift from me? Then I will not be slow to give it to You!  
Let everyone of us feel in his heart that though God needs nothing from  
us, yet we need the privilege of giving to Him.  
14, 15. Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay your vows unto the most  
High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you

shall glorify Me. [See Sermons #1505, Volume 25—PRAYER TO GOD IN TROUBLE AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE and #1876, Volume 31—ROBINSON CRUSOE’S TEXT—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See the three ways of praising

God? One is by giving Him your grateful thanksgiving. Banish your murmurings. Sweep away your mistrusts and let your mouth be filled with His praise all the daylong! Then the next way of praising God is by paying your vows unto Him—let your constant prayers and offerings to God prove the gratitude of your heart. And the last and sweetest way of praising God is to call upon Him in the day of trouble. There are many of you who are in trouble at this moment, therefore call upon God! Perhaps you say, “That will benefit me, but how will it glorify Him?” Why, God gets much honor out of hearts that dare to trust Him! If you can cast your burden upon the Lord, you will as much honor Him as angels do when, with veiled faces, they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory.” We adore His wisdom, His faithfulness, His love, His Grace, His Truth, His power when we believe that in the darkest night He can bring us sudden daylight and that in the ebb tide of our affairs He can bring the floods back again. Christian, honor your God by calling upon Him! With all your difficulties, doubts and fears, call upon God and He will deliver you, and you shall glorify Him! Now comes another change—

16. But unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth? Unconverted preachers, unsaved Sunday school teachers—what answer can you give to this question of the Most High?

17-20. Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My Words behind you. When you saw a thief, then you consented with him and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. Slander, you see, is put side by side with adultery and theft and, indeed, I do not know whether it is not the worst of the three! You might almost as well cut a man’s throat as slander his character. You had better steal his purse than steal his good name. “What shall be given unto you? Or what shall be done unto you, you false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.” There are no coals hot enough to burn slanderous tongues! There are no punishments severe enough for those who slander their own mother’s son.

21. These things have you done and I kept silent. An amazing thing is that silence of God, that long-suffering with sinners! And another amazing thing is the impudent interpretation which the sinner gives to that silence!.

21. You thought that I was altogether such an One as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes. “I will do what I have not yet done. If you think Me in arrears, I will clear myself with you soon. I will ease Me of My adversaries.” When God arises in judgment, He may make it to be a slow work, but He will make it to be a sure work.

22, 23. Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoever offers praise, glorifies Me: and to him that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God. How blessed, then, is it to praise the Lord both with your lips and with your life!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #490 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GRACIOUS RENEWAL  
NO. 490

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 25, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Renew a right spirit within me.”  
Psalm 51:10.**

WE had a joyful meeting last Wednesday evening. As a Church we all met together as a loving family, and it was a sight of the most encouraging kind to see a great host, like the host of God, of Brothers and Sisters, all dwelling together in unity. That solemnly joyful sight suggested to my heart the propriety of addressing you today upon the subject of the renewal of your consecration to Christ. I thought that the season, the annual season when we all meet together, would be but a fit and proper opportunity for our giving ourselves over again to Him whose we are, and whom we serve.

In an honored sanctuary in the neighborhood, it is the custom at the early part of the year to have a solemn form of covenant read at communion, when the Church members all give their verbal assent with a solemn “Amen.” There must be something very solemn, and at the same time something very delightful, in the uttered consent of a multitude of persons to the will and law of Christ. Days of annual celebration should be days of solemn dedication.

Dear Friends, there are other occasions when you might very rightly, I think, renew your Covenant with God. After recovery from sickness, when, like Hezekiah, you have had a new term of years added to your life, and have risen from the bed of languishing to tread the greensward, and breathe the fresh air. Then should you sing—

*“My life which You have made Your care,*

*Lord, I devote to You.”*  
After any extraordinary deliverance, when your troubles have a pause, when your joys bud forth anew, when after a season of deep depression of spirit you can once again lift up your brow, and bathe it in the light of God—then, again, should you visit the foot of the Cross of Christ—and by the blood that is sprinkled there renew your consecration to your Lord.

Especially will it be incumbent upon you to do this after any sin, after any such sin, I mean, as may have grieved the Holy Spirit, or brought dishonor upon the cause of God. Then, like David, repair to your chamber, and, with bitter tears of penitence, look to the hyssop, and the blood which can make you whiter than snow—and again offer yourself unto the Lord Most High as a teacher of sinners—or a singer of His praise. I think, Brothers and Sisters, we should not only let our troubles confirm our dedication to God, but our prosperity should do the same.

If we should ever meet with occasions which deserve to be called, in Oliver Cromwell’s words, “crowning mercies,” then, surely, if He has crowned us, we ought also to crown our God. If He has been pleased to give you a wreath of loving kindnesses and of tender mercies, then bring

forth anew all the jewels of the Divine regalia that have been stored in the jewel closet of your heart. And let your God sit upon the throne of your love, arrayed in royal apparel. If we would get good out of our prosperity, we should not need so much adversity.

If we would gather from a kiss all the good it might confer upon us, we should not so often smart under the rod. If we will not gather wisdom from vines and fig trees, we must be taught it with briars and thorns. Our folly makes rods for its own back. Do any of you come here today with hearts leaping for joy? Have you received a valued favor which you little expected? Has the Lord put your feet in a large room? Oh, can you sing of mercies multiplied? Then this is the day to put your hand upon the horns of the altar and say, “Bind me here, my God. Bind me here with cords, even forever.”

I may also suggest that there are certain seasons in life when this fresh espousal is very comely—in arriving at manhood, at the birth of children, at the death of friends, in passing the anniversaries of our birth, in advancing from strength to gray hairs—we may read anew the memorials of our love. Inasmuch as we need the fulfillment of new promises from God, let us give fresh promises to God, or, rather, let us offer renewed prayers that the old ones may not be dishonored.

I have known persons who have religiously set apart a certain day in the month, or year, when they would look anew over their obligations, survey their state before God, and determine to be the Lord’s forever. Let us commend their zeal, if we do not imitate their precision. Well, Beloved, I suggest—and I am sure such a joyous act as this will never be out of season—I suggest that this morning, if God shall enable us, we renew our vows unto Him.

These were the thoughts which possessed my heart. But there was another which overrode them all, and prevented my following out my desire. You see, my text deals not with renewing our vows before God, nor with our proclaiming anew in the courts of the Lord’s house our surrender to Him—no, it goes deeper than all this—“Renew a right spirit within me.” Surely, if the Lord will do this, then our consecration will be renewed. If the fountain is filled, then the streams must flow. If the sun is made to shine, then the plants must bud. If the sap within the tree flows vigorously, then the fruit without will be plentiful.

Perhaps we have done well to lay the axe at the root of the tree by going to the very soul and core of this matter. We have our hand upon the lever now—it is a dead weight when a man tries to renew his own vows—but now we have the lever under it. If we cry to God in prayer, “Renew a right spirit within me,” we shall accomplish our end none the less certainly, even though we do not so much preach upon the subject of consecration, as upon the power of God the Holy Spirit to renew our spirit and bring us afresh to Himself.

Come then, Beloved. I want, not so much to preach, as to lead you now to the footstool of Divine mercy in humble, earnest entreaty—that the Lord may renew within you a constant spirit and invigorate the life of your piety. For this there are several reasons, which we will give at once.

I. And, first, a cogent motive of desiring the renewal of our graces is to be found in THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR IT, IF WE WOULD PERSEVERE. That we need renewal is very clearly seen when we reflect that all created things need it. Nothing that God has made is self-existent. Selfexistence belongs exclusively to the, “I AM THAT I AM.” Even the tall archangel, who stands nearest the eternal Throne, can only claim a borrowed existence which is immortal only in the immortality of God.

The very mountains crumble, rocks dissolve, and marble wears away. Those old rivers that have even been adored by idolaters for their antiquity, still need to be refreshed with the melted snows from the mountain’s brow. It is rumored of our mother earth herself, that her soil is losing its former fruitfulness. Certain it is that the most fertile fields yield no perpetual harvests unless the labor of man fertilizes the soil. All things on earth need, perpetually, to be renewed.

“You renew the face of the year,” said the Psalmist, for in winter earth sleeps like a wearied giant, as if gray with the decay of age, the snow covers its slumbering head. In winter the world shows none of her youthful verdure. All her beauty lies buried beneath the sod. Are not all things hushed and quiet in winter’s bedchamber of life? But spring comes leaping on. The song of birds arouses the slumbering earth and she awakes refreshed.

But were it not for the renewing of delicious spring, would not earth become everywhere as intolerable as at her frozen poles? Nor here, alone, is refreshing needed, for doubtless the upper spheres require fresh fuel for their ardent flames. The orb of day shines in radiance lent him by the great Father of Lights, albeit that he is, in Milton’s noble phrase, “of this great world both eye and soul.” That eye must soon grow dim with age, and that soul must lose its overflowing life, if the all-filling God refuses His ever-flowing aid.

No created thing stands by itself. It is only an infernal conceit that anything can be without the great Creator’s perpetual Presence. And will you lend your soul to this blasphemy of Hell? If your piety can live without God, it is not of Divine creating. It lives not but in your imagination. It is but a dream—for if God has begotten it, it would wait upon Him as the flowers wait for the dew.

Moreover, this Truth of God is especially applicable to those creatures of God which are endowed with life. Those without life need preserving— but the truth is not so clearly seen in their case as in living objects. But life, if God would sustain it, must often, no, constantly, receive renewal. What animal can live without the refreshment of sleep and food? Job’s war horse, whose neck is clothed with thunder, must humble himself to his stall and to his provender.

The wild asses of the wilderness, whose bands the Lord has loosed, have the range of the mountains for their pasture. The unicorn abides not by the crib, neither will he harrow the valleys for the farmer—yet he grows weary and lies down to rest. Behemoth, whose bones are as bars of iron, eats grass as an ox, and leviathan, which makes the deep to boil like a pot, whose eyes are like the eyelids of the morning, receives the breath in his nostrils each hour from his Maker.

Even the trees, those motionless things, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their fires with labor—these must drink of the rain of Heaven, and suck from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap fresh drawn from the earth. You and I, having life, cannot expect that it should be sustained without renewal from God. Our natural life needs constantly its bread and water. The strongest man that ever lived must soon yield to the weakness of death, unless he were reinvigorated by nourishment.

Sampson himself must have a cleft opened in the rock that he may drink, for though he has slain the Philistines, yet will he perish unless his thirst is quenched. Assuredly it must be so in spiritual life, or else all the analogies of nature must be reversed. You must drink again of the Living Water. You must feed anew upon the Living Bread. What mean those texts in Scripture that speak of waiting upon the Lord, and renewing our strength? What can be the meaning of, “renewing our strength like the eagle’s”? And what could be David’s meaning when, in his matchless pastoral, he sings, “You restore my soul,” if we do not need full often the times of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord?

But I need not travel so far to fetch my arguments in your own inner consciousness. My Brothers and Sisters, you are aware that your piety requires constant renovation. What downward tendencies the thoughtful must perceive in themselves. We could travel downhill to Hell how easily, but upwards to Heaven with what difficulty! Downward, without a hand to help. But upward, no hand less than the Omnipotent must speed our course. Do you not find, Christians, that as we men must eat, so we must pray? Is there not a vacuum in your heart and a pang within it, if you have neglected supplication?

Do you not discover that as men must breathe, so you must exercise faith in Christ, for if your faith is suspended for a moment, there is a suffocation of all your hope, your joy, your love? No—of your very life! Have you not found that, as it is necessary to repair the waste of the body by the frequent meal, so you must repair the waste of the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances? I will not give a farthing for your experience—it cannot be the experience of a child of God—unless you discover a hungering and a thirsting in your inner man.

And what are these but proofs that renewal is wanted—signs by which your new nature sets forth to you a secret necessity which moves it to these outward longings? Oh, how dull our love becomes if we go for a little time without a sight of Christ! How our faith flickers if we are for a little season absent from the Cross! How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starvelings some saints are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! You know you want renewal! You feel you do. Need I say more?

Moreover, if you do not perceive this very apparent Truth of God, let me remind you that you may be made to see it, and that terribly, by some surprising sin. Just as this prayer was forced out of David by his adultery with Bathsheba, and his bloody murder of Uriah, so you—yes, you, my Brothers and Sisters, saints before the Lord—yes, you, Preacher—you may be made to know it, by being suddenly overtaken in a fault, to your own shame forever. “Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

There are north winds in the hand of the Almighty which He has not yet permitted to come forth upon men. But when the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe, woe to the tree that has not sucked up fresh sap and grasped the rock with many intertwisted roots. There are tempests yet to come forth from the secret treasuries of God. If they come, woe, woe to the mariners that have not yet strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven.

Without perpetual restoration, I say, we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of Hell, or the stern afflictions of Heaven, nor even for the strife within us. If you suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over you. And so may you have a sad downfall, a painful desolation—and a lamentable disgrace may follow from your neglect of the renewing of your spirit before God.

Once more, here, and though this reason may not seem so forcible as the last, the wise man will understand it, and see that there is yet mighty power therein, “That unconscious backsliding from God, which is, perhaps, even more dangerous, though not so disgraceful as open sin. That unconscious apostasy from God, I say, will certainly be upon you, unless you have seasons of renewal. Does not Hosea speak of Ephraim as having gray hairs here and there upon him, but he knew it not?

Oh, Beloved, I do proclaim—I speak not in any severity against God’s saints—but I do believe that this is the sin in the Church of God at the present moment—that the most of us have gray hairs here and there and know it not. We walk so carelessly before God. we do not make such heartwork of religion as we should. Indifference, I find, to be my own temptation. I do not know that I am assaulted with certain other sins which prevail over other men, but this indifference I find to be harder to meet than even a temptation to lust or covetousness.

I do believe that the Church, to a great extent, is just now where Bunyan’s Pilgrim was when he went through the Enchanted Ground and the air was heavy, and the Pilgrim had much ado to keep himself from sleeping. The Church has rest nowadays. These are times of quietness. And therefore we are in danger of being given to slumber. Perhaps it is a “ruthless legend that the holidays of Capua ruined the veterans of Hannibal,” but if it is a legend in his case, it is a fact in ours.

The peace and quietness of the Church in these calm times bring on an idleness, a dullness, an indifference, a lethargy as deadly and as damnable as outrageous sin itself. And unless the Holy Spirit arouses us and constrains us to come back again to the simple earnestness of our first love, we shall slip and slide and discover not how low we have fallen till out of the depths we have to cry in agony, “Renew a right spirit within me.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, for these reasons, I do persuade you, and therein I do persuade myself—let us take with us words. Let us turn unto the Lord. Let us beg Him to heal our backslidings, and to receive us graciously. Let us entreat Him to be as the dew unto our souls that we may grow as the lily and cast out our roots as Lebanon. In the words of Jeremy in the Lamentations let us pray, “Turn You us unto You, O Lord, and we shall be turned. Renew our days as of old.”

If the crown is fallen from our head because we have sinned, let us seek the Lord with deep humiliation of soul. If the joy of our heart has ceased, if our dance is turned into mourning, let us return unto Him from whom we have erred, and renew our marriage covenant. “Thus says the Lord, I remember you, the kindness of your youth, and the love of your espousals.” My Brothers and Sisters, if thus He remembers us, let us remember Him, and offer this supplication, “Renew a right spirit within me.” This brings me now to a second method of reasoning with you.

II. Secondly, let us pray the brief but very forcible prayer of the text because of our OWN POWERLESSNESS TO RENEW OUR OWN SPIRITS. It is a doctrine acknowledged by all orthodox Christians, and confessed in some form or other by all Believers, that without the Spirit of God we are unable to do anything aright. Nevertheless, I question if any of us have given our full consent to the doctrine of human inability in its fullest bearings. “Without Me you can do nothing,” is a text upon which our life is the sermon—but until its very close it is probable we shall not fully fathom the depth of our own weakness.

Brethren, when a ship is in sailing order and in good condition, she still cannot speed on her journey of herself! Even though the sails are spread, there is no hope of her making port unless the wind shall blow. If that is so, how much more is it true that if that ship leaks, if the worm has begun to eat her timbers, or if by grazing upon a rock she has done serious damage to her bottom, it is impossible that she should repair her own damage! If her sails are tattered, how shall she mend them? If her masts are strained, if any injury whatever is done to her tackling, how shall she be able to recover herself?

Brethren, you can see the analogy. If the child of God, even when in a healthy state, needs to cry for the Divine Spirit, how much more when he has fallen under spiritual decays, or has grievously backslidden, does he need the Divine hand of the Mighty Carpenter to set him right! As for ungodly men, the analogy might be pushed still farther if that were in the subject of this morning. If the ship built and manned cannot sail without the wind, how much less could the trees of the forest hew themselves, convey themselves to the shipwright’s yard, fashion themselves into timbers, keel, beam, and mast—and then arrange themselves into a ship and launch themselves upon the sea!

Yet even this were less a miracle than for an unconverted man to regenerate himself. But we must return to our point, that the Christian, when his heart is out of order, has no power to put himself right again without the blessed Spirit. The disease of the living must be cured by the same Voice which removes the sleep of the dead. He who said, “Lazarus come forth!” is needed to say, “Take up your bed and walk!” Indeed, if you will think for a moment, you will find the work of renewal to be a stern work. It is called in Scripture—conversion.

Now, in conversion the same power is exercised that was put forth in raising Jesus Christ from the dead. What power, then, must be required in the renewal of a soul! Besides, to renew a soul is to go directly opposite to nature. What power is necessary to make water leap uphill, to suspend the waterfall in midair, to compel a flame to blaze in the midst of the depths of the sea? Yet such a power as this is absolutely needed to reverse the efforts of the flesh, and to make our old carnal corruptions, which had begun to get the mastery, resign it once more.

The strong man armed keeps the house till a stronger than he binds him. And sin, when it once prevails in a Believer, would continue to prevail unless the Mighty One who first broke our chains shall come to set us free. Do you not know, Beloved, that in the renewal of our spirits every Divine Grace is needed that was nestled for our first conversion? We needed repentance in order to our first salvation—we certainly need it now, that we may be renewed. We wanted faith that we might come to Christ at first—only the like Grace can bring us to Jesus now.

We wanted a word from the Most High, a word from the lips of the Loving One, to end our fears then—we shall soon discover, when under a sense of present sin, that we need it now. No man can be renewed, I say, without as real and true an exercise of the Holy Spirit’s energy as he felt at first, because the work is as great. The same Graces are needed, and flesh and blood are as much in the way now as ever they were. Let your powerlessness, O Christian, be an argument to make you pray earnestly to your God.

Remember, David, when he felt himself powerless, did not fold his arms or close his lips, but he hastened to the Mercy Seat with, “Renew a right spirit within me.” Let not the doctrine that you, unaided can do nothing, make you sleep. Rather let it be a goad in your side to drive you with an awful earnestness to the great Fountain from which all streams must flow to satisfy your wants and plead it, plead it as though you pleaded for your very life—as though you pleaded for your only son—“Lord, renew a right spirit within me.”

Nor pray this falsely. Prove that you mean it by going forth to use the means. Continue much in prayer. Live much upon the Word of God. Attend constantly a soul-satisfying Ministry. Kill the lusts that have driven your Lord from you. Be careful to watch over the future uprisings of sin— otherwise your prayers cannot be sincere. The man who prays to God to do a thing must use the means through which God works. He is a hypocrite who asks the Lord to visit him, and then nails up his door, or asks for life, and then refuses to eat.

The Lord has his own appointed ways, and sitting by the wayside you will be ready when He passes by. Oh, continue, then, in all those blessed ordinances which will foster and nourish your dying Graces. And strengthen the things which remain which are ready to die. Knowing that all the power must be from Him, cease not to cry, “Renew a right spirit within me.”

III. But we change our note and come to a third point. I would the Holy Spirit might honor the word this morning, and I should look upon it as no mean privilege if I might stir up any of you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, truly today to come afresh to the Fountain filled with Blood, and to renew again your entire surrender and resignation of yourselves to your Lord. The argument I use shall be found in THE BLESSED RESULTS WHICH ARE SURE TO FOLLOW, if the Lord shall renew your spirit.

Think what joy you will experience! There are some things, Beloved, that perhaps may need to be renewed, but they would bring no joy. The physician may require you to receive a new bottle of medicine. It may be possible that an operation once performed may have lost its potency. Painful though it is, it may be required to be performed again. But that of which I speak has no pain to the child of God. It is in itself so sweet that it ought to tempt you to perform it.

What is it, my Brothers and Sisters? Is it not the renewal of a brotherly covenant, just as when Jonathan and David went into the woods and renewed their covenant? I do not believe it was a sorrowful hour to Jonathan. I can imagine that David shed tears when he parted from his beloved friend, tears of deep affection, perhaps, but oh, with what joy did they clasp each other in the woods! With what true love did they make a covenant when Jonathan loved David as his own soul.

The prince stripped himself of the robe that was upon him and gave it to David. And he even gave his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And surely you will not object to renew your embrace of your David today! Can it be a hard matter to you, once more, to go without the camp bearing His reproach, to clasp the Man, once again who is better to you than all the treasures of Egypt? Besides, there is a sweeter figure. The Covenant we have with Christ is a marriage Covenant.

I believe in Sweden it is common when a happy pair have been wedded for five-and-twenty years to have what they call, “A silver wedding.” And if they should be spared to old age, until their children’s children are round about them, on the fiftieth year, they have, “A golden wedding.” Who would not wish to have a repetition of the happy day! Let us celebrate today, dear Friends, a silver wedding with the Christ whom we married years ago. And oh, we will wait awhile longer and anticipate our golden wedding, in the year of jubilee, when we shall see Him as He is and be like He is.

What? Will you not give Him the kiss that is the token of continued affection? Do you refuse to give Him fresh pledges of your love, which is the fruit of His everlasting love to you? Why, the thing is so joyous that I cannot refrain from crying, “Let the marriage bells be rung again! Bring forth the wedding dainties once more, and let us sit at the table of the marriage festival!” Jesus, we do embrace You! We are Yours, it is happiness, it is Heaven, it is bliss superlative to renew our vows to You and to receive fresh tokens of Your regard to us.

Do you remember, Beloved, that in our early days, besides having an abundance of joy, how full of heavenly light our Graces were, and how real everything appeared to our faith at the first? Now if we can have our spirit renewed, and made it as it was at first, why, then we shall have back the same satisfactory reality in our emotions. I speak for one. I know that when my eyes first looked to Christ, He was a very real Christ to me. And when my burden of sin rolled from off my back, it was a real pardon, and a real release from sin to me. And when that day I said for the first time, “Jesus Christ is mine,” it was a real possession of Christ to me.

When I went up to the sanctuary then in that early dawn of youthful piety, every song was really a Psalm, and when there was a prayer, oh, how I followed every word! It was prayer, indeed! And so was it, too, in silent quietude, when I drew near to God. Oh it was no mockery, no routine, no matter of mere duty. It was a real talking with my Father who is in Heaven. And oh, how I loved my Savior Christ then! I can talk about loving Him now, and methinks if He said to me as He did to Simon Peter— “Do you love me?” I would dare to answer, “You know all things, You know that I love You.”

But still, my consciousness of loving Christ is not always as vivid, now, as it once was. Why, then I was quite sure I loved Him, I know I could have burned for Him, or suffered anything for His dear sake. Was it not so with you? Well, Beloved, if we will come now, and put our hand within His hands afresh, which will be the effect of His renewing our spirit, then we shall have back again all the fullness and reality that distinguished our early, new-born piety. Oh, how blessed this will be!

Moreover, at that time how active all our Graces were! Do you not remember? Why, you had no doubts then, your faith was so strong. You had no lukewarmness then, your zeal was so burning. You remember, some of you, when first the Lord met with you? Perhaps it was in this house, or in the Surrey Music Hall. You would stand in the crowd till you were almost ready to drop, but there were no sleepy eyes, no dull, lethargic spirits. Oh, how you used to drink in the Word of God! It was marrow and fatness to you when you fed upon it.

If anybody would have bribed you to stay away from a Prayer Meeting or from a weeknight lecture, they might have offered the world, but it would have been a bribe too low. But now, too often, if there is a little discomfort in getting in the gate, if you happen not to get the very seat you want, or if you happen to be seated uncomfortably, or in a cramped position—you cannot worship as once you did. I know it may be the fault of the minister—perhaps he does not preach as he did in your younger days—when you were first converted. That is possible, I suppose. Still, I think it is more likely that you have lost the ears you once had, or that your ears are become dull of hearing.

I think it is more likely that your eyes have lost their quickness of sight, or that your hearts may be less tender and sensitive. Certainly your Graces are not in such active exercise as they were. Well now, if we come back to our Master, we shall have our youthful force and vigor renewed. To my mind it is always a pleasant sight to see lambs skipping in the meadows, because it shows they have more strength than they well know what to do with—and so they do a great many things that are improper for sheep to do. What odd, fantastic gestures they have!

It is even so with young Christians. They will often do many rash things just because they have an excess of liveliness. They have such a full tide of love and zeal that they do not know how to put it into action. Young life demands exercise. O that some of you who are old in years, and others of you upon whose Graces there are signs of decay, could but recover some of this juvenile effervescence! Ah, and you can have it. In the answer to

this prayer you will find it, “Renew a right spirit within me.”

A subject like this grows upon me while speaking of it. I cannot doubt that you will find it equally enlarge upon you in thinking it over. But on no account let us forget the practical ends that ought to be kept in view. Dear Friends, your usefulness to others will be increased if the Lord should graciously visit you with times of refreshing. You want the renewal of your own spirit in your Sunday school class, in the district where you distribute tracts, in the little room where you preach—or in your family, with your own children. You want to have more Divine Grace in your own hearts that you may have power with them. Well, you must get this by coming anew to your Lord.

Ah, and some of you came up here this morning complaining of the world and its trials. The world is very hard with you, and troubles are multiplied. How little weight the sorrows of this life will have in the scale, if balanced against the joy of your heart when the Lord renews your spirit. What did you care when you were first converted, whether you were rich or poor? It seemed no matter to you. Like Peter, you left the net, and the fishes, that you might get at your Lord. Like the woman at the well, you left the water pot that you might go and tell others that you had seen a Man who told you all things that ever you did.

Well, now, if your former piety comes back, if the zeal of your young days shall be restored to you, the world will be just as much a trifle to you, and you will tread it beneath your feet with just as much heroic contempt as you did when first you received the Gospel, not in word only, but in power. Since all these blessed results will follow, let me therefore beseech you—by your love to your own souls, by your care to grow in Divine Grace, by your anxiety to prosper in the Lord’s way, and by your interest in the welfare of others—pray with me this prayer, “Renew a right spirit within me.”

And You, O Lord, hear it in Heaven, Your dwelling place. Let Your eyes be open unto the supplication of Your servants, to hearken unto us in all that we call for unto You.

IV. One other argument only, where many might be given. Do not GOSPEL OBLIGATIONS irresistibly constrain us by the means of this, our prayer, to renew our Covenant with God?

Legal motives I would disdain to urge you with. But Gospel motives I may, and must. Did you do right in giving your soul to Christ at first? Was it a mistake? Was it the effect of a juvenile excitement, misled by some fanatical speech? No, you cannot say that. You believe it was the best thing you ever did in your life. You have often regretted you never did it before. There are a thousand things you repent of, but this one thing, that you gave yourself to God, is a subject of perpetual congratulations with you.

Very well, then, if it was well to do it then, do it now. If you would not make out yourself to have been a fool, and your faith to have been a lie. If you would not before the eyes of men and of angels declare that the whole thing is a farce—this day, even this day—let us go into Gilgal, and there let us renew the kingdom before the Lord. Oh, once again do what you did at the first—if it were a wise, if it were a good thing.

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, remember how often Jesus renewed His Covenant with His people. It was not enough to have spoken it in the ear of Adam, and whispered it to the heart of Eve. Enoch must testify of it. Abraham must understand it on the plains of Mamre, as Noah adores the time, when floating securely in the ark. There must be a renewed revelation to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to Moses, and to Joshua. Symbols of the renewed Covenant must be seen in the tabernacle, and in the temple. Each day, each week, each month, each year, each jubilee must give some fresh form of Christ setting His seal anew to the love which He bore to His people and His purpose to redeem His Church by blood.

Does Christ do this, and will you blush to do it? Oh, do as Jesus did to you—as you would that “the Man” should do to you, do you also unto Him. And moreover, He has renewed His Covenant with you. Come, I want you to look back at your old diaries. You have not burned your pocketbooks, in which you set down in some mysterious marks that others could not read, some mementoes of your Tabors, your Mizars and the hills of the Hermonites. I want you to look back. Has not Christ renewed His Covenant with some of us many times?

My soul looks back and sees some joyous seasons, some days marked with the red Dominical letter among the days of my history, when He said to me afresh, “You are Mine. I have redeemed you by blood.” It may be it was on a bed of sickness. Perhaps it was when you were walking in the streets. It may be it was in a season of holy retirement, or it may be in a moment when you were brought down to the earth. Oh, He has renewed His Covenant with us many and many a time with such sweet reassuring words that our soul, which was tired of this world, has been willing to stay her three-score years and ten, because her Husband had visited her.

You have stayed me with flagons. You have comforted me with apples. You have made me sick with love. Your left hand has been under my head, and Your right hand did embrace me. Therefore will I renew my vows unto You even as You did unto me!

Yet farther, dear Friends, and I shall not stay longer than this, though it is a very wide field. Let us be moved today to renew our Covenant with Christ, or rather to ask Him to renew our spirit, because

 every Covenant transaction binds us to it. You believe in the doctrine of election. We do not blush to preach it, and you love to hear it. What does election mean? It means that God has chosen you. Very well, if it is so, then you will acknowledge it anew today, by choosing His way and Word. You believe in a special and efficacious redemption, that you were redeemed from among men. Very well, then, you are not your own, you are bought with a price.

You believe in effectual calling. You know that you were called out. If it is so, recognize your distinction and separateness as a sacred people set apart by God. You believe that this distinction in you is perpetual, for you will persevere to the end—if you are to be God’s forever, be His today. And are you not looking for a Heaven from which selfishness shall be banished? Are you not expecting a Heaven where Glory shall consist in being wholly absorbed in Christ? Well then, this day, by all that is coming, as well by all that is cast, let your soul be bound as with cords that cannot be snapped to the altar of your God.

Backsliders, you that have gone astray, pray this prayer today. He bids you pray it, and He will, therefore, answer it. The text in the margin reads “renew a constant spirit within me.” You have been obstinate, wayward, unstable, fickle. Poor Backslider, He has put this prayer here for you—“Renew a constant spirit within me.” My Brothers and Sisters, the Church has had to cast you out, but if still there is a desire in your soul toward God, return! Return! Return! Your Father waits to meet you. The Church, your mother, longs for you. Your Brothers and Sisters desire to see your face again.

Say it, and we will say it with you, “Renew a right spirit within me,” and it shall be done. And you, Christians, that have not backslidden, you, my Brothers and Sisters, whose heads are covered with the gray honors of long service, offer today this prayer, for you need to pray it as well as the youngest of us, “Renew a right spirit within me.” Ask the Master who has kept you in your youth to preserve you till, in life’s latest hour, YOU bow, “and bless in death a bond so dear.”

You strong men and fathers, who are struggling with the world, battling day by day with business and its cares, forget not your God through being mindful of many things. Today, in this little pause in the noise and turmoil and strife of the world’s bustle, come now and renew your vows. You young men and maidens, you little ones in God’s Israel, whose portion it is to be the lambs carried in His bosom, you, also, say, “Renew You, O God, a right spirit within me.”

Come, renew the dedication so lately made. You that are brought, like Samuels, to God’s house, that you may wear the vestments of prophets before you wear the garments of manhood—give yourselves anew to the Lord. Let your youthful voices, so full of sweet music, unbroken as yet to the deeper bass which the world’s care is sure to give them by-and-by, sing unto the Lord, and let this be your cry—“Lord, I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaiden, You have loosed my bonds!”

May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, so dwell in us that each of us may renew our vows, through His renewing a right spirit within us. Amen.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #954 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A MOST NEEDFUL PRAYER CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT  
NO. 954

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 9, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”  
Psalm 51:11.**

THIS Psalm is beyond all others a photograph of penitent David. You have probably seen that interesting slab of stone which bears on its surface indications of the fall of raindrops in a primeval shower—this Psalm preserves the marks of David’s teardrops for the inspection and instruction of succeeding generations. Or what if I change the figure and borrow another from an Oriental fable? They said of old that pearls were formed by drops of spring rain falling into shells upon the shores of the sea. So here, the drops of David’s repentance are preserved in inspired Scripture as precious, priceless pearls.

This Psalm is as full of meaning as of tenderness. I know not how large a literature has gathered around it, but certainly writers of all creeds and ages have used their pens to illustrate it—and there is room for as many more. It is a perfectly inexhaustible Psalm. Its deep shaft of sorrowful humiliation leads to veins of golden ore. The stones of it are the place of sapphires.

We shall confine ourselves, this morning, to this one verse—not with any prospect of being able to bring out all its meaning, but rather hoping to make use of it—and to find produced in ourselves a measure of the feeling which it so solemnly expresses. If we should be made to drink into its spirit, and then to pour out our hearts at the feet of our Redeemer, it will be an unspeakable blessing. We shall use the text, first, in its evident sense as the utterance of a penitent saint. Secondly, we shall employ it, as I think it may be used, as the cry of an anxious Church. And then, thirdly, but in a very modified sense, we shall put it into the mouths of awakened, but as yet unsaved souls.

I. First, then, in its largest, widest, and primitive sense, we must regard this verse as THE CRY OF A PENITENT CHILD OF GOD. “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” This will certainly be fit language for any child of God here who has fallen into gross sin. I trust, my Brothers and Sisters, this may not be your case, but if it should be, hesitate not when you have fallen into David’s sin, if you feel David’s repentance, to offer David’s prayer, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”

Backsliding Christian, you may yet return—there are pardons for sins of deepest dye. The Lord will heal your broken bones, and restore unto you the joy of His salvation. But probably far more of us will have an equal necessity to utter this supplication on account of gradual inward backsliding from the former closeness of our walk with God. One great sin, when committed, startles the soul into repentance.

But a continuation of sin will be found to be even more dangerous. Though no one of the company of our transgressions may be a peculiarly striking iniquity, yet the whole together may produce an equally lamentable result upon the soul. White ants will devour a carcass as surely and as speedily as a lion. Many threads of silk twisted together may hold a man as fast as one band of iron.

Come, let us consider. Many of us have been saved by Divine Grace, and not barely saved, but we have been made to walk in the light of God’s Countenance. We have been somewhat like Daniel, men greatly beloved and highly favored. Now, have we acted in conformity with such distinguishing mercy? Have we manifested a holy jealousy such as Divine love ought to produce in us? Must not some here confess that their love has by degrees grown cold, or at least lukewarm? Must not many of us acknowledge that we have been very carnal, so as to have been overjoyed with worldly prosperity, or overly dampened with worldly adversity?

Must we not acknowledge, many of us, that we have been slothful in the Master’s service? Are there not some among you who for the last few months have done little or nothing for the Church and Truth of Christ? You were once diligent in your Master’s business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But that has gone—your former zeal and fidelity have departed from you—unstable as water, you do not now excel. With this there has crept over some hearts a listlessness in prayer, a want of enjoyment in reading the Word, a deadness towards spiritual things, a carelessness of walk, a carnal security of spirit. Dr. Watts’ verse might suit some of you sadly well—

*“In vain we tune our formal songs,  
In vain we strive to rise.  
Hosannas languish on our tongues,  
And our devotion dies.”*

Now, in such a case, my Brothers and Sisters, if you are conscious of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. If you are obliged to confess that the former days were better than now, and to admit that the consolations of the Lord are small with you—I do, in deep and anxious sympathy with your condition—exhort you to use from your heart the language of the Psalmist, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”

You will perceive that a soul which can really pray thus has life—true spiritual life—still struggling within. An ungodly man does not ask that he may abide in nearness to God. Rather, he would say, “Where shall I flee from Your Presence?” He does not seek for God’s Spirit. He is quite content that the evil spirit should rule him, and that the spirit of this world should be predominant in him.

But here is life, struggling, panting, crushed, painful life—but life for all that. The higher spiritual life which sighs after God. I have seen in the corner of the garden a little fire covered up with many damp autumn leaves. I have watched its feeble smoke, and known thereby that the fire still lived and was fighting with the damp which almost smothered it. So, here, these desires and sighs and cries are as so much smoke, indicating the Divine fire within. “Cast me not away from Your Presence,” shows a soul that loves God’s Presence. “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me,” reveals a heart that desires to be under the dominion of that Spirit yet more completely.

Here are signs of life, though they may appear to be as indistinct and doleful as hollow groans far underground—such as have been heard from men buried alive—voices from the sepulcher, choked and ghostly, but telling of life in the charnel house, grappling with death, and crying out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?” Let us look at these words closely, since I have shown you how applicable they are to us, and how they indicate spiritual life. I think when David used them, he may have looked back in his mind to that portion of sacred history with which he was conversant.

He remembered when Adam and Eve, having rebelled against their Maker, were driven out from God’s Presence, when the cherubim with flaming sword blocked the gate of Eden’s blighted garden. “My God,” he seems to say, “I, too, have offended. Your Presence is my Paradise, my Eden, all else is wilderness to me—barren, thorn-bearing wilderness. O drive me not out! Cast me not away from Your Presence! Let me but know You love me and I shall be in Eden. Let me but know that I am still Your child, Your favored one, and I will find in that sweet assurance my Paradise, my all. Let me be a courtier in Your palace, or even a doorkeeper in Your house, and I will be content. “But from Your Presence banish me not, else do You wither all my joys.”

Did he think of Cain, too, and was his mind so distressed that he was half afraid lest he should become like that marked man who went out from the Presence of the Lord to be a wanderer and a vagabond, and find from then on no rest for the sole of his feet? Did he feel that if he were exiled from God’s Presence he would be just as wretched as the accursed Cain, himself? Did the thought of that first manslayer put an emphasis into the prayer, “Cast me not away from Your Presence”?

Do you think he remembered Pharaoh, too, in that memorable night when the cloud that imaged the Presence of Jehovah came down between Israel and Egypt, and the dark side of it was towards Pharaoh? For God indignantly turned His back upon the haughty king, while His face shone lovingly upon His chosen, but afflicted people. Did he mean by our text to say, “Lord, turn not Your back on me. Cause not such trouble and confusion in my soul as ensued in Egypt’s hosts when the night of Your wrath fell on it. O cast me not away from Your Presence”?

Is it possible that the penitent monarch, while penning this Psalm, thought of Samson, too, and therefore uttered the latter part of the verse, “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me”? Did he remember the strongman who could tear a lion as though it were a kid when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, or smite the Philistines hip and thigh till he piled them up in heaps when God was with him—but who, when his locks had been shorn, and the Spirit was gone—was ignominiously bound, and with blinded eyes was made to do a mill horse’s work?

Did he think of the hero of Gaza and say, “My God, take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Leave me not to be the sport of my enemies. Cast me not off as one whom You can no longer employ for high and honorable service. Take not Your Holy Spirit from me”? Or is it not very likely that if he thought of all these, yet his eyes were peculiarly fixed upon one between whom and himself there had been a very close relation? I mean Saul, his predecessor on the throne. That man had been chosen to rule God’s people Israel, but he proved rebellious, and he was cast away from God’s Presence, so that God would not hear him in the hour of distress.

No Urim and Thummim would give him a Divine response. No Prophet would regard him. No priest could present for him acceptable sacrifices. He was cast away from God’s Presence, and the Spirit was finally gone from him. Even that ordinary measure of the Spirit which he had once enjoyed was gone. Saul was once among the Prophets, but we find him byand-by among the witches. Saul had lost all prudence in the council chamber, all success in the battlefield. The voice of Him by whom kings reign had gone forth against him, and broken his scepter.

“Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.” All this David remembered with a shudder, and his heart said to him, “What? Shall the son of Jesse be like the son of Kish? Shall the second anointed of Samuel be like the first, of whom the Lord said, ‘It repents Me that I have set up Saul to be king’ ”? He became overwhelmed with dreadful apprehension and turned to the Lord with a bitter cry, “Oh, can it be, my God? Shall I also be cast away from Your Presence, and Your Spirit taken from me?” He bows himself in agonizing prayer with this as his petition, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”

Give me your patient attention, you who love the Lord, while I try to give you many reasons why such a prayer as this should arise out of the depths of your hearts, and leap from your lips. As for the first petition of the text, “Cast me not away from Your Presence,” my Brethren, we have need to present it, for God’s Presence is to us our comfort amid affliction. He is “a very present help in trouble.” It is our greatest delight—of all our true joys it is the source and sum. We call Him by that name, “God our exceeding joy.”

The Lord’s Presence is our strength. God with us is our banner of victory. When He is not with us we are weaker than water, but in His might we are Omnipotent. His Presence is our sanctification. By beholding the Glory of the Lord we become like He. Communion with God has a transforming power upon us. This, too, is our highest glory—angels have no brighter honor. And this shall be our Heaven hereafter—to dwell in the immediate and unveiled Presence of the Lord in His own Palace forever.

I cannot, however, dwell at length on this first part of the text, and therefore I have summarized the reasons for its use. But the second I shall ask your attention to in greater detail. “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” Remember, my Brethren, it was the Holy Spirit who first of all regenerated us. If we have, indeed, been born again from above, our new birth was by the Holy Spirit. “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” are we made this day spiritual men. If, therefore, we have not the Spirit, or it is possible that the Spirit is taken from us, the very essence of our spiritual life is gone. We are utterly dead, we are no longer numbered with the living people of the living God.

The Holy Spirit is not to us a luxury, but a necessity. We must have the Spirit of God or we live not at all in a spiritual sense. If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. Without the supernatural work of this Divine Person upon our nature we are not numbered with the family of God at all. Remember, my dear Friends, that into the Holy Spirit you and I, when we professed our faith in Jesus, were baptized. We were immersed “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” And this day, without the Holy Spirit, you and I are fraudulent professors, baptized deceivers, and arrant hypocrites.

If we were not, indeed, baptized into the Holy Spirit, how dare we be baptized into the outward symbol? As he who, if an unworthy communicant, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, even so does the unworthy participant in Baptism. This day we are bearing a false profession, we wear a fictitious name, we are as those who said they were Jews and were not, but did lie. We number ourselves with the people of God, but if we have not the Spirit we shall at last be numbered with the castaways. See to this, I pray you, and O may the preacher see to this himself!

Remember, too, that the Spirit of God is to each one of us the Spirit of adoption. “You have not received,” says the Apostle, “the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Without the Spirit of God, then, we have no Spirit of adoption. We have lost that best of all blessings, the sonship, which places us in possession of all the treasures of Heaven as joint-heirs with Christ.

In the wilderness it was the sonship of our Lord which Satan assaulted when he tempted the Savior. “If You are the Son of God,” said he. Christ the Lord, however, stood fast upon this point and was not moved—and therefore He conquered. Let anything come between us and the distinct recognition of our sonship towards God and we are undone. Lord, if it so pleases You, suffer Satan to rob me of all my goods, as Job was deprived of all his treasures. And let the desire of my eyes be taken from me, and my eyes, themselves, no more behold the sweet light of day.

But “take not Your Holy Spirit from me,” for then my very relation to

You would vanish from my heart. While I can say, “My God, my Father,” I have enough, though all else is gone. But if You are no Father to me, or I have no Spirit of adoption towards You, then I am undone, indeed. “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me,” is a necessary prayer, for to do so would be to end our spiritual life, to cast us out as mere pretenders, to treat us as

trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

Further, let us not forget that it is by the Holy Spirit that we have access to God. “We have access by one Spirit unto the Father,” says the Apostle. Now, access to God is among the richest of our privileges. Let a man be able to take his burdens to God and it little matters how heavy they may be. Let him be able to tell his needs to his Father, and it little signifies how great those needs may be, for God will supply them all according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. But take away the Mercy Seat, or block up the road by which the Believer reaches it. Withdraw his power in prayer, and his faith in the promise—and all this you do if you take away the Holy Spirit from him—then is the Believer ruined, indeed.

Praying in the Holy Spirit is the only true praying. O may we never cease from it! “He helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” Without His teaching, then, what stammering prayers, what wandering prayers, what prayers that are not prayers at all we should offer! We must have the Spirit or else our great resource and remedy of prayer becomes unavailable. On your knees, then, you that have wandered and deserve to be forsaken and deserted of the Holy Spirit! I beseech you cry mightily, “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me,” and let your plea be in the name and merit of Christ Jesus the Savior.

Moreover, Brethren, the Holy Spirit is our great Instructor. In these times, when errorists of all kinds are anxious to mislead us, some from the side of credulity, and others from the side of skepticism, we have need to pray every day, “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” One says, “Lo, here!” Another, with equal vehemence, cries, “Lo, there!” We have not only, “another gospel,” but we have

 fifty other gospels now preached. Though there is but one foundation and one salvation, yet there are those among us who proclaim with earnestness this, and that, and other doctrines as fundamental, though their teaching is of the flesh, and not of God.

The young and unwary must often have cause, in great bewilderment, to enquire, “How shall I know the Truth? By what means shall I discern the way?” Now, the Spirit of God is given to “lead us into all Truth,” and reverently sought, He will be given to all who lack wisdom—to teach them the things of Christ, by taking those precious things and revealing them unto their hearts.

But oh, without the Holy Spirit our patient and Infallible Teacher, we should be like a child in the woods when the sun has gone down, wandering here and there, torn with briers and fearful of the wolf, crying in the dark for its father. Or like a traveler lost on one of our southern downs, surrounded by a clinging mist, not knowing which way he goes, and in constant danger of falling from some lofty cliff into the sea. “Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” You puzzled and bewildered children of God, here is a prayer for you—and God fulfill it to you according to His infinite mercy.

Again, I pray that I may be helped to magnify the Holy Spirit in your esteem, making you to love Him and worship Him more than ever. Dear Brethren, we want the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. This is one of His names, the Paraclete, the Comforter. He has come on purpose to appease the griefs of His children, and bring peace into their minds. Now, whatever our troubles may be, if we have such a Comforter, we can afford to welcome them.

Our adversities may be innumerable, but with the Holy Spirit’s Presence, we rise above them all. But, O my God, if the Comforter is gone, then my brain reels, my spirit sinks, I give up the conflict, I cannot endure to the end—for only by His consolations shall I in patience possess my soul.

Though I might enlarge, I must not, for time reproves me. The Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, and when we feel sin raging within, how can we hope to conquer without His aid? If He should leave us, if He who began the work does not keep His hand to it, how will it ever be complete? Holiness is too Divine a work to be worked in us by any inferior hand. He who made the first rough draft must put in the perfecting stroke, or all will remain incomplete.

And He, also, is our power for practical service—the “power from on high” for which Apostles tarried of old. If the Holy Spirit is not with the preacher, vain are his pleadings with men. If He is not with the teacher in his class, with any worker for God—what is their labor but beating the air, or reasoning with the waves? If no other person can pray this prayer from his inmost soul, at least the preacher can.

It rises up, as the Lord knows, from the very center of my heart. I dread beyond all things the Spirit’s withdrawal. Death has not half the terror of that thought. I would sooner die a thousand times than lose the helpful Presence of the Holy Spirit. I will just one moment allude to a controversy which has raged around this text, and then pass on. Some have said, “Then a true saint may be cast away, lose the Spirit of God, and perish.” The argument being that there is no need for a man to pray for that which God is sure to give, or pray against an evil which God will never inflict.

The answer is briefly this—I should not dare to pray, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me,” if I had not the promise that He will not cast me away from His Presence, nor take His Holy Spirit from me. Instead of it not being right to pray for what God will give, I venture to say it is not right to pray for what God will not give. The promise is not a reason for not praying, but the very best reason in all the world for praying. Because I earnestly believe that no real child of God will ever be cast away from God’s Presence, therefore I pray that I may not be.

And because I am well persuaded that from no really regenerated soul will God ever utterly take His Spirit, therefore, for that reason above all others do I pray that He may never take His Spirit from me. I say, again, it is absurd to argue that a thing which God promises to give is not to be asked for, for has He not Himself said, “I will yet for this be enquired of

by the house of Israel, to do it for them”? The fact that the continuance of the Holy Spirit is the subject of an inspired prayer rather strengthens, than weakens the certainty of the promised blessing.

Moreover, be it remembered, that God may partially take away His Presence and His Spirit, and yet, after all, never remove His everlasting and eternal love from that person. For He may only withdraw for a season, for wise reasons, to return again afterwards with fullness of Grace. Against this partial desertion we are, however, allowed and encouraged to pray. Once again, remember that when a man has sinned, as David did, and is bowed down as David was, he cannot always pray in language which would be precisely suitable for a well-assured saint.

He has doubts as to whether he is saved, and therefore he does well to pray on the lowest ground as though he were not surely a saint, but might prove an apostate after all. It is most natural for a backslider to use expressions implying the very worst, expressions rather of fear than confidence, rather of distress than repose. David cries like Jonah out of the belly of Hell, “Cast me not away from Your Presence.”

The lower down we get, the better. I frequently find that I cannot pray as a minister. I find that I cannot sometimes pray as an assured Christian, but I bless God I can pray as a sinner. I begin again with, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” and by degrees rise up again to faith, and onward to assurance. When assurance is gone, and faith is weak, it is a great comfort that we may pray a sinner’s prayer—the words of which may be inaccurate as to our actual condition, but correctly describe our doubts and fears, and supposed condition.

II. But now I shall pass on to take these words and use them as THE VOICE OF AN ANXIOUS CHURCH. The true Church of God may well pray, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” Brethren, I shall speak pointedly to this Church, over which the Holy Spirit has made me an overseer. Let us, my dear Brethren, remember that there have been Churches of old which God has cast away from His Presence.

Where are the Churches of Asia that were once like golden candlesticks? Where are Sardis, Thyatira and Laodicea? Can you find so much as a relic of them? Are not their places empty, void and waste? Look at the Church of Rome, once a martyr Church, valiant for the Truth of God, and strong in the Lord—now the very personification of Antichrist, and utterly gone aside to the worship of images and all manner of idolatries—an apostate and defiled thing, and no more a Church of Christ at all.

Now, what has happened to other Churches may happen to this Church and we ought to be very earnestly on our guard lest so it should be. In your own time you yourselves have seen Churches flourishing, multiplying, walking in peace and love. But for some reason not known to us but perceived by the Watcher who jealously surveys the Churches of God, a root of bitterness has sprung up, divisions have devoured them, heresy has poisoned them, and the place that once gloried in them scarcely knows them now.

Existing they may be, but little more—dwindling in numbers, barren of Divine Grace—they are rather an encumbrance than power for good. Remember, then, Beloved, that the power of any Church for good depends on the Presence of God, and that sin in the Church may grieve the Lord so that He may no more frequent her courts, or go forth with her armies. It is a dire calamity for a Church when the Lord refuses any longer to bless her work, or reveal Himself in her ordinances.

Then is she driven of the wind here and there like a boat derelict and castaway. The Lord may, because of sin, take away His Holy Spirit from a Church. The spirit of love may depart, the spirit of prayer may cease, the spirit of zeal and earnestness may be removed, and the Spirit which converts the souls of men may display His power elsewhere, but not in the once-favored congregation. Let me impress upon you that all this may readily happen if we grieve the Holy Spirit as some Churches have done.

My Beloved, let me refresh your memories with the recollection that the great power of the Church does not lie in the power of her organizations. You may have good schemes for work wisely arranged and managed, but they will be a failure without the Divine energy. Too often excellent methods are rigidly adhered to, and confidently relied upon, and yet, without the Holy Spirit they are sheer folly.

We are told that in unhappy Paris, when first the mails were stopped, the drivers of the mail carts took their seats upon their boxes and sat there, though no horses were forthcoming. Red tape commands as much reverence as the magic cord of the Brahmins. Formal routine satisfies many. Preachers, deacons, and teachers sit on the boxes of their mail coaches for the appointed time, but the power which moves the whole is too much forgotten, and in some cases ignored.

Souls are not saved by systems, but by the Spirit. Organizations without the Holy Spirit are windmills without wind. Methods and arrangements without Divine Grace are pipes from a dry conduit, lamps without oil. Even the most Scriptural forms of Church government and effort are null and void without the “power from on High.”

Remember, too, that the power of the Church does not lie in her gifts. You might, every one of you, have all wisdom and be able to understand all mysteries. We might all speak with tongues and be numbered among the eloquent of the earth—but our Church might not flourish for all this. Gifts glitter, but are not always gold. Gifts may puff up, but they cannot

 build up if the Holy Spirit is not there.

Strife and divisions, emulations and jealousies are, through the evil of our nature, the very frequent consequences of the possession of great talents by a Church—and these things are unmingled evils. Nor does the power of the Church consist in her wealth. When the Spirit is with her, sufficient treasure is laid at her feet, and the “daughter of Tyre is there with a gift.” But if the Spirit of God is gone, we might say of all the money that was ever poured into ecclesiastical coffers by those who sought to

strengthen her, “Your money perish with you!”

Gold avails nothing to a Church devoid of Divine Grace, it does but increase the evil which is corrupting within. O you vainglorious Churches— you may gild your domes, you may make your pillars of alabaster, and cover your altars with precious stones—you may clothe your priests in scarlet and in fair white linen, you may make your ceremonies imposing, your processions gorgeous, and your music enchanting—but all this avails nothing if the Spirit of God is gone! All that remains for you is as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.

Nor, and here let me press this upon you, does the strength of a Church lie merely in her doctrines. I know not that Laodicea held false doctrines, yet was she nauseous to the Lord. Orthodox Churches may become lifeless corpses. Truth may be held in unrighteousness. Creeds most accurate may be but the cerements in which a dead Church is wrapped to be carried to her burial. Men have had sound views of the Truth of God, and yet have been unsound in life, and sound in nothing else but in the sleep of carelessness.

Nor does the strength of a Church lie in her numbers. Congratulate yourselves that your membership is counted by thousands, but if you become a mob and not an army, or an army without a Divine Leader, and without the enthusiasm which only the present Spirit of God can give— what are your numbers but the source of difficulty, corruption, and failure? You are like so many grains of sand that cannot unite. You are altogether broken, and poured out like water if the Spirit is gone.

What availed the number of the Scribes and priests of old when God had left them to their own blindness? What can the largest flock of sheep do without a shepherd? What is a large Church without the Lord’s Presence but a mass of chaff to be scattered with a whirlwind, or to rot on the threshing floor? So, too, is it with the past history and the prestige of a Church. It is vain to depend on these. There is far too great an attitude among us to fall back on what our fathers did, or what we ourselves achieved ten or twenty years ago. My word to you, my dearly Beloved Church, is, “Hold fast that which you have, that no man take your crown.”

Our crown as a Church has been this—we have been a soul-winning Church. We have had nothing else whereof to boast, but this is our claim—we have sought the souls of men, and God has given them to us. To Him be all the glory. Shall we lose that crown through slackness and lukewarmness? It must be so unless we cry again and again, “Take not Your Holy Spirit from us.” The Holy Spirit we want to abide with us in all the excellency of His glorious power. And if we have Him not, woe is the day. Our Shiloh shall become a desolation, and this beautiful house of our assembling shall become a hissing and a reproach.

Brethren, I will use an image which will come home to your minds at once. Any Church of God from which the Spirit has departed becomes very much like that great empire with whose military glory the world was dazzled, and whose strength made the nations tremble. France, mistress of arms, queen of beauty, arbiter of politics—how soon has she fallen! I have heard many reasons given for her sudden overthrow, but I scarcely believe any of them to be sufficient to account for such a fall.

In an hour, like a lily broken at the stalk, she has withered. On a sudden, as though the hand of God had gone out against her, her glory has departed. Why was it? I do not believe that it was any lack of courage in her soldiery, nor do I even think that there was more than usual deficiency of skill in her commanders. Her hour had come, she was weighed in the balances and found wanting, and her prowess failed her as in a moment. The nation once so great now lies bleeding at her victor’s feet, pitied of us all, none the less, because her folly continues the useless fight.

Just so have we seen it in Churches. May we never so see it here. Everybody may be saying, “How wondrously that Church flourishes! What power! What influence! What numbers!” And on a sudden some radical evil which had been eating out the very soul of the Church may come to its issue—and then, as in a moment, all the apparent prosperity will subside—and the Philistines will rejoice. May it not be so! May our prayer be, “Take not Your Holy Spirit from us.”

Travelers in Egypt point to spots where once grew luxurious vegetation when the soil was constantly irrigated by the rich stream of the Nile. But now the irrigation, having ceased, the sand of the Libyan desert has conquered the fertile ground and annexed it to the wilderness. After this sort, Churches irrigated by the Spirit once produced rich harvests of souls—left of the Spirit the sand of the world has covered them—and where once all was green and beautiful there is nothing but the former howling wilderness.

It awakens melancholy reflections when we hear of the bodies of old Egyptian kings, proud lords of millions of men, dragged by our discoverers out of their secret chambers in the pyramids and exposed to every vulgar eye. The great sarcophagus has had its lid uplifted, and the monarch who once ruled the world has been taken out and his corpse unrolled for the sake of a little old linen, and an ounce or two of the embalming gum. Poor mummy! Once a Pharaoh whose voice could shake a nation and devastate continents—now used to heat an Arab’s kettle or to furnish an object for a museum.

So with a Church—alive by the Divine indwelling—God gives it royalty and makes it a king and priest unto Himself among the sons of men. Its influence is felt further than it dreams. The world trembles at it, for it is fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. But when the Spirit of God is departed, all that remains is its old records, ancient creeds, title-deeds, traditions, histories and memories!

It is in fact a mummy of a Church rather than a Church of God, and it is better fitted to be looked at by antiquarians than to be treated as an existent agency. May we never come to this! May the Tabernacle abide in prosperity till the Temple of God shall be among men. Let our whole

Church lift up the prayer, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.”

III. But time outruns me, and therefore I must close by regarding this as THE CRY OF AN AWAKENED SINNER. Not properly, nor accurately, but still instructively I may use it. O unconverted Man, if you are, indeed, anxious about your soul, pray this prayer, “Cast me not away from Your Presence. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.” Say you thus to the Lord, “O You most merciful God, pronounce not yet that word, ‘Depart, you cursed.’ My God, cast me not away as reprobate.

“Let Your longsuffering spare me a little longer, till Your Grace has saved me. Let me still stand on praying ground and pleading terms with You! ‘Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.’ It is true I have not Your Spirit as I gladly would have it, but still I hear Your Word. O let me not be denied the hearing of Your Gospel which by Your Grace may bless my soul. Still have I Your Holy Book, and Your Spirit’s voice is heard there—may it lead me to Jesus. O take not away Your Book from me! Shut me not up in Hell, where I shall feel the threats, but never know the promises of Your Word.

“Sometimes Your Spirit touches my conscience—hard as my heart is—it sometimes trembles. Sometimes I feel myself inclined to love You if I could. I feel some sighing and yearning after You. Take not these beginnings of Grace from me. O God, I wait upon You in the hearing of Your Word, and sometimes I hope Your power, Your life, will come to me, and I, even I, the chief of sinners, shall yet be saved. O take not away that hope utterly and forever. Swear not in Your anger that I shall never enter into Your rest, but rather turn Your pitying eyes on me and break my heart this day, and bind it up with the dear Savior’s love. Save me, O save me, with Your great salvation, for the sake of Jesus, Your Son.”

Have you prayed that prayer, dear Hearer? It shall be heard. But hear what God speaks to you—it is this—“Believe you now this day, and trust in Jesus and you shall be saved.” Come now and put yourself before the Cross. Trust yourself for time and for eternity in His dear hands, who there poured out His soul unto death for sinners. Then shall you know without a doubt that He will never cast you away from His Presence!

“Him that comes to Me,” says Jesus, “I will in no wise cast out.” Then shall you know that the Spirit shall not be taken from you, for He is with them that believe, and He shall abide in them forever. God bless you, every one of you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE CHRISTIAN’S GREAT BUSINESS  
NO. 1130

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 7, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You.”  
Psalm 51:12-13.**

BELOVED Brothers and Sisters, sinners are all around us living in their sins. Tens of thousands in our great cities and our country towns and villages are abiding in the densest spiritual darkness. They do not know their right hand from their left as to eternal things. And an equally numerous class who

 do know something of the letter of the Gospel are yet as men who see but perceive not, who hear but understand not. Some of these wandering ones are in great misery everyday, as the result of their sins, and if we knew what they suffered we would greatly pity them. It would be impossible for us to remain indifferent if we heard their secret groans. And all these sinners, whether they are suffering or not, are living to the dishonor of God, robbing God of the Glory which is due Him as Creator, and more or less dishonoring the Lord Jesus who receives no reward from them as Redeemer. If we were in a right state of heart we could not live where we are without feeling daily anguish on account of abounding sin.

Meanwhile, all around us there are potent agencies at work to hold these sinners in their present condition and prevent their escape into a better life. We may be idle, but the powers of darkness and their agents are busy—busy in working mischief, leading men into one form of error or another, or casting one or other of the nets of infidelity around them. Hell from beneath is stirred at this moment! If there is no revival in the Church of God, there is certainly a revival among her enemies! They are compassing sea and land to make proselytes, though, when they make them, they will be tenfold more the children of Hell than they were before. The activity of the hosts of the Evil One should act as the sound of the alarm to awake the slumbering army of the living God! What are you doing, O sleepers? Arise, for the Philistines are at your gates!

Meanwhile, the case is still graver. Sinners are dying! Every hour hurries a company of them into eternity. They are carried away as with a flood! They fall like grass before the mower’s scythe! And where do they go? Alas, we know, but how little do we consider! They are driven from the Presence of God and from all hope of restoration. Their woe is such as cannot be described in language, though in the Book of God the Holy Spirit has employed terms of extreme expressions, whose meaning it would be hardly possible to exaggerate. I might say, eye has not seen, nor

has ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the doom which awaits all those who perish in impenitence!

Beloved, the thought of souls sinking into everlasting woes stirs me with the desire to awake you. I feel that if my heart is cold I may share the responsibility of any lack of zeal in you, but if I shall be helped to be earnest, I shall hope that the sacred contagion will spread and that Believers in Christ all around will be deeply concerned for the souls of others. Our topic, then, is the life business of the Christian—to teach transgressors God’s ways—that sinners may be converted unto Him.

We shall handle our subject thus—first, we shall show who are to teach others. Secondly, what they are to aim at in their teaching. Thirdly, why they should thus seek the conversion of others. And, fourthly, how they can do this, for there may be some who will need a little practical guidance as to what they shall attempt.

I. First, dear Brethren, WHO ARE TO TEACH TRANSGRESSORS THAT THEY MAY BE CONVERTED UNTO GOD? The reply is easy. The text is found in a Psalm which is deeply penitential all through, but ends in the joy of forgiven sin. The words before us relate to joy restored by a sense of pardon—therefore the men who should teach others the ways of God are those who have, themselves, been pardoned. Who else can tell of the guilt of sin but men upon whom the burden of sin has pressed, who have felt the arrows of conviction in their own soul, who have been bowed into the dust because they have felt that the wrath of God rested upon them?

They can speak with authority concerning what they have personally felt. When such men speak of pardoning love and of the blood which cleanses, how sweetly do they tell of that blessed moment when their transgressions were forgiven and their sins were covered! These are not the men to descant upon the dignity of human nature, the excellencies of virtue and the merit of moral reformation. Their story is of quite another kind. They cry, “We have destroyed ourselves and all our help is found in Jesus! We are condemned and have no means of self-justification! But there is a precious blood that speaks better things than that of Abel, which pleads for us!”

Pardoned Sinners, go and publish the story of what God’s Grace has done for you! You are the men, and none others in the world, who can tell it to advantage. Tell it with the hope that your fellow men will hear it and live. While, however, all pardoned sinners ought to do this, we should remember that we are most fit for the doing of it when we are full of the joy of God’s salvation. Notice the prayer—“Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways.” If you are doubtful as to whether you are saved or not. If the sword of the Spirit is rusted in your hand, or hidden in a scabbard, you cannot wield the weapons of your holy war with any force while your arm is trembling with doubt. You must know in yourself that you are forgiven and that you have proved the power of the precious blood, before you can speak to others with the hope that they will believe your message.

When Luther lay sick and sorrowing, before he had found peace with God, a truly gracious monk came to his bedside and said, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” Luther looked at him, for he had often repeated those words in the creed, but had never felt their power before. The man of God said, “You believe in the forgiveness of David. You believe in the forgiveness of Peter. Believe you in the like forgiveness of your own sins through the precious blood of Jesus.” And Luther did believe it—and from that time he spoke like a man whom God had sent—speaking mightily because he believed confidently. In preaching justification by faith he roared like a lion in the glory of his strength, for the joy of the Lord in his own soul had become his strength to bear testimony to others!

I wonder not that some men doubt, and waver, and vacillate in their doctrinal sentiments and teachings, and talk about views and opinions. O Sirs, if they had once felt a broken heart and the terrors of a broken Law—if they had once known the power of the blood to bind up the wounds of the heart—they would speak of certainties and soon would come to be accused, as some of us are, of being positive and dogmatic! Who can help being dogmatic about a thing which is his very life and is as sure to him as his existence itself? While we believe in the joy of the Lord we shall not come to sinners with, “ifs” and “buts,” but with a faith which will, by God’s Grace, help them, also, to believe! To prepare us to win souls, we must have the Holy Spirit resting upon us, for the text says, “Uphold me with Your free Spirit.”

The Spirit of God in the Church is the standing miracle which proves that she is of God. Were the Spirit of God gone from her, it would be impossible for the Church to hold her ground. But the Holy Spirit abiding in the Church is the testimony of God to His Church and the strength of her testimony for her God. Beloved, if the Holy Spirit shall come upon you and rest on you continually, you will sweetly tell of your Lord’s Grace and of His dying love. The right words will come, for it shall be often given you in the same hour what you shall speak! The right emotions will attend the words, for the Spirit of God creates tenderness and pity! The ice will melt in your spirit, the hard frosts of your long backsliding winter will yield to the returning Sun of Righteousness—the season of cold and death shall be over and gone—and the time of the singing of birds shall have come to your soul. Then will you be able to teach transgressors God’s ways. O Brothers and Sisters, pray for a revival in your own souls! Beseech the Holy Spirit to come upon you! Entreat the Lord to send the Breath from the four winds, not only upon the dry bones, but also upon the men who have to prophesy in the valley of the dead!

Note, also, that if we would bear good testimony for God to the conversion of souls, we must, by the Spirit of God, be upheld in consistency of life, “Uphold me with Your free Spirit.” Brethren, if you are inconsistent in your own daily lives, how can you hope to be useful to others? The old proverb is a true one, “Actions speak louder than words.” If we speak to

men upon the evil of sin and yet indulge in it, what can they infer from our conduct? If we tell them of the wrath of God against evil and yet find pleasure in it ourselves, will they believe us? If we speak of a Savior’s dying love and yet are, ourselves, unloving, how will they believe us to be Christ’s disciples? Vain must it be for us to converse upon the power of Grace when it never appears in our own conduct! Inconsistency will mar the most eloquent testimony and make it no better than silence.

If we are unholy we shall pull down with our right hand dexterously what we in a clumsy manner attempt to build up with our left. We must be consistent and our prayer must be—“Uphold me with Your free Spirit,” or we cannot teach transgressors. Then, Brethren, we shall not say, “Stand by, for I am holier than you!” But feeling that we owe our preservation entirely to Divine Grace, we shall not reckon it any condescension on our part to come down to teach even the most guilty transgressors God’s ways so that the most notorious sinners may be converted unto God. Brethren, the text plainly shows us that pardoned sinners, possessed of the Holy Spirit, rejoicing in salvation and upheld in consistency of life, are the chosen instruments of God for the conversion of their fellow men. Let us note this and act accordingly.

I see nothing in the text and, indeed, nothing in the Scriptures, about a certain class of officials being set apart to convert sinners to the exclusion of others. One of the most deadly injuries ever inflicted upon the Church of God was the invention of the distinction of clergy and laity—there really is no such distinction in the Word of God. On the contrary, the Apostle says to the saints, “You are God’s

 cleros”—you are God’s clergy—you are God’s heritage, all of you! And another Apostle tells you that the Lord Jesus has made you kings and priests unto God, not some of you, but all His people. God forbid that we should ever arrogate any superiority over our fellows! The ministry is not ours, alone—you, also, are all to minister according as you have gifts and Grace.

All the members of Christ’s body have a ministry to discharge—not the tongue alone, but the hand and the feet. Even those parts of the body which are least observable and even less comely, are all necessary for the health of the entire system and therefore should occupy themselves in their own peculiar service. Do not excuse yourselves, therefore, by saying, “We will pray for you, that you may teach transgressors, and sinners may be converted unto God.” Do it, my Brothers and Sisters, for greatly do I need your prayers, but do not, when you have prayed for me, forget that you, also, are bought with the blood of Christ! And therefore use all your strength to His service. Neither does the text suggest that persons of superior abilities are the only persons who should addict themselves to teaching transgressors. The least in ability—the man of one talent— should as diligently serve his Lord as the servant whose talents are more numerous.

Neither does it appear that men, because of the pressure of business, are to think themselves excused, for David was a king and kings have much to do. In any kingdom much thought and activity must be required and David might, therefore, have claimed exemption from spiritual work. But he knew that he had been a sinner and he knew that he had been saved—therefore he was ready to help others. Have you been saved? Then, dear Brother, though you are up to your throat in business cares, still, nevertheless, say, “I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto You.” For, Beloved, if the saved ones do not communicate the Gospel to the unconverted, who will?

Will the devil try to save them? Will the devil’s servants try to save them? Will the men who are, themselves, in error or in unbelief try to convert others to Jesus? You know they will not! Who else ought to do so? “Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes.” Nobody ought to teach the things of God but the regenerate—and these are bound by a thousand ties to give themselves to the service. My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ—if there are no bonds laid upon us to seek the wandering souls of men, upon whom can the labor be laid? Who else can do it? Shall the blind lead the blind? Shall the dead prophesy to the dead? What other heart but that which has, itself, been renewed, can tell of regeneration and the Spirit’s quickening power?

Remember, if the tongues of the saints speak not for Jesus, then the testimony for Jesus has ceased from among men. If the saints do not preach the Gospel, the angels cannot, for no such ministry has been assigned to them—therefore sinners must perish for lack of knowledge! O Church of God, to you is this commission given! Be not faithless in it, but be clear of the blood of all men!

II. We will consider WHAT THE BELIEVER OUGHT TO AIM AT IN HIS WORK WITH SOULS. Brethren, our great aim is conversion—the conversion of transgressors. “I will teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You.” We are to aim at the conversion of all men— of whatever sort they may be—for Christ has a people redeemed by blood in all ranks of society. We should seek for the conversion of our children and of those who sit constantly with us under the shadow of the means of Grace. Still, lest it should be forgotten, I will mainly dwell upon this point—that if there are any in the world who peculiarly and above all others are transgressors, these are the persons whom our own sense of love to Christ should induce us to teach God’s ways—for if there is glory brought to God by one person more than another when he is converted, it is by one who was a notorious sinner.

The forgiveness of great sin, the reclaiming of a man from gross habits of vice, the deliverance of a woman who has fallen—these are the things which make the Grace of God illustrious. The Church of God should remember that the light is most needed where the darkness is darkest—that the physician is most required where disease is most rife. Therefore should she spend her utmost strength against the most fully developed sin. The point to aim at is the conversion of sinners, not merely their reformation. It is a good thing to improve a man by reforming him—he is all the better for being sober, honest, and industrious. It was a good thing that the beasts, when they were in Noah’s ark, were so tame. But they came out as they went in—lions were lions and vipers were still vipers.

The work we long to see accomplished is far greater than mere restraint or education, it is a thorough transformation. We pray that the lions may become lambs and the serpents become doves. Less than this it is not worthwhile for the Christian to live for, for there are philanthropic minds abroad apart from the Church who will look after moral reformation and sufficiently discharge the service. Let us help them if we can, but it is a side issue—our business is a more radical one—the one of the axe to the root of the tree by the change of the nature. Our object is more lasting. We have to do with immortal souls and their eternal future. Beloved, we must keep to this and be content with nothing short of the conversion of men. But it must be their conversion to God—“Sinners shall be converted unto You.”

I am very glad to convert a Brother to Scriptural views upon Baptism, Church government and the higher doctrines. It is always desirable to see Brethren learn the Truth—but what will be the use of it if the individual is not, first, converted to God? The main object of all Christian work should be that sinners may be converted unto God—that they may love the God whom they have forgotten. That they may adore the Christ whom they have despised. That they may feel the power of the Holy Spirit whom they have grieved. This is what we desire, O Sinners! It is not your outward washing to make you appear as Christians—it is your inward renewing—it is your possession of a new heart and right spirit that we desire. “You must be born again.” It will not do for us to mince matters with you—our prayer is that you may be turned to God, as the prodigal son was when he said—“I have sinned against Heaven and before you.” May such a blessed turning as this come to you, for this, and only this, can fit you for Glory. Except you are converted and become as little children, you can in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven.

This work is to be accomplished by teaching. “Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted.” It cannot be done by processions, pictures, incense and performances after the manner of the Romanist and the Anglican. And it cannot be accomplished by excitement, bawling, stamping and shouting, after the manner of certain brethren of our acquaintance, who cry, “Believe! Believe! Believe!” but who do not tell the people what they are to believe, nor instruct them in the faith. Teaching is needed. All the earnestness possible should go with the teaching, but there must be sound doctrine, real instruction, solemn Truths of God made known. It is by such means that sinners will be converted to God.

The most important teaching is that which dwells upon the Lord’s ways—God’s way of punishing sin, God’s way of forgiving sin, God’s way of mercy through a Sacrifice. God’s way of pardon through faith in Jesus. God’s ways of wounding, of healing, of killing, of making alive. God’s ways of sending forth the Eternal Spirit and working as He wills among the sons of men, neither waiting for man nor tarrying for the sons of men. The more of God’s ways we proclaim, the more likely is it that sinners will be converted unto God! You see, then, Brothers and Sisters, what you are to aim at and you are not to be satisfied without it. Did we not, at the beginning of this year, propose the one to the other—that we would, each one, seek for the conversion of at least one soul? Brethren, we have now passed into September! Has your desire been fulfilled? Has your labor of love been blessed?

I know that some of you have been the means of bringing several to Jesus. I could point, at this moment, if I chose, to one who would blush to have his name known—who during the last few months has led several to Jesus and that by inducing them to attend here, lending them his seat, and taking care that they were comfortably accommodated. He has also a kind, encouraging word for them and he looks after them with much anxiety—and therefore he has had the joy of bringing them to Jesus! God be thanked for this! May this be the joy of you all! Brothers and Sisters, are you doing something of that sort, or striving for Jesus in some other way? If not, God grant that in the few weeks of the year we have left you may yet accomplish something for the Lord, by the power of His Spirit.

III. And now, thirdly, gathering up all my strength for it, let me try to show you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, WHY WE SHOULD SEEK THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS. And it should be done first—and I will begin with the lowest motive—because it will save us from many ills. I believe that the not seeking to win souls brings many spiritual maladies upon Christian men. The lepers outside the gates of Samaria found that the Syrians had fled. They went from tent to tent and feasted and at last they said, “We do not well. Let us go and tell this to the king’s household, lest some mischief befall us.” They felt that if they did not reveal the good news some evil might happen to them. And I tell you solemnly, God, in discipline, often brings sorrow upon His own people because of their unholy silence as to gracious things.

An eminent surgeon, who was also an eminent Christian, visited a lady who was a professed Believer in Christ, but who, like some ladies I have heard of, was frequently troubled with imaginary diseases. The good doctor was frequently called in, until at last he said to her, “Madam, I will give you a prescription which I am certain will make a healthy woman of you, if you will follow it.” “Sir,” she said, “I shall be so glad to have good health that I will be sure to follow it.” “Madam, I will send you the prescription this evening.” When it arrived it consisted of these words, “Do good to somebody.” She roused herself to relieve a poor neighbor and then sought out others who needed her help, and the Christian woman, who had been so constantly desponding, nervous and fanciful, became a healthy, cheerful woman, for she had an objective to live for and found joy in doing good to others!

I can recommend that medicine to many whose lives are subject to bondage, for I know Brothers and Sisters who are never a day free from pain who are, nevertheless, full of happiness because they live to serve the Lord with their substance. Some of you might do great good with articles which you might very readily spare. You have ornaments which Christian men and women are better without, which, if broken up or sold, would aid the good cause. I wish many would follow the example of Oliver Cromwell when he went into Exeter Cathedral and saw 12 massive images of the Apostles in silver. “Oh, oh,” he said, “why are these gentlemen here?” “They are the 12 Apostles,” was the reply. “Very well,” he said, “melt them down and send them about doing good.” I wish Christians would do that with some of their gold and silver jewelry. Anyway, for our own sakes, lest the canker get into our gold and the rust into our silver, use it for doing good. Yes, by all means, seek the souls of men for God. Some evil will befall you if you keep the Gospel to yourselves.

Secondly, it will greatly add to your joy. Who does not like to be the bearer of good news? The pleasant tale of redeeming Grace and dying love. The pleasant story of a Savior who came from Heaven to earth to lift us up from earth to Heaven. The story of our own conversion, the story of God’s goodness since our conversion—why, it must be delightful to tell it! And when you have spoken for Jesus, if you succeed in converting a sinner to God, then comes the pleasure! Great is the mother’s joy when she looks upon her first-born child. She remembers no more her travail for joy that a man is born into the world! I am sure, however, there is more pleasure looking upon a new-born child of God and remembering no more your anguish over that soul—and your care in seeking to bring it to Jesus— because you have such bliss in knowing that there is one soul the more to decorate the Redeemer’s crown!

Happy are our lives who can win souls! I am very apt to be cast down and distressed in soul, but, next to fellowship with my Lord, my greatest consolation is found in receiving glad tidings of souls saved. Here comes a letter of loving thanks from Ceylon and another from the north of Norway, saying, “Blessed be God that I read your sermons and found a Savior.” From America I hear of an eminent Jewish Rabbi who has become a Baptist minister through reading one of my discourses. And recently I received a letter from Havana from a sailor who had just left the hospital. He told me how the man who died in the next bed told him that he had a treasure which he would give him if he would take care of it. And he then handed him a number of my sermons stitched together. “They have saved my soul,” he said, “and I hope they will save yours.” The sailor who writes blesses God in a warm-hearted way that it is so and the sermons have led him to Jesus!

Is this not joy? Would you not like to share it? From almost every quarter of the globe the good news comes to me—comes like manna, almost every day, and my heart is glad within me! I want you to know the same gladness, all of you in your measure. This honey is so sweet that I would have your mouths filled with it! You are, each one, helping me in the work of the College which aims at helping our young Brothers to preach and, therefore, I do not speak as if I found fault, but still, dear Brothers and Sisters, you may personally be engaged in the Master’s work and so, in a larger degree, have a share in the joy of seeing transgressors converted unto God. I have, however, better reasons than these. We will get out of these selfish motives into something higher. Unless you tell abroad the Gospel, how will you prove the sincerity of your prayers? You bow your knees and say, “Your kingdom come; Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.” How can it be if you never try to speak a word for Jesus and never seek to bring new subjects into His kingdom?

Your prayers—what can they be but hypocritical if they are not supported by your actions? Again, what proof is there of the sincerity of your love to Christ? You say you love Him and I believe you do. I believe there are thousands here to whom Christ is dearer than all besides. Show, then, a proof of your love! Do you ask, “How?” Out of your Master’s mouth shall you receive the answer, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” Do you answer, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You”? Here, then, is the proof which He demands—“Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs. Distribute unto others the heavenly food which you receive from Me. What I tell you, speak upon the housetops!” Abundantly yield to your Lord this proof of your affection!

Indeed, Beloved, is there any proof of the sincerity of any man’s religion who does not try to spread it? You have found this good thing—if it is, indeed, good—you will wish others to have it. What a disgrace it is that Christians should be so indifferent to the spread of the Truth of God in these days! There has been, lately, a revival among Muslims. We had all thought that the crescent was waning and that Muslims would never endeavor to make converts again. Instead, there appears to have been, in many parts of the world, a singular awakening of the old enthusiasm which marked the early days of Islam. What? And shall the false prophet command the zeal of his followers and shall not the Son of God possess the souls of His people? Let it not be said Christians are cold! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkalon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice over us! Can lies and falsehoods lead men to martyrdom, as popery has done full many a time—does it lead men and women to seclude themselves and give all their lives to the service of Antichrist— and is there no zeal left among the Believers in Jesus? Followers of God, is there no zeal left among you? The Lord help us to answer this question, as we shall wish to have answered it when the Judge sits upon His Throne!

I will go further and say that if we do not try to bring sinners to Christ, let alone our religion, where is our humanity? If I believed that sinners could be annihilated I should have no particular reason for preaching to them. In fact, I should have a very urgent reason for never doing anything of the kind! Certain heretics teach that if men do not hear the Gospel at all they will be annihilated at death—but if they do hear it and reject it— they will live and be punished for a time. Then, I say, let them die, they

will be better without hearing the Gospel—and he is a traitor who preaches it to them and makes them run so great a risk! But we, Beloved, who believe the solemn Truth of God which has often made us tremble from head to foot—that the wrath of God abides upon the ungodly forever—if we do not attempt their salvation, we are demons!

That was a harsh word, but I will not change it. I leave it where it stands. I care not what pretensions you are making to Christianity—if you are doing nothing in any way for the souls of men—you act like demons! If there is a wreck at sea and a mariner refuses to aid in saving when he is strong and able, men cry shame of him. A man is dying for need of bread at your door. If you have plenty, but refuse to give him a crust and let him die on your doorstep, the whole neighborhood will censure you! But a soul perishing, a soul perishing for lack of knowledge! For lack of the Bread of Life and you have it and do not hand it to him—O Sirs, how dwells the love of God in you? Is there a spark left? You are without Grace, for you have fallen below the humanity of Nature! In vain your years of profession, your long prayers and loud professions, if neither your substance nor your tongue is consecrated to God!

Beloved, there is one argument which ought to touch us all, and it is this. Can any of us refuse to teach the sons of men if he has really seen and known the Savior? There, stand a minute and look at Him upon the Cross. Do you see His wounds and the blood distilling from them? Do you mark the traces of agony in that dear face, so lovely and yet so marred? Have you caught a glimpse of your Master’s shoulders, where the plowers made deep furrows with their scourges? Can you gaze through His body into His heart and see the deeps unknown of anguish which He endured for sinners—guilty, lost, and ruined sinners—and have you no love for them? Does He come to you this morning and put His pierced hand upon you, and say, “I laid down My life for you—and as My Father has sent Me into the world, even so, I send you”—and can you look into His face and say—“My Master, I have never done anything for poor sinners, and I never shall”?

I think you will say, “My Lord, forgive the past and help me in years to come.” The seraphic Summerfield, just before he died, said to those around him, “I have been looking into eternity and if ever I should rise from this bed I shall preach very differently from what I have done.” And yet he had preached most fervently the Gospel of Christ! Some of us might well say, “I have looked at Jesus. I have seen His disinterested love. I have marked His agonies and groans and I must preach differently. I must live differently. I must teach differently from anything I have ever done before.” O, Holy Spirit, make it so and Yours shall be the praise!

IV. And now we have to close with the last point, which is to be most practical. The question will arise—HOW, THEN, ARE WE TO TEACH TRANSGRESSORS GOD’S WAYS that sinners may be converted unto God? I would say to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, “wait upon the Lord for direction.” But one of the directions you need not wait for is this, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” Some of you who could not speak, at least not to many, can assist those who do. If your own tongue will not serve your heart, get other men’s tongues to help you—in connection with our College there are always needs—and by helping others into the ministry you may have a tongue to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself.

Still, at your own house talk about the Savior or write about Him, or in some other directly personal way try to serve your Lord. To all Believers far and near, be it known at this time, that almost all our Missionary Societies are in need, not so much of money, as of men. The Baptist Missionary Society has sent out a circular requesting the prayers of the Churches that God will raise up men who will go abroad. Our older Missionaries are dying off. Many are coming home through sickness—and very few come forward to fill their places. Surely some brave young men whose hearts God has touched, who have been doing work at home, will cheerfully surrender all they are and all they have to go and proclaim among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ! I would be a recruiting sergeant this morning and I pray the Lord that some of the right kind may join the noble army of Missionaries.

At home we greatly need Evangelists to travel throughout the land. I do not see where funds will come from for their maintenance, but if men of some small property who can preach would retire from business and go from town to town preaching the Gospel it would be the grandest work they could undertake! If we had 100 such men in our own denomination, who would go from place to place like the Apostles—the missing link in the Church would be supplied—and we would see many sinners converted to God. When any of you move into the country, as you do when you increase in wealth, should you not feel that you ought to seek the good of the people? And if there is no Church of your own faith and order near, should you not commence one? Rest not till you see the Gospel preached in the neighborhood—and that fully—that sinners may be converted to God!

Ministers also are needed, and especially ministers who can support themselves. How much good might be done if the many merchants in London, men of education, would, on Sunday, go into the villages and preach the Gospel, bearing their own expenses and helping to find their own preaching room! It is impossible, in a poor community like the Baptist denomination, that we can ever cover the country with the Gospel if all ministers must be supported. We need a body of men who do not need support—who can do without it—who would think it their highest honor, like Paul the Apostle, to be no burden to the Churches. I feel that if I were a business man I should like to make money for Jesus. And with a prosperous business, such as some of you have, it would be delightful to me to be the father of a Church in some destitute locality where it would be a pleasure to give rather than to take.

Whereas by our present mode of action a poor little Church must need be presided over by a Brother who is pretty nearly starved and does not obtain a stipend equal to the average wages of a common artisan— therefore the cause of God is spoken of evilly. The fault does not always lie with the Church, which may be too poor to do better, but with rich Brethren who ought to be preaching the Gospel, themselves, instead of hearing it. Many here, I daresay, among my own hearers, possess latent talent which only needs to be dug out of the earth and delivered from the napkin. Lord, stir them up and set their tongues on fire! If the Lord hears that prayer and touches your lips with a live coal from off His altar, you will say, “Here am I! Send me!”

Then there is our own Sunday school. Do you know that because I am constantly urging our friends to go out and teach anywhere, the result has been that a large number of the Sunday schools in our neighborhood are well supplied by our people and our own schools are often short of teachers? I do not desire to narrow your spirit which prompts you to work in the schools of other Churches, but do not forget your own home work! Thanks be to God for the zeal of our young people, but the best women in the Church, and the best men ought to be in the Sunday school, teaching there what they experimentally know! I pray you see to it that our Sunday schools are well sustained—there are enough of you to do this.

Then, again, time was when we had in our Evangelist Society, for preaching in the streets, many young men and some, probably, who had better have learned a little more before they began. Now we have not so much of that. Is zeal for preaching the Gospel diminishing among us? Brothers, it ought not to be! That Society needs many more who will proclaim the Gospel of Jesus by the wayside, or in the lodging houses. Let me say to every man who can speak for Jesus, do not let that excellent work flag, no, not for a moment! And the Visiting Societies, and the Tract Societies—all these need helpers. Are there not some here who will come to their rescue?

I love to see our Brothers and Sisters opening little Prayer Meetings in back streets, in places where the Gospel is not proclaimed, or among people who do not go to hear it. Try to start fresh places of worship in regions remote from others. For all this kind of service Christ needs you, Brothers and Sisters. Shall He call in vain? We wish those we love to show their love to us. Do, therefore, by the love of Jesus—by the blood of Jesus—if there is any love in you towards Him and any gratitude for what He has done for you, go forth from this day forward and teach transgressors His ways, that sinners may be converted unto Him!

The Lord seal this address with His blessing. Amen.  
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke 5. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #713 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SOUL MURDER—WHO IS GUILTY?

NO. 713

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.” Psalm 51:14.**

DAVID had been grossly guilty towards his faithful and veteran friend Uriah. He had given instructions that Uriah should be led into the hottest part of the fight and then suddenly deserted so that he might be struck by the sword of the Syrians, and might appear to have died in the natural order of battle. Whereas, of course, his death was a cowardly murder, planned and devised by the very man who ought to have been his protector.

It is pleasing to observe in David’s penitence that he plainly names his sin. He does not call it manslaughter. He does not speak of it as an imprudence by which an unfortunate accident occurred to a worthy man, but he calls it by its true name, bloodshed. It is true he did not actually slay the husband of Bathsheba—it was by another hand that Uriah died. But still it was planned in David’s heart that Uriah should be slain, and he was before the Lord the murderer of Uriah. He calls a spade a spade, and names his crime as bloodshed.

Let us learn in our confessions to be honest with God. Do not give fair names to foul sins. Call them what you will, they will smell no sweeter. What God sees them to be, that you must labor to feel them to be, and with all openness of heart acknowledge their true character. Observe, too, that David not only gives it the right name, but is evidently oppressed with a sense of the heinousness of his sin. It is easy to use words, but it is difficult to feel their meaning. He prays like one who is consciously guilty. The blood of Uriah was now not on his hands, alone, but on his conscience. The bloody hand was before him continually and the impossibility to purge away the stain, except by the sacrificial hyssop, made David’s heart lay low in the dust.

The fifty-first Psalm is the photograph of a contrite spirit. Oh, let us seek after the like brokenness of heart, for however excellent our words may be, yet if the heart is not conscious of the blackness and Helldeservingness of sin, we cannot expect to find mercy with the Judge of all the earth! Possibly, my Brethren, you will think that I ought not to use such a text as this in addressing you, for there are no murderers here. “A sermon from this text to someone who had strangled another, or fired the deadly shot through his enemy’s heart might be well enough, but are there any here,” says one, “that are guilty of bloodshed?”

Yes, Friend. The preacher is guilty, at any rate, if no one else is! And he believes that there is not a person here who will be able to go out of this house unconvicted of sin in this respect, if God the Holy Spirit is but here, first, to enable the preacher to lay the charge clearly, and secondly, to enable your conscience honestly to take that home which really belongs to you. There are other ways of being guilty of bloodshed besides stabbing with a knife, or poisoning with a deadly drug. There is another kind of murder far less detested, but equally black in God’s sight—not the destruction of the body—but the destruction of the soul! Not the destruction of the mere shell, the outward man, but the murder of the real man, the inward self, the inner spirit, the soul murder which cries for vengeance before high Heaven, concerning which we have need to offer the prayer of David, “Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation.”

Before I proceed to the heavy work of this morning, which is to bring home sin to our consciences, I would like to put in a word by way of caution. I shall have to speak of some who “destroy with their meat those for whom Christ died,” and of others who, “crucify the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” And when I do so, there will be some who will not dare to take exception to the Scriptural phraseology, because everyone yields to that, but they will fight hard against the supposed meaning of the very expressions which they are forced to put up with. They will say to me, “It is impossible that any should be destroyed for whom Christ died.”

And I may add it is equally impossible that Christ should be crucified afresh. I shall quite agree with them in this, but if they, therefore, gather that it is

 impossible for anyone to be guilty of the two sins mentioned, I shall not agree with them, because such offenses would not have been mentioned in Scripture as having been committed if they could not be committed.

Do you not know, dear Friends, that a man may be guilty of a sin which he never could actually commit, but which he committed in his heart? For instance, in very deed and act, I can never destroy a man for whom Christ died. It is not in my power nor in the power of even devils to destroy such souls! But if I commit an action which in the ordinary nature of things would destroy such a soul. If I utter teachings, or if I present an example which, if God did not prevent, would destroy such a soul, then I am guilty because I should have destroyed that soul if it had not been for God’s interposing. His interposition does not take away my guilt though it prevented its effects.

Though I cannot crucify the Lord afresh, that is to say, He is so exalted in Heaven that all Hell could not drag Him down to the Cross—yet if I do an action which would crucify Him again, if it could be done—an action which has a tendency to put Him to an open shame, though I may not be able to complete the thing in act, yet, since its natural influence would lead to such a result, I am guilty of it. This is easily illustrated. Suppose that a man who had the management of certain points on a railway should willfully turn the points in such a way that two trains must come into collision and the passengers must be killed.

Imagine that an angel should descend from Heaven and stand between those two trains and prevent the collision. Where would be the difference between the man’s guilt whether the people were killed or not killed? The guilt is the same, because the thing would have happened if it were not for a miraculous interposition. So by bad teaching, and by unholy living, those for whom Christ died would be made to perish if it were not for a Divine interposition. And by inconsistency of conduct Christ could be nailed again to the tree if it were not prevented by Divine power. But that prevention does not at all alter my sin. I am just as guilty as if the natural effect had followed. If you should fire at a man and the bullet were unexpectedly turned aside, you would be as truly guilty as if your victim had died!

Human law might not call you a murderer, because human law is obliged very much to judge a sin by the effect, but the Lord looks at the heart and weighs the motive, the desire and the design. Please understand, then, that when I shall be speaking this morning about your destroying souls, I do not mean that you will in the end defeat the Divine purpose of Divine Grace, but you will be as guilty as if you could. Jesus Christ will not lose a soul whom He has determined to save, or be thwarted in any of His designs of mercy—but this will not extenuate your guilt, or mine. I put this in by way of caution, lest any should think me dubious of the great doctrines of Sovereign Grace which are every day dearer than ever to me.

I. The first business this morning is to awaken and bring home to the conscience of this assembled multitude A STARTLING CRIME. There are many ways of being guilty of bloodshed. Every man is guilty of it in one respect, namely, concerning the death of our Lord. I will not say that we are all guilty of His actual murder upon the tree, for we were not then born. Yet, as it was the common sin of mankind which rendered it necessary that He should suffer, we cannot escape from a share in His death.

This I can see very clearly, that those who reject, despise or neglect the claims of the Lord Jesus, and refuse to bow before Him, do, in effect mock Him, scourge Him, and put Him to death. In speaking against His Gospel, in deriding His servants, in neglecting His Book, in denying His Deity, and in refusing to believe in Him, men are virtually guilty of crucifying the Lord of Glory—for they thus do that which proves that if they had been in a like condition with the Roman soldiers and with the Jewish priests— they would have nailed Him to the Cross. We have committed actions tantamount to the crucifying of the Savior, and therein His blood comes upon us to our condemnation—unless by faith it comes upon us to our acceptance and forgiveness.

Oh, Sinner, let this be forever a subject of trembling to you, that you have necessarily something to do with the Cross! That having heard of it, it shall be unto you either a savor of death unto death, or of life unto life! Either the blood of Jesus shall fall upon your heart to cleanse you from all guilt, or it shall fall upon your head to condemn you. You have said, “I know Him not. I will not obey Him. I will not yield to Him. I will, as far as lies in me, put out His light and quench His dominion in the midst of mankind.” What is this but aiming at the very life of Christ, and being guilty of His blood?

Another form of bloodshed, and I am only hinting at these two, is that of anger without a cause. We are told on Inspired authority that he that is angry with his brother is a murderer. Unless there is good and sufficient cause for anger, in which case a man may be angry and sin not, anger is murder! When I have a hasty thought against a man and wish him out of the world, I have killed him in thought, and even though I may disguise the wish under the expression of wishing him in Heaven, there is guilt in the desire! Oh the hard, cruel, black thoughts which men have towards one another when they are angry! Why, they kill and slay a thousand times over! These hasty sins are soon forgotten by us, but they are not soon forgotten by God. Let us weep over our hot tempers, for the fire of Hell burns in them!

And let us be forever free from that lingering malice which harbors resentment and will not be brought to forgive, for this, especially, is before God a form of bloodshed, and concerning it we have need to pray, “Deliver me, O God, from malice, and evil temper, and envy, and all uncharitableness, lest the guilt of bloodshed should be at my door.” Having hinted at these, I now come to what I am driving at, namely, those sins against men’s souls by means of which blood may be at our door.

Let me call to your remembrance, some of you, your early days and your first youthful transgressions. It is taken for granted in the world that young persons ought to be allowed to sow their “wild oats.” And then it is hoped that afterwards they will settle down. But these wild oats are more easily sown than reaped, and many men might weep tears of blood to think of what a harvest has sprung from them. We sinned very carelessly and joyously, and led others into sin without a thought of the future. And now that we are converted to God we have to look back, and wish in vain that others could be turned from the dangerous paths into which we led them! I do not want to bring any needless bitterness into the heart of any person who is saved and pardoned, but I should like to cast a dash of gall into men’s hearts who have never sought the Savior and who are growing gray.

I would make them seriously reflect upon the mischief of their early days. Alas, you cannot undo the evils of your sins! Your children, trained amiss with a bad example before them, are not now to be tutored for God. Your acquaintances who have copied your habits are not now to be reclaimed. Perhaps some of you have had companions with whom you used to drink and feast who are now in Hell and brought there very much through you. How sad should be those depraved men who have been partners in the sin of guilty women, or women who have lured giddy young men into the paths of vice. I feel sure that even when such persons repent and find forgiveness the thought of the past cuts like a knife.

I can hear one of them sighing. “Alas, I cannot undo my deeds! Those with whom I sinned are gone, gone where I cannot reach them even with a prayer. And although others linger upon earth, they are gone, now, to such extremes of sin that it is almost hopeless to think that they shall be reclaimed, and all this is due to my youthful follies. Oh that I could wipe them out, even with my blood!” “Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of our salvation.”

Many unconverted persons here will perhaps feel, I trust they may, the point of the next observation, namely, that false teaching involves the guilt of bloodshed. Some, who afterwards have become ministers of Christ, were at one time ministers of Arianism, Socinianism, Deism, or infidelity. Now the man who leads the young mind astray from the Truth of God and guides youth into doubt and skepticism must not think that he shall go unscathed. Those who err from the Truth perish, but their blood shall be laid at the door of the teachers who first sowed the seeds of evil thought within them.

There was a despot in Italy who was wont to shoot poisoned adders at passersby in the street, and there are men who delight to shoot sharp, stinging doubts into young minds. They will not deny any one grand Truth of God, but they will insinuate covert doubts which assail the whole Gospel system. Pity, Brethren, heartily pity those false teachers who have been able to attain to eminence by the fatal gift of unsanctified talent. What must be at their door who have denied the Deity of Christ, who have despised and spoken slightingly of God’s Atonement? To have beguiled the minds of men till they have looked upon you as their oracle, and then to have taught them false doctrine—what is more horrible? With what solemnity is the teacher’s office invested when we remember that God will require at our hands the blood of souls!

You who are now converted, but were once infidels, or miscalled Unitarians, I pray you go not to your bed tonight till you breathe this prayer, “Deliver me, O God, from the blood of souls! Let none go down to the pit cursing me because I taught them error and led them away from the fountain of life. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation.” It is a dastardly thing to poison the wells of a city, but what is it to poison the well of the Truth of God and make soul-thirst the medium of soul-ruin?

It was an accursed thing, in the old story, for a man to pour poison into his sleeping brother’s ear, and yet hundreds have done the same! Sometimes by word of mouth, and still more often by infamous literature. Who knows the evil caused by evil books scattered broadcast over the land, which, like the ashes that Moses hurled into the sky, have brought a grievous plague wherever they have fallen? O you authors and editors of newspapers who teach ungodly principles and sneer at Divine Truth—take heed lest the blood of souls cry out against you—as the blood of Abel did against the first manslayer!

Our text has a voice in another direction. Some men actually trade in luring others into sin. By this craft they get their wealth. Pandering to the drunken and vicious habits of the multitude, they literally fatten on the ruin of those whose evil tastes they gratify and excite. Satan has many soul-hunters in his pay who hunt for the precious life. It is an amusement to some to decoy others into the snares and meshes of the Evil One. I have known beings of this class. I will paint one whom I knew who is gone to his last account. He was an old drunkard, hoary with years of infamy. His language—profanity. His life—abomination. I should blush to mention the sins of which he would speak with a delighted leer.

Never came there a young man within his range but what he tempted him to the tavern and to places still worse. If one saw any youth of the congregation walking with that man, you knew that he would soon be missing from the House of Prayer. It was impossible for a person to be five minutes with that old wretch without being infected by the contagion of his filthiness. His whole heart went with his foul tongue in the work of depraving the youthful mind! It was a sight to see the man’s lips as he spoke lusciously of a dainty sin, and to see the contempt that was in his countenance as the minister of righteousness looked sorrowfully at the destroyer and his victim. His joy was greatest when he had been the means of casting down a professor of religion, or could see young Hopeful become as vile as himself!

When he saw those die—whom he had led into sin and educated in profanity till they became as bad as himself—no twitch of conscience ever came over him! When he died and was buried, one almost thanked God for his removal, for he was a most fearful hindrance to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Oh, should I address some such who delight to sing lascivious songs, and to talk loosely, God forgive you! You are a great sinner, and may He take that black heart out of you, and give you a new heart and a right spirit, for, if He does not, double damnation must be your portion, since as he that, by God’s Grace, turns many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever, so shall you who have turned many to unrighteousness be plunged in the blackness of darkness forever!

This, I dare say, comes home to but very few—indeed, I trust to none of you here—but the next point may touch us all in some respects. Bad example is a way by which the blood of souls may come upon us. If a man should live in a densely populous neighborhood, and should carry on a trade which sent forth deadly fumes into the air so that everybody who breathed them would be infected with disease and die, who could acquit him of murder? Granted that he clearly knows that the fumes which he makes are deadly—if he, for any hope of gain—causes such ruin, he deserves to die himself.

But what is bad example? Is not that in the family and in the social circle just such a deadly vapor? I spoke just now of bad teaching, but bad example is even more dangerous, because its range is wider. Bad example reaches those who would not have listened to false doctrine, but who receive the poison through their eyes. How do you know, Mother, but that the girl who breaks your heart learns her first sin from you? Father, can you be so angry with your child when you are not quite sure but what he has imitated you?

Master, you, the other day, spoke very severely about a certain servant who forfeited your trust—are you sure there was not some irregularity in your conduct which misled him? Every man, especially in a great city like this, is responsible not only for himself but for his neighbors, and there are some of us who are like the church clock—other people set their watches by us. It becomes such of us as are religious teachers to be particularly careful. There are some things which I feel I might do, as far as I am concerned, which I believe I might do without suffering any personal hurt. But I do not do them for your sakes, and which I dare not do for the sake of many who would take license from my example to do a great deal more than I would do, and would make me the horse on which they would put the saddle of their sin.

Christian parents, you must not always say, “I can do this.” Yes, but would you like everybody else to do it? Because, if it is unsafe for one, it seems to me you have no business to touch it. “If meat offends my brother, I will eat no meat while the world stands,” is a grand old Christian saying of one who was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles. We must be careful even of things indifferent. But when it comes to those things which are positively evil, the bad example of a Christian is ten times worse than that of one who is not a Christian. If I see a sinner commit sin, his example is poison, but it is labeled. The inconsistent life of a professor is unlabeled poison, and I am very likely to be injured by it. Inconsistent Christians, false professors, you that have a name to live and are dead, take care lest bloodshed be at your door, and much of it, too!

But these are things of which the ungodly have their share, and therefore I come, now, to talk a few quiet words to the Christian only. I want to single out those Brothers and Sisters who love the Lord, and who are saved from the wrath to come through Him. I want to ask you, Do you not think that you and I may have been guilty of the blood of souls, though we are set by God to be, instrumentally, their salvation? Though we are the lights of the world and the salt of the earth, yet may we not have been darkness, and salt that has lost its savor? Answer, I pray, such questions as these! May we not have bloodshed laid to us from neglect of family duties? I fear that this is one of the sins of this age.

The Puritans were noted for the care in which they brought up their children—they never fell into the fault of sparing the rod, and their children were catechized every Sunday. They were prayed for and wept over, and the Puritan household was a very Heaven upon earth. But oh, if some of us see our children running into sin, and growing up to be thoughtless, careless, and giddy—what can we say—who shall we blame? Are there none here, like Eli, who have only said to their children, when they have done wrong, “My sons, why do you do this?” but have let them go unchastised? Remember the character of Hophni and Phinehas, and the message of Samuel concerning them—“Thus says the Lord, I will do a thing at which both the ears of everyone that hears shall tingle: I will judge the house of Eli because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.”

Let us take heed, lest God bring the like on us! Oh, Sirs, it is no small charge to be a parent, and to neglect that charge brings no small guilt upon us! When I see so many children of Christians turn out worse than others. When I find some of the sons of ministers among the ringleaders in sin—what can I do but pray that I may sooner die than have such a curse fall upon myself? If any of us have neglected home duties, let us beware lest we have the blood of our children laid at our door!

Have we not often neglected the souls of seekers in distress who would become very glad of our attention? At our meeting for prayer and fasting last Tuesday, a Brother who was, I think, the best man among us, made a confession of cowardice and we all looked at him and could not understand how he could be a coward. A bolder man I do not know! He told us that there was a man in his congregation who was a wealthy man. If he had been a poor man he would have spoken to him about his soul. But, being a wealthy man, he thought it would be taking too much liberty. At last, one of the members happened to say to him, “Mr. So-and-So, have you found a Savior?” and bursting into tears, the man said, “Thank you for speaking to me! I have been in distress for months, and thought the minister might have spoken to me. Oh, I wish he had. I might have found peace.”

I am afraid that often you good people have sinners convicted of sin sitting beside you in your place of worship, and when the sermon is over you ought to get a word with them—you might be the means of their comfort—but you forget it, and you go your way. Now, is this a thing to be forgotten, as if it were no great offense? Let me give you a picture which may set it forth. See yonder poor wretches whose ship has gone down at sea? They have constructed a poor tottering raft and have been floating on it for days. Their supply of bread and water is exhausted and they are famishing. They have bound a handkerchief to a pole and hoisted it, and a vessel is within sight. The captain of the ship takes his telescope, looks at the object, and knows that it is a shipwrecked crew.

“Oh!” he says to his men, “we are in a hurry with our cargo, we cannot stop to look after an unknown object. It may be somebody perishing, and it may not be, but, it is not our business,” and he keeps on his course. His neglect has murdered those who died on the raft! Yours is much the same case, only it is worse because you deal with immortal souls! And he only deals with bodies which he allows to die. Oh, my Brother, I do implore you before the Lord, never let this sin lay at your door again! If there is one who is impressed, and needs a word of comfort, fly on the wings of Mercy to such a soul and help cheer him as God enables you!

May we not be guilty, in the next place, of neglecting to warn many that are not impressed? If I saw a man go reeling on towards a precipice, and knew, as he went staggering forward, that in a few minutes he would go over the edge and be plunged into eternity—if I did not shout out and warn him to draw back—I should feel that when he fell I had a share in his death. When you hear a funeral bell toll for a neighbor, can you say, “If that soul is gone to its last account, I did at least tell him of the way of mercy”? No, I fear there are many now slumbering in the sepulcher whom you can never warn now, but whom you ought to have warned—your brothers, your sisters, your own children, your next door neighbors—they are gone, gone from where they never can return. And among the things they will have to say at the Day of Judgment will be this, that they can bear witness against you that you never warned them to flee from the wrath to come.

O God, we are all guilty here! “Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of our salvation.” Further, have we not been guilty of the blood of souls by exposing them to danger? When a father puts his boy apprentice, if he only cares about his worldly gain and not about his soul’s interest, I cannot acquit him, nor will God acquit him. Parents have sometimes put their girls to school and their boys to trade where if they had obtained any good it would have been a miracle, and where if they met with mischief it was only what they might expect.

Now it is according to law that if I expose my child to the cold and it perishes through my negligence I am punished. Surely it must be so with sin. So with our servants, our neighbors, and work people—if we expect them to do for us what we would not do for ourselves we are guilty of their sins. Some here may possibly be carrying on unnecessary trades which require working men to toil all Sunday (works of necessity, of course, I speak not of), but there are systems of trading which for no justifiable reason involve the keeping away of the men employed from a place of worship. Now when these men are lost, I ask at whose door will their blood lie? Who had the profits of their labor? Who fattened on their gains? Who sucked the very blood of their souls to coin it into wealth for himself? If there is such an one, let him cease from the sin, and pray, “Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation.”

Christian, do you not think that sometimes you may have been guilty from unholy silence? When I hear God’s name profaned and offer no rebuke, but take it quietly, is there no sin there? When I see my neighbor going into sin, and have an opportunity of speaking and do not, is that silence without blame? When I go up and down the street and meet people in many ordinary avocations to whom I might speak of Christ and never do—when they perish, shall I be clear? Oh the thousands that some of us come in contact with, and yet leave them as if we had no care about their eternal state! Shall we be clear, Brothers and Sisters, shall we be clear?

May not another sin also be charged upon some of you? Some have a way, not only of doing no good, but doing a deal of mischief by their harsh conversation to young beginners. I have known elderly professors who, instead of encouraging the young, would seem as though they would snap the child’s head off if it spoke of Divine things! They doubt the possibility of the conversion of little ones and will ask knotty questions, and raise difficult points to perplex those who have but lately found Christ. They delight to insinuate that the convert’s joy is nothing but mere excitement, and they do all they can to thrust seeking souls into despair.

Unlike the Master, who never broke the bruised reed, they break all they can! And, unlike He who never quenched the smoking flax, they would, if they could, quench even those that have begun to blaze! Is there no guilt here? Are there none such in this House? I know there are! May they have Divine Grace to feel the sin and to plead for mercy! Unhallowed levity about Divine things is another home-born sin. Do we ever trifle about God’s Word? Are we not tempted to joke and utter a silly jest when it would have been prudent to have urged a warning? I fear, Brethren, and fear sorrowfully, that many of us who ought to know better are verily guilty here. To trifle with eternal things is no small crime.

But here is a point upon which I would speak more earnestly, still— how often have we withheld prayer concerning others? We know they are perishing, but we do not pray for them! We are conscious that their state will be one of woe, but yet no tears flow from our inhuman eyes, and our spirits are not affected. Neglected closets shall call upon them to speak against us. I shall leave our lack of prayer in private to be a matter of personal confession, but I am afraid that after having thought it over we shall feel we have been guilty of bloodshed.

Then there is a general need of earnestness especially chargeable upon us who are ministers. That I should ever have preached to you as I have sometimes done ought to break my heart. And that some of you should teach in Sunday school as you teach ought to cause you deep regret! And that you should go even about tract distributing in so cold a manner as you sometimes do should make you smite upon your breasts. Oh if we were half as earnest to serve God as others are to win gold, what success we might expect! And we have not had it because of our want of earnestness! Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God!

II. In the second place, let us make AN EARNEST CONFESSION. Let us not deny our responsibility or we shall be like Cain, who said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Shun a Cainish spirit. Let us not try to shift the responsibility to God’s shoulders by saying, “God’s decree will be fulfilled.” That is true, but Divine sovereignty is no excuse for human negligence. Let us feel, “We are guilty here,” and do not let us murmur, “Well, we have a right to do as we like. It is a voluntary work.”

It is so, but, Brethren, we are debtors unto the Jew and Gentile. Loved with such mercy as that which we have received, we ought to have done more for souls and we are guilty because we have not done it. Let us not soothe ourselves with, “Well, we will do better in the future.” Look to the past—how can you undo that? And the souls that have gone, past recall, down the cataract of death—what can you do for them? Bestir yourself! Bestir yourself for the future! For there you can do much. But for the past, what is to be done but weep! Let us make a clean breast of it when we are alone, and solemnly confess that we have been guilty of the blood of souls.

III. In the third place, our text has in it AN EARNEST PRAYER which I commend to you. You observe it is addressed to God. It is not a resolution made in his own strength, but it is addressed to God. “Deliver me, O God.” You observe that it is addressed to the God of salvation. Thanks be to His name, He can save us! He is the God of salvation. It is His prerogative to forgive. It is His very name and office to save those who seek His face. Let us go to the God of salvation!

Better still, the text calls Him the God of my salvation. Yes, blessed be His name, guilty as I am I am saved! Though the blood of others once lay at my door—and my sin humbles me—yet through Jesus’ precious blood I can rejoice in the God of my salvation! Then look at the word, “Deliver.” It has two meanings. “Deliver me from the guilt of the past—whatever I may have been in the years gone by forgive it. But Lord, deliver me from the power of it for the future.” If I am a minister, Lord, make me more prayerful. If I am a Sunday school teacher, help me to teach the children as though they would be dead before we met again. If I am a father or a mother, help me to instruct my dear children as though their salvation rested upon me.

If I am a neighbor, let me not neglect the street, or court, or lane where I live. If I am a citizen, let me not neglect the claims of those who live in the same city with me. If I am a Christian, do not let me be a dark lantern, do not suffer me to be unsavory salt. Some of you professors are of no use to anybody. I know some professing Christians who hoard their money just as if they did not owe Christ anything. They never give to the cause of God and their gold and their silver are red with blood—the blood of those who might have had the Gospel preached to them if there had been the means of sending it. I know others who come in and out and occupy seats and sing and pray as others do, but take no part in the work of the Church. They are useless idlers, like the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel.

If such are present now, the Lord send the darts of conviction through them! If you are His people, I hope you have the Grace to receive the rebuke in the spirit in which it is sent to you and profit by it. If you have been bought with blood, live as one who is not his own! If you are a mere worldling, why do you come here and make a profession of Christianity? But if you have been saved, ask to be delivered from the great sin of bloodshed!

IV. The psalmist ends with A COMMENDABLE VOW. It is about the only vow that I can advise any of you to make. He says, first of all, if God will deliver him, he will sing. And I vow I will. If I am only able to say as George Fox said, when he was dying—honest Quaker as he was—“I am clear”—oh if I can say, “I am clear,” I will sing, indeed! It is enough to make any man sing if he can be minister to such a congregation as this and be clear.

Sometimes when I have gone down out of the pulpit, and somebody has said, “There are six or seven thousand people without excuse because they have heard the Gospel,” I have said, “Yes, it is so,” but I have thought, “Have I preached it as earnestly as I ought?” And many a time it has made me toss on my bed to think of the responsibility of this mass of human beings, and the twenty thousand or more who regularly read the sermons as they come from the press. Who is sufficient for these things? Truly a saved minister will be an everlasting wonder!

Then it is said, “My tongue shall sing aloud.” Oh yes, indeed! Who can sing in any other style if such a mercy as this is afforded us? If, indeed, we are found faithful, we will not sing in a whisper! If we have discharged our conscience, and no man can say, “You have been unfaithful to me,” our tongue shall sing aloud! But note the subject, note the subject! It does not say my tongue shall sing aloud of my faithfulness, of my integrity, or of my earnestness. Oh no! When I have done my best. When I am delivered from all guilt of bloodshed, and my tongue begins to sing—it shall not sing of anything but Your righteousness, YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, O Jesus!

We cannot sing of ourselves. We must sing of the finished work of a precious Savior. “Ah,” said one to a dying saint, “you have fought a good fight!” “Ah,” said he, “do not tell me that. I am thinking of how Jesus Christ said, ‘It is finished.’ ” This is solid comfort for our souls. We must come as sinners, still! I would like to have some such verse sung over my dead body as was sung over dear Rowland Hill when they buried him under his pulpit at Surrey Chapel. He had asked them to sing the hymn—

“**Jesus, Your blood and righteousness**

*My beauty are, my glorious dress”*  
and that verse was sung slowly and solemnly—  
*“When from the dust of death I rise,  
To take my mansion in the skies,  
Even then shall this be all my plea,  
‘Jesus has lived and died for me.’”*  
Yes, we shall sing and sing aloud, too, but we shall not sing of goodness, but of the righteousness of our dear Redeemer!  
Now, poor Sinner, what do you say of Christ’s righteousness? Do you not see that you are guilty of many sins? Oh that you may have Divine Grace to confess them! Remember the righteousness of Christ can wash away all sin, and however black and foul we may have been, we have but to come to the fountain filled with blood, and if we wash there, we shall be white as snow! The Lord give us such a washing, and we will sing aloud of His righteousness!

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REPENTANCE AFTER CONVERSION  
NO. 2419

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JUNE 30, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 12, 1887.

**“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”  
Psalm 51:17.**

THE French have a phrase which signifies in English, “assisting at a service.” A person who has been present at some grand function of the church speaks of himself as having “assisted” at the service. I want that many of us should literally carry out that expression just now. I do not want so much to preach as to lead you in the offering of sacrifices. Somebody says, perhaps, “But I have no bullock, no lamb.” No, but you have a heart—and it is a broken and a contrite heart that I propose that we should present to God! I will not invite those of you to do so who have never experienced the working of Divine Grace within your souls. I trust that you will be led to do so by the Spirit of God, but I cannot, just now, invite you to offer that sacrifice, for my appeal is to those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to those who have been restored from spiritual death, to those who are debtors to Free Grace and dying love. It is to them I speak and I invite and entreat them to accompany us while we present to God the sacrifices which He will not despise—the sacrifices of a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

I would have you specially notice that in this Psalm David puts the sacrifice in its right position—and I would put it in the same position. You observe that he has, first of all, sought pardon for his sin and he has found it. He has prayed, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” His sin, then, is forgiven. He has, next, asked for a restoration of purity—“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.’’ That, also, has been done. I will suppose it, my dear Friend, to have been done in your case, also— that you have been renewed in the spirit of your mind by the Grace of God.

Then, next, joy has also been restored to David, for he says, “Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,” so that it is not a question with him as to whether he is saved or not—he is a man who is saved and living in the assurance of salvation! Sin is pardoned and the impurity engendered by grievous transgression has become put away. He has peace with God—he is the man who brings the sacrifice. He is the man who presents to God a broken heart and a contrite spirit. More than that, he has become a preacher—his gratitude to God has led him to be useful to others, as he says in the 13th verse, “Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You.” And even more than that, he has gone from the pulpit to the choir—he has become a singer and he sings a sweet song of thankfulness to the great God who has saved him! Now, this is the man whose lips the Lord has opened and whose mouth is showing forth God’s praise! This is the man who says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

Perhaps you have the notion that repentance is a thing that happens at the commencement of the spiritual life and has to be gotten through as one undergoes a certain operation—and that is an end of it. If so, you are greatly mistaken! Repentance lives as long as faith. Towards faith I might almost call it a Siamese twin. We shall need to believe and to repent as long as we live! Perhaps, also, you have the idea that repentance is a bitter thing. It is sometimes bitter—“They shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn,” but that is not the kind of repentance that I am talking of, now. Surely that bitterness is past, it was all over long ago. But this is a sweet bitterness which attends faith as long as we live—and becomes a source of tender joy!

I do not know whether I shall quite convey my meaning to you, but I can assure you that the greatest joy I have ever known has not been when I have laughed, but when I have cried. The most intense happiness I have ever felt has not been when I have been exhilarated and full of spirits, but when I have leaned very low on the bosom of God and felt it so sweet to be so low that one could scarcely be lower and yet did not wish to be any higher! I quite agree with Mr. Rowland Hill, who said he supposed that there could be no tears of repentance in Heaven and that would be the only thing that he could almost regret, for sweet Sister Repentance is such charming company that we shall regret to part with her even at the gates of pearl. As we may have to part with her, there, I want us to keep her company all the time this service lasts! And my objective at this time is to ask you to bring to God, while we are here in this House of Prayer, the sacrifices of a broken and a contrite spirit. I want you to indulge yourselves in this most rare and exquisite delight of sorrow at the feet of Jesus—not sorrow for unpardoned sin, but sorrow for pardoned sin, sorrow for that which is done with, sorrow for that which is forgiven, sorrow for that which will never condemn you—for it was laid on Christ long ago and is put away forever! It is this sweet sorrow that I want you to indulge. Up with the sluices, then, Brothers and Sisters, and let these sacred streams of sorrow flow forth!

I. And, first, LET US CONSIDER WHAT THIS SACRIFICE IS. It is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.  
If you and I have a broken spirit, all idea of our own importance is gone. What is the use of a broken heart? Why, much the same as the use of a broken pot, or a broken jug, or a broken bottle! Men throw it on the dunghill! Hence David says, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise,’’ as if he felt that everybody else would despise it. Now, do you feel that you are of no importance? Though you know that you are a child of God, do you feel that you would not give a penny for yourself? You would not wish to claim the first place. The rear rank suits you best and you wonder that you are in the Lord’s army in any rank at all.  
Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I believe that the more God uses us, the less we shall think of ourselves, and the more He fills us with His Spirit, the more will our own spirit sink within us in utter amazement that He should ever make use of such broken vessels as we are! Well now, indulge that feeling of nothingness and unimportance! Not only indulge it as a feeling, but go and act upon it! And be you in the midst of your Brothers and Sisters less than the least—humble yourselves in wonder that God should permit your name to stand on the roll of His elect at all. Admire the Grace of God to you and marvel at it in deep humiliation of spirit. That is part of the sacrifice that God will not despise!  
Next, if you and I have a broken and a contrite heart, it means that frivolity and trifling have gone from us. There are some who are always trifling with spiritual things, but he who gets a broken heart has done with that sort of spirit. A broken heart is serious, solemn and in earnest. A broken heart never tries to play any tricks with God and never shuffles texts as though even Scripture, itself, were meant only to be an opportunity for testing our wit. A broken spirit is tender, serious, weighed down with solemn considerations. Indulge that spirit, now—be solemn before God, grasp eternal things, let slip these shadows—what are they worth? But set your soul on things Divine and everlasting. Pursue that vein of thought and so bring before God a broken and a contrite spirit!  
Further, a broken spirit is one out of which hypocrisy has gone. That vessel, whole and sealed up, may contain the most precious oil of roses, or it may contain the foulest filth—I know not what is in it. But break it and you will soon see! There is no hypocrisy about a broken heart. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, be before men what you are before God! Seem to be what you really are. Make no pretences. I am afraid that we are all hypocrites in a measure—we both pray and preach above our own actual experience full often—and we, perhaps, think that we have more faith than we actually have and more love than we have ever known. The Lord make us to have a broken heart that is revealed by being broken! You know, now, what was in that pot, for there it lies, broken to shivers. Its contents are no longer concealed, they have all run out. Now, pour out your hearts before God as you sit there in your pews, and let Him see what He really does see—all that is in your soul—for in your hidden parts He would have you to know wisdom. Reveal yourselves unto yourselves and so reveal yourselves unto your God!

Once more, a broken spirit signifies that all the secrets and essences of the spirit have flowed out. You remember what happened when that holy woman broke the alabaster box? We read that “the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” A broken heart cannot keep secrets! Now is all revealed. Now its essence goes forth. Far too much of our praying and of our worship is like closed-up boxes—you cannot tell what is in them. But it is not so with broken hearts! When broken hearts sing, they sing! When broken hearts groan, they groan! Broken hearts never play at repenting, nor play at believing. There is much of religion, nowadays, that is very superficial, it is all on the surface. A very small quantity of Gospel paint, with just a little varnish of profession, will go a very long way, and look very bright. But broken hearts are not like that—with broken hearts the hymn is a real hymn, the prayer is a real prayer, the hearing of sermons is earnest work—and the preaching of them is the hardest work of all!  
Oh, what a mercy it would be if some of you were broken all to pieces! There are many flowers that will never yield their perfume till they are bruised. Even the generous grape lets not its juice flow forth till it is trodden under foot of men. Breaking and bruising are fit treatment for the nature of men, especially for the new nature. When God has put sweetness into our hearts, it is then that breaking develops the sweetness. Oh, to worship God in spirit and in truth! One has well said, “No one ever worshipped God with his whole heart unless he worshipped him with a broken heart. And there never was a heart that was truly broken that did not, thereby, become a whole heart.” The divided heart is not broken, but the broken heart is never divided. I know that I am talking in riddles, but the wise will understand me. To get unity of spirit, there must be contrition and brokenness of heart.  
II. Now, in the second place, LET US OFFER THE SACRIFICE.  
I have told you a little of what the sacrifice means, now we will try, as God shall help us, to bear our brokenness of heart before the Lord. Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us mourn for awhile on account of our past sin. We will do so from several points of view.  
First, let us deeply regret that we have sinned against so good a God. While I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin a trifle. But when I knew Him to be my Father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against Him. When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin. But when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could have rebelled against One who loved me so and sought my good. Will you not now think of the goodness of God, Brothers and Sisters, and shall it not lead you to repentance? Shall we not feel within our hearts a burning indignation against sin because it is committed against so holy, so good, so glorious a Being as the infinitely blessed God?  
Let me help you, again, and may the arrow pierce your very hearts this time! Let us mourn to think that we have offended against so excellent and admirable a Law. If the Law of God were like the laws of men, it might sometimes be a virtue to break it! But where a Law is so balanced, so perfect, oh, how could we have run contrary to it? Brothers and Sisters, the Law of God, when it says to us, “You shall not,” only sets up a danger signal to tell us where it is injurious to go. And when the Law says, “You shall,” it does but lift up a kindly hand to point out to us the best and safest path. There is nothing in the Law of God that will rob you of happiness—it only denies you that which would cost you sorrow! We know that it is so and, therefore, we stand here and bow our head, and mourn that we should have been so foolish as to transgress, so willful and suicidally wicked as to do that evil thing which God hates and which so grievously injures us! We have nursed vipers when we have nursed sins! We have hatched the cockatrice’s egg when we have thought upon iniquity! Therefore let us be truly sorry for our sin and for our folly.  
You remember that I am talking to those of you who are saved, to those of you whose sins are forgiven. In my heart, I think that I can hear some others say, “Will you not let us join with you in repenting though we are not pardoned?” Bless your hearts, yes! God help you to join with us and if you do, you will find pardon, too, for pardon comes in this way! A broken heart can never long be divided from the broken Savior. You shall have peace with Him when you are at war with sin. But now I am especially inviting the people of God to sweetly grieve in this House of Prayer and offer the sacrifice of a contrite heart while they remember that they have sinned against God’s perfect Law.  
More than that—and this is a very tender point—let us grieve that we have sinned against a Savior’s love. I like that verse we sang just now— *“‘Tis I have thus ungrateful been,  
Yet, Jesus, pity take!  
Oh, spare and pardon me, my Lord,  
For Your sweet mercy’s sake!”*  
The greatest crime that was ever committed against high Heaven was that crime of deicide when men nailed the Son of God to the Cross and put Him to death as a criminal! Where are the wretches that did this awful deed? They are here—I will not say that they are before us, for each of us harbors one of them within his bosom. “‘Tis I”—“‘Tis I have thus ungrateful been.” How can I speak to you thus? Well, perhaps, all the better, because from my very heart I ask that we may stand together at the foot of the Cross and count the purple drops and say, “These have washed away my sins, yet I helped to spill them. Those hands, those feet, have saved me, yet I nailed them there. That opened side is the refuge of my guilty spirit, yet I made that fearful gash by my sin. It was my sin that slew my Savior!”  
O sin, you thrice accursed thing, away with you! Away with you! Come, let us be filled with mournful joy, with pleasurable sorrow, while we sit beneath the bloody tree and see what sin has done—and yet see how sin, itself, has been undone by Him who died upon the Cross on Calvary! Beloved, the more you love your Lord, the more you will hate sin. If you often sit at the table with Him and dip your hand into His dish. If you lean your head upon His bosom with the blessed John. If you are favored and indulged with the choicest brotherliness towards the Well-Beloved, I know that you will often find occasion to seek a quiet place where you may shed tears of bitter regret that you should ever have sinned against such a Savior as Jesus!  
Let me help you, again, however, while I remind you, Beloved, of our sins against the holy Spirit. Oh, what do we not owe to the Holy Spirit? I speak to you who know Him. It is the Holy Spirit who quickened you, the Holy Spirit who convinced you of sin, the Holy Spirit who comforted you! And oh, how sweetly does that Divine Comforter still comfort! Yet we resisted Him and grieved Him. Do you not remember, in your youthful days, how you strangled your convictions, how you held down conscience and would not let it reprove you? That blessed Spirit, whom we vexed and spurned, might have left us and gone His way, never to strive with us again, but He loved us so that He came and took up His abode with us and now He dwells in us! Within the narrow cell of our poor heart He has condescended to find a temple for His perpetual indwelling. O my Soul, how could you ever grieve Him? How could you ever have resisted that best and most tender Friend? I do not ask you to torture yourselves, but I do invite you, Beloved, to now indulge the joyful grief of sweet heavenly penitence as you remember the love of the Spirit.  
Let us go a step further and set our sin in the light of God’s Countenance. I speak to you, Beloved, who are God’s elect. He loved you from before the foundation of the world and yet you have sinned against Him. He chose you from among men, of His own Sovereign Grace, and ordained you to belong to Christ, and gave you to Jesus to be His forever! Alas, you knew it not, and you continued to sin against this distinguishing and discriminating Grace! Oh, that even the elect of God could have done this! See that you crucify the sin that suffered you to act so shamefully. Then in due time you were redeemed. For you, Beloved, Jesus shed His precious blood! He shed it not for all men, but with a special view to the redemption of His elect. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. He has redeemed us from among men! We have been the object of that special and peculiar redemption and yet against that dear Christ, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, we rebelled and transgressed! Ordained to be of the blood royal of Heaven, and yet a rebel! Ordained on earth to have the love of God within our spirit and, in Heaven, to behold His face forever—ordained by Divine decree to this high destiny—and yet for many a year a rebel, a willful rebel against such wondrous love as this! I do not know what to say to myself! I despise myself, I loathe myself, that I should thus have acted against such extraordinary love!  
Then remember, also, that you are God’s child, adopted into His family, His twice-born, Divinely regenerated. You are an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ. And yet—and yet you have acted so sinfully! O God, You have forgiven Your servants but we have never forgiven ourselves! And we never mean to—we shall always mourn, even in our joy for pardoned guilt, that we, the favorites of Heaven, should have so grieved the Lord!  
Go a little further. I want you to set sin in the light of your marvelous experiences. Oh, there are some of us who, without boasting, can tell of answered prayer when we have come back from the top of Carmel and we have cried, “I have won the day!” And yet to us who have been privileged, thus, to have power with God, it was not always so. Perhaps the very lips that now prevail in prayer were once habituated to blasphemy. Oh, mourn, my Brother, if it were so! Can you ever stop mourning? When John Newton wrote the Cardiphonia, or,

 Voice of the Heart—when he left us that choice treasure—I am sure that he must often and often have smitten upon his breast and grieved over the thought that he was once, in Africa, a blasphemer and everything that was foul and bad!  
Oh yes, wonders of Grace have been ours! Wonders of Grace! Wonders of Grace! We have tasted the wines on the lees well refined—yet once we drank of the wine of the clusters of Sodom and Gomorrah! What has Grace not done for us, Brothers and Sisters? You and I have been in the King’s banqueting house and His banner of love has waved over us! And our Beloved has caught us away, “from the top of Amana, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards,” and manifested His love to us in the secret places where no eye saw except our own and His. There did He reveal to us His great love! Yet we were the very ones who once despised Him, broke His Sabbaths, refused to read His Word, neglected prayer, perhaps ridiculed holy things! We were proud, covetous, unholy— but we are washed, we are sanctified. Oh, let us sit here and sweetly repent, and present to our God the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit!  
Besides, dear Friends, think of the injury you have done to others by your example. What a powerful preacher a mother is to her boy! What an influential preacher is a father to his son! What a mighty preacher one workmen may be to another, especially if he is a man of stronger mind than his fellows! Whatever any of us do, we are sure to have some who will copy us—it cannot be avoided. You are all writing copies every day, even though you are not schoolmasters and there are some who will learn either bad or good writing from you, for they will copy your handwriting. I mean, that they will imitate what they see in you. In years to come, when you have forgotten what you did, some may be following your former example. I would urge young men—and I am glad to see a great many of them present—to pray that they may begin life in such a way that they may not have much back reckoning.  
Suppose a man to be converted after his children are born. If those children have seen the father do wrong, they will, perhaps, remember the evil better than the good example of their converted father. When your children have once left your roof, what opportunities of influencing them aright you have lost! Though you may, yourselves, be saved by faith in Christ, yet you cannot call back the boys and the girls from those sinful ways into which you led them in the days of your ungodliness! This thought has a sharp sting in it for any who, by word or by example, have taught others to do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. If this is your case, Beloved, while you praise God that He has forgiven your sin, yet mourn that you ever led any astray by your wrongdoing!  
If that is not enough, I want to lead you a little further and bid you think of all the opportunities that we lose whenever we fall into sin. I repent of sin unfeignedly because it has hindered my progress. I am now speaking only to the people of God, mark you. If any of you sinners want to creep in among them, you may, but I am especially addressing them. There is one here who, not long ago, was a pilgrim on the road to the Celestial City and he went part of the way up the Hill Difficulty, climbing splendidly on his hands and knees. He made the best of his way up, but it came to pass that when he had gone about half-way up the hill, he found a little arbor by the roadside. It was built there by the Lord of the Way that he might rest himself a little in it, and then go on his way. But this Brother sat down in the arbor and he sat on till he went to sleep. And he slept there, I do not know how long. Just lately he has been awakened and he has gone on his way, again, climbing up, but he has discovered that he has lost the roll that he used to carry in his bosom.  
It was a roll that he had when first he started at the head of the Way and he meant to present it to the Lord of the Celestial City when he came to his journey’s end. But he has lost his roll. You know what Mr. Bunyan says of this matter. It was getting late, but Christian had lost his roll, so he had to go back, and he wisely went back to the place where he had fallen asleep—all the way moaning and sighing and crying to himself, “I have lost my evidences, I have lost may roll. Where shall I find it?” He was so glad when he looked under the bench, to see the roll there. I guarantee you that he quickly picked it up, put it in his bosom! But then, you see, he had to go over that part of the road three times. If he had not lost his roll and had to go back, he might, by that time, have been much further on the road. There were lions in that region and that was ugly for him. If he had got into the House Beautiful earlier in the day, he would not have suffered the fears he now had. So he went along in a very sad state of mind and all because of that careless sleeping in the arbor. Oh, what some of you might have been if it had not been for your sins since conversion! What a preacher I might have been! What workers in the Sunday school you might have been! Oh, what winners of souls you might have become by this time! But you have been asleep and had to go back, perhaps, and so you have missed many opportunities of serving Christ.  
Let us sit and think this matter over and begin to say, “Lord, we present to You a broken and contrite heart, mourning and lamenting, for if we are straitened, we are straitened in ourselves, not in You. If we are mourning in darkness, we, ourselves, made the darkness. If we are desponding, we have, in a large measure, created the despondency. Lord, we grieve and sorrow for all this.” Since I have been in this house, tonight, I have heard of a dear Brother, whose prayers I remember among the first I heard when I came to be pastor of this Church. He passed away, today, and has gone to his reward, an old man and full of years. That Brother is where you and I will be very soon! Do not talk about years—they go so quickly and our friends pass away quickly, too.  
Just the other day a man of God sat at his table writing. He had dipped his pen in the ink, but he never laid it on the paper, for he fell asleep, then and there, and he was gone Home. We, too, shall soon pass away. “Perhaps in a few days I shall be among the angels”—say that to yourself, my Brother. Perhaps in a few weeks I shall behold the face of Him I love”—say that, my Sister. It will come true! Perhaps in a few years—no, drop the, “perhaps,” and say—“Certainly, within a few years, I shall behold the Beatific Vision.”—  
*“Father I long, I faint to see  
The place of Your abode.”*  
I see myself walking over that street of gold that shines like glass! Earthly gold is dull, you cannot see into it. If you could, you would see the tears of the oppressed and, sometimes, the blood of crushed men in it. But the gold of Heaven is good and you can see into it, as you could into a sea of glass. I think I am walking there. I hardly know myself and there I meet one and another of you whom I knew, here, and we go together down that golden street and look in at the many mansions, from which come out many to welcome us, and we thread our way into the center. There is no temple there, no tabernacle of worship there, but we get into the center and we stand upon the glassy sea into which all the streets seem to run. And as we look around, we see angels and elders bowing there before the Throne of the Infinite Majesty, and we are there and we bow with them. And when we lift up our eyes to that Light, we sing, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!”  
Now I want you to think of your sins in the light of that Glory. Oh, how could those who are predestinated to these heavenly seats ever have wandered into sin? What? Was it so that we, who were born to behold the face of God, ever loved the theater and all its abominations? What? Did we, who were ordained to be peers with cherubim and seraphim, ever love the racetrack and all its gambling? What? Were we, whom God has made to be conformed to the image of His firstborn Son, ever seen to be drunk and staggering through the streets, defiled with unchastity, or polluted with gluttony, or guilty of covetousness, or cursed with pride? What? We whom the Lord has loved with an everlasting love and without whom Christ, Himself, will not be content to reign in Heaven, groveling in iniquity?  
Oh, I think these questions must have helped to make sin seem contemptible and loathsome! I point at it the finger of scorn! O dear children of God, scorn your sins, lament your sins, weep over your sins! Indulge that feeling and God will accept it when it is mixed with faith in His dear Son, for “the sacrifices of God,” that is, all sorts of sacrifices put together—sin-offerings, burnt offerings, peace-offerings, scapegoats and all together—“the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” One broken spirit is worth them all! “A broken and a contrite heart”—though there is but one such—“O God, You will not despise.”  
God bless you, Beloved, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 51.**

This is a portion of Scripture which can never be read too often. If any among us have never found mercy, let them use this Psalm as their own personal prayer—while those who have found mercy can read between the lines and read the sweetness of pardon into the bitterness of sorrow for sin! This Psalm was written by David when Nathan came to him after his great sin with Bathsheba. He needed Nathan to come to him to rebuke him. If David had not been in a very sad state of heart, he would not have fallen into the sin. It was that state of heart which left him so hardened, so obdurate, that he needed Nathan pointedly to say to him, “You are the man.” After that, he wrote and prayed this truly penitential Psalm.

Verse 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. He used to talk about being God’s servant, but he says nothing about that, now. He used to speak of God’s great love to him, but he cannot realize that, now. Yet he appeals to God for mercy—“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness.”

1. According unto the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. “There they are, they stare me in the face; nobody but You can blot them out; do it, Lord, for Your sweet mercy’s sake. Blot them out of existence and out of memory. And when You have blotted them from Your Book of Remembrance, then blot them from me, too.”

2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. “If washing will not do, use fire, use blood, use anything, but cleanse me from my sin.”

3. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me. “Lord, help me. Here is my sin—I cannot shut my eyes to it. I dare not deny it, or excuse it. I make a clean breast of it. I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me.”

4. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight. “I have sinned against others, but this is the foulness of the blot, the venom of the sting, that I have sinned against my God.”

4, 5. That You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. “Behold, for this is a wonder, and I look at it and I mourn over it. Behold, before I had a shape, I was out of shape! Before I saw anything, still there was sin antecedent to my very existence.”

6. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. “But, alas, Lord, what You desire is not there. In my inward part I find falsehood! In my hidden part, I find folly! Lord, what You desire, You must also bestow, or else I shall never have it! Oh, hear Your servant’s supplication!”

7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. This is delightful pleading on David’s part. He had seen the priest take the sprigs of hyssop, dip them in the blood and then sprinkle the leper. So his prayer is, “Lord, give me purification through the Atonement. ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.’” It requires strong faith, when under a deep sense of sin, to be quite sure that God can put the sin away. It is a grand thing to be able to say, “Wash me, foul as I am, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

8. Make me to hear joy and gladness. “Lord, I have heard nothing but groans, lately, and I have made no sound but sighs—‘Make me to hear joy and gladness.’”

8. That the bones which You have broken may rejoice. When God makes us feel the weight of sin, it is a bone-breaking operation. He seems to strike as though He would kill—and only He that thus strikes can afterwards heal. Then He makes each fragment of the bone to sing and praise Him!

9. Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. You see that the Psalmist has many names for sin, for evil, like a great rogue, has many aliases. So it is sometimes sin. Sometimes it is transgression, passing over the line of right. And sometimes it is inequity, or a departure from perfect equity. “Call it by whatever name it may be called, Lord, let me be rid of it. ‘Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.’”

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. “My Creator, I am spoiled. Come and make me over again. My heart has grown foul. You who did make me, clean me.” The watchmaker best cleans the watch that he made. “Create in me a clean heart, O my Creator, and renew a right spirit within me.”

11. Cast me not away from Your Presence. “I have acted as if You were not present, but, oh, do not fling me away! Do not take Your Presence away from me.”

11, 12. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation. “Once I was so happy. Oh, give me back my joy!”  
12. And uphold me with Your free Spirit. “I have fallen foully; let me not fall again. Henceforth, I cannot trust myself; You uphold me. I have been free to sin. Lord, send me a freer spirit, that I may be free to follow after righteousness.”  
13. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways. He would turn preacher if God would but bless him! He would tell others what great things God had done for him.  
13. And sinners shall be converted unto You. He felt sure that if he once told his tale of love, others would be melted and would turn to God—and no doubt it was the case.  
14. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. “Once cleanse me from my sin and I will sing Your praises forever! And I will sing earnestly, too—‘My tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.’”  
15. O Lord, open You my lips. He felt as if he was going too fast when he promised to speak and to sing, so he prayed, “O Lord, open You my lips”—

15. And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. When good men have had a fall, they walk very tenderly afterwards. Once put them on their legs and they are very careful how they move. They are afraid to speak except as God opens their lips.

16. For You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it. David remembered that under the Law there was no sacrifice appointed for the expiation of adultery. There were some sins that were left out of the catalog, and this was one of them.

16, 17. You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. Even for the man who has committed the most atrocious crimes, there is still acceptance if he brings God the sacrifice of a broken spirit!

17, 18. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: build, You, the walls of Jerusalem. Now that he feels himself forgiven, he begins to pray for the good estate of the Church of God and the Lord’s people everywhere! We cannot do that when sin is breaking our bones—but when we get peace and rest, then the first instinct of the newborn life is to pray for God’s Kingdom— “Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: build, You, the walls of Jerusalem.”

19. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

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UNIMPEACHABLE JUSTICE  
NO. 86

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 15, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“Against You, You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak and be clear when You judge.”  
Psalm 51:4.**

YESTERDAY was to me a day of deep solemnity. A pressure rested on my mind throughout the whole of it which I could not, by any possibility, remove. At every hour I remembered that during that day one of the most fallen of my fellow creatures was launched into an unknown world and made to stand before his Maker. Some might have witnessed his execution without tears. I think I could not even have thought of it for long without weeping at the terrible idea of a man so guilty, about to commence that endless period of unmingled misery which is the horrible doom of the impenitent which God has prepared for sinners. Yesterday morning the sun saw a sight which sickened it—the sight of a man launched, by a judicial process—into eternity, for guilt which has rendered him infamous and which will stamp his name with disgrace as long as it shall be remembered.

There is now agitating the public mind, something which I thought I might improve this day and turn to a very excellent purpose. There are only two things concerning which the public have any suspicion. The verdict of the jury was the verdict of the whole of England—we were unanimous as to the high probability, the well-near absolute certainty of his guilt. But there were two doubts in our minds—one of them but small, we grant you, but if both could have been resolved, we would have felt more easy than we do now. The one was concerning the criminal’s guilt and the other was concerning his punishment. At least some few of our fellow countrymen have been afraid lest we may not have been justified when we spoke against him and quite clear when he was judged. Two things were needed—we would have liked to have had his own confession—and certainly we would have preferred something more than circumstantial evidence. We desired to have had the testimony of an eyewitness who could swear to the deed of murder done. But moreover, there is also a strong feeling in the mind of many that the severity of the punishment is questionable. There are some who pronounce authoritatively that the murderer’s blood must be shed for murder. But there are some who think the Christian dispensation has ameliorated the law and that now it is no longer, “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” Many persons in England have shuddered at the thought of executing a penalty so fearful on any man, however great his crime, seeing that it puts him beyond the pale of hope. I shall not enter into the question of the rightness of capital punishment. I have my opinion upon it, but this is not exactly the place to state it—I only wish to use these facts as an illustration of the text. David says, “O Lord, hear my own confession—‘against You, You only, have I sinned,’ and by my own confession You would ‘be justified when You speak and clear when You judge.’ And, Lord, there is something else besides my own confession. You, Yourself, were eyewitness of my deed. ‘Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.’ And now you are, indeed, ‘justified when you speak and clear when you judge.’ And as to the severity of my punishment, there can be no doubt of that.” There may be doubt of the severity when man executes punishment for a crime against man, but there can be no doubt when God, Himself, executes vengeance for a crime that is committed against Himself. “You are justified when You speak, You are clear when You judge.”

Our subject this morning, then, will be that both in the condemnation and in the punishment of every sinner, God will be justified—and He will be made most openly clear from the two facts of the sinner’s own confession and God, Himself, having been an eyewitness of the deed. And as for the severity of it, there shall be no doubt upon the mind of any man who shall receive it, for God shall prove to him in his own soul that damnation is nothing more nor less than the legitimate reward of sin.

There are two kinds of condemnation— the one is the condemnation of the Elect. This takes place in their hearts and consciences when they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves—a condemnation which is invariably followed by peace with God. After that there is no further condemnation, for they are then in Christ Jesus and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The second condemnation is that of the finally impenitent, who, when they die, are most righteously and justly condemned by God for the sins they have committed—a condemnation not followed by pardon, as in the present case, but followed by inevitable damnation from the Presence of God. On both these condemnations we will discourse this morning. God is clear when He speaks and He is just when He condemns, whether it is the condemnation which He passes on Christian hearts, or the condemnation which He pronounces from His Throne, when the wicked are dragged before Him to receive their final doom.

I. In the first place, CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN, when he feels himself condemned by conscience and by God’s Holy Spirit—and when he hears the thunders of God’s Law proclaiming against him a sentence which, if it had not been already executed on his Savior, would have been fulfilled on him—the man has no grounds whatever, at that time, to plead any excuse! But he will say, in the words of the Psalmist, “You are justified when You speak and clear when You judge.” Let me show you how.

1. In the first place, there is a confession. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, there was no confession. We could not have expected it—such crimes could not have been committed by a man capable of confessing them. The fact that he died hardened in his guilt is wellnear conclusive proof that he was guilty, for had he betrayed any emotion, or had he bowed his knees and cried for mercy, we might, then, have suspected that he had not been guilty of so dark a deed of blood. But from the very fact that he hardened his heart, we infer that he was capable of committing crimes, the infamy of which point them out as the offspring of a seared and torpid conscience! The Christian, when he is condemned by the Holy Law, makes a confession—a full and free confession. He feels, when God records the sentence against him, that the execution of it would be just, for his now honest heart compels him to confess the whole story of his guilt. Allow me to make some remarks on the confession which is followed by pardon.

First, such a confession is a sincere one. It is not the prattling confession used by the mere formalist when he bends his knees and exclaims that he is a sinner. It is a confession which is undoubtedly sincere because it is attended by awful agonies of mind and usually by tears, sighs and groans. There is something about the penitent’s demeanor which puts it beyond the possibility of a fear that he is a deceiver when he is confessing his sin. There is an outward emotion, manifesting the inward anguish of the spirit. He stands before God and does not merely turn King’s evidence against himself, as the means of saving himself, but with tears in his eyes he cries, “O God, I am guilty.” And then he begins to recount the circumstances of his crime, even as if God had never seen him. He tells God what God already knows—and then the Gracious One proves the Truth of the promise—“he that confesses his sin shall find mercy.”

In the next place, that confession is always abundantly sufficient for our own condemnation. The Christian feels that if he had only half the sin to confess that he is obliged to tell God, it would be enough to damn his soul forever—that if he had only one crime to acknowledge, it would be like a millstone round his neck to sink him forever in the bottomless pit of Hell! He feels that his confession is superabundantly enough to condemn him—that it is almost a work of supererogation to confess all, for there is enough in one tenth of it to send his soul to Hell and make it abide there forever! Have you ever confessed your sins like this? If not, as God lives, you have never known what it is to make a true confession of your sin! You have never had the sentence of condemnation passed on you in that way which is succeeded by mercy. But you are yet awaiting that terrible sentence which shall be succeeded by no words of love, but by the execution of the sentence of infinite indignation and displeasure!

This confession is attended with no apology on account of sin. We have heard of men who have confessed their guilt and afterwards tried to extenuate their crime and show some reasons why they were not so guilty as apparently they would seem to be. But when the Christian confesses his guilt, you never hear a word of extenuation or apology from him. He says, “Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.” And in saying this, he makes God just when He condemns him, and clear when He sentences him forever. Have you ever made such a confession? Have you ever thus bowed yourselves before God? Or have you tried to palliate your guilt and call your sins by little names and speak of your crimes as if they were but light offenses? If you have not, then you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves. You are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom and you shall be dragged out, amidst the universal hiss of the execration of the world, to be condemned forever to flames which shall never know abatement!

Again—after the Christian confesses his sin, he offers no promise that he will, of himself, behave better. Some, when they make confessions to God, say, “Lord, if you forgive me I will not sin again.” But God’s penitents never say that. When they come before Him they say, “Lord, once I promised, once I made resolves, but I dare not make them now, for they would be so soon broken! They would but increase my guilt and my promises would be so soon violated that they would but sink my soul deeper in Hell. I can only say if You will create in me a clean heart, I will be thankful for it and will sing to Your praise forever. But I cannot promise that I will live without sin, or work out a righteousness of my own. I dare not promise, my Father, that I will never go astray again—

*‘Unless You hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline  
And prove like they at last.’*

“Lord, if You do damn me, I cannot murmur. If You cast me into Hell, I cannot complain. But have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ’s sake.” In that case, you see, God is justified when He condemns and He is clear when He judges, even clearer than any earthly judge can be, because it is seldom that such a confession as that is ever made before the bar.

2. Again—when the Christian is condemned by the Law in his conscience, there is something else which makes God just in condemning him, beside his confession, and that is the fact that God, Himself, the Judge, comes forward as a Witness to the crime. The convinced sinner feels in his own soul that his sins were committed in the face of God, in the teeth of His mercy and that God was an exact and minute Observer of every part and particle of the crime for which he is now to be condemned, and the sin which has brought him to the bar. “Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak and be clear when You judge.”

The convinced sinner who has just become a Christian feels at that time that God was a Witness and that he was a most veracious Witness— that He saw and saw most clearly. And when God, by His Law, says to him, “Sinner, you did such-and-such a thing and such-and-such a thing,” the awakened conscience says, “Lord, that is true. It is true in every circumstance.” And when God goes on to say, “Your motives were vile, your objectives were sinful,” conscience says, “Yes, Lord, that is true. I know that You did see it and that You are a sure Observer. You are no false witness but all that You say in Your Law about me is true.” When God says, “The poison of asps is under your lips, your throat is an open sepulcher, you flatter with your tongue,” conscience says, “It is all true.” And when He says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” conscience says, “It is all true.” And the sinner has this awful thought, that every sin he ever sinned is written in Heaven and God records it there! He feels, therefore, that God is just when He condemns and clear when He judges.

And, moreover, God is not simply a veracious witness, but the testimony God gives is an abundant one. You know that in some cases which are brought before our courts, the witness swears that he saw the man do such-and-such. But then he may be mistaken as to the identity of the person. Perhaps he did not see the whole transaction. And then he has not pried into the man’s heart to see what were the man’s reasons, which may make the crime lighter or greater, as the case may be. But here we have a Witness who can say, “I saw all the crime. I saw the lust when it was conceived. I saw the sin when it was brought forth. I saw the sin when it was finished, bringing forth death. I saw the motive. I beheld the first imagination. I saw the sin when, as a black rivulet, it started on its way—when it suddenly began to increase by contributions of evil. And I saw it when it became, at last, a broad ocean of unfathomable depth—an ocean of guilt which human feet could not pass and over, which the ship of Mercy could not have sailed unless some mighty Pilot had steered it by shedding His own blood.” Then the Christian feels that God, having seen it all, is justified when He speaks and clear when He condemns. I would feel a solemn responsibility, if I were a judge, in putting on the black cap to condemn a man to death—because, however carefully I may have weighed the evidence and however clear the guilt of the prisoner may have seemed—there is a possibility of a mistake. And it seems a solemn thing to have consigned a fellow creature’s soul to a future world, even with a possibility of an error in that judgment! But if I had, myself, beheld the bloody act, with what ease of mind might I then put on the black cap and condemn the man as being guilty, for I should know and the world would know, that having been a witness, I would be just when I spoke and clear when I condemned! Now, that is just what the Christian feels when God condemns him in his conscience—he puts his hand upon his mouth and yields without a word to the justness of the sentence! Conscience tells him he was guilty, because God, Himself, was a Witness.

3. The other question which I hinted at as being on the public mind, is the severity of the punishment. In the case of a Believer, when he is condemned, there is no doubt about the justice of the punishment. When God, the Holy Spirit, in the soul, passes sentence on the old man and condemns it for its sins, there is felt most solemnly in the heart the great Truth of God that Hell, itself, is but a rightful punishment for sin. I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of Hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that Hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were! But we have always found that such men found fault with Hell because they knew right well they were going there! As every man finds fault with the gallows who is going to be hung, so do many men find fault with Hell because they fear that they are in danger of it. The opinion of a man about to be executed must not be taken with regard to the propriety of capital punishment, nor must we take the opinion of a man who is, himself, marching to Hell concerning the justice of Hell, for he is not an impartial judge. But the convinced sinner is a fair witness—God has made him so—for he feels in his soul that there will be pardon given to him and that God, by Divine Grace, will never condemn him there. But at the same time, he feels that he deserves it and he confesses that Hell is not too great a punishment nor the eternity of it is not too long a duration of punishment for the sin which he has committed. I appeal to you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters—you may have had doubts as to the propriety of your being sent to Hell before you knew your sins—but I ask you, when you were convinced of God, did you not solemnly feel that He would be unjust if He did not damn your soul forever? Did you not say in your prayer, “Lord, if You should now command the earth to open and swallow me up, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against You. And if You were now to roll over my head the billows of eternal fire, I could not, in the midst of my howling in misery, utter one single word of complaint about Your justice”? And did you not feel that if you were to be one thousand, thousand years in Hell, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all! And if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you would have dared not, even if your own soul had been at stake, written anything except that sentence, “everlasting fire.” You would have been obliged to have written that, for you felt it was but deserved doom. Now, was not God just, then, when He condemned, and clear when He judged? And did He not come off clear from the Judgment Seat, because you, yourself, said the sentence would not have been one whit too severe if it had been fulfilled, instead of being simply recorded and then you, yourself, set at liberty?

Ah, my dear Friends, there may be some who rail at God’s Justice, but no convinced sinner ever will! He sees God’s Law in all its glorious holiness and he strikes his hand upon his breast and he says, “O sinner that I am, that I ever could have sinned against such a reasonable Law and such perfect Commandments!” He sees God’s love towards him and that cuts him to the very quick. He says, “Oh, that I should ever have spit on the face of Christ who died for me! Wretch that I am, that I could ever have crowned that bleeding head with the thorns of my sins, which gave itself to slumber in the grave for my redemption!” Nothing cuts the sinner to the quick more than the fact that he has sinned against a great amount of mercy. This, indeed, makes him weep. And he says, “O Lord, seeing as I have been so ungrateful, the doom You can ever sentence me to, or the fiercest punishment You can ever execute upon my head would not be too heavy for the sins I have committed against You!” And then the Christian feels, too, what a deal of mischief he has done in the world by sin. Ah, if he has been spared to middle age before he is converted, he looks back and says, “Ah, I cannot tell how many have been damned by my sins. I cannot tell how many have been sent down to Hell by words which I have used, or deeds which I have committed.” I confess before you all, that one of the greatest sorrows I had, when first I knew the Lord, was to think about certain persons with whom I knew right well that I had held ungodly conversations and sundry others that I had tempted to sin. And one of the prayers that I always offered, when I prayed for myself, was that such an one might not be damned through sins to which I had tempted him. And I dare say this will be the case with some of you when you look back. Your dear child has been a sad reprobate. And you think, “Did not I teach him very much that was wrong?” And you hear your neighbors swear and you think, “I cannot tell how many I taught to blaspheme.”

Then you will recollect your companions, those you used to play cards or dance with and you will think, “Ah, poor souls, I have damned them!” And then you will say, “Lord, You are just if You damn me.” When you reflect what a deal of mischief you have done by yourself, you will then say, “Lord, You are clear when You judge. You are justified when You condemn.” I warn you who are going on in your sins, that one of the most fearful things you have to expect is to meet those in another world who perished through being led astray by you! Think of it, O man! You who have been an universal tempter! There is a man, now in Hell, who was taught to drink his first glass through you. There lies a soul on his deathbed and he says, “Ah, John, I had not been here, as I now am, if you had not led me into evil courses which have weakened my body and brought me to death’s door.” Oh, what a horrible fate will yours be, when, as you walk into the mouth of Hell, you will see eyes staring at you and hear voices saying, “Here he comes! Here comes the man that helped to damn my soul!” And what must be your fate when you must lie forever tossed on the bed of pain with that man whom you were the means of damning? As those who are saved will make jewels in the crowns of glory to the righteous, surely those whom you helped to damn will forge fresh fetters for you and furnish fearful fire wood to increase the flames of torment which shall blaze around your spirit! Mark that and be warned. The Christian feels this terrible fact when he is convinced of sin and that makes him feel that God would be clear if He judged him and would be justified if He condemned him. So much concerning this first condemnation.

II. But now a little concerning THE SECOND CONDEMNATION, which is the more fearful of the two. Some of you have never been condemned by God’s Law in your conscience. Now, as I stated at first that every man must be condemned once, so I beg to repeat it. You must either have the sentence of condemnation passed on you by Law in your conscience and then find mercy in Christ Jesus, or else you must be condemned in another world, when you shall stand with all the human race before God’s Throne! The first condemnation to the Christian, though exceedingly merciful, is terrible to bear. It is a wounded spirit which none can endure! But, as for the second condemnation, if I could preach with sighs and tears, I could not tell you how horrible that must be! Ah, my Friends, could some sheeted ghost start from its tomb and be reunited to the spirit which has been for years in Hell, possibly such a man might preach to you and let you know what a fearful thing it will be to be condemned at last! But as for my poor words, they are but air. For I have not heard the misery of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs and groans and moans of lost spirits! If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the Gulf of Despair—if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment over that burning mixture whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance—then I might tell you somewhat of its misery. But I cannot, now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might frighten our eyes from their sockets and make each individual’s hair stand upon our heads! I have not seen such things—but, though I have not seen them, nor you either—we know enough of them to understand that God will be just when He condemns and that He will be clear when He judges. And, now, I must go over the three points again. But I must be very brief about them.

1. God will be clear when He condemns a sinner from this fact—that the sinner, when he stands before God’s bar—will either have made a confession, or else such will be his terror that he will scarcely be able to brazen it out before the Almighty. Look at Judas. When he comes before God’s bar, will not God be clear in condemning him? For he, himself, confessed, “I have sinned against innocent blood,” and he threw the money down in the Temple. And few men are so hardened as to restrain themselves from acknowledging their guilt. How many of you, when you thought you were dying, made a confession upon your deathbeds to your God! And mark you, there will be many of you, who, when you come to die, though you have never confessed, yet will lie there and confess before God in your moments of wakefulness during the night, the sins of your youth and your former transgressions. And it may be that when you are laying there, God’s vengeance will be heavy on your conscience. Then you will be obliged to tell those who stand about your bed that you have been guilty of notorious sins. Ah, will not God be just when you shall go straight from your deathbed to His bar and He shall say, “Sinner, you are condemned on your own confession. There is no need for Me to open the book, no need for Me to pronounce the sentence. You have, yourself, pronounced your own guilt. Before you died, you stamped yourself with condemnation—‘depart you cursed!’”

And though there will be many die who never made a confession in this world and, perhaps, there will be some professors so brazen-faced that they will even stand before God’s Throne and say, “When did we see You hungry and gave You nothing to eat? When did we see You naked and clothed You not?” Yet I cannot believe that most of them will be able to plead any excuse. I find Christ saying of one, that he stood speechless when he was asked how he got in, not having on a wedding garment. And so it may be with you, Sirs. You may brazen it out when here—you may scorn the Law and despise the thunders of Sinai—but it will be different with you,

 then. You may sit up in your bed and rail against Christ even when death is staring you in the face—but you will not do it, then. Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron will suddenly be melted. That heart of yours, which was like steel or the nether millstone, will be dissolved like wax in the your midst! You will begin to cry before God and weep and howl—you will testify to your own guilt when you say, “Rocks! Hide me! Mountains! Fall on me.” For you would need no mountains and no rocks to fall upon you if you were not guilty! You will be justly condemned, for you will make your own confession when you stand before God’s bar. Ah, if you could see the criminal, then, what a difference there is in him! Where, now, are those eyes that stared so impiously at the Bible? Where, now, are those lips which said, “I curse God and die!” Where, now, is that heart which was once so stout, that spirit once so valiant as to laugh at Hell and talk familiarly with death? Ah, where is it? Is that the same creature—he whose knees are knocking together, whose hair is standing up on end? Whose blanched cheek displays the terror of his soul? Is that the same man who just now was burning with impudent rage against his Maker? Yes, it is he—hear what he has to say, “O God, I hate You. I confess it. I was unjust in the world that has gone by and I am unjust now. Wreak your vengeance on me. I dare ask no mercy and no pardon, for still fixed is my heart to rebel against You. Indissoluble are the bonds of my guilt—I am dammed, I am damned and I ought to be!” Such will be the confession of every man when he shall stand before his God at last, if he is out of Christ and unwashed in the Savior’s blood. Sinners! Can you hear that and not tremble? Then I have a wonder before me this day—a wonder of conscience, a wonder of hardness of heart, a wonder of impenitency!

2. But in the second place, God will be just because there will be witnesses there to prove it. There will be none of you, my dear Friends, if you are ever condemned, who will be condemned on circumstantial evidence—there will be no necessity for the deliberation of a jury. There will be no conflicting evidence concerning your crimes. There will be no doubts to testify in your favor. In fact, if God, Himself, should ask for witnesses in your case, all the witnesses would be against you! But there will be no need of witnesses. God, Himself, will open His Book and how astonished will you be when all your crimes are announced—with every individual circumstance connected with them—all the minuteness of your motives and an exact description of your designs! Suppose I would be allowed to open one of the books of God and read that description. How astonished you would be! But what will be your astonishment when God shall open His great book and say, “Sinner, here is your case,” and begin to read! Ah, mark how the tears run down the sinner’s cheeks. The sweat of blood comes from every pore. And the loud thundering voice still reads on, while the righteous execrate the man who could commit such acts as are recorded in that book. There may be no murder staining the page, but there may be the filthy imagination—and God reads what a man imagines, for to imagine sin is vile, though to do it is viler still! I know I would not like to have my thoughts read over for a single day. Oh, when you stand before God’s bar and hear all this, will you not say, “Lord, You will condemn me, but I cannot help saying You are just when You condemn and clear when You judge.” There will be eyewitnesses there.

3. But lastly, in the sinner’s heart there will be no doubt as to the righteousness of his punishment. The sinner may in this world think that he can never, by his sins, by any possibility deserve Hell. But he will not indulge that thought when he gets there. One of the miseries of Hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. Tossed on a wave of fire, he will see written in every spark that emanates from there, “You knew your duty and you did it not.” Tossed back, again, by another wave of flames, he hears a voice saying, “Remember, you were warned!” He is hurled upon a rock and while he is being wrecked there, a voice says, “I told you it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” Again he plunges under another wave of brimstone and a voice says, “He that believes not shall be damned—you did not believe— and you are here.” And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence which he read in God’s Word, in a tract, or in a sermon. Yes, it may be, my Friends, that I shall be one of your tormentors in Hell, if you should be damned. I trust in God that I, myself, shall be in Heaven. And perhaps, if you are lost, one of the most powerful things that shall tend to increase your misery will be the fact that I have always tried to warn you and warn you as earnestly as possible! And when you lift up your eyes to Heaven, you will shriek and say, “O God! There is my minister looking down reprovingly on me and saying, ‘Sinner, I warned you.’” If you are lost, it is not for lack of preaching! If you are damned, it is not because I did not tell you how you might be saved! If you are in Hell, it is not because I did not weep over you and urge you to flee from the wrath to come, for I did warn you—and that will be the terror of your doom—that you have despised warnings and invitations and have destroyed yourself! God is not accountable for your damnation and man is not accountable for it. But you, yourself, have done it. And you will say, “O Lord, it is true. I am now tossed in fire but I lit the flame. It is true that I am tormented but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs. I burned the brick that has built my dungeon. I brought myself here! I walked to Hell even as a fool goes to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter! I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals! I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart! I sinned, which is the same as saying that I damned myself, for to sin is to damn myself—the two words are synonymous.” Sin is damnation’s sire, it is the root, and damnation is the horrible flower which must inevitably spring from it! Yes, my dear Friends, I tell you yet again there will be nothing more patent before the Throne of God than the fact that God will be just when He sends you to Hell! You will feel that, then, even though you do not feel it now!

I thought within myself just this minute, that I heard the whisper of someone saying, “Well, Sir, I feel that such men as Palmer, a murderer, will feel that God is just in damning them, but I have not sinned as they have done.” It is true, but if your sins are less, remember that your conscience is more tender, for according to the amount of guilt, men’s consciences generally begin to get harder. And because your conscience is more tender, your little sin is a great sin, because it is committed against greater light and greater tenderness of heart. And I tell you—a little sin against great light may be greater than a great sin against little light! You must measure your sins not by their apparent heinousness, but by the light against which you sinned. No crime could be much worse than the crime of Sodom. But even Sodom, filthy Sodom, shall not have so hot a place as a moral young lady who has fed the poor and clothed the naked and done all she could—but never loved Christ! What do you say to that? Is it unjust? No, if I am a less sinner than another, I all the more deserve to be damned if I do not come to Christ for mercy!

Oh, my dear Hearers, my beloved Hearers, I cannot bring you to Christ! Christ has brought some of you, Himself, but I cannot bring you to Christ! How often have I tried to do it! I have tried to preach my Savior’s love and this day I have preached my Father’s wrath—but I feel I cannot bring you to Christ! I may preach God’s Law, but that will not frighten you unless God sends it home to your heart! I may preach my Savior’s love, but that will not woo you unless my Father draws you! I am sometimes tempted to wish that I could draw you myself—that I could save you. Surely, if I could, you would soon be saved! But ah, remember, your minister can do but little—he can do nothing else but preach to you. Do pray that God would bless me a little, I beseech you, you who can pray. If I could do more, I would do it. But it is very little I can do for a sinner’s salvation. Do, I beseech you, my dear people, pray to God to bless the feeble means that I use. It is His work and His salvation. But He can do it. O poor trembling Sinner, do you now weep? Then come to Christ! O poor haggard Sinner, haggard in your soul! Come to Christ! O poor sinbitten Sinner! Look to Christ! O poor worthless Sinner! Come to Christ! O poor trembling, fearing, hungering, thirsting Sinner, come to Christ! “Everyone that thirsts, come to the waters. And he that has no money, come, buy wine and milk. Come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Come! Come! Come! God help you to come! For Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3486 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S DESIRE FOR US, AND HIS WORK IN US

NO. 3486

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON AUGUST 11, 1870.

**“Behold You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.”  
Psalm 51:6.**

WHAT a contrast is here and I think intended to be here! In the verse before this one, David describes human nature as it is in its original. He was shaped in iniquity and in sin did his mother conceive him. So that throughout his entire nature from the very first there was iniquity and sin. But God desires the very opposite, so that he felt that he was the very opposite of what God would have him to be. God desires truth and his heart had been false to God. God would have him to be wise and he was, from his very birth, as foolish as a wild donkey’s colt. Observe, then, that wide as the Poles are asunder is human nature—and what God would have human nature to be! It would be right to tell you that the older translators and commentators have been accustomed to read this verse somewhat differently from our own version, though I believe our own version to be correct. Calvin and others that preceded him thought that David here said, “You desire truth in the inward part, and in the hidden part you

 have made me to know wisdom,” putting it in the past tense. They thought that David said this to show how very inexcusable was his sin—“I am not an untaught one—an uninstructed person. I have not been left without knowledge of Your Law, of what sin is and of what holiness is. You have made me to know wisdom. I have felt Your power within my heart. I have been taught in my most secret places to know You, and yet for all that, I have revolted and gone aside, and committed this foul sin of adultery and murder.” If so—if that is the correct translation (and there is no reason why that should not be correct, as well as the one we have here), it teaches us that it is a great aggravation to sin when sin is committed by a Christian. Never say that because a man is a Believer his sin is less! No, but if it is the same sin as in another, it is far worse in him than it would be in another! A stranger may say of me what my child must not say without being guilty of great ingratitude and much unkindness. It was you, a man, my friend, my acquaintance—this made the treachery of Judas to become so cutting to the Savior. The nearer a man is to God’s heart, the more detestable is the sin in him! You cannot bear to see an evil in one you love. If one you love has a toothache, you think more of the pain of that beloved one than of some far greater sickness of one in whom you take no concern. So sin is a disease which, when God sees in His own beloved child, He perceives it with sorrow and He is quick to remove it and to heal it. Never trifle with sin because you are a Christian! Rather be the more careful to watch against it—

*“Quick as the apple of an eye,  
O God, my conscience make!  
Awake, my Soul, when sin is near  
And keep it still awake.”*

But now we will go to the text as it stands in our own most admirable and never equaled, and I think never to be excelled, version of Holy Scripture. We have here two things. First, we have God’s desire. And secondly, we have God’s work. “You desire truth in the inward parts.” Then next, “In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.” Let us consider first—

I. THE LORD’S DESIRE FOR US.  
That which is desirable to God must be exceedingly and essentially desirable. All wise men will desire that which the Infinitely wise God may desire! We are quite certain that there must be something exceedingly precious in that which God thinks fit to be an object for His Infinite desires.  
Now observe what this desire is. And the first remark shall be, it has to do with inward things. “You desire truth in the inward parts.” God had made man not only outward, but man inward—not merely these outward members, but the conscious, thoughtful, commanding spirit that rules these members of flesh and blood. God looks, therefore, in all that is done by us that we should do it with our spiritual nature, and He estimates all our actions not merely by what they apparently are, but by what they spring from—He measures them by the motive, by the spirit, by the ruling desire in them. Having made our inward parts, He keeps His eyes fixed upon the complicated spiritual machinery within us, understanding it all, knowing when any cog of any wheel is out of order, when any of the machinery is disarranged. Nothing is hid from His Presence and knowledge! He searches the hearts, and tries the reins of the children of men. And His desire, as here expressed, is not so much anything with regard to the outward act or the tongue, or to any ceremonial performances, whatever, but, first of all, it has to do with the inward parts.  
Dear Hearer, learn from this that there is nothing in religion that is so desirable as the inward part of it. Your first and chief business with your God has to do with your innermost self—your real self. You shall come to keep your outward rightly enough if you will begin to cleanse the inside of the platter first. The outside of the house shall be whitewashed and cleansed afterward—but your first work must be to look into the secret chamber of your spirit and discover what is there. True religion does not begin outside, and then go within, but it begins within and then works outside. The candle is not outside the lantern, but it is first inside the lantern—and then it sheds light all around. Let your inward part be, then, the first part of your care! The mass of even religious mankind do not think so. Do they not go to their place of worship on Sunday? Do they not occasionally read their Bibles? Have they not a form of prayer at the very tip of their tongue? Have they not given up swearing? Are they not strictly sober? Are they not honest? There are all outward and external things—and sometimes a few ceremonies are added to complete them, such as Baptism and the Eucharist, and many more things—and the man thinks himself perfectly complete, whereas he has not even begun yet, for all this is but a thing of nothing unless the heart has, first of all, been purged and made right inside by God! Dear Hearer, whatever you shall omit, see to it that you look to your heart! “My son, give Me your heart”—see to it that you love your God with heart and soul, and that your religion is a thing that has to do with your vital, your inward, your very essential self, for God’s desire is here—let your anxiety be in the same direction!  
Next, I observe in the text that God cares for truth—He looks for truth—by which, I think, we are to understand here, truth as opposed to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy in the heart is a mortal disease. If your religion is only a pretense. If your heart is black, though your face is bright. If you have filthiness in the well, though in the bucket there may be a little clean water, you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! The pure, truthful, holy God abhors hypocrisy! There can hardly be conceived anything more detestable in the sight of the Most High than to mock Him with words of seeming while our hearts and the reality of our nature are at enmity to Him. God desires truth in opposition to mere semblance. There are some who have no intention to be hypocrites, but still, all the Grace they have is but sham grace! All the knowledge of God they have is but theoretical. All the experience they have ever had is fanciful—all the communion with God they have ever had is mere delusion! The whole thing is but a bubble. Fair are its colors, but it will soon vanish—it is not stable and substantial—it is a mere outward shadow and there is no substance in it. God desires “truth in the inward parts,” real repentance, real faith, vital godliness, real communion with God! Everything there must be what it professes to be, for God desires truth—that is, substance—in the inward parts.  
Does not this yet mean a third thing, that God desires truth as opposed to falsehood or lies? Some persons very sincerely hold lies in their inward hearts. I do not doubt but what there is many a man who believes a false religion and is as sincere in it as any man is in a true one! But his being sincere in believing a lie does not transform the lie into a truth! And if he follows a wrong way, that wrong way will lead to a wrong end— however sincerely it may be followed! God desires that there may be truth in your heart, not error. Even if it is your heart that holds the error, that shall make no difference! He desires truth to be there—truth about Himself, truth about His Son, truth about His Spirit, truth about yourself, your sin, the way of your salvation—truth about what He has revealed. He desires truth—“truth in the inward parts.”  
Now put the two things together—God desires truth and He desires truth in the inward parts. Now does not this mean that He desires truth to affect all the powers of our mind, and all the powers of our mind to be conformable to Divine Truth? This is what I mean— we know we have knowledge—God would have us truly know. There is much knowledge that is not true knowledge. A man knows Christ, it may be, by what he has heard, what he has seen of others, but he does not truly know Christ in his own soul! Beware of the letter only! Beware of mere theoretical knowledge! God desires that what you know about His Son should be true, real knowledge. There is a great danger when we live with Christian people to pick up a second-hand experience. They have their sorrows— we hear them speak of them. We, perhaps, think we know something about those sorrows. We talk as they do. We hear of their joy and oh, it is so easy to dream that we have enjoyed the same! We use their language. This is how cant comes into the world—and it has not quite gone yet—it is all too common. But a borrowed experience and the language that comes of it—these are very loathsome to true minds, and very loathsome to God! God would not have your brains stuffed with mere words, nor would He have you seduce yourself into confidence with mere doctrines! He would have you know in your heart the guilt of sin by bitterly lamenting it—know in your heart the power of the precious blood by receiving the cleansing which it brings—knowing the sorrows and the joys of being a Christian by being a Christian yourself! He desires truth in the inward parts, wherein our knowledge is stored up.  
So would the Lord have truth in our desires. We desire to be saved, all of us, I suppose, but oh, how many of these desires have no truth in them! “Yes,” says a man. “I would gladly be saved,” but then he will not give up his sin. He would gladly be saved and he commences to pray, but his goodness soon vanishes. Prayer is irksome to him—he has not learned prayer. He desires, he says, to be taught of God, but he does not give a willing ear. He desires to be resigned to God’s will, he says, and he continues to kick and rebel against it! It is vain to say, “My desire is this” and, “that,” when my course of action is clean contrary to it. I certainly do not desire to go North if I voluntarily steer towards the South. God would have our desires to be all true. Oh, delude not yourselves with the thought that you have holy desires unless you truly have them! Do not think your desires are true towards God unless they are really so—He desires truth in our desires.

So would the Lord have truth in all our affections. We think we love God, but I venture to ask the question of myself—I would raise it and I would have you raise it with yourselves—do you really love the Lord? Do you really love Him? Were He here and your soul spoke the honest truth, and it were put, “Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?” what would the answer be? And, indeed, it will be put to you tonight—when you get home it will probably be put to you in some new shape. You will be tried in your patience. If you love Him, keep His commandments, then, and be patient towards all men. You may be tried tonight by some loss or cross—if you love Him, you will take up His Cross and cheerfully follow Him. See how your love may be! “Examine yourselves whether you are in the faith—prove your own selves.” Where are your affections? Are they where the moth and rust corrupt, or are they yonder where eternity shall never see corrosion or robbery to deprive you of your possessions? “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be, also.” God desires not that you should say, “I love,” if you do not, or that you should say, “Peace, peace,” where there is no peace, and give a traitorous kiss. He desires truth in your affection! Is your heart right? Ah, this question is easy to ask, but to answer it is not so easy—but it may be easy to answer it if it is hurried without consideration—and probably untruthfully! But if you would be grounded on the Rock, truly bottomed on a sure foundation, you will say, “Search me, O God! And try me, and know my ways: and see if there are any wicked ways in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Help me to keep my heart with all diligence, for I know that out of it are the issues of life.” May there be truth in the inward parts of my affections.  
So the Lord would have truth in our emotions. The emotion of fear, for instance, should not be excited as it is in some by foolish, frivolous things. This is a false fear which ought not to come across the Christian’s mind. There are some, too, who say they have a fear of God. Others who say they have a joy of God! Some that speak of sweet peace in God. Others that talk of holy delight in God. But it is one thing to talk about these things, and another to possess them! He desires that all your emotions, when you are in His Presence (and you are always there), should be truthful! Too often we say in prayer, I fear, more than our heart says, and perhaps the preacher, in talking to you tonight, may say more than he, himself, knows. We are apt to do this. We have, therefore, good need to be very, very watchful, for all that there is within us that is untruthful is unaccepted. Only that which is of the truth, that comes of the truth that is in Christ Jesus, who is The Truth—only that can be pleasing to the Lord our God! Thus might I mention the understanding. God would have us have truth there, and not put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. I might mention the will. The will should truly be surrendered to God and cheerfully obedient to Him. He desires truth there. But whatever there may be within man, whatever faculty, power, or talent he possesses, the whole should be truthfully laid at His feet, and the whole experience of the little world within us should be conformed to the truth as it is in Jesus! To live with truthfulness within is a great thing, for we often talk lies in our hearts. The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” We may tell lies in our own hearts—we may thieve, rob, steal and murder in our own hearts. Yes, our own hearts may be a shamble in which we may murder all the world, though we never laid a finger on any man! And in our hearts we may destroy the very Throne of Deity, yes, and God, Himself, for we do that in our heart when we wish there were no God. I know not what there may be in our heart—a very pandemonium, a little Hell—a great Hell in a little heart! Oh God, look You on us and put out all false things, and let truth be in our inward parts!  
Now mark, before I turn from this first head of the subject, that when we say that the great desire of God is that we should have truth in our inward parts, we are not to suppose that, therefore, He is indifferent to our outward actions—our words and so on! On the contrary, it is because He is a lover of holiness and purity that He thinks most of our hearts, because a true-hearted man must be a truth-speaking man and a truth-loving man! You have made the fountain clean—well then, there cannot be foul water come out of it! If once you have been made all clean within by Sovereign Grace, then the outcome must be from what there is within. You may have the devil within and hang out the angel outside, but you cannot have the angel within and the devil outside—it cannot be so. Where Jesus Christ reigns in the interior, the Glory of His Presence will glow in the exterior, too! You may be to your neighbors and friends an upright man, towards your enemies, a forgiving and gentle man, towards your God a manifestly devout man if in all things you are upright within, and devout within! May God grant, then, that we may be what He would have us be—that we may have truth in the inward parts. Now for the second part of the text.  
II. GOD’S WORK IN US.  
I am very thankful that the second sentence comes after the first, for surely we might all tremble if it were not so. “Behold You desire truth in the inward parts.” “Yes,” we might say, “but, Lord, how shall we ever get it there? How shall we who are unclean be purged? You may say, ‘You shall be clean,’ but, Lord, we cannot bring it to You! How shall we who are polluted cleanse ourselves?” Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? But now comes this, joined on with an, “and”—a blessed rivet that can never be driven out—“and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.” Now let us go over this blessed word of encouragement—“and in the hidden part”—the secret part—“You shall make me to know wisdom.” Observe that where there is all fallen within us, there will God work! He does not disdain to begin even with us, though all is out of order, though all is stained and all polluted! When He made the world, truly there was nothing to help Him, but there was nothing to oppose Him. Darkness was on the face of the deep, and disorder ruled—but those were rather negative than positive and they disappeared at once at His bidding. But in the fallen heart there is much to oppose, and to oppose vigorously! With a fierce determination to ruin himself, man resists the Grace of God, and were it not that He who created the world puts His hand a second time to the work, to create in us a new heart, we would continue in our destruction, in our guilt and enmity to the Most High! Now what a comfort it is that God will deal with our secret part—our hidden part! He does not disdain to come and touch the wheel and the machinery within, though it is all polluted. If we were to think of touching a running sore, or to put our hand upon a leper, we would shudder at it—but what must it be for a holy God to come and deal with an unholy heart, with corrupt affections—with a depraved will? We think of some poor men that are, for their livelihood, compelled to work in loathsomeness in our common sewers, but oh, what is all that compared with the heart! Yet the Infinite Mercy, condescension and Omnipotent Grace of God stooped down to deal with our inward parts! Admire the condescension of God and have hope for yourself, poor lost one, because God will deal with your inward parts!  
But now notice that in my inward part, “You will make me to know wisdom.” See the grandeur of that word! No one else can make a man really wise—spiritually, internally and eternally wise—but God Himself. Here, again, I must remark upon the condescension of God. In one verse I find Him asked to be a washer, in another place I find Him asked to heal us, and here I find Him asked to come and teach us! Shall He be schoolmaster to us? Shall He take such as we are in hand, and our inward parts in hand, to teach our inward parts His Wisdom? Yes, He will do it! Means are used, I know—His ministers, His Word, His Providence— but we never learn by these till He teaches us to profit. These are school books, the apparatus of the school house. The Master must come and explain them and bring His Truth home, or else we learn not. It is His prerogative, His sole prerogative, to speak to the heart so as to make us foolish ones wise! The Holy Spirit will do it. “In the inward parts You will make me to know wisdom.” Oh, blessed Spirit, You will show me of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come—You will take of the things of Christ and reveal them to me—You will not disdain me, poor scholar as I am. You will make me to know wisdom! And great Son of God—so will You also teach—You will condescend by Your example, by Your Sacrifice and by Your precept, to make me to know wisdom! And You, great Father, even You shall not disdain to deal with us as with sons—and by Your chastening still to teach us until we know wisdom. See, then, how God deals with the inward parts and, remember, it is God who does it!  
Well, next, “In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom”— me! It is David who speaks, but he speaks, I trust, for you. “Make me to know wisdom.” Now who was he that used those words? It was David, a great sinner—to put it plainly, an adulterer and a murderer—but, “You will make me,” he says, “to know wisdom.” This is a bad scholar to begin with—a rough block for the great Sculptor to carve, but David says, “You will make me to know wisdom.” A sinner, I said, but he was a sinner publicly disgraced. Men knew of his sin—he was the song of the drunkard and the mark of the blasphemer! His character for a while was gone—men spoke of David’s sin. Ah, but You will make me—the biggest fool in Israel (for I doubt not he felt he was)—You will make me to know wisdom—me, from my disgrace and dishonor, You will yet lift me up! He that said this, mark you, was a penitent, bitterly penitent for what he had done. How can you know wisdom till you have hated sin? God has not introduced you to the school, yet, until He has made you smart under His rod on account of sin. This is the very beginning of wisdom, to know the bitterness and mischief of sin, and to turn from it!

He that spoke this was a praying man. The whole Psalm is a prayer. God will teach the praying one. He who teaches you to pray will teach you everything else! This is one of the early lessons of the Christian, to learn to pray. “Behold, he prays,” was said of Saul of Tarsus. You shall learn to sing as angels do if you begin with these bass notes of prayer. He that said this was a believing man. He was a great sinner, but he was a great Believer! It was a great faith, as we said in the exposition, that made him say, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Now, Sinner, disgraced Sinner, but penitent, prayerful, believing Sinner, God will yet make you wise—make you wise! Man, do you see this, that He desires it? He will give you that, but He will give you more! He will give you wisdom—that is more than truth! You know that truth is one thing, but wisdom is better than knowledge, for wisdom is the right way of using knowledge! Many a knowing man is a fool. A wise man is a “knowing” man, although “a knowing man” is not always wise. He desires you to have truth, and wherever truth is, he that follows her is wise. He will put truth within you—that is the doctrine. You shall have wisdom, that is the practice. Truth shall be the gem, but wisdom shall be the flashing rays which come from it, the brilliance thereof. He will make you to know wisdom.  
Let me say very briefly, and in two or three sentences, what it is to know wisdom. Suppose you know the truth about sin. Well, if you know it truthfully, then your wisdom will be to hate that sin! If you know the reality of sin, your wisdom will be to lay it upon Christ by faith where God has laid it in the Old Covenant and in the Covenant of Grace—and then having had your sin forgiven, if you know sin aright, and will be wise concerning it—you will watch against it, knowing its damnable character and how apt you are to fall into it! And so, knowing the truth in your heart about sin, in your heart you will be wise towards sin, lamenting it, confessing it, carrying it to Christ—watching against it, abhorring it, protesting against it all your days!  
So taking another subject, a blessed subject, the Savior, if you have truth in your inward parts about the Savior, you know Him to be the one and only Savior, but an all-sufficient and perfect one! Well then, your wisdom is to live upon Him! To live with Him, to live like He and the God that desires you to have the truth about Christ in your heart will teach you how to act wisely concerning Christ! In your heart and in your life you will worship Him, you will adore Him so as to spend yourself for Him—for this is wisdom towards the truth as it is in Jesus!  
So take but one other subject. If you have learned the truth about service, and God would have that truth in your heart, for you are His servant bought with His blood, why, then, He will teach you wisdom in service. He will show you how to deny yourself, how to consecrate yourself, how to poor out your whole strength at His feet, how to meet your enemies, how to surmount your difficulties, how to fight His battles, how to win the crown! He desires you to have truth in your heart about this matter and He will give you wisdom in your heart concerning it all. So observe that what God requires of us in one place, God gives us in another! He deals with sinners very honestly—He tells them what He wants. He then deals with them very generously, for He gives them what they need! He does not lower the Law, or diminish its spirituality to suit the sinner—He tells him the truth, that He desires that he should have truth in his inward parts—but when He has set out the Law, He sets out an equally broad Gospel. He works in the sinner what His gracious Law demands! There are the tablets of stone—God does not take one out of the Ten Commands away—He puts the Mercy Seat on the top of the whole— covers the whole—and so He does not diminish from the Christian anything of what should be in him, or tell him to rest content with inferior holiness, or with a second-rate obedience! He tells him that He desires truth, even in his inward parts! He comes to him and He says, “That which I expect from you I will give you: that which I require I will bestow upon you.”  
“In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.” Now turn my text into a prayer. “O God! I confess my inward part is not what it should be, nor can I make it so. You might well sweep me away because my heart is depraved, but oh, take me—wash me in the Savior’s blood! Send Your Spirit to create me new and make me in my inward part to know wisdom,” for Your mercy’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 8:1-34.**

The words we are about to read follow a passage in which the Apostle describes the conflict of his soul. It is rather singular that it should be so. To catch the contrast, let us begin at the end of the 7th Chapter, 22nd verse.

Romans 7:22-25 For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:1 .There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Some simpletons have said that Paul was not a converted man when he wrote the closing verses of that 7th Chapter. I venture to assert that nobody but an advanced Christian, enjoying the highest degree of sanctification could ever have written it! It is not a man that is dead in sin that calls himself, “wretched,” because he finds sin within him—it is a man made pure by the Grace of God, who, because of that very purity, feels more the comparatively lesser force of sin than he would have done when he had less Grace and more sin. I believe that the nearer we get to absolute perfection, the more fit to enter the gates of Heaven—the more detestable will sin become to us, and the more conflict will there be in our souls to tread out the last spark of sin. Bless God, Beloved, if you feel a conflict. Bless Him and ask Him who it may rage more terrible, still, for that shall be one evidence to you that you are, indeed, out of all condemnation because you are struggling against the evil!

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. I am not the bond-slave of it—I am the enemy of it. I am free from it, fighting against it, struggling like a free man against one who would bring him into captivity, but even though I sometime feel as if I were a captive, I know I am not, I am free!

3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not in the flesh, but after the Spirit. This is our victory, that let the flesh lust as it may, we do not walk after it—we are kept by God’s Grace! We are preserved so that the bent and tenor of our life is after the rule of the Spirit of God.

5, 6. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Oh, what a death it is to us if ever the flesh gets the mastery! And if it had the mastery in us, we should know that we were still in death, but oh, what a joy, what life, what peace it is to have the Spirit ruling in us so that we are spiritually minded. God give us this to the fullest!

7, 8. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. We must be born-again, then. It is no use improving the flesh. The taking away of the filth of the flesh was the old law but the burying of the flesh, that is the new. The plunging of it into the death of Christ is the very sign of the New Covenant. Oh, to know the full the power of the life of God for the death of the flesh!

9, 10. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. That is why we have aches and pains, and infirmities—because the body is dead—that is, doomed to die, must die. It must see corruption unless the Lord comes and even in that case it must undergo a wondrous change—so we regard our body as dead. No wonder, then, that all those aches and pains and troubles of body come upon us. The day shall come however, when even it shall be delivered from the power of death! Meanwhile, blessed be God, “the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

11. But if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. The blessing of life is to come to the body, too—it shall be immortal, by-and-by, delivered from all the infirmities and sorrows which sin and death have brought upon it.

12, 13. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. It is a live thing and a quickening thing, for you shall live.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. God has not a dead child—never had one. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. First, love, and then sonship. He rises in his strain.

16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. It is first a quickening Spirit, and then a witnessing Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now up again.

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if we suffer with Him. Up again—  
17. That we may be also glorified together. Oh, what a rise is this from groaning under, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—up to this point—“That we may be also glorified together”!  
18, 19. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. It is not merely that the Spirit will bless the body, but that spiritual men will bless the whole creation! Materialism, which is like the body inhabited by the spirits of saints, is to share in the bliss which Christ has come to bring.  
20-22. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. Just as our body is, so to speak, the world, the earth in which our spirit dwells, so this big earth is the body in which the Church dwells. And this body has its pains, so this creation has its pains, but as this body is to rise again, so this creation, also, though it “groans and travails,” is to be brought into the “glorious liberty of the children of God.” And what a world it will be when the curse that fell on it through the sin of Eden shall be removed by the glorious Atonement of Calvary! And when the blood of Christ which fell to the ground, which you will remember has never gone away from the earth, but is still somewhere, shall have fully redeemed the world, the whole world shall be a trophy of the Redeemer’s power!  
23. And not only they, but we also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Of course we groan within ourselves! Who said we didn’t? And those brethren who say they never groan, I wish they would learn better. It is one of the signs of Grace and marks of a child of God that he is not perfect and does not think he is, but groans after it, cries after it. “We groan without ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” For this poor body still lies, in measure, under a curse, still with its pains, still with its carnal appetites and fleshly tendencies to hamper and to trouble it! But this we groan after—that this flesh of ours, and the whole creation in which we dwell, shall yet have a joyous deliverance!

24-30. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. He speaks as if it were all done, because the major part of it is done in the saints, and it will only be a wink of the eye and it will all be done in everyone of us who are Believers! Let us look at it as quite fully done, even now, by hope that we are already glorified together.

31, 32. What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? What, indeed, what can we say? We are lost in wonder, love and praise! Thus much, however, we can say, for it concerns our struggles while we are here below. Paul has got that shadow still over him—of struggling against the flesh. What shall we say in the view of these blessed things concerning that struggle? Why, this: “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

33, 34. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Equally impossible—and if neither God nor Christ will condemn, what judge have we to fear? The Judge of all the earth, and the Judge of the quick and the dead—if neither of these condemn, condemn away who likes!

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1937 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A MINGLED STRAIN

NO. 1937

**A SERMON DELIVERED  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”  
Psalm 51:7.**

IN what state of heart should we come to the Communion Table? It is no light matter—in what manner shall we come before the Lord in so sacred an ordinance? By the very nature of the sacred supper we are taught that there should be a mixture of emotions. The bitter and the sweet, the joyful and the sorrowful are here intermingled. The Sacrifice of Christ for sin—is it more a subject of sorrow or of joy? Can we look to the Cross without mourning for sin? Can we look at it without rejoicing in pardon bought with blood? Is not the most suitable state of heart for coming to the Communion Table just this—mourning for our transgression and joy because of the great salvation? There is a double character about this holy rite. It is a festival of life and yet it is a memorial of death. Here is a cup— it is filled with wine. This surely betokens gladness. Listen to me! That wine is the symbol of blood! This, surely, betokens sorrow! In my hand is bread—bread to be eaten, bread which strengthens man’s heart—shall we not eat bread with thankfulness? But that bread is broken, to represent a body afflicted with pain and anguish—there must be mourning on account of that agony! At the Paschal Supper, the lamb of the Lord’s Passover had a special sweetness in it—yet the commandment expressly ran—“with bitter herbs they shall eat it.” So is it at this table. Here we, with joy, commemorate the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world—but with deep sorrow we recall the sin which, though taken away, causes us, in the recollection of it, to repent with great bitterness of heart.

Our text is the expression of one who is deeply conscious of sin and yet is absolutely certain that God can put away that sin. Thus it holds, in one sentence, a double thread of meaning. Here is a depth of sorrow and a still greater deep of hopeful joy—“deep calls unto deep.” I thought that this expression of mixed feeling might guide us as to our emotions at this holy festival.

I. I shall handle the text by making three observations. The first will be this—THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE LANGUAGE OF A SINNER IS MOST SUITABLE TO A CHILD OF GOD. There are seasons when it is about the only language that he can use, when he seems shut up to it and he uses it without the slightest suspicion that it is out of place upon his lips and, indeed, it is not out of place at all. I suppose that everybody will agree that the language of David in this Psalm was most suitable to his condition. When he prayed, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,” he prayed a proper prayer, did he not? Surely no one is going to quibble with David over this petition and yet I cannot be sure. The modern way of handling the Bible is to correct it here and amend it there—tear it to pieces—give a bit to the Jews, a bit to the Gentiles, a bit to the Church and a bit to everybody—and then make it out that sometimes the old servants of God made great blunders!

We, in modern times, are supposed to be more spiritual and to know a great deal better than the Inspired saints of the Old and New Testaments. But still, I should not think that anybody would say that David was wrong, but if he did, I would reply, “This is an Inspired Psalm and there is not half a hint given that there is any incorrectness in the language of it, or that David used language under an exaggerated state of feeling which was not truly applicable to a child of God.” I think that nobody will doubt that David was a child of God and that, even when he had defiled himself, he was still dear to the great Father’s heart. I gather, therefore—I feel sure of it—that he was quite right in praying the language of this 51st Psalm and saying, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!”

Yet this is precisely the way in which an unconverted man ought to pray, just the way in which every soul that comes to God may pray. It is only an enlargement of the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” This language, so suitable to the sinner, was not out of place in the mouth of one who was not only a Believer, but an advanced Believer, an experienced Believer, yes, an Inspired Believer and a teacher of others, who, with all his faults, was such a one as we shall rarely see the likes of again! Yes, among the highest of saints there was a time with one of them, at least, when the lowliest language was appropriate to his condition! There is a spirit abroad which tells us that children of God ought not to ask for pardon of their sins, for they have been pardoned, that they need not use such language as this, which is appropriate for sinners, for they stand in a totally different position. What I want to know is this—where are we to draw the line? If, on account of a certain sin, David was perfectly justified in appealing to God in the same style as a poor, unforgiven sinner would have done, am

 I never justified in doing so? Is it only a certain form of evil which puts a man under the necessities of humiliation?

It may be that the man has never fallen into adultery, or any other gross sin, but is there a certain extent of sin to which a man may go, before, as a child of God, he is to pray like this? And is all that falls below that high-water mark of sin a something so inconsiderable that he need not go and ask any particular forgiveness for it, or pray like a sinner at all about it? May I, under most sins, speak very confidently as a child of God, who has already been forgiven, to whom it is a somewhat remarkable circumstance that he should have done wrong, but still, by no means, a serious disaster? I defy anybody to draw the line! And if they do draw it, I will strike it out, for they have no right to draw it! There is no hint in the Word of God that for a certain amount of sin there is to be one style of praying and for a certain lower amount of sin another style of praying!

I venture to say this, Brothers and Sisters, going farther, that, as this language is certainly appropriate in David’s mouth and as it would be impossible to draw any line at which it would cease to be appropriate, the safest and best plan for you and for me is this—seeing that we are sinners, if we have not been permitted to backslide as much as David, yet we had better come in the same way—we had better take the lowest place, urge the lowliest plea and so make sure work of our salvation! It is safest to assume the greatest supposable need. Let us put ourselves into the humblest position before the Throne of the heavenly Grace and cry, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions!”

But is not a man of God forgiven? Yes, that he is! Is he not justified? Yes, that he is! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Let that all stand true in the highest sense that you can give to it but, for all that, the sinner’s cry is not thereby hushed into silence! True children of God cry and let me tell you they cry after a stronger fashion than other children! They have their confessions of sin and these are deeper and more intense than those of others. Whatever our confidence may be, our Lord Jesus Christ never told us to pray, “Lord, I thank You that I am forgiven and, therefore, have no sin to confess. I thank You that I need not come to You as a sinner!” But He put into the mouth of His disciples such words as these—“Our Father, which are in Heaven, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.” I reckon that the Lord’s Prayer is never out of date! I expect to be able to pray it when I am on the brink of Heaven and, if I should ever be sanctified to the fullest extent, I shall never turn round to the Savior and say, “Now, my Lord, I have got beyond Your prayer! Now, Savior, I can no more address my Father who is in Heaven in this language, for I have outgrown Your prayer!”

Brothers and Sisters, the notion sounds to me like blasphemy! Never shall I say to my Savior, “I have no necessity, now, to come to Your precious blood, or to say to You, ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’” Listen, Brethren—“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another,” and what then? Why, even then, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” We still need the blood when walking in the light, as God Himself is in the light!

While we are here below, we shall need to use just such language as David did. Appropriate as our text is to the sinner, it is equally appropriate to the saint and we may continue to use it till we get to Heaven! Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that when our hearts cannot honestly use such language, we may think that we are raised up by faith, but it is possible that we may be blown up by presumption! When we do not bow into the very dust and kiss the Savior’s feet and wash them with our tears, we may think that it is because we are growing in Grace, but it is far more likely that we are swelling with self-esteem! The more holy a man is, the more humble he is. The more really sanctified he is, the more does he cry about his sin, whatever it may be—“Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

When you get the clearest possible view of God, what will be the result? Why, the deepest downcasting in your own spirit! Look at Job. He can answer his wretched accusers, but when he sees God—ah, then he abhors himself in dust and ashes! Was Job wrong in heart? I question whether any of us are half as good as Job! I am sure few of us could have played the man as he did under his sorrows. With all the failure of his patience, the Holy Spirit does not call it a failure, for He says, “You have heard of the patience of Job.” He says not, “of his impatience,” but, “of his patience.” And yet this blessed, patient man—patient even by God’s own testimony—when he saw God, abhorred himself! Look at Isaiah, again. Was there ever a tongue more eloquent, more consecrated, more pure? Were there ever lips more circumcised to God than those of that mighty evangelical Prophet? And yet, when he beheld the Glory of the Lord, the train of the Lord filling the Temple, he said, “Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”

Those of you that can do so, may come to my Master’s table, tonight, as saints—I shall come as a sinner. You that feel that you can come there glorying in your growth in Grace may so come if you like—I shall come feeling that I am nothing, less than nothing! I shall endeavor to come to the Cross just as I came at first, for I find that if I get beyond the position of a believing sinner, I get into a dangerous condition. Safety lies in conformity to the Truth of God and the Truth of God will not allow any of us to glory before God! The more I know the Lord and the more I live in communion with Him, the more do I feel happy in lying at His feet and looking up to Him to be my All in All. I would be nothing, and let Christ be everything. Take this from one who has been a preacher of the Gospel for more than 35 years—and a soul-winner who needs not to be ashamed—I am as entirely dependent upon the free mercy of the Lord this day as ever I was—and I look to be saved in the same manner as the thief upon the Cross.

II. Secondly, let me make another observation. It shall be this—AN EXTRAORDINARY SENSE OF GUILT IS QUITE CONSISTENT WITH THE STRONGEST FAITH. It is a blessed thing when the two go together. David was under an extraordinary sense of sin and right well he might be, for he had committed an extravagant transgression. He had done a very grievous wrong to man and committed great lewdness before the Lord—and when the Spirit of God, at last, awakened his conscience through the rebuke of Nathan, it is not at all amazing that he should have bowed down under a deeply humiliating sense of his own guilt. He was guilty, deeply guilty— more guilty than even he, himself, knew.

You and I, perhaps, may also be, by God’s Grace, favored with a deep sense of sin. But I hear some people say, “Did I understand you rightly, Sir, or did my ears deceive me? Favored with a deep sense of sin?” “Yes, I said that, for while sin is horrible, a thorough sense of it, bitter as it is, is one of the greatest favors with which God blesses His chosen! I am sure that there are some of God’s children whose experience is shallow and superficial, for they do not know the heights and depths of redeeming love— neither are they established in the Doctrines of Grace—and all because they were never deeply plowed with a sharp sense of sin! These know nothing of subsoil plowing, so as to turn their very hearts up under the keen plow of the Law. But that man who knows what sin means and has had it burned with a hot iron into the core of his spirit—he is the man who knows what Grace means—and is likely to understand its freeness and fullness! He who knows the evil of sin is likely to know the value of the precious blood! I could scarcely ask for any of you a better thing than that you should fully know, in your own spirit, the horribleness of sin as far as your mind is capable of bearing the strain.

David was so conscious of his guilt that he compares himself to a leper. The language of the text refers, I believe, to the cleansing of lepers. Hyssop was dipped in blood and then the sacrificial blood was sprinkled upon the polluted individuals to make them clean. David felt that he had become a leprous man. He felt like one who had contracted the horrible, the polluting, the incurable disease of leprosy! He felt that he was not fit to come near to God, nor even to associate with his fellow man. He confessed that his guilt was such that he ought to be put away, shut out from the assembly of the people. His guilt had polluted a whole nation, of whom he was the representative and to whom he was the example. Did you ever feel like that? I tell you that you do not know all the pollution of sin unless you have been made to feel yourself to be a polluted thing! If you had 50 leprosies, they would not pollute you like sin, for a poor leper is not really polluted—he may bear a grand and noble soul within that rotting body!

Sin, alone, is real pollution, hellish pollution, abominable pollution! There is nothing in Hell that is worse than sin—even the devil is only a devil because sin made him a devil—so that sin is the most horrible and intolerable evil that can fall upon the spirit of man. David felt that dreadful Truth of God. But yet, mark you, though he felt the horror of the disease of sin, his faith was strong enough to make him use the confident language of the text, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” “Black as my sin is, filthy as it is, if You do but purge me, O my God, I shall be clean!”

Yes, David is sure that God can cleanse him . He pleads as one who has no question upon the matter towards God. His prayer is—“You purge me, and I shall be clean! Apply the precious blood of the great Sacrifice to me, O God, and I shall be whiter than snow!” There is about the Hebrew a sense which I could hardly give you, unless I were to put it thus—“You will un-sin me.” As though God would take his sin right away and leave him without a speck of sin, without a single grain of it upon him! God could make him as if he had never sinned at all! Such is the power of the cleansing work of God upon the heart that He can restore innocence to us and make us as if we had never been stained with transgression at all! Do you believe this? Do you believe this? Oh, you are a happy man, if, under the deepest conceivable sense of sin, you can still say, “Yes, I believe that He can wash me and make me whiter than snow!”

But will you follow me while I go a step farther? The words of our text are, in the Hebrew, in the future tense and they might be read, “You shall purge me and I shall be clean,” so that David was not only certain about the power of God to cleanse him, but about the fact that God would do it—“You shall purge me.” He cast himself, confessing his sin, at the feet of his God and he said, “My God, I believe that, through the great Atonement, You will make me clean!” Have you faith like that of David? Do you believe this? Beloved, some of us can boldly say, “Yes, that we do! We believe not only that God can pardon us, but that He will. Yes, that He has pardoned us and we come to Him, now, and plead that He would renew in us the cleansing work of the precious blood and of the water which flowed from the side of Christ—and so make us perfectly clean! Yes, we believe that He will do it! We are sure that He will and we believe that He will continue to cleanse us till we shall need no more cleansing!”

Hart’s hymn sings concerning the precious blood—  
*“If guilt removed, returns and remains,  
Its power may be proved again and again.”*

This witness is true and we set our seal to it.

The Psalmist David believed that although his sin was what it was, yet God could make a rapid cleansing of it. He speaks of the matter as worked promptly and speedily. It took seven days to cleanse a leper, but David does not follow the type when the reality excels it! He says, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” It is done directly, done at once—washed and whiter than snow! It will not take seven days to wipe out the crimes of seven years! No, if a man had lived 70 years in sin—if he did but come to his God with humble confession and if the precious blood of Jesus were applied to him—his sins would vanish in the twinkling of an eye! The two facts come together. “Purge me—I shall be clean. Wash me—I shall be whiter than snow.” It is done at once! Note the rapidity of the cleansing.

Mark the effectual character of the purgation. “Purge me, and I shall be clean.” Not, “I shall think that I am,” but “I shall be. I shall be like a man perfectly healed of leprosy.” Such a man was not purged in theory, but in reality, so that he could go up to the court of the Lord’s house and offer his sacrifice among the rest of Israel. So, if you wash me, Lord, I shall be really clean! I shall have access to You and I shall have fellowship with all Your saints.

Once more—David believed that God could give him internal cleansing. “In the hidden parts,” he says, “You shall make me to know wisdom.” I like that about the text. It is, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” Where?—Hands? Yes. Feet? Yes. Head? Yes. All this is good, but what about the heart? There is the part that you and I cannot cleanse, but God can! Imagination, conscience, memory—every inward faculty—the Lord can purge us in all these! “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” This includes the whole man. And this declaration falls from the lips of a man who knew himself to be as defiled as he could be, a very leper, only fit to be put away into his own house and shut up there for fear of contaminating the rest of mankind! He boldly says, “If the Lord washes me, I shall be clean, I am certain of it! I shall be perfectly clean and fit to have communion with Him.”

Notice one more remark on this point, namely, that David, while thus conscious of his sins, is so full of faith towards God that he appropriates all the cleansing power of God to Him—“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” There are four personal words in one verse. It is easy to believe that God can forgive sin in general, but that He can forgive mine in particular—that is the point! Yes, it is easy to believe that He can forgive man, but to believe that He will forgive such a poor specimen of the race as I am is quite another matter! To take personal hold upon Divine blessings is a most blessed faculty. Let us exercise it. Can you do it? Brothers and Sisters, can you do it? You that cannot call yourselves Brothers and Sisters, you far-away ones, can you come to Christ, all black and defiled as you are and just believe in Him that you shall be made whole? You will not be believing too much of the Great Sinners’ Friend! According to your faith be it unto you.

III. This brings us to our third and last point, upon which I will speak with great brevity. Notice that A DEEP SENSE OF SIN AND A CONFIDENT FAITH IN GOD MAKE THE LORD’S NAME AND GLORY PRE-EMINENTLY CONSPICUOUS. God is the great Actor in the text before us. He purges and He washes—and none but He. The sins and the cleansing are, both of them, too great to allow of any inferior handling.

“ Purge me.” He makes it all God’s work. He does not say anything about the Aaronic priest. What a poor miserable creature the priest is when a soul is under a sense of sin! Have you ever met with a person who has been really broken in heart who has gone to a priest? If so, he has been made ashamed of his looking to man, for he has found him to be a broken cistern that can hold no water! Why, my Brothers and Sisters, if we had this platform full of popes and one poor soul under a sense of sin to be comforted—the whole lot of them could not touch the sinner’s wound, nor do anything to stanch the bleeding of his heart! No, no, the words of the best of men fall short of our need! As the dying monk said, “Tua vulnera, Jesu!”—“Your wounds, Jesus!” These can heal, but nothing else can! God must, Himself, wash us! Nothing short of His personal interposition will suffice.

Now, notice the next word, “Purge me with hyssop.” We must have faith, which is represented by hyssop. How little David makes of faith! He thinks of it only as the poor “hyssop.” Many questions have been raised as to what hyssop was. I do not think that anybody knows. Whatever it may have been, it was a plant that had many little shoots and leaves, because its particular fitness was that the blood would cling to its many branches. Its use was that it stored the blood and held it there in ruby drops upon each one of its sprays—and that is the particular suitability of faith for its peculiar office. It is an excellent thing in itself, but the particular virtue of faith lies in this—that it holds the blood so as to apply it. Scarlet wool was used in the ceremony of cleansing and the scarlet wool was useful because it soaked in the blood and held it within itself. But the hyssop was still more useful because while it held the blood, it held it ready to drop. That is how faith holds the great Sacrifice—it holds the atoning blood upon every spray, ready to drop upon the tortured conscience! Faith is the sprinkling hyssop—it is nothing in itself, but it applies to the soul that which is our cleansing and our life!

David, moreover, seems to me to say, “Lord, if You will purge me with the blood of the great Sacrifice, it does not matter how it is done! Do it with the little hyssop from off the wall. However tiny and insignificant the plant may be, yet it will hold the precious drops and bring them to my heart and I shall be whiter than snow.” It is God, you see—it is God all the way through.

“ And I”—there is just that mention of himself. But what of himself? Why, “I shall be the receiver. I shall be clean.” “I.” What about that intensive, “I”? “I shall be whiter than snow”—I shall be the material on which You work—the guilty pardoned—the polluted made clean—the leper made whole and permitted to come up to Your House.

That is all I ask of my Lord tonight—that He will let me come to His table and be the receiver, the eater, the drinker, the cleansed one, the debtor, the bankrupt debtor, plunged head over heels in debt to the heavenly Creditor! Oh, to be nothing! To lie at His feet! Oh, to be nothing but washed—washed in the blood! How sweet it is no longer to ride on horses, but to have God for your All in All—no longer to go forth, sword in hand, boasting our strength and glorying in what we can do—but to sit down at Jesus’ feet and sing the victory which He, alone, has won!

Come, let us pray from our very hearts, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” God bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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END VOLUME 32 Sermon #3056 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE GUILT AND THE CLEANSING  
NO. 3056

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 8, 1865.

*“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”  
Psalm 51:7.*

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon on the same text is #1937, Volume 32—A MINGLED STRAIN— Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

You know how David had sinned. To the sin of adultery he had added that of murder. David felt like one who was shut out from God and was unworthy to approach Him. He could not be content to remain in such a condition. He longed to be reconciled to God and he remembered that he had sometimes seen a man who had the leprosy put out of the city as an unclean person, or he had seen one who had defiled himself by touching a corpse shut out for a time from all communion with those who drew near to worship God. “Ah,” he thought, “that is just as I am—I am unworthy to appear before God, for I am spiritually unclean.”

But David had also seen the priest take a basin full of blood and dip hyssop in it—and when the bunch of hyssop had soaked up the blood, he had seen the priest sprinkle the unclean person therewith and then say to him, “You are clean. You have admittance now to the worship of God. You can mingle with the great congregation—I pronounce you clean through the sprinkled blood.” And David’s faith, acting upon the telescopic principle, looked far down the ages and he saw the great atoning Sacrifice offered upon Calvary. And as he saw the Son of God bleeding for sins which were not His own, he desired that the blood of Christ might be applied to his conscience, feeling that it would take away his defilement and admit him into the courts of God’s House and into the love of God’s heart. And so he prayed this prayer, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.”

He felt, too, that sin was a very great defilement—that he was black and filthy—but he knew how he had often, when hunted like a wild goat among the mountains, stooped down to a cooling brook and washed away the dust and stain of travel in the running water and his face and hands had been clean again. And so, bowing down before God he sees, in the Sacrifice of Christ, a cleansing flood and his desire is expressed in these words, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” The words do not require any exposition—they require application. They do not need to be explained—they need to be offered up to God in prayer by brokenhearted suppliants!

There are two things I shall try to talk about, as God shall help me. The one is that sin is a very foul thing—David says, “Purge me.” “Wash me.” The other is that the cleansing must be very great—this process of sprinkling hyssop and of washing must be very potent, for he says, “I shall be clean.” “I shall be whiter than snow.”

I. First, then, a little about THE DEFILEMENT.  
Sometimes it has been asked by unconverted men, “Why do you talk so much about Atonement? Why could not God be generous and forgive sin outright? Why should He require the shedding of blood and the endurance of great suffering?” Sinner, if you had a right sense of sin you would never ask such a question! In asking that question you speak upon the supposition that God is such an One as yourself. But He hates sin. He sees in sin such loathsomeness as you have never dreamed of! There is, to Him, such horrible abomination, such a heinousness, such a detestableness and uncleanness about sin that He could not pass it by. If He did, He would bring upon His own Character the suspicion that He was not holy. Had God passed by human sin without a substitutionary Sacrifice, the seraphim would have Suspended their song, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.” The judge who winks at sin is the abettor of sin. If the supreme Ruler does not punish sin, He becomes Himself the patron of all guilt and sin may take its rest beneath the shadow of His wings! But it is not so and, Sinner, God would have you know, and have angels know—and have devils know that however lightly any of His creatures may think of sin—and however foolishly simple man may toy with it—He knows what a vile thing it is and He will have no patience with it! “He will by no means spare the guilty.”  
I have heard it said by persons looking at the subject from another point of view, that the preaching of full forgiveness through the Savior’s blood, to the very chief of sinners, is apt to make men think lightly of sin—that, when we tell them—  
*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One, There is life at this moment”—*  
for every soul that looks at Christ, we do, in effect, find a plaster for men’s wounded consciences which, when thus healed, will only aid and abet them in going to sin again. How untrue this is! A moment’s reflection will show you. We tell the sinner that God never does gratuitously pass by a single sin and that pardon never could have come to one man of Adam’s race had it not been procured by the tremendous griefs of the Savior who stood in men’s place. Our own belief is that all the proclamations of the Law of God and all the threats of judgment that were ever thundered forth by the most Boanerges-like of ministers, never did show man so much the vileness of sin as the preaching of this one great Truth of God—“The Lord has caused to meet on Him the iniquity of us all. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” That is the great condemnation of sin—the Savior’s death! Never is God dressed in such resplendent robes of glorious holiness as when He is smiting sin as it is laid upon His only-begotten Son! Having lifted it from sinners and laid it upon Christ, He does not spare it because of the worthiness of the Person to whom it is imputed. He smites and crushes it with His full force and fury till the oppressed Victim cries out, “Behold, and see if there is any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me when Jehovah has afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.”  
Let us now turn this subject over a little—the guilt of sin. We think that the Atonement sets forth that guilt most thoroughly—let this Truth of God reach the ears of every unpardoned man and woman here. It appears that there is nothing but blood that will ever wash your sin away—the blood of Christ, the blood of God’s dear Son—this cleanses us from all sin, but nothing ease can. The blackness of your sin will appear, then, if you recollect that all the creatures in the universe could not have taken one of your sins away. If all the holy angels in Heaven had performed the best service that they could render, they could not have taken away even one of your sins! If the great archangel had left his station near the Throne of God’s Glory and had been led into a deep abyss of suffering, all that he could have done would not have been a drop in the bucket compared with what would be required to take away one single sin, for sin is such an enormous evil that no created being could remove it! And even if all the saints on earth could have ceased to sin and could unceasingly have praised God day and night, yet there is not merit enough in all their songs to blot out one single offense of one single sinner! No, let me go further. Could your tears and the tears of all created intelligences, “no respite know.” Could the briny drops— *“Forever flow—  
All for sin could not atone.”*  
No, I will go a step lower. The pains of the damned in Hell are no atonement for sin! They suffer in consequence of sin, but no atonement has been made by them, for all they have suffered has not lessened what they have to suffer. And when ten thousand times ten thousand years shall have rolled over their poor accursed heads, they will be just as far off having satisfied Divine Justice as they are now, for sin is such a dreadful thing that even Tophet cannot burn it up, though “the pile thereof is fire and much wood,” and though “the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it.” Sin is cast into its flames and men suffer there—but all the burnings of Gehenna never did consume a single sin—and never could! Think of that! Earth, Heaven and Hell could never take away a single sin from a single soul!  
None but Christ could do it and even Christ Himself could not do it unless He became a Man. It was absolutely necessary that the Substitute for human sin should be of the same nature as the offender. Christ must therefore be born of Mary that He might become Man. Man must suffer, for man had sinned. As in Adam all died, so in another Adam must all be made alive if they were ever to be made alive at all. They fell by one man, so they must rise by another Man, or else never rise. But even the Man Christ Jesus, in association with the Godhead, could not have taken away your sins unless He had died. I never read in Scripture that all that He did in His life could take away sin. The Savior’s life is the robe of righteousness with which His people are covered, but that is not the bath in which they are washed. The whole life of Christ—all His preaching upon the mountains, all His fasting in the wilderness, all His travail in birth for souls, yes, all His bloody sweat, all His scourging, all the shame and the spitting that He endured could not have saved your soul, or take away one sin, for it is written, “Without shedding of blood is no remission” of sin. Think of this, Sinner! To take out that one sin of yours, if you had only one sin, the Infinite must become an Infant and the Immortal must yoke Himself with mortality! And then, in that position, and in that condition, He must become “obedient unto death,” or else not one sin on your part could ever be removed from your soul!  
But I want you to go with me further than this. Christ Himself, in His death, could not have taken away one sin if it had not been for the peculiar form of death which He endured. He had to be crucified and then Paul could write, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. Christ must, therefore, hang upon a tree that He might be cursed—and there is no man who ever lived who can tell what is meant by that expression—that Christ was cursed. If all the mighty orators who have moved the Christian Church at once to tears and to joy, could stand here, I would defy them to weigh this burden of the Lord, or estimate its tremendous meaning, “Christ was made a curse for us.” Christ a curse! Jehovah-Tsidkenu a curse! Jesus, the darling of the Father, made a curse! He, who “counted it not robbery to be equal with God,” a curse! O angels, you may well marvel at this mystery, for its astounding depths you cannot fathom! Yet so it is. “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”  
And this leads me to mention what I think is surely the climax here, that although Christ died the death of the Cross, even then He could not have taken any sin away unless it had been expressly ordained and settled that He therein did Himself take our sin as well as our curse—and did therein stand before God, though in Himself personally innocent—as if He had been a sinner and there suffer, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” There is that black, that hideous, that damning, that everlasting soul-destroying thing called sin! Jehovah-Jesus sees it on His people. He knows that they can never be with Him where He is while that sin rests on them and He also knows that there is no way by which they can be freed from it except by His taking it. Can you picture the scene? He takes that terrible, that cursed, that Hell-kindling, that Hell-feeding thing—that fuel of the eternal Pit, that object of eternal Wrath—He takes that sin upon Himself and now what does sin seem to say? It is imputed to Christ and it seems to hide itself behind Christ— and it says to God, “O God, You hate me, but You cannot reach me here. Here I am! I am Your enemy, but there is between us an impassable barrier.” Now, what will become of sin? Hear this, you sinners who still have your sins resting upon you! What will become of sin? God says, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd.” And the sword did smite Him, so that Christ cried out, “All Your waves and Your billows are gone over Me.” And He uttered that dreadful shriek, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” in unutterable depths of anguish because God had turned away His face and smitten Him in His fierce anger, pounded Him as in a mortar, trampled on Him as in the wine-press, crushed Him as in the olive-press, broke Him between the upper and the nether millstones of His awful wrath made Him to drink the whole cup dry and caused Him to suffer—

*“All that Incarnate God could bear,  
With strength enough, but none to spare.”*  
So you see that before even one sin can be pardoned, Christ must suffer what that sin deserves, or something tantamount thereunto by which Divine Holiness shall be cleared of all stain. Then what an awfully evil thing sin must be! Yet you will see her standing at the corner of the street, with a smiling face, trying to allure you. But shake your head at her and say, “No, no! The Savior bled because of you!” And you will see sin sparkling in the wine-cup, but look not on it when it is red, and moves itself aright, but say unto it, “O Sin, I loathe you, for you did open my Savior’s veins and cause His precious blood to flow!” It is easy to get black by sin, but remember that it is so hard to get clean that only God’s Omnipotence, in the Person of Christ, could provide a Cleanser for your sins!  
And now, Sinner, I say this word to you, yet some will go and mock it. I cannot make you see the filthiness of sin. You think it a mere trifling thing. God Almighty, you say, is very merciful, forgetting how tremendously just He is. But though I cannot make you see sin, yet I can leave this Truth with you—you will one day feel what sin means unless you repent of it, for He that spared not His own Son will not spare you! If the Judge upon the Throne of God smote Christ, who had no sin of His own—smote Him so sternly for other men’s sins—what will He do with you? If He spared not His Beloved Son, what will He do with His enemies? If the fire burned up Christ, how will it burn up you? O you who are out of Christ—without God and without hope—what will you do? What will you do when God shall put on His robe of thunder and come forth to deal with you in His wrath? Beware, beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”  
I want you to take this prayer now. I have tried to bring out the meaning of it. You are thus black, so pray to God, “Purge me with blood: apply it by Your Holy Spirit, as the priest applied to the leper the blood upon the bunch of hyssop. ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’”  
II. And now we shall have a few words upon THE POWER OF THE CLEANSING.  
Whom can it cleanse? That is the first question. David answers it, for he says, “It can cleanse me.” He meant himself. I would not exaggerate David’s sin, but it was a very frightful one. What could be more dreadful than for a man so highly-favored, who had so much of the Light of God, so much communion with God and who stood so high as a light in the midst of the nation to commit two crimes so accursed as those which we must lay at his door—adultery and murder? While my blood runs chill at the very thought of his having committed them, yet in my soul I am glad that the Holy Spirit ever permitted such a black case to stand on record! What an encouragement to seek pardon it has been to many who have sinned as foully as David did! If you can bend your knees and pray David’s prayer, you shall get David’s answer! “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” What if you have even defiled your neighbor’s wife? What if you have even struck your neighbor to his heart and left him dead upon the earth? These two crimes will damn you to all eternity unless you shall find pardon for them through the blood of Jesus—and there is pardon for them there! If you look up to where that blood is streaming from the hands and feet and side of Jesus. If you trust your broken spirit in His hands, there is pardon for your crimson sins to be had right now! Is there a harlot here? O poor fallen woman, I pray that Christ may so forgive you that you will wash His feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head! Is there a thief here? Men say that you will never be reclaimed, but I pray the same Eternal Mercy which saved the dying thief to save the living thief! Have I any here who have cursed God to His face a thousand times? Return unto your God, for He comes to meet you! Say to Him, “Father, I have sinned.” Bury your head in His bosom! Receive His kiss of forgiveness, for God delights to pardon and to blot out transgression. Now that He has smitten Christ, He will not smite any sinner who comes to Him through Christ. His wrath is gone and He can now say, “Fury is not in Me.” Here, then, is a great wonder—that Christ’s precious blood can cleanse the vilest of the vile and you may now pray the prayer of the text, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.”  
From what can it cleanse? I dare not mention every kind of sin, but there is no sin from which it cannot cleanse. What a precious Truth of God that is, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” During this last week I have been with Brother Offord conducting Prayer Meetings. And he told, one evening, a tale which I made him tell every evening afterwards, for I thought it so good. He said there was a poor man living in Dartmoor who had been employed during the summer in looking after horses, cows and so on, that were turned out on the moor. He was a perfect heathen and never went to a place of worship, perhaps, since he was a child. For him there was no Sabbath. After a time, he grew very ill. He was over 60 years of age and, having nothing to live upon, he went into the workhouse. While he was there, it pleased the mysterious Spirit to make him uneasy as to his soul. He felt that he must die and the old man had just enough Light of God to let him see that if he did die, all was wrong with regard to a future state. He had a little grandchild who lived in a neighboring town—Plymouth, I think it was—and he asked leave for his grandchild to come in to see him every day. As he was very ill and near death, that was allowed. She came in and he said to her, “Read the Bible to me, Dear.” She complied and the more she read, the more wretched the old man grew. “Read again,” he said. The more she read, the more dark his mind seemed to be with a sense of guilt.  
At last, one day, she came to that passage in the first Epistle of John—you know it—“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “Is that there?” he asked. “Yes, Grandfather,” replied the little girl, “that is there.” “Is that there?” “Oh, yes, Grandfather, it is there.” “Then read it again! Read it again!” She again read, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “My Dear, are you sure it is just like that?” “Yes, Grandfather.” “Then read it again, Dear.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” “Then,” he said, “take my finger and put it on that verse. Is it on that text, Child?—is my finger on that blessed text?” “Yes, Grandfather.” “Then,” he said, “tell them,” (alluding to his friends) “that I die in the faith of that!”—and he closed his eyes and doubtless entered into eternal rest. And I will die in the faith of that Truth of God, by the Grace of God—and so will you, I trust, Brothers and Sisters, die with your finger on that text, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Oh, it is sweet living and it is sweet dying if you can rest there! Now we see, then, that whatever your sins may have been, they are all included in those little words, “all sin”—therefore be of good comfort, poor Sinner—if you believe in Jesus Christ, you are born of God and His blood cleanses you from all sin!  
Another question is, When will it cleanse? It will cleanse now. It will cleanse at this moment! You remember that it is in the present tense, “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses”—that is to say, just at this particular moment, some three or four minutes to eight o’clock—there is efficacy in the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse now. You need not stop till you get home to pray. He who trusts Christ is saved the moment that he trusts! His sin is blotted out the instant that he accepts Christ as his Substitute and justifies God in smiting sin in the Person of the Savior. There is efficacy in the blood now! Perhaps there has strayed in here one who says, “It is too late.” Who told you that? Sir, it was the devil—and he was a liar from the beginning! “Ah,” says another, “but you do not know that I have sinned against the Light of God and knowledge.” My dear Friend, I do not know how much you have sinned, but I do know that it is written, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” And I know that you have not gone beyond the uttermost, so I conclude that He is able to save you—right now, just as you are, standing in yonder crowd, or sitting here in these pews!  
Once more—In what way is Christ able thus to cleanse? I answer—In a perfect and complete way! David says, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” We do not see snow very often, now, but when we did see it last time, what a dazzling whiteness there was upon it! You took a sheet of paper and laid it upon the snow and you were perfectly surprised to see the clean, white paper turned yellow or brown in comparison with the snow’s dazzling whiteness! But David says, “I shall be whiter than snow.” You see, snow is only earthly whiteness, only created whiteness, but the whiteness which Christ gives us when He washes us in His blood, is Divine whiteness! The whiteness is the righteousness of God Himself! Besides, snow soon melts and then where is the whiteness? The snow and the whiteness run away together, but there is no power in temptation, no power in sin which is able to stain the whiteness which God gives to a pardoned sinner! And then snow, especially here in this, our smoky city, soon gets brown or black—but this righteousness never will—  
*“No age can change its glorious hue—  
The robe of Christ is always new!”*  
“And is this perfect whiteness for me?” asks one. Yes, for you, if you believe in Jesus! If you were as black as the devil himself, if you did but believe in Jesus, you should be as white as an angel in a moment because, by believing, you accept God’s way of saving souls—and to do this is the greatest thing that can be done! The Pharisees came to Christ and they said, making a great fuss about their zeal, “Here is our money. Here is our talent. Here is our time—‘what shall we do, that we might work the works of God?’” They opened their ears for His answer and they thought He would say, “Give tithing of mint, anise and cummin. Be careful to wash your hands every time you eat. Give your money to the poor. Endow a row of almshouses. Become monks. Lacerate your backs. Tear your flesh,” and so on. But Jesus said nothing of the kind! They wondered, I have no doubt, what He was going to say and they seemed to be all on tiptoes. “Now He is going to tell us the greatest work that a creature can do.” “What shall we do that we might work the works of God.” He answers them thus—“This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” Ah, then they went away, directly, for no such simple thing, no such humbling thing as this would they do! Perhaps there are some of you who say, “Why don’t you preach morality?” “Talk of morality!” Says Cowper—

*“O You bleeding Lamb,  
The best morality is love of You”—*  
and so, indeed, it is! If I were to tell you that I was commissioned by God to say that if you walked from here to John o’Groat’s House in the cold and wet, bare-footed and ate nothing on the way but dry bread and drank nothing but water, you would inherit eternal life, you would all be on the road tomorrow morning, if not tonight! But when I say just this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved,” what do you do, then? Are you such a fool as to be damned because the way to be saved is too simple? My anger waxes hot against you, that you should play the fool with your own soul and be damned because it is too easy! Think of a man who has a disease that is killing him and he will not take the medicine because it is too simple. He will not apply to the physician because his terms are too cheap. He will not apply such-and-such a remedy because it is too simple! Then when that man dies, who can pity him? Did he not reject the remedy from the worst and emptiest of all motives?  
“Oh!” says one, “but, simple as it is, it seems too hard for me—I cannot believe!” Sinner, what can you not believe? Can you not believe that if Jesus Christ took human sin and was punished for it, God can be just in forgiving it? Why, you can surely believe that! You say that you cannot believe, that is, you cannot trust Christ! Why, poor Soul, I should find it the hardest work in the world if I were to try not to trust Him, for He is such a precious Savior, such a mighty Savior that I can say with John Hyatt that I would not only trust Him with my one soul, but with a million souls if I had them! Yet it may be that you do not understand what believing is. It is not doing anything! It is leaving off doing. It is just believing that Christ did it all—  
*“Nothing, either great or small,  
Nothing, Sinner, no—  
Jesus did it, did it all  
Long, long ago!”*  
Christ is worthy of being trusted. Rely upon Him! God give you the Grace to do so and you are saved! Remember what we said the other night— there is all the difference in the world between the religion that is made up of, “Do, do,” and that other religion that is spelt “D-o-n-e, done.” He who has the religion of, “It is all done,” loves God out of gratitude and serves Him because he is saved. But he who has the religion of “Do” is always a slave, never gets salvation, but perishes in his doings—as they deserve to do who will look to themselves instead of looking to Christ! May the Lord now command His own blessing for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 51.**

May God graciously grant to all of us the Grace which shall enable us to enter into the penitential spirit which is so remarkable in this Psalm!  
Verse 1. Have mercy upon me, O God. David breaks the silence at last and he does so by crying to God for mercy! Before he says anything else, he appeals to this attribute of mercy which is so glorious a trait in the Character of Jehovah. And he casts himself, all guilty as he is, upon the absolute mercy of God. “Have mercy upon me, O God.”  
1. According to Your loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. David talks as if the Lord had said to him, “What is the measure of the mercy that you need?” And he knows of nothing by which he can measure it except the boundless and infinite loving kindness of the Lord. “O God!” he seems to say, “deal out mercy to me according to the measure of Your own boundless Nature. Let Your mercy be the only judge of the mercy that I need.”  
2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. The forgiveness of sin is not enough for the true penitent. He needs the defilement which he has incurred through sin to also be removed. If washing will not suffice, he asks the Lord to try any other method that will accomplish the desired end.  
2. And cleanse me from my sin. “If fire is needed to purify me, use fire, O Lord, only ‘cleanse me from my sin.’”  
3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is always before me. David felt that there was a multitude of transgressions recorded against him in God’s unerring register, yet he especially realized the guilt of that one sin which Master Trapp calls the devil’s nest-egg, to which so many other sins were added. That first sin was a peculiarly foul one, but he added lying, deception and murder to it in order to try to cover it—and thus he made it even greater than it was at first. It was well that he confessed that great sin which was always before him.  
4. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge. “The essence, the virus, the climax of my sin consists in its assault upon You, my God. Therefore, O God, if You condemn me, You will be just! There is nothing that can be said against the severest verdict of Your Infallible Justice. Yet, O God, I still appeal to Your mercy and pray You to forgive me and to put away all my sin!”  
5. Behold. David is full of astonishment and amazement! His one great sin has opened his eyes to see the sinfulness of his whole nature.  
5. I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. “I was ‘shaped in iniquity’ when I was shaped, and conceived in sin when I was conceived.” He sees that the sin is in himself and that it does not happen to him as an accident, but flows from him as naturally as foul water runs from a polluted spring!  
6. Behold. Here are more wonders.  
6. You desire truth in the inward parts. First he wondered when he saw how sinful he was. Now he wonders as he sees the purity which God demands—“You desire truth in the inward parts.”  
6, 7. And in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop. “O Lord, You have ordained means by which leprous sinners may be cleansed. The outward sign is the bunch of hyssop dipped in sacrificial blood. O Lord, give me in very deed what that sign means! Give me the cleansing influence of the blood of the great Sacrifice. ‘Purge me with hyssop.’”  
7. And I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. I cannot help once more remarking, though I have often before made the same observation, that we have here the evidence of wonderful faith on David’s part. He has a very real consciousness of the blackness of his sin, yet he also has a triumphant conviction that God can put that sin away and can make even his defiled nature to become clean and pure— “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”  
8. Make me to hear joy and gladness. How late in the Psalm that prayer comes! He writes seven verses before he dares to pray for joy and gladness. And those seven verses are all either confessions of sin or petitions for deliverance from sin and, my sinful Friend, you must not first seek to get rid of your sorrow, but rather be thankful for your sorrow for sin and pray that you may never lose that sorrow until you lose the sin that causes it. “Make me to hear joy and gladness.”  
8. That the bones which You have broken may rejoice. If God’s children fall into sin, the Lord does not wink at their sin—He chastises them so severely that He sometimes even breaks their bones! But God’s pardoning mercy can set those bones and make each broken and mended bone to become a mouth for holy song—“that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.”  
9. Hide Your face from my sins. “Do not look at them, O Lord! Even take pains to put them out of Your sight.”  
9. And blot out all my iniquities. “Obliterate them as though they had been written upon tablets of wax and You did, with a hot iron, put the whole record of them away—‘blot out all my iniquities.’”  
10. Create in me a clean heart, O God. He feels that he needs his Creator to again perform His great creating work. David knows that he needs a clean heart, but he does not ask the Lord to make his heart clean—he knows better than to present that request. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” so David’s cry to God is, “ ‘Create in me a clean heart’—let it be a new creation—give me a new heart and a clean heart.”  
10. And renew a right spirit within me. There was once a right spirit in man, but through sin, it has lost its beauty, its tenderness, its delicacy, its sensitiveness, its holiness. So each one of us needs to pray, “O God, renew a right spirit within me!”  
11. Cast me not away from Your Presence. “I cannot bear to be away from Your Presence. I must see Your face or I cannot live.”  
11-13. And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You. One of our proverbs says, “A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.” And he who knows by bitter experience what sin is, talks tenderly and sympathetically to his fellow sinners—and God is sure to bless such earnest personal testimony—and so sinners will be constrained to turn unto Him.  
14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, You God of my salvation. He called his sin by its right name. He knew that he had really been the murderer of Uriah, so he confesses his guilt in all its hideousness. “Deliver me from bloods (see marginal reading), O God, You God of my salvation.” It is remarkable that when David confesses his sin in the strongest language that he can use, he at the same time lays hold upon God with the boldest faith that he can exercise. So, the deeper the sense of sin in us is, the stronger can the Grace of God make our faith to be!  
14. And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. Should not David have said, “My tongue shall sing aloud of Your mercy”? That would have been quite right, yet David knew that God had a way of bestowing His mercy in complete consistency with His righteousness—and this being the more amazing part of Divine forgiveness, the most astonishing wonder of all, he selects that and says, “My tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.”  
15. O Lord, open You my lips. In the eighth verse, he had prayed, “Make me to hear,” and now he does as good as say, “Make me to speak.” Sin puts all the organs of the human body out of order and Grace is needed to put them all right again. “O Lord, open You my lips.”

15, 16. And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You desire not sacrifice. The offering of bulls, lambs and rams amid the pomp of priestly ritual. “You desire not sacrifice.”  
16, 17. Else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. This is all sacrifices put into one and the man who brings a bleeding heart to God is accepted when the one who brings a bleeding bull is rejected! But he who brings a bleeding Savior brings the best Sacrifice of all!  
17, 18. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion. David seems to say, “Whatever You do with me, O God, do bless Your people!”  
18. Build You the walls of Jerusalem. “My sin has helped to pull them down and so has done great mischief, but, O Lord, will You not undo the mischief that I have done and build again the walls of Your Zion?”  
19. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bulls upon Your altar. Never do men give so freely to the cause of God as when they are rejoicing over pardoned sin! Keep a deep sense of your indebtedness to God alive in your soul and you will feel that you can never do enough for Him who has forgiven you so much!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THE WORDLESS BOOK  
NO. 3278

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1911.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 11, 1866.

**“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”  
Psalm 51:7.**

I DARESAY you have, most of you, heard of a little book which an old Divine used constantly to study. And when his friends wondered what there was in the book, he told them that he hoped they would all know and understand it, but that there was not a single word in it. When they looked at it, they found that it consisted of only three leaves—the first was black, the second was red and the third was pure white. The old minister used to gaze upon the black leaf to remind himself of his sinful state by nature, upon the red leaf to call to his remembrance the precious blood of Christ, and upon the white leaf to picture to him the perfect righteousness which God has given to Believers through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son.

I want you, dear Friends, to read this book this evening, and I desire to read it myself. May God’s Holy Spirit graciously help us to do so to our profit!

I. First, LET US LOOK AT THE BLACK LEAF. There is something about this in the text, for the person who used this prayer said, “Wash me,” so he was black and needed to be washed. And the blackness was of such a peculiar kind that a miracle was needed to cleanse it away—so that the one who had been black should become white, and so white that he would be “whiter than snow.”

If we consider David’s case when he wrote this Psalm, we shall see that he was very black. He had committed the horrible sin of adultery, which is so shameful a sin that we can only allude to it with bated breath. It is a sin which involves much unhappiness to others besides the ones who commit it. And it is a sin which—although the guilty ones may repent—cannot be undone. It is altogether a most foul and outrageous crime against God and man—and they who have committed it do indeed need to be washed!

But David’s sin was all the greater because of the circumstances in which he was placed. He was like the owner of a great flock, who had no need to take his neighbor’s one ewe lamb when he had so many of his own. The sin in his case was wholly inexcusable, for he well knew what a great evil it was. He was a man who had taken delight in God’s Law, meditating in it day and night. He was, therefore, familiar with the commandment which expressly forbade that sin, so that when he sinned in this way, he sinned as one does who takes a draft of poison, not by mistake, but well knowing what will be the consequences of drinking it! It was willful wickedness on David’s part for which there cannot be the slightest palliation.

No, more! Not only did he know the nature of the sin, but he also knew the sweetness of communion with God and must have had a clear sense of what it must have meant for him to lose it. His fellowship with the Most High had been so close that he was called “the man after God’s own heart.” How sweetly has he sung of his delight in the Lord. You know that in your happiest moments, when you want to praise the Lord with your whole heart, you cannot find any better expression than David has left you in his Psalms. How horrible it is that the man who had been in the third Heaven of fellowship with God could have sinned in this foul fashion!

Besides, David had received many Providential mercies at the Lord’s hands. He was but a shepherd lad, but God took him from feeding his father’s flock and made him king over Israel! The Lord also delivered him out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, enabled him to overthrow and slay giant Goliath and to escape the malice of Saul when he hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains. The Lord preserved him from many perils and at last firmly established him upon the throne—yet, after all these deliverances and mercies, this man, so highly favored by God—fell into this gross sin.

Then, also, it was a further aggravation of David’s sin that it was committed against Uriah. If you read through the list of David’s mighty men, you will find at the end, the name of Uriah the Hittite—he had been with David when he was outlawed by Saul. He had accompanied his leader in his wanderings. He had shared his perils and privations, so it was a shameful return on the part of the king when he stole the wife of his faithful follower who was at that very time fighting against the king’s enemies! Searching through the whole of Scripture, or at least through the Old Testament, I do not know where we have the record of a worse sin committed by one who yet was a true child of God! So David had good reason to pray to the Lord, “Wash me,” for he was indeed black with a special and peculiar blackness.

But now, turning from David, let us consider our own blackness in the sight of God. Is there not, my dear Friend, some peculiar blackness about your case as a sinner before God? I cannot picture it, but I ask you to call it to your remembrance, that your soul may be humbled on account of it. Perhaps you are the child of Christian parents, or you were the subject of early religious impressions, or it may be that you have been in other ways specially favored by God—yet you have sinned against Him, sinned against light and knowledge, sinned against a mother’s tears, a father’s prayers, and a pastor’s admonitions and warnings! You were very ill once and thought you were going be die, but the Lord spared your life and restored you to health and strength—yet you went back to your sin as the dog returns to his vomit, or the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. Possibly a sudden sense of guilt alarmed you, so that you could not enjoy your sins, yet you could not break away from them. You spent your money for that which was not bread, and your labor for that which did not satisfy you, yet you went on wasting your substance with riotous living until you came to beggary—but even that did not wean you from your sin. In the House of God you had many solemn warnings and you went home again and again resolving to repent, yet your resolves soon melted away like the morning cloud and the early dew—leaving you more hardened than ever! I remember John B. Gough, at Exeter Hall, describing himself in his drinking days as seated upon a wild horse which was hurrying him to his destruction until a stronger hand than his own seized the reins, pulled the horse down upon its haunches and rescued the reckless rider. It was a terrible picture, yet it was a faithful representation of the conversion of some of us. How we drove the spurs into that wild horse and urged it to yet greater speed in its mad career until it seemed as if we would even ride over the gracious Being who was determined to save us! That was sin, indeed, not merely against the dictates of an enlightened conscience and against the warnings which were being continually given to us, but it was what the Apostle calls treading underfoot the Son of God, counting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing and doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace!

Let me, Beloved, before I turn away from this black leaf, urge you to study it diligently and to try to comprehend the blackness of your hearts and the depravity of your lives. That false peace which results from light thoughts of sin is the work of Satan—get rid of it at once if he has worked it in you! Do not be afraid to look at your sins! Do not shut your eyes to them for you to hide your face from them may be your ruin—but for God to hide His face from them will be your salvation! Look at your sins and meditate upon them until they even drive you to despair. “What?”says one, “until they drive me to despair?” Yes. I do not mean that despair which arises from unbelief, but that self-despair which is so near akin to confidence in Christ. The more God enables you to see your emptiness, the more eager will you be to avail yourself of Christ’s fullness. I have always found that as my trust in self went up, my trust in Christ went down—and as my trust in self went down—my trust in Christ went up. So I urge you to take an honest view of your own blackness of heart and life, for that will cause you to pray with David, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Weigh yourselves in the scales of the sanctuary, for they never err in the slightest degree. You need not exaggerate a single item of your guilt, for just as you are you will find far too much sin within you if the Holy Spirit will enable you to see yourselves as you really are.

II. But now we must turn to the second leaf, THE BLOOD-RED LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK which brings to our remembrance the precious blood of Christ.

When the sinner cries, “Wash me,” there must me some doubt of cleansing where he can be washed “whiter than snow.” So there is, for there is nothing but the crimson blood of Jesus that can wash out the crimson stain of sin! What is there about Jesus Christ that makes Him able to save all whom come unto God by Him? This is a matter upon which Christians ought to meditate much and often. Try to understand, dear Friends, the greatness of the Atonement. Live much under the shadow of the Cross. Learn to—

*“View the flowing  
Of the Savior’s precious blood,  
By Divine Assurance knowing  
He has made your peace with God.”*

Feel that Christ’s blood was shed for you, even for you! Never be satisfied till you have leaned the mystery of the five wounds. Never be content till you are “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breath, and length, and depth, and height and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.”

The power of Jesus Christ to cleanse from sin must lie, first, in the greatness of His Person. It is not conceivable that the sufferings of a mere man, however holy or great he might have been, could have made atonement for the sins of the whole multitude of the Lord’s chosen people! It was because Jesus Christ was one of the Persons in the Divine Trinity. It was because the Son of Mary was none other than the Son of God. It was because He who lived, and labored, and suffered, and died was the Great Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made, that His blood has such efficacy that it can wash the blackest sinners so clean that they are “whiter than snow!” The death of the best man who ever lived could not make an atonement even for his own sins, much less could it atone for the guilt of others. But when God, Himself, “took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men” and, “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross,” no limit can be set to the value of the Atonement that He made! We hold most firmly the Doctrine of Particular Redemption, that Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it. But we do not hold the doctrine of the limited value of His precious blood! There can be no limit to Deity—there must be infinite value in the Atonement which was offered by Him who is Divine. The only limit of the Atonement is in its design, and that design was that Christ should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him—but in itself the Atonement is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world—and if the entire race of mankind could be brought to believe in Jesus, there is enough efficacy in His precious blood to cleanse everyone born of woman from every sin that all of them have ever committed!

But the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus must also lie in the intense sufferings which He endured in making Atonement for His people. Never was there another case like that of our precious Savior. In His merely physical sufferings there may have been some who have endured as much as He did, for the human body is only capable of a certain amount of pain and agony—and others beside our Lord have reached that limit. But there was an element in His sufferings that was never present in any other case. The fact of His dying in the place of His people—the one great Sacrifice for the whole of His redeemed—makes His death altogether unique, so that not even the noblest of the noble army of martyrs share the Glory with Him. His mental suffering also constituted a very vital part of the Atonement—the sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings. If you can comprehend the bitterness of His betrayal by one who had been His follower and friend, His desertion by all His disciples, His arraignment for sedition and blasphemy before creatures whom He had Himself made—if you can realize what it was for Him, who did no sin, to be made sin for us, and to have laid upon Him the iniquity of us all—if you can picture to yourself how He loathed sin and shrank from it, you can form some slight idea of what His pure Nature must have suffered for our sakes! We do not shrink from sin as Christ did because we are accustomed to it—it was once the element in which we lived, moved and had our being! But His holy Nature shrank from evil as a sensitive plant recoils from the touch. But the worst of His sufferings must have been when His Father’s wrath was poured out upon Him as He bore what His people deserved to bear—but which now they will never have to bear—

*“The waves of swelling grief  
Did over His bosom roll  
And mountains of almighty wrath  
Lay heavy on His soul.”*

For His Father to have to hide His face from Him so that He cried in His agony, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”must have been a veritable Hell to Him! This was the tremendous draft of wrath which our Savior drank for us to its last dregs so that our cup might not have one drop of wrath in it forever! It must have been a great Atonement that was purchased at so great a price!  
We may think of the greatness of Christ’s Atonement in another way.

It must have been a great Atonement which has safely landed such multitudes of sinners in Heaven, which has saved so many great sinners and translated them into such bright souls. It must be a great Atonement which is yet to bring innumerable myriads into the unity of the faith and into the Glory of the Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven. It is so great an Atonement, Sinner, that if you will trust to it, you shall be saved by it however many and great your sins may have been. Are you afraid that the blood of Christ is not powerful enough to cleanse you? Do you fear that His Atonement cannot bear the weight of such a sinner as you are? I heard, the other day, of a foolish woman at Plymouth who, for a long while, would not go over the Saltash Bridge because she did not think it was safe. When, at length, after seeing the enormous traffic that passed safely over the bridge, she was induced to trust herself to it, she trembled greatly all the time and was not easy in her mind until she was off it. Of course, everybody laughed at her for thinking that such a ponderous structure could not bear her little weight. There may be some sinner in this building who is afraid that the great bridge which Eternal Mercy has constructed, at infinite cost, across the gulf which separates us from God, is not strong enough to bear his weight. If so, let me assure him that across that bridge of Christ’s atoning Sacrifice, millions of sinners as vile and foul as he is, have safely passed, and the bridge has not even trembled beneath their weight nor has any single part of it ever been strained or displaced. My poor fearful Friend, your anxiety lest the great bridge of Mercy should not be able to bear your weight reminds me of the fable of the gnat than settled on the bull’s ear and then was concerned lest the powerful beast should be troubled by his enormous weight! It is well that you should have a vivid realization of the weight of your sins, but at the same time you should also realize that Jesus Christ, by virtue of His great Atonement, is not only able to bear the weight of your sins, but He can also carry—indeed, He has already carried upon His shoulders the sins of all who shall believe in Him right to the end of time—and He has borne them away into the land of forgetfulness where they shall not be remembered or recovered forever! So efficacious is the blood of the Everlasting Covenant that even you, black as you are, may pray with David, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

III. This brings me to THE WHITE LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK, which is just as full of instruction as either the black leaf or the red one—“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

What a beautiful sight it was, this morning, when we looked out and saw the ground all covered with snow! The trees were all robed in silver, yet it is almost an insult to the snow to compare it to silver, for silver at its brightest is not worthy to be compared with the marvelous splendor that was to be seen wherever the trees appeared adorned with beautiful festoons above the earth which was robed in its pure white mantle. If we had taken a piece of what we call white paper, and laid it down upon the surface of newly-fallen snow, it would have seemed quite dirty in comparison with the spotless snow. This morning’s scene at once called the text to my mind—“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” You, O black Sinner, if you believe in Jesus, shall not only be washed in His precious blood until you become tolerably clean, but you shall be made white, yes, you shall be “whiter than snow”! When we have gazed upon the pure whiteness of the snow before it has become defiled, it has seemed as though there could be nothing whiter. I know that when I have been among the Alps and have, for hours looked upon the dazzling whiteness of the snow, I have been almost blinded by it. If the snow were to lie long upon the ground and if the whole earth were to be covered with it, we should soon all be blind. The eyes of man have suffered with his soul through sin, and just as our soul would be unable to bear a sight of the unveiled purity of God, our eyes cannot endure to look upon the wondrous purity of the snow. Yet the sinner, black through sin, when brought under the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, becomes “whiter than snow.”

Now, how can a sinner be made “whiter than snow”? Well, first of all, there is a permanence about the whiteness of a blood-washed sinner which there is not about the snow. The snow that fell this morning was, much of it, anything but white this afternoon! Where the thaw had begun to work, it looked yellow even where no foot of man had trod upon it. And as for the snows in the streets of London, you know how soon its whiteness disappears. But there is no fear that the whiteness which God gives to a sinner will ever depart from him—the robe of Christ’s Righteousness which is cast around him is permanently white—

*“This spotless robe the same appears  
When ruined nature sinks in years.  
No age can change its glorious hue,  
The robe of Christ is always new.”*

It is always “whiter than snow.” Some of you have to live in smoky, grimy London, but the smoke and the grime cannot discolor the spotless robe of Christ’s Righteousness! In yourselves, you are stained with sin, but when you stand before God, clothed in the Righteousness of Christ, the stains of sins are all gone. David in himself was black and foul when he prayed the prayer of our text, but clothed in the Righteousness of Christ, he was white and clean. The Believer in Christ is as pure in God’s sight at one time as he is at another. He does not look upon the varying purity of our sanctification as our ground of acceptance with Him—He looks upon the matchless and Immutable Purity of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and He accepts us in Christ—not because of what we are in ourselves! Hence, when we are once “accepted in the Beloved,” we are permanently accepted! And being accepted in Him, we are “whiter than snow.”

Further, the whiteness of snow is, after all, only created whiteness. It is something which God has made, yet it has not the purity which appertains to God, Himself. But the Righteousness which God gives to the Believer is a Divine Righteousness! As Paul says, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.” And remember that this is true of the very sinner who before was so black that he had to cry to God, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” There may be one who came into this building black as night through sin, but if he is enabled now, by Grace, to trust in Jesus, His precious blood shall at once cleanse him so completely that he shall be “whiter than snow!” Justification is not a work of degrees—it does not progress from one stage to another—but it is the work of a moment and it is instantly complete! God’s great gift of Eternal Life is bestowed in a moment and you may not be able to discern the exact moment when it is bestowed. Yet you may know even that, for as soon as you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are born of God, you have passed from death unto life, you are saved, and saved to all eternity! The act of faith is a very simple thing, but it is the most God-glorifying act that a man can perform. Though there is no merit in faith, yet faith is a most ennobling Grace, and Christ puts a high honor upon it when He says, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Christ puts the crown of salvation upon the head of Faith, yet Faith will never wear it herself, but lays it at the feet of Jesus and gives Him all the honor and Glory!

There may be one in this place who is afraid to think that Christ will save him. My dear Friend, do my Master the honor to believe that there are no depths of sin into which you may have gone which are beyond His reach! Believe that there is no sin that is too black to be washed away by the precious blood of Christ, for He has said, “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” And “all manner of sin” must include yours! It is the very greatness of God’s mercy that sometimes staggers a sinner! Let me use a homely simile to illustrate my meaning. Suppose you are sitting at your table, carving the meat for dinner, and suppose your dog is under the table, hoping to get a bone or a piece of gristle for his portion? Now, if you were to set the dish with the whole roast on it down on the floor, your dog would probably be afraid to touch it lest he should get a cut of the whip! He would know that a dog does not deserve such a dinner as that—and that is just your difficulty, poor Sinner! You know that you do not deserve such Grace as God delights to give. But the fact that it is of Grace shuts out the question of merit altogether! “By Grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” God’s gifts are like Himself—immeasurably great!

Perhaps some of you think you would be content with crumbs or bones from God’s table. Well, if He were to give me a few crumbs or a little broken meat, I would be grateful for even that, but it would not satisfy me! But when He says to me, “You are My son, I have adopted you into My family, and you shall go no more out forever,” I do not agree with you that it is too good to be true! It may be too good for you, but it is not too good for God—He gives as only He can give! If I were in great need and obtained access to the Queen, and after laying my case before her, she said to me, “I feel a very deep interest in your case, here is a penny for you,” I would be quite sure that I had not seen the Queen, but that some lady’s maid or servant had been making a fool of me! Oh, no—the Queen gives as Queen, and God gives as God—so that the greatness of His gift, instead of staggering us, should only assure us that it is genuine and that it comes from God! Richard Baxter wisely said, “O Lord, it must be great mercy or no mercy, for little mercy is of no use to me!”

So, Sinner, go to the great God with your great sin, and ask for great Grace that you may be washed in the great fountain filled with the blood of the great Sacrifice—and you shall have the great salvation which Christ has procured! And for it you shall ascribe great praise forever and ever to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 51.**

It is a Psalm and, therefore, it is to be sung. It is dedicated to the Chief Musician and there is music in it, but it needs a trained ear to catch the harmony. The sinner with a broken heart will understand the language and also perceive the sweetness of it—but as for the proud and the selfrighteous, they will say, “It is a melancholy dirge,” and turn away from it in disgust. There are times, to one under a sense of sin, when there is no music in the world like that of the 51st Psalm! But it is music for the chief Musician, for “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” And this is the Psalm of penitence—there is joy in it—and it makes joy even to the Chief Musician, himself!

Verse 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Here is a man of God, a man of God deeply conscious of his sin, crying for mercy, crying with all his heart and soul, and yet with his tear-dimmed eyes looking up to God and spying out the gracious attributes of Deity—loving kindness, and tender mercies, multitudes of them! There is no eye that is quicker to see the mercy of God than an eye that is washed with the tears of repentance! When we dare not look upon Divine Justice—when that burning attribute seems as if it would smite us with blindness—we can turn to that glorious rainbow of Grace round about the Throne of God and rejoice in the loving kindness and the tender mercies of our God!

2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. “If washing will not remove it, burn it out, O Lord, but do cleanse me from it! Not only from the guilt of it and the consequent punishment, but from the sin itself. Make me clean through and through. ‘Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.’”

3. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is always before me. “As if the record of it were painted on my eyeballs, I cannot look anywhere without seeing it! I seem to taste it in my meat and drink. And when I fall asleep, I dream of it, for Your wrath has come upon me, and now my transgression haunts me wherever I go.”

4. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge. This is the sting of sin to a truly penitent man—that he has sinned against God. The carnal mind sees nothing in that. If ever it does repent, it repents of doing wrong to man. It only takes the manward side of the transgression, but God’s child, though grieved at having wronged man, feels that the deluge of his guilt—that which drowns everything else—is that he has sinned against his God! It is the very token and type and mark of an acceptable repentance that it has an eye to sin as committed against God. Now observe that the Psalmist, having thus sinned, and being thus conscience of his guilt, is now made to see that if the evil came out of him, it must have been in him at first—he would not have sinned as he had done had there not been an unclean fountain within him!

5, 6. Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts—Then it is not sufficient for me to be washed outside—being outwardly moral is not enough. “You desire truth in the inward parts”—

6. And in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. In that part which is even hidden from myself, where sin might lurk without my knowing it, there would You spy it out. I pray You, Lord, eject all sin from me, rid me of the most subtle form of iniquity that may be concealed within me.

7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. This is a grand declaration of faith! I know not of such faith as this anywhere else. The faith of Abraham is more amazing, but to my mind, this faith of poor broken-hearted David, when he saw himself to be black with sin and crimson with grime, and yet could say, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,” is grand faith! It seems to me that a poor, trembling, broken-down sinner who casts himself upon the Infinite Mercy of God, brings more Glory to God than all the angels that went not astray are ever able to bring to Him!

8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we cannot sin with impunity! Worldlings may do so as far as this life is concerned, but a child of God will find that, to him, sin and smart, if they do not go together, will follow very closely upon one another’s heels. Yes, and our Father in Heaven chastens His people very sorely, even to the breaking of their bones—and it is only when He applies the promises to our hearts by the gracious operation of His Holy Spirit and makes the chambers of our soul to echo with the voice of His loving kindness, that we “hear joy and gladness again.” It is only then that our broken bones are bound up and we begin to rejoice once more.

9. Hide Your face from my sins. David could not bear that God should  
look upon them. [See Sermon #86, Volume 2—UNIMPEACHABLE JUSTICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

9. And blot out all my iniquities. “Put them right out of sight. Turn Your gaze away from them and then put them out of everybody’s sight.”  
10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. “Make me over again. Let the image of God in man be renewed in me. No, not the image, only, but renew the very Spirit of God within me.”  
11, 12. Cast me not away from Your Presence and take not Your Holy Spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of Your salvation. “Lift me up, and then keep me up. Let me never sin against You again.”  
12, 13. And uphold me with Your free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your way. There are no such teachers of righteousness as those who have smarted under their own personal sin—they can, indeed, tell others what the ways of God are! What are those ways? His ways of chastisement—how He will smite the wandering. His ways of mercy—how he will restore and forgive the penitent!  
13. And sinners shall be converted unto You. He felt sure that they would be converted and if anything can be the means of converting sinners, it is the loving faithful testimony of one who has, himself, tasted that the Lord is gracious. If God has been merciful to you, my Brother or my Sister, do not hold your tongue about it, but tell to others what He has done for you! Let the world know what a gracious God He is!  
14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, You God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. I like that confession and that prayer of David. He does not mince matters, for he had guiltily caused the blood of Uriah to be shed, and here he admits it, with great shame, but with equal honesty and truthfulness. As long as you and I call our sin by pretty names, they will not be forgiven. The Lord knows exactly what your sin is, therefore do not try to use polite terms about it. Tell Him what it is, that He may know that you know what it is. “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, You God of my salvation.” “But surely,” says someone, “there is nobody here who needs to pray that prayer!” Well, there is one in the pulpit, at least, who often feels that he has need to pray it, for what will happen if I preach not the Gospel or if I preach it not with all my heart? It may be that the blood of souls shall be required at my hands! And, my Brothers and Sisters, if anything in your example should lead others into sin, or if the neglect of any opportunities that are presented to you should lead others to continue in their sin till they perish, will not the sin of bloodguiltiness be possible to you? I think you had better, each one, pray David’s prayer, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, You God of my salvation.” “And then, O Lord, if I once get clear of that, ‘my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.’”  
15. O Lord, open You my lips. He is afraid to open them himself lest he should say something amiss. Pardoned sinners are always afraid lest

they should err again. [See Sermons #1130, Volume19—THE CHRISTIAN’S GREAT BUSINESS and #713, Volume 12—SOUL-MURDER—WHO IS GUILTY?—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

15, 16. And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You desire no sacrifice; else would I give it. “Whatever there is in the whole world that You desire, I would gladly give it to You, my God.”

16-18 . You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion. You see that the Psalmist loves the chosen people of God. With all his faults, his heart is right towards the kingdom under his charge. He feels that he has helped to break down Zion, and to do mischief to Jerusalem, so he prays, “Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion.”

18, 19. Build You the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar. Once get your sin forgiven and then God will accept your sacrifices. Then bring what you will with all your heart, for an accepted sinner makes an accepted sacrifice through Jesus Christ!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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BROKEN BONES  
NO. 861

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 21, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.”  
Psalm 51:8.**

BACKSLIDING is a most common evil, far more common than some of us suppose. We may ourselves be guilty of it and yet may delude our hearts with the idea that we are making progress in spiritual life. As the cunning hunter always makes the passage into his pits most easy and attractive, but always renders it most difficult for his victim to escape, so Satan makes the way of apostasy to be very seductive to our nature, but alas, the path of return from backsliding is very hard to tread and were it not for Divine Grace, no human feet would ever be able to make progress in it.

If I should be successful, this morning, in calling attention to decline in the spiritual life, especially in calling the attention of those to the matter whom it most concerns—I mean those who are themselves declining—I shall feel happy, indeed. At the same time, if I should so speak that those who have backslidden may be encouraged to hope for restoration and to seek, with earnestness and eagerness, that they may even now be restored, a second good result will have followed and unto God shall be double praise!

Dear Friends, we make little enough advance in the spiritual life, as it is—it were a thousand follies in one to be going back. When I look at my own standing on the road to Heaven, I am so dissatisfied with that to which I have attained, that to give up an inch of what I have gained would be excess of madness! A rich man may lose a thousand pounds or more and not feel it—but he whose purse is scant cannot afford to lose a shilling. Those who abound much in Divine Grace, might, perhaps, be able to bear some spiritual losses—but you and I cannot afford it! We are too near bankruptcy as it is and so poverty-stricken in many respects that it well behooves us to look to every one of the pennies of Grace—to watch our little drains and expenditures and to neglect no means by which even a little might be gained in the spiritual life.

May God grant to us, now, that while we are listening to His Word we may derive a blessing. There are three things to which I shall call your attention this morning. The first is, the plight in which David was—he speaks of his bones as having been broken. Secondly, the remedy which he sought, “Make me to hear joy and gladness.” And then, thirdly, the expectation which he entertained, namely, that the bones which had once been broken would yet be able to rejoice.

I. In commencing, let us notice THE PLIGHT IN WHICH DAVID WAS. His bones had been broken. We hear persons speak very flippantly of David’s sin—boldly offering it as an accusation against godliness and as an excuse for their own inconsistent conversation. I wish they would look, also, at David’s repentance, for if his sin was shameful, his sorrow for it was of the most bitter kind. And if the crime was glaring, certainly the afflictions which chastised him were equally remarkable.

From that day forward, the man whose ways had been ways of pleasantness and whose paths had been paths of peace, limped like a cripple along a thorny road and traversed a pilgrimage of afflictions almost unparalleled. Children of God cannot sin cheaply! Sinners may sin and in this life they may prosper, yes, and sometimes prosper by their sins. But those whom God loves will always find the way of transgression to be hard. Their follies will cost them their peace of mind. It will cost them their present comfort and even cost them all but their souls, so that they are saved, but so as by fire. David had sinned and for awhile the sin was pleasurable—all the attendant circumstances appeared to be favorable to his escape from punishment.

He had managed to conceal his crime from the injured Uriah and then he had, with horrible craftiness, effected the death of the injured husband. Every circumstance in Providence seemed to favor the concealment of the monarch’s sin. His conscience slept. His passions rioted. But his heart was estranged and his Grace was at its lowest ebb. Perhaps he even persuaded himself that his adultery, which might have been a great sin in others, was excusable in himself because of his position as a despotic sovereign, who, according to Oriental notions, had almost absolute power over the persons of his subjects. It is so easy to persuade ourselves that what custom concedes to us, it is right to take.

But because David was a man after God’s own heart, his ease in sin could not long continue—the Lord would not allow such a disease to destroy His servant. David’s rest was abruptly broken. The stern Prophet, Nathan, delivers to him a parable with a personal application. The sense of right in the king is awakened. Conviction of sin, like a lightning flash, destroys the towers of his joy and lays his peace prostrate in ruins! He trembles before God, whom in his heart he loved, but whom he had, for awhile, forgotten.

The king goes into his chamber mourning and lamenting before the Lord, followed by the chastising rod which drives the word home upon his conscience! The Holy Spirit becomes the spirit of bondage to him and makes him again to fear. By the rough north wind of conviction all his joys are withered and his delights cut off. He becomes one of the most wretched of mortals. His sighs and groans resound through his palace, and where once his harp had poured forth melodies of pleasant praise, nothing is heard but dolorous notes of plaintive penitence! Alas, for you, O conscience-stricken monarch! Your couch is watered with your tears and your bread made bitter with your grief. Well do you compare your sorrow to the pain of broken bones!

Brothers and Sisters, let us open up that poetical metaphor before us. We may gather from this that David’s plight was very painful. “His bones,” he says, “were broken.” A flesh wound is painful—and who would not wish to escape from it? But here was a more serious injury, for the bone was reached and completely crushed. No punishment was probably more cruel than that of breaking poor wretches, alive, upon the wheel when a heavy bar of iron smashed the great bones of the arms and of the legs— the pain must have been excruciating to the last degree! And David declares that the mental anguish which he endured was comparable to such extreme agony.

You are on your way home today and in affecting a passage across one of our most perilous roads, you are startled by a fearful cry, for some poor unwary passenger has been dashed down by a huge and impetuous vehicle! You rush to the rescue, but it is too late—the unhappy victim is pale and death-like—and the word sounds terribly on your compassionate ears when you are informed that his bones are broken. We think comparatively little of wounds which only tear the curtains of flesh—but when the solid pillars of the house of manhood are snapped in two and the supports of the body are broken—then every man confesses that the pain is great, indeed.

David declares that such was his pain of mind. His soul was racked and tortured, anguished and tormented. The pain of a broken bone is as constant as it is excruciating. It prevents sleep by night and ease by day. The mind cannot be diverted from it. Men cannot shake off the remembrance that this, their frame, is so seriously injured. O beware, you Believers who are just now tempted by the sweets of sin and remember the wormwood and gall which will be found in the dregs afterwards! You who feel the soft blandishments of sin to be so pleasing to your flesh and are ready to yield to its gentle fascinations, remember that when it reveals itself, the softness of its touch will all be gone and it will be towards you as a huge hammer, or like the crushing wheels of the chariot of Juggernaut, crushing your spirit with anguish! The velvet paw of the tiger of sin conceals a lacerating claw!

The metaphor also signifies that the result of his sin and of his repentance was exceedingly serious. A trifling thing is superficial. That which is merely on the surface is not a matter which may cause us deep anxiety— but a broken bone is not a thing to laugh at! Such an injury compels a man to change his lightheartedness for apprehension. Had it been but a skin wound, he might have wrapped his handkerchief about it and have gone his way and have said, “It will heal in due time.” But in the case of a broken bone he anxiously sends for the surgeon and knows that he must lie by awhile—he feels the accident is no mere trifle.

Believe me, dear Friends, genuine sorrow for sin is not as some suppose it—mere sentimentalism. Under sorrow for sin I have seen men driven almost out of their senses—until it seemed as if their minds would fail them under their apprehensions of guilt and its heinousness. Yes, some of us have personally felt it, and we bear witness that if all forms of bodily pain could be heaped upon us at once, we had sooner bear them all than the burden of sin! O believe me, as I am sure you will who have felt the same—guilt upon the conscience is worse than the body on the rack. Even the flames of the stake may be cheerfully endured—but the burnings of a conscience tormented of God are beyond all measure unendurable. Many have felt this soul-anguish and have endured this month after month, but have at last found rest, so that there is comfort in this misery, for it ends well and profitably. May you who now feel your bones to be broken, now plead, as David did, “Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.”

The plight into which David fell was more than serious and painful—it was complicated. The setting of one broken bone may puzzle the surgeon, but what is his task when many bones are broken? In one bone a compound fracture will involve great difficulty in bringing the divided pieces together, in the hope that yet new bone may be formed and so the member may be spared. But if it should come to a broken arm, and leg, and rib—if in many places the poor human frame has become injured—how exceedingly careful must the surgeon be! Often the very treatment which may be useful to one member may be injurious to the other—disease in one limb may act upon another. The cure of the whole, where all the bones are broken, must be a miracle! If a mass of misery—a man full of broken bones—shall yet become healthy and strong, great credit must be given to the surgeon’s skill. Brothers and Sisters, you see the case of a man, then, who has sinned against God by backsliding from his ways and who is heavily struck by his conscience and by the Holy Spirit! It is a complicated sorrow which he endures.

The metaphor of broken bones also seems to indicate that the greater powers of the soul are grieved and afflicted. The bones are the more important part of the structure of the body. In our spirits there are certain Graces which are, so to speak, the bones of the spiritual man—to these David refers. Our heavenly Father is pleased, sometimes, when we have sinned, to allow our faith to become weak like a broken bone. We cannot grasp the promises we once delighted in. We cannot voice the encouraging Word as we did in happier days. Our faith brings us pain rather than rest. He suffers our hope to lose its joy-creating power, and like a broken bone, our very hope for a better land where rest remains, becomes a pining disquietude at our present forlorn condition.

Even love, that notable limb of strength which makes the soul to run so nimbly, is full of weakness and anguish and makes us cry, “Do I love my Lord at all, and if so, how could I have offended Him so greatly? When I have backslidden so far, surely for me to talk about love to God would be to take a holy word upon polluted lips!” At that time the great master Graces within our spirit seem, each of them, to minister to our woe. And though they are there—as the broken bone is still in the man’s body—they are so injured and weakened, and all but powerless that their only vitality is the sad vitality of pain!

Our faith in the Scriptures leads us to tremble at their threats. Our hope shocks us because, though we have hope for others, we cannot rejoice for ourselves. And our very love to God, yet alive within us, makes us hate and despise ourselves to think we should have acted thus towards One so good and kind. O Brethren, you who are lingering on the brink of sin and are beginning to slip with your feet, may the thought of these broken bones awaken you from your dangerous lethargy as with a thunderclap! And may you fly at once to the Cross and to the fountain filled from Jesus’ blood and begin your spiritual career anew with more earnestness and watchfulness than you have ever shown before! The case was painful, serious and complicated.

In the fourth place, it was extremely dangerous, for when several bones are broken, every surgeon perceives how very likely it is that the case will end fatally. Around each shattered bone there lingers the danger of gangrene and if that grievous ill should intervene, the healing is in vain. When a heart is broken with repentance, the gangrene of remorse is most urgent to enter it. When the spirit is humbled, the gangrene of unbelief covets the opportunity to take possession of the man. When the heart is really emptied and made to feel its own nothingness, then the demon, Despair, beholds a dark cavern in which to fix his horrible abode. It is a dreadful thing to have faith broken, hope broken and love broken—and the entire man, as it were—reduced to a palpitating mass of pain. It is a dreadfully dangerous condition to be in, for, alas, my Brothers and Sisters, when men have sinned and have been made to suffer afterwards, how often have they turned to their sins again with greater hardness of heart than ever!

With many, the more they are struck the more they revolt. When the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint and they seem to be nothing but “wounds and bruises and putrefying sores” through the afflictions they have suffered—yet they still return to their idols—and the more they are chastened the more they revolt! Think, I pray you, how many professors have backslidden and have been chastened but have continued in their backsliding until they have gone down to Hell! I did not say children of God—I said professors—and how do you know but what you may be a mere professor yourself?

Ah, my Friend, if you are living in known sin at this time and are happy in it, you have great cause to tremble! If you can go on from day to day and from week to week in neglected prayer and neglected reading of the Word. If you can live without the means of Grace in the week days. If you are cold and indifferent towards our Lord and Master. If you are altogether becoming worldly and covetous and vain—fond of levity and the things of this world and yet are at ease—you have grave cause to suspect that you are a bastard in the family and not one of the true children of the living God! I use that hard expression, remembering how the poet puts it—

*“Bastards may escape the rod,  
Plunged in sensual, vain delight.  
But the trueborn child of God,  
Must not, would not, if he might”*

Ah, indeed, he would not if he might! Great God, never let us sin without a smart! Never suffer us to turn to the right or to the left without receiving at once a reproof for it, that we may be driven back into the strait and narrow path and may so walk all our lives with You! The danger is, when the bones get broken, the gangrene of despair, or the mortification of indifference may set in and the man becomes a castaway. How this ought to keep any of you who know the Lord from indulging in the beginnings of declension! How jealous should you be lest you run these frightful risks!

Yet again, David’s case was most damaging. Supposing the danger to be over, yet a broken bone is never a gain, but must always a loss. Poor man! While his bone is broken he is quite unable to help himself, much less to help others! His being unable to help himself makes a draft upon the strength of the Church of God. Power which might otherwise be employed has to be turned into the channel of succoring him, so that there is a clear demand upon the Christian power of the Church which ought to be expended mainly in seeking after lost souls—there is a damage to the whole Church in the declension of one backsliding Believer.

Moreover, while the man is in this state he can do no good to others. Of what service can he be who does not know his own salvation? How can he point others to a Savior when he cannot see the Cross himself? How shall he comfort another man’s faith while his own faith can scarcely touch the hem of your garment? By what energy and power shall he help the weak when he, himself, is the weakest of all? Yes, and let me say even after God, in His mercy, has healed every broken bone, it is a sad detriment to a man to have had his bones broken at all! Somehow or other there is never the freedom of action and degree of energy in the healed arm that there is in the one that was never broken. It is a great blessing for the cripple to be helped to walk with a crutch—but it is a greater blessing never to have been a cripple.

It is an unspeakable blessing to have been able always to run without weariness and walk without fainting. When a man’s bone has been broken in his boyhood, if it is ever so well set, yet, I have heard say, it will feel the changes of the weather and will feel starts and shocks unknown before— unpleasant reminders that it was once broken. So it is with us—if we have fallen into a sin, even though we have recovered from it—there is a weakness left and a tendency to pain. We never are the men, after backsliding, that we were before. And we never make, altogether, a recovery from great spiritual decline, so as to be, all things considered, quite what we were before.

I grant that in some points we may become superior, as, for instance, in knowledge of self and in experience of the spiritual life. We may have made an advance, but still, in holy agility, in sacred vivacity, in consecrated exultation, we are not what we were. I will defy David to dance before the Ark of God with all his might after the sin with Bathsheba had crippled him. Yes, and there is no giant killing. There is no slaying his ten thousands. There is very little of high and mighty exploit in Israel’s cause after the sin, even though succeeded by a gracious recovery. I grant you, David exhibited virtues of another class and excellences of another kind— but even these are not such as to tempt us to risk the experiment for ourselves!

God grant that our bones may not be broken, lest our soul be damaged for life. May we never be like a ship which has been all but wrecked and just escaped the rocks—tugged into harbor with extreme difficulty, her hull all but waterlogged, her cargo spoiled, her masts gone by the board, her streamers gone, her crew and passengers all wet and saved as by the skin of their teeth—a mere hulk dragged into haven by infinite mercy! God grant, instead of that, that we may have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, sails all filled, with a goodly cargo on board to the praise of the glory of His Grace who has made us accepted in the Beloved!

One more reflection on this point and that is, although David’s case was very painful, very serious, very complicated, very dangerous and very damaging, yet it was still hopeful. The saving clause lies here—“The bones which You have broken.” What? Did God break those bones? Then the breaking was not done by accident, but by design! Did God, in chastisement, deal with David’s spirit and bring him into this killing sorrow? Then He who wounds can bind up! Infinite power rests in God, and if He has, in wisdom, been pleased to break, He will, in mercy, be pleased to reset the bones. O you wounded spirits, far be it from Me to wound you yet more! Far rather would I help to bind on the splints and the strapping. Let this, then, be your consolation, like a piece of heavenly plaster may this be to you—“The Lord kills and makes alive. The Lord wounds and He makes whole.”

None but He can do it! If your sorrow is a hatred for sin, depend upon it, the devil did not give you that sorrow and your own nature did not breed it—it is a Heaven-given sorrow! Those bones of yours shall yet be healed! Yes, and they shall yet rejoice! The lesson for this first part of the subject, then, is, let as many as are now possessing any spiritual health and enjoyment be careful that they do not lose it. Let such as have lost their nearness to God be anxious to regain it before worse evils shall come. Let those who are almost in despair take heart, for they cannot be in a worse plight than David was and the God who rescued David can rescue them! Let them not sit down in despair, but, with the Psalmist, let them rise up with humble hope and address themselves, as we do now, in the second place, to the remedy.

II. THE REMEDY WHICH THE PSALMIST RESORTED TO. Observe, negatively, he did not lie down sullenly or in despondency—he turned to his chastening God in prayer! He did not offer sacrifices, nor attempt good works of his own. He turned not to himself in any measure, but to God alone. He did not cast away his confidence in God. He believed, still, that there was power in Heaven to save him and therefore, by humble faith, he lifted up the voice of his cry to the Most High in these words—“Make me to hear joy and gladness.”

Now notice, Brothers and Sisters, in this, first of all, David believed that there was joy and gladness even for such as he was. Notice the verse which comes before this text, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Yes, there is the key to his meaning. He believed that there was pardon and that pardon would restore his joy and gladness to him! He was confident that God could pardon—that He could pardon completely—that He had already provided the means of pardon. David alludes to that in the hyssop—that God could thoroughly pardon even him, “Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Now, beloved Mourner, I pray you believe the same precious fact. There is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared! Great as your sin may be, whether as a sinner or as a fallen Christian, yet still it cannot exceed the boundless extent of Jehovah’s compassion! He is able to forgive the greatest sins through the blood of His dear Son. There cannot be so much enormity in your sin as there is merit in the Savior’s Atonement. What? Though you should have sinned against light and knowledge and so far as you could do so, have crucified the Lord afresh and put Him to an open shame, yet, without injury to His justice or taint upon His holiness, God can stretch out the silver scepter and forgive you, even you! And He can do that at this instant! Believe that! Believe that, now, for it is most certainly true!

In the next place, David knew that this joy and gladness must come to him by hearing. Observe, “Make me to hear joy and gladness.” He did not expect it by doing—he did not look for it merely by praying—he certainly did not expect it by feeling! He expected it by hearing. Oh, those fops and fools, what good is it, in all they do, who attempt to preach the Gospel, as they say (which gospel is no Gospel), through the eyes—by their vestments and pantomimes! Why, the gate of mercy is the ear! Salvation comes to no man through what he sees, but through what he hears! As says the Scripture, “Incline your ear and come unto Me: hear and your soul shall live.”

As it was well observed this week by an eminent Brother in Christ, there are some who despise sermons and imagine that public prayer is everything. But these should remember that nowhere in the New Testament did Jesus commission special men to go forth and celebrate public prayer! Nowhere did He give even a hint of a ritual! Nowhere did He prescribe a liturgy. He did not ordain morning prayer and vespers, or so much as a formal prayer for the day! But He did say to His disciples—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel.” Far are we from undervaluing the assembling of ourselves together for public prayer! But yet it is suggested that so little should be said of that which we call public worship in the New Testament—while the same Book teems with references to the preaching of the Word—and plainly declares that, by the foolishness of preaching God will save them that believe!

Our Lord Himself was, throughout His whole life, a Preacher—and among the greatest signs of His Messiahship He mentioned that the poor had the Gospel preached unto them! The fact is, the sermon reverently heard and earnestly delivered, is the highest act of worship! And the preaching of the Gospel is, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, the greatest instrumentality for the salvation of men! Though all the liturgies that were ever said or sung had remained unwritten. Though all the notes of pealing organs had been silent. Though every morning celebration and evening chant had been unknown. Though every “performing of service” had been foresworn—the world might have been all the better for the loss!

The Gospel faithfully proclaimed is God’s gate of mercy—the preaching of His Word by earnest lips, touched with the consecrating fire—is the power of God unto salvation! The hearing of the Word is the great horror alike of papists and infidels—but it is the greatest of all means of Divine Grace! Let those who are disconsolate and cast down remember the Master’s precept and be diligent in listening to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus. God asks no sacraments of you—“You desire not sacrifice, else would I give it.” David turned away from ceremonies and his truly evangelical prayer was, “Make me to

 hear,” for there is the point of healing.

Notice that the hearing which David intended was an inward and spiritual hearing with his whole soul. One is struck with the expression, “Make me to hear.” What? David, have you no ears? Does he mean, “Lord, send me a Prophet”? No, there was Nathan, there was Gad—Israel was not without her Prophets in those days. He does not ask for a preacher. What, then, did he seek? What? Had the man’s ear become deaf? Spiritually that was the case. He heard the Word of comfort, but he did not hear it aright. He was distracted. His soul was tempest-tossed. His conscience tormented him. The threats of the Law thundered in his ears, so that when the good Word came, “The Lord has put away your sin, you shall not die,” he did not hear it as being his own. He took it with him into his prayer closet and he remembered the words, but he could not feel the inward sense to be true to himself.

Therefore does he ask for the hearing ear. “Lord,” he seems to say, “Cleanse these ears of mine! O give my poor heart the power to grasp these absolving words lest I should be like those who, having ears, hear not. And having eyes, see not, and do not understand.” Believe me, I can make some of you hear well enough with your outward ear—but one of my most earnest prayers is that God would make you all hear within—and especially those who are desponding—and those who refuse to be comforted. I suggest this prayer to mourners, today, to take home with them and I beg God’s people to join in supplication for them. “Make me to hear! Make me to hear that precious Gospel! Make me to hear and to receive Your own true Word! It has comforted so many, Lord, let it comfort me!

“I know Your blood has pardoned others, O help Your poor brokenhearted servant to get pardon as well as they! I do not doubt Your power or Your willingness to save others, but, Lord, there are such obstacles and difficulties about my case! I beseech You, roll away the stone from the sepulcher of my poor dead hopes and make me to live in Your sight. It is really a making, Lord—a creation, a work of Omnipotence—a work in which the attributes of Your power and Your Grace will be resplendent. Make me to hear! You who have made the ear at first can make it new. O make me to hear joy and gladness!”

Do you catch the meaning of the Psalmist? He knows that the comfort must come by hearing, but he knows it must be a spiritual hearing and therefore he asks for it of the Lord.

III. And now, as time fails us, though we might have enlarged here, we shall turn in the last place to THE HOPE WHICH THE PSALMIST ENTERTAINED. What was it? “That the bones which You have broken may rejoice.” Notice—not, “that the bones which You have broken may grow quiet and be calm and at rest”—that was not enough. Not, “that the bones which You have broken may become callous, indifferent, painless.” No, no! That he would have vehemently disapproved—but, “that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.” He dares to ask for great mercy! Yes, the greatest mercy!

When a great sinner comes to a great God, if he pleads at all, he will do well to plead for great things. For since he deserves nothing at all, all that comes to him must come of Grace and, therefore, the same mercy which freely gives the little may as well give the much! Therefore, seeking Sinners, make bold to open your mouths wide, for He will fill them! Let us look at these words more closely—“that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.” He means, then, that if he is enabled by faith to look to Christ, whose blood is sprinkled by the hyssop upon the soul. If he receives perfect pardon through the atoning Sacrifice which makes sinners white as snow, then he will possess a deeper and truer joy than before.

In times past his tongue rejoiced, but now his bones will rejoice! Before, his flesh rejoiced, now his bones and marrow will rejoice! The deep pain which he had felt within the inmost depths of his nature would now be exchanged for an equally deep content, which, like an artesian well, gushes up from the very heart of the earth all clear and fresh! It would rise in continual flood from the heart of his nature, all fresh with holy exultation! He would now know what sin meant as he never knew before! He would know what chastisement for sin was as he could not have dreamed before! He would know what mercy meant as he had not before understood! And therefore his inmost nature shall praise and bless God in a way in which he had never done until that hour!

That deeply experimental, painful, and yet blessed experience of his weakness and of God’s power to save, taught him a heart-music which only broken bones could learn. You know, Brothers and Sisters, there is a great deal of flash about many of our spiritual joys. They are, in the grosser parts, very near akin to carnal excitement—and especially with young beginners the gladness is too apt to trail in the mire of mere mental pleasure. Our gladness is frequently far from being deep as we could wish—but after the bone-breaking everything is solid—after the bonehealing everything is true! What our joy lacks in vividness it makes up in stability and depth. So David means, “the innermost core of my nature. The very essentials of my spiritual being shall sing and rejoice.”

Note again, he means that his joy would be more than ever a matter of his whole soul. “My bones which were broken shall all of them,” in the plural, “rejoice.” He had been a mass of misery—mercy shall make him a mass of music! It is not easy to get the whole man to praise God. You can bless God, sometimes, in His House with your heart and with your voice, too, but your thoughts will wander after the sick child, or after the bad debt. Some faculty or other is unstrung—the 10 strings are not all in tune. But when the bone-breaking process has been suffered. When the man feels himself thoroughly crushed before God—all his thoughts are concentrated, then, upon his misery—and when he obtains relief, then all his thoughts are concentrated upon the mercy. And he blesses God with a unanimity of all his powers never before reached!

The bones which God has broken, without discord, every one of them praise Him! That rejoicing expected was peculiar to the brokenness which would be apparent in it. Every broken bone would then become a mouth with which to bless God! But there would always be a humility, gentleness, softness and tenderness in such praise. I must confess I like to listen to the high sounding cymbals and I can shout as loudly as any, “Praise the Lord with the harp. Blow upon the trumpet in the new moon.” I can cry with ardor, “O for a shout, a sacred shout, to God, the Sovereign King.” But the dulcimer’s soft notes often have the most music in them to my weary ears. Trumpet notes of triumph may be too much like the noise of those who go forth to the battles of earth or make merry in the feast.

But the soft music of broken bones is peculiarly sacred and reminds one of the Master’s sacred joy—the soft and solemn music of His soul when He said, “My praise shall be of You in the great congregation. I will pay My vows before them that fear Him,” when He blessed God on the Cross, that a seed should serve Him—that it should be unto the Lord for a generation, His joy was true and deep. “Still waters run deep.” The brokenness of heart has not in it the roaring as when the sea roars and the fullness thereof, but it has the gentle flow of that silver river, “the streams which make glad the city of God.”

Once again, the joy which the Psalmist expected would have much of God in it, for you observe that the Lord appears in this verse twice—“He breaks the bones and He makes the ear to hear joy and gladness.” God is appealed to as the Breaker and the Healer. After having been sorely struck and having at last found comfort, we always think more of our Lord Jesus than we did before. If I have grown in anything since I have known the Lord, I think it is in this one thing—in having more frequent and realizing thoughts of God the Father, Son and Spirit personally considered. There was a day when I thought doctrine the first thing and allimportant. And there was a time when I conceived inward experience to be most exceedingly worthy of my regard.

I think the same now, but over and above all that my soul possesses a deep sense of God and a longing to be in daily personal fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Surely this being filled with God is a more excellent way, for doctrine may be but food untasted and experience may turn out to be but fancy. To live upon God by faith and to serve Christ with the heart—and to feel the Holy Spirit’s indwelling—this is reality and truth! When a man has had such dealings with God as David had and received such mercy from Him, then his joy will be fuller of God than it ever was before.

You will notice in the verse, too, that David sets no end whatever to his joy. “The bones which You have broken may rejoice,” but how long? Ok, as long as ever they please! Once let the bone be set, the ground of joy is constant and continuous! A pardoned sinner never needs to pause in his sacred gratitude! Let the Lord visit the most broken-hearted among His people and light their candle and the devil cannot blow it out. And Death itself, that last of foes, shall not quench the sacred flame! O see, my Brethren, how blessed a remedy Christ has provided for all the evils of your backsliding! See how to get at it, by an earnest prayer to God through Christ! Go to your chambers and breathe out a prayer, you daughters of sorrow, and you sons of woe, for—

*“The Mercy Seat is open still—  
There let your souls retreat.”*

God waits to be gracious! He comes today in the Gospel to meet His poor prodigal and to receive him with arms of love! Christ, this morning, by our ministry, is sweeping the house to search for His lost piece of money! The Good Shepherd is seeking His wandering sheep! O be joyful and thankful that you are in the land of mercy, in the place where the heart of God yearns over His dear wandering ones! Come to Jesus now! O come, now, by faith and let your prayer be the words of the text, “Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.”

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A GOOD MAN IN AN EVIL CASE  
NO. 2830

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 10, 1903.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 19, 1886.

**“Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you: He shall never allow the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22.**

Those of you who were here last Thursday evening will recollect that the sermon was concerning those sons of Gershon who were burdenbearers in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness. [Sermon #2829,

Volume 49—LOWLY SERVICE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at

http://www.spurgeons.org.] They were not appointed to preach. They were not ordained to fight—their service consisted in bearing burdens. There were some here, on that occasion, whom I had never known before who had been, by the space of 30 years, great sufferers. They were carried into this place last Thursday evening—I did not know of their presence until afterwards, when they told me that the sermon seemed to have been made for them and that it had given them great comfort.

I thought I would follow up that sermon about burden-bearers by a discourse upon another text which shows us that there are some burdens which we need not carry. Burdens of service, or burdens of which come through our consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ—these we will never lay down so long as we live. It shall be our joy to daily take up our cross and follow Jesus, but there are certain burdens of care and sorrow, of which the text speaks—especially the burdens which come from the slander, reproach and oppression of ungodly men—which we need not carry. David says, “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

Beloved Friends, the very best men in the world may be slandered! And if you should hear them evilly spoken of, be you not among those who straightway condemn them. There are some who say, “Where there is smoke, there is sure to be fire.” And although it is well known that “common fame is a common liar,” yet there are some who are so fond of hearing or telling lies that they are sure to believe such a lie as this, especially if it is spoken concerning a servant of God. Be you not, therefore, ready to believe all the reports that you hear against any Christian people. The best of men, as I have already reminded you, have been worst spoken of and there are some who turn upon them directly, like lions scenting their prey.

I may be just now addressing some who are the victims of the malice of ungodly men or women. I am sorry, dear Friends, that this should be your lot, for it is among the most bitter of human afflictions. But at the same time I would remind you that nothing unusual has happened to you. You remember the three brave men who were cast alive into Nebuchadnezzar’s burning fiery furnace when it was heated seven times more than it was known to be heated? You are scarcely enduring such a fiery trial as that and, certainly, you are not suffering as did your Master, the Lord of all pilgrims who have made their way to Heaven! But if, in any degree, it should happen that you are bearing a burden of this kind, the text will have a special message for you.

In speaking upon this passage, I want to keep it in context with the whole Psalm. I do not think it is dealing properly with the Bible to pick out one verse here, and another there, without looking to see what the context of the passage is. If men’s books were treated as God’s Book is often treated, we should make many a grand and noble literary work to appear to be an insane production! It is true that God’s Book can endure even such treatment as that. It is such a wonderful Book that even a sentence torn out of it will convey a most precious Truth of God, but it is not fair to the Book, and it is not fair to yourself, to treat the Bible so. A text of Scripture should always be viewed in the setting in which God has placed it, for there is often as much that is admirable in the gold which forms the setting of the jewel as there is in the jewel itself.

I. So, looking at our text in that light, I shall begin by saying that WHEN WE ARE MUCH TRIED AND BURDENED, THERE IS SOMETHING THAT WE ARE TEMPTED TO DO. The text does not mention it, but the Psalm does. And the text is an antidote to the malady which the Psalm describes or implies. “Cast your burden upon the Lord,” is an injunction concerning that which we are to put in the place of something else which more naturally suggests itself to our poor foolish minds.

And, first, when we are in very severe trouble, we are tempted to complain. The Psalmist says, in the second verse, “I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise.” I am not sure that our version is quite fair to David in this instance, but it suits my present purpose admirably. As the children of God, we ought to avoid even the semblance of a complaint against our Heavenly Father. But when our faith is sorely tried, when some sharp reproach is stinging our spirit, we are all too apt to begin thinking and saying that God is dealing harshly with us. You know Job, that most patient of men, became very impatient when his so-called “friends” poured vinegar instead of oil into his wounds. Smarting under their cruel treatment, he said some things which he had far better have left unsaid. O Brothers and Sisters, pray that whenever the Lord lays His rod heavily upon you, your tears may have no rebellion in them! Whatever His providential dealings with you may be, may you be enabled to say, with the Patriarch, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” May you even join Job in his triumphant declaration, “Through He slays me, yet will I trust in Him.” It is grand faith that enables a Believer to say, “Though I should die at God’s altar, I will die like the lamb that is brought to the slaughter, or be like the sheep that is dumb before her shearers and makes no complaint.”

The next natural temptation is that of giving up altogether and lying down in despair. You get that in the fourth and fifth verses—“My heart is sorely pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me.” Have not some of you been sometimes tempted to say, “There, I can do more. I must give up—that last cruel blow has utterly broken me in pieces and I feel that I can only lay down and die in the bitterness of my spirit”? Brothers and Sisters, this is a temptation against which you must strive most earnestly! As no living man should complain, so no living man should despair—and especially no child of God! Up with you, poor Heart! You have not yet come to the end of God’s delivering mercy, even though you have come to the end of your poor puny strength. The Lord shall light your candle, now that your night is so dark. You shall yet sing for very joy of heart, though now you can only, like David, mourn in your mourning. He will bring you again from Bashan, and from the depths of the sea if you have sunk as low as that. Therefore, talk not of dying before your time. Yet, if you do so, you will not be the first who has talked like that, for there was one who never died, who said, “O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.” That was Elijah, the Prophet of Fire! Yet, just then he seemed as if he were only cold ashes rather than a vehement flame—another proof that the best of men are but men at the best!

The next very common temptation is to want to flee from our present trials. You get that in verses six to eight—“I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.” Possibly you are the pastor of a church and things do not prosper as you could wish. I wonder where they do? But, in your case, you think there is such little prosperity that you must give up your position and run away. Young gunners, before they have become accustomed to the smell of gunpowder and the noise of cannons, have often been known to desert their guns. And even old soldiers have sometimes felt what the “trembles” are! But, my Brother, if this is your case, I beseech you not to run away. If you did flee, where would you go? You think you will run away, as Jonah did, do you? I guarantee you that Jonah was very sorry that he had run away when he found himself in the whale’s belly at the very bottom of the mountains in the depths of the sea! And you and I will be sure to get into greater trouble in we run away from the path of duty.

Fight it out, Man! Stand your ground in the name of God and in the strength of God! It may be that there are better days just now coming and that Satan is seeking to drive you away just as you are on the brink of success! Dr. Watts has a good paraphrase of this Psalm and also writes wisely concerning the temptation to flee the post of duty. He says—

*“Oh, were I like a feathered dove,  
And innocence had wings!  
I’d fly, and make a long remove  
From all these restless things.  
Let me to some wild desert go,  
And find a peaceful home;  
Where storms of malice never blow,  
Temptations never come.  
Vain hopes and vain inventions all,  
To escape the rage of Hell!  
The mighty God, on whom I call,  
Can save me here as well.  
God shall preserve my soul from fear,  
Or shield me when afraid;  
Ten thousand angels must appear,  
If HE commands their aid.”*

Possibly the special case in point is not that of a minister. It is some Mary, weeping at home because her brother Lazarus is dead. Martha is not a very congenial sister to her, so she does not even go with her when she goes to meet the Lord. Yet, strangely enough, each of the sisters says the same words to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died.” In due time the Master sends for Mary and soon she has the joy of welcoming Lazarus back from the grave. Some of us get strange ideas into our head at times—we resolve that we will go, we know not where, and do, we know not what! Ah, my dear Friends, he whose great trouble lies in his own heart cannot run away from it, for he bears it about with him wherever he goes! The old man of the mountain who sits upon your shoulder and clings so tightly to you, if he is yourself, is not to be shaken off by your running away! Far wiser will it be for you to do as the text says, “Cast your burden upon the Lord.” Then you will need no wings like a dove, nor will you wish to fly away to the wilderness, but you will be willing to stay in the very midst of the battle and even there you will be in perfect peace—

*“Calm ‘mid the bewildering cry,  
Confident of victory.”*

I have often enjoyed the greatest solitude amid the crowds in Cheapside and I believe that there is many a Christian who has experienced the deepest peace in the midst of the wildest turmoil. Some of us know what Madame Guyon meant when she wrote—

“ *While place we seek or place we shun,  
The soul finds happiness in none!  
But with a God to guide our way,  
‘Tis equal joy to go or stay.”*

Trust in Him! Cast your burden on Him, for so you will escape from this temptation of wanting to flee away from the place where He would have you be!

There is one other temptation that this Psalm suggests to me, and that is the temptation to wish ill to those who are causing us ill. Perhaps mistaking the meaning of the passage, we are apt to pray the prayer in the ninth verse, “‘Destroy, O Lord!’ Our foes have slandered us, they have spoken evil of us and we wish that they were dead, or that some great judgment might overtake them.” It will never do, dear Friends, to indulge such a feeling as that! We shall be injured if we desire that others should be injured. Slander has, indeed, stung you when you harbor the wish to sting another! Someone said, in my hearing, attempting to justify revenge or retaliation, “But if you tread on a worm, it will turn,” and I answered, “Is a poor worm that only turns because of its agony through man’s cruelty, the pattern for a Christian man to follow? Will you look down to the dust of the earth to find the example that you are to imitate?” Wicked men trod upon Christ—who even compared Himself to a worm—yet He did not turn upon them, except to cry, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Let that be the only kind of turning that you ever practice towards your enemies! Do not be driven, by their evil speaking or their cruel deeds, into harshness of speech or even harshness of thought! I have known some persons, under sore trouble, who have at last become quite soured and bitter of spirit—that is all wrong and very sad—and no good can ever come of such a state of heart as that. The bruising of the sycamore fig results in its growing sweeter—let your bruising produce a similar effect upon you. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus in His wondrous Sermon on the Mount, “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.” If you do not act thus— which is the right thing for you to do—you will almost certainly do the wrong thing in some shape or other. Therefore, God help you to do what is right! Child, is your father rough on you? Then, love him until he becomes tender and gentle. Wife, is your husband unkind to you? Then, win him back by your sweet smiles. Servant, is your mistress harsh to you? Even good women have sometimes dealt as harshly with their servants as Sarah dealt with Hagar. Well, if that is your case, be not like Hagar who despised her mistress. Submit to her, for so shall you yet win her, as many a Christian slave of old, far worse treated than you have been, won his master or his mistress to Christ in those earliest and happiest days of Christianity. What is there for a Christian to do but love his enemies? This is the most powerful weapon that we have in our armory! We shall be wise as serpents if God teaches us wisdom. And we shall also be harmless as doves if the Holy Spirit, like a dove, rests upon us and makes us, also, to abound in gentleness. By this sign we shall conquer, for it is love that always wins the day!

Thus I have shown you what we are tempted to do when we are like this good man who was in such an evil case.  
II. Now I am going to show you, from the text, as the Holy Spirit shall help me, WHAT WE ARE COMMANDED TO DO. That is, “Cast your burden upon the Lord.” You have a burden upon your back. It is too heavy for you to bear? Cast it upon the Lord!  
“How shall I do that?” someone asks. Well, if you are a child of God, I invite you, first of all, to trace your burden back to God. “But it comes from the treachery of Ahithophel, or from the rebellion of Absalom!” I grant you that it does, but those are only the second causes, or the agents—trace the matter back to the Great First Cause. If you do that, you will come, by a mystery which I will not attempt to explain, to the hand of Divine Providence and you will say of every burden, “This, also, comes from the Lord.” You have probably seen a dog, when he has been struck with a stick, turn round and bite the staff that struck him. If he were a wise dog, he would bite the man who held the stick that dealt the blow. When God uses His rod upon one of His children, even a godly man will sometimes snap at the rod. “But, Sir, surely you would not have me turn upon my God?” Oh, no! I know you will not do that, for you are His child. And when you see that God is holding the rod in His hand, you will cease to be rebellious and you will say, with the Psalmist, “‘I was dumb with silence.’ I was going to speak, but I opened not my mouth because I saw that it was in Your hand that the rod of chastisement was held.” It is always well to trace our trials directly to God and say, “It may be Judas Iscariot who has betrayed me, but, still, it was planned in God’s eternal purpose that I should be betrayed, so I will forget the second cause, except to pray God to forgive the malice of the betrayer—and, by His Grace, I will look to the Lord who permitted the trial to come upon me for His own Glory and for my good.”  
The next thing you have to do is this. Seeing that the burden is from God, patiently wait His time for its removal. There are some people, who, if they had a task set to them by some great one whom they respected and revered, would cheerfully perform it. If, in the middle of the night, you were called up by a Queen’s messenger and bid to do something for Her Majesty, you would be glad to rise and dress, even though it might be a cold night and you might have far to go to fulfill your commission. And if you feel that your burden is from the Lord—if the King’s arms are stamped upon the affliction or trial that comes to you—straightway you will say, “As the Lord wills it, I will bear it without complaining. When it is His time to deliver me, I shall be delivered. And as long as it is His time for me to suffer, I will, by His Grace, suffer patiently.”  
I wish that all Christians could be like that good old woman who was asked whether, as she was so very ill, she would prefer to live or to die. She said that she had no preference whatever, she only wished that the will of the Lord might be done. “But, still, if the Lord said to you, ‘which will you have?’ which would you choose?” She said, “I would not even then choose, but I would ask the Lord to choose for me.” You see, whenever anything comes to us from God, we have not the responsibility of it—but if it came through our own choice, then we might say to ourselves, “What fools we were to choose this particular trial!” You say that you do not like the cross God has sent you. Well but, at any rate, it is not by your own choice that you have to carry that particular cross. It is God who chose it for you, whereas if you had selected it, you might well say, “Oh, dear me, what a mistake I made when I chose this burden!” Now you cannot say that and I pray that you may have Divine Grace to see that “the whole disposing” of your lot is, as Solomon says, “Of the Lord.”  
The Hebrew of our text would bear such a rendering as this, “Cast on the Lord what the Lord gives you. Cast on Him what He casts on you. See the marks of His hands on your burden and you will be reconciled to your load. Know that God sends it to you and patiently wait till He takes it away.” F. W. Faber very sweetly writes—  
*“I have no cares, O blessed Lord,  
For all my cares are Yours.  
I live in triumph, too, for You  
Have made Your triumphs mine.  
And when it seems no chance nor change From grief can set me free—  
Hope find its strength in helplessness,  
And patiently waits on Thee.  
Lead on, lead on, triumphantly,  
O blessed Lord, lead on!  
Faith’s pilgrim-sons behind You seek  
The road that You have gone.”*  
One blessed way of casting our burden upon the Lord is to tell the Lord all about it. It is a high privilege to get away, alone, and talk to God as a man talks with his friend. But I know what you often do, my Brothers and Sisters, when you get into a predicament and cannot tell what to do—then you begin to pray. Why do you not, every morning, tell the Lord about all your difficulties before they come? What? Will you only run to Him when you get into trouble? No, go to Him before you get into trouble. Half our burdens come from what we have not prayed over! If a man would take the ordinary concerns of life distinctly to God, one by one, it is marvelous how easily the chariot of life would roll along! Things over which we have not prayed are like undigested food that breeds mischief in the body—they breed mischief in the soul. Digest your daily bread by first praying, “God give it to me and then God bless me in the use of it. And then God bless me afterwards in the spending of the strength derived from it to Your praise and Glory.” Salt all your life with prayer, lest corruption should come to that part of your life which you have not thus salted. Tell the Lord, then, your griefs, just as, when a child, you told your troubles to your mother!  
“I cannot find words,” says one. Oh, they will come! They come fast enough when you complain to man and they will sweetly come if you get into the blessed habit of talking to God about everything. A friend said to me, not long ago, “I was on the Exchange and I saw that I had made a mistake in a certain transaction. I had lost money by it and if I had gone on dealing in the same fashion, I would have been ruined. I just stepped aside for a minute or two into a quiet corner of my office. I stood still and breathed a prayer to God for guidance. Then I went back, and felt, ‘Now I am ready for anyone of you.’” “So I was,” he said, “I was not confused and worried, as I would otherwise have been, and so liable to make mistakes, but I had waited upon God and I was therefore calm and collected.” There is much wisdom in thus praying about everything, although, possibly, some of you may think it trivial. I believe that the very soul of Christianity lies in the sanctifying of what is called secular—the bringing of all things under the cognizance of our God by intense, constant, importunate, believing prayer.

When you have told the Lord everything, the next thing for you to do, in order to cast your burden upon Him, is to believe that all will work together for your good. Swallow the bitter as readily as you do the sweet and believe that, somehow, the strange mixture will do you great good. Do not look out your window, judging this, and that, and the other, in detail, but, if God sent it to you, open the door and take it all in, for all that has come from Him will be to His Glory and to your profit. Believe that if you shall lose certain things, you will really be a gainer by your losses. Even if your dearest one is taken from you, all shall be well if you have but faith to trust God in it all. If you are stricken with mortal sickness, it will still be well with you and if you do steadfastly trust in the Lord, you shall know that it is so. “We know,” says the Apostle Paul—he does not say, “We think, we suppose, we judge,” but—“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” If you know this, my Brother, or my Sister, it shall help you to “cast your burden upon the Lord.”  
When you have done this, then leave your burden with the Lord. In the process of trusting God with your burden, get to the point that you have done with it. If I cast my burden upon the Lord, what business have I to carry it myself? How can I truthfully say that I have cast it upon Him if I am still burdened with it? Throughout my life, which has not been free from many grave cares, there have been many things which I have been able to see my own way through and, using my best judgment, they have passed off well. But in so large a church as this, there sometimes occur things that altogether stagger me. I do not know what to do in such a case as that and I have been in the habit, after doing all I can, of putting such things up on the shelf and saying, “There, I will never take them down again, come what may. I have done with them, for I have left them wholly with God.” And I wish to bear my testimony that somehow or other the thing which I could not unravel, has unraveled itself! When Peter and the angel “came unto the iron gate,” it “opened to them of its own accord.” And the same thing has happened to me many a time. “Who shall roll away the stone for us from the door of the sepulcher?” asked the holy women when they came to the tomb of their Lord? “And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away.” Learn to say, “My God has made this difficulty and there is some good result to come of it. I have done the little I can do, so now I will leave it all with Him.”  
Ah, but I know what some of you do—you say that you have left it all with God and then you lie awake all night fretting about it! Is that casting your burden upon the Lord? Oh, for a blessed literalism about the promises of God and our faith in them, so that we take them to mean just what they say and act upon them accordingly! Now, if some poor woman here were sadly in debt for her rent and she met with a Christian Brother who said to her, “Do not fret, my good Sister, I will see it all paid tomorrow,” do you think she would go running about, and saying, “O dear, I shall lose my things, my rent will not be paid”? No, she would say, “Mr. So-and-So, whom I know and trust, said that he would pay it for me, and I feel perfectly at peace about it.” Now, do you so with your God if you know Him! David said, “They that know Your name will put their trust in You.” If you truly love the Lord, it will be a proof of your love to repose your care upon Him without questioning. And when you have cast your burden upon Him, it will prove the truth of your having done so if you are unburdened and your heart is at rest. If He bears my burden, why should I also bear it? If He cares for me, what have I to do to vex myself with fretful, anxious cares?  
I have thus done my best to show you what we are commanded to do—“Cast your burden upon the Lord.”  
III. And now thirdly, and very briefly, WHAT WE SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO DO.  
If I read the text aright, we here have David talking to himself. And what we are to endeavor to do is to talk to ourselves, just as David talked to himself. He says of his enemy, “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart” and so on. And then he seems to say, “Come, David, do not fret yourself like this, but cast your burden upon the Lord.” Have you not noticed how often David seems as if he were two Davids—and one David talks to the other David? It was so when he said to himself, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul; and why are you disquieted within me?” And I want you, dear Friend, to chide yourself and say, “Come, fretful Heart, what are you doing? Cast your burden upon the Lord. What are you doing? Has God forsaken you? Has God refused to help you? Be gone, Unbelief! Come, Faith, and dwell in my soul and reign over my spirit, swaying your gracious scepter of peace.”  
And when you have thus been chiding yourself, argue with yourself about the matter. Say to yourself, “See how the text puts it—‘Cast your burden upon the Lord.’ Well, if it is your burden and God meant it for you, then do not quarrel with it. And as it is your burden, so is God your God, the covenant-keeping God, your Father and your Friend. Come, my Soul, cast your burden upon your God! Where else should you put your burden when He bids you cast it upon Him? You cannot sustain yourself under such a load, but God will sustain you and your burden, too.” Think of the righteousness of God and say, “It is impossible that the righteous God should leave the righteous to perish. If they are slandered, that is a further reason why God should take up their cause. He is their Advocate and their Defender. Come, my Heart, it shall never be truly said of the Judge of all the earth that He leaves His people to perish, especially when their good name is assailed because of their fidelity to Him!”  
I want you, dear Friends, to talk thus with yourselves, especially those of you who are rather apt to give way to despondency. There are some such here, I know. You come to me, sometimes, with your griefs, and I do the best I can to cheer you. But I have often said to myself, “That dear Sister had a father who was a member with us. He used to come to me in just the same way as she does. This despondency seems to run in their2 blood.” Some of you must have been born in December and you never seem to get out of that month—it is always winter with you. But now I want you just to take the language of the text and say to yourself, “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” And, possibly, God will bless your own sermon to yourself more than He would bless my sermon to you! At any rate, try it.  
IV. Lastly—and here I need the time for a whole sermon, let us think of WHAT WE MAY EXPECT IF WE FULFILL THE COMMAND OF THE TEXT—“Cast your burden upon the Lord.”  
There are two grand things in the text—sustenance and sufferance. The old Puritans would have made a book about those two words and we might preach a dozen sermons upon them and still not exhaust their meaning! What does the Lord do with His people when they cast their burdens upon Him? He gives them sustenance. “He shall sustain you.” The word, “sustain,” is the same that is used when God told Elijah to go to Zarephath, saying, “Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain you,” that is, “to feed you,” “to nourish you.” Perhaps that would have been a better rendering of the original. “Cast your burden upon the Lord,” and what will He do? Deliver you out of your trouble? No, but He will feed you till you can carry it, and that will be an even better thing than relieving you of the burden.  
Here is a dear child that has but a little load to carry, yet he staggers under it. It would be a kind thing for his father to pick up the child and his load, too, and carry both him and his burden. But the wise father says, “I will so provide for that child that he shall grow in strength and, at last, shall be able to carry his load.” “Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you.” That is, “He shall feed you. He shall nourish you.” I believe that when Paul was attacked by that viper that came out of the sticks, it was a very ugly thing, indeed, but Paul just shook it off into the fire. Why do you think that snake came? Why, it came to feed them all! “No,” you say, “that serpent did not do that!” It did, for the islanders said that this man was a god and straightway they began to gather around him and his companions and to provide for their needs with all the greater alacrity because of the reverence that they felt for the Apostle! So you shall often find that what looks like a horrible thing will be the best way in which God could bless you.  
“Cast your burden upon the Lord.” “It will crush me.” No, it will not— you shall grow under it and then grow out of it! And you shall prove the truth of those precious lines—  
*“From all their afflictions My Glory shall spring, And the deeper their sorrows, the louder they’ll sing.”*Only by faith leave your trouble with your God and He will nurture you. Even out of the very rock of trouble will He feed you and give you oil out of the flinty rock of your afflictions.  
Then, the other point is sufferance. I am obliged to hurry over these Truths of God and leave you to meditate upon them afterwards. “He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Learn, from this declaration, that nothing will happen to you but what God permits. There are some things which are very grievous, which God does allow to happen to His people. But there are other things which He will not allow. He will never allow them to be moved. “No,” He says, “My child who has walked uprightly before Me, My righteous one, the man who spoke the Truth, the man who did the right thing, I will not suffer that man to be moved. He may be moved as the boughs of a tree sway to and fro in the breeze, but not as the roots of a tree are torn up by a storm. He may be moved a little, like a ship riding at anchor, which just swings with the tide, but he shall not be driven out to sea, or drift onto the rocks to his destruction.”

“He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Do you catch the Psalmist’s idea? It is as if God interposed and said, “No, I will not permit that.” A father may see his child somewhat put upon, yet at first he may not interfere. But, at last, a cruel blow is struck and he says, “No, I will not stand that! While I have an arm to defend my child, he shall not be treated in that fashion.” Well, then, leave everything with your Heavenly Father, for He will not allow you to be moved! If you are really righteous, trusting in the Righteous One, justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and are doing what is right in His sight, He will not allow you to be moved. The next time you are sorely vexed by the tongue of slander, go and tell your Father, just as the little boys tell their big brothers. Go and tell your Father all about it and do not fret over it. If somebody has done you a great wrong, you may say to him, “I shall be obliged to refer you to my solicitor.” But after you have done that, I hope you do not go writing letters to him on your own. Refer everything to God and leave all with Him, for, so, a blessed peace will bedew your spirit, making your life on earth like the beginning of life in Heaven!  
In closing my discourse, I must say that I do feel, in my inmost soul, the deepest pity for those of you who have no God to go to when you are in trouble. You have a burden to bear, but you cannot cast it on the Lord. He will allow you to be moved, for you do not cry unto Him to help you. I feel that I would rather be a dog than be a man without a God. I think I could make myself happy if I were only a mouse in its hole, but if I were a prince in a palace, without God, I should be utterly miserable! O poor Hearts, if you really want Him, He is to be had! If you are longing for Him, His door is open to receive you. If you will come to Him, He will come and meet you much more than half way! Yes, all the way will He come to everyone who wills to come to Him. As soon as you say, “I will arise,” He has already arisen and is on His way to meet you! Practically, there is no distance for you to go, for He is there, waiting to welcome you. Believe in His dear Son and live! First cast your great burden of sin upon the Lord and then cast upon Him all other burdens that He is willing to take from you and, soon, He will put a new song into your mouth and establish your going. The Lord grant it, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen!

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FAITH HAND IN HAND WITH FEAR  
NO. 3253

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1911.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.”  
Psalm 56:3.

IT must be a very difficult thing to be the first traveler through as unknown country, but it is a much more simple matter to travel where others have preceded us. However difficult may be the road, we discover our path by certain marks which they have left for us, and as we turn to the record of their journey, we say, “Yes, they said that here they came to a forest, and here is the forest. Here they spoke of a broad river and here they forded it. Here is exactly the spot which is marked—we are on the right road, for we are following in the tracks of those who have gone before.” Now God in His Providence has placed us in “the ends of the world” as to time—a long caravan of pilgrims has preceded us, and they have left us marks on the way and records of their journey.

A notable one among the pilgrims to the skies was David, for his pilgrimage was so singularly varied. Some travel to Heaven amid sunshine almost all the way there. And some, on the other hand, seem to have storms from beginning to end. But David’s case differed from these, for he had both the storms and the sunshine! No man had fairer weather than the King of Jerusalem, yet no man ever plowed his way through soil that was more deep with mire, nor through an atmosphere more loaded with tempest than did this man of many tribulations! He has been a kind of pioneer for us. I remember seeing, some years ago, the French army going through Paris and noticing some of the big, tall fellows—old men who had been in the wars of the first Napoleon. These went in front and they seemed to be worth all the rest that were behind. They were the pioneers that cleared the way for the others. Now David, and such as he, of whom we read in the Scriptures, are the grand old soldiers that bear the standard and lead the way—and we are the raw recruits that follow on behind them! Let us be thankful that we have some veterans to lead the vanguard!

Our text is rather an extraordinary one, yet it represents the experience of many of us, and we are comforted by the thought that our feelings and David’s have very much agreed—“What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.”

You notice in the text, first, a complex condition—here is a man afraid and yet he is trusting. Then we will look at the natural side of this condition—“I am afraid.” And then we will look at the gracious side—“I will trust in You.”

I. Notice, first, then, that here is David in A COMPLEX CONDITION. He says, “I am afraid,” yet with the same breath he says, “I will trust in You.” Is not this a contradiction? It looks like a paradox. Paradox it may be, but contradiction it is not! What strange creatures we are! I suppose every man is a trinity, certainly every Christian is—spirit, soul and body—and we may be in three states at once. And we may not know which of the three is our real state! The whole three may be so mixed up that we become a puzzle to ourselves. Though certain mental philosophers would say that I flagrantly err in asserting that such a thing can be, yet nevertheless I am quite certain that it is a very common experience of the child of God!

It is even quite possible for us to find two minds and two wills—two sets of facilities within ourselves clashing and jarring and warring and contending with one another. In a record of some very notable experiences of doctors who attend upon the insane, there is a very singular case described of a man who was always sane regularly one day, as clear in the intellect and intelligent in judgment as any man—but the next day he was always insane. On the day on which he was sane, he used to talk about how the doctor ought to treat him on the morrow, and to express his surprise that he entered into such a state, reasoning in the most practical manner. He seemed to be two men! There is a record of another case, even more remarkable, of a man who would act and speak and think as an intelligent full-grown person, but after sleeping two or three days he would wake up a child, to learn like a child, to walk like a child, to speak like a child, and to all intents and purposes, to lead the life of a child. Then he would fall asleep, again, and wake up as an adult person. To us it seems a most marvelous thing that this should happen—but perhaps it is even more marvelous to find ourselves perfectly sane, with no mental malady upon us, and yet at the same moment the subject of two opposite sets of feelings—afraid, and yet trusting!

I am sure that every Christian here will follow me while, for a moment, I speak upon this singular duplex condition of Christian experience. You remember how the women returned from the sepulcher. They had seen a vision of angels—they had also seen the Lord—and it is said they departed quickly “with fear and great joy”—very fearful, trembling at what they had seen, but very joyful—never so fearful and yet never so joyful before! And you remember that the disciples, when the Lord Jesus stood in their midst, “believed not for joy.” Extraordinary thing! They did believe, or they could not have had the joy! And yet the joy seemed, when it grew out of the belief, to cut away its own roots and “they believed not for joy”—strange, marvelous state of mind, yet common to the Christian!

The same thing is true as to our attitude to sin. Have you not found yourself, Beloved Believer in Jesus Christ, drawn towards an evil thing for a moment, fascinated by it, finding a tendency in the carnal corruption of your nature to go after evil and yet, at the very same time, you hated yourself that you should give way even for a moment to a thought so vile? You have felt the desire to go after sin, but yet another self, as it were, struggled with greater force not to go after it. One faculty seems to say, “How sweet that sin would be,” yet you have said, “It is gall and bitterness itself.” The flesh has loved it, but the spirit has said, “I abominate it, I loathe it,” and has cried out to God to prevent the possibility of our being allowed to indulge ourselves in it! Thus warring and contending with us, the Prince of the power of the air, uniting with our own evil nature, has endeavored to drag us down, while the Holy Spirit, co-working with the incorruptible Seed which He has imparted in us, has sought to draw us upwards towards holiness, purity and perfection! It is a wondrous warfare which only the elect of God can understand.

So, too, you have been the subject of another phase of the same phenomenon in reference to faith. You have seen a precious promise or a glorious Doctrine and you have believed it because you have found it in God’s Word. You have believed it so as to grasp it and feel it to be your own, yet, perhaps, almost at the same time certain rationalistic thoughts have come into your mind and you have been vexed with doubts as to whether the promise is true. You remember, perhaps, the insinuations of others, or something rises up out of your own carnal reason that renders it difficult for you to believe, while at the same time you are believing! You battle with yourself—one self seems to say, “Is it so?” and yet your inner self seems to say, “I could die for it, I know it is so!” You are tormented because you cannot answer arguments against it, but yet at the same time you feel that you have answered them, and that they are no arguments at all! Your heart repels all attacks upon the Truth of God, and yet, somehow or other, for a while, you are staggered by the assault which Satan has made upon you!

I might go on to mention many other ways in which these two states of mind will come. I have found it frequently so in prayer when I have sought to draw near to God. An idle worldly spirit will bring ten thousand distracting thoughts to bear upon the soul and the heart will seem to say, “I cannot pray just now, I have other things to do. I must think of them.” What is worse, the mind will persist in thinking of these things and they will come crowding in—some work that you have to do, perhaps some friend that you have to call upon, something you have forgotten— those things will come pouring in upon you as if in your own heart you said, “I do not want to pray.” Yet at that very same time you have felt a holy craving, an insatiable longing to draw near to God in prayer and you have said, “I must pray, I cannot live without it. I must now have a period of fellowship with God, cost me what it may.” These two things will be here—the praying and the not praying, the faithless and the believing struggling, one with another, and your poor spirit will be like ground that is trampled upon by two armies that are fiercely contending as to which shall get the mastery! You see that in David’s case, when in the text he says, “I am afraid,” yet adds, “I will trust in You.”

II. Now, secondly, let us look at THE NATURAL SIDE OF THIS CONDITION.  
David says, “I am afraid.” Admire his honesty in making this confession. Some men would never have admitted that they were afraid. They would have blustered and said they cared for nothing! Generally there is no greater coward in this world than the man who never will acknowledge that he is afraid. But this hero of a thousand conflicts, this brave scion of the sons of men, honestly says, “I am afraid.” Why was he afraid?  
First, because he was but a man, and we men cannot rule the elements, we cannot overcome those who are mightier than ourselves. “They are many that fight against me, O Most High,” he cries! And then he adds, “I am afraid.” We cannot expect, therefore, that we should be free of fear when powers greater than our own are set in array against us. We are afraid because at the very best, we are but weak and feeble men!  
He was afraid, again, because he was a sinful man. It is this that makes cowards of us more than anything else. We know that we deserve the rod of our Father and though, by faith, we feel assured that He will never use the sword of Justice against us, yet we are often afraid that the correcting rod will be brought out and that we shall be sorely chastened. Well, then, while we are men, and sinful men, it is no wonder that we should be afraid!  
Besides, David was something more than that—he was afraid because he was an intelligent man. He knew his position and could rightly estimate its risks. Now, with some persons, bravery arises from utter ignorance. They do not know the danger to which they are exposed and, therefore, do not fear it. The unsaved sinner, if he did but know in what peril he is, would not be as quiet as he is. Unconverted men and women, if they did but know who and what and where they are—if they did but remember that “God is angry with the wicked every day”—would be very ill at ease! They would be full of alarm and terror. But the Christian knows his position. He is not blind, his eyes have been opened, he has been brought to the Light of God, he does not shut his eyes to the strength of his spiritual adversaries, nor to his own internal weakness, nor to the awful guilt of sin. He sees all these and, therefore, it is not to be wondered at, that with so much intelligence, a Christian should have some misgivings. “I am afraid,” says he.  
And then he is afraid, again, because he is no stoic. The heathen tried as far as they could to turn their flesh into iron and harden their hearts into steel, but such is never the process through which the Christian passes. The Christian, when his sinews are most braced and he is most heroic for his Master, is still as tender and as sensitive as a little child. The Grace of God does not take away from us feminine tenderness, though it gives to us masculine courage. In fact, it blends the two in a perfect man, putting strength and sympathy together, and making us like Christ who, with all the force of the majesty of holy determination and courage, had all the tenderness and gentleness that the fondest love could bring. Therefore we are afraid because we do not boast of insensibility, but we still strive to be gentle and tender-hearted—the Grace of God keeps us so.  
But when is it that the saint should expect to be most afraid? Is it not when enemies around him are many? The Psalmist, therefore, is afraid because he is compassed by foes. The Christian does not like having enemies. If he could help it, he would not have a single one. He never willingly makes an enemy and if he could destroy his enemies by turning them into friends, he would be delighted to achieve so great a victory. When, therefore, he sees that he has many enemies and they are very cruel and very determined—the is afraid.  
We are afraid, sometimes, when we think of the old enemy, our spiritual enemy, for we know his cunning. He has been so long tempting the saints that he knows his business well. We know what poor, foolish birds we are when he is the fowler—how soon we are taken in his net and, therefore, at the prospect of being tempted again by him, we bow our knee to our great Father and we cry—“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” We are afraid at the thought of having to fight Satan! Who has read John Bunyan’s description of Christian fighting Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation but will not be fearful at the prospect of such a fight as that?  
The man of God may be afraid, too, because he sees need surrounding him. The Christian must eat and drink, and though he is not to make this the great question of his life, yet he cannot look upon his little ones and think that he will not have sufficient bread to fill their mouths without being somewhat afraid. The natural side of the question must come up. He is not so hardened that he does not feel it—and when he sees need staring him in the face, for his own sake and for the sake of those about him, he is afraid.  
If, in addition to all this, there comes upon him the remembrance of past sin, and with especial vividness some transgression into which he has lately fallen, he is afraid because of the memory of the past. Though he may look to Jesus—and he will do so. Though he may see his sin laid on Christ, yet, even while he is looking, he will often be amazed with a sore amazement and an agony of soul will come over him—not so much the fear of being finally cast away if, indeed, he is a child of God, but a fear lest, after all, he should turn out not to be what he hoped he was! If you are never afraid about the condition of your soul, I am afraid for you! If you never had a fear about your state, I think I may remind you of Cowper’s lines—  
*“He has no hope who never had a fear  
And he that never doubted of his state,  
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.”*  
Under a sense of sin, it is but natural, no, I will add, it is but right that a trembling should come over the soul and that we should fall down in the Presence of God humbled before Him!  
The same is the case, too, with the man who is afraid because of the thought of approaching death. We have seen some, when they have actually come to die, rejoicing with unspeakable joy and it has strengthened our faith when we have heard their bold declarations as they have felt the Master’s Presence in their final hour. But if, as a rule, you and I can think of death without any kind of fear, if no tremor ever crosses our minds, well then, we must have marvelously strong faith, and I can only pray we may be retained in that strength of faith! For the most part there is such a thing as terror in prospect of death—the fear is often greater in prospect than in reality! In fact, it is always so in the case of the Christian. But yet, when we give ourselves up to fear for a time, we are grievously afraid.  
This, then, is the natural side of the question. A man may be a true Believer, he may be a very David—and yet be afraid.  
III. Now take THE GRACIOUS SIDE OF IT—“What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.”  
“I will trust in You.” How glorious is this confession of faith! It is not the expression of nature—it is a sign of Divine Grace. No man trusts in God unless there has first been a Divine work upon his soul! At least no man who is afraid can trust in God unless the Lord has taught his timorous spirit to fly like a dove to the sure dovecot cleft by Divine Grace in the Rock of Ages. Happy soul that has been taught the sacred art and mystery of believing in Jesus! It is the highest and noblest of all the practical sciences! God grant us Grace, what time we are afraid, to exercise ourselves in it!  
It is a sure sign of Grace when a man can trust in his God, for the natural man, when afraid, falls back on some human trust, or he thinks that he will be able to laugh at the occasion of fear. He gives himself up to jollity and forgetfulness, or perhaps he braces himself up with a natural resolution—  
*“To take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them.”*  
He goes anywhere but to his God. Only the gracious spirit—only the soul renewed by the Holy Spirit, will saw, “‘What time I am afraid,’ my one and only resort shall be this, ‘I will trust in You.’” The thoughtless, as I have said, try to laugh off their fear. The naturally thoughtful try to invent some scheme by which they may pass through the difficulty, but he who is truly believing leaves schemes and frivolities, and applies to his God with the burden of his care—and finds from Him an instantaneous and effectual relief!  
And, after all, is it not the most reasonable thing in the world that a soul that is afraid should trust in God? Where can there be a firmer ground of reliance than in Him whose power never can be defeated, whose wisdom is never at a nonplus? If I have God’s promise that He will help me, to whom or where should I go, but unto the God who has so promised? If, in addition, He has given me His oath, “that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie,” I might have strong consolation, where shall my timid spirit go but to the shadow of the wings of the God of the Covenant who, by promise and by oath, has guaranteed my safety? What are my circumstances? Has He not given me a promise suitable to them, a special promise for each special time? So I need never be afraid because of my circumstances. Has He not, indeed, given me one text which covers them all with its broad expanse? “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” With a God who is almighty and eternally faithful. With a God who promises and seals the promise with His oath—that He will help me when I call upon Him—what can be more reasonable than that when I am afraid, I should come and put my trust in Him?

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, and as it is reasonable, it certainly proves itself to be most effectual, for he who trembles from head to foot does but begin to trust in God and, behold, he grows calm at once! Have we not seen minds so distracted as to be almost bereft of reason grow quiet and peaceful when they have learned to do the work they could do and then left the rest to God? Oh, it is sweet waiting at the posts of Jehovah’s door! It is well to tarry till His promise becomes ripe and then in all its sweetness drops into our hands. “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” so has He declared. My Soul, lay hold upon that, and the next time you are afraid, seek a safe shelter beneath that promise! “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” When I am afraid lest I should be in need, I will come and go beneath that promise. If it is a good thing, God has bound Himself by His Word to give it to me. “Fear you not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.” My God, when at another time I am full of alarm and dismay, I will come to You, for You are bound to strengthen and help and uphold Your servants who place their confidence in You!  
Dear Brothers and Sisters, let me exhort you—and may God’s Holy Spirit back up the exhortation—to the exercise of a holy trust in God, not only when you are happy but when you are afraid! Faith in God is a seasonable thing as well as a reasonable thing. Fruit is always best in its season, and the time for faith is the time of trial. Faith is never so fullflavored as when it is produced beneath cloudy skies. Other fruits need the sun to ripen them, but this is one of the precious fruits put forth by the moon. You shall, when your experience is most trying, honor God the most if you can then trust Him! Surely it needs little faith to believe in Providence when the purse is full. What sort of faith is it that believes in the merits of the precious blood of Jesus when it feels its own sanctification to be complete, if such can ever be the case? What kind of faith is that which leans on the Beloved when it can stand alone? But that is true faith which, when it cannot stand by itself, which sees death written upon all its own power, which sees almost all its hopes withered and blasted with the East wind, yet cries, “My God, it is enough! My soul waits only upon You. My expectation is from You.” This is, indeed, the way to honor God!  
Observe the graduation there often is in Christian experience. You will sometimes find Believers in so low a state that their heart is full of fear. By-and-by they are enabled to exercise the faith that God has given them, but it is mingled fear and trust. But they do not stop there, they get a little further—as David did in this Psalm, as you can see if you will read a word or two further on—there it gets to be trust and no fear. “In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” May you climb the steps of that gracious ladder! May you, if you have fear, also have faith with your fear, and then afterwards have your faith without any fear! When faith gets strong enough, fears are expelled!  
Let me, however, return to my point that when you are afraid, then is the time to trust the Lord. When you are very poor, then is the time to believe the Doctrine of Divine Providence. When you feel the guilt of your sins, then is the time to lay hold on Jesus Christ and to wash in the fountain filled with His blood. Who cares to wash when he is clean? The time to wash is when the filth is felt! Then fly to the all-cleansing blood. You say, “I feel so dead and cold, I have not the spiritual vivacity and warmth and life that I used to possess. I used to come up to the Tabernacle and feel such joy and rejoicing in worshipping on God’s Holy Day, but now I feel flat and dull.” Oh, but do not be tempted to get away from Christ because of this! Who runs away from the fire because he is cold? Who, in summer, runs away from the cooling brook because he is hot? Should not my deadness be the reason why I should come to Jesus Christ? Now is the time for Him to show His power! Now my Master, if indeed You are a Friend that sticks closer than a brother and, blessed be Your name, You are such a Friend, behold, here is one of Your friends! Prove that You can forgive and still stick to him—cause him to trust in You and let him find You better than all his fears!  
I have done when I have made an application of my text to those of you who have not believed in Jesus and yet desire to do so. I know your fears, your doubts, your trembling. Let me whisper in your ear this word—“Now that you are afraid, put your trust in Jesus. Christ came to save sinners such as you are with all your fear. Now, while your fears toss you to and fro, go to Jesus—  
*“While the raging billows roll,  
While the tempest still is high.”*  
Hang all your weight upon the Lover of Souls now! Do not wait till you get rid of your fears and then go to Him—go now!  
A lady was once walking in a field and a bird flew right into her bosom. She wondered why the little lark came nestling there, but looking up, she saw a hawk in the air. It had pursued the little bird, which, though it would have been quite afraid at any other time to find a shelter where it did find it, had by the greater fear of its enemy been driven out of the lesser fear. She to whom it fled for refuge cared for it, cherished it and set it free. So be it with you. Let your great fears of Hell overcome that fear that you have sometimes had that perhaps Jesus may reject you. Fly into His bosom. “Oh, but I fear that He will reject me.” Well, then, I trust that your other fears will get so great as to overcome this fear. John Bunyan says that his fear of Hell at last became so terrible that if Jesus Christ had stood with a naked sword in His hand, or if He had held a pike to him, he would have run on the point of the pike and would always rather go to an angry Christ then be cast into Hell! But, believe me, Christ is not angry. He holds no pike and no sword in His hand. This is His word of promise, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”Aged Sinner, you who have been a great transgressor, whoever you may be, if you come and simply cast yourself upon the blessed Savior who on the Cross offered up Himself for human guilt, you shall be saved!  
“What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” I dare to say these ancient words tonight from the depths of my soul! I am afraid of my sins! I am afraid of my unworthiness! I never live a day but what I see reason to be afraid! If I had to stand all by myself, I would be afraid to stand before God! If I had never done anything in my life but preach this one sermon, there have been so many imperfections and faults in it that I am afraid to place any reliance upon it! But my Lord Jesus, You are my soul’s only hope. I trust entirely in You!  
Beloved, have this same faith. May God work it in you and then your fear shall only drive you closer to your Lord! And so the fear and the faith shall go on hand in hand together for a while, till at last perfect love shall come in and take the place of fear—and then faith and love shall go hand in hand to Heaven!  
May the Lord bless every one of you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 6:1-21.**

Verses 1, 2. After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased. Many of them curiosity-mongers wanting to see more wonders worked. Others of them sick, themselves, and anxious to be healed. Wherever Jesus went, a throng went with Him.

3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. That was His frequent posture when His disciples were gathered around Him. He sat at His ease and talked to His hearers. He was not very demonstrative in His oratory, but spoke calmly and quietly, and left the Truths of God to find its own way into the minds and hearts of men.

4, 5. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He said unto Philip, Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat? They were in a lonely place out in the wilderness where the people had no means of obtaining food. And Jesus knew that they would soon be faint with hunger, so He consulted with Philip as to what was to be done. It is great kindness and condescension on our Lord’s part to consult with His followers. He often did it, not that He needed their advice or help, but because they needed to be taught how to think and how to act for the good of others.

6. And this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Observe the complex Character of Christ—as Man, He consulted with Philip—as God, He knew beforehand what He would do.

7. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them, may take a little. Two hundred pennyworth must have seemed an enormous amount to poor Philip, for all Christ’s disciples had made themselves poor by following Him. The bag that Judas carried probably scarcely ever had as much as that in it. If it were all spent, it would not go far towards feeding five thousand men, beside the women and children!

8, 9. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said unto Him, There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? These small fishes were commonly cured and dried by that lake—little fish very much resembling sardines or anchovies—and they were eaten dry as a relish with bread. This lad had five barley cakes and a couple of these little fish, that was all.

10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down—Jesus would have everything done decently and in order. The people obeyed Christ’s command and sat down. We are told by Mark, “in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties.” “There was much grass in the place.” Our Lord has a carpet in His banqueting hall, such a carpet as Solomon in all his glory could not have made! “There was much grass in the place. So the men sat down”—

10, 11. In number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and  
when He had given thanks—[See Sermon #2216, Volume 37—THE LAD’S LOAVES IN THE LORD’S HANDS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

Among the Jews, it is always the master of the house who gives thanks. They do not call upon a child to say Grace, but the father of the family, like a priest in his own house, stands up and pronounces a blessing upon the food. It is a beautiful thought that Christ thus made Himself, as it were, the Father of that large family, the Head and Provider for those many thousands of people!

11. He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. “As much as they would.” That is Christ’s measure for those who gather at His table— it is only your own will that limits the amount of Divine Grace that you may have.

12, 13. When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. I am sorry to say that it is a mark of very poor people that they are often very wasteful people. These beggars who had come only to be fed, were not satisfied to eat till they were satisfied, but they threw down pieces of bread just as I frequently see, in the streets of London, great pieces of bread thrown away. It should not be so, for bread is the staff of life. Among the Egyptians, they are always peculiarly careful that never a portion of bread should be wasted, nor should it ever be as in a city like this where there are so many persons who are starving for lack of bread. But while I see the carelessness and wastefulness of the crowd, I also notice the carefulness and economy of Christ. He who could make food enough to feed the thousands at His will, yet would not waste a crust! I think a large-hearted liberality should always be consistent with a strict economy. I have heard of one who called at a rich man’s door to ask for a subscription and he heard him scolding the servant for wasting a match. “Ah,” He thought, “I shall get nothing out of him!” Yet he received from that very man a larger subscription than from anybody else upon whom he called during that day! Christ would give anything but He wasted nothing—let us imitate His example!

14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world. But the faith that comes by the way of the stomach is not worth much. If people are converted by loaves and fishes, bigger loaves and bigger fishes will make them go the other way—converts made thus are of small worth!

15-17 . When Jesus, therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain alone. And when evening was now come, His disciples went down to the sea, and entered a boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not come to them. [See Sermon #2945, Volume 51—

NIGHT—AND JESUS NOT THERE!—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Then it was very dark. Ah, my dear Friends, perhaps you know what it is to be in trouble and to mourn an absent Lord! This is a direful description of an especially dark night for the disciples— “It was now dark, and Jesus had not come to them.”

18, 19. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing near unto the ship: and they were afraid. Do you wonder that they were filled with fear? It seemed so strange a sight—a man walking on the waves of the sea!

20. But He said unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they must have felt at ease at once as soon as they knew that it was Jesus who was walking towards them upon the water. Lord, if it is You, fear would be foolish on our part! We are only too glad to have Your company.

21. Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land where they were going. No sooner was Jesus with them than they were where they wanted to be! The Presence of Christ works wonders for us. We are soon at our haven when the Lord of Heaven comes to us!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3362 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FEARING AND TRUSTING— TRUSTING AND NOT FEARING  
NO. 3362

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 10, 1913.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 15, 1867.

**“What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” “I will trust, and not be afraid.” Psalm 56:3. Isaiah 12:2.**

I INTEND this evening to have two texts, though I shall not therefore have two sermons and so keep you a double length of time! Our first text, which will suffice to begin with, is in the 56th Psalm, at the 3rd verse— “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.”

David was one of the boldest of men. From his youth up, he was noted for his courage. As a youth he went, in simple confidence in God, and attacked the giant Goliath. Throughout life there was no man who seemed to be more at home in wars and battles—and less likely to be afraid. But yet this hero, this courageous man, says that he was sometimes afraid. And I suppose that there are none of us but must plead guilty to the impeachment that sometimes the brave spirit gives way and that we tremble and are afraid. It is a disease for which the cure is here mentioned, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” When my soul suffers from the palsy of fear, I will lay hold upon the Strong One and get strength from Him—and so my fears shall all be cast out.”

To be afraid is, in some cases, a very childish thing. We sometimes expect to see our little children frightened and that they will not bear to be alone in the dark, but we are surely not afraid to be there! The more we are afraid, the more childish we become. Courage is manly, but to be afraid is to be like a child. It is not always so, however, for there are some great and sore dangers which may well make the very boldest man tremble.

To be afraid is always a distressing thing. The heart beats quickly and the whole system seems to be thrown out of order. There have been known cases of men who have had to endure severe terror for several hours—and their hair has all turned gray in a single night. No doubt, too, there have been diseases which have brought men to their graves which have been caused by fright. Fear is always distressing and whether it is the fear of outward danger, or fear of inward sin, it is always a terrible thing to have to go mourning because of being afraid.

And to be afraid, too, is always a weakening thing. The man who can keep calm in the midst of difficulty is better able to meet it. If he is at sea in a storm, if his mind is quiet, he is likely to steer his vessel safely through the danger. But if he is perturbed and cast down with agitated alarm, we can have but little confidence in him, for we know not where he may steer the boat! A man who is afraid often runs into worse dangers than those from which he seeks to escape. He plunges himself into the sea to escape from the river—and it is as though he fled from a lion—and a bear met him.

To be afraid, then, is generally a very mischievous thing. And though sometimes exceedingly excusable, yet full often it is also exceedingly dangerous. David, however, here gives us the cure for fear, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.”

I shall not have time this evening to take all the fears and amazements which distress humanity, but there are four or five which we will mention and which may comprehend the others—

I. SOMETIMES WE ARE AFRAID OF TEMPORAL TROUBLES. If some of you have such a smooth path in life that you are untried in this respect, yet the great proportion of mankind have a hard fight to find bread to eat and garments with which they shall be clothed. And in the lives of the poor, especially, there must often be sad times when they are afraid lest they should not be able to provide things necessary and should be brought to absolute starvation. Such a fear must very often afflict those who are in extreme poverty. And you, too, who are in business, in this age of competition, you are, no doubt, frequently afraid lest, by a failure in this direction or in that, you should not be able to meet your engagements—and the good ship of your business should drive upon the rocks.  
Such fears, I suppose, fall to the lot of all young tradesmen when they are starting in business but, perhaps, there are a few older ones who have done longer and rougher work and are quite free from such times of anxious fear.  
And, Brothers and Sisters, even if we have none of these troubles about what we shall eat and what we shall drink, yet we have our domestic troubles that make us to be much alarmed. It is no small thing to see a child sick, or, still worse, to see your life’s partner gradually fading away and to know, as some do, that the case is beyond all medical skill— and that she, who is so dear, must be taken away.  
And you wives, perhaps, are, some of you, dreading the hour when you may become widows and your little children may be fatherless. You have often been afraid as you have looked ahead to the calamity which seemed to overshadow you. God has not made this world to be a nest for us—and if we try to make it such for ourselves—He plants thorns in it so that we may be compelled to mount and find our soul’s true home somewhere else, in a higher and nobler sphere than this poor world can give!  
Now, whenever we are tried with these temporal affairs, David tells us we are to trust in God. “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” I will just do this—after having done my best to earn my daily bread and to fight the battle of life, if I find I cannot do all I would, I will throw myself upon the promise of God, wherein He has said, “Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.” I will believe that my Heavenly Father, who feeds the ravens, will feed me, and that if He does not allow even the gnats that dance in the sunbeam to perish for lack of sustenance, He will not allow a soul that rests upon Him to perish for lack of daily bread. Oh, it is a sweet thing, though, perhaps, you may, some of you, think it a hard thing—it is a sweet thing when God enables you to leave tomorrow with Him and to depend upon your Father who is in Heaven!

I speak to the tradesman and all who often have to do business in great waters, who seem to go from waterspout to waterspout and over whom all God’s waves and billows seem to go—I believe you will find yourselves much stronger to do battle against these difficulties if it is your constant habit to commit all your cares to Him who cares for you. It will all go wrong with us, even in smooth waters, if we do not have God to be the Pilot. And as to rough weather, we shall soon be a wreck if we forget Him! I know of nothing more delightful to the Believer than every morning to commit the day’s troubles to God and then go down into the world feeling, “Well, my Father knows it all.” And then at night to commit the troubles of the day again into the great Father’s hands and to feel that He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” It is sweet sleeping when you can have a promise for the pillow at your head! You know, perhaps, the good old story which is told of the woman on board ship who was greatly afraid in a storm, but she saw her husband perfectly at peace and she could not understand it. Her husband said he would tell her the reason, so, snatching up a sword, he pointed it at her heart. She looked at it, but did not tremble. “Well,” he said, “are you not afraid? The sword is sharp and I could kill you in a moment.” “No,” she said, “because it is in your hands!” “Ah,” he replied, “and that is why I am not afraid—because the storm is in my Father’s hands and He loves me more than I love you!”  
A little child was at play in a lower room and as he played away by himself, amusing himself, about every ten minutes he ran to the foot of the stairs and called out, “Mother, are you there?” and his mother answered, “Yes, I am here,” and the little lad went back to his sport and fun—and was as happy as happy could be—and until again it crossed his mind that his mother might have gone. So he ran to the stairs again and called, “Mother, are you there?” “All right,” she said, and as soon as he heard her voice again, back he went once more to his play. It is just so with us. In times of temporal trouble we go to the Mercy Seat in prayer and we say, “Father, are You there? Is it Your hand that is troubling me? Is it Your Providence that has sent me this difficulty?” And as soon as you hear the voice which says, “It is I,” you are no longer afraid! Oh, happy are they who, when they are afraid in this way, trust in the Lord!  
A second great fear, through which some of you have never passed, but through which all must pass who enter into Heaven, is a—  
II. FEAR CONCERNING THE GUILT OF PAST SIN.  
Do not tell me with regard to temporal troubles that they are sharp and bitter! Believe me, that trouble for sin is far more bitter and keen. Do you remember when God was pleased to awaken you from your long sleep—when you looked within and saw that you were all defiled, full of pollution and all manner of evil? Do you recollect how the thoughts pierced you like poisoned arrows—“God requires that which is pure.” “For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the Day of Judgment”? Do you recollect how it seemed as though Hell flared up right before you where you stood and it seemed as though there was only a step between you and death! The terrors of the Lord got hold upon you, and the very marrow of your bones seemed to freeze as you thought about an angry God and of how you, in your sins, without any preparation, could meet Him! Oh, it is not so long ago with some of us but what we recollect being startled in our sleep under a sense of sin! And all day long the common joys of men were no joys to us, and though before we had been sprightly and cheerful like others—yet our mirth was now turned into mourning and all our laughter into lamentation!  
Perhaps some of you are passing through this state of mind now. You are now conscious of your old sins. The sins of your youth are coming up before your remembrance. Now, if so, listen to what David says, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Beloved, if you would ever get rid of the fear of your past sins, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to suffer for the sins of all who will trust Him. All the sins of all His people were reckoned as upon Him and all that they should have suffered on account of those sins, Jesus Christ suffered in their place! The mighty debt, too huge for us to calculate, was all laid upon Him and He paid it to the last farthing! He was sued and summoned at the court of the Eternal Justice, for the sins of His people were reckoned as upon Him—and all that they should have rendered with hands and feet, and brow and side, He discharged—the whole tremendous debt that was due to God, the debt caused by the sins of all His people were paid by Him!  
Now, it is a blessed thing when sin burdens us to fly away to Christ and stand in spirit beneath the Cross—and feel that under that crimson canopy, no flash of Divine penalty shall ever fall upon us! “Smite me? Great God, You cannot, for have You not smitten the redeeming Christ on my account? Is it not recorded that for those who trust Him, Your Son is both Surety and Substitute? How, then, can You first sue the Substitute and then afterwards sue the person for whom the Substitute stood?” Faith thus clings to the Cross and feels, no—knows—that all is safe! I would God that some of you who are lamenting over the burden of your sins and are pressed down by it, would look to the Son of God pouring out His life and would trust Him, for then your sins would be gone in a moment! Only look on Jesus and though you had committed all the sins that are committable by mortal man, yet Jesus Christ can put them all away! If every form of iniquity were heaped upon you till you were dyed through and through with it, like the scarlet that has been lying long asoak in the dye, yet let the crimson blood of Jesus come into contact with your crimson sins and they—  
*“Shall vanish all away,  
Though foul as Hell before!  
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea,  
And shall be found no more!”*  
Now, I know it is very easy when we do not feel our sins to trust in Christ, but the business of faith is to trust in Christ when you do feel your sins! Brothers and Sisters, it would be cheap faith to take Christ as the saints’ Savior, but it is the faith of God’s elect to take Him as the sinner’s Savior. When I can see marks of Grace in myself, to trust Christ is easy—but when I see no marks of anything good, but every mark of everything that is evil and then come and cast myself upon Him and believe that He can save me, even me, and rest myself upon Him—this is the faith which honors Christ and which will save us! May you have it and such time as you are afraid of sin, may you trust in Christ! A third fear, which is remarkably common, is a—  
III. FEAR LEST WE SHOULD BE DECEIVED.  
Among the best and most careful of Believers this fear intrudes itself, “Lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Lest, after having been united to the Church, I should prove to be a dead member and so be cut out of the living vine. All these fears have I met with. One has said, “I fear I was never chosen of God.” Another has said, “I fear I never was effectually called.” And yet a third has said, “I fear I never possessed the repentance that needs not to be repented of.” Still others have confessed, “I am afraid my faith is not the faith of God’s elect.” Very frequently have I heard this, “I am afraid I am a hypocrite,” which is one of the oddest fears in all the world, for nobody that is a hypocrite was ever afraid of it! It is the hypocrite who goes on peacefully, without fear, confident where there is no ground for confidence. But these fears abound and, in some respects, they are healthy. Better to go to Heaven doubting, than to Hell presuming! Better to enter into life crippled and maimed, than having two eyes and hands, and feet, to be cast into the destroying fire! We cannot say too much in praise of assurance— and we cannot speak too much against presumption. Dread that! Shun it with all your might!  
But when you and I are besieged by these doubts and fears—and I very often am—as to whether we are the children of God or not, what is the best thing for us to do? “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” This is the shortcut with the devil! This is the way to cut off his head more readily than anyway else. Go straight to Christ! Do not stop to argue with Satan. He is a crafty old liar and he will be sure to defeat you if it comes to argument between you. Say to him, “Satan, if I am deceived, if all I have ever known up till now has been only head knowledge, if I am nothing but a mere hypocrite, yet now—  
*“Black, I to the fountain fly  
Wash me, Savior, or I die!”*  
It is a blessed thing to begin again—to be always beginning and yet always going on—for no man ever goes on to perfection who forgets his first love, his first faith and forgets to walk in Christ Jesus as he walked in Him at the first!  
Beloved, whatever may be the doubt that comes to you tonight, I beseech you remember it is still, “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” If you have been a backslider, weep over it. If you have been a great sinner, be sorry for it, but still remember, “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” And, “Where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound.” The Gospel’s voice is still, “Return, you backsliding children, for I am married unto you, says the Lord.” “Come, now, let us reason together. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.” Come, come, come, you doubting ones, trembling and broken to pieces! Come again—a guilty, weak and helpless worm—and cast yourself into Jesus’ arms!  
But we cannot tarry upon that. A fourth fear, which is frequent enough to cause Christians much distress, is—  
IV. A FEAR THAT WE SHALL NOT HOLD ON AND HOLD OUT TO THE END.

Many thousands of God’s saints are quite unnecessarily troubled with this. Remember that where God begins to work, He does not ask us to finish. He always completes His own work. If you have begun the work of salvation, you will have to carry it on, but if God has begun the good work in you, He will carry it on and bring it to its perfection of completeness in “the day of Christ.” Yet there are thousands who say, “Should I be tempted, I might fall! Working as I do with so many others, none of whom fear God, but who sneer and ridicule at Divine things, I might, perhaps, turn aside and prove like one of them.” It is very proper that you should have that fear, very proper that you should be distressed at it—  
*“What anguish has that question stirred, If I should also go!”*  
But, dearly Beloved, what time you are afraid, do not say, “I shall be able to hold out”—do not trust in yourselves, or you will trust a broken reed— but what time you are afraid, renew your trust in Christ! Go with the temptation which you now experience and which you expect to return tomorrow, to the Lord and He will, with the temptation, show the way of escape out of it. I remember a miner who had been a sad, drunken man, and a great blasphemer, but he was converted among the Methodists— and a right earnest man he was! But he seemed to have been a man of strong passions and, on one occasion when he was praying, he prayed that sooner than that he might ever go back to his old sins, if God foresaw that he would not be able to bear up under the temptation, He would take him to Heaven at once! And while he was praying the prayer in the Prayer Meeting, he fell dead! God had answered him. Now, if you are to be tried in the order of Providence in a way that you cannot bear and there is no other way of escape for you, God will take you clean away to where no temptation shall ever come near you! What time you are afraid, put your trust in Him and all will be well!  
The last fear I have to mention, and then I shall have done with my first text, is this—  
V. THE FEAR OF DEATH.  
There are some “who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage.” But Christ came to deliver such—and where Christ works, He delivers us from that fear! Beloved, do you ever get afraid of death? You do, perhaps, when you feel very sick or when you are very ill and low spirited. You begin to look ahead and you say, “I have run with the footmen and they have wearied me. What shall I do when I have to contend with the rider on the pale horse? My trials have been so great that I have scarcely found faith enough to bear them! What shall I do in the last great trial of the swellings of Jordan?” Now, what ought you to do at the time you are afraid of dying, but to say with David, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in You”? Oh, fear not to die! If you are in Christ, death is nothing! “But the pain, the dying struggle,” you say. Oh, there is no pain in death! It is the life that is full of pain. Death? What is it? Well, it is but a pin’s prick and then it is over. “Many lie a-dying for weeks or months together,” say some. No! Say they live, for ‘tis living that makes them full of pain and anguish, but death ends all that! Death is just the passing through the narrow stream that is the entrance in the fields where—  
*“Everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers.”*  
To be afraid to die must be because we do not understand it, for if Believers know that to die is but to enter into the arms of Jesus Christ, surely they will be able to sing bravely with one good old saint— *“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing, But gladly put off this garment of clay!  
To die in the Lord is a Covenant blessing, Since Jesus to Glory, through death, led the way!”*What time you are afraid of dying, trust in the living Savior, for in Him are life and immortality! Remember—  
*“Jesus can make our dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on His breast we lean our head,  
And breathe our life out softly there.”*  
He will keep you where you shall sing—  
*“Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,  
My soul would stretch her wings in haste— Fly fearless through death’s iron gate,  
Nor fear the terror as she passed.”*  
You shall fear no fear and know no evil because He shall be with you! And you shall find that His rod and His staff do comfort you!  
Now, Brothers and Sisters, I have taken you far, like a guide conducting a number of travelers up the first road on a mountain. And I think we have gathered something even there, but now I want you to go up still higher. I feel as if, in handling this text, we have been travelling third class to Heaven, but now I want you to get into the first class! Hitherto we have been going in a sort of parliamentary train, which will get to Heaven safe enough, but I want you now to take the express.  
My second text will let you know what I mean. It is in the 12th Chapter of Isaiah and the 2nd verse—“I will trust and not be afraid.”  
This is several stages beyond the first text. David says, “What, time I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Isaiah says, “I will trust and not be afraid,” which is far better! When David is afraid, He trusts in God, but Isaiah trusts in God, first, and then he is not afraid at all! I told you in the first case that there was disease and that faith was the remedy, but you know prevention is always better than cure. I have heard of a man who had serious chills and he was thankful to have a medicine which helped him through it. But his neighbor said he should not be very thankful for that, for he had a remedy which prevented him from ever having the malady! So with you who are doubting and fearing—it is a good thing that faith can bear you through it—but how much better it will be if you get a faith that does not have these doubts, that lives above these fears and troubles!  
Look! There are two vessels yonder, and a storm is coming on. I see a great hurrying and scurrying on the deck of one. What are they doing? They have a great anchor and they are throwing it out! The storm is coming and they want to get a good hold, for fear lest they should be driven on the shore.  
But on the deck of the other vessel, I see no bustle at all. There is the watch pacing up and down as leisurely as possible. Why are they not in a panic? “Ahoy there! Ahoy! What makes you so calm and assured? Have you got out your anchor? Look! Your comrades in the other vessel, how busy they are!” “Oh,” says the watch, “but we had our anchor out a long while ago, before the storm came on and, therefore, we have no need to trouble, now, and hurry to throw it out.”  
Now, you who are full of doubts, fears and troubles, you know the way to be safe is to throw out the anchor of faith! But it would be better if you had the anchor of faith already out so that you could trust in God and not be afraid at all!  
Let us take the fears which we have already mentioned over again. Faith saves from—  
I. THE FEAR OF TEMPORAL TROUBLE.  
The man who fully trusts in God is not afraid of temporal trouble. You have read, perhaps, the life of Bernard Palissy, the famous potter. He was confined for many years on account of his religion and he was only permitted to live at all because he was such a skillful workman that they did not want to put him to death. King Henry the Third of France said to him, one day, “Bernard, I shall be obliged to give you up to your enemies to be burned unless you change your religion.” Bernard replied, “Your Majesty, I have often heard you say you pity me, but believe me I greatly pity you, though I am no king but only a poor humble potter. There is no man living that could compel me to do what I believe to be wrong—and yet you say you will be compelled—those are kingly words for you to utter!” And he could say this to the king, in whose hands his life was! Bernard was a very poor man. As I have told you, he used to earn his bread by making pottery. And he used to say, in his poverty, that he was a very rich man, for he had two things—he had Heaven and earth. And then he would take up a handful of the clay by which he earned his living. Happy man! Though often brought to the depths of poverty, he could say, “I will trust and not be afraid.”  
Take as another example. Martin Luther. They came to Martin one day and they said, “Martin, it is all over with the Reformation cause, now, for the Emperor of Germany has sworn a solemn oath to help the pope.” “I do not care a snap of my finger for both of them,” he said, “nor for all the devils in Hell! This is God’s work, and God’s work can stand against both emperors and popes!” Luther was a man who trusted—really, intensely— and because of this he was not afraid. Is not that much better than being afraid, and then having to trust to banish the fear? Now, God is with me, and come what may—  
*“Should earth against my soul engage,  
And hellish darts be hurled.  
Now I can smile at Satan’s rage,  
And face a frowning world.  
Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall—  
I shall in safety reach my home,  
My God, my Heaven, my All.”*  
Oh, if we can all get to this brave assurance of faith, happy shall we be in the midst of the worst trouble! Faith also saves from the—  
II. FEAR CONCERNING PAST SIN.  
He is in a blessed state who is delivered from such fear because he who is not is not afraid. One of you knows a man, perhaps, who has got into debt and who owed a great deal. But some little time ago a friend paid all his debts for him—and he has the receipt! Now, when he walks the streets, is this man afraid of the sheriff’s officer? Does he fear that he shall be arrested? Why, no! He knows he shall not, because he carries the receipt with him! Every man who trusts Christ perceives his own sin, but he also perceives that Christ paid for all his sin. He that believes has the witness of his pardon in himself which he carries with him as a receipt and which eases his conscience and prevents his fears. Oh, if you can but know that Christ died for you! If you can but rest alone in Him so as to know that He is yours, then all the sins that you have ever committed, though you lament them, shall never cause you a moment’s uneasiness, for they are drowned beneath the Red Sea of the Savior’s blood and, therefore, you may say, “I will trust and not be afraid.” As to that third fear which I mentioned—the fear lest we should be hypocrites, or—

III. LEST THE WORK OF GRACE SHOULD NOT BE RIPENED IN OUR HEARTS—  
There is one way of getting rid of that fear entirely! If you take a sovereign across the counter, you may not know whether it is a good one— you may have some doubts about it. But if you get it straight from the Mint, I do not suppose you will have any suspicion of it at all! So when a man asks, “Is my faith right? Is my religion right?” If he can say, “I got it straight from the Throne of God by trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ”—then he will know that he received it from Headquarters—and there can be no mistake about it! A Christian has no right to be always saying—  
*“Do I love the Lord or no?  
Am I His, or am I not?”*  
He may be compelled to say it, sometimes, but it is far better for him to come just as he is and throw himself at the foot of the Cross and say, “Savior, You have promised to save those that believe! I believe, therefore You have saved me!” I know some think this is presumption, but surely it is worse than presumption not to believe God! And it is true humility to take God at His word and to believe Him.  
I think I once illustrated this Truth of God in this place in this way. A good mother has two children. Christmas is drawing near and she says to one of them, “Now, John, I shall take you out on Christmas Day to such a place and give you a great treat.” She promises the same to William. Now, Master John says to himself, “Well, I do not know. I do not know whether my mother can afford it. Or perhaps I do not deserve it. I hardly think she will take me—it will be presumption in me to believe that she will.”  
But as for little Master William, he is no sooner told that he is to go out on Christmas Day than he claps his hands and begins to skip—and tomorrow tells all his playmates that his mother is going to take him out on Christmas Day! He is quite sure of it. They begin to ask him, “How do you know?” “Why,” he says, “Mother said so.” Perhaps they mention some things that make it look rather unlikely. “Oh, but,” he says, “my mother never tells lies and she told me she would take me, and I know she will!” Now, which of those children, do you think, is most to be commended—the bigger boy, who raised difficulties and suspected his mother’s word? Why, he is a proud little fellow who deserves to go without the pleasure! But as for his little brother, William, who takes his mother at her word—I do not call him proud. I consider him truly humble—and he is the child who really deserves the mother’s fondest love! Now, deal with God as you would have your children deal with you! If He says He will save you if you trust Him, then if you trust Him, why, He will save you! If He is a true God, He cannot destroy the soul that trusts in Christ! Unless this Bible is one great lie from beginning to end, the soul that trusts in Christ must be saved! If God is true, every soul that trusts in Jesus must be safe at the last. Whatever he may be and whoever he may be, if he trusts his soul with Christ and with Christ, alone, He cannot be cast away unless the promise of God can be of no effect! “I will trust and not be afraid.”  
So, Brothers and Sisters, it will be with other fears—time fails us to mention them—whatever they may be. May you get into such a blessed state of confidence in the love of God, in the love of Christ’s heart, in the power of Christ’s arm, in the prevalence of Christ’s plea, that at all times you may trust in Him and in nothing, whatever, be afraid!  
God bring us all up to this second platform and give us Divine Grace to stay there—and happy shall you be and have a foretaste of Heaven upon earth! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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THREE TEXTS, BUT ONE SUBJECT— FAITH  
NO. 2335

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1889.

**“In the shadow of Your wings will I make my refuge.” Psalm 57:1.  
“Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain you.” Psalm 55:22.  
“Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” Isaiah 50:10.**

IT is the preacher’s business to endeavor to make plain to the people the meaning of the word, FAITH. Inasmuch as salvation comes by believing, it is most important that men should know what believing is—and though we have to preach upon many topics and take the whole range of the Word of God—yet it often behooves the minister of Christ to dwell especially upon the way whereby men are saved and to explain what is that step by which they enter into eternal life. You may think that it is very easy to explain faith and so it is, but it is still easier to confuse people with your explanation. There is nothing simpler in the world than to believe in Christ Jesus, yet probably there is nothing more difficult than to explain to a man what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus—not that the thing, itself, is difficult, but the explaining of it is not so easy.

You remember the story, perhaps, of Mr. Thomas Scott, a very excellent commentator, who brought out an edition of John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, to which he had written very excellent and, I think that I must add, very dull notes. On going round his parish, he called on an aged person and found her studying the book. “Well, my good woman,” said he, “I see that you are reading Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress.” “Yes, Sir,” she replied, “I always enjoy that book.” “And, pray, do you understand it?” “Yes, Sir, I understand it very well and I think that, by the Grace of God, I shall one day understand your explanation of it”—which was not very complimentary to Mr. Scott! So, I have no doubt that there are many who better understand what faith is without our explanations. It is so easy to darken counsel by words without knowledge and to give illustrations which, themselves, need to be illustrated, and definitions which need to be defined. I am afraid of doing that, tonight—I see my difficulty and I cry to God to help me to put faith very plainly before every sinner here—that you may all know what it is and may at once exercise it.

I have met with a large number of persons who have believed in Christ who were accustomed to hear the Gospel preached and to have faith explained to them, but in almost every case they have told me that they did not know what faith was till they, themselves, believed and, although they were told a hundred times over that it was simply trusting in Christ, they still did not get a hold of the right idea—they still entertained the thought that there was something to be felt, something to be done, something to be endured, something or other more than the simple casting of themselves upon Christ for eternal salvation! I have also noticed how, when I have tried to use illustrations, the friend to whom I have spoken has not been affected by them and has not understood my illustrations.

Speaking to a young man, once, I quoted to him that verse of Dr. Watts which begins—  
*“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,  
On Your kind arms I fall.”*

“But,” he said, “I cannot fall.” “Oh, my dear Friend,” I replied, you do not catch the idea at all, because it is not a thing that a man can do. He falls because he cannot help it—there is no effort in falling, it is cessation from effort.” Still, though I put it, as I thought, so that he ought to understand it, he did not comprehend it. It was sometime later when the Holy Spirit revealed it to him, that he came to understand what faith was. Perhaps you ask, “Are we such dolts that we do not even understand plain Saxon language when it has to do with spiritual things?” Ah, my Hearers, sin has made fools of us! Sin has so befooled us that even God’s Word, itself, does not convey God’s meaning to our stupid minds until the Spirit of God comes and teaches our reason, reason—and takes the film from our eyes and helps us to see what is, in itself, plain as a pikestaff—but is not plain to us by reason of our sinful and corrupt nature! Before I try, then, to preach about what faith is, may I ask you to pray the Holy Spirit to come and open men’s eyes, that they may see what faith is? For truly, as we know not what we should pray for as we ought, we know not how to believe as we ought! And we make mistakes on this simplest of all subjects until the Holy Spirit sets us right. Divine Spirit, we believe in You, but we do not believe in ourselves! We see, in some measure, how stupid, how ignorant we are. Come, we pray You, and teach us even the first lesson of the Doctrines of Christ, teach us to believe in Jesus!

If you want to cut a diamond, you must cut it with a diamond—so, if you want to explain Scripture, you must explain it with Scripture. I thought, therefore, that I would take three expressions from the Old Testament which may help to set forth what faith really is.

I. The first expression you will find in the 57th Psalm, and the first verse. It shows that faith is HIDING IN God—“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusts in You: yes, in the shadow of Your wings will I make my refuge.”

See then, trusting in God, that is, faith, is the same thing as hiding under the shadow of God’s wings by way of refuge. Let me explain that figure, first, as relating to birds beneath their mother’s wings. There is a hawk in the sky, the hen sees it, she begins to give her warning “cluck.” The little chickens hardly know what the danger is, but they understand the mother’s call and they see her crouching down on the ground. Have you ever seen her close to the earth, with her wings outspread and calling and calling again till every one of her chicks comes and hides beneath her wings? They are out of sight of the bird of prey—if that hawk comes down at all, it will have to attack the hen and kill her before it can reach her chicks. The pecks of its bill, the tearing of its talons will have to be, first, upon the mother bird, for her little ones are all hidden beneath the cover of her wings.

Now, that hiding is an illustration of faith. Here is Christ, the Savior, and I hide myself under Him. The justice of God must strike the sinner, or One who is able and willing to suffer in the sinner’s place. It is imperative, as a first Law of the universe, that sin cannot go unpunished. As Justice approaches, with drawn sword, I find Christ coming and interposing between me and the sentence of the Law—and if the avenger seeks me, I hide away under Christ and all the blows must be dealt upon Him. You know how He was wounded, beaten, torn, that you and I, hiding beneath Him, might escape. It sometimes happens, on the sides of the Alps, that a mountain goat or a wild gazelle may be feeding there and an eagle spies out a kid close by its mother—and the powerful bird thinks to devour that kid and down it flies! But the little creature crouches as low as it can at its mother’s side and there stands the mother with horns ready to meet the eagle, and to fight against it for the life of her beloved little one. So the little kid is hidden away behind its mother and she valorously contends for it. In that way we must hide behind the Savior. We sang just now—

*“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,*

*Let me hide myself in Thee!”*  
I put myself behind my Savior. I say to God, Deal not with me—deal with my dying Savior! My God, I interpose between Your wrath and my guilty head, the Sacrifice which He presented on the Cross, when He bowed His head and said, ‘It is finished!’”

The act of the chickens hiding away beneath the hen’s wings is a very good description of the act of faith.  
It may be further illustrated by travelers hiding beneath a rock. Journeying through hot countries, they find towards noon that the air is very sultry and that the sandy soil beneath them reflects the heat of the sun. They seem to be traveling in a hot bath and they feel faint and weary. But yonder there is a great rock cropping out of the soil and under its shadow the heat is not felt. I have often been struck with the singular coolness that there is just by the side of a great rock. I have, myself, sometimes stood out in the sunshine in the South of France and it has been so hot that I have felt ready to faint—and I have just stepped back within the shadow of a rock and found it almost as chilly as a vault! Refreshing, indeed, has it been to get into the cooler atmosphere!  
Well, now, Christ is the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land—and if you and I come to Him, and let His shadow come between us and the burning heat of the sun of Divine Justice, the heat will fall on the Rock— not on us. We shall be safe and refreshed and the Rock will screen us from all evil. Come and put Christ between you and God! He is the Interposer between God and man and that is true faith which gets to the side of the Rock, Christ, and hides away beneath His sheltering shade!  
Take another Biblical metaphor, that of the manslayer hiding in the City of Refuge. That was a part of the Law, you remember. If one had killed a man inadvertently and not of malice, the next of kin of the man killed could seek revenge and he followed up the manslayer—and the poor man’s only hope of life was to hurry away as quickly as ever he could to a refuge city belonging to the priests. If he could once pass through the gate of a City of Refuge, he was sure of a fair trial and could not be put to death by the avenger of blood. Oh, how he hurried! How his feet seemed to fly over the soil, especially if he saw the avenger at some little distance following him with hot feet! But once let the city gate be shut, he breathed freely within the sacred streets—he was safe! Come, guilty souls, and fly away to Christ, as the manslayer fled away to the City of Refuge and, once safe in Him, with Jesus as the great Gate between you and the avenger of blood, you are perfectly safe! Do you comprehend and catch the thought? It is hiding away in Christ, from the pursuit of vengeance, from the righteous wrath of God, that brings safety.  
Another illustration comes in here, it is that of the conies hiding in the rocks—“The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.” A coney was not exactly like a rabbit—a rabbit hardly dwells among rocks—but this creature was always found in holes and crannies of the rocks. Poor little coney, a dog is after it and the sportsman seeks to destroy it. But there is an opening in the rock and he slips in there and is perfectly safe. The dog barks and the coney’s little heart beats fast, but barking will not kill conies! The sportsman looks up and down, but he cannot see the coney—he can see the rock, but he cannot see the coney within the rock. The coney has hidden right away from the keenest sight of the man who would destroy him.  
Now, just hide in that way in Christ, who died for guilty men! Trust Him. Believe Him. Believe that He will save you. Hide yourself in the Rock of Ages and then, though you may feel some fears, you will have no need of any. Once safe in Christ, all is well with you! You know that when a ship has been driven by a storm and the winds are out, the mariners hasten to the harbor. When they got into port, down goes the anchor! The rattle of the chains is one of the most pleasant sounds ever heard when one is seasick and worn out with a tempest-tossed voyage. Down goes the anchor—well, but when the motion of the ship still keeps on, she rocks to and fro—yes, but the anchor is down, the fear is all over! No matter how the vessel rocks, the winds cannot drive her out of the harbor. She is safe in port and the anchor is down—all is well with her. Oh, if tonight you can let the anchor go right down into the deeps and trust Christ—get a grip on Christ and hold on to Christ—you may have some fears and there may be some tossing for you yet to endure, but all is well! As the ship hides itself in the harbor, so do you hide away in Christ, saying with David, “In the shadow of Your wings will I make my refuge.” This is faith.  
I cannot preach as I would. I have been learning to preach for ever so many years, but I cannot do it as I want to. But I wish that, instead of my preaching to you, you would practice what I bid you and hide away under the shadow of Christ’s wings—  
“*Come, guilty souls, and flee away  
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds!  
This is the welcome Gospel-Day,  
Wherein Free Grace abounds.”*  
I remember when I first hid away in that Rock. I have been tempted many times to come out, but I never will. I cannot fight the hawk, I cannot kill the eagle, but I can squeeze myself further back into my Rock and hide away there and even—  
*“When my eye-strings break in death,  
When I soar through tracks unknown,”*  
and see Christ on His Judgement Throne, I hope, still, to shelter in the Rock of Ages! Do the same, dear Sister! Do the same, dear Brother! May the Holy Spirit lead you to do it now! Remember that you have to believe for yourself—the Holy Spirit will not believe for you—He cannot believe for you. How can He? He has nothing to believe. It is you who have to believe and though He works in you to will and to do, He works, but you believe. It is only personal faith that saves—it could not be the faith of the Holy Spirit—it must be the sinner’s own faith though it is worked in him by the Spirit of God. Therefore, believe and live unto God!  
II. Having dwelt on that illustration long enough, I ask you, now, to notice another expression in Psalm 55, verse 22—“Cast your burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain you.” This passage sets forth faith as ROLLING OUR BURDEN UPON GOD.  
I believe that this text might be rendered, “Roll your burden upon the Lord.” The similar passage in Psalm 37, verse five, “Commit your way unto the Lord,” is, in the margin, “Roll your way upon the Lord.”  
Faith, then, is the leaving of our burdens with God. When a man believes in Christ, he shifts his burden from his own shoulders onto the shoulders of Christ—  
*“My soul looks back to see  
The burdens You did bear,  
When hanging on the cursed tree,  
And hopes her guilt was there.”*  
There you are, stooping down beneath a crushing load, heavy as that which Atlas was supposed to bear when the whole world was on his back—and Christ comes in and says, “Roll your burden from off your shoulders on to Mine. Let Me bear it for you.”  
Well, then, if the burden is laid upon Christ, then we have not to bear it ourselves. Notice that. Some will say, “We trust Christ, but yet we are not at ease.” How is that? If you have trusted Christ, you have rolled your burden upon Him—it is no longer upon you. I do not know whether there are still, near Ludgate Hill, as there used to be, certain rests for burden bearers. You might have seen the porter come toiling up to that spot and, as he shifted his burden onto the rest, he was, himself, relieved of the load. I have often looked at one of those rests at Mentone and seen the women come along the road with huge baskets of lemons or oranges on their heads and, as soon as they have reached this kind of table, they have put their burden on it, sat down and rested a while.  
Now, when they put their basket of oranges there, it is not on their head, is it? There is the beauty of rolling your burden upon Christ! When He takes it, it is not on you any longer. A thing cannot be in two places at one time! And when, by faith, I lay my burden down at Jesus’ feet, I do not have it anymore! If my sin is laid on Him, it does not any longer lie on me! Come, poor Soul, here is the act of faith—to take the mighty burden that will crush you lower than the lowest Hell—and lay it on Christ, your Savior!  
When the burden is on Him, and not on us, the burden is not ours to take up again. I have heard that some of our rests in London were done away with because porters were known to come and put their loads on them, and sit down a while and, afterwards, get up and go home without them. You would hardly believe they could be so forgetful, but people do strange things. However, that is a mistake that I want you to make with regard to Christ, for there is no mistake in it! Lay your sin on Him by an act of faith, but do not take it up again! I never can believe, as some do, in God forgiving our sin and afterwards laying it to our account. I believe that in the day when our sin was laid on Christ, it was

 all laid there, and taken away from His people, never to be charged against them again! “As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” How far is the East from the West? If you could travel, like a ray of light, as far eastward as you pleased—while another went as far westward as he could desire—you might go on forever and forever, and yet not meet. The distance, so far as created things can be, is infinite—and so far has the Lord removed our transgressions from us. If we, by faith, lay our sins upon Christ, God Himself forgets them and casts them behind His back, so that He says that if they are searched for, they shall not be found anymore forever.  
And here is one of the greatest mercies of all, that the burden is not even on Christ now. Roll your burden upon Him and, if you do, that burden is not on Him now. He died on the Cross and they laid Him in the sepulcher. Your sin rolls into His sepulcher and it is buried. Christ has left it as a dead and buried thing and He has risen from among the dead. He took your debt upon Himself, but when He paid that debt, it was not anymore due from Him, neither was it due from you! Therefore, we rightly sing—  
*“Now both the Surety and sinner are free.”*The atoning Sacrifice of Christ is so complete a satisfaction to the Lord that even the sin that was laid on the Lamb of God is gone forever! It has ceased, even, to be, so that a Believer in Christ may, indeed, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!  
Now then, roll your burden upon the Lord. I really think that if a number of friends all stood here, tonight, groaning under a great load, and I said, “Just roll your burdens off,” they would understand me. What a lot of rolling off would be done very soon! That is all that is required with your sin. Jesus is willing to take it! Jesus is willing to obliterate all the black record against you! Let it go to Him. Tell the devil that you have been answering him long enough and you are not going to talk to him any longer, for you have an Advocate in whose hands you are going to leave your case. When a man has an advocate, he does not go and do his legal business, himself—he refers everybody to his advocate. “Go and settle with him,” he says. And tonight, when the devil says, “You are a sinner,” I reply, “I know I am and so are you.” “Ah,” says he, “but you deserve death.” “Yes,” I answer, “but there is One who stood in my place—go and settle my account with Him. He undertook my business and He said that He would see me through with it if I would but trust Him, and I do trust Him! I must refer you to my Advocate, He can settle with you, I cannot.”  
Do that, I pray you! Roll your burden upon the Lord. Trust in Him—to roll your burden upon Him is to trust Him! I do not know a better figure by which to set faith forth. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit may use it, tonight, to the unburdening of many poor souls!  
III. I said that we would have three of these Old Testament diamonds— the third is found in the 50th chapter of Isaiah, and the 10th verse, where faith is likened to STAYING UPON GOD. I read it to you just now, but we will read the verse again—“Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and” (here is the same thing as trusting in the name of the Lord, the explanation of it) “stay upon his God.”  
The word, “stay,” means, “lean.” If I cannot stand, if I feel giddy, I naturally put out my hand. And if I feel faint, I lean upon some support and, the more faint I am, the more I lean. At this moment, I lean my whole weight upon this platform rail, just so. If this rail gives way, I must go down. I am leaning, staying myself wholly here. Now that is what you have to do with Christ—lean on Him with all your weight of sin and sorrow— lean on Jesus Christ and lean hard! Do not try to hold yourself up, now— throw yourself right on Him, lean on Him, rest on Him, let Him bear the whole of your weight. Stay yourself upon Him.  
In order to do that, you must believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is able to bear you up. Do you not believe it? He is God as well as Man. He has offered an all-sufficient Atonement to God. He is well-pleasing to the Father. He is the Lord, strong and mighty—a Savior—and a great One! Lean on Him and lean hard. Did anyone say, “I am afraid to trust Christ lest He may not be able to bear me up”? Oh, dear Friend, do not talk so! It seems so absurd. I remember a good old lady who would never go over the Saltash bridge at Plymouth. She looked up at it and said that she did not believe that it would ever bear her weight. There were great luggage trains that went rolling over it, but, still, she always said that it would not bear her. You smile, do you? Now, just think that you are that old woman—you are doing a more foolish thing than she did if you cannot trust Christ with your weight! Christ who is Omnipotent to save! How foolish you must be! He is able to save you. He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him! Therefore stay yourself upon Him.  
Then, lean all your weight on Him. If you do that, you no longer have to support yourself. The sinner says, “I do not think that I could ever get to Heaven.” Lean upon Christ to get there. “Oh, but if I were to leave my sins, I am afraid that I would go back to them!” Lean upon Christ to keep you from going back. “Oh, but if I lived here many years, I would be tempted and I might fall!” Lean upon Christ to preserve you from falling. “Ah, but you do not know what a temper I have!” Lean upon Christ to conquer your temper. “But, Sir, I have gone back so many times.” Lean upon Christ to keep you from going back anymore—stay yourself upon Him! I cannot possibly mention all your weaknesses, all your doubts and all your fears, but whatever they are, lean upon Christ, lean hard on Him, like one of our female missionaries, when sustained by one of her converts in the hour of death. The convert said, “Lean on me, Missionary. Lean on me, Sister,” and as she thought that the missionary had a delicacy in resting all her weight, she said, “If you love me, lean hard, for the harder you lean, the more I shall feel that you love me.” And Christ says to you, “Sinner, if you love Me, lean hard.” Lean hard on Him and He will bear you up. You do not need strength for leaning on Christ—  
*“True belief and true repentance,”*  
perseverance, and every Grace that you need to make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, Christ will give it all to you! Depend upon Him for it all! You will never have ease of mind, you will never know what full salvation means till you just give yourself up, as though you were dead, that He might be your life. Resign yourself to Christ, as a wandering sheep has to do to the shepherd when he takes it by the legs and throws it on his shoulders and carries it home, rejoicing. Christ can save—He will save—therefore, stay yourself upon Him!  
If you do, you shall have perfect peace. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You.” I should like to begin preaching, again, with that for my text, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You.” If you have not perfect peace, it is because you are not staying yourself on God as you ought to do. There is no other way of coming to a perfect rest but by a perfect leaning upon Christ. Will you do that tonight? If a man were to get one foot on a rock, he might stand very well. Suppose that he puts the other foot on the sand? The sea comes up, the sand is treacherous and his foot begins to sink. I should recommend him to get wholly on that bit of rock and to stand there. Do so, then—stay yourself wholly upon Christ. Have no confidence in yourself, in Baptism, in sacraments, in prayers, in good works, in anything but the finished work of Christ—and when you get there, you are on a foundation that can never be moved!  
I would like to say, as I finish, that I have now served the Lord Jesus Christ for about 40 years and I have preached His Gospel, I can say, with all my heart. Neither have I cared for anything but to win souls to my Lord Jesus, but when I came to Him at first, I had no hope but in His blood and merits and I have no more hope, now, apart from His blood and merits, than I had at the beginning! I stand on the same foundation as I stood upon then. I have heard of a good man who said, as he was dying, that he was sorting over his life, putting his good works in one bundle and his bad ones in the other. At last he said to his wife, “It is no use sorting them out, for the good ones are so bad that I think that I will fling them all away and cling to Christ, alone.”  
There was a famous cardinal, in Luther’s day, who fought tremendously against the Reformer, but he said, in the course of the discussion, that, seeing that there is much in our good works that is faulty, and no man can be quite sure that he has done enough good works to save him—upon the whole it is better to trust only to the merits of Christ. Well, the best of everything always suits me and if that is the best, I will let other people have the second best and I will just trust in Christ, and trust in Christ, alone. Oh, that you would all do so tonight! Have done with yourself! Have done with your good works! Have done with your bad ones—have done with any reliance upon self, whatever—and just come as you are and trust Christ who died for the guilty and undeserving!  
O bankrupt Sinner! O Sinner without a hope, come and just stay yourself upon the immovable foundation of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ and you shall find eternal life tonight! Yes, even tonight! God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ISAIAH 50.**

Verse 1. Thus says the LORD. There is always something weighty coming when you have this preface. If God speaks, we ought to hear with reverence, with attention.

1. Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? God is here addressing His ancient people. They had been given up, as it were, left, forsaken. They compared themselves to a wife who had been divorced by her husband, or to children who bad been sold by their father because of his extreme poverty. The Lord says, “Now, tell Me, have I really put away My chosen people as a man in a pet puts away his wife? Have I really sold you to profit by you? What benefit is it to Me that you are carried away captive and that you are left without comfort?”

1. Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away. It was not God’s changeableness, but their own sinfulness that had brought upon them all their sufferings. The Jews might have remained a nation in possession of their own land to this day if they had not turned aside unto idols. It was not that God cast away His people whom He did foreknow, but they cast Him off, they sold themselves. Now, if any child of God has fallen into trouble of heart and has lost his comfort, let him not blame God—his sorrow is caused by his own acts and deeds. And if any man or woman here should be in deep trouble brought on by sin, let them not set it down to their destiny, let them not call God unkind, but let them take the blame to themselves— “For your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.”

2. Therefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer? It is Christ who is speaking here by the mouth of the Prophet. When He came, there was “no man.” He could not find in all the nation any faithful one to help Him in His great redemptive work. “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” He preached repentance and faith throughout the land, but they cried, “Crucify, Him! Crucify Him!” They loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

2. Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? If you are in the worst plight in which you can be, God can still help you. Despair of yourself, but do not despair of Him! If you have come to the very bottom of all things and the last ray of hope is quenched in midnight darkness, God is still the same! Hear what He says to you, “Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?” Can He not break the bonds of drunkenness? Can He not deliver the unchaste from their vile passions? Can He not pick up from the dunghill the outcast and the offcasts? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is the salvation of the greatest sinners impossible for Him to accomplish? That can never be, for He is “mighty to save.”

2. Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I Make the rivers a wilderness, their fish stink because there is no water, and they die of thirst. God divided the Red Sea, He parted the Jordan asunder and made a way for His people to pass over. He who has done this can do anything! When God takes up the case, impossibility is not in the dictionary. However great your sorrow, however deep your misfortune, or however grievous your sin, if God comes to deal with it, He will make short work of all your troubles and all your despair.

3, 4. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering. The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakens morning by morning, He wakens My ears to hear as the learned. This is Christ speaking again. When He came here, though He found no man able to help Him, none to come and join Him in the redemption of His people, yet He gave Himself up to the tremendous task. He became instructed of the Father. He was taught to speak a word to weary ones. “Never man spoke like this Man.” There is no gospel like His Gospel, no doctrine like His Doctrine. He went to God in private “morning by morning.” He received His message from His Father and He came and delivered it to the people. Oh, what a glorious Christ we have!

5. The Lord GOD has opened My ears and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. He had His ear bored as slaves had when they would not go out free, but meant to remain with their master. Christ had a bored ear, an opened ear. He never rebelled against God’s will. He was obedient to the Father, even unto death. If you want to know how obedient He was, hear me read the next verse—

6. I gave My back to the smiters, and My checks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting. Now let me go back a little and read, again, the third verse—“I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.” “I gave My back to the smiters, and My checks to them that plucked off the hair.” It is the same Divine Person who musters the hosts of Heaven till the very skies are blackened with the artillery of God, who here says, “I gave My back to the smiters, bowing down to the brutal Roman scourge, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” You remember the scene that I pictured last Sunday night, the whole band of soldiers mocking Christ and even spitting upon Him? [ Sermon #2333, Volume 39—The Whole Band Against Christ— Read/download entire sermon at http://www.spurgeongems.org .] That was the fulfillment of these words, “I hid not My face front shame and spitting.” That same Christ, without whom was not anything made that was made, whose face is the sun of Heaven, whose Glory is matchless and unsearchable, says, “I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” Do not say, then, that God has no love to you! Do not say that He has cast you away as a husband divorces his wife. Talk no more as if there were no help for you, no means of your deliverance. Behold how low your Savior stooped, how gracious He was to suffer so much for guilty men—and be encouraged to trust Him. He who gave His back to the smiters says to you, “The chastisement of your peace was upon Me, and with My stripes you are healed.”

7. For the Lord GOD will help Me. This is Christ still speaking. Though God, Himself, yet as the God-Man, looking to His Father for help in the dread struggle through which He went to save us, He declared, “The Lord God will help Me.”

7. Therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. And He was not—He went through with all that He had undertaken. He drank our bitter cup till none of the dregs remained. He bore the terrible wrath of God, which otherwise would have rested on us forever! God helped Him and He bore it all.

8, 9. He is near that justifies Me; who will contend with Me? Let us stand together: who is My adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help Me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. Will any now come to battle against Christ and hope to conquer Him? Voltaire used to say, “Crush the Wretch!” but where is Voltaire now? And those who agreed with Voltaire, where are they now? But Jesus always lives and reigns and God is with Him! He who shall once come to battle with our glorious Lord shall soon know the power of Christ’s weakness and the Omnipotence of His death!

10. Who is among you—Here is a very blessed question. Christ, having passed through all the trouble that could be passed through, and having come out of it triumphant, now looks round on all His followers, on all the children of God, and He says, “Who is among you”—

10. That fears the LORD, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God. Do you see the drift of it? Our Savior trusted and He was not confounded. He stayed Himself upon God even when He said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” and He came off a conqueror! Trust in God and you, also, will be victorious! Let your strength be drawn from that strong and mighty One who is pledged to help all who trust Him and you shall triumph even as Jesus did! Do you refuse to trust God? Then listen to this—

11. Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that you have kindled. If you think to make yourselves happy in sin, go and do it! If you fancy that your own righteousness will save you, go and try it!

11. This shall you have of My hand; you shall lie down in sorrow. Your fire shall not warm you! Your sparks shall not enlighten you! You will have to lie down to die and you shall lie down in sorrow. O my dear Hearers, the time will come when each one of us must put off this body and lie down to die! God grant that we may, none of us, have to lie down in sorrow, but instead thereof, having trusted in God, may He light our candle for us in the last moment, that we may fall asleep in Jesus and wake up in His likeness in the everlasting Glory! May God bless to us the reading of His Word! Amen.

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STRONG FAITH IN A FAITHFUL GOD  
NO. 3445

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1915. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. “I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performs all things for me.” Psalm 57:2.

DAVID was in the Cave Adullam. He had fled from Saul, his remorseless foe, and had found shelter in the clefts of the rock. In the beginning of this Psalm he rings the alarm bell—and very loud is the sound of it. “Be merciful unto me,” and then the clapper hits the other side of the bell. “Be merciful unto me.” He utters his Miserere again and again. “My soul trusts in You; yes, in the shadow of Your wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.” Thus he solaces himself by faith in his God. Faith is always an active Grace. Its activity, however, is first of all manifested in prayer. This precedes any action. “I will cry,” he says, “unto God Most High.” You know how graciously he was preserved in the cave, even when Saul was close at his heels. Among the winding intricacies of those caverns he was enabled to conceal himself, though his enemy, with armed men, was close at hand. The Targum has a note upon this which may or may not be true. It states that a spider spun its web over the door of that part of the cave where David was concealed. The legend is not unlike one told of another king at a later time. It may have been true of David, and it is quite as likely to be true of the other. If so, David would, in such a passage as this, have directed his thoughts to the little acts God had performed for him which had become great in their results. If God makes a spider spin a web to save His servant’s life, David traces his deliverance not to the spider, but to the wonder-working Jehovah! And he says, “I will cry unto God Most High, unto God that performs all things for me.” It is delightful to see these exquisite prayers come from holy men in times of extreme distress. As the sick oyster makes the pearl, and not the healthy one, so does it seem as if the child of God brings forth gems of prayer in affliction more pure, brilliant and sparkling than any that he produces in times of joy and exultation.

Our text is capable of three meanings. To these three meanings we shall call your attention briefly. “Unto God who performs all things for me.” First, there is Infinite Providence. As it stands, the words, “all things,” you perceive, have been added by the translators. Not that they were mistaken in so doing, for the unlimited expression, “God that performs for me,” allows them to supply the omission without any violation of the sense. Secondly, there is inviolable faithfulness, as we know that David here referred to God’s working out the fulfillment of the promises He had made. We sang just now of the sweet promise of His Grace as the performing God. I think Dr. Watts borrowed that expression from this verse. Thirdly, there is a certainty of ultimate completeness. The original has for its root the word, “finishing,” and now working it out, it means a God that performs or, as it were, perfects and accomplishes all things concerning me. Whatever there is in His promise or Covenant that I may need, He will perfect for me. To begin with—

I. THE MARVELOUS PROVIDENCE.  
The text, as it stands, speaks of a service—“I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performs all things for me.” “All things,” that is to say, in everything that I have to do, I am but an instrument in His hands—it is God who does it for me. The Christian has no right to have anything to do for which he cannot ask God’s help. No, he should have no business which he could not leave with his God. It is his to work and to exercise prudence, but it is his to call in the aid of God to his work and to leave the care of it with the God who cares for him. Any work in which he cannot ask Divine co-operation, the care of which he cannot cast upon God is unfit for him to be engaged in. Depend upon it, if I cannot say of the whole of my life, “God performs all things for me,” there is sin somewhere and evil lurks in the disposition thereof. If I am living in such a state that I cannot ask God to carry out for me the enterprises I have embarked in, and entirely rely on His Providence for the issues, then what I cannot ask Him to do for me, neither have I any right to do for myself! Let us think, therefore, of the whole of our ordinary life and apply the text to it. Should we not, each morning, cry unto God to give us help through the day? Though we are not going out to preach. Though we are not going up to the assembly for worship. Though it is only our ordinary business, that ordinary business ought to be a consecrated thing! Opportunities for God’s service should be sought in our common avocations—we may glorify God very much therein. On the other hand, our souls may suffer serious damage, we may do much mischief to the cause of Christ in the ordinary walk of any one day. It is for us, then, to begin the day with prayer—to continue all through the day in the same spirit and to close the day by commending whatever we have done to that same Lord. Any success attending that day, if it is real success, is of God who gives it to us! “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it,” is a statement applicable to the whole of Christian life! It is vain to rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for so He gives His Beloved sleep. If there is any true blessing, such blessing, as Jabez craved, when he said, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed,” it must come from the God of Heaven—it can come from nowhere else. Cry then, Christian, concerning your common life to God! Say continually, “I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performs all things for me.”  
Perhaps at this hour you are troubled about some petty little thing, or you have been through the day exercised about some trivial matter. Do you not think we often suffer more from our little troubles than from our great ones? A thorn in the foot will irritate our temper, while the dislocation of a joint would reveal our fortitude. Often the man who would bear the loss of a fortune with the equanimity of Job will wince and fume under a paltry annoyance that might rather excite a smile than a groan. We are apt to be disquieted in vain. Does not this very much arise from our forgetting that God performs all things for us? Do we not ignore the fact that our success in little things, our rightness in the minutiae in life, our comfort in these inconsiderable trifles depends upon His blessing? Know you not that God can make the gnat and the fly to be a greater trouble to Egypt than the diseases of cattle, the thunder, or the storm? Little trials, if unblessed—if unattended with the Divine Favor, may scourge you fearfully and betray you into much sin. Commend them to God, then! And little blessings, as you think, if taken away from you, would soon involve very serious consequences. Thank God, then, for the little. Put the little into His hands—it is nothing to Jehovah to work in the little, for the great is little to Him! There is not much difference, after all, in our littles and our greats to the Infinite Mind of our glorious God. Cast all on Him who numbers the hairs of your head, and allows not a sparrow to fall to the ground without His decree! Unto God cry about the little things, for He performs all things for us. Do I speak to some who are contemplating a great change in life? Take not that step, my Brother, my Sister, without much careful waiting upon God. But if you be persuaded that the change is one that has the Master’s approval, fear not, for He performs all things for you. At this moment you have many perplexities. You may vex yourself with anxiety, and make yourself foolish with shilly-shallying if you sport with fancy, vexing up bright dreams, and yielding to dark forebodings. There is many a knot we seek to untie which were better cut with the sword of faith! We should end our difficulties by leaving them with Him who knows the end from the beginning!  
Up to this moment you have been rightly led—you have the same Guide. To this hour, He who sent the cloudy pillar has led you rightly through the devious ways of the wilderness—follow, still, with a sure confidence that all is well. If you keep close to Him, He performs all things for you. Take your guidance from His Word and, waiting upon Him in prayer, you need not fear. Just now, perhaps, in addition to some exciting dilemma, you are surrounded with real trouble and distress. Will it not be well to cry unto God Most High, who now, in the time of your strait and difficulty, will show Himself, again, to you a God all-sufficient to His people in their times of need? He is always near! I do not know that He has said, “When you walk through the green pastures, I will be with you, and when your way lies hard by the river of the Water of Life, where lilies bloom, I will strengthen you.” I believe He will do so, but I do not remember such a promise. But, “When you go through the rivers, I will be with you,” is a well-known promise of His. If ever He is present, it shall be in trial—if He can be absent, it will certainly not be when His servants most need His aid! Rest in Him, then. But you say, “I can do so little in this time of difficulty.” Do what you can, and leave the rest to Him! If you see no way of escape, does it follow that there is none? If you see no help, is it, therefore, to be inferred that help cannot come? Your Lord and Savior found no friend among the whole family of man, “Yet,” said He, “could I not presently pray to My Father, and He would send me twelve legions of angels?” Were it necessary for your help, the squadrons of Heaven would leave the Glory Land to come to your rescue—the least and poorest of the children of God as you may be! He will perform for you—be you, therefore, obedient, trustful, patient. ‘Tis yours to obey, ‘tis His to command, ‘tis yours to perceive, ‘tis His to perform. He will perform all things for you!  
Very likely among this audience, some are foolish enough to perplex themselves as to their future life, and forestall the time when they shall grow old and their vigor shall be abated. It is always unwise to anticipate our troubles. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Of all selftorture, that of importing in sure trouble into present account is, perhaps, the most insane! Do you tell me you cannot help looking into the future. Well, then, look and peer into the distance as far as your weak vision can reach, but do not breathe upon the telescope with your anxious breath and fancy you see clouds! On the contrary, just wipe your eyes with the soft kerchief of some gracious Word of promise and hold your breath while you gaze through that transparent medium. Use the eyesalve of faith! Then, whatever you discern of the future, you will also descry. He rules and He overrules! He will make all things work together for good! He will surely bring you through! Goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever! He it is who will perform all things for you. Oh, strange infatuation! You see your weakness, you see the temptations that will assail you and the troubles that threaten you, and you are afraid. Look away from them all! This is no business of yours. Leave it in His hands, who will manage well, who will be sure to do the kindest and the best thing for you. Be of good confidence and rest in peace!  
So shall it be even at life’s close. He performs all things for me. I have the boundary of life in the prospective, the almost certainty that I must die. Unless the Lord comes before my term expires, I must close these eyes, gather up these feet in the bed, breathe a last gasp and yield my soul to Him who gave it. Well, fear not! He helped me to live—He will help me to die! He has made me perform up to this moment my allotted task, yes, He has performed it for me—giving me His Grace and working His Providence with me. Shall I fear that He will desert me at the last? He performs not some things, but all things, and He cannot omit this most important thing which often makes me tremble. No, that must be included, for all things are mine—death as well as life! I leave my dying hour, then, with Him, and never boding ill of it, I cry unto God Most High, unto God that performs all things for me! I want, dear Brothers and Sisters, to leave this impression in your minds, that in the great business of life, whatever it is, while we do not sit still and fold our hands for lack of work, yet God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. This we recognize distinctly—if anything is done right, or successfully, it is God that performs it, and we give Him the Glory! I want you to feel that, as the task is performed by Him in all its details, so to the very close of your life, all shall be performed of His Grace through you by Himself, to His own honor and praise, world without end! The second run of thought which the text suggests is that of—

II. INVIOLABLE FAITHFULNESS.  
“Unto God that performs all things for me.” The God who made the promises has not left them as pictures, but has made them to fulfill them. It is God who is the actual Worker of all that He declared in the Covenant of Grace should be worked in and for His people!  
Let us think of this as it pertains to our Redeemer’s merits. “Unto God that performs all things for me.” Meritoriously our Savior-God has performed all things for us. Our sin has been all put away—He bore it all— every particle of it. The righteousness that wraps us is complete—He has woven it all from the top throughout. All that God’s infinite, unflinching Justice can ask of us has been performed for us by our Surety and our Covenant Head. I need not say I have to fight—my warfare is accomplished. I need not think I have to wash away my sins—as a Believer, my sin is pardoned. All things are performed for me! Don’t forget amidst your service for Christ what service Christ has rendered to you! Do all things for Christ, but let the stimulating motive be that Christ has done all things for you! There is not even a little thing that is for you to do to complete the work of Christ. The Temple He has built needs not that you should find a single stone to make it perfect. The ransom He has paid does not wait until you add the last mite. It is all done! O Soul, if Christ has completely redeemed you and saved you, rest on Him and cry to Him! And if sin rebels within you at this present moment, fly—though your spirit is shut up as in the Cave Adullam—fly to Him by faith—to Him who has done all things for you as your Representative and Substitute! After the same manner, all things in us that have ever been worked there have been performed by God for us. The Holy Spirit has worked every fraction of good that is within our souls. No one flower that God loves grows in the garden of our souls in the natural soil, self-sown. The first trembling desire after God came from His Spirit. The blade, though very tender would never have sprung up if Jesus had not sown the seed. Though the first rays of dawn were scarcely light, but only rendered the darkness visible, yet from the Sun of Righteousness they come—no light sprang from the natural darkness of our spirit! It could not be that life could be begotten of death, or that light could be the child of darkness. He began the work. He led us when we went tremblingly to the foot of the Cross. He helped us when we followed Him with staggering steps. The eyes with which we looked to Jesus and believed, were opened by Him! Christ was revealed to us not by our own discovery, nor by our own tuition, but the Spirit of God revealed the Son of God in our spirit! We looked and we were lightened. The vision and the enlightening were alike from Him—He performed all for us.  
As I look back upon my own spiritual career, when I was seeking the Savior, I am wonderfully struck with the way in which God performed everything for me. For if He had not, I do remember well when I should have rendered it impossible for me to have been here to tell of the wonders of His Grace! Hard pressed by Satan and by sin, my soul chose strangling rather than life. Had I known more of my own guiltiness, my heart would utterly have broken and my life have failed. But wisdom and prudence were mingled with the teachings of God’s Law. He did not allow the schoolmaster to be too severe, but stayed the soul beneath the dire remorse which conviction caused. I had never believed on Him if He had not taught me to believe! To give up hope in self was desperate work, and then to find hope in Christ seemed more desperate, still. It appeared to me easy enough to believe in Jesus while one was really believing in one’s self, but when “despair” was written upon self, then one was too apt to transfer the despair even to the Cross, itself, and it appeared impossible to believe! But the Spirit worked faith in me, and I believed. That is not my testimony, only, but the testimony of all my Brothers and Sisters—in that hour of sore trouble it was God who performed all things for us! Since then and up to this moment, my Brothers and Sisters, if there has been any virtue, if there has been in you anything lovely and of good repute, to whom do you or can you attribute it? Must you not say, “Of Him all my fruit was found”? You could not have done without Him! If you have made any progress, if you have made any advance, or even if you think you have, believe me, your growth, advance, progress, have all been a mistake unless they have come entirely from Him! There is no wealth for us but that which is dug in this mine. There is no strength for us but that which comes from the Omnipotent One Himself. “You who perform all things for me,” must be our cry up to this hour!  
What a consolation it is that our God never changes! What He was yesterday, He is today. What we find Him today, we shall find Him forever! Are you struggling against sin? Don’t struggle in your own strength— it is God who performs all things for you! Victories over sin are only sham victories unless we overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and through the power of Divine Grace. I am afraid of backsliding, but I think I am more afraid of growing in sanctification apparently in my own strength. It is a dreadful thing for the gray hairs to appear here and there—but it is worse, still, for the hair to appear to be of raven hue when the man is weak. Only the indication is changed, but not the state itself. May we have really what we think we have—no surface work, but deep, inner, spiritual life, worked in us from God—yes, every good spiritual thing from Him who performs all things for us and, I say, whatever struggles may come, whatever vehement temptations assail, or whatever thunderclouds may burst over your heads, you shall not be deserted, much less destroyed! In spiritual things it is God who performs all things for you. Rest in Him, then. It is no work of yours to save your own soul— Christ is the Savior. If He cannot save you, you certainly cannot save yourself. Why rest you your hopes where hopes never ought to be rested? Or let me change the question. Why do you fear where you never ought to have hoped? Instead of fearing that you cannot hold on, despair of holding on yourself and never look in that direction again! But if the preservation is of God, where is the cause for anxiety with you? In Him let your entire reliance be fixed. Cast the burden of your care on Him who performs all things for you! Lastly, this text in its moral, literal acceptation refers to—  
III. THE FINISHING STROKE OF A GRAND DESIGN.  
It really means, “I will cry unto God Most High—unto God who perfects all things concerning me.” David’s career was charged with a great work. It was portentous with a high destiny. He had been anointed when a lad by Samuel. The Lord had said, “I have provided Me a king among the sons of Jesse.” And Samuel had taken “the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.” He was thus clearly ordained to be king over Israel. His way to the throne was by Adullam. Strange route! To be king over Israel and Judah, he must first become a rebel, a wandering vagabond, known as a chieftain of bandits, hunted about by Saul, the reigning monarch. He must seek refuge in the courts of his country’s enemies, the Philistines, being without an earthly refuge, or place to lay his head. Strange way to a throne! Yet the Son of David had to go that way, and all the sons of God. The younger brethren of the Crown Prince will have to find their way to their crown by much the same route. But is not this a brave thing? Though Adullam does not look like the way to Zion, where he shall be crowned, David is so confident that what God has said will come to pass, so sure that Samuel’s anointing was no farce, but that he must be king, that he praises and blesses God that while He is making of him a houseless wanderer, He is perfecting that which concerns him and leading him by a sure path to the throne. Now, can I believe that He who promises that I shall be with Him where He is, that I may behold His Glory—He who gives the certainty to every Believer that he shall enter into everlasting happiness—can I believe tonight that He is perfecting that for me—that the way by which He is taking me tonight, so dark, so gloomy, so full of dangers, is, nevertheless, the shortest way to Heaven? That He is, tonight using the quickest method to perfect that which concerns my soul? O Faith! Here is something for you to do and if you can perform it, you shall bring glory to God! The pith of it is this— that if God has the keeping of us, He will perfect the keeping in the day of Christ! All His people are in the hands of Jesus, and in those hands they shall be forever and ever! “None shall pluck them out of My hands,” He says. Their preservation shall be perfected. So, too, their sanctification. Every child of God is set apart by Christ and in Christ—and the work of the Spirit has commenced which shall subdue sin and abolish the very roots of corruption—and this work shall be perfected! No, is being perfected at this very moment! The dragon is being trodden down under foot. The Seed of the woman within us is beginning to bruise the serpent’s head and shall clearly bruise it and crush it, even to the death within our soul.  
He is perfecting us in all things for Himself! He has promised to bring us to Glory. We have the earnest of that great Glory in us now. The new life is there—all the elements of Heaven are within us. Now He will perfect all these. He will not allow one good thing that He has planted within us to die. It is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. He will perfect all things for us. There is nothing that makes the saints complete but what God will give to us. There shall be lacking in us no one trait of loveliness that is necessary for the courtiers of the skies— no one virtue that is necessary to mark us as of the Divine Race, but shall be given, no, perfected in us! What a marvelous thing is a Christian! How mean; how noble! How abject; how august! How near to Hell; how close to Heaven! How fallen, yet lifted up! Able to do nothing; yet doing all things! Doing nothing; yet accomplishing all things because herein it is that, in the man, and with the man, there is God—and He performs all things for us! God, give us Grace to look away entirely, evermore, from ourselves and to depend entirely upon Him!

Now is there a soul here that desires salvation? My text gives you the clue of comfort. Try—the thing is simple—try. Look to Him. He performs all things for you! Everything that is needed to save your soul, your Heavenly Father will give you. Jesus, the Savior, has worked out all the sinner’s needs. You have but to come and take what is already accomplished and rest in it. “I cannot save myself,” you say. You need not— there is One who performs all things for you. “I am bruised and mangled by the Fall,” says one, “as though every bone were broken.” “I am incapable of a good thought. There is nothing good in me, or that can come from me.” Soul! It is not what you can do, but what God can do—what Christ has done—that must be the ground of your hope! Give yourself up unto God, Most High—unto God, who performs all things for you, and you shall be blessed, indeed! God send you away with His own blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 34:1-20.**

Verse 1. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. “Others may do what they please, and murmur, and complain, and be filled with dread and apprehension of the future, but I will bless the Lord at all times. I can always see something for which I ought to bless Him. I can always see some good which will come out of blessing Him. Therefore will I bless Him at all times. And this.” says the Psalmist, “I will not only do in my heart, but I will do with my tongue.” His praise shall continually be in my mouth, that others may hear it, that others may begin to praise Him, too, for murmuring is contagious, and so, thank God, is praise! And one man may learn from another—take the catchword and the keyword out of another man’s mouth—and then begin to praise God with him. “His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” What a blessed mouthful! If some people had God’s praises in their mouths, they would not so often find fault with their fellow men. “If half the breath thus vainly spent” in finding fault with our fellow Christians were spent in prayer and praise, how much happier, how much richer we would be spiritually! “His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear, thereof, and be glad. Boasting is generally annoying. Even those who boast cannot endure that other people should boast! But there is one kind of boasting that even the humble can bear to hear—no, they are glad to hear it! “The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.” That must be boasting in God—a holy glorying and extolling the Most High with words sought out with care that might magnify His blessed name! You will never exaggerate when you speak good things of God. It is not possible to do so. Try, dear Brothers and Sisters, and even boast in the Lord. There are many poor, trembling, doubting, humble souls that can hardly tell whether they are the Lord’s people or not—and are half afraid whether they shall be delivered in the hour of trouble—who will become comforted when they hear you boasting. “The humble shall hear, thereof, and be glad.” “Why,” says the humble soul, “God that helped that man can help me! He that brought him up through the deep waters and landed him safely, can also take me through the river and through the sea, and give me final deliverance. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord!” “The humble shall hear, thereof, and be glad.”

3. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together. He cannot do enough of it himself. He wants others to come in and help him! First, he charges his own heart with the weighty and blessed business of praising God, and then he invites all around to unite with him in the sacred effort. “Magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt His name together.”

4. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. That was David’s testimony. That is mine. Brother, that is yours, is it not? Sister, is not that yours, too? Well, if you have such a blessed testimony, be sure to proclaim it! Often do you whisper it in the mourner’s ear, “I sought the Lord and He heard me.” Tell it in the scoffer’s ear. When he says, “There is no God,” and that prayer is useless, say to him, “I sought the Lord and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” It is a pity that such a sweet encouraging profitable testimony should be kept back. Be sure at all proper times to make it known! But it is not merely ourselves. There are others who can speak well of God.

5. They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. And who were they? Why, all the people of God—the whole company of the saints in Heaven and the saints on earth! It can be said of them all, “They looked to Him and were lightened.” As there is life in a look, so is there light in a look! Oh, you that looked to Christ and lived at first, look to Him again if it is dark with you tonight—and speedily it shall be light round about you! “They looked unto Him and were lightened.”

6. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. Who was he? He was a poor man—any poor man— nothing very particular about him, but he was poor—a poor man. What did he do? He cried. That was the style of praying he adopted—as a child cries—the natural expression of pain. Poor man, he did not know how to pray a fine prayer and he could not have preached you a sermon if you had given him a bishop’s salary for it! But he cried. He could do that. You do not need to go to the Board School to learn how to cry. Any living child can cry. This poor man cried. What came of it? “The Lord heard him.” I do not suppose anybody else did, or if they did, they laughed at it. But it did not matter to him. The Lord heard him. And what came of that? He “saved him out of all his troubles.” Oh, is there a poor man here tonight in trouble? Had he not better copy the example of this other poor man? Let him cry to the Lord about it! Let him come and bring his burdens before the Great One who hears poor men’s prayers! And, no doubt, that poor man lived to tell the same tale as he who wrote this verse. “This poor man cried and the Lord heard and saved him out of all his troubles.”

7. The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear Him and delivers them. It is no wonder, then, that they are delivered, for the angels are always handy. They are waiting round about God’s people. Lo, they are not at a distance to fly swiftly and come for our rescue, but God has set a camp of angels round about all His people! Are we not royally attended? What a portion is ours! Many are they that are against us, but glorious are they that are for us, both in their number and their strength. But the text does not intend so much the angels, as one blessed, glorious, Covenant Angel—the Angel of the Lord, the Messenger of God. He it is that holds His camp hard by His people and sends His messengers for their rescue in all times of difficulty.

8. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him. That is the language of experience. Some of us have lived by trusting God for many years and, instead of growing weary of it, we would invite others to do the same! Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! You cannot know His goodness without tasting it. But there was never a soul yet that did taste of the goodness of the Lord but what could bear cheerful testimony that it was even so. “Oh, taste and see.” Partake of it! Become practically acquainted with it! Trust God, yourselves, and none of you shall ever have to complain of God. To your last hour you will have to find fault with yourselves, but never once will you have to accuse Him of changeableness, or of unfaithfulness, or even of forgetfulness! “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, for blessed is the man that trusts in Him.”

9, 10. O fear the LORD, you His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. They are very strong, those young lions. They are fierce. They are rapacious. They are cunning. And yet they lack and suffer hunger. And there are many men in this world who are very clever, strong in body and active in mind. They say that they can take care of themselves and, perhaps, they do appear to prosper, but we know that often you who are the most prosperous apparently are the most miserable of men! They are young lions, but they lack and suffer hunger. But when a man’s soul lives upon God, he may have very little of this world, but he will be perfectly content. He has learned the secret of true happiness. He does not need any good thing, for the things that he does not have, he does not wish to have. He brings his mind down to his estate, if he cannot bring his estate to his mind. He is thankful to have a little spending money on the road, for his treasure is above. He likes to have his best things last, and so he is well content if he has food and raiment, to urge on his way to the rest which remains for the people of God! “The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

11. Come, you children. You that are beginning life—you that want to know where true happiness is found.  
11. Hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. It is that which you need to know, beyond everything else!  
12, 13. What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. He that can rule his tongue can rule his whole body. Alas, that unruly member destroys peace and happiness in thousands of cases! The tongue can no man tame, but the Grace of God can tame it! And that man begins life with a prospect of happiness whose tongue has been tamed by Divine Grace.  
14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. True happiness is found in true holiness. “Depart from evil.” That is, do not go after it. But it is much more than that. Get away from it. Give it a wide berth. “Depart from evil.” But be not satisfied with the negatives. It is not enough to say, “I do not do any evil,” but do good! The only way to keep out the evil is to fill the soul full of good. We must be active in the cause of God, or Satan will soon lead us into sin. “Depart from evil and do good.”

“Seek peace.” Be of a quiet turn of mind. Be always ready to forgive. “Seek peace and pursue it.” That is, when it runs away, run after it! Make up your mind that you will have it. There are some that seek quarrels. There are some that seek revenge. As for you, seek peace and pursue it.  
15. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. God is all eyes and all ears, and all His eyes and all His ears are for His people. Are you distressed in heart? God sees your distress. Are you crying in secret in the bitterness of your soul? God hears your cry. You are not alone. O lonely spirit, broken spirit, be not dismayed—be not given to despair—God is with you! If He sees nothing else, He will see you. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous.” And if He hears no one else in the world, He will hear you—“His ears are open to their cry.”  
16. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. You know what we sometimes say—“I set my face against such a thing as that.” Now God sets His face against them that do evil. You will come to an end, my Friend. Your happiness, like a bubble painted with rainbow colors, may be the object of foolish desires, but in a little while it will burst and be gone, as the bubble is, and there will be nothing left of you! Even your remembrance will be wiped out from the face of the earth! What numbers of books have been written against God of which you could not get a copy, now, except you went to a museum? What numbers of men have lived that have been scoffers—and they who had great names among the circles of unbelievers? They are quite forgotten, now! But the Christian Church treasures up names of poor, simple-hearted Christian men and women—treasures them up like jewels, and their fame is fresh after hundreds of years!  
17. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. That is how we live, if you want to know. God makes us righteous and then we cry. We often praise Him. We desire to have our mouth full of praise for Him. But we cry as well, and whenever we cry, God hears, and our troubles are removed.  
18. The LORD is near unto them who are of a broken heart; and saves such as are of a contrite spirit. Are you here, tonight, poor weeping Mary? Are you here, brokenhearted, troubled Sinner? Are you here? Are you seeking the Lord? Do not seek Him any longer! You have got Him! Read the text, “The Lord is near unto them that are of a broken heart.” He is with you now! Speak to Him! Cry to Him! Trust Him. You shall find deliverance this night!  
19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. You should hear some of them talk, and you would soon know that, for I know some of the righteous that seldom talk of anything else! “Oh, the badness of trade!” They have been losing money—oh, ever since I knew them! They had not any when they started, but they have gone on losing money every year—and I believe they always will! And they always have pains of body. The weather is so bad. And they always have ungrateful friends. And the church they belong to is not up to the mark. Indeed, there is nothing around them that is right. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” Well now, dear Brothers and Sisters, as that is recorded in God’s Word, and most of us have a pretty good acquaintance with that subject, I do not think that it is necessary for all of us to insist upon it every day! Should not we go on to the next part of the verse? “Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” but—but—  
19. But the LORD delivers him out of them all. Not out of some of them, but out of all of them, however numerous they may be!  
20. He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken. He sustains no real injury. He gets flesh-wounds and bruises, but his bones are not broken. That is to say, the substantial part of his nature is well kept and preserved.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1496 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

AMONG LIONS  
NO. 1496

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My soul is among lions.”  
Psalm 57:4.**

SOME of you cannot say this and you ought to be very thankful that you are not obliged to do so. Happy are you young people who have godly parents and who dwell in Christian families. You ought to grow like the flowers in a conservatory, where killing frosts and biting blasts are unknown. You live under very favorable circumstances. Your soul, I might almost say, is among angels, for you dwell where God is worshipped, where family prayer is not forgotten, where you can have a kindly guidance in the hour of difficulty and comfort in the time of trial. You dwell where angels come and go and God, Himself, deigns to dwell! Happy should young people be in such circumstances! How grateful and how holy you ought to be!

I want all who dwell where everything helps them, to remember the many gracious ones who dwell where everything hinders them. You who live near the Beautiful Gate of the temple must not forget the many who are sighing in the tents of Kedar. If your soul is not among lions, praise God for it—and then let your sympathies go out towards those who mournfully complain—

*“My soul with him that hates peace  
Has long a dweller been.  
I am for peace, but when I speak,  
For battle they are keen.”*

It is a Christian duty to “remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.” And whenever our own favored circumstances lead us to forget those who are persecuted and tried, our very mercies are working mischief in us. “We are all members, one of another.” If one member suffers, all the rest should suffer with him and, therefore, we will turn our thoughts towards our persecuted Brothers and Sisters tonight, that our united supplications may sustain them under their difficulties and, if the Lord is so pleased, may even deliver them.

When may a Christian truly say, “My soul is among lions”? Such is the case when, either from our being members of ungodly families, or from having to gain our livelihood among unconverted and graceless people, we are subjected to reproach and rebuke and to jest and jeer for Jesus Christ’s sake. Then we can say, “My soul is among lions.” I know that many in this congregation are the only ones in their family whom God has called. I bless His name that He is often taking one of a household and a lone one of a family and bringing such to Jesus. Some quite un-Christian person who thinks not of God drops in here out of curiosity and God meets with him and he becomes the first of his kith and kin to say “I am

the Lord’s.”

Frequently when converts come to cast in their lot with us, they will say, “I do not know one in all my family who makes any profession of godliness. They are, all of them, opposed to me.” In such a case the soul is among lions and it is very hard and trying to be in such a position. Well may we pity a godly wife bound to an ungodly husband! Alas, full often a she is married to a drunk whose opposition amounts to brutality. A tender, loving spirit that ought to have been cherished like a tender flower is bruised and trod under foot—and made to suffer till her heart cries out in grief, “My soul is among lions!” We little know what life-long martyrdom’s many pious women endure.

Children also have to bear the same when they are singled out by Divine Grace from depraved and wicked families. Only the other day there came under my notice one who loves the Lord. I thought that if she had been a daughter of mine I should have rejoiced beyond all things in her sweet and gentle piety, but her parents said, “You must leave our house if you attend such-and-such a place of worship. We do not believe in these things and we cannot have you about us if you do.” I saw the grief which that state of things was causing and though I could not alter it, I mourned over it. Woe unto those who tyrannize over my Lord’s little ones!

Nobody knows what godly working men have to put up with from those among whom they labor. There are some shops where there is religious liberty, but frequently the working men of this city are great tyrants in matters of religion. I tell them that to their faces—if a man will drink with them and swear with them, they will make him their companion—but when a man comes out to fear God, they make it very hard for him. And pray, dear Sir, has not a man as much right to pray as you have to swear? And has he not as much right to believe in God as you have to disbelieve? It is a wonderfully free country, this wonderfully free country! Almost as free as America in the olden times when every man was free to beat his own slave, for now the working man claims freedom to laugh and swear at every other working man who chooses to be sober and religions!

There are large factories all over London where a Christian man has to run the gauntlet of sneers from morning to night which never ought to come upon the face of honest men and which never would come if Britons were as fond of freedom as they profess to be! They declare that they never will be slaves, but they are slaves—slaves to their own ungodliness and drunkenness—the great mass of them! And only where Divine Grace comes in and snaps the chain do men become free at all. If one serious man sets his face steadfastly to serve God, the baser sort seem as if they must get him under their feet and treat him with every indignity that malice can devise. It may be all in sport, but the victim does not think so.

Do not tell me that persecution ceased when the last martyr burned! There are martyrs who have to burn by the slow fire of cruel mockery day after day. But I bless God that the old grit is still among us and that the old spirit still survives, so that men defy sneers and slander and hold on their way! I could tell stories which would both shock you and delight you of what is said and done by the common order of English working men against those who profess religion—and how courageously the righteous and the true bear it all and, in the long run, conquer, too—they oftentimes win their mates to confess the same faith!

They call us all cants and hypocrites and the like, but they know better! And if they had a grain of manliness, they would cease from such lying. A true Briton gives that liberty to others which he claims for himself and if he does not choose to be religious himself, he stands up like a man to defend the rights of others to be so if they choose! Now, then, you British workmen, when shall we see you doing this? The text speaks of a soul among lions. Why did the Psalmist call them lions? “Dogs” is about as good a name as they deserve! Why call them lions? Because at times the Christian man is exposed to enemies who are very strong—perhaps strong in the jaw—very strong in biting, tearing and rending.

Sometimes the Christian man is exposed to those who loudly roar out their infidelities and their blasphemies against Christ—and it is an awful thing to be among such lions as those. The lion is not only strong but also cruel. And it is real cruelty, which subjects well-meaning men to reproach and misrepresentation. The enemies of Christ and His people are often as cruel as lions and would slay us if the law permitted them to. The lion is a creature of great craftiness—creeping along stealthily and then making a sudden leap—and so will the ungodly creep up to the Christian and, if possible, spring upon him when they can catch him in an unguarded moment. If they think they spy a fault in him, they come down upon him with all their weight!

The ungodly watch the righteous and if they can catch them in their speech, or if they can make them angry and cause them to speak an unguarded word, how eagerly they pounce upon him! They magnify his fault, put it under a microscope of 10,000 power and make a great thing of it. “Report it! Report it!” they say. “So would we have it!” Anything against a true-born child of God is a sweet nut for them! Such as are daily watched, daily carped at, daily abused, daily hindered in everything that is good and gracious—go with your tears before the God you serve and cry to Him, “My soul is among lions.”

Now, it is to such that I am going to speak tonight. A little, at first, by way of comfort. And then a little by way of advice.  
I. First, BY WAY OF COMFORT. You are among lions, my dear young Friend, then you will have fellowship with your Lord and with His Church. Every Lord’s Day and every time we meet, this benediction is pronounced upon you, that you may enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit brings you into fellowship with Jesus and this involves your being conformed to His sufferings. Now, your Lord was among lions. The men of His day had not a good word to say of Him. They called the Master of the house, Beelzebub—they will never call you a worse name than that. They said that He was a drunk and a winebibber—possibly they may say much the same as that of you and it will be equally false.  
You need not be ashamed to be pelted with the same dirt that was thrown at your Master! And if it should ever come to this, that you should be stripped of everything and false witnesses should rise up against you—and you should even be condemned as a felon and taken out to be executed—your lot will still not be worse than His. Remember that you are the followers of a Crucified Lord and cannot expect to be the world’s darlings! If you are Christians, the Inspired description of the Christian life is the taking up of the cross! Do you expect to be dandled on the knees of that same ungodly world which hung your Master upon the Cross?  
No. You know that he who is the friend of this world is the enemy of God. This Truth of God is unchangeable. It is just as certain, today, as it was in years gone by that, “the evil hates the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him.” You may pick up a fashionable religion and get through the world with it very comfortably, but if you have the true faith, you will have to fight for it. If you are of the world, the world will love its own. But if you are not of the world because the Lord has chosen you out of the world, the world will hate you! When a villager goes up the little street the dogs do not bark at him, for they know him well. But when a stranger rides along, they set up a howl. By this shall you know whether you are a citizen of the world or a pilgrim towards the better land.  
Nor was your Master alone. Remember the long line of Prophets that went before Christ? Which of them was it that was received with honor? Did they not stone one and slay another with the sword? Did they not cut one in pieces with a saw and put others to death with stones? You know that the march of the faithful may be tracked by their blood. And after our Lord had gone to Heaven, how did the world treat the Church? In the streets of Rome and all large cities, the fierce cry was often heard, “Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions!”  
At the dead of night men cry, “Fire!” when a house is blazing. A mob will cry, “Bread!” when they are starving. But the cry of old Rome that was dearest to the Roman heart and most expressive of their horrible enmity to goodness was, “Christians to the lions!” Of all the gallant shows the Roman Empire ever saw that excited the populace beyond all things else was to see a family—a man and his wife, perhaps, and a grown daughter and son and three or four children—all marched into the arena, the big door thrown open and lions rushing out to spring upon them and tear them to pieces!  
What harm had the Christians done? They had forgiven their enemies! That was one of their great sins! They would not worship the gods of wood and stone. They would not blaspheme the name of Jesus whom they loved, for He had taught them to love one another and to love all mankind. For such things as this, men raised the cry, “Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions !” All along, this has been the cry of the world against all who have faithfully followed in the steps of Jesus Christ. Just now the merciful hand of Providence prevents open persecution, but only let that hand be taken away and the old spirit will rage again! The seed of the serpent still hates the Seed of the woman—and if the old dragon were not chained, he would devour the man-child as he has often tried to do. Do not deceive yourselves—in one form or other the old howl of, “Christians to the lions!” would soon be heard in London if almighty power did not sit upon the Throne and restrain the wrath of man.  
You who have to suffer a measure of persecution for Christ’s sake ought to be very glad of it, for you are counted worthy not only to be Christians, but to suffer for Christ’s sake. Do not, I pray you, be unworthy of your high calling, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ should. In these afflictions you are having fellowship with your Head and with His mystical body, therefore be not ashamed. Here is another thought. If you are among lions you should thereby be driven nearer to your God. When you had a great many friends, you could rejoice in them. But now that these turn against you and the Truth of God has come home to you that, “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household,” what ought you to do? Why, get closer to God than you ever were before!  
Jesus Christ so loved His Church that He said, as He looked at His poor disciples, “These are my mother, and sister, and brother.” You should do what your Master did—make His Church your father and mother and sister and brother! No, better still, make Christ all these to you and more! Take the Lord Jesus to be everything that all the dearest of mortals could be and far more. Sing that charming verse, which is a great favorite of mine, for it was very precious to me in days gone by*— “ If on my face, for Your dear name,  
Shame and reproach should be,  
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If You remember me.”*  
Be sure that you live near to God. All Christians ought to do so, but you especially should be driven by every false accusation, by every caustic remark, by every cutting sentence nearer to your Father’s bosom. The more they rebuke you the more constantly should you abide under the cover of His sacred wings and find your joy in the Lord!  
And, getting close to Christ, let me say to you, now, by way of advice and by way of comfort, too, endeavor to be very calm and happy. Do not mind it. Take as little notice of the scoffer as you can. It is a grand thing to have one deaf ear! Mind that you keep yourself very deaf to slander and reproach as the Psalmist did when he said, “I was as a man that hears not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.” One blind eye towards the folly of enemies is often of more use to a man than two that are always looking about with suspicion. Do not see everything; do not hear everything. When there is a hard word spoken, do not notice it, or, if you must hear it, forget it as quickly as you can.  
Love others all the more, the less they love you—repay their enmity with love. Heap coals of fire upon them by making no return to a hard speech except by another deed of kindness. Very seldom defend yourself— it is a waste of breath and casting pearls before swine. Bear and bear again! Remember that our Lord has sent us forth as sheep among wolves and sheep cannot defend themselves. The wolf can eat all the sheep up if it likes, but, do you not see, there are more sheep in the world, now, than there are wolves, 10,000 to one? Though the wolves have had all the eating and though there never yet was a sheep that devoured a wolf, yet the sheep are here and the wolves have gone! The sheep have won that victory and so will Christ’s little flock.  
The anvil is struck by the hammer and the anvil never strikes in return and yet the anvil wears the hammer out! Patience baffles fury and vanquishes malice. The non-resistance principle involves a resistance which is irresistible. The steady patience that cannot be provoked, but which, like Jesus, when reviled reviles not, is certain of conquest. This is what you persecuted ones need to learn, to get more near your God when you are among the lions in order to be the more calm and patient as men rage against you.

A third piece of comfort is this. Please remember that although your soul is among lions, the lions are chained. When Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den, the lions were hungry and would soon have devoured him, but you know why it was that they could not touch him. Ah, the angel came. Just as the fierce lions were about to seize Daniel, down he came swift from Heaven and stood in front of them. “Hush!” he said—and they lay as still as a stone. So says the text—“My God has sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths.” They had fine teeth, but their mouths were shut! If the Lord can easily shut a lion’s mouth, He can as easily quite the mouth of an ungodly man! He can take all trouble off of you, if He wills it, in an instant!  
And He can give you a smooth path to Heaven when it pleases Him. Only remember that if everything on the road to Heaven were smooth, Heaven would not be so sweet at the end and we should not have an opportunity of displaying those Christian Graces which are brought out and educated by the opposition of the world. God will not quench the fire of persecution, for it consumes our dross—but He will moderate its power so that not a grain of pure metal shall be lost. The lions are chained, dear Friend! They can go no farther than God permits. In this country the most they can do, as a rule, is to howl—they cannot bite—and howling does not break bones, so why, then, be afraid?  
The man who is afraid of being laughed at is not half a man, but almost deserves the scorn he receives. Never mind what is said. Talking will not hurt you. Harden your spirit against it and bear it gallantly. Go and tell your Lord of it if your heart fails you and then go forward, calm, as your Master did, fearing nothing, for God will bear you through. The lions can roar, but they cannot tear—fear them not.  
Another fact for your comfort is this—when your soul is among lions, there is another lion there as well as the lions that you can see. Have you never heard of Him? He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah! How quietly He lies! How patiently He waits by the side of His servants! The jest, the jeer, the noise continues and He lies still. If He only would—if He thought it wise—if it were not for His superlative patience He has only to rouse Himself for one moment and all our enemies would be destroyed! Our great Lord and King could have had 20 legions of angels when He was in the garden for the lifting of His finger, but He continued alone, a suffering Man.  
If He willed it at this day, He could sweep the ungodly away as chaff before the wind! His longsuffering is for their salvation, if haply they may turn and repent. If your faith is as it should be, it will be a great joy to you to know that He is always with you; that He is always near you. If He is ever absent from others of His servants, He is never away from His persecuted servants. Ask the Covenanters among the mosses and the hills and they will tell you that they never had such Sabbaths in Scotland as when they met among the crags and set their scouts to warn them against Claverhouse’s dragoons. When Cargill or Cameron thundered out the Word of God, with what power was it attended! How sweetly was the blessed Bridegroom with His persecuted Church among the hills!  
There is never such a time for seeing the Son of God as when the world heats the furnace seven times hotter. There is the flaming furnace—go and stand at the mouth of it and look in. They threw three bound men in their clothes and in their hats into it and the flame was so strong that it killed the soldiers who threw them in! But look! Can you see them? Nebuchadnezzar himself comes to look. See how greatly he is astonished! He calls to those around him and he demands, “Did not we cast three men bound into the furnace? Look! There are four! A strange, mysterious form is that fourth! They are walking the coals as if they walked in a garden of flowers. They seem full of delight! They are walking as calmly as men do when they converse in their gardens in the cool of the day! And that fourth, that mysterious fourth is like the Son of God!”  
Ah, Nebuchadnezzar, you have seen a sight that has often been seen elsewhere. When God’s people are in the furnace, God’s Son is in the furnace, also! He will not leave those who will not leave Him. If we can cling to Him, rest assured that He will cling to us, even to the end! Fear not the lions, then. Our Samson would turn upon them and tear them in a moment if their hour were come—  
*“Jesus’ tremendous name  
Puts all our foes to flight!  
Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb,  
A Lion is in fight.  
By all Hell’s host withstood,  
We all Hell’s host overthrow.  
And conquering them, through  
Jesus’ blood  
We still to conquer go.”*  
Again, I want to comfort you with this word—you whose souls are among lions should remember that you will come out of the lions’ den unharmed. Daniel was cast into the den. Darius could not sleep that night and when he went in the morning he did not expect to find a bone of Daniel left and so he began crying out to him. How surprised he must have been when Daniel replied that his God had preserved him! How thankful he was to fetch him out of the den! You, too, dear child of God, will come out of the den all right. There will be a resurrection of God’s people’s bodies at last and there will be a resurrection for their reputations, too!  
The slanderer may belie the character of a true man, but no true man’s character will ever be buried long enough to rot. Your righteousness shall come forth as light and your judgment as the noonday. You need not be afraid but, as Daniel rose from the den to dignity, so will every man who suffers for Christ receive honor and glory and immortality “in that day.” Remember that if you are now among the lions, the day is hurrying on with speed when you shall be among the angels! Our Lord and Master, after being in the wilderness with the wild beasts, found that “angels came and ministered to Him.” Such a visitation awaits all the faithful.  
What a change those martyrs enjoyed who took a fiery breakfast on earth, but supped with Christ that very day after riding to Glory in a chariot of fire! If you have to suffer now, even all that can possibly be wreaked of vengeance upon you for Christ’s sake, you will think nothing of it when you have been five seconds in Heaven! Indeed, it will be a subject of congratulation that you were permitted, in your humble measure, to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ’s sake! Therefore be comforted, you young people, and march on with heroic step. I see a soldier or two here tonight and I am right glad that we have generally a block of red coats in the congregation. I know that often in the barracks it is hard for a Christian man to bear witness for Jesus Christ.  
Many and many a soldier has found his path as a Christian to be extremely difficult. He has had to sail very carefully, like a ship among torpedoes, and only Divine Grace has kept him safe. Some of you who reside in large establishments, where you sleep in rooms with great many others, find it difficult, even, to kneel down to pray. Mind that you do it, though. Do it at first right bravely and keep it up! Never be ashamed of your colors. Begin as you mean to go on—and go on as you begin! If you begin parleying, you will soon lose all their respect and make it worse for yourself. In the name of Jesus Christ let me beseech you to be firm and steadfast even unto death!  
Be comforted, for there has no new thing happened to you. It is no novelty for the followers of Jesus to be ridiculed and despised. He came to send fire on the earth and it has been kindled well near 2,000 years. The fiery path is the old road of the Church militant—therefore tread it and be glad that you are permitted to follow the heroes of Heaven in their sacred way!  
II. Now, a few words BY WAY OF ADVICE. Of course this does not deal with all of you who are now present. I hope that many of you dwell among the godly. Still there are some whose soul is among lions and to them I give this counsel. First, if you dwell among lions, do not irritate them. If I happened to be among lions, I would not tease them. I would take good care that if they were cruel and fierce I did not make them so. I have known some who I hope were Christians, who have acted very unwisely and have made matters worse for themselves.  
There is such a thing as ramming religion down people’s throats, or trying to do so. You can put on a very long face and try to scold people into religion. This will not do. Never yet was anybody bullied to Christ and there never will be. Some are very stern and make no allowances for other people—these may be good, but they are not wise. What is a rule to you and to me may not be a rule to everybody else. We said, the other Sunday, that we should not think of eating what we give to swine, but we do not, therefore, say, “These swine must not have their slop.” No, no! It is good enough for them. Let them have it.  
And as to worldly people and their amusements, let them have them, poor things. They have nothing else, let them have their mirth. I would not touch their joys, nor would you, for they would be no pleasure to you. But do not, as a new-born man, go and set yourself up as the standard of what the ordinary sinner, dead in sin, is to be! He cannot come up to our standard. Do not be perpetually finding fault! That is pulling the lions’ whiskers and the creatures are very likely to growl at you. If your soul is among lions, be gentle, be kind, be prudent, be tender—sometimes be silent. A good word is on your tongue, but there are times when you must not say it—for the life of you, you must not say it—for it would rouse the lions and make more sin than needs be.  
Sometimes a Truth of God needs defending, but, my inexperienced and untaught Brother, do not try to defend it, for you have not the strength. The champion of infidelity will challenge one who is weak and uninstructed and he overthrows him—and he who came forth valorously is beaten in argument. He was not up to the mark in knowledge and so he was vanquished! And then, what do the adversaries say? Why, they boast that the Truth is disproved and that Christ is beaten. Nothing of the kind! The British empire was not defeated when a regiment of our soldiers were slain at Isandula—and the Truth and cause of Christ is not defeated when some weak champion full of zeal rushes to the front when he ought to have kept in the rear.

I do not say much on this point because we have not much rash zeal, nowadays, and it would be a pity to check what honest zeal there is. But still, there is such a text as, “Be you wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Put your finger on your lips when you are irritated. You cannot speak to the purpose when you are perturbed and are likely to be angry. Be quiet and bide your time. Many a man would do more good for the cause of God if he would not irritate ungodly people. Leave them alone— seek their salvation lovingly and tenderly—but when your efforts to do them good only provoke them to sin, try another way. Do not go on with that which angers them—invent another method. I believe that some Christians make half the opposition which they get from the world by their own ill tempers and stupidity. They challenge conflict. Their actions seem to say, “Who will fight me?” and then, of course, somebody takes up the challenge. Do not act foolishly! If your soul is among lions and they are inclined to be quiet, do not needlessly excite them.  
Secondly, if your soul is among lions, do not roar, yourself, for that is very easy to be done. We have known some who we hope were Christians who have met railing with railing, hard words with hard words, bitter speeches with bitter speeches. The ungodly are lions, but you are not—do not try to meet them in their own line. You will never roar as well as they do! If you are a Christian, you have not the knack of roaring. Leave them do it. Your way of meeting them is not by losing your temper and abusing your antagonists and so becoming a lion, yourself—you must conquer them with gentleness, patience, kindness and love!  
I pray you, dear Brothers and Sisters who have to bear a good deal for Christ’s sake, do not get soured in spirit. There is a tendency in a martyr age to become obstinate and pugnacious. You must not be so. Love, love, love! And the more you are provoked, love the more! Overcome evil with good. I think it necessary to mention these cautions because I know many require them. Again, if your soul is among lions, do not be cowardly. Have you never heard that a lion is afraid of a man if he looks him steadily in the face? I am not sure about that piece of natural history, but I am quite certain that it is true with regard to the ungodly world.  
If a man will bear himself calmly. If he will be unmoved, determined, resolute and steadfast, he will overcome the adversary. “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” If you give way a little, you will have to give way a great deal. If you give the world an inch, you will have to give it a mile as sure as you are alive. If you will not yield an inch, no, nor yet a barleycorn, but stand steadfast, God will help you. Courage is what is needed. The world, after a while, says of any man, “It is of no use laughing at him—he does not mind it. It is of no use calling him hard names—he only smiles at you. It is useless to be his enemy, for he will not be yours. He will only be your friend.”  
Then the world whispers, “Well, after all, he is not so bad a fellow as we thought he was. We must let him have his own way.” There is a big human heart somewhere down in men if you can but get at it and, after a while, when truth and righteousness have suffered and been denounced, men turn round and are almost ready to carry on their shoulders with hosannas the same person whom, a little while before, they longed to crucify. Do not be a coward! Do not be a coward!—  
*“Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!  
The fight will not be long.  
This day the noise of battle,  
The next the victor’s song.”*  
Even if the fight were long, for such a Master as Jesus it were worth while to endure 10,000 years of scorn and, moreover, the reward at the end will repay us a thousand-fold!  
If your soul is among lions, then do not go out among them alone. “Then whom shall I take with me?” asks one, “there is not a Christian in the shop.” Take your Lord with you! Be absolutely sure that you do that. Now, my dear Friend, I know what they said yesterday and how they bantered you and you were tart and short with them because you were not in prayer in the morning as you ought to have been. If your mind had been more calm and gentle as the result of prayer, you would not have minded it one-half so much. Take your Master with you and whenever you have to speak, remember that He is standing at your side and try to say what you would like Him to hear. And then, when you have made your defense, you will be able to say, “Good Master, I think I have not dishonored You, for I have spoken Your words.”  
Oh, live near to Christ if you live among lions! Those of you who endure opposition make the best Christians. Many that have been distinguished for Christ in later life have had to rough it a little at first. “It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth.” If I could bring a garden-roller and roll the grass for you all the way from here to Heaven, do you think that I would do it? Certainly not! A rough place or two is good for you—it tries and strengthens pilgrim feet! A child will never become a man if he is carried about, all his life, like a baby. You must run alone. You must learn the arts of holy warfare or else you will not be fit to be a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb! May His good Spirit help you to keep in fellowship with Christ that He may guard and protect you from every temptation and persecution.  
Further, let me say to you that if your soul is among lions and you feel very weak about it, you are permitted to pray the Lord to move you in His Providence to quieter quarters. A Christian man is not bound to endure persecution if he can help it—“When they persecute you in one city flee to another.” You are quite warranted in seeking another situation. There may be reasons why you should remain under the trial and, if so, take care that you do not overlook them. Prudence may make you avoid persecution, but cowardice must not mingle with the prudence! That prayer which says, “Lead us not into temptation,” gives us, as it were, a permit to move from places where we are much tempted and sometimes it is the duty of the Christian to seek some other sphere of labor, if he possibly can, where he will not be so much tried.  
One thought more—the braver thing is to ask for Grace to stay with the lions and tame them. “My soul is among lions.” Well, if the Lord makes you a lion tamer, that is the very place where you ought to be! In some of our districts in London as soon as ever a man is converted he feels that he cannot live there any longer and this makes the district hopeless. My dear Friend, Mr. Orsman, working in Golden Lane, as it used to be, told me that his was an endless task because as soon as ever the people were converted they would say, “Would you have me live here any longer, in such a horrible place as this?” They naturally felt that as they had grown sober, decent and respectable, they should move into a different locality and they did so—and the result is that the old spot does not improve.  
Sometimes the Christian man should say, “No, God has made me strong in Grace and I will stop here and fight it out. These are lions, but I will tame them. I believe that God has put me here on purpose to bring my fellow workmen to the Savior and, by His Grace, I will do it.” Now, if I were a lamp, I daresay that if I had my choice of where I should burn, I should choose to blaze away in a respectable street. I should like to scatter my light in front of the Tabernacle! But surely if I were a really sensible lamp I should say to myself—“If there are only a few lamps and all the streets have to be lit, there is more necessity to light up a back slum or a blind alley than to adorn a main street. Therefore let me shine in the dismal courts. In a lonely, dark place where murder may be done—there let me act as guardian of the night and detective of the villain.” A wise lamp would say, “I came into the world to give light and I should like to give light where light is most needed. Hang me up in Mint Street, or in St. Giles’s, or away there by the back of Kent Street where I may be most useful.” And now, Christian people, is there not sense about this advice? Is there not reason in it? Would not your Master have you go where you are most needed and should you not, therefore, if your soul is among lions, say, “Thank God it is so. These people are not going to conquer me, but I am going to conquer them”?  
What a beautiful spectacle was that which was exhibited by the Moravian Brethren in their grand times! They could not land on one of the West Indies to preach the Gospel to the Negroes, for the planters would not have anybody there but slaves. So two Brothers sold themselves for slaves and lived and died in bondage that they might teach the poor Negroes of Christ! It is said that there was a place in Africa where persons were shut up whose limbs were rotting away through leprosy and other diseases. Two of these Brethren climbed up a wall and saw these poor creatures—some with no legs and others with no arms. They asked to be allowed to go in to win souls for Christ and the answer was, “If you enter you can never come out again because you would bring contagion. You go in there to die, to rot away as the lepers do.”  
These brave men went in and died that they might bring the lepers to Christ! I hope that we have some drops of that grand Christian blood still in our veins! And if we have, we shall feel that we could go to the gates of Hell to win a sinner! You are not like your Master unless you would die to save men from Hell. You will bear jests and jeers and count them nothing if you can but win souls. So stop where you are, my stronger Brothers and Sisters—if your souls are among lions, tarry and tame the lions!  
It will be a grand thing for you to come, one day, to the Church meeting with two or three of your neighbors whom you have been the means of converting to Christ. I like to see a man march, if he can do it, with a tame lion on each side! When a man has, by God’s Grace, brought some of those that were drunks and swearers to the feet of Jesus, oh, it is a grand triumph! It has been my business for many years to be a lion tamer and I delight in it! If there is any lion of the sort here, I wish the Master would tame him and make him lie down and crouch at His feet. There is the place for us poor sinners—at the feet of Christ.

But do not be afraid of sinners, dear Friends, for how can you tame them if you tremble at them? Go forth to win them in the strength of the living God and you shall yet see the lion lie down with the lamb—and a little child shall lead them. Amen and amen!

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THE ALARUM  
NO. 996

**A SERMON  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I myself will awake early.” Psalm 57:8.**

THE proper subject to treat upon with such a text as this would be the propriety and excellence of early rising, especially when we are desirous of praising or serving God. The dew of dawn should be consecrated to devotion. The text is a very remarkable expression, and might fitly be made the early-riser’s motto. It is, in the original, a highly poetical phrase, and Milton and others have borrowed or imitated it. “I will awaken the morning.” So early would the Psalmist arise for the praise of God, that he would call up the day, bid the sun arise from the chambers of the east, and proceed upon his journey. “I will awaken the morning.”

Early rising has the example of Old Testament saints to recommend it, and many modern saints having conscientiously practiced it and have been loud in its praise. It is an economy of time, and an assistance to health. Thus it doubly lengthens life. Late rising is too often the token of indolence and the cause of disorder throughout the whole day. Be assured that the best hours are the first.

Our city habits are to be deplored, because by late hours of retirement at night we find early rising difficult if not impossible. If we are able to escape the shackles of custom and secure for devotion and contemplation the hour when the dew is on the grass, we may count ourselves thrice happy. If we cannot do all we would in this matter, at least let us do all we can. That is not, however, the topic upon which I now desire to speak to you. I come at this time not so much to plead for the early as for the awakening. The hour we may speak of at another time—the fact is our subject now.

It is bad to awake late, but what shall be said of those who never awake at all? Better late than never—but with many it is to be feared it will be never. I would take down the trumpet and give a blast, or ring the alarm bell till all the faculties of the sluggard’s manhood are made to bestir themselves and he cries with new-born determination, “I myself will awake.” “Will awake.”

This is a world in which most men, nowadays, are alive to their temporal interests. If in these pushing times any man goes to his business in a sleepy, listless fashion, he very soon finds himself on an ebb-tide and all his affairs aground. The wide-awake man seizes opportunities or makes them—and thus those who are widest awake usually come to the front. Years ago affairs moved like the broad-wheel wagon, very sleepily, with sober pause and leisurely progression—and then the son of the snail had a chance. But now, when we almost fly, if a man would succeed in trade he must be all alive, and all awake.

If it is so in temporals, it is equally so in spirituals—for the world, the flesh, and the devil are all awake to compete with us. And there is no resolution that I would more earnestly commend to each one of the people of God than this one—“I will awake. I will awake at once. I will awake early. And I will pray to God that I may be kept awake—that my Christian existence may not be dreamy—that I may be to the fullest degree useful in my Master’s service.” If this were the resolve of each, what a change would come over the Christian Church!

I long to see the diligence of the shop exceeded by the closet, and the zeal of the market excelled by the Church. Each Christian is alive—but is he also awake? He has eyes , but are they open? He has lofty possibilities of blessing his fellow men, but does he exercise them? My heart’s desire is that none of us may feel the dreamy influence of this age, which is comparable to the enchanted ground—but that each of us may be watchful, wakeful, vigorous, intense, fervent. Trusting that the Holy Spirit may bless our meditations to our spiritual quickening, we shall briefly turn our thoughts to the consideration of two or three things.

I. Our text is connected with the duty of praise, and therefore our first point shall be—IT IS MOST NECESSARY THAT OUR MINDS SHOULD BE IN A STATE OF WAKEFULNESS WHEN WE ARE PRAISING GOD. Therefore, as we ought to be always praising Him, our mind ought always to be wakeful. It is a shame to pray with the mind half asleep—it is an equal shame to attempt to praise God till all the powers of the mind are thoroughly aroused. David is herein a most fit example, for he sings, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.”

We should be fully awake when engaged in private thanksgiving. The song of our solitude should be full of living joy. I am afraid there is very little private singing nowadays. We often hear discourse concerning private prayer, but very seldom of private praise—and yet ought there not to be as much private praise as private prayer? I fear from the seldomness of its being mentioned that private thanksgiving has grown to be a sleepy affair. Then as to public worship, how earnest ought it to be! Yet how seldom is it hearty and real! How often do we hear half-awake singing! Sometimes a sort of musical-box, consisting of pipes, keys, and bellows is set to do all the adoration.

The heathens of Tibet turn the wind to account religiously, by making it turn their windmills and pray for them. And our Brethren in England, by an ingenious adjustment of pipes, make the same motive power perform their praise. Where this machinery is not adopted, still the Lord is robbed of His praise by other methods. Sometimes half a dozen skilled voices of persons who would be equally as much at home at the opera or the theater as in the House of God, are formed into a choir to perform the psalmody.

And it is supposed that God accepts their formal notes as the praise of the entire assembly! How far different is the genuine song of gracious men who lift up their voices to the Lord because their hearts adore Him! Oh, I love to hear every voice pouring out its note, especially if I can but hope that with every voice there is going forth a fervent heart. This warmhearted, joyful singing—why, it makes the congregation on earth to be like the assembly of the skies! It causes the meeting place of the saints to be a faint type of the gathering of the angels and glorified spirits before the Throne of God.

To drone or to whisper in such a delightful exercise is criminal. If ever we should exhibit the angels’ wakefulness, it should be when we are emulating their employment. Our praise ought to be performed with a fully awakened mind—first, that we may remember what we are praising God for. We should have a vivid sense of the mercies we have received, or we cannot bless God aright for them. You who have not yet received spiritual blessings should not be forgetful of His temporal mercies! It is surely sufficient cause for lively thanksgiving that you are not upon a bed of sickness—that you are not in the lunatic asylum. That you are not in the workhouse. That you are not on the borders of the grave. That you are not in Hell. That you still have food and raiment, and that you are where the Gospel is graciously presented to you.

Should not all this be thought of? Should not this be fuel for the flame of gratitude? As for us who have tasted spiritual blessings, if our minds were awake, we should think of eternal love and its goings forth from eternity. Of redeeming love, and the streams that flow from the fountain of Calvary. Of God’s immutable love, and His patience with our ill-manners in the wilderness. Of Covenant mercy, of mercies yet to come, of Heaven, and the bliss hereafter. Such recollections should call up our whole man to praise the Lord.

If the innumerable benefits which we receive were thought of and dwelt upon, the contemplation would put a force, a volume, a body into our song—and make it far more the flaming ethereal thing which it ought to be. We want our souls awakened, next, so that we may remember to Whom our praise is offered. Before no mean king do we bow the knee of homage. To praise God is to stand in the immediate Presence of the blessed and only Potentate. Do not even seraphs veil their faces in that august Presence?

With what lowliness ought we bow! With what earnestness of spirit should we praise! “Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” Courtiers are not expected to nod with drowsiness in the presence of their king. And as they came to present thanksgiving, it would seem strange if they were to yawn as men half asleep. Surely it would be hypocritical congratulation and insulting behavior if they should be detected in a sleepy condition! If we come together to praise God, let us really do it. If we cannot praise Him, let us know and mourn that we cannot do it, and let us be sure that the spirit is willing, even if the flesh is weak.

Let all sleepiness be put away in the Presence of the ever-wakeful Jehovah, before whose eyes all things are naked and open. He never slumbers nor sleeps so as to make a pause in His mercy to us—let not our slumbering spirits cause an omission of our grateful song. We need that we should be awake in praise, that our whole hearts may be thoroughly warm in the exercise.

Under Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, the acceptableness of our praise depends very much upon the warmth of it. As cold prayers virtually ask God to deny them, so cold praises ask God to reject them. Cold praises are a sort of semi-blasphemy—they say, as it were, “You are not

worthy to be ardently praised. O God, we bring You these poor thanksgivings—they are good enough for You.” Surely if we treated our heavenly Father as we should, every sacred passion would glow in our hearts like a furnace—our whole heart would catch fire, and as Elijah went up to Heaven with horses of fire and chariots of fire, so, too, our soul, as we thought upon the goodness and the graciousness of God, would ascend to Heaven in vehement joy of adoration.

Our praises would not be like the incense in the censer—sweet but cold. But coals of fire would be put in with the incense, and then, like a holy cloud of smoke, our gratitude would ascend to Heaven! Mark with what exhilaration the Psalmist rendered praise unto God, and imitate him. See him dancing before the ark, and hear him cry aloud, “Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.” Brethren, we have need to wake up our souls in praise, or else we shall at times fail altogether in the duty.

Only the wakeful are praiseful. Sleeping birds sing not. The very best praises God receives from earth are from His troubled saints. But then they are awake. The strokes of the rod have aroused them. When the three holy children sang in the fire, their song was sweet, indeed. Yet had they not been thoroughly in earnest, they had poured forth no holy hymn. When martyrs have magnified God standing on the burning ingot, they have given God better praise than even the angels can.

It was the old fable that the nightingale was made to sing by the thorn that pricked her breast—and many a child of God has poured forth his sweetest music when the thorn of affliction has pierced his heart. Wake up your souls—you that are desponding, you that are depressed, you that have a dead child at home, you that are expecting soon to go to the grave with those you love, you that have been losing your property, you that are pinched with poverty—wake up your souls to praise God still, for unless well awake you will forget to extol Him!

Remember what Job did when he sat on the dunghill, scraping himself with a bit of broken pot, yet he praised God, and said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” It was grand of you, O Patriarch of Uz, to be able thus to extol your Lord—then was your soul fully awake. Beloved Friends, may our inmost souls be so energetic with the power of Divine Grace that we may spontaneously and earnestly bless the Lord at all times and under all circumstances.

Do you believe, my Brethren, that among all the throng of those who see Jehovah face to face, there is one dull, cold, careless worshipper? Look through the seraphim and cherubim—they are all flaming ones— burning with intense desire and fervent adoration. Look through the hosts of angels—they are all His ministers that do His pleasure and bless Him while they do it. Search through all those sanctified and glorified bands of spirits and you shall not find one with half-closed eyes wearily praising his Maker. Heaven consists in joyful praise!

Look at the very birds on earth—how they shame us! Dear little creatures, if you watch them when they are singing you will sometimes wonder how so much sound can come out of such diminutive bodies. How they throw their whole selves into the music and seem to melt themselves away in song! How the wing vibrates, the throat pulsates, and every part of their body rejoices to assist the strain! This is the way in which we ought to praise God. If birds that are sold at three for two farthings yet render God such praise, how much more heartily ought we to sing before Him?

Let it be a resolution with us at this hour that we will praise God more. That we will sing to Him more at home, about our business and in all proper places. And that whenever we do sing we will do it heartily, waking up our tongue and all the powers of our mind and body to bless and praise the name of God.

II. Now, secondly, we shall notice that WAKEFULNESS IS A GREAT NEED IN THE ENTIRE SPIRITUAL LIFE. I believe it to be one of the great wants of the Church. I question whether most of us are awake spiritually. I question whether I am. I wish to be wakened far more to a sensibility of the power of the world to come, and a tenderness in regard to spiritual Truth.

Slumber is so natural to us. “Well,” says one, “but we talk about the things of God.” Yes, but people talk when they are asleep, and a good deal of Christian conversation is very much like the talk of sleepers. There is not the force in it—the life in it that there would be in conversation if we were really awakened to feel the power of the Truths of God. “Yet,” says one, “I hope we act consistently.” I trust you do, but there are many people who walk in their sleep, and, alas, I know some Christian professors who appear to be trying very hazardous feats of sleep-walking just now.

Some sleepwalkers have been able to walk on places where, had they been awake, they never would have been able to endure the dizzy height. And I see some Christians, if indeed they are Christians, running awful risks which I think they would never venture upon unless they had fallen into the deep sleep of carnal security. Speak of a man slumbering at the masthead!—it is nothing to a professor of religion at ease while covetousness is his master—or worldly company his delight.

If professors were awake, they would see their danger and avoid sinful amusements and ungodly associations, as men fly from fierce tigers or deadly cobras. “Well, but we are doing much good and useful work,” says one—“teaching in Sunday schools, distributing religious tracts, or laboring in some other form of service, we are spending our time in commendable engagements.” I am glad to hear it—but people can do a great deal in their sleep. We have heard many strange instances of how habit, at last, has enabled persons to pursue their callings, to answer signals, and keep up all the appearance of industry—and yet they have been at the time asleep.

Oh, it is a very shocking thing that so many of our churches in England are in a deep sleep! Dissenting churches I know best about, and there are many where the minister preaches in his sleep, where the people sing in their sleep, where prayer is offered in sleep, and even the communion is celebrated amid a profound spiritual slumber. Have you ever been at a Prayer Meeting where half, if not all—both of those who prayed vocally and those who listened—were in a lethargy as rigid as death?

Talk of sleeping women who have been in a swoon by the month together! The wonder may be a lying one in the natural world, but in the spiritual world it is as common as daisies in the meadows. Adam slept

soundly when the taking away of his rib did not wake him, but what shall we say of those who startle not though they are losing all the strength and glory of their souls? Alas, for some congregations it is long since they had a revival—they have lost the very idea of vigorous piety and vital energy. All the week round they are all asleep, and if a real, earnest, living, stirring sermon were preached among them, it would be almost as if the King of Prussia’s Krupp guns had dropped a live shell into their midst.

I wish a spiritual live shell could fall into some congregations and burst among them, killing their conventionality, and wounding their selfsatisfaction with a deadly wound. Men may attend to outward worship with unimpeachable decorum and correctness—and yet there may be no wakefulness in it—and consequently no acceptableness with God Most High. Come, Brothers and Sisters, we must wake up! Even if we have been asleep, ourselves, we must do so because we are in the enemy’s country. It will not do to sleep here! This side of Heaven we are in every place and at all hours surrounded by foes. What did the Master say? “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!”

Be like sentries at your post, for otherwise the enemy will soon betray you. Will you not grieve the Holy Spirit if you are lethargic? Will you not dishonor your Master if you fall asleep? Remember, also, that the devil seeks your destruction, and can never do you so much mischief as he can if he finds you sleeping. Let the growling of the old lion arouse you. If nothing else will bestir you, remember the fiery darts of the Wicked One. Saul would not have lain so quiet if he had known that Abishai was holding the spear over him, and longing to pin him to the earth—yet this is the condition of professors who are given to slumber.

Samson would have scarcely slept on Delilah’s lap if he had foreseen that his hair would be cut, and his eyes put out by the Philistines. Up, then, you drowsy professors, for the Philistines are upon you! Moreover, Brethren, slumber impoverishes us. The sluggard, the thistle and the thorn always go together, and rags and poverty follow close behind. You may miss, by your sleep, great spiritual profit. You cannot expect sleepy Christians to grow in Grace. They will miss many instructive things in God’s Word, many precious promises meant only for the wakeful.

They will lose high enjoyments and spiritual banqueting, for the king’s entertainments are not for those who fold their arms and toss upon the bed of indolence. Wealth lies in the field of the wakeful, but the lover of ease shall have want come upon him as an armed man. I blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in God’s holy mountain, for it is high time to awake out of sleep!

Awaken too, my Brother, for you are losing opportunities for usefulness. While you sleep men are dying. See how the cemeteries are becoming crowded, how the area of them has to be enlarged. Day by day you see, wending through the streets the funeral procession—men gone beyond the reach of your instructions and your warnings are carried to their long homes. Awake then, awake, for death is busy everywhere! Meanwhile, those who do not die before you may be removed beyond the sphere of your usefulness. They go where at least you cannot reach them, where perhaps no one ever will, and their blood may lie upon your head, and that forever.

Awake, for perhaps while you are asleep another heart that is now accessible to the Gospel may become finally hardened. Conscience will soon become seared and then there is nothing for zeal and earnestness to work upon. It will be too late for you to put the seal upon the wax when once it is cool. Quick, Sir! While the wax is soft put the seal down! How many opportunities for good we all miss! But those who are asleep lose all their opportunities, and they will be surely required of them when the Master comes.

Awake, I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, because you will insensibly lose the power, the joy of your spiritual life. Communion with God will become more and more scarce with you as you become more sleepy. Awake, lest you backslide, lest you fail by little and little—lest after all you become apostate—and prove yourself not to be a child of God. Awake, for your power with others will certainly depart from you as your wakefulness departs.

A sleepy preacher never wins the souls of men. A dull, formal servant of God is of little or no use in the Church of God. I think I said years ago, “Give me half a dozen thorough red-hot Christians, and I will do more, by God’s Grace, with them, than with half a dozen hundred of ordinary professors.” I am sure it is so. Crowds of professors are past all cure. I would as soon hunt with dead dogs, as try to work with them. They cannot be trained into heroes—they are dolts both by nature and by practice—much slothfulness has drained out their soul’s life. The most you can hope for them is that they will remain decently Christianized, so as not altogether to disgrace us.

But, O for thoroughly wide-awake men, men who feel the life of God in their souls, and are, therefore, more than ordinarily earnest. Band together hall a dozen such, and the Holy Spirit being with them, they will make all London feel their presence before long. O may God awaken all of us, for our spiritual life absolutely requires it.

III. Thirdly, I am going to mention CERTAIN WAYS OF KEEPING YOURSELVES AWAKE. “How can I be kept awake?” asks one. Answer, first, make it a matter of prayer with the Lord to awaken you. No one can give you spiritual power and watchfulness but the Spirit of God. “All my fresh springs are in You.” Where life first comes from, there more life must be obtained. Christ has come that we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly. He who first called us from the dead must also arouse us from among the slumbering. He who brought us from the grave of our depravity must bring us from the couch of our indolence. Pray about the matter. Make it a point with God—ask Him to arouse you. On your knees is the posture in which to conquer sloth.

Next, means are to be used. We are not to leave the matter with God and think there is nothing to be done by ourselves. Act towards yourselves about your spiritual wakefulness as you would with natural wakefulness. Set your inventive faculties to work and devise means for chasing away the sleep dragon. What would you do if you required to be awakened early? Perhaps you would set an alarum—a good thing, no doubt. Take care you set a spiritual alarum. Every Christian ought to keep one, and it should be so well set as to keep exact time, and so powerful as to arouse

the most slumbering.

A tender conscience, quick as the apple of the eye, is a precious preservative against sinful sleep. But it must never be tampered with or its usefulness will soon end. When once the hour has come, off goes the alarum—the man starts up all at once, and says, “It is time to rise.” So should my conscience be so well regulated that when a temptation is near, or a sinner is near me whom I ought to warn, my soul should at once take the alarm, and say, “Here is work to do—a sin to be conquered, or a soul to be instructed—now, therefore, perform the doing of it with all your might! I hear the alarum, and I must bestir myself!”

May we always maintain and retain such a special wakefulness that we may be at our post of duty or in our place of conflict with a punctuality which none can question. O for the alarum of a tender conscience! Many of our friends who, have to be up early in the morning ask the policeman to call them at the appointed hour. I may not compare the Christian minister with a policeman in some respects. But yet he is one of God’s officers, and it is part of his business to stir up drowsy professors. It is well to attend an earnest Gospel ministry where the minister’s voice, under God’s blessing, will be likely to wake you up.

Faithful preachers are among God’s best gifts. Cherish them, and be obedient to their admonitions. I have known persons become offended when a minister is “too personal.” But wise men always prize a ministry in proportion as it is personal to themselves. He who never tells me of my faults, nor makes me feel uneasy is not likely to be the means of good to my soul. What is the use of a dog that never barks? Why have a doctor, and grow angry with him if he points out the source of your disease?

Did God send us, as His messengers, to pander to your tastes or flatter your vanity? We seek not your approval if it is not founded on right. I have often felt pleased when I have heard people confess, after their conversion, “I came to the Tabernacle and at the first I could not endure the preaching. I hated the preacher, and raged at his doctrine, but I could not help coming again.” Just so. Conscience makes men respect the Gospel, even when their depravity makes them loathe it. They are held fast by the cords which they gladly would cast from them.

May it often be so, O my unregenerate Believers, that while my plain dealing excites your anger, it may, nevertheless, have a power over you! And may every man and woman here, whether saved or unsaved, feel that the preaching is the Truth of God to his or her soul. And, whether liked or not liked, may it become the permanent means of arousing from sleep, and ultimately bringing to Christ every one of you to whom these words shall come. Be sure and attend an arousing ministry, and pray God to make the ministry which you now listen to more and more an arousing ministry to your own soul.

Pray for the preacher, for he is in the same danger as yourselves! He, too, is compassed with infirmity. The minister soon goes to sleep unless God wakens him. And what is more sad than to see the professed messenger of God become a traitor both to his Master and to men’s souls by a lack of zealous affection? It is ill for the sheep if the shepherd, himself, is asleep. Woe to the camp where the sentry is given to slumber! May God deliver our country from being overrun with preachers whose souls are insensible concerning their grand work—and who love the bread of their office better than the glory of God or the good of their hearers!

I have known some persons adopt a plan for awaking in the morning which I can recommend spiritually, at any rate. They have drawn up the blinds in the direction of the morning sun, that the sun might shine on their face and wake them. I know of no better way of waking your soul than letting the Light, and the Life, and the Love of God shine full into your face. When the Sun of Righteousness arises He brings healing beneath His wings, and He brings awakening, too. A man cannot think much of Christ and love Christ much, and walk much in Christ’s fellowship, and yet be asleep. The two who went to Emmaus in Immanuel’s company, were their hearts cold?

No, do not think so. “Did not our heart burn within us?” Yes, and your hearts will burn, too, and your whole spiritual system will flame and glow if you walk in the company of Jesus. I can recommend constant fellowship with God as one of the best remedies for spiritual sloth, the surest provocative of holy zeal. Many times people are awakened in the morning by the noise of the street in which they live. “I cannot sleep after such an hour,” says one, “for I hear the tramp of those who are going into the city and the grind of the street traffic.”

At a certain time you hear the hammer of the blacksmith, the scream of an engine, or the heaving of machinery and after that sleep is gone. The activities of the world ought to awaken Christians. Are worldlings so active? How active ought we to be! Do they labor and spend their sweat for earthly wages? How much more ought I to put forth my entire strength to serve so good a Master, whose reward of Grace is everlasting bliss? The world is all astir today—let the Church be all awake, too.

We ought to be stimulated to supreme efforts by the activity of our fellow Christians. I find it does me much service to read the biographies of eminent servants of Christ, such as martyrs, missionaries, and reformers. I rise from reading their memorials feeling ashamed to be of so dwarfish a stature compared with these spiritual giants. What a humbling effect such a reflection ought to have on the do-nothings who swarm in the Churches! But alas, these are not soon moved to judge themselves. With this one word we leave them—think of what some are doing and be ashamed that you are doing so little in proportion to what they accomplish.

There are many ways of waking, but here is one with which I will close my observations on this point. Hear the trumpet of the second coming. “Behold, the Bridegroom comes. Go you out to meet Him,” was the cry that awakened the virgins when they all slumbered and slept—may it have the like arousing power at this moment. We know not when Christ will come, nor is it for us to utter prophecies about it—the times and seasons are hidden from us. “Of that day and that hour knows no man.” Whether it will be before the Millennium or after the Millennium, let those judge who can. I have no judgment upon it.

I think, as you carefully read the Scriptures, you will feel more and more convinced that only this is clearly and certainly revealed—that the Lord will personally come in such an hour as we look not for Him. Let that fact awaken us! Let it keep us always watchful, with loins girt and lamps trimmed, proving our faithful love to our blessed Master! These are, it is

clear, very many ways by which Christians may be awakened. God grant they may be effective to each and all.

I think it was Sydney Smith who was once preaching a sermon about sleeping in Church, and when he had done, he said, “Now, what good have I done? All those who sleep have been asleep through my sermon, and only those who are wakeful have heard me, and they did not need my rebukes and advice.” I often feel that this is very much the preacher’s case. Earnest people, when the congregation is exhorted to earnestness, take it home to themselves—but those persons who do nothing and are most indolent—are the very ones who say, “I do not see the need of it. I do not want to be disturbed.”

Of course not! It is not only the mark of the sluggard to sleep, but it is another characteristic of him that he is angry with those who would compel him to rise. “A little more sleep,” says he, “a little more slumber.” He turns his heavy head upon the pillow once again and wishes no blessings upon those who knock at his door so heavily. You sleepy professors are likely to do the same, but I will not refrain from knocking till you refrain from dozing. I pray God that there may be very few in this Church of the incorrigible order, whose life is one long dream—a dream of selfaggrandizement, meanness, and littleness.

May you and I, and all of us, be thoroughly earnest in the service of our Master! And if we cannot arouse others by our precept, at least let us not fail to try the force of our example.

IV. I must close with a word upon the fourth point, which is this—THE GREAT AND URGENT NEED THAT THE UNCONVERTED SINNER SHOULD AWAKE. Up to now I have spoken to the converted man—now let me address myself to the ungodly—and may the voice which shall call the dead to judgment now awaken him. You, you unconverted Man, are asleep! A deep and horrible sleep holds you fast. If it were not so, you would perceive your danger, and you would be alarmed. You have broken God’s Law. The fact is certain and solemn, though you treat it lightly.

Punishment must follow every breach of that Law, for God will not be mocked nor suffer His government to be treated with contempt. For every transgression there is an appointed recompense of reward. The retribution which is your lawful due will not long be withheld—it is on its road towards you. The feet of Justice are shod with wool—you do not hear its coming, but it is as sure as it is silent. Its steps are swift and its stroke overwhelming. Awaken, O Man, and listen to this text—“God is angry with the wicked every day. If He turns not, He will whet His sword. He has bent His bow, and made it ready.”

No peril of plague, battle, shipwreck, or poison can equal the hazard of an unpardoned soul. Beware, you that forget God—for His terrors are past conception—and His wrath burns as an oven. If you were awakened, O sin-stricken Transgressor, you would also perceive that there is a remedy for your disease—a rescue from your present danger. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And, “Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has everlasting life.” Forgiveness of sin is guaranteed to everyone that rests in the work of Jesus, and all other necessary blessings are secured to him.  
If you were awake, you would not remain an unconverted sinner another hour, but you would turn unto God with full purpose of heart! If God would awaken you, you would tremble at the jaws of Hell which are open to receive you! You would turn to Christ, and say, “Jesus, save me! Save me now!” You are asleep, Sinner—you are asleep, or you would not take matters so coolly. I am afraid for you, and bowed down with amazement and dread. The mercy is that you may be awakened—you are not yet among the slain that go down into the pit. O that that almighty Grace would awaken you at this present moment, before your doom is sealed and your damnation executed!

I offer here my fervent prayers for you, believing that He, to whom I pray, is able to bring to holy sensibility the most stolid of mankind. Strange ways God has of awakening His elect ones from their deadly slumbers. Awake them He will, and He will shake Heaven and earth sooner than let any one of them perish in unfeeling security. He will strike them down as He did Paul, or send an earthquake to shake them as He did to the jailer at Philippi. In His own way and time He will make them come to themselves and then to Christ.

Remember the story of Augustine. To the grief of his dear mother, Monica, he had been leading a wicked life. But God’s time had come, and as Augustine walked in the garden he heard a little child say, “Take! Read! Take! Read!” This induced him to take the Bible and read it. He no sooner read than a passage came before his eyes which awakened him, and he sought a Savior, and found Him. Perhaps it will be a death in your house that will wake you—sad means—but often most effectual.

A mother’s deathbed has been a soul-saving sermon to many a family. Some sleepers need a thunderclap to arouse them. Pray, you dear people of God that are awake, that the sinner may be awakened, for there is this awful danger—that he may sleep himself into Hell! Spiritual sleep deepens—the slumberer becomes more heavy still—the stupor more dense till the conscience grows seared and the soul is unimpressible. The flesh is turned into stone, the heart is harder than steel. It may be that some of those who hear these words of warning may never wake to think about their souls till in Hell they life up their eyes. What an awful lifting up of the eyes will that be!

O you who are now peaceful and secure, what a change awaits you! Hurled from vainglorious security to blank despair in a moment! You took it all so easily—you said, “Let me alone! Do not worry me! There’s time enough. The preacher ought not to frighten us with these bugbears. We have a great deal else to do besides listening to horrible stories of Hell and damnation.” And so you wrapped it up. And so you smoothed it over—but the end—who shall describe?

Have you ever heard of the Indian in his boat upon one of the great rivers of America? Somehow his moorings had broken, and his canoe was in the power of the current. He was asleep while his canoe was being borne rapidly along by the stream. He was sound asleep—and yet had good need to have been awake—for there was a tremendous waterfall not far ahead. Persons on shore saw the canoe—saw that there was a man in it asleep. But their vigilance was of no use to the sleeper—it needed that he himself should be aware of his peril.

The canoe quickened its pace, for the waters of the river grew more rapid as they approached the waterfall. Persons on shore began to cry out, and raise alarm on all sides! At last the Indian was aroused. He started up and began to use his paddle, but his strength was altogether insufficient for the struggle with the gigantic force of the waters around him. He was seen to spring upright in the boat and disappear—himself and the boat— in the fall. He had perished, for he woke too late!

Some persons on their dying beds just wake up in time to see their danger, but not to escape from it—they are carried right over the waterfall of judgment and wrath. They are gone, forever gone, where Mercy is succeeded by Justice, and Hope forbidden to enter. Let much prayer go up from believing hearts that God would awaken sinners now, and begin with those who come to the place of worship, and remain at ease in Zion. Ask for the arm of God to be revealed while the heavenly message is delivered. For this is our message—“Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.”

There is a man before me now asleep in his sins whom God means to make a minister of Christ—he knows not the Divine purpose—but there are lines of love in it for him. Arise, O Slumberer, for Jesus calls you! Awake, you Saul of Tarsus! You are a chosen vessel unto the Lord! Turn from your sins—seek your Savior! There is one here who has been a great sinner. But the Lord intends to wash him in the cleansing fountain, and clothe him in the righteousness of Christ. Come, you guilty One, awake! For mercy waits for you.

There is a poor weeping woman here who has gone far into sin. But Jesus says, “Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.” Sister, awake! Come and receive the mercy which Jesus Christ is ready to bestow upon you! God give you waking Grace, and saving Grace. May you and I, beloved Brethren in Christ, awake to the most earnest and intense form of life in Christ and life for Christ. At once let us bestir ourselves—we may think it early, but it will be none too early! May we awake now, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 108; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.  
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A SINGULAR TITLE AND A SPECIAL FAVOR  
NO. 1182

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The God of my mercy shall prevent me.”  
Psalm 59:10.**

A LIFE without trouble would be very uninteresting. Our opportunities for greatness would be narrowed down if trials were gone. I watched a glorious sunset, marveling at the beauty of the evening skies all ablaze and adoring Him who gave them their matchless coloring. On the next evening I resorted to the same spot, hoping to be, again, enraptured with the gorgeous pomp of the ending day, but there were no clouds and, therefore, no glories. True, the canopy of sapphire was there, but no magnificent array of clouds to form golden masses with edges of burning crimson, or islands of loveliest hue set in a sea of emerald. There were no great conflagrations of splendor or flaming peaks of mountains of fire. The sun was as bright as before, but for lack of dark clouds on which to pour out his luster, his magnificence was unrevealed.

A man who should live and die without trials would be like a setting sun without clouds—he would have scant opportunity for the display of those virtues with which the Divine Grace of God had endowed him. In the case of David we have much cause for thankfulness that he did not lead a life of unbroken tranquility. It is well for us that his was not a flowery path of continuous prosperity. Over him the waves and billows dashed full often—both within and without he was assailed daily, so that he became the epitome of all the temptations and the aspirations, the Graces and the weaknesses, the joys and the sorrows of our humanity—and therefore his life was so wondrously instructive. David owed much to the Philistines, to the tracks of the wild goats, to the cave of Dallam and to persecuting Saul!

His tried life and a thousand trying circumstances trained him for a grand life and made him, for us, a mirror in which we see ourselves reflected in all our varying moods and passions. None of us can know what we are till we are tried, nor will the good within us increase to any degree of bitterness unless it is exercised. The arm unused loses muscular force—put it to stern labor and it gathers strength. Soldiers are made by war and mariners by storms. The scholar may think it difficult to be severely examined, but he becomes the wiser by the searching test. Our trials and troubles, while they test and develop us, also, by Divine Grace, strengthen and improve us—and we always have great cause to bless God for them when Grace sanctifies them to our highest good.

Had not David been a man of many afflictions he would never have penned such a verse as our text, a confident utterance of unstaggering faith, full of meaning, rich with consolation—the very cream of assured hope in God. There are three things in the text—the first is David’s looking to his God, for God is the theme of the verse. Secondly, David’s appropriating Divine mercy—“the God of my mercy.” And then, thirdly, David’s condence in merciful help from God— “The God of my mercy will prevent me.”

I. First, then, let us think for awhile of David’s LOOKING TO HIS GOD. “The God of my mercy,” he says. Note that this Psalm was composed by him upon the occasion of his being shut up in the house of Michal, Saul’s daughter, and surrounded by his adversaries. The messengers of the bloodthirsty king watched the house all night long, to kill him, and when they had not effected their purpose, Saul demanded that he should be brought, on his bed, into his presence, that he might slay him. It was not easy for a man, when his enemies were watching the house, to escape out of their hands. David, however, does not appear to have been at all disturbed, but with perfect confidence in God, he expected that a way of escape would be made for him.

He could not hope that Saul would relent, nor could he expect his friends to come to the rescue. Neither did he rely upon his own cunning for the means of escape, but calmly prayed, “Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; defend me from those that rise up against me.” He rested quietly, feeling sure that God had his enemies in derision, and could as readily break the line of watchers as a man can drive off a pack of prowling dogs, to whom, indeed, he compares his foes. Now, Brothers and Sisters, this looking above, this having our eyes upon the Lord, is a practice which should be habitual with all Believers, and needs to be learned by us all. David looked to God on this occasion because he had, before this, habitually waited upon Him. His faith had realized the existence of God and his soul had felt the power of that realized truth.

This is a thing unknown to the unconverted—and unfelt to any high degree by large numbers of those who profess to know the Lord. That there is a God is a doctrine which we all receive, but that God really exists is not grasped by us as it should be. Other existences are more real to us, whereas God’s being should be the most real of all. We look upon His existence as a mystery, a light and airy thing, proper to be believed, but not a matter of everyday fact which can influence our lives to any great extent. This unreal view of God arises from a secret deep-seated unbelief. We dare not say that God is a fiction, but we act as if He were. The faith which David had, and which I trust we have, in our measure, makes God a fact to the mind and heart—intensely and superlatively real! An eye anointed with faith looks upon men and women as if they were shadows, for they are soon to dissolve and cease to be. But it views the Lord as the only real substantial existence—and all that concerns Him as being alone, sure, and vitally important.

God is unseen, but none the less present and energetic in our lives. He is unheard by the ear but none the less perceived by the heart. He is certainly at work accomplishing His purposes, although our coarse and earth-bound senses cannot discover Him. Faith has a far greater perceptive power than the senses, it is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” While carnal men say, “seeing is believing,” we assure them that to us, “believing is seeing.” We turn their saying upside down—our faith is eye and ear—and taste and touch to us! It is so mighty in us that we do not only know that there is a God, but we regard Him as the great motive force of the universe and daily calculate upon His mighty aid.

Therefore it is the Christian’s habit to fall back upon God in all time of faintness, to cry to God in all time of danger—he does not pray because he thinks it a pious, though useless, exercise, but because he believes it to be an effectual transaction—the potent pleading of a child with its Parent, rewarded with loving grants of blessing. The Believer does not look up to Heaven because it is a natural instinct to hope for better days and to cheer one’s self with a pious fiction about Providence! He looks up to Heaven because God is actually there, truly observant, tenderly sympathetic and ready with a mighty arm to come to the rescue of His people! So, then, because it is our desire to wait upon the Lord, we go to Him in troublous days as a matter of course.

We do not make him an occasional resort to be used only when we cannot help it, but we dwell in Him and, morning by morning pour out our hearts before Him. And so, when adversity comes, we fly to God as naturally as the dove to its dovecote, or the coney to the rock, or the weary child to its mother’s bosom. The nautilus, when disturbed, folds up its sails and sinks into the depths. And even so, in every hour of storm we descend into the depths of Divine Love. Blessed is that man whose spirit looks to God, alone, at all times! Let us, each one, ask his own heart—is this my case? And if we can answer aright, let us sing with Madame Guyon—

*“Ah then! To His embrace repair,  
My Soul, you are no stranger there!  
There Love Divine shall be your guard,  
And peace and safety your reward.”*

On this special occasion David was driven more closely to his God by the peculiar trouble with which surrounded him. To no other helper could he look, he was shut up to his God. Michel, Saul’s daughter, proved faithful to him, but he could not have been sure that she would dare to incur her father’s displeasure for his sake. Outside the house there might be friendly hearts, but they were far away—and the watchful followers of the tyrant shut up every avenue. But lo, there was a broad highway upwards to the Throne of the Most High! And the believing prayers of David traversed the shining road and brought him assurances of deliverance. To whom could he look but unto God? Every other door was closed, save that door which is opened in Heaven. See, then, how the bow of trouble shot him like an arrow towards God! It is a blessed thing when the waves of affliction wash us upon the rock of confidence in God, alone—when darkness below gives us an eye to the light above.

The Psalmist says in the verse preceding the text, “Because of his strength”—that is, the strength of the foe—“will I wait upon You, for God is my defense.” Because the enemy is too strong for me, therefore will I turn to my God and invoke His Omnipotence as my defense. Are any of you, this morning, in trouble so deep that you know you must sink in it, so far as material help is concerned? That is a glorious position to be in if your faith proves equal to the occasion and leads you to cast yourself upon God and swim to shore! It is nothing for a man to walk down here upon the ground, but to walk aloft upon yonder slender thread, which the eye can scarcely see, is a feat of skill at which men gaze with admiration—and to walk on what the eye cannot see at all, or the foot feel, needs a yet higher art—such is the walk of faith!

To lean upon God’s invisible arm, which the carnal mind knows not, and accounts as little worth, is grand work! If you can walk where there is no visible pathway, you belong to the race of the immortals, a God-given faith proves your lineage to be Divine! Perhaps you have a task set before you which is much too heavy for you. Well, Brother, Sister, you have the honor of being placed where you can, to the fullest, display your trust in God! What you can do you must do, but what you cannot do and yet must do, you may confidently expect the Lord to enable you to perform! He will elevate your weakness into a platform for His power. To come to the end of yourself is to get to the beginning of your God. Blessed is that extremity which is God’s opportunity! Such was David’s case.

As soon as David had looked, alone, to his God, his trials grew small . In his own esteem they grew to be nothing, for he says, “You, O Lord, shall laugh at them, You shall have all the heathen in derision.” And I think something of the laughter of God penetrated David’s spirit—and in that house where he was enclosed as a prisoner—he smiled, in his heart, at the disappointment which awaited his foes. You may look at your troubles till your spirits sink within you. You may watch the adversaries of God till your soul within you is heavy, even, to despair. But if you then lift up your eye to Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will—across whose brow no cloud can ever pass, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, who bears up the unpillared arch of Heaven and, unaided, wheels the ponderous orbs along their trackless courses—then difficulties vanish, impossibilities end and perils and dangers cease to be!

To get away from man and nestle beneath the wings of God is to exchange doubt for certainty, and fear for confidence. Faith laughs at that which fear weeps over! It leaps over mountains at whose feet mere mortal strength lies down to die. Reliance upon God, dear Friends, is a virtue to which I would urge every Believer—may the Holy Spirit work it in you. We have fallen upon evil times—this is the age of little men and cowards—but where does our littleness lie? From where comes our cowardice? I believe that both are caused by our faith. If the Son of Man should come at this hour, would He find faith on the earth? If anyone could find it, He could, for He is the Author of it, and wherever there is any faith His eyes quickly discern it. But yet, if He were to come, would He find it?

Alas, it is sadly rare! Yet, my Brethren, faith is the bread on which heroes feed—the air which gives breath to great souls. Believe in God and all things are possible for you. Whenever there has been a revival of faith in the saints of God, they have been potent against all adverse forces. Why, even a wrong faith is mighty when thoroughly received. Have you not been astonished to hear of late that Mohammedanism has made great headway in the world, that in India, especially, Muslim proselytes have been vastly more numerous than Christian converts? What has been the reason? Why, because you never saw or heard of a Muslim teacher who did not believe every word of the Koran! The teachers of the book believe in the book and believe in their prophet, hence their success, false, though their faith is!

On the other hand, nowadays it is easy to find a Christian teacher who believes next to nothing of the very things that he is set to teach—and who, in his secret heart, does not reverence the doctrine which he officially declares! The worm of unbelief, the cursed dry rot of infidelity and skepticism among professional teachers is eating out the heart and force of Christianity! He can never be strong for God who does not believe, yes, and believe with all his heart, soul and strength—in the very marrow of his being. Christianity can never be strong till her disciples have strong convictions, till those who believe in the revealed Truth of God believe in it as assuredly as they believe in their own existence! As it is on the large scale, so it is with each one of us—we can bear any burden when we believe in God—but we are crushed like moths when unbelief betrays us.

We can attempt any labor and make any sacrifice when we have confidence in the Lord. But if we doubt whether we are His children and whether His Gospel is, indeed, the victorious Gospel of the olden times, our strength evaporates and we are like Samson when his hair was lost. We must possess strong faith in God, or we shall be unstable as water. O Brothers and Sisters, we need in this Church men and women who habitually live as seeing Him who is invisible. We need those who will never rely upon mere opinion—either their own or that of others! We need Brothers and Sisters who ascribe to the Word of God sovereign authority and accept it as infallibly true, knowing it to be Divine!

If we have among us men of principle because men of experience, men of forceful lives because those lives have struck their roots into eternal verities—if we have men and women who take trials, difficulties, everything, in fact, to the one only God and trust only upon Him—we shall have heroes among us again! They will be pillars in the Church which cannot be moved! They will be bulwarks for our Israel against which the assaults of the enemy shall never avail! God make each one of us such! I long, in my own soul, to get right away from everything but the Lord, and to do His will and preach His Truth as in His sight only. Policy? Let it be abhorred! The pleasing of men? Let it be scouted! The attempt to gratify the tendencies of the age? Let it be loathed! All aiming at our own personal interests, may God deliver us from it!

But for the Truth as it is in Jesus may we live, and if need be, die! For God’s honor may we feel that we could sacrifice everything! And in His strength may we be sure that the battle is not doubtful, but the triumph must come to God and to the right. “My soul, wait you upon God.” That is our first point—would God we had learned its lesson!

II. The second part of the text is to notice DAVID’S APPROPRIATION OF THE DIVINE MERCY. “The God of my mercy.” This is quite a unique expression—it occurs only in this Psalm. God is the God of mercy and is frequently called so. He is also styled, “The God of all Grace,” but you will find none but David calling Him, “The God of my mercy.” Notice that the pith of the title lies in the appropriating word, “my.” Luther used to say that the very soul of divinity lay in the possessive pronouns. Another Divine said that all the stir there ever has been in the world has been caused by meum and tuum, mine and yours. “It is mine,” says one man.

“It is mine,” cries another man, and then comes a conflict. “It is mine,” says one king. “No,” says another, “it is not yours,” and then fierce war begins. Nothing influences a man so much as that which he calls his own. “The God of my mercy.”

Now it is clear that David appropriated to himself a portion of Divine mercy as being peculiarly his and we shall never advance in the Divine life unless we do the same, for the mercy which is common to all men, of what use is it to any man? But the mercy which any one man by faith grasps for himself, this is the mercy which will bless him and which he will prize above all things. When Gideon’s men went out to fight they had not a whole row of pitchers between them, but every man held a pitcher in his own hand, and a trumpet, too, and so the Midianites were routed. Solomon represents his armed men as having, each man, his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. A thousand swords hung up in the armory of David had been of little value—they only availed when each man had his own sword ready to his hand.

In heavenly things it is always so—we may pray in the plural—but we must believe in the singular. Notice how the Lord’s prayer runs—“Our Father which are in Heaven,” but if we would repeat the Apostles’ Creed, we must not say “we believe in God the Father,” but, “I believe.” Believing must be in the first person singular! Praying should have a width and compass about it to embrace all the saints, but believing must be by each one for himself—“The God of my mercy.” What do you know about this, my dear Hearers? Is a portion of the Divine mercy really yours, so that another cannot seize it? Is there a lot in which you must stand in the end of the days, even as by faith you stand in it now, and call it all your own?

Happy David, to be able to make this appropriation! Happy Christian, if God’s Grace has taught you to do the same! I think he meant, too, that there was a portion of mercy which he had already received, which was, therefore, altogether his own. The “God of my mercy”—he meant the God of the mercy he had already experienced. Look at this for a minute. Well may it bring the tears into your eyes to think of it. The mercy which nursed you in your infancy, when you were upon the knee of kindness. The mercy which watched over you in your youth and kept you when you were apt to stray. The mercy which restrained you from many a deadly sin. The mercy which guided you into that road where happy and holy teachings were waiting for you. The mercy which influenced you for the right. The mercy, above all, which decided you for Christ and cleansed you in His blood! The mercy which has followed you to this day and still follows you. Oh, bless the Lord that it has all come from Himself and think of Him as the God of your mercy!

Too little do we prize our mercies till they are removed from us. I have heard of a person who at 50 years of age was murmuring that he had suffered two long years of sickness. But someone reminded him that he had enjoyed 48 years of perfect health in which he had never spent a single hour in bed through illness. Then he said to himself, “I will bless God, who might have given me 48 years of sickness and only two of health— that He has been pleased to reverse that allotment. My mercies have been very great—far larger is the number of His favors than the time of my sufferings.” Bless, then, the Lord this moment, Beloved, and take Him to yourselves under that sweet name, “The God of my mercy.” And, remember, that all the mercy you have had is little compared with the mercy you have yet to receive. There is a portion of mercy laid up and labeled for you.

As the rich father thinks, “This will I give to my eldest son, and that to the second, and that to the third,” and so he puts by a portion for each of his children, so has God mapped out and allotted for each one of us some choice and special mercy fitted for our peculiar case—which no one can receive but ourselves—but which we must and shall obtain. Is not our hymn delightfully suggestive where it sings—

*“And a new song is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set.  
Glory to You for all the Grace  
I have not tasted yet.  
I have a heritage of joy  
That yet I must not see—  
The hand that bled to make it mine,  
Is keeping it for me.”*

Blessed be God for His reserves of mercy, for the blessing yet to be revealed—which is as sure as if we had it—is kept in a better hand than ours! It is preserved by Him who bought it, till the time appointed shall arrive. “The God of my mercy,” that is, of the mercy I have had, and also of that which is treasured up for me in the Covenant purpose and decree, among the sure mercies of David.

But I think David made a larger grasp than this, for when he said, “The God of my mercy,” he felt as if all the mercy in the heart of God belonged to him! Let me utter a great saying, worth your treasuring up—if any one saint should have all the needs of all the saints in the world put upon him. And if his necessities should be so great that nothing would supply them but the whole of the infinite mercy which fills the heart of God, that child of God should have all the mercy which the Lord Himself can dispense. Great as your necessities may be, my dear Brethren, all the mercy that is in God belongs to you and is engaged to meet your case! Let me put it in another light. If there were no other person in the world but you, and God loved you infinitely and alone, would He not be able to do as much for you as if all His Omnipotence was devoted to your good, and if all the thoughts of His Divine Grace centered upon you and you were the focus of all His wise and loving purposes?

“Oh, yes,” you say, “I should be favored, indeed.” You are just as favored as that! For the multiplicity of the objects of Divine Love necessitates no diminution to anyone. God can love a million and love each one as intensely as if there were but one to be favored! Our little minds are distracted with many objects. We cannot concentrate upon many—we are, therefore, straitened. But the full concentrated love of the eternal God is set upon each one of His dear children. God is entirely yours—not half of God! The Savior is yours—not a part of the Savior! God is All and that All belongs to you in Jesus Christ! Is there not comfort here? “The God of my mercy.”

One other word about it, and it is this—when God is called “the God of my mercy,” we may understand it as being the Guarantor of mercy to me.

If we say such a person is the guardian of a child, that child is then particularly under his care. If God is the God of my mercy, then He stands in a particular relationship to my mercy and binds Himself to secure it to me. The constable of the Tower of London stands in relationship to it and is concerned for its preservation. Now the Lord is not only the Keeper and Guarantor of my mercy, but the God of it, and therefore He is peculiarly interested in my mercy and will see that it comes to me—and is by no means allowed to fail. He is more than the Trustee of it, the Security for it, the Guarantee of it, the Giver of it, the Source of it, the Security of it—He is the God of my mercy!

What condescension is this! He is the God of Heaven! Is not that His grand title? Yes, but He is, “the God of my mercy,” as surely as He is the God of Heaven and earth. He is the Most High God, possessor of Heaven and earth, the God of angels and, “God over all, blessed forever.” He is all this, but He is also, with equal truth, “the God of my mercy.” There is a command which says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” and if He would not have us take it in vain, we may rest assured He will not make it vain, Himself! And if He calls Himself, as He does here, “the God of my mercy,” He cannot allow it to be an empty title—He will surely make it good. What is an offense in the creature will not be performed by the Creator. He will not make vain any one of those august titles which He has been pleased to take to Himself. Your mercy is sure, O Christian, for God is the God of your mercy.

Now I want you all to pause a moment and ask whether you really have appropriated, by faith, the mercy of God and the God of mercy. Why did not that unhappy artiste fly the other day? Why did he fall to the ground a mangled mass? Because his wings were not his own or a part of himself! The smallest bat which ventures out in the evening twilight can fly because it has its own wings. The tiniest hummingbird which dives into a flower bell can fly because its wings belong to it. But this man had only a borrowed contrivance, a mechanical invention which he could not appropriate to his own being! Another might use it as well as he, if, indeed, it could be used at all! If you wish to fly, you must have wings of your own.

Many religious professors have a mechanical religion. They have the baptism of babyhood and the priestly efficacy of sacraments—a mere flying machine! It will not serve their turn—they must have faith and Grace of their own. They must have a personal faith in a personal God. Those who have such appropriating faith shall mount up with wings as eagles, but no others can. Wings which are not your own wings will be of no use to you, but ensure your destruction. If you are the most humble, weak and obscure of all God’s children, if you have a real faith of your own, so that you can say, “My God, my Savior!” and can cry, “Abba, Father!” you shall mount aloft to His abode and make your nest forever by the Throne of Love! God grant us power to appropriate His precious things and call Him—“the God of my mercy.”

III. The last and practical point is, we see in the text, thirdly, David CONFIDING IN GOD. “The God of my mercy shall prevent me.” Prevent is an old English word and it has shifted from its original meaning, so that the uninstructed reader is apt to be misled by it. Its old meaning is “to go before,” and that is, indeed, the root meaning of the word. Here it means to anticipate, to be before, to go before as a guide, to make an easy way, to be beforehand. “The God of my mercy will prevent me,” or anticipate me by His mercy. Now, it so happens that the Hebrew word may be read in all three tenses. And some have said it should be understood, “The God of my mercy has prevented me.” Others “does prevent me.” And a third party, like our translators, read it, “shall prevent me.” Whichever tense you choose is true, and the whole three put together may be viewed as the full meaning of the passage. “The Lord has prevented me.”

Brethren, this is one of the grand doctrines of the Gospel, the doctrine of eternal love, spontaneous, self-generated, having no cause but itself. God loved us before we loved Him—He went before us with love. Before His people were born, God had elected and redeemed them, and prepared the Gospel by which, in due time, they are called. He is before us in all good things. Loving before our first parent had broken the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace had been “ordered in all things and sure.” In the eternal purpose the Lamb was slain from before the foundations of the world—the provision for Atonement was made before sin actually existed! Before there was any defilement, there was an arrangement for cleansing us from all iniquity!

In the volume of the Book it had been written that Christ would come and do the Father’s will, by which will we are sanctified. Sin is a thing of time, but mercy is from everlasting! Transgression is but of yesterday, but mercy was ever of old. Before you and I sought the Lord, the Lord sought us. The first thought of reconciliation was not with man, but with his God. Some theologians dream that the sinner takes the first step, but I never met with a child of God who would say that he, himself, did so. They all, speaking from experience, declare, “we loved Him because He first loved us.” The Grace of God is preventing Grace—unsought, undesired, unmerited—preceding all good impressions and emotions, and coming to us when we are yet ungodly and dead in trespasses and in sins.

Before we thirsted the Living Water gushed from the smitten Rock! Before we were hungry, the oxen and the fatlings were killed. Before we were wounded, the oil and wine were ready to be poured into the gashes. Our Father knew that we should have need of these things and He prevented us with the blessings of goodness by laying them up in store for us from of old. O Lord, You have the first hand with Your people! They seek You early, but You are up before them! You have distanced them in the race of affection! You are Alpha, indeed! The Lord has prevented us, but the meaning of the passage is that He does still prevent us. Is He not daily doing so? You have many needs, but they are anticipated. Before you can feel the pinch of need, the mercy is given! God goes before you, day by day, and His paths drop fatness.

You have often been fretting about what is to happen in a month’s time when you expect to be in distress. When the month has come there has been no distress because the supply has been provided. You have gone to the sepulcher, saying, “Who will roll away the stone for us?” But when you have come to the spot, the stone has already been removed. Your troubles have been ended before they began! So, also, has the Lord prevented your sins. How often, when you have sinned, has the pardon for the sin and

the deliverance from its consequences come upon you then and there, and restored you at once? While even yet more frequently the blessed God of your mercy has forestalled the temptation and prevented the sin altogether!

Look at David with his angry heart and his naked sword in his hand, attended by his furious followers—“I will go,” he says, “and slay this fellow, Nabal, and leave not a man of his house by the morning light. How dare he say there are many servants that run away from their masters nowadays? I will let him know that if a man cannot be generous to David he shall at least be civil, or his head shall answer for it!” David marches in hot passion, but at the moment when David puts his foot outside his tent God leads forth from Nabal’s house a wise and gentle woman to be an angel of mercy to him. Abigail meets him half-way and turns him back from his design by telling him that if he would restrain his wrath, in later days it would be no grief to him that he had not avenged himself.

Truly, David might say, “The God of my mercy has prevented me. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent you this day to meet me.” Even in the common acceptation of the word, “prevent,” God has often so gone before us that He has prevented us from the commission of many sins into which, otherwise, we should have fallen to our sorrow and damage. Again, how often has He gone before our prayers? Before we have asked we have had! While we were yet calling, we have received! I have asked the Lord, sometimes, for blessings which have been on the road while I was asking—and I did not know it—but they have come almost before the words escaped my lips! Have you not known it so? “Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” The desire of the righteous is granted, oftentimes, as soon as it takes shape and before it is expressed. Brethren, it will always be so. God will prevent us.

A good captain, when he is marching an army through a country, takes care to make provision for every emergency. It is time for the soldiers to camp and they need tents. Bring up the baggage wagons! Here are the tents which you ask for! The men must have their rations. Here they are! Serve them! The meat needs cooking. See, there are the portable kitchens and the fuel! The army comes to a river, by-and-by, how will they pass it? Why, the engineers are ready and are very soon thrown across. It is wonderful how the well-skilled commander foresees every possible emergency and has everything ready just in the nick of time.

Much more is it so with our God. If any child of God is placed in a position where never a child of God was before, he shall get new light upon another part of God’s Character and the world and the Church shall be the wiser because of the man’s peculiar difficulties. “The God of my mercy shall prevent me.” March on, child of God, for God goes before you. Be assured of this, His angels fly around you and you may hear the rustling of their wings if you have but faith enough! Since the eternal God, Himself, leads the van, march where He clears the course and your path shall be one of happiness and peace. The Lord will prevent us if we seek more Grace and higher attainments. Let us go from strength to strength, for at each halting place our table shall be spread. Let us climb the hill, for Grace, sufficient for the day, awaits us at each stage of progress.

Let us rise into spiritual manhood, for the blessings peculiar to that state are waiting for us! Let us endeavor to do more for Jesus than we have ever done! Let us put forth greater effort, for God’s Spirit will go before us to prepare the way! There is a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees at the very time when we begin to bestir ourselves. When we preach, Jesus is with us, according to His promise. If we lift our hands in holy service, a hand unseen but Omnipotent is lifted at the same instant! Strike, then, feeble ones, for God strikes, too! Advance, for God is with you, and will give you the victory! We shall arrive at old age before long and, perhaps, with old age will come decrepitude or sickness—but the God of mercy will go before us to prepare the land Beulah in which we shall rest till He shall call us across the stream.

As to death, when that shall come, I know, Beloved, that the Lord will prevent you, for Jesus has gone before for the very purpose of preparing a place for you. When we expect friends, we set open the gate, that when they come they may know that they are welcome. Christ has set Heaven’s gate open for us and none can shut it. He awaits the coming of His people and when they enter Heaven they shall not be unexpected guests, but shall find, each one, his mansion furnished and ready for him. Our Forerunner is where we soon shall be! We shall cause no bustle of preparation when we arrive, but we shall be welcomed home as our children are when, on a set day, they return to us. The God of my mercy will, through the trackless ether, precede me, and into the Glory He will beckon me! And up to His Throne He will conduct me.

So let us close with these three practical reflections. If He prevents us with mercy, let us not hesitate to come to Him. Loiter not, O Soul, if you would have the mercy of God! Is God so quick? Will you be slow? Does He go first and will you not follow? If any man or woman, or child in this place, this morning, desires salvation and eternal life, let him not hesitate to believe in Jesus, for the God of mercy has gone before him. Come, and welcome! All things are ready, come to the Gospel supper! The next reflection is, is God so quick in mercy? Let us, who are His people, be very quick in service. Do not let us wait to have suggested to us by others what we should do. That is true love to Christ which does not need reminding, forcing, or editing.

When a man says to himself, “God has given me these unasked mercies, what shall I render to Him? I will not turn to the Law and say, ‘This is what I ought to do,’ neither will I require some good and earnest Brother to stir me up to an unwilling duty, but I am eager to serve God— what can I do? What will He permit me to bring?” Some saints have thought of one offering, and some of another—and the Lord has been pleased with each one. Imitate the readiness of love which shone in the woman who had but one costly possession in the world, an alabaster box of very precious ointment. Nobody expected or advised her to take it and pour its contents upon the head of Jesus. Indeed, there were those who reckoned such a gift an idle waste!

But her own love bade her do it and so she consulted not with flesh and blood—she brought it out and broke it—and filled the house with perfume, while she poured the sacred nard upon the head of Him she loved so well. Does no special act of consecration occur to you? Have you not some sacrifice to present? Can you not think of some design which shall be a memorial of your gratitude? Say in your heart, “My God, since You do prevent me, I cannot hope to keep pace with Your mercy, but at any rate I will not lag further behind You than I must. When I have done all I can for You, how little it is, but that little shall be done.”

George Herbert once described a good man as resolved, “to build a hospital, or mend common ways,” and in his day these were acts of charity which piety delighted in. Other good deeds are more fitting for these days. Houses for worship are needed in many a populous district. Orphan children need to be fed. He who can buy no sweet cane with money, can bring time and zeal and effort—and these are precious. What then, my Brothers and Sisters, will you do?

And now finally, Believer, cast yourself into your Lord’s arms! Have done with fretting! Have done with anxiety and doubt! If you came in here this morning burdened, go out happy as the birds of the air! Mount like the lark to your God and sing as you mount! Shower down your song among the groveling sons of men while your eyes are upon your Father’s home and your wings of faith bear you heavenward! God bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 62.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—63, 690, 46.  
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GOD’S MERCY GOING BEFORE  
NO. 3413

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1914.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 10, 1870.**

**“The God of my mercy shall prevent [go before] me.” Psalm 59:10.**

IF you read this Psalm, you will find that David was in a very grievous plight. He was surrounded by the most cruel and the most false of men. They were ravening like wolves over carrion and endeavoring to destroy his character—and even to take his life. David knew where his resort was. As the conies make their dwellings in the rocks, and as the swallows have built a nest for themselves at God’s altar, so David resorted to his God, and to his God alone.

All the skin bottles may be dry, but there is water in the well. And all creature comforts may fail but there is an all-sufficiency in an unfailing God. If all is false to you, God will be true! And if all hate you, God is Love—and if you are in Him, He cannot be angry with you, nor rebuke you—love towards you, and love only, shall rule the day!

Let me persuade every child of God here in the hour of his trouble to resort to the comfort which David found so availing. Away, as a bird to the mountain—away, away to your God! If you have Rabshekeh’s letter about you, go and spread it before the Lord. If you have, today, an inward sorrow that you cannot tell into any other ear, go, like Hannah, and stand before God, and there let your soul pour out its bitterness. You shall find that in consulting human sympathy, there is some gain—often very little—but in seeking the sympathy of your great High Priest above, there is much gain and there never can be failure. When David returned to Ziklag, he found it burned and his wives carried away captive. He and his men had lost all their property and all their families. His men spoke of stoning him, but it is written, “David encouraged himself in his God.”

Now, if you have come to something like the same plight. If your affairs are at the lowest ebb and there is the sharpest winter passing over all your prospects, now turn to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope! Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Be of good courage, for He shall strengthen your heart. If we learn only that lesson—and do but put it into practice throughout our life—we shall have a good reward for coming up to the assembly of God’s people tonight.

But now, a few words upon this text of David’s. He declares that the God of his mercy would go before him, or forestall him. The word “prevent,” when it was used by our translators, did not mean at all what it does now. It means here that God would provide, would forestall, would be beforehand in loving kindness with him—and the two points we will speak of tonight are these—it has been so. It shall be so. First—

I. IT HAS BEEN SO.  
The God of our mercy has gone before us and outrun us. It has been so in the salvation of all His people. Long before time had begun, God had foreknown His chosen, and foreordained them unto eternal life. They had not chosen Him, for they were not in existence! He chose them as He saw them in the glass of His decrees. It must always be that God goes before or outruns His people, since from before the foundation of the world He had loved them—loved them with an everlasting love. There can be nothing before this. We know of nothing that can stand side by side with it, so far as we are concerned, for we had no being, except in the purpose of God. But even then He loved us. He loved us when we were dead in sins, when we had not a heart with which to love Him, when we were rejecting Him altogether and did evil even as we could—yet He loved us notwithstanding all. It must always be true if we think of the Doctrine of Election that He went before us with His mercy!  
It was so also, with redemption. Where were we when Christ redeemed us? My Brothers and Sisters, our sins were laid on Christ, but they were not then committed. Our transgressions were then taken by Him, but we had not even perpetrated them then! We were not yet living and yet a Savior was provided for us before we were, by any actual sin, personally lost. A fountain filled with blood was provided for us before we had, by any actual guilt, become defiled. Oh, here was Divine forethought—here was a precious going before, of God’s goodness! How He must have loved us, that knowing what our needs would be, foreseeing the abundance of our sins, He laid by in store the Divine Atonement, the sacred Propitiation by which all our sins should be put away. This was another going before of His mercy!  
Indeed, Brothers and Sisters, if you think of it, the whole Gospel is a going before of us. There was that Book written exactly to meet your case and mine, when as yet our case was not in existence. Here was a Covenant “ordered in all things and sure” and made for us in the Person of Christ. We were not parties to it, for as yet had not any being. Here was mercy laid by in the Covenant, everything that our necessities could require! Grace for Grace supplies for all the needs of our nature, treasured up for the poor mendicants before we ever became beggars, or knew that we were in need!

Think of the fullness that there is in Jesus Christ, and all these 1,800 years ago in matter of fact, and there from the foundation of the world in the Divine Purpose for every elect soul, though many of them would not come into being until remote centuries had flown by! All this forestalled, and the giving of the Holy Spirit, too, by which the saints are now called unto repentance, and unto a new life and all the operations and influences of the Holy Spirit which are all provided for in the Covenant of Grace—all bestowed upon the saints as one by one, they come into life, but all provided for long before they were born! My God, your goings forth were of old, from everlasting, and all your goings forth were full of love to me, and to all them that love You! How marvelous are You in Your condescending Grace! Where shall I find words with which to adore You? How shall I sufficiently give you the gratitude of my heart in outward expression for this, Your ancient, Your everlasting love towards those whom you have chosen? Bless His name, oh, you His people! Live to His praise and love Him all day long!  
But this Truth of God met with a further illustration in our experience at the time of our conversion and before it. Observe the preventing goodness or God with many of us before conversion. We might have committed the unpardonable sin, but we were always kept from that—how, we may not know, and probably never shall until we are in Heaven. We might have put ourselves into positions where instrumentalities which were blessed to us might never have reached us. We have sometimes been on the verge of committing sins which might have led us in a downward career of vice, farther and farther, and might even have led us to destroy ourselves! Speaking after the manner of men, our soul has run innumerable risks, each one of which could have led to eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord, had it not been that going before mercy was beforehand with us and would not let us commit the fatal act which would have consigned us to everlasting perdition! Many and many a time has He held back His servants when they were just on the edge of the fatal precipice, when they were about to take the deadly poison which would have eternally destroyed their souls! His mercy, in some Providence which they did not understand, has interposed. And you who are here tonight, you have been sick lately. Well, that sickness has kept you out of a sin into which you were beginning to slide. You have lately been overtaken with a very terrible loss. Yes, but your soul was getting eaten up with covetousness, and if it had not been for that loss, you had not been here tonight—you would have been still seeking after the world with both your hands—and you would not have had an ear for anything like a message from the Throne of God! It may be a part of the joy of Heaven to be permitted to see the manifold wisdom of God in His dealing with us even before we were quickened by His Spirit. There are marvelous preparations, I do not doubt, which are going on in human hearts for the more effectual work of Grace, for there are many who are not converted, but whose case is very hopeful. They are like what our Lord called “honest and good ground,” ready for the living Seed. Holy teachings at home, Godly examples, works within the mind that have tended to elevate the taste and purify the morals—and a thousand other things may come in as a sort of preparation for the true work of Divine Grace—and in looking back, while we must, first of all, see the preventing Grace of God in keeping us back from sin, we can next see it in gently leading us, though we knew Him not, as He did Israel of old, taking us by the arms and teaching us to go, sweetly inclining us, gently drawing us until the time should come when He should pass by us and say unto us, “Live.” All the history of an elect child of God, even before conversion, will be found to be full of traces of the going before goodness of the Lord.  
But probably we noticed this most at the time of our conversion. Some of us recollect when we first began to sigh and cry after a Savior, but oh, how He then went before us with His mercy! The sermon that we heard seemed exactly to suit our case, though the minister knew nothing of us. And when we turned to the Word of God, there were texts there, some of them very terrible ones, and they did for us just exactly what ought to have been done—they helped in the cutting and tearing process that was necessary before the pierced hands should come and bind up our wounds! God’s mercy in going before us helped us to the tenderness of heart that we were seeking after, helped us to the repentance that we longed to feel, helped us to the contrition which we desired to experience. It helped us, in fact, to have done with self, and to begin with Him! It helped us to see the depravity of our hearts as soon as ever we began to desire to see it and to be humbled on account of it.  
But do you not remember when those desires began to assume the form of prayer—when you got some light as to the way of salvation and desired how to close in with Christ and to trust Him? How swiftly did the Divine Father then run to meet His prodigal child! Oh, happy day when He fell upon our neck and kissed us, when He took off our rags and put on the raiment of joy, and bade the music and dancing go on in the house because the lost one was found! Oh, at that time, in gracious answer to prayer almost as soon as we began to pray, perhaps, we had an instance of how He goes before us with the blessings of His goodness! We were not fit to receive His mercy—so we thought—but His mercy came. We were not ready for Christ, but Christ came to us. We felt ourselves so hardened, but He came and softened us. We could not squeeze out a tear, but He accepted the dry bottles that would have had tears in them if they could. We felt as if we were just nothing—but Christ knew that our nothingness made room for Him to be everything—so He came and took us at our worst and gave Himself to be ours forever and ever! Oh, if He had waited until we had washed that foul face, and taken away every stain with floods of tears—oh, if He had waited until we had cleansed those filthy hands and washed them snowy white, until we had found a wedding dress in which we should have been fit to come—ah, Savior, You would have waited even till now and even forever, for we never could have been fit for You! But no sooner did we long to come, no sooner did we feel that we would gladly come if we dared, but felt that we were all unfit to come, than Your swift feet of mercy brought You to Your children, and the Grace was given for which we scarcely dared to hope! That is my experience, Brothers and Sisters, and I know that it is yours—God in the matter of conversion going before us with His mercy!  
And how has it been since then? Take another illustration from your life. Have you not oftentimes been prevented by the God of your mercy— by directions given when you were just about to take a wrong step? I remember well, and never can forget, how the whole turn of my life was made by the Providence of God in what we would call an accident.  
I certainly, in all probability, had not been here tonight if it had not been that an engagement made to meet a certain gentleman at a certain time was punctually kept by us both, but a servant showed him into one room on one side of the passage, and showed me into another on the other side—and we sat there two hours waiting for one another, but missed each other—and so the whole current of my life flowed in another direction! I recollect a course of action which I would have adopted, but from which I was altogether turned by hearing, as I thought, as I walked alone and sought direction, such a voice as this, “Seek you great things for yourself? Seek them not.” That text guided me in what I believe was a right, prudent and certainly has been a happy way! Had it not been for that, I might have gone astray, unwittingly, but still unwisely, into all sorts of paths! Have you not found it so? Just when you did not know which way to go you had the direction when you sought it. If you applied to God, He gave you guidance by some means, just as surely as the Jew had it when he resorted to the priest who wore the Urim and the Thummim. Take care that you always recollect this in the future, if it has been so in the past. God has gone before you, and marked out your path for you—and given you a plain map of the way. Has it not been so?  
Moreover, He not only tells us the way, and so prevents us, but He clears the way for us. Great difficulties have frequently run in our way in Providence and in Grace, and we have been like the women who went to the sepulcher. We have said, one to another, “Who shall roll away the stone for us?” But when we have come there, behold, “the stone was rolled away for it was very great.” God had made a road where we could not see any and could not make any. What? Have you never gone through the Red Sea? Have the waters never stood upright as a heap on either side while you, as God’s chosen, went through? I know you have had an experience analogous to that! Then treasure up the memory of it. Do not be ashamed now, in your talks with your fellow Christians, to tell that the Lord has gone before you with His goodness, in clearing the way for you!  
How frequently, too, has He gone before us with His goodness, by supplying our needs! Like the Israelites, who, however early they rose in the morning, found the manna from Heaven awaiting them, so has it been with you, with all who trust God! Your needs have not come as quickly as the supplies. In fact, some of us have only known our needs by finding the supplies sent! And we have said, “Then I must have needed this, or it would not have come.” And we have blessed the Lord as we have seen our soul’s necessities in the light of the Grace that has come to supply them! Oh, it has been so with you—you know it has! You have had to move, perhaps, from place to place, and God has prepared the place for you. It may be that your life has consisted much of wandering to and fro, and tossing about, yet, though you seemed like a football, you have never been tossed anywhere but what you have fallen on your feet, and fallen into the place, too, that God had provided and prepared for you! So it has been up to the present, has it not? Has He not thus gone before you with His goodness?

And once again, how often, dear Friends, when we have begun to pray for a mercy, we have had the mercy while we have yet been calling—while we have been speaking He has heard us! How frequently have we desired to return from our backslidings, and while we have been desiring to return, He has appeared and melted us down in penitence and gratitude. We have desired sanctification, and we have had the rod sent to our house directly, which was probably the very speediest way to ensure our growth in that respect. Whatever we have actually needed of the Lord, our God, He has not withheld it from us in its season, so that we will join in saying that until now it has been so, it has been so. The God of our mercy has gone before us. Now, in the second place—  
II. IT SHALL BE SO.  
It shall be so with you who are seeking Christ tonight. God’s rule for the future is His action and conduct in the past. He never changes. You must not imagine that Jesus Christ will be sterner with you than He has been with others like you. If it has been His custom to reject those who have come, He will reject you. But if it has never been so, it never shall be so, for, “Him that comes to Me, I will in nowise cast out.” Hearken, then, to Jesus now! God will go before you with the blessings of His goodness. Now, you have been thinking lately—  
*“I’ll to the gracious King approach,  
Whose scepter mercy gives.”*  
And you have thought to yourself, “Before I can come, I must feel my need aright.” Now, you think you do not feel your need and you have been troubled a great deal lately because you have not that tenderness of heart that you ought to have. Now, if you cannot come to Christ with a broken heart, come to Christ for a broken heart! He is ready to give it to you. The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord in this respect. Come and tell Him that you need a broken heart. One of the best prayers you can pray is, “Lord, create a right spirit within me.” You say, perhaps, “Sir, I need more than a broken heart—I need even to learn to pray.” Well, I remember what Mr. Fuller once said to a young man who was trying to pray and could not. He whispered to Mr. Fuller, who was kneeling by his side, “I cannot pray.” “Tell the Lord so,” said Mr. Fuller. So, Brothers and Sisters, when you say, “I cannot pray as I would. I cannot express myself as I desire,” go and tell the Lord that you are a poor, ignorant soul, and that you do not know how to pray, and say, “Lord, teach me.” “Oh, but I do not feel the desire I need to feel.” I have often found that those who have most of desire think they have not any. Well, go and tell the Lord about that, and ask Him to give you the desire which shall be necessary to make earnest prayer, that you may begin to pray, that you may have a broken heart. Wherever you like to go back to, I will go back with you, but I will tell you that Jesus Christ was there before you, and that He will meet you there with just what your souls need! He is there ready with it. He will go before you with the blessings of His goodness. The God of my mercy shall go before! “Well,” says one, “but I think that I ought to have some sort of preparation for God. I do not mean merit, but still, there must be the cleansing of the hands and the reformation of the heart.” Yes, I know there must, and I know what is more—that there will be all that if you come to Christ for it—but if you try to work this in yourselves, before you come to Him, you will certainly fail!  
Now, instead of going roundabout to find preparations for Christ by way of reformation, come to Him as you are, for He will give you all the fitness that you think you ought to bring. He has got it all. Christ did not come to save the righteous, but sinners, just as a physician does not present himself to heal those who are whole, but to heal those who are sick. “But I do not feel my sickness.” That is part of your sickness that you do not feel your sickness. Come and have that cured as well as all the rest! Do not think that you are to patch up a part of the cure and then to come to Him! But oh, stand to one side and let Him go before you with the blessings of His goodness, of His love, His blood and His Holy Spirit. He will meet you just where you are.  
“But I am desirous to be saved,” says one “and I do not think that Christ is willing to have me.” Ah, but remember the verse we sometimes sing—  
*“No sinner can be beforehand with Thee— Your Grace is most Sovereign, most rich, and most free.”*If you have a heart-felt desire after Christ, I know where you obtained it. It never grew in your garden. The dust heap of your heart would never yield so sweet a flower as that! It is the Grace of God that has made you desire Christ and for every spark of desire that you have to Christ, Christ has a volcano full of desire after you! Oh, if you have but a farthing’s worth of desire for Him, He has ten thousand pounds worth of desire towards you! You cannot outrun Christ, I am sure. “I would gladly be at peace with God,” says one. “I throw down the weapons of my rebellion tonight! I will say, ‘Lord, accept me.’” And do you think that He is unwilling to be at peace with you? Why, there never was any unwillingness on His part! He wills not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he would turn unto Him and live. Oh, do not imagine, do not imagine, any of you, that if there is any distance between you and God, God makes the distance! No, it is your own heart, your own unbelief, your love of sin— something sinful on your side—it is no lack of Grace on His side! I do not say that God will meet you half-way—I do not believe He will—but I believe He will meet you all the way, every inch of it, that He will meet you just where you are! Like the poor man that was left between Jerusalem and Jericho, of whom it is said that the good Samaritan came “where he was,” so Jesus will come and pour in the oil and the wine to heal and quicken. Only cry unto Him! If you cannot frame words, groan out your prayer! Let your aching heart but cry, “My God, have mercy on me! For Jesus’ sake, forgive me!” and He will outrun you, Sinner! He will outrun you! He will anticipate the prayer and grant the blessing! Why are you afraid to come? You know not what God is, or you would come right willingly and tell Him all your case. He can meet it! He understands it! He knows it now! Oh, come! Seek the secrecy of your chamber. Tell out as best you can, your sins, your fears, your weaknesses and unbelief—and trust in that Son of God, who became Man that He might lift men up to God—and as surely as you trust Him, you shall be saved!  
But now, it shall be so, to you who are the people of God. He will go before you with the blessings of His goodness in the future, as He has done in the past. Now, you are, perhaps, going across the sea to America or Australia. Well, He will be there before you. All is well! He has arranged it for you before you get there, and you shall have reason to say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord, He has come where His servant should come and has prepared a place for him, and made him a sphere of labor.” Or it may be, my dear Friend, that you do not know just where you are going. Well, I do not know that you need fret yourself about it, for if you walk by faith in the living God, you are going just where He knows it is best for you to go—and He will go before you. As surely as ever His glorious marching was through the wilderness with the hosts of Israel, so will there be glorious marching at your head to lead you in a right way and to bring you to a city to dwell therein. Trust in Him with full confidence and go onward, for He shall be your Guide and lead the van.  
I speak now especially to the members of this Church. It is a blessed thing to reflect upon, that in all Christian service, God will go before us. When our missionaries have gone to foreign lands, it has often happened that before the missionary has arrived, there has been a tradition in the minds of the people that there would be white men who would come to teach them some new thing—and thus they have been prepared for it and frequently whole tribes have speedily given ear to the Gospel of Christ, because for many years God had been leading them to expect His Gospel! Now, what has happened in heathen countries is happening every day in our own country! I believe that God prepares the minds of the people for the preacher as much as ever He does prepare the preacher for the people! I ask the Lord to give me preparation for the pulpit, but I often think that the other side of it—the preparation of the people for the pulpit—is equally important, and that the Lord will give it in answer to prayer! Now, how often, dear Friends, when you try to do good, you will discover that the person you are anxious about has been prepared by God on purpose for you? For instance, a man has been sick and ill. Ah, you see he had been thoughtless, before, and God has just been plowing the soil by making the man thoughtful and careful, in order that he may now listen to the Gospel. There are a thousand different sorrows that Cross over men’s minds. A working man, for instance, may during the day feel depressed, and he does not know why. Some recollections of his early childhood may come across him, but he cannot tell why, and you, perhaps, meet him ten minutes after that. If you would but speak to Him of Christ, you would be surprised to find that you had come just in the very nick of time, when God had made the man ready for you and then sent you as a messenger from Him! Believe it, that whenever you feel an extraordinary anxiety after a soul, you may take it as an indication that that soul is as much needing you as you are needing it! There is a something that will attract that person to you, as well as you to that person. Or if you should seem to be repelled, God has still a design there, and you must try again, and labor again—for a blessing will certainly come. God is preparing the man even while that man repulses you—preparing him for the time when at last he shall cheerfully accept that Savior whom you propose to him!

My Brothers, as God’s servants, we are very much in the position of Joshua with the Israelites when they came up to Canaan. They were to conquer Canaan, but do you know Canaan had been conquered long before? For if you conquer a man’s heart, it is merely a matter of detail to go and conquer his body, and God had sent before a rumor of what He would do, and Rahab told them that she knew that the hearts of the Canaanites were melted in them for fear. Moreover, God sent diseases and sent the hornet so that these people were dying, and those who were living were weakened by disease and stung by hornets, so that the Jewish hosts had an easy work. They had but to take what God had made ready for them! Go up, go up, O hosts of the Lord, for God has conquered the land beforehand for you! All these sorrows and griefs, all the calamities of wars, all the miseries of nations are but convincing them, as they shall be convinced, that their idols cannot help them! And even as to the Antichrist of Rome, all the kings that have committed fornication with her shall hate her, and shall burn her flesh as with fire! God is working secretly, God is working mysteriously and mightily! Only be encouraged, O Church of God, to go up and take the prey, for Jericho shall fall before your shouts, as God, even the Lord, your God, shall be exalted, as you win the last great victory! Think of all this through this month when you will be hard at work and just go in to win a soul. Go in for God has gone before you! You, dear Teacher, be earnest with that child, for God is intending to bless it and is getting that child ready! Your instrumentality shall fit to that heart as a key does to the wards of the lock. God is preparing you and preparing it, and good will come of it!  
And now, lastly, Brothers and Sisters. We shall soon expect to have done with laboring for Christ and to have done with pilgrimage and all its cares, except that we shall have the last river to pass over. But then, “the God of my mercy shall go before me.” There shall be the delightful Presence of Jesus and the shining company of angels, and the visions of Glory yet to be revealed—and we shall forget the pangs of earth in the joys of the heavenly land! Like one drop of bitterness that is drowned in the flood of sweetness, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and when we come to Heaven, itself, we shall discover that our God has gone before us there. “Behold,” says the Redeemer, “I go to prepare a place for you.” Oh, how delightful it is to think of going to Heaven where there will be nothing to get ready, but where all will be just as we need it—all that can be required to give to us the highest conceivable happiness, all ready, and all made ready by Christ! Rejoice, then, Believer! He will go before you through this earth and before you into Heaven, where He has already gone, bless His name! Live happily! Live happily! Live to serve Him out of gratitude for what He has done, and the Lord bless you evermore. Amen and Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 116:1-6; ROMANS 5:10-21.**

Verse 1. I love the LORD because He has heard my voice and my supplications. You cannot help loving God if He has heard your prayers. Have you tried Him? If you have, you can join with David and thousands of others in confessing that He is a prayer-hearing God and, therefore, you love Him. I find the verse might be read, “I love the Lord because He hears.” He is always hearing. I am always speaking to Him and He is always hearing me. Therefore I love Him. Can you imagine a better reason for love?

2. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. “He has inclined His ear”—stooped down, as it were, as you do to a sick person to catch his faintest word. “He has inclined His ear.” He has heard my prayer when I could hardly hear it myself! When it was such a broken prayer, such a feeble prayer, that I was afraid I had not prayed, yet He heard me! He inclined His ear and, “therefore, will I call upon Him as long as I live.” That is, I will never leave off praying and I will never leave off praising. This is the best gratitude we can show to God. Now, if a beggar were to say to us, “If you will help me today, I will beg of you as long as I live,” we would not be very thankful! But when we say this to God, He is glad, for He wants us to be thus continually calling upon Him.

3, 4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD—O LORD, I beseech You, deliver my soul. He felt as if he had been hunted. As in hunting, they sometimes surround the stag with dogs as with a cordon, so he says, “the sorrows of death compassed me. There was no getting away. I was in a circle of sorrow.” Worse than that, his pains of conscience and heart were so great that he says, “The pains of Hell get hold upon me”—got the grip of him, as though he were arrested by them—as though those dogs had come so close as to seize and grasp him. “Then,” he says, “I called.” At the worst extremity he prayed. There is no time too bad to pray! When it is all over with you, still pray. Often the end of yourself is the beginning of your God. He means to get you away from every other confidence, that you may fling yourself upon Him. “Then called I upon the name of the Lord.”

And what was the prayer? A very short one—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.” God does not measure prayers by the yard. It is not by the length, but by the weight. If there is life, earnestness, heart in your prayer, it is all the better for being short. Read the Bible through and you will scarcely find a long prayer. Prayers that come from the soul are often like arrows shot from the bow—quick, short, sharp! And God hears such prayers as these—“O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.”

5. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous. Wonderful combination— gracious and yet righteous! And if you want to know how this can be, look at Calvary, where Jesus dies that we may live! “Oh, the sweet wonders of that Cross, where God the Savior loved and died”—where there was the Justice of God to the fullest and the mercy of God without bound. “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous.”

5, 6. Yes, our God is merciful. The LORD preserves the simple. Those that have such a deal of wit may take care of themselves, but, “the Lord preserves the simple,” the straightforward, the plain-minded—those who believe His Word without raising questions. “The Lord preserves the simple.”

6. I was brought low and He helped me. Oh, many of you can say this, I trust, and if you cannot, I hope you will before long—“I was brought low and He helped me.”

**ROMANS 5:10-21.**  
10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall by saved by His life. This is a grand argument for the safety of all Believers, having a three-fold edge to it! If He reconciled His enemies, will He not save His friends? If He reconciled us, will He not save us? If He reconciled us by the death, will He not save us by the life of His Son?

11. And not only so—The blessings of the Covenant of Grace rise tier upon tier, mountain upon mountain, Alp on Alp. When you climb to what seems the utmost summit, there is a height yet beyond you. “And not only so”—

11. But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Then he begins to explain the great plan of our salvation.

12. Therefore as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. In that one man.

13, 14. For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. Children died who had not actually sinned, themselves, but died because of Adam’s sin.

15-17. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one, to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense— By Adams’ sin.

17, 18. Death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of Grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. All who are in Christ are justified by Christ, just as all who were in Adam were lost and condemned in Adam. The “alls” are not equal in extent—equal as far as the person goes in whom the “alls” were found. And this is our hope—that we, being in Christ, are justified because of His righteousness.

19, 20 . For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Moreover the Law entered—The law of Moses.

20. That the offense might abound, but where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. It makes us see sin where we never saw it. It comes on purpose to drive us to despair of being saved by works. It bids us look to the flames that Moses saw, and shrink and tremble with despair.

21. That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.  
—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2979 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

OUR BANNER  
NO. 2979

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 29, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1863.**

**“You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth.”  
Psalm 60:4.**

MOST writers upon this Psalm, after having referred the banner to the Kingdom of David, say that there is here a reference to the Messiah. We believe there is. Nor is that reference an obscure allusion. In the Lord Jesus we find the clue to the history and the solution of the prophecy. He is the banner—He is the ensign that is lifted up before the people. He is Jehovah-Nissi, “the Lord My Banner,” whom it is our joy to follow and around whom it is our delight to rally. We shall not stay to prove— though we might readily do so—that the banner here intended is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ in the majesty of His Person—in the efficacy of His merit—in the completeness of His righteousness—in the success of His triumph—in the glory of His advent. If you read it with an eye to Him, you have the meaning at once—“You has given Christ as a banner to those who fear You, to be displayed because of the truth.” So let us consider our Lord Jesus Christ, first, as He is compared to a banner. Secondly, by whom He is given. Thirdly, to whom He is given. And fourthly, for what purpose.

I. Let us consider OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AS HE IS COMPARED TO A BANNER.  
The banner was far more useful, I suppose, in ancient, than it is in modern warfare. Times have changed and we are changed by them. Yet we still speak with reverence of the old flag. There is much meaning in the phrase, “the flag that’s braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze.” The soldier still waves the flag of his country and the sailor still looks with patriotic pride to the flag that has so long floated at England’s masthead. Our metaphor, perhaps, rather points to ancient than present use.  
We should notice, first of all, that the banner was lifted up and displayed as the point of union. When a leader was about to gather troops for a war, he hoisted his banner and then every man rallied to the standard. The coming to the standard, the rallying round the banner, was the joining with the prince, the espousing of his cause. In the day of battle, when there was always a likelihood that the host would be put to flight, the valiant men all fought around the banner. Its defense was of the first and chief consequence. They might leave the baggage for a while—they might forsake the smaller flags of the divisions—but the great blood-red banner that with prayer had been consecrated—they must all gather round it, and there, if necessary, shed their heart’s blood.  
Christ, my Brothers and Sisters, is the point of union for all the soldiers of the Cross! I know of no other place where all Christians can meet. We cannot all meet—I am sorry that we cannot—at the baptismal stream. There are some who will not be baptized—they still persist in the sin of putting drops of water in the place of the ordained flood and bringing infants where faith is required. We cannot all meet even around the table of the Eucharist—there are some who thrust aside their brethren because they do not see eye to eye with them. And even the Communion Table has sometimes become a field of battle. But all Christians can meet in the Person of Christ! All true hearts can meet in the work of Christ! This is a banner that we all love, if we are Christians, and far from it are those who are not. Here to Your Cross, O Jesus, do we come! The Churchman laden with his many forms and vestments. The Presbyterian with his stern Covenant, and his love of those who stained the heather with their blood. The Independent with his passion for liberty and the separateness of the free churches. The Methodist with his intricate forms of Church Government, sometimes forms of bondage, but still forms of power. The Baptist, remembering his ancient pedigree and the days in which his fathers were hounded even by Christians, themselves, and counted not worthy of that name—they all come to Christ! Various opinions divide them. They do not see eye to eye on many matters. Here and there they will have a skirmish for the old landmarks and rightly so, for we ought to be jealous, as Josiah was, to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, and neither decline to the right hand nor to the left. But we rally to the Cross of Christ! And there all weapons of national warfare being cast aside, we meet as Brothers, fellow comrades in a blessed Evangelical Alliance who are prepared to suffer and to die for His dear sake! Forward then, Christians, to the point of union! In the crusade against the powers of darkness, with the salvation of sinners for my one undivided aim, little care I for anything but the lifting up of my Master’s Gospel and the proclamation of the Word of mercy through His flowing blood!  
Again, the banner, in time of war, was the great guide-star; it was the direction to the soldier. You remember what special care they took, in the day of battle, that in case the standard-bearer should fall, there might still be some means of guiding the warriors.  
So, to this day, Christ is the great Guide of the Christian in the day of battle. There is no fear that Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever, will ever fail. Fix your eyes upon Him, Christian, and if you would know the best way to fight, fight in His footsteps, imitate His every action, let your life be a copy of His life! You need never stop to ask for directions—the life of Christ is the Christian’s model. You need not turn to your fellow Believer and ask, “Comrade, what are we to do now? The smoke of battle gathers and the cries are various. Which way shall I go?” The Apostle Paul has given us our directions—“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.” Press forward, in Christ’s footsteps, saying, “God has given You, my Savior, to be to me a banner because of the truth.”  
In these two respects, as the central point for rallying, and as the direction to the warrior, Christ is our banner!  
And the banner, let it be remembered, is always the chief object of attack. The moment the adversary sees it, his objective is to strike there. If it is not the most vulnerable point, it will be at least the point where the adversary’s power is most felt. Did they not of old aim their shots at the flagstaff so as to cut down the banner? Whenever the old Knights of the Red Cross fought the Saracens, they always endeavored to make their steel ring upon the helmet of the man whose hand held the standard of Mohammed! The fight was always fiercest around the standard. Sometimes, when the battle was over, the field would be strewn with legs, and arms, and mangled bodies, but, in one place there would be a heap where they were piled one upon another—a great mountain of flesh and armor, broken bones and smashed skulls—and one would ask, “What does this means? How came all this carnage is here? Why are they so trampled, one upon another, and in pools of human blood?” The answer would be, “‘Twas there the standard-bearer stood, and first the adversary made a dash, and stole the banner, and then 50 knights vowed to redeem it, and they dashed against their foes and took it by storm. And then again, hand to hand, they fought with the banner between them, first in one hand and then in another, changing ownership each hour.”  
So, dear Friends, Christ Jesus has always been the object of attack! You remember that when Divine Justice came forth against Christ on Calvary, it made five tears in the great Banner, and those five wounds, all glorious, are still in that Banner! Since that day, many a shot has sought to riddle it, but not one has been able to touch it! Borne aloft, first by one hand and then by another, the mighty God of Jacob being the strength of the standard-bearers, that Banner has bidden defiance to the leaguered hosts of the world, the flesh and the devil! And never has it been trailed in the mire, and never once carried in jeering triumph by the adversary! Blessed are the tears in the Banner, for they are the symbol of our victory! Those five wounds in the Person of the Savior are the gates of Heaven to us! But, thank God, there are no more wounds to be endured—the Person of our Lord is safe forever. “A bone of Him shall not be broken.” His Gospel, too, is an unwounded Gospel and His mystical body is uninjured. Yes, the Gospel is unharmed after all the strife of ages. The infidel threatens to rend the Gospel to pieces, but it is as glorious as ever! Modern skepticism has sought to pull it thread from thread, but has not been able so much as to rend a fragment of it! Every now and then, fresh adversaries have found out some new methods of induction or declamation, attempting to prove the Gospel to be a lie, and Christ an impostor. Have they succeeded? No, verily, they have all had to fly from the field. The good old Banner of the Lord Omnipotent, even Christ Jesus, still stands exact above them all!  
And why should the banner be the object of attack but for this very reason, that it is the symbol of defiance? As soon as ever the banner is lifted up, it is, as it were, flaunted in the face of the foe. It seems to say to him, “Do your worst, come on! We are not afraid of you—we defy you!” So, when Christ is preached, there is a defiance given to the enemies of the Lord. Every time a sermon is preached in the power of the Spirit, it is as though the shrill clarion woke up the fiends of Hell for such a sermon to say to them, “Christ is come forth again to deliver His lawful captives out of your power! The King of kings has come to take away your dominions, to wrest from you your stolen treasures, and to proclaim Himself your Master.” There is a stern joy which the minister sometimes feels when he thinks of himself as the antagonist of the powers of Hell. Martin Luther seems to have felt it when he said, “Come, let us sing the 46

th Psalm and let the devil do his worst!” That was lifting up the standard of the Cross! If you want to defy the devil, don’t go about preaching philosophy! Don’t sit down and write out fine sermons with long sentences, three quarters of a mile in length! Don’t try and cull fine, smooth phrases that will sound sweetly in people’s ears. The devil doesn’t care a bit for this! But talk about Christ! Preach about the suffering of the Savior! Tell sinners that there is life in a look at Him and straightway the devil takes great offense.  
Look at many of the ministers in London! They preach in their pulpits from the first of January to the last of December—and nobody finds fault with them because they prophesy such smooth things. But let a man preach Christ! Let him exclaim about the power of Jesus to save and press home Gospel Truths with simplicity and boldness—straightaway the fiends of darkness will be against him and, if they cannot bite, they will show that they can howl and bark! There is a symbol of defiance in the banner of the Cross—it is God’s symbol of defiance, His gauntlet thrown down to the confederated powers of Darkness—a gauntlet which they dare not take up, for they know what tremendous power for good there is in the uplifting of the Cross of Christ! Wave, then, your banner, O you soldiers of the Cross! Each in your place and rank keep watch, but still wave your banner, for though the adversary shall be full of wrath, it is because he knows that his time is short when once the Cross of Christ is lifted up!  
We have not quite exhausted the metaphor yet. The banner was always a source of consolation to the wounded. There he lies, the good knight. Right well has he fought without fear and without reproach, but a chance arrow pierced the joints of his harness and his life is oozing out from the ghastly wound. There is no one there to unbuckle his helmet, or give him a draught of cool water. His frame is locked up in that hard case of steel and though he feels the pain, he cannot gain relief. He hears the mingled cries, the hoarse shouts of men that rush in fury against their fellows and he opens his eyes—as yet he has not fainted from his bleeding. Where, do you think, does he look? He turns himself round. What is he looking for? For friend? For comrades? No. Should they come to him, he would say, “Just lift me up and let me sit against that tree, but you go to the fight.” Where is that restless eye searching and what is the object for which it is looking? Yes, he has it! And the face of the dying man is brightened. He sees the banner still waving and with his last breath he cries, “On! On! On!” and falls asleep content because the banner is safe. It has not been cast down. Though he has fallen, yet the banner is secure!  
Even so, every true soldier of the Cross rejoices in its triumph! We fall, but Christ does not! We die, but the cause prospers! As I have told you before, when my heart was most sad—as it never was before nor since— that sweet text, “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name,” quite cheered my soul and set me again in peace and comfort. Is Jesus safe? Then it never matters what becomes of me! Is the banner all right? Does it wave on high? Then the adversary has not won the day! He has felled one and another, but he, himself, shall be broken in pieces, for the banner still shine in the sun!  
And, lastly, the banner is the emblem of victory. When the fighting is over and the soldier comes home, what does he bring? His blood-stained flag. And what is borne highest in the procession as it winds through the streets? It is the flag. They hang it in the church—high up there on the roof, where the incense smokes, and where the song of praise ascends— there hangs the banner, honored and esteemed, borne in conflict and in danger. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ shall be our Banner in the last day and when all our foes shall be under our feet! A little while and He that will come shall come, and will not tarry. A little while, and we shall see— *“Jehovah’s banner furled,  
Sheathed His sword; He speaks! ‘Tis done, And the kingdoms of this world  
Are the kingdoms of His Son.”*  
And then Jesus, high above us all, shall be exalted! And through the streets of the holy city, the acclamations shall ring, “Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!”  
II. Let us turn to our second point for a few moments. It is this—Who gave us this Banner? BY WHOM WAS CHRIST GIVEN TO US?  
Soldiers often esteem the colors for the sake of the person who first bestowed them. You and I ought greatly to esteem our precious Christ for the sake of God who gave Him to us—“You have given a Banner to those who fear You.” God gave us this Banner in old eternity. Christ was given by the eternal Father, from everlasting, before the earth was, to His elect people, to be the Messiah of God, the Savior of the world! He was given in the manger, when “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” He was given upon the Cross when the Father bestowed every drop of His Son’s blood, and every nerve of His body, and every power of His soul to bleed and die, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” “You have given a banner.”  
That Banner was given to each one of us in the day of our conversion. Christ became, from that time forth, our glory and our boast. And He is given to some of us, especially, when we are called to the ministry, or when the Holy Spirit’s guidance puts us upon any extraordinary work for Christ. Then is the banner, in a direct and especial manner, committed to our care. There are some here who have had this Banner given to them to carry in the midst of the Sunday school. A dear Sister here has it. A beloved Brother has it to bear in the midst of many of this congregation. The young men of our College, of our Evening Classes, and many others of you, workers for Christ, have that Banner, that you may bear it in the streets, that you may lift up the name of Jesus in the causeways, and in the places of assembly. And, in a certain measure, all of you who love the Lord, have that Banner given to you, that in your various spheres of service you may talk of Jesus and lift up His holy name!  
Now, inasmuch as God Himself gives us this Banner, with what reverence should we look upon it, with what ardor should we cluster round it, with what zeal should we defend it, with what enthusiasm should we follow it, with what faith and confidence should we rush even into death, itself, for its defense!  
III. Thirdly, TO WHOM IS THIS BANNER GIVEN? The text says, “You have given a banner to those who fear You.” Not to all men. God has a chosen people. These chosen people are known, in due time, by their outward character. That outward Divine Grace-worked character is this—they fear God, and they that fear God are the only persons who ought to carry this banner. Shall the banner be put into a drunkard’s hands? Shall the great Truth of Christ be left to those who live in sin? Oh, it is a wretched thing when men come into the pulpit to preach who have never known and felt the power of the Gospel! Time was—but times are changed somewhat—when, in multitudes of our parish pulpits, men whose characters were unhallowed, preached to others what they never practiced themselves! To such, the banner ought not to be given! Men must fear God, or else they are not worthy to bear it.  
Moreover, none but these can bear it. What others bear is not the banner—it is but an imitation of it. It is not Christ they preach—it is a diluted thing that is not the Gospel of Jesus. They cannot proclaim it to others till they know it themselves! It is given to them that fear God because they will have courage to bear it. Fear is often the mother of courage. To fear God makes a man brave. To fear man is cowardly, I grant, but to fear God with humble awe and holy reverence is such a noble passion that I would we were more and more full thereof, blending, as it were, the fear of Isaac with the faith of Abraham! To fear God will make the weakest of us play the man, and the most cowardly of us become heroes for the Lord our God!  
Now, inasmuch as this banner is given to those that fear God, if you fear God, it is given to you. I do not know in what capacity you are to bear it, but I do know there is somewhere or other where you have to carry it. Mother, let the banner wave in your household! Merchant, let the banner be fixed upon your house of business. Let it be unfurled and fly at your masthead, O sailor! Bear the banner, O soldier, in your regiment! Yours is a stern duty, for, alas, the Christian soldier has a path of briar that few men have trod. God make you faithful and may you be honored as a good soldier of Jesus Christ! Some of you are poor and work hard in the midst of many artisans who fear not God. Take your banner with you and never be ashamed of your colors. You cannot be long in a workshop before your companions will pull their colors out. They will soon begin talking to you about their sinful pleasures, their amusements, perhaps their infidel principles. Take your banner out likewise. Tell them that it is a game two can play at—never allow a man to show his banner without also showing yours! Do not do it ostentatiously—do it humbly—but do it earnestly and sincerely. Remember that your banner is one that you never need be ashamed of—the best of men have fought under it! No, He who was God as well as Man has His own name written on it! Surely, then, you need not be ashamed to wave it anywhere and everywhere. You can think bravely—now be great in action as you have been in thought—

*“Presence of mind and courage in distress Are more than armies to procure success.”*

IV. This is our last question, FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THIS BANNER GIVEN TO US?  
Our text is very explicit upon that point—it was given to us to be “displayed because of the truth.” It is to be displayed. In order to display a banner, you must take it out of its case. Members of this congregation, Brothers and Sisters in the Church, I pray you study the Scriptures much. I would not have men attempt to preach unless they have some power. To go forth without some study would be like a man attempting to do execution with a gun that had much powder in it and no shot. Young men, save your spare hours to study the Bible. Steal them from your sleep if you cannot get them any other way. Sunday school teachers, be diligent in your preparations for your classes. Let your banner out of the case. It is of little service lifting it up in the midst of the ranks without its being unfurled. See that you know the holy art of unfurling it. Practice it! Study it! Be well acquainted with Him who is the wisdom of God and the power of God!

And, after the flag is unfurled, it needs to be lifted up. So, in order to display Christ, you must lift Him up. Lift Him up with a clear voice, as one who has something to say which he would have men hear. Speak of Him boldly, as one who is not ashamed of His message. Speak affectionately, speak passionately, speak with your whole soul—let your whole heart be in every word you say, for this is to lift up the banner!  
But, besides lifting up the banner, you must carry it, for it is the business of the standard-bearer, not merely to hold it in one place, but to bear it here and there if the plan of battle shall change. So, bear Christ to the poor lodging houses, to the workhouses, to the prisons, if you can get admittance, to the back streets, to the dark slums, to the cellars, to the solitary attic, to the crowded rooms, to the highways and the byways! And you especially who are private Christians and not preachers, bear it from house to house! We had a complaint, the other day, that some of you had been going from house to house to try and talk to others about their souls. You had entrenched upon the parochial bounds of the authored gamekeeper! I pray you to entrench again! What is my parish? The whole world is my parish! Let the whole world be your parish likewise! What does it matter to us if the world is parceled out among men who probably do little or nothing? Let us do all we can! No man has any right to say to me, “Visit in such-and-such a district, not here—this is my ground.” Who gave it to you? Who gave him lordship of the world, or any portion of it? “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” The earth is your field and no matter upon whose district, territory, or parish! Let me encourage you who love the Savior, you who have the pure Gospel, to go and spread it! Let nothing confine you, or limit your labors, except your strength and your time!  
Still, after all, if we carry the Gospel and lift up the banner, it will never be displayed unless there is wind to blow it. A banner would only hang like a dead flag upon the staff if there were no wind. We cannot produce the wind to expand the banner, but we can invoke heavenly aid. Prayer becomes a prophecy when we say, “Awake, O heavenly wind, and blow, and let this banner be displayed.” The Holy Spirit is that gracious wind who shall make the Truth of God apparent in the hearts of those who hear it. Display the banner, talk of Christ, live Christ, proclaim Christ everywhere! He is given to you for this very purpose. Therefore, let not your light be hid under a bushel. “You are the light of the world.” “Let your light so shine before men.” Let the old flag be held up by firm hands. Go forth in new times, with new resolves, and may you have constant renewing as new opportunities open before you!  
Oh, but are there not some of you who could not bear this banner? Let me invite such to come and take shelter under it. My Master’s banner, wherever it goes, gives liberty! Under the banner of old England, there never breathes a slave. They tread our country, they breathe our air and their shackles fall! Beneath the banner of Christ, no slave can live. Do but look up to Jesus, relying upon His suffering in your place, and bearing your sins in your place and forthwith you shall have acceptance in the Beloved! And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ. So may God enlist you beneath the banner, to His Glory! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
GENESIS 32; PSALM 119:33-40.

Genesis 32:1. And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. What an encouragement the visit of these angels must have been to Jacob after the strife which he had had with Laban! But, dear Friends, angels often come to meet us, though we know it not. As in the old classic story, the poor man said, “This is a plain hut, but God has been here,” so we may say of every Christian’s cottage, “Though it is poor, an angel has come here,” for David says, “The Angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.” As the angels of God met Jacob, I trust that if you have come here after some stern battle, trial and difficulty, you may find the angels of God meeting you here. They do come into the assemblies of the saints. Paul tells us that the woman ought to have her head covered in the assembly “because of the angels,” that is, because they are there to see that all things are done decently and in order.

2. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. He gave it a name to commemorate God’s having sent the angels and called it, “two camps” or, “two hosts.”

3. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He is out of one trouble with Laban— now he is into another with Esau. Well did John Bunyan say—

*“A Christian man is seldom long at ease; When one trouble’s gone, another does him seize.”*

4, 5. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall you speak unto my lord Esau, Your servant Jacob says thus, I have adjourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and women servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight. This is very respectful language, and rather submissive, too. But when a man knows that he has done wrong to another, he ought to be prepared to humble himself to the injured individual and, though it happened long ago, yet Jacob really had injured his brother Esau. So it was but right that in meeting him again, he should put himself into a humble position before him. There are some proud people who, when they know that they have done wrong, yet will not admit it. And it is very hard to end a quarrel when one will not yield and the other feels that he will not, either. But there is good hope of things going right when Jacob, who is the better of the two brothers, is also the humbler of the two.

6, 7. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We went to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And well he might be, for an angry brother, with four hundred fierce followers, must mean mischief!

7, 8. And he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau comes to the one company, and smites it, then the other company which is left shall escape. This is characteristic of Jacob. He was a man of plans and arrangements, a man of considerable craftiness which some people, nowadays, call, “prudence.” He used means and he sometimes used them a little too much. Perhaps he did so in this case, but, at the same time, he was a man of faith and, therefore, he betook himself to prayer.

9-12. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, Return unto your country, and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which You have showed unto Your servant, for with my staff I passed over the Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And You said, I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the seas which cannot be numbered for multitude. A prayer most humble, most direct in its petitions, and also full of faith. That was a grand argument for him to use—“You said, I will surely do you good.” This is one of the mightiest pleas that we can urge in praying to God—“Do as You have said. Remember Your word unto Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.” O Brothers and Sisters, if you can remind God of His own promise, you will win the day, for promised mercies are sure mercies—

*“As well might He His being quit,  
As break His promise, or forget.”*

“Has He said, and shall He not do it?” Only for this will He be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them, and we must take care that we call His promise to mind and plead it at the Mercy Seat.

13-21. And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewe, and twenty rams, thirty milch camel with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, saying, ‘Whose are you? And where are you going? And whose are these before you? Then you shall say, They are your servant Jacob’s; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall you speak unto Esau, when you find him. And say we moreover, Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me. So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company. If Jacob had been true to his faith in God, he would have dispensed with these very prudent preparations, for, after all, the faithfulness of God was Jacob’s best defense! It was from God that his safety came—not from his own plotting, planning and scheming. There are some of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, who have minds that are naturally given to inventions, devices, plans and plots—and I believe that where this is the case, you have more to battle against than those have who are of an ample mind and who cast themselves more entirely upon the Lord. It is a blessed thing to be such a fool that you do not know anyone to trust in except your God. It is a sweet thing to be so weaned from your wisdom that you fall into the arms of God.

Yet, if you do feel that it is right to make such plans as Jacob made, take care that you do what Jacob also did. Pray as well as plan and if your plans are numerous, let your prayers be all the more fervent, lest the natural tendency of your constitution should degenerate into reliance upon the arm of flesh and dependence upon your own wisdom, instead of absolute reliance upon God.

22-24. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them and sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day. It was the Man Christ Jesus putting on the form of Manhood before the time when He would actually be Incarnate! And the wrestling seems to have been more on His side than on Jacob’s, for it is not said that Jacob wrestled, but that “there wrestled a Man with him.” There was something that needed to be taken out of Jacob—his strength and his craftiness—and this Angel came to get it out of him. But, on the other hand, Jacob spied his opportunity and, finding the Angel wrestling with him, he in his turn began to wrestle with the angel.

25. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him. So that he was made painfully to realize his own weakness while he was putting forth all his strength!

26. And He said, let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let You go, except You bless me. Bravely said, O Jacob! And you sons of Jacob, learn to say the same! You may have what you will if you can speak thus to the Covenant Angel, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.”

27, 28. And He said unto him, what is your name? And he said Jacob. And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob. “The supplanter.”  
28. But Israel. “A prince of God.”  
28, 29. For as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed. And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray You, Your name. That has often been the request of God’s people—they have wanted to know God’s wondrous name. The Jews superstitiously believe that we have lost the sound of the name of Jehovah—that the name is altogether unpronounceable. We think not so, but certainly, no man knows the Nature of God, and understands Him but he to whom the Son shall reveal Him. Perhaps Jacob’s request had somewhat of curiosity in it, so the Angel would not grant it.  
29. And He said, why is it that you ask after My name. And He blessed him there. He did not give him what he asked for, but He gave him something better and, in like manner, if the Lord does not open up a dark doctrine to you, but gives you a bright privilege, that will be better for you!  
30-32. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because He touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew which shrank.  
Psalm 119:33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes. The Psalmist is constantly talking about “the way.” We have that expression in the 27th verse, then in the 29th , the 30th and the 32nd –and now again we have it here—“Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes.”  
33, 34. And I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your Law; yes, I shall observe it with my whole heart. That is not true or right understanding which permits us to go into sin. Those who are really wise in heart hate evil and love righteousness.  
35. Make me to go in the path. Or, way—  
35. Of Your commandment; for therein do I delight. “Make me to go.” Not only show me the way, but make me to go, like a nurse does with a child when she puts her hands under its arms and strengthens its tottering footsteps. This is a very beautiful expression—“Make me to go.” Lord, we are very weak. We are like little children. Make us to go in the path of Your commandments, for therein do we delight.  
36. Incline my heart unto Your testimonies, and not to covetousness. The heart must love something—it will either love that which is good, or that which is evil. “O Lord,” the Psalmist seems to pray, “incline my heart in the right direction. Make it lean towards that which is good. Cause me to count Your Grace better than all the riches of the world.”  
37. Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity. “Do not let me even look at it, for one may look at an ugly thing until the sense of its deformity gradually disappears and it becomes attractive. Lord, never let me so fix my eyes upon sin that, at last, I come to reckon it a desirable thing.”  
37. And quicken You me in Your way. “A man who travels quickly has not time to stop and look at the things in the road. Lord, let me go so fast to Heaven that when the devil hangs his baubles in his shop window, I may not have time even to stop and look at them! Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity and quicken You me in Your way.’”  
38. Establish Your word unto Your servant, who is devoted to Your fear. That is, “Make Your word to me real and true. Put away my natural skepticism, my proneness to question, my tendency to doubt.” “Establish Your word.” “Make me to know how firm, how true, how real it is, for I would love it more and more. I do believe it, for I am devoted to Your fear, but I long to be still further established in the faith.”  
39. Turn away my reproach which I fear. Are any of you fearing reproach? If so, you may well fear it, for you deserve it. Yet, even then, you may ask the Lord to turn it away from you.  
39, 40. For Your judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after Your precepts. Some people whom I know long after the promises, and others long after the doctrines. I hope that they will all get an equal longing for the precepts, for true Believers love the precepts as much as they love the promises or the doctrines. “Behold, I have longed after Your precepts.”  
40. Quicken me in Your righteousness.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
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MOAB IS MY WASH POT  
NO. 983

**A SERMON DELIVERED  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Moab is My wash pot.” Psalm 60:8.**

MOAB, which had threatened Israel, was to be so completely subdued, and become so utterly contemptible as to be likened to a wash pot or basin in which men wash their feet. More than this, however, may have been intended—no, we feel sure was intended by the expression. Let us explain exactly what the language literally means. In the East the general mode of washing the hands and the feet is with a basin and ewer. Water is poured upon the hands or feet from the ewer, and it falls into the basin.

No Oriental, if he can help it, will wash in standing water. He prefers to have it clear and running. He puts his feet into the wash pot, into the bath, into the basin, and then the clear, cool liquid is poured upon his feet. The wash pot’s sole purpose is to hold the dirty water which has already passed over the man’s flesh. Wearing no completely covering shoes, as we do, but only sandals, the feet of an Eastern traveler in a long journey become very much defiled. The water, therefore, when it runs off from them, is far from clean, and the wash pot is thus put to a very contemptible use by being only the receptacle of dirty water.

When Moab thus became a wash pot, it was far other than when it was said, “Moab has been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his lees, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither has he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.” “We have heard the pride of Moab (he is exceedingly proud), his loftiness, and his arrogance, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart.” What does Moab represent to you and to me?

We are the children of Israel by faith in Christ, and in Him we have obtained by Covenant a promised land. Our faith may cry, “I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.” All things are ours in Christ Jesus. “Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine.” Now Moab was outside of Canaan. It was not given to Israel as a possession, but in course of time it was subdued in warfare and became tributary to the Jewish king. Even thus our faith overcomes the world, and enables us to say, “this world is ours”—ours for a useful, necessary purpose. We set but small store by it. It is nothing but our wash pot. But we are content to use it as far as we may make it subserve a holy end.

The best possessions we have outside of the spiritual heritage we put under our feet, desiring to keep them in their proper inferior position. They are not the crown of our head, nor the comfort of our heart, nor the girdle of our loins, nor the staff of our support. They are put to far baser uses. They yield us some comfort, for which we are grateful to God, but it is only for our feet or lower nature. Our head and heart find nobler joys.

The whole world put together, with all its wealth, is but a mess of potage for Esau and nothing more.

God’s Jacob has a better portion, for he has the birthright. Our worst is better than the world’s best, for the reproach of Christ is greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt—

*“We tread the world beneath our feet,  
With all that earth calls good or great.”*

“Moab is my wash pot,” nothing more—a thing contemptible and despicable as compared with the eternal realities of Covenant blessings. Yet, for all that, there was a use for Moab, a use to be rightly understood. A wash pot has its necessary function. And even this base world may be made, by faith, in the hands of God to be the means of aiding the purity of the saints.

Its afflictions and troubles may work for our present and lasting good. The world and its trials can never be compared to the water which cleanses our feet. For that purifying stream we look to a far higher source. But it may be likened to the basin in which our feet are placed while they are being washed. If we regard Moab as representative of the unregenerate people among whom we dwell, we do well, like the children of Israel, on their march to Canaan, to let them alone, for their heritage is not our heritage—neither are their joys our joys.

The less communion we have with them the better. If we ask of them, as Israel did of Moab, simply to be allowed to go on our way in peace, it is all we need. Moses sent his messenger, who said, “Let me pass through your land: I will go along by the highway. I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. You shall sell me meat for money, that I may eat. And give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet, until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God gives us.”

Like the pilgrims in Vanity Fair, we only ask a clear passage through the place, for we have no inheritance in it, no, not so much as we can set our foot upon. Yet, inasmuch as we cannot altogether separate ourselves from the sinful—for then must we go out of the world—we are compelled to feel the influence of their conduct. And it will become our wisdom to watch that this become not injurious to us, but be made under God rather to be of service to us than a hindrance.

My object will be to show that, contrary to the ordinary course of nature, but not contrary to faith—even this ungodly world may be made to assist our advance in holiness. As of old the men of Israel went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his axe and his courtier, so may we derive some sharpening from our enemies. We may gather honey from the lion, take a jewel from the toad’s head, and borrow a star from the brow of night. Moab may become our wash pot.

While this is contrary to nature, it is also unusual in history. In the Book of Numbers we read that Balak, son of Zippor, desired to vanquish Israel, and therefore he sent for Balaam, the son of Beor, saying, “Curse Israel for me, and perhaps I shall prevail against them.” Balaam was not able to curse Israel by word of mouth, but he cursed them in very deed when he counseled the king to make them unclean in God’s sight by sending the daughters of Moab among them, who not only led them into lasciviousness, but invited them to the sacrifices of their gods. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and the plague would have devoured them, had not the holy zeal of Phinehas turned away the Divine anger.

Thus it is clear that Moab of old was foremost in polluting and defiling Israel. It is a great feat of faith when the thing which naturally defiles is turned into a wash pot. Behold the transformations of Grace! This ungodly world outside the Church—the world of wicked men—would naturally pollute us, but faith turns them into a wash pot, and finds in them motives for watchfulness and holiness. We sigh, in the words of the old Psalm—

*“Woe is me that I in Mesech am  
A sojourner so long.  
That I in tabernacles dwell  
To Kedar that belong.”*

As we cannot sing the Lord’s song in a strange land, so neither can we very readily keep our garments unspotted in a land deluged with uncleanness. With difficulty do we save ourselves from this untoward generation. And yet faith learns the secret of overcoming the ordinary tendency of things, and of making that which might injure us subsidiary to our advantage, fulfilling that ancient promise, “And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.” The defiling world may be made helpful to us in the following ways—

I. First of all, ungodly men, if we are in a gracious spirit, may be of solemn service to us because WE SEE IN THEM WHAT SIN IS. They are beacons upon the rocks to keep us from danger. The lives of many men are recorded in Scripture, not as excuses for our sins, much less as examples, but the very reverse. Like murderers in the olden times hung in chains, they are meant to be warnings.

Their lives and deaths are danger signals, bidding those who are pursuing a career of sin to come to a pause, and reverse the engine at once. They are our wash pot in that respect, that they warn us of pollution, and so help to prevent our falling into it. When we learn that pride turned angels into devils, we have a lesson in humility read to us from Heaven and Hell. When we read of profane Esau, obstinate Pharaoh, disobedient Saul, apostate Judas, or vacillating Pilate, we are taught by their examples to shun the rocks upon which they made eternal shipwreck.

Transgressors of our own race are peculiarly suitable to act as warnings to us, for we ought ever to remember when we see the sins of ungodly men, that “such were some of us.” Whenever you see a drunkard, if you were once such, it will bring the tears to your eyes to remember when you, too, were a slave to the ensnaring cup, and you will thank God that his Grace has changed you. Not as the Pharisee will you pretend to thank God, while you are flattering your own self, but with deep humiliation you will confess what Grace has done.

When we read in the newspaper a sad case of lasciviousness, or any other breach of the laws of God and man, if we were once guilty of the like and have now been renewed in heart, it will make us blush. It will humble us, and cause us to admire the power and Sovereignty of Divine Grace.

Now the blush of repentance, the shamefacedness of humility, and the tear of gratitude are three helpful things—and all tend, under God’s Grace to set us purging out the old leaven. Remember, O Believer, that there is no wretch upon earth so bad, but what you were once his equal in alienation from God and death in sin!

In untoward acts there may have been much difference, but in the inner man how little! The seed of all the sin which you see in him lies in your corrupt nature and needs only a fit season to bring forth and bud. You were once in that fire of sin in which he is consumed by his passions! You have been plucked as a brand from the burning, or else had you still been there. Yonder is a prodigal, all bespattered from head to foot—but we, also once were plunged into the ditch until our own clothes abhorred us—and we should be sinking in the mire even now if the mighty hand of Grace had not lifted us up from the horrible pit, and washed us in the Savior’s blood.

We were “heirs of wrath even as others.” “All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.” Our sins are different, but we were all, without exception, shaped in iniquity—and as in water, face answers unto face— so the heart of man to man. When you see the wickedness of an ungodly man, make him your wash pot by remembering that you also, though you are regenerate, are encompassed with “the body of this death.”

Remember the words of the Apostle—“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me. But how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find, then, a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

The old nature so remains in us, that, if we were to be deserted by God, we should even yet become such as the ungodly are. Need I quote to you the speech of John Bradford, one of the godliest of men? When he saw a wretch taken out to Tyburn to be hanged, the tears were in his eyes, and when they asked him why, he said, “There goes John Bradford, but for the Grace of God.” Ah, and when we see a prodigal plunging into excess of riot, there goes the best among us, if we are not preserved in Christ Jesus. Yes, and when the damned go down to Hell, there must I go, unless the same Grace which restrains me now from sin, shall uphold me to my last day. And keep me from falling.

Brother Christian, you carry much combustible matter in your nature! Be warned when you see your neighbor’s house on fire. When one man falls, the next should look to his steps. You are a man of like passions. Remember yourself lest you also be tempted. In these days of epidemics, if we knew that a certain house was tainted with disease, and if we saw a person who had come from it with the marks of the disease on his face— what should we feel? Should we not take it as a warning to keep clear, both of the house and of him? We ourselves are as likely to take the disease as he was!

So when we see a sinner transgressing we should say to ourselves, “I, also, am a man, and a fallen man. Let me abhor every evil way, and guard myself jealously, lest I also fall into sin.” In this way Moab may be a wash pot. By remembering what we are and what we were, we may, by taking warning from the evil courses of others, avoid the like condemnation. There are certain sins which we readily detect in others which should serve as loud calls to us to correct the same things in ourselves.

When a man sees the faults of others and congratulates himself that he is far superior to such, he evidently knows not how to extract good from evil. He is proud, and knows nothing. But when we perceive errors in others and immediately set a diligent watch against falling into the like, then Moab is rightly used and becomes our wash pot. For instance, as to the matter of bodily indulgence. The sinner is a man who puts his body before his soul, and his head where his feet should be. He is therefore a monster in nature.

Instead of the world being under his feet, as it is with every good man, he inverts himself and places his head and his heart in the dust. He lives for the body which is to die, and forgets the soul which lives forever. When, therefore, you see a drunkard, or an unchaste person, say to yourself, “I must mortify my members, and give my spiritual nature the predominance. For this I must cry mightily to God, the Eternal Spirit, lest the body of this death prevail over me. I must keep under my body, as the Apostle says, and bring it into subjection, lest I, too, become a prey to the same animal passions which lead sinners captives.”

I see the ungodly man putting this poor fleeting world before the eternal world to come—he is a fool. But let me take heed that I, in no measure, imitate him. Let me never in my business live as though only to make money. Let me not fall into his error, but ever seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and believe that other things shall be added to me. The ungodly man disregards God. God is not in all his thoughts. He says in his heart, “No God.” Now when I know that the ungodly man does that, it should be a warning to me not to forget the Lord, or depart from Him in any measure.

Alas, we are all of us more or less atheistic. How little of our life is given to God! You who love and fear Him are not always near to Him, though He is always near to you. Do you ever enter upon your enterprises without Him? When you begin your business with Him, are you not apt to forget Him in the middle passage of it? Or when you have gone on to the very center of a work with Him, are you not liable to leave Him before you close? Is not this to learn the way of the wicked and to be like them in wandering away from the living God? To have God always with us, to lean hourly upon Him, and to feel each moment that He is All in All to us—this is the true condition in which our minds ought to be continually.

The atheism of the outside world should warn us against the inward godlessness of our naturally atheistic hearts. We select these sins as specimens of the general principle, but it is applicable to all forms of evil. Did you ever meet with a vain man who boasted loudly and evermore talked about his own beloved self? Was not that a lesson for you? Surely it will help to preserve you from acting so ridiculous a part! Did not I hear you, the other night, laughing at the boaster for his folly? Let us hope,

then, you will never set others laughing at yourself. You know another person who is morose, he always speaks sharply and makes enemies. Be you of another spirit!

Be courteous, cultivate the Grace of cheerfulness and good temper as a Christian. The moroseness of the churl should enforce upon you the duty of godly gentleness. Moab will be your wash pot. You know a certain person whose hands appear to be paralyzed if they are required to bestow a contribution. How unlovely his meanness makes him! Will not the miserable exhibition of stinginess which he represents lead you to avoid all covetousness? Another person of your acquaintance is very soon irritated. You can hardly say a word to displease him but he makes a crime of it immediately, and falls into the temporary insanity of anger.

Well, then, learn yourself to be slow to wrath. Seek that charity which is not easily provoked and thinks no evil. Maybe your friend’s blood is warmer than yours, and there is some excuse for him. But since you see how unwise and wicked it is in him, seek much Grace to overcome the propensity in your own case. If a man should fall into a pit through walking unwarily along a dangerous path, his fall should be my safety—his experience should be my instruction—there can be no need for me to roll over the same precipice in order to know experimentally how dangerous it

is! How sad a fact it is that very few of us ever learn by the experience of

other people! Dame Experience must take each one of us into her school and make us personally smart under her rod—otherwise we will not learn. Warnings are neglected by the foolish. The young sluggard sees the huge thorns and thistles in the older sluggard’s garden and yet he follows the same lazy habits. One step follows another into the shambles.

Flies see their brethren perishing in the sugared trap, and yet rush into it themselves. The Lord make us wise and prudent, and from the errors of others may we learn to steer our own course aright. Then may we truly say, “Moab is my wash pot.”

II. Another illustration of this practical principle lies in the fact that WE SEE IN THE UNGODLY THE PRESENT EVIL RESULTS OF SIN. We frequently have the opportunity of beholding in them, not only sin, but some of its bitter fruits. And this should still further help us to shun it, by God’s Grace. Evil is now no longer an unknown seed of doubtful character. We have seen it planted, and have beheld sinners reaping the first sheaves of its awful harvest. This poison is no longer an uncertain drug, for its deadly effects are apparent in those around us. If we sin, it is no longer through the want of knowing what sin will lead to, for its mischief is daily before our eyes.

First, are you not very certain, those of you who watch unconverted and ungodly people, that they are not solidly happy? What roaring boys they are sometimes! How vociferous are their songs! How merry their dances! How hilarious their laughter! You would think that there were no happier people to be found under the sun. But as on many a face beauty is produced by art rather than by nature, and a little paint creates a transient comeliness, so often the mirth of this world is a painted thing, a base imitation—not so deep even as the skin.

Ungodly men know nothing of heart-laughing. They are strangers to the deep, serene happiness which is the portion of Believers. Their joy comes and goes with the hour. See them when the feast is over—“Who has woe? Who has redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine. The men of strength to mingle strong drink.” Mark them when alone—they are ready to die with dullness. They want to kill time as if they had an overplus of it and would be glad to dispose of the superfluity.

A man’s face must be very ugly when he never cares to look at it. And a man’s state must be very bad, indeed, when he is ashamed to know what it is. And yet in the case of tens of thousands of people who say they are very happy, there is a worm inside the apple. The very foundation stone has been removed from the edifice. And you may be sure it is so, for they dare not examine into matters. Ungodly men at bottom are unhappy men. “The way of transgressors is hard.” “There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.” Their Marah is never dry, but flows with perennial waters of bitterness.

What says their great poet Byron—  
*“Count over the joys your hours have seen, Count over the days from anguish free.  
And know whatever you have been,  
‘Tis something better not to be.”*

Now then, if things are really so—if sin brings, after all, an unsatisfactory result to the mind. If a man is not rendered happy by an evil course—then let me choose another path, and, by God’s Grace, keep to Wisdom’s ways of pleasantness and paths of peace into which my Lord, by His love, has drawn me and by His Grace has led me. I am happy in His bosom, I drink living waters out of His fountain. Why should I go to those broken cisterns, which I clearly see can hold no water? Why should I wish to wander over the dreary waste of waters?

Noah’s hand is warm, and the peaceful ark is near—“Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” When I read of aching hearts and hear that great worldling, who had all the world could give him, sum it all up with this sentence, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” does not my heart say at once, “Oh, empty world, you tempt me in vain, for I see through the cheat” ?

Madam Bubble we have seen with her mask off, and are not to be fascinated by so ugly a witch. We follow not after yonder green meads and flowing brooks because they are not real, and are only a mirage mocking the traveler. Why should we pursue a bubble or chase the wind? We spend our money no more for that which is not bread. Moab is our wash pot. If others have found earthly things to be unsatisfactory, we wash our hands of their disappointing pursuits. Dear Savior, we would follow You wherever You go, till we come to dwell with You forever.

But it is not merely that ungodly men are not happy. There are times when they are positively wretched through their sins. Sometimes fear comes upon them as a whirlwind and they have no refuge or way of escape. I have been, now and then, called to witness the utter anguish of a man who has lost his gods. His great idols have been broken, and he has

been in despair.

His darling child is dead, or his wife is a corpse and he knows not how to endure life. Did you ever see a godless man when he had lost all his money in a speculation which once promised fair? Did you mark his woe? Did you ever see the countenance of a gambler who had staked his last and lost his all? See him in an agony which can find no alleviation. He rises from the table, he rushes to cover his hands in his own blood. Poor soul, he has lost his all!

That never happens to a Christian—never! If all he had on earth were gone, it would be only like losing a little of his spending money—his permanent capital would be safe in the Imperial treasury—where Omnipotence, itself, stands guard. Even when no very great calamity puts out the candle of the worldling, yet, as years revolve, a gathering cloud darkens his day. Hear again the world’s master songster. The confession will suit many—

*“My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone.  
The worm, the canker, and the grief—  
Are mine alone.  
The fire that in my bosom plays  
Alone as some volcanic isle;  
No torch is kindled at its blaze—  
A funeral pile.”*

This is the world’s treatment of its old servants—it dishonors them in old age. But it is not so with aged Believers—“they shall still bring forth fruit in old age. They shall be fat and flourishing, to show that the Lord is upright.” When all our wealth on earth is gone, our treasure is still safe in Heaven where moth corrupts not, and thieves break not through nor steal. When we think of the despair of men—of blasted hopes—Moab may become our wash pot, and may keep us from setting our affection upon their fleeting joys.

Here and there, in the Moab of sin, you meet with men who are in their garments, their trembling limbs, their penury, and their shame living monitors and standing proof that the way of transgressors in hard. There are sins whose judgment hastens as a whirlwind—sins of the flesh which eat into the bones and poison the blood. Sins of appetite that degrade and destroy the frame. If young men knew the price of sin, even in this life, they would not be so keen to purchase pleasurable moments at the price of painful years.

Who would coin his life into iniquity to have it returned to him in this life red-hot from the mint of torment? Mark well the spendthrift, void of understanding! I have seen him at my door. I knew his relatives—people of reputable character and good estate. I have seen him in rags which scarcely covered him, piteously weeping for a piece of bread. Yet a few short years ago he inherited a portion which most men would have thought wealth. In a mad riot, into which he could not crowd enough of debauchery, he spent all that he had.

He was soon penniless, and then loathsome and sorely sick. He was pitied by his friends, but pity has been lost on him, and now none of his kith or kin dare own him. I, too, fed him, clothed him, and found him a place of labor. The garments which charity had supplied him, within the next few hours, were sold for drink and he was wallowing in drunkenness. The work was deserted almost as soon as attempted. He will die of starvation, if he is not already dead, for he has abandoned himself to every vicious excess and already trembles from head to foot, and looks to be on the borders of the grave.

Nothing keeps him sober but want of another penny to buy a drink. Not even that can restrain him from uncleanness. Hunger, cold, and nakedness he knows full well—and prefers to endure them rather than earn honest bread and abandon his licentiousness. Tears have been wept over him in vain, and many must have been his own tears of misery when he has been in want. The workhouse is his best shelter and its pauper clothing his noble livery. Away from that retreat he is a mass of rags and indescribable filth!

Young Christian professor, if you are tempted by the strange woman, or by the wine which moves itself aright in the cup, look on the victims of these destroyers before you dally with them! See the consequences of sin even in this life, and avoid it! Don’t even pass by it! Look not on it, but flee youthful lusts which war against the soul. Thus make filthy Moab to become your wash pot from this time forth.

The unconverted, when they go not thus far, may yet be beacons to us. Observe, for instance, the procrastinating hearer of the Gospel. How certainly he becomes hardened to all rebukes. Early sensibility gives way to indifference. Let us also beware lest we, by trifling with convictions and holy impulses, lose tenderness of conscience. They advance in evil, and at last commit with impunity sins which, years ago, would have struck them with unaffected horror. Let us be cautious lest a similarly blunting process should be carried on upon our hearts.

But time would fail me to show you in detail how readily the evil results of sin in others may preserve us from falling into the like—how, in a word, Moab may be our wash pot.

III. A third point suggests itself. Men of this world are made useful to us since they DISCOVER IN US OUR WEAK PLACES. Their opposition, slander, and persecution are a rough pumice stone to remove some of our spots. When young men come to college one of the chief benefits they obtain is the severe criticism to which they are subjected from their tutors and fellow students. Sharp ears hear their slips of speech and they are made conscious of them.

Now in a certain sense the outside world often becomes a college to the Christian. When we are with our dear Christian Brethren, they do not look for our faults—at least they should not—neither do they irritate us and so bring our infirmities to the surface. They treat us so lovingly and gently that we do not know our weak side. Young Christians would be like plants under glass cases in a conservatory and become tender and feeble. But the rough world tries them, and is overruled by God to their strengthening and general benefit.

Men’s lynx eyes see our shortcomings, and their merciless tongues inform us of them. And, for my part, I see much advantage brought out of this maliciousness of theirs. They are our monitors and help to keep us humble, and make us careful. If we cannot bear a little shake from men,

how shall we bear the shaking of Heaven and earth at the Last Day? The world often tries us as with fire, and the things which we reckoned to be gold and silver perish in the ordeal if they are but counterfeit—and we are gainers by such a loss.

In the world our temper is tried, and too often we become irritated. What then? Why just this. If sanctification has regulated our emotions, patience will have her perfect work and charity will suffer long. But if we are soon angry and find it hard to forgive, let us not so much find fault with those who try us as with ourselves, because we cannot bear the ordeal. Our pride must go down! We must become slow to wrath, we must be content to be as our Lord—the meek and lowly Savior. These irritations show us how far we are from the Model, and should excite in us a desire for progress towards His complete Image.

Perhaps you had fondly said in your heart, “I could bear a great deal. I could act the Christian under the worst abuse.” But now you sing another song and find how great your weakness is. Moab thus becomes your wash pot, for now you will go to God in prayer and ask to be subdued to His will. Do not worldly men in some cases frighten professors out of their testimony for Christ? I mean, has it ever happened that our cheek has blanched, and our tongue failed us in the presence of cavilers, blasphemers, and skeptics? And have we not been silent when we ought to have avowed our Lord?

That also shows how cowardly we are at heart, and how cold is our love. We are to blame for not having more courage. If we were strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, as we ought to be, we should be ready to go with Christ to prison and to death, and never think of shunning His service. Do you not find that ungodly men, when you are obliged to be in their company in business, will occasionally utter remarks which shake your faith about Truths of God which you imagined you firmly believed?

Too many are content with a superficial creed. Their faith is not rooted deep in their hearts, and therefore a little wind rocks the tree to and fro. And before long the very motion of the tree tends to root it, and it becomes all the more firm. God overrules, for good, the evilness of men against the Truth. Besides, do not ungodly men drive us from loving the world? We might think of finding our rest here below, but when we hear their tongues cruelly and unkindly slandering us, then we are sick of their company—

*“My soul distracted mourn and pines  
To reach that peaceful shore,  
Where all the weary are at rest,  
And troubles vex no more.”*

An extreme case of the way in which evil treatment may tend to our sanctification may be found in the life of one of the old ministers in the north of Scotland. “A cold, unfeeling, bold, unheeding, worldly woman was the wife of Mr. Fraser, one of the ministers of Ross Shire,” writes my beloved friend, Mr. John Kennedy, in his interesting book entitled, The Days of the Fathers in Ross Shire. “Never did her godly husband sit down to a comfortable meal in his own home, and often would he have fainted but for the considerate kindness of some of his parishioners. She was too unfeeling to try to hide her treatment of him, and well was it for him, on one account, that she was.

“His friends thus knew of his ill-treatment, and were moved to do what they could for his comfort. A godly acquaintance arranged with him to leave a supply of food in a certain place, beside his usual walk, of which he might avail himself when starved at home. Even light and fire in his study were denied to him on the long, cold winter evenings. And as his study was his only place of refuge from the cruel scourge of his wife’s tongue and temper, there, shivering and in the dark, he used to spend his winter evenings at home.

“Compelled to walk in order to keep himself warm, and accustomed to do so when preparing for the pulpit, he always kept his hands before him as feelers in the dark, to warn him of his approaching the wall at either side of the room. In this way he actually wore a hole through the plaster at each end of his accustomed beat, on which some eyes have looked that glistened with light from other fire than that of love, at the remembrance of his cruel wife. But the godly husband had learned to thank the Lord for the discipline of this trial.

“Being once at a Presbytery dinner, alone, amidst a group of moderates, one of them proposed, as a toast, the health of their wives, and turning to Mr. Fraser, said, as he winked at his companions, ‘You, of course, will cordially join in drinking to this toast.’ ‘So I will, and so I ought,’ Mr. Fraser said, ‘for mine has been a better wife to me than any of yours has been to you.’ ‘How so?’ they all exclaimed. ‘She has sent me,’ was his reply, ‘seven times a day to my knees, when I would not otherwise have gone, and that is more than any of you can say of yours.’”

Ah, this is the way to make Moab our wash pot! That is to say, to make those who grieve us most act but as rough waves to hurry us on to the Rock. If the birds of Paradise will keep to the nest, their ungodly relatives or neighbors shall be a thorn to make them mount into their native element—the Heaven of God. The attacks of the ungodly upon the Church have been overruled by God to make His people leave the camp and forsake ungodly associations so as to be separate.

I know a Beloved Sister in Christ who was baptized. She had moved in high circles, but they told me that after her Baptism she received the cold shoulder. When I heard it, I said, “Thank God for it,” for half her temptations are gone. If the world has turned its back upon her she will be all the more sure to turn her back on the world and live near to her Lord. The friendship of the world is enmity to God—why should we seek it? “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

If any man will follow Christ he must expect persecution, and one of the cardinal precepts of the Christian faith runs thus—“Come you out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach.”

IV. Lastly, IN REFERENCE TO THE WORLD TO COME, the terrible doom of the ungodly is a most solemn warning to us. My heart fails me to speak concerning the destiny of the ungodly in another world. Dying without hope, without a Savior—they go before the Throne unclean, unforgiven, to hear that awful sentence—“Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Pursue them for a moment, in your thoughts, down to the deeps of wrath where God’s Judgment shall pursue them. My Lord, I pray You of Your Grace, save me from the sin which brings such a result at the end of it. If the wages of sin are such a death as this, Lord save me from so accursed a service. Will not the sight of their destruction drive us to watchfulness and cause us to make our calling and election sure? Will it not make us anxious lest we also come into this place of torment? O the wrath to come! The wrath to come which this Book speaks in so many terrible tones and dreadful images!

Remember Lot’s wife! “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

In this way Moab becomes our wash pot, by showing us what sin grows to when it has developed itself. This consideration will surely cause us more heartily to love the Savior who can deliver us from it. Dear Friends, if you are not in Christ, much of what I have said bears upon YOU! Think! And pray to escape from the wrath to come. I would not have you be made a mere wash pot to be used and broken as a potter’s vessel. Neither should you wish to be a vessel without honor, a thing of no esteem.

But may you have faith in Jesus—life in Him—and then you shall be a royal diadem, a crown of Glory in the hand of our God. May you have a heritage among those who fear the Lord and are reconciled to Him by faith in the total Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Portion of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Psalm 60.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2728 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HIGH ROCK  
NO. 2728

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 26, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A THURSDAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1859.

**“From the end of the earth will I cry unto You, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” Psalm 61:2.**

IT is supposed by many that David wrote this Psalm at the time when he fled from his son Absalom. That trial was one of the most grievous of all the afflictions of David’s greatly-checkered life. It was but a little thing for him to be hunted by Saul like a partridge upon the mountains. It was a small matter for him to have to take refuge with Achish, and to sojourn among the Philistines, an alien from his mother’s children. No, all the afflictions of his preceding life were but light trials compared with the revolt of Absalom. He was his father’s favorite son, one in whom his soul delighted, for he was a comely personage in his outward appearance and he had a lordly and kingly bearing—he was David’s darling, although, in his moral character, utterly unworthy of this distinction. This child of his, who was the nearest to his heart, had the greatest opportunity to cut him to the quick. Those things which we allow to take the chief place in our bosoms have the most power to give us grief.

Absalom, first of all, kills his brother, and then, by dint of courtesy and such pretended generosity, as demagogues always know how to use, won the affections of David’s people from their rightful monarch. And then he blew the trumpet and set himself up as king in opposition to his father. No, more than this, he sought his father’s life! It was not sufficient for him to seize the crown, but he longed to murder the head that should have worn it. His father was driven from his house and was made to cross, with a few attendants, over the brook Kedron and to go away from the sanctuary of God. He had to dwell in the midst of a forest and sleep among his armed men and, at other times, to camp out upon the open plain. Who can tell the grief of this monarch? Wave after wave had rolled over him. He had often said that he desired to be like the sparrow and the swallow, dwelling beneath the eaves of God’s sanctuary—and now his great trouble is that he is driven far away from God’s House to what he calls “the end of the earth.”

As he thought of the cause of his exile, how grieved must he have been! For his son, his darling son, the son of his heart, the son whom he had pardoned, the son whom he had honored, the son whom he had recalled from the banishment he richly deserved—this son had struck him. We know that old quotation from Shakespeare, which is repeated many and many a time, and is always true—

*“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is*

*To have a thankless child!”*  
Yet here was one who was not only unthankful, but who drove his father into exile and sought his life! David always clung to this child of his even in the time of his greatest iniquity. When at last he was compelled to send out his army against the rebel, you remember how he commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.” And when he was killed, you know how David lamented over him, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” Now, from the very fact that David loved this young man so much, his sorrows must have been peculiarly poignant. If a man can bring his mind to thrust out from his bosom one who has proved ungrateful, then half the battle is over. If love can cut the link—can say, “I have done with you, I will reckon you now no more my child”—then the heart steels itself against its deepest sorrow, and the arrow rattles only against the harness. But it was not so with David—he still opened wide his breast to his unworthy son.

Let us who stand in the relation of children to our parents, remember that it is in our power to give them the greatest possible grief—and yet would we not, each of us, sooner die than that those who brought us forth should have to lament on account of us? Yet, haply, there are some of you who are bringing your parents’ gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. O you who are cursing your father’s God—who are desecrating the day that your parents reckon to be holy—you who despise the Gospel which your father and mother love, remember that you are not only grieving God, but you are grieving your parents also! Push them not into the tomb before their time, lest their ashes testify against you and lest, in the hour of your trouble, when your children treat you in like manner, you should have to learn the bitterness of rearing in your own bosom the serpent that shall sting you with the deadliest venom! Let each of us take heed that we deal gently with our parents and always treat kindly those who have tenderly fostered us.

With this preface, let us now turn to our text, and I think we shall understand it all the better from this little reference to David’s history. There are three Truths of God here. The first is, that prayer is always available— “From the end of the earth will I cry unto You, when my heart is overwhelmed.” The second Truth is, that sometimes even the Believer cannot get to Christ as he could wish, but that then there is a way provided for leading him to Christ—“Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” Then, in the third place, we shall consider Christ under the aspect of a Rock that is higher than we are.

I. In the first place, let us remember that PRAYER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE—in every place and in every condition of our spirit—“From the end of the earth will I cry unto You.”

Suppose it is possible for us to be banished to the uttermost verge of the green earth, to “rivers unknown to song”? Suppose us to be hastened far away where dwindling daylight dies out and where the sun’s bleak ray scarcely scatters light on the world—where vegetation, dwarfing and declining, at last dies out? Suppose us to be banished into exile, without a friend and without a helper? Even there, from the end of the earth, we would find that prayer to God was still available! In fact, if there is a place nearer than another to God’s Throne, it is the end of the earth, for the end of the earth is the beginning of Heaven! When our strength ends, there God’s Omnipotence begins. Nature’s extremity is God’s opportunity. If wicked monarchs should banish all God’s people, their banishment would be an object of contempt, for how can they banish those who are strangers wherever they may be? Is not my Father’s House a large one? Yon dome, the blue sky, its roof? The rolling seas, the swelling floods, the green meads, the huge mountains—are not these the floors of His House? And where can I be driven out of the dominions of my God and beyond the reach of His love? Banishment may seem a trouble to the Christian, but if he looks up and sees his Father’s House—and beholds the smile of his God—he will know that such a thing as banishment is to him an impossibility! But supposing us to be exiled from everything that is dear to us? Even then we should not be shut out from access to God’s Throne!

I think David meant, by the expression, “the end of the earth,” a place where he should be far away from his friends, far away from human help and far away from God’s sanctuary.

God’s people are sometimes brought into such a condition that they are far away from friends. Such an one walks the streets of London and thinks, “Oh, if I could only tell my sorrow to a friend, then I might find some relief! But amidst all the myriad faces that hurry like a stream along the road, I see not one that tempts me to tell my tale. I look around and find myself a stranger amidst multitudes of my countrymen.” Perhaps you know what it is to have a trouble which you are compelled to bear yourself, which you could not describe even to those in your own house, though your friends would have been ready to help you if they had known—yet it was such that, with all their readiness, they would not have had ability to assist you in it, the biggest words could not have told it, and the bitterest tears could not have spelled it out! You were far away from friends in reality, though they were all round you. Now this is what David meant by “the end of the earth”—far away from friends—yet even then, when friend and helper and lover failed, did he cry unto his God.

Again, he meant by, “the end of the earth,” far away from human help. There are difficulties into which the true Believer is brought that no human hand can remove. His spiritual affairs are weights too heavy for human strength to lift. Though all the giants of earth should come and strain their backs until their shoulders should give way, and their limbs should totter beneath the enormous load, yet the spiritual necessities of the Christian could not be carried by them—they are an intolerable burden for human shoulders—none but God can sustain them. There are times when we are sighing after spiritual mercies, when we are groaning under the withdrawal of God’s Countenance, when our sins are hunting us like packs of wolves, when afflictions are rolling over us like huge billows—when faith is little and fear is great, when hope is dim, and doubt becomes terrible and dark—then we are far away from human help. But, blessed be God, even then we may cry unto Him—

*“When anxious cares disturb the breast,  
When threatening foes are nigh,  
To Him we pour our deep complaint,  
To Him for succor fly.”*

No, more, even in temporal affairs there are times when the Christian gets into such a place that no earthly friend can help him. He has made some mistake—perhaps in the ardency of his zeal to do right, he has done wrong—in the attempt to run in the ways of God, he overshot the road and got into another place, and found himself in the path of evil when he hoped to be in the way of right. Such things have happened. Business men, with all their carefulness, have made miscalculations and have found themselves plunged into difficulties from which they see no way of escape. In vain do others offer help. Wealth would not avail, for character is at stake. Yet even then, “from the end of the earth,” when human help has failed them, they have cried unto God and if they have cried in faith, they have never found that God has ceased to hear as long as they have continued to cry to Him!

By “the end of the earth,” I think, too, David means at a distance from the means of Grace. Sometimes, by sickness, either personal or the sickness of our relatives, we are detained from the House of God. At other times, in journeying by land or upon the sea, we are unable to be in God’s sanctuary and to use the means of Grace. This is a great deprivation to God’s people. You will find that a true Christian had rather miss a meal than lose his daily portion of Scripture, or his frequent resort to the House of Prayer. That man is no child of God who does not value the means of Grace. I tremble for that man’s piety who professes himself able to maintain the vital spark of Grace within him when the means of Grace are at hand and he lives in neglect of them! Some people, if they go to a watering-place, or a little way out of town, say, “Well, there is nobody here who preaches my sentiments, so I shall not go anywhere.” I would remind them that the Apostle Paul said, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” If there is no place of worship especially dedicated to God, we bless Him that—

*“Wherever we seek Him, He is found,*

*And every place is hallowed ground”—*  
but if there is a building that is open for the worship of God, even if I could not enjoy the preaching of the minister, I would go there to join in the singing of Christ’s praises and to offer my prayer with the multitude that keep holy-day.

Still, there must be in our lives different times when we are away from the sanctuary of God and, to the Christian, that will be like being at the end of the earth. But then, thanks be to God, we may still cry unto Him. When no Sabbath bell shall summon us to the House of Prayer, when no servant of the Lord shall proclaim, with happy voice, the promise of pardoning mercy, when there shall not be seen the multitude on bended knees and when the sacred shout of praise is unheard—and we are far away from the gatherings of God’s House—yet we are not far away from Him and we may still say to Him, “From the end of the earth will I cry unto You.”

It seems, however, that the Psalmist was in a worse plight than this, for a man might be at the end of the earth and still be happy, for it is not the place that makes the man, but the man that makes the place! A man might be in paradise even in Hell, itself, if his heart were right with God. Let a man have his heart full of peace and joy and happiness, and it is impossible to make that man miserable. I have often thought that when people find fault with their station in life, they are making a great mistake—they should find fault with themselves. Many a man is miserable whose head wears a crown, and many are happy whose heads have no place of repose. Some who are in rags have rich hearts, while many who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously everyday, have starving spirits, for, after all, it is the mind that is the standard of the man, and if the mind is happy, the place where the man is does not matter at all.

But, alas for poor David! He had been wrong without and wrong within, too, so that he had to cry, “My heart is overwhelmed.” I find, in Calvin’s notes on this text a most extraordinary translation and, as he says, a very harsh one—“While my heart is turned about,” that is, tossed here and there, or agitated. There is an expression of a similar character where John Bunyan says that he was exceedingly tumbled up and down in his mind. It does seem that one meaning of this text may be, “When my spirit is tumbled about”—when it is out of order, when it is brought into a kind of chaos and confusion—when, to use another word which expresses closely the idea of the Hebrew, “My spirit is wrapped over and over”—when it is covered as a man covers his face in the day of grief because his sorrow is so great that he shuns the sun and would not have his fellow creature’s eyes behold the anguish of his soul—“even then,” says he, “when my spirit is overwhelmed, will I cry unto You.”

Turn the heart upside down and then you will get the idea of its being overwhelmed. Even then, what does the Psalmist say? “You people, pour out your heart before Him.” If your heart is turned over, let it be emptied before the Lord! David says, in another Psalm, “I pour out my soul in me.” How foolish that was! It did him no good—it was the wrong place for his soul to be poured out! He was much wiser when he said, “Pour out your heart before Him.” It is a happy way to pray, when the heart is turned upside down, to spill all its contents at the foot of the Throne of Grace. Perhaps, sometimes, the overwhelming of our heart is only meant to empty all its dregs out of it, that the last particle of self-righteousness, self-reliance and self-confidence may be drained out at the Mercy Seat, that there may be room for an overflowing abundance of Divine Grace.

Imagine a vessel at sea and you can get an idea of the meaning of our text. It has been laboring in a storm, sometimes lifted up to Heaven, as though its masts would sweep the stars. Then again descending until its keel seemed dragging on the ocean bed—first staggering this way, and then that way, reeling to and fro, now rushing forward and now starting back—like a drunken man, or like a madman who has lost his way! At last a huge sea comes rolling on, its white crest of foam can be seen in the distance and the sailors give up all for lost. On comes the wave, gathering up all its strength till it dashes against the ship and—down the vessel goes, it is overwhelmed! The decks are swept, the masts are gone, the timbers are creaking, the ship descends and is sucked down as in a whirlpool—all is lost. “Now,” says David, “that is the case with my heart. It is overwhelmed, drawn into a vortex of trouble, borne down by a tremendous sea of difficulty, crushed and broken! The ribs of my soul seem to have given way. Every timber of my vessel is cracked and gone out of its place. My heart is overwhelmed within me.” Can you now get an idea of the extreme sorrow of the Psalmist’s spirit? “Yet,” he says, “even then, will I cry unto You.” Oh, noble faith that can cry amidst the shrieking of the tempest and the howling of the storm! Oh, glorious faith that from the bottom of the sea can shoot its arrows to the heights of Heaven! Oh, masterpiece of faith that from a broken spirit can present prevailing prayer! Oh, glorious triumph that from the end of the earth can send a prayer which can reach all the way to Heaven!

And now, Christian, may God help you to make up your mind to this, that wherever you are, you will never leave off praying, whatever the devil says to you. If he should urge you to forsake the Mercy Seat, say to him, “Get behind me, Satan.” If he should say that you have sinned too much to pray, tell him his argument proves the reverse—the more you have sinned, the more you should pray. If he tells you that your difficulties are tremendous, tell him that the very greatness of the difficulties in which you are involved should bear you nearer to God. Never cease to cry while you have breath! And when you have no breath, still cry. As long as you can speak, cry unto Him—and when you cannot speak—let groans that cannot be uttered still go up before God’s Throne. Cease not to pray in every difficulty and in every strait betake yourself to your closet, for there you shall find God even if you cannot find Him anywhere else.

Let me also say this word to anyone who has begun to pray, but who has not yet found peace with God, although he is overwhelmed by a sense of his guilt. My dear Friend, if God has overwhelmed you with a sense of sin and if you feel as if you were far away from mercy—at the very end of the earth—yet, I beseech you, cry unto Him! Mark, our text says, “Cry.” Oh, what power there is in that simple act of crying! As I rode here, this evening, I saw a boy sitting on the pavement crying with all his might about something or other he had broken. And I observed a lady, who was going by, stop a moment, for the poor fellow’s face was so much awry, and the tears were flowing so plentifully that she seemed as if she must give him something. And, indeed, I felt inclined, if I had not been in a hurry to come here, to stop and ask him what he was crying for, for one cannot bear to see a fellow creature weeping.

All beggars who want to deceive, take to crying, for they know that has an effect upon susceptible ladies who are passing by—there is great power in tears and these people know it. The best style of prayer is that which cannot be called anything else but a cry. Now, if you cannot pray as many do—if you cannot stand up in a Prayer Meeting and pray fluently and eloquently like others do—as long as the Lord enables you to cry, I beseech you, do not leave off crying! Cry, “Lord, have mercy on me!” “Lord, save, or I perish!” “Lord, appear unto me.” “I am the chief of sinners, Lord, manifest Yourself to me.” Cry, cry, cry, poor Sinner! And He that hears the young ravens when they cry will hear you! Do not think that the voice of your crying shall be lost. The voice of boasting dies away unheard, but the voice of crying penetrates the ears of God, reaches His heart and moves His hands to give a plenitude of blessings. Above all things, Sinner, if you feel your need of a Savior, keep on crying—Satan can never harm you while God helps you to cry. So long as you have a word of prayer on your lips, the Law of God has not a word of condemnation to utter against you. If you can cry at God’s Mercy Seat, then that is a proof that Christ is crying on your behalf at His Father’s Glory Seat. Be you instant in prayer and you shall be successful in it. When your heart is overwhelmed, even from the end of the earth, cry unto God!

II. I must speak very briefly upon the second point, which is this. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN EVEN A BELIEVER CANNOT GET TO CHRIST AS HE DESIRES.

Then, thank God there is the prayer of our text—“Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” Some people make out faith to be a marvelously easy thing—and so it is in theory—but it is the hardest thing in the world in practice. If men are to be saved on the condition of their repenting and believing, they can be no more saved than on the condition of their being perfect, unless there is added to this condition the promise that the God who requires faith will give faith and work repentance in them! I have been astonished to find, in this age, that there are great preachers and men who, I have no doubt, gather many around them, who tell the people that the condition and the ground of the sinner’s justification are his faith, his repentance and his obedience. Why, the ground of our justification is the righteousness of Christ! And as to conditions, there is no condition at all, for God gives justification freely! And He gives faith and He gives repentance, too—it is all His gift. There never was a man saved by faith or repentance which he performed as a matter of duty. Albeit that the Word of God demands of every man that he should submit himself to God by repentance, and lay hold of Christ by faith, yet no man ever will or ever can do this of himself—it is only the Sovereign will of God and the Sovereign Grace of God that give repentance and faith.

Sometimes God, in His Sovereignty, is pleased to show a man his sin, but not to show him his Savior for a season. He strips the sinner— perhaps he leaves him to shiver in the cold before He clothes him, just to let him know what a gift that robe of Christ’s righteousness is! He kills him, pierces him through and through with the Law, and there lets him lie in utter inability, for a season, before He quickens him and makes him spiritually alive. The fact is, God acts as He chooses with those whom He saves. He sometimes gives repentance and faith at the same time, just as the thunder sometimes follows the lightning at once. At other times, He gives repentance and then He makes us tarry for many a day before He gives us full assurance of our interest in Christ—but they are sure to follow one another, sooner or later. God never gave conviction without at last giving faith! He never led a man out of himself without at last leading him to Christ! If He brought him down to despair, He afterwards lifted him up to hope. But, still, there may be a gap between the two and during such a period it is our business to use this blessed prayer, “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. Oh, help me to believe! Lord, enable me to see the need of Your Son. Give me the power to look unto Him who was pierced, and, as You have given me eyes to weep, so give me eyes to look on Him and Grace to rejoice in Him as mine.” So, you see, if we cannot believe, if doubts so overwhelm us that we cannot get to Christ to our own satisfaction, remember that it is the Holy Spirit’s office to draw us to Christ and we may, therefore, pray to Him, “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.”

III. We are now coming to that part of the text which most of all delights my soul, the thought of JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN WE ARE.

We have all various standards for measuring things and, after all, men must measure by themselves. If you hear a man praising another, you will generally find that the reason he praises that other is because he sees in him something very much like what he possesses himself. “There,” he says, “I love a man who is honest and outspoken.” He means, all the while, that he thinks himself a remarkably honest and outspoken man and, therefore, he loves to see himself reproduced in another! After all, we generally measure with our own measuring-rods. We take ourselves to be the standard for other people. A few nights ago I proved this in my own case. Going along Bermondsey, I looked in at the shop windows to see what time it was. One clock said ten minutes to seven, another said seven o’clock, and another said ten minutes past. Then I began to think what a pity it was I had not my own watch with me—what was that but a belief that my own watch was infallible and that all the clocks were probably wrong? There is a great deal of trying ourselves on the touchstones of our own infallible selves and even the Christian is not altogether free from this practice till he gets to Heaven! So the Lord graciously adapts His Word to our poor littleness and speaks of Jesus as the Rock higher than we are.

Come here, Beloved, and let us measure the Rock Christ Jesus as far as we can by comparison. Here is a man who is a great sinner. “Ah,” he says, “I am, indeed, a great sinner. My iniquities reach so high that they have ascended above the very stars! They have gone before me to the Judgment Seat of God and they are clamoring for my destruction.” Well, Sinner, come here and measure this Rock. You are very high, it is true, but this Rock is higher than you are. Estimate yourself at the greatest you possibly can. Set your sins down at some inconceivable height! If you have thought yourself to be a very Goliath in sin. If you say, “I am as big a sinner as Saul of Tarsus was,” put your sin, pile on pile, tier on tier, no, borrow your neighbor’s sins and take them all, and then remember that—

*“If all the sins that men have done  
In will, in word, in thought and deed  
Since worlds were made and time begun, Were laid on one poor sinner’s head—  
The blood of Jesus Christ alone  
Could for this mass of sin atone,  
And sweep it all away.”*

However high your sin may be, there is the cover of a Rock in a weary land higher than you are, and under this you may shelter yourself!

Here comes another forward. He is not a man full of doubts and fears, but he is a man of hopeful spirit. “Oh,” he says, “I have many sins, but I hope that the Lord Jesus Christ will take them all away. I have many needs, but I hope that He will supply them. I shall have many temptations, but I hope that He will ward them off. I shall have many difficulties, but I hope He will carry me through them.” Ah, Man, I like to see you have a good long measuring rod when it is made of hope! Hope is a tall companion—he wades right through the sea and is not drowned— you cannot kill him, do what you may! Hope is one of the last blessings God gives us and one that abides at the last with us. If a man is foodless and without covering, still he hopes to see better days, by-and-by. Now, Sinner, your hopes, I would have you to see, are very tall and very high— but remember, this Rock is higher than any of your hopes! Hope whatever you please. Let your hope expand itself—let it climb the highest mountain and stand on it—let it lift up itself higher and yet higher, but this Rock is higher still! Christ is a better Christ than you can hope for— He has more mercy than you hope for! He has more power to save than you hope to receive, more love than you can hope to have! He has a better Heaven for you than you could hope to enjoy!

But here comes another, and he says, “Ah, my hope has grown strong, I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is a precious Christ. I can speak well of Him, for He has been my sure defense in every time of war, my refuge in every time of distress, my granary in every hour of famine, my light in every night of darkness. I can speak well of Him and, in consequence of what I know of Him, I can believe that He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. I believe Him to be all that He says He is. I believe in His Word. I rejoice in Him— my faith scarcely knows a bound when I begin to think what He is, and what He has done for me.” Yes, but He is a Rock higher than your faith! I love to see your faith mounting up very high, but Christ is better than your faith and higher than your faith. Why, Man, if your faith were twice as great as it is, Christ would be a warrant for it all! No, if your faith could be multiplied a thousand times more, so that you could believe more of Him, and better things of Him, and higher things of Him, still He would be higher than your faith could ever climb!

I do hope to grow in faith, and get more and more of that celestial virtue. I think I believe my Master better, now, than I did once, though sometimes I think my faith fails me. Yet I am sure that I do enjoy a quieter conscience than I did, and a more peaceful calm than at one time I experienced. And I hope to believe in Him still more. I pray that my faith may continually increase so that, being rooted and grounded in Him, I may grow up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus. But this I know, though you or I should grow till our faith should be greater than that of Paul, till it should be such a faith that it should say to the fig tree, “Be you plucked up by the roots,” or to the mountain, “Be you cast into the sea,” and it should be done—still, even then—

Christ would be higher than our faith. We might believe a great deal about Him, but would faith grasp all, even then? It has long arms, but not long enough to encompass Christ—He is greater than faith itself could conceive Him to be!

Here comes another. He says, “Ah, blessed be God, I have a golden measuring rod here—not that of hope, or fear, or faith, but, better still, the measuring rod of enjoyment.” “Ah,” says one, “how high have I been in enjoyment of Christ! He has taken me to Calvary and there I have seen the flowing of His precious blood—

*‘With Divine assurance knowing*

*He has made my peace with God.’*  
Not content with that, he has taken me to Tabor! There I have seen my Lord transfigured and have beheld His Glory, as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth. No, more, He has taken me to the top of Pisgah and He has bid me ‘view the landscape o’er.’ I have seen the joys which He has reserved for them that love Him. But,” says the Believer, “Christ has said to me, ‘Friend, come up higher.’ When I first went to the feast, I sat in the lower room of Repentance. He came in and said, ‘Friend, come up higher,’ and He took me into another chamber called Faith. And then He came in again, and said, ‘Friend, come up higher.’ And He took me to the upper room of Assurance. Then He saw me again, and He said, ‘Friend, come up higher,’ and He took me to the upper room of Communion. And sometimes he seems to me to say, ‘Friend, come up higher, into the ecstatic bliss which the highest degrees of constant fellowship can give.’ And I am now waiting only till He should say, ‘Come up higher,’ and take me to His own bosom, to tarry with Him forever!”

Ah, well, I am glad to hear you talk thus. I wish I had many of those whose pastures are in these high places, many who could say that they had grown tall in these delightful things! But, remember, this Rock is higher than you are! All you have ever enjoyed of Christ is but as the beginning of a topless mountain. When I have been in Scotland, I have gone up some of the hills there and I have thought, “This is a very high place, indeed! What a fine view there is, what a height I have reached!” “Ah,” someone has said, “but if you were to see the Alps, this hill would only seem like the beginning—you would only have got to the foot when you had climbed as high as this!” And so it is with you. By your experience, your sweet enjoyment, you think you have reached the top of the mountain—but Christ comes and whispers to you, “Look yonder, far above those clouds—you have only begun to go up! This hill of communion is only one step. As yet you have only taken a child’s leap—you have farther to go, far higher than you could imagine or conceive.” Ah, this is, indeed, a Rock higher than you are, the highest in communion—and the next to the Throne of God!

“Well,” cries another, “from what I have heard, and what I have read in God’s Word, I am expecting very great things of Christ when I shall see Him as He is. Oh, Sir, if He is better than the communion of His saints can make Him. If He is sweeter than all His most eloquent preachers can speak of Him. If He is so delightful that those who know Him best cannot tell His beauties, what a precious—what a glorious—what an inconceivable Christ He must be!” Ah, Friend, I am glad you are measuring Christ by your expectation! But let me tell you—high as your expectations are, He is higher than you are! Expect what you may, but when you see Him, you will say with the Queen of Sheba, “The half was not told me.” You may sit down and think of Christ’s glories and splendors, of the happiness that He has provided for His people, till you lose yourself in a very sea of delightful meditation! The promise dropped into your heart may go on widening in circles till you have grasped a whole universe of pleasure and delight in contemplating the name of Christ—but, remember, when you have conceived the most, Christ the Rock is still far above what you have conceived and imagined!

Let us pause here and ask—What shall we do with a hill that is higher than we are? Shall we lie forever at its base and not attempt to climb it? God forbid! Shall we pretend that we have climbed it? That were presumption! So let us press forward, evermore ascending it, ever crying when we get at the greatest height, “Lord, still lead me up, still lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am; lead me on, O Lord, till I come to Heaven, and even then, still lead me beside the living fountains of water, still lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am! O Lord, always help me to be climbing, pressing forward, looking not on that which is behind, but on that which is before, pressing forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus!”

Now, as some of you will be exercised with troubles, remember that the Rock is higher than you are. And when your troubles reach you, if you are not high enough to escape them, climb up to the Rock Christ, for there is no trouble that can reach you when you get there! Satan will be howling at you and, perhaps he will be nibbling at your heel, barking and biting at you—so climb into the Rock Christ and he will not be able to reach you, and you will scarcely hear his howling—he will be low down in the valley when you are in the Rock higher than he is! Fears will arise and doubts will come in like a flood—there is no place so safe in the time of a flood as a high rock, so climb to the Rock Christ—and then, though the waves of the sea roar and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, you will be secure if you are on the Rock that is higher than you are! And oh, while the world is dragging you down, forever seek to be climbing up! If the devil says, “Come down, again, and be worldly! Come down and be selfish,” always cry, “Lord, lead me up, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am. My country is in the skies. Help me to be climbing upwards—never permit me to descend, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am.”

And as for you who are still under a sense of sin, who have not yet found the Savior, let this be your prayer, “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am.” Do not get to measuring Christ by yourselves. As high as Heaven is above the earth, so high are His thoughts above your thoughts, and His ways above your ways. O Beloved, you should measure God’s Grace by the immeasurable—not by your nothingness, but by His infinity! Remember, God’s mercy is beyond all bounds, for it swells above the flood of our sins. If our sins are as mountains, Christ’s mercy, like the stars, shines as much above the mountains as above the valleys! Cry out, Sinner, when Satan is dragging you down to the pit, “Lord, save me from the devouring flames and lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” And then, thank God, Christ is a Rock—not a mound that is raised by man! And that Rock shall stand forever! And if I get on it, there is no fear that the Rock will shake. I may shake on it, but it will never shake under me—and if my enemies try to attack me, I can hide myself in the clefts of the Rock where they cannot reach me! And though ten thousand ages roll away, and many a stone is moved from its place, this Rock shall still abide—

*“When rolling years shall cease to move.”*  
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GOD ALONE THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE  
NO. 80

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 18, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

**“He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”  
Psalm 62:2.**

How noble a title. So sublime, suggestive and overpowering. “MY ROCK.” It is a figure so Divine, that to God, alone, shall it ever be applied. Look on yon rocks and wonder at their antiquity, for from their summits a thousand ages look down upon us. When this gigantic city was as yet unfounded, they were gray with age. When our humanity had not yet breathed the air, ‘tis said that these were ancient things. They are the children of departed ages. With awe we look upon these aged rocks for they are among nature’s first-born. You discover embedded in them the remnants of unknown worlds, of which, the wise may guess, but which, nevertheless, they must fail to know unless God, Himself, should teach them what has been before them. You regard the rock with reverence, for you remember what stories it might tell if it had a voice, of how through igneous and aqueous agency it has been tortured into the shape it now assumes. Even so is our God pre-eminently ancient. His head and His hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for He is “the Ancient of Days,” and we are always taught in Scripture to remember that He is “without beginning of years.” Long before Creation was begotten, “from everlasting to everlasting,” He was God!

“My Rock!” What a history the rock might give you of the storms to which it has been exposed. Of the tempests which have raged in the ocean at its base and of the thunders which have disturbed the skies above its head—while it, itself, has stood unscathed by tempests and unmoved by the buffeting of storms. So with our God! How firm has He stood—how steadfast has He been—though the nations have reviled Him and “the kings of the earth have taken counsel together!” By merely standing still, He has broken the ranks of the enemy without even stretching forth His hand! With motionless grandeur like a rock, He has broken the waves and scattered the armies of His enemies, driving them back in confusion. Look at the rock, again—see how firm and unmoved it stands! It does not stray from place to place but it abides fast forever. Other things have changed, islands have been drowned beneath the sea and continents have been shaken, but see, the rock stands as steadfast as if it were the very foundation of the whole world and could not move till the wreck of Creation, or the loosening of the bands of Nature. So with God—how faithful He is in His promises! How unalterable in His decrees! How unswerving! How unchanging!

The rock is immutable, nothing has been worn from it. Yon old granite peak has gleamed in the sun, or worn the white veil of winter snow—it has sometimes worshipped God with bare uncovered head and at other times the clouds furnished it with veiling wings, that like a cherub, it might adore its Maker. But yet it, itself, has stood unchanged. The frosts of winter have not destroyed it, nor have the heats of summer melted it. It is the same with God. Lo, He is my Rock! He is the same and His Kingdom shall have no end. Unchangeable He is in His Being, firm in His own sufficiency. He keeps Himself Immutably the same. And “therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” The ten thousand uses of the rock, moreover, are full of ideas as to what God is. You see the fortress standing on a high rock, up which the clouds, themselves, can scarcely climb and up whose precipices the assault cannot be carried. The armed cannot travel, for the besieged laugh at them from their eminence. So is our God a sure defense and we shall not be moved if He has “set our feet upon a rock and established our goings.” Many a giant rock is a source of admiration from its elevation—on its summit we can see the world spread out below, like some small map. We mark the river or broadly spreading stream as if they were a vein of silver inlaid in emerald! We discover the nations beneath our feet, “like drops in a bucket,” and the islands are “very little things” in the distance, while the sea, itself, seems but a basin of water, held in the hand of a mighty giant. The mighty God is such a Rock! We stand on Him and look down on the world, counting it to be a little thing. We have climbed to Pisgah’s top, from the summit of which we can race across this world of storms and troubles to the bright land of spirits—that world unknown to ear or eye, but which God’s Truth is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. This mighty Rock is our refuge and our high observatory from which we see the unseen and have the evidence of things which as yet we have not enjoyed. I need not, however, stop to tell you all about a rock—we might preach for a week upon it— but we give you that for your meditation during the week. “He is my Rock.” How glorious a thought! How safe am I and how secure—and how may I rejoice in the fact that when I wade through Jordan’s stream, He will be my Rock! I shall not walk upon a slippery foundation, but I shall tread on Him who cannot betray my feet. And I may sing, when I am dying, “He is my Rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

We now leave the thought of the rock and proceed to the subject of our discourse, which is this—that God, alone, is the salvation of His people— *“He ONLY is my Rock and my Salvation.”*

We shall notice, first, the great Doctrine, that God only is our salvation. Secondly, the great experience, to know and to learn that, “He only is my Rock and my salvation. And, thirdly, the great duty, which you may guess is to give all the glory and all the honor and place all our faith on Him “who only is our Rock and our Salvation.”

I. The first thing is THE GREAT DOCTRINE—that God “only is our Rock and our Salvation.” If anyone should ask us what we would choose for our motto, as preachers of the Gospel, we think we would reply, “God only is our Salvation.” The late lamented Mr. Denham has put at the foot of his portrait a most admirable text, “Salvation is of the Lord.” Now that is just an epitome of Calvinism—it is the sum and the substance of it. If anyone should ask you what you mean by a Calvinist, you may reply, “he is one who says, salvation is of the Lord.” I cannot find in Scripture any other Doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible. “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.” Tell me anything that departs from this and it will be a heresy. Tell me a heresy and I shall find its essence here—that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rocky Truth of God—“God is my Rock and my Salvation.” What is the heresy of Rome but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh to assist in our justification? And what is that heresy of Arminianism but the secret addition of something to the complete work of the Redeemer? You will find that every heresy, if brought to the touchstone, will discover itself here—it departs from this— “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”

Let us now explain this Doctrine fully. By the term, “salvation,” I understand not simply regeneration and conversion, but something more. I do not reckon that is, “salvation,” which regenerates me and then puts me in such a position that I may fall out of the Covenant and be lost! I cannot call that a, “bridge,” which only goes half-way over the stream. I cannot call that, “salvation,” which does not carry me all the way to Heaven, wash me perfectly clean and put me among the glorified who sing constant hosannas around the Throne! By, “salvation,” then, if I may divide it into parts, I understand deliverance, preservation continually through life, sustenance and the gathering up of the whole in the perfecting of the saints in the Person of Jesus Christ at last.

1. By, salvation, I understand deliverance from the house of bondage, wherein by nature I am born and being brought out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, together with a putting “on a rock and establishing my goings.” This I understand to be wholly of God. And I think I am right in that conclusion because I find in Scripture that man is dead. And how can a dead man assist in his own resurrection? I find that man is utterly depraved and hates the Divine change. How can a man, then, work that change which he hates? I find man to be ignorant of what it is to be born-again and, like Nicodemus, asking the foolish question, “How can a man enter again into his mother’s womb and be born?” I cannot conceive that a man can do that which he does not understand—and if he does not know what it is to be born-again, he cannot make himself to be born-again! No, I believe man to be utterly powerless in the first work of his salvation. He cannot break his chains, for though they are not chains of iron, they are chains of his own flesh and blood. He must first break his own heart before he can break the fetters that bind him. And how shall man break his own heart? What hammer is that which I can use upon my own soul to break it, or what fire can I kindle which can dissolve it? No, deliverance is of God alone! The Doctrine is affirmed continually in Scripture. And he who does not believe it, does not receive God’s Truth. Deliverance is of God, alone—“Salvation is of the Lord.”

2. And if we are delivered and made alive in Christ, preservation is still of the Lord, alone. If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful—if I have Graces, God gives me Graces. If I have fruits, God gives me fruits. If I hold on in a consistent life, God holds me on in a consistent life. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation except what God Himself first does in me! Whatever I have—all my goodness is of the Lord, alone! But when I sin, that is my own, but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely! If I have repulsed an enemy, His strength nerved my arm. Did I strike a foe to the ground? God’s strength sharpened my sword and gave me courage to strike the blow! Do I preach His Word? It is not I, but Divine Grace that is in me. Do I live to God a holy life? It is not I, but Christ who lives in me. Am I sanctified? I did not sanctify myself—God’s Holy Spirit sanctifies me! Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by God’s chastisements. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me! I find in God all I need, and I find in myself, nothing. “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”

3. And again—sustenance also is absolutely requisite. We need sustenance in Providence for our bodies and sustenance in Grace for our souls. Providential mercies are wholly from the Lord. It is true the rain falls from Heaven and waters the earth and “makes it bring forth and bud that there may be seed for the sower and bread for the eater.” But out of whose hand comes the rain and from whose fingers do the dew drops distil? It is true, the sun shines and makes the plants grow and bud and bring forth the blossom and its heat ripens the fruit upon the tree. But who gives the sun its light and who scatters the genial heat from it? It is true, I work and toil, this brow sweats. These hands are weary. I cast myself upon my bed and there I rest, but I do not ascribe my preservation to my own might. Who makes these sinews strong? Who makes these lungs like iron and who makes these nerves of steel? “God only is the Rock of my Salvation.” He only is the salvation of my body and the salvation of my soul! Do I feed on the Word? That Word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from Heaven? What is that manna, but Jesus Christ, Himself, Incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink? Am I continually receiving fresh increase of might? Where do I gather my might? My salvation is of Him— without Him I can do nothing! As a branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abides in the vine, no more can I, unless I abide in Him!

4. Then if we gather the three thoughts in one. The perfection we shall soon have when we shall stand yonder, near God’s Throne, will be wholly of the Lord! That bright crown which shall sparkle on our brow like a constellation of brilliant stars shall have been fashioned only by our God! I go to a land, but it is a land which the plow of earth has never turned up —though it is greener than earth’s best pastures. And though it is richer than all her harvests ever saw, I go to a building of more gorgeous architecture than man has built! It is not of mortal architecture. It is “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” All I shall know in Heaven will be given by the Lord. And I shall say when, at last I appear before Him—

*“Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days!  
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise.”*

II. And now, Beloved, we come to THE GREAT EXPERIENCE. The greatest of all experiences, I take it, is to know that, “He only is our Rock and our Salvation.” We have been insisting upon a Doctrine. But Doctrine is nothing unless proved in our experience. Most of God’s Doctrines are only to be learned by practice—by taking them out into the world and letting them bear the wear and tear of life. If I ask any Christian in this place whether this Doctrine is true, if he has had any deep experience, he will reply, “True I say, that it is. Not one Word in God’s Bible is more true than that, for, indeed, salvation is of God alone.” “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.” But, Beloved, it is very hard to have such an experimental knowledge of the Doctrine that we never depart from it. It is very hard to believe that “salvation is of the Lord.” There are times when we put our confidence in something other than God—and we sin by linking hand-in-hand with God something besides Him! Let me now dwell a little upon the experience which will bring us to know that salvation is of God alone.

The true Christian will confess that salvation is of God alone effectively, that is, that “He works in him to will and to do of His own pleasure.” Looking back on my past life, I can see that the dawning of it all was of God—of God effectively. I took no torch with which to light the sun, but the sun gave me light. I did not commence my spiritual life—no, I rather kicked and struggled against the things of the Spirit. When He drew me, for a time I did not run after Him. There was a natural hatred in my soul for everything holy and good. Wooings were lost upon me—warnings were cast to the wind—thunders were despised. And as for the whispers of His love, they were rejected as being less than nothing and vanity! But sure I am, I can say, now, speaking on behalf of myself and of all who know the Lord, “He only is my Salvation and your Salvation, too.” It was He who turned your heart and brought you down on your knees. You can say in very deed, then—

*“Grace taught my soul to pray,  
Grace made my eyes overflow.”*

And coming to this moment, you can say—  
*“‘Tis Grace has kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go.”*

I remember when I was coming to the Lord. I thought I was doing it all myself and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. One day when I was sitting in the House of God I was not thinking much about the man’s sermon for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, “How did you come to be a Christian?” I sought the Lord. “But how did you come to seek the Lord?” The thought flashed across my mind in a moment—I would not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him! I am sure you will not be many weeks a Christian, certainly not many months, before you will say, “I ascribe my change wholly to God.” I desire to make this my constant confession. I know there are some who preach one Gospel in the morning and another at night—who preach a good sound Gospel in the morning because they are preaching to saints—but preach lies in the evening because they are preaching to sinners. But there is no necessity to preach Truth at one time and lies at another—“The Word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” There is no need to put anything else in it, in order to bring sinners to the Savior! But, my Brothers and Sisters, you must confess that “Salvation is of the Lord.” When you turn back to the past, you must say, “My Lord, whatever I have, You gave it to me. Have I the wings of faith? I was a wingless creature once. Have I the eyes of faith? I was a blind creature once. I was dead till You made me alive, blind, till You opened my eyes. My heart was a loathsome dunghill but You put pearls there, if pearls there are, for pearls are not the product of dunghills—You have given me all I have.”

And so, if you look at the present, if your experience is that of a child of God, you will trace all to Him. Not only all you have had in the past, but all you have now! Here you are, sitting in your pew this morning. I just want you to review where you stand. Beloved, do you think you would be where you are now if it were not for Divine Grace? Only think what a strong temptation you had yesterday. They did “consult to cast you down from your excellency.” Perhaps you were served like I am, sometimes. The devil sometimes seems to drag me right to the edge of a precipice of sin by a kind of enchantment, making me forget the danger by the sweetness which surrounds it. And just when he would push me down, I see the yawning gulf beneath me and some strong hand put out and I hear a Voice, saying, “I will preserve him from going down into the pit. I have found a Ransom.” Do you not feel that before this sun goes down you will be damned if Grace does not keep you? Have you anything good in your heart that Grace did not give you? If I thought I had a Grace that did not come from God, I would trample it beneath my feet, as not being a godly virtue! I would guess it to be but a counterfeit, for it could not be right if it did not come from the Mint of Glory! It may look ever so much like the right thing, but it is certainly bad unless it came from God! Christian, can you say, of all things past and present, “He only is my Rock and my Salvation”?

And now look forward to the future. Brothers and Sisters, think how many enemies you have. How many rivers you have to cross, how many mountains to climb, how many dragons to fight, how many lions’ teeth to escape, how many fires to pass through, how many floods to wade. What do you think? Can your salvation be of anything except of God? Oh, if I had not that everlasting arm to lean upon, I would cry, “Death! Hurl me anywhere! Anywhere out of the world.” If I had not that one hope, that one trust, bury me ten thousand fathoms deep beneath the ground where my being might be forgotten! Oh, put me far away, for I am miserable if I have not God to help me all through my journey. Are you strong enough to fight with one of your enemies without your God? I think not. A little silly maid may cast a Peter down and cast you down, too, if God does not keep you! I beseech you remember this. I hope you know it by experience in the past but try to remember it in the future—wherever you go, “Salvation is of the Lord.” Do not get to looking at your heart—do not get to examining to see whether you have anything to recommend you— just remember, “Salvation is of the Lord.” “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”

Effectively, it all comes of God and, I am sure we must add, meritoriously. We have experienced that salvation is wholly of Him. What merits have I? If I were to scrape together all I ever had and then come to you and beg all you have got, I should not collect the value of a farthing among you all! We have heard of some Catholic who said that there was a balance struck in his favor between his good works and his bad ones and therefore he felt he deserved Heaven. But there is nothing of the sort here! I have seen many people, many kinds of Christians and many odd Christians, but I never yet met with one who said he had any merits of his own when he came to close quarters. We have heard of perfect men and we have heard of men perfectly foolish—and we have thought the characters perfectly alike! Have we any merits of our own? I am sure we have not if we have been taught of God! Once we thought we had, but there came a man called, Conviction, into our house one night and took away our glorying. Ah, we are still vile! I don’t know whether Cowper said quite right, when he said—

*“Since the dear hour that brought me to Your foot And cut up all my follies by the root  
I never trusted in an arm but Thine—  
Nor hoped but in Your righteousness Divine!”*

I think he made a mistake, for most Christians get to trusting in self at times, but we are forced to acknowledge that “salvation is of the Lord,” if we consider it meritoriously.

My dear Friends, have you experienced this in your own hearts? Can you say, “amen,” to that, as it goes round? Can you say, “I know that God is my helper?” I dare say you can, most of you. But you will not say it so well as you will, by-and-by, if God teaches you. We believe it when we commence the Christian life, we know it afterwards. And the longer we live, the more we find it to be the truth—“Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, but blessed is he who trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.” In fact, the crown of Christian experience is to be delivered from all trust in self or man and to be brought to rely wholly and simply on Jesus Christ! I say, Christian, your highest and noblest experience is not to be groaning about your corruption, is not to be crying about your wanderings, but is to say—

*“With all my sin and care and woe,*

*His Spirit will not let me go!”*  
“Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.” I like what Luther says, “I would run into Christ’s arms if He had a drawn sword in His hands.” That is called venturesome believing, but as an old Divine says, there is no such thing as venturesome believing—we cannot venture on Christ—it is no venture at all, there is no chance involved in the least degree. It is a holy and heavenly experience when we can go to Christ, amid the storm and say, “Oh, Jesus, I believe I am covered by Your blood,” when we can feel ourselves to be all over rags and yet can say, “Lord, I believe that through Christ Jesus, ragged though I am, I am fully absolved.” A saint’s faith is little faith when he believes as a saint—but a sinner’s faith is true faith when he believes as a sinner. The faith, not of a sinless being but the faith of a sinful creature—that is the faith which delights God! Go, then, Christian! Ask that this may be your experience, to learn each day, “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”

III. And now, in the third place, we speak of THE GREAT DUTY. We have had the great experience, now we must have the great duty.  
The great duty is—if God only is our Rock and we know it, are we not bound to put all our trust in God, to give all our love to God, to set all our hope upon God, to spend all our life for God and to devote our whole being to God? If God is all I have, surely all I have shall be God’s! If God, alone, is my hope, surely I will put all my hope upon God. If the love of God is alone that which saves, surely He shall have my love alone! Come, let me talk to you, Christian, for a little while. I need to warn you not to have two Gods, two Christs, two friends, two husbands, two great fathers. Do not have two fountains, two rivers, two suns, or two heavens, but have only one! I need to bid you, now, as God has put all salvation in Himself, to bring all yourself to God. Come, let me talk to you!  
In the first place, Christian, never join anything with Christ. Would you stitch your old rags into the new garment He gives? Would you put new wine into old bottles? Would you put Christ and self together? You might as well yoke an elephant and an ant! They could never plow together. What? Would you put an archangel in the same harness with a worm and hope that they would drag you through the sky! How inconsistent! How foolish! What? Yourself and Christ? Surely, Christ would smile—No, Christ would weep to think of such a thing! Christ and man together? CHRIST AND COMPANY? No, it never shall be—He will have nothing of the sort! He must be all. Note how inconsistent it would be to put anything else with Him. And note, again, how wrong it would be. Christ will never bear to have anything else placed with Him. He calls them adulterers and fornicators who love anything else but He. He will have your whole heart to trust in Him, your whole soul to love Him and your whole life to honor Him! He will not come into your house till you put all the keys at His feet! He will not come till you give Him attic, parlor, drawingroom and cellar, too. He will make you sing—  
*“Yet if I might make some reserve,  
And duty did not call,  
I love my God with zeal so great,  
That I should give Him all.”*  
Mark you, Christian, it is a sin to keep anything from God!  
Remember, Christ is very grieved if you do it. Assuredly you do not desire to grieve Him who shed His blood for you? Surely there is not one child of God here who would like to vex his blessed elder Brother? There cannot be one soul redeemed by blood who would like to see those sweet blessed eyes of our best Beloved bedewed with tears. I know you will not grieve your Lord, will you? But I tell you, you will vex His noble spirit if you love anything but He. He is so fond of you that He is jealous of your love. It is said, concerning His Father, that He is “a jealous God” and He is a jealous Christ you have to deal with! Therefore, put not your trust in chariots, stay not yourselves in horses, but say, “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”  
I beg you, mark, also, one reason why you should not look at anything else—and that is if you look at anything else, you cannot see Christ as well. “Oh,” you say, “I can see Christ in His mercies.” But you cannot see Him as well, there, as if you viewed His Person! No man can look at two objects at the same time and see both distinctly. You may afford a wink for the world and a wink for Christ. But you cannot give Christ a whole look and a whole eye and the world half an eye, too! I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, do not try it. If you look on the world, it will be a speck in your eye. If you trust in anything but Christ, between two stools you will come to the ground and a fearful fall you will have. Therefore, Christian, look only on Him. “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”  
Mark you, again, Christian—I would bid you never put anything else with Christ. For as sure as ever you do, you will have the whip for it. There never was a child of God who harbored one of the Lord’s traitors in his heart but he always had a charge laid against him. God has sent out a search warrant against all of us—and do you know what He has told His officers to search for? He has told them to search for all our lovers, all our treasures and all our helpers. God cares less about our sins, as sins, than He does about our sins, or even our virtues, as usurpers of His Throne! I tell you, there is nothing in the world you set your heart upon that shall not be hung upon a gallows higher than Haman’s! If you love anything but Christ, He will make you regret it. If you love your house better than Christ, He will make it a prison for you. If you love your child better than Christ, He will make it an adder in your breast to sting you. If you love your daily provisions better than Christ, He will make your drink bitter and your food like gravel in your mouth. Till you come to live wholly on Him, there is nothing which you have which He cannot turn into a rod if you love it better than He!  
And, mark once again—if you look at anything except God, you will soon fall into sin. There was never a man who kept his eyes on anything but Christ who did not go wrong. If the mariner will steer by the polestar, he shall go to the north. But if he steers sometimes by the polestar and sometimes by another constellation, he knows not where he shall go. If you do not keep your eyes wholly on Christ you will soon be wrong. If you ever do give up the secret of your strength, namely, your trust in Christ— if you ever dally with the Delilah of the world and love yourself more than Christ—the Philistines will be upon you and shear your locks and take you out to grind at the mill! And you will surely grind till your God gives you deliverance by means of your hair growing once more and bringing you to trust wholly in the Savior. Keep your eyes, then, fixed on Jesus. For if you do turn away from Him, how ill will you fare! I bid you, Christian, beware of your Graces. Beware of your virtues. Beware of your experience, beware of your prayers. Beware of your hope. Beware of your humility. There is not one of your Graces which may not damn you if they are left alone to themselves. Old Brooks says when a woman has a husband and that husband gives her some choice rings, she puts them on her fingers. And if she should be so foolish as to love the rings better than her husband—if she should care only for the jewels and forget him who gave them—how angry would the husband be and how foolish she would be, herself! Christian! I warn you, beware, even, of your Graces, for they may prove more dangerous to you than your sins! I warn you of everything in this world. For everything has this tendency, especially a high estate. If we have a comfortable maintenance, we are most likely not to look so much to God. Ah, Christian, with an independent fortune, take care of your money, beware of your gold and silver. It will curse you if it comes between you and your God. Always keep your eyes out to the cloud and not to the rain—to the river and not to the ship that floats on its bosom. Look you not to the sunbeam, but to the sun. Trace your mercies to God and say perpetually, “He only is my Rock and my Salvation.”  
Lastly, I bid you once more to keep your eyes wholly on God and on nothing in yourself, because what are you now and what were you ever, but a poor damned sinner if you were out of Christ? I had been preaching, the other day, all the former part of the sermon as a minister. Presently I thought I was a poor sinner and then how differently I began to speak! The best sermons I ever preach are those I preach not in my ministerial capacity, but as a poor sinner preaching to sinners. I find there is nothing like a minister remembering that he is nothing but a poor sinner, after all. It is said of the peacock that although he has fine feathers, he is ashamed of his black feet—I am sure that we ought to be ashamed of ours. However bright our feathers may appear at times, we ought to think of what we would be if Divine Grace did not help us. Oh, Christian, keep your eyes on Christ, for out of Him you are no better than the damned in Hell! There is not a demon in the pit of Hell but might put you to the blush if you are out of Christ. Oh that you would be humble! Remember what an evil heart you have within you, even when Grace is there. You have Grace—God loves you, but remember, you still have a foul cancer in your heart! God has removed much of your sin, but the corruption still remains. We feel that though the old man is somewhat choked and the fire somewhat dampened by the sweet waters of the Holy Spirit’s influence, yet it would blaze up worse than before if God did not keep it under control! Let us not glory in ourselves, then. The slave need not be proud of his descent—he has the brand upon his hand. Out with pride! Away with it! Let us rest wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ!  
Now, just one word to the ungodly—you who do not know Christ. You have heard what I have told you, that salvation is of Christ, alone. Is not that a good Doctrine for you? For you have not got anything, have you? You are a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Hear this, then, Sinner—you have nothing and you do not need anything, for Christ has all. “Oh,” you say, “I am a bond slave.” Ah, but He has got the redemption. “No,” you say, “I am black with sin.” Yes, but He has got the bath that can wash you white. You say, “I am leprous!” Yes, but the good Physician can take your leprosy away. You say, “I am condemned.” Yes, but He has got the acquittal warrant signed and sealed, if you believe in Him. You say, “But I am dead!” Yes, but Christ has life and He can give you life! You need nothing of your own—nothing to rely on but Christ! And if there is a man, woman, or child here who is prepared to say solemnly after me, with his or her heart, “I take Christ to be my Savior, with no powers and no merits of my own to trust in. I see my sins, but I see that Christ is higher than my sins. I see my guilt, but I believe that Christ is mightier than my guilt”—I say, if any of you can say that, you may go away and rejoice, for you are heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven!

I must tell you a singular story which was related at our Church Meeting, because there may be some very poor people here who may understand the way of salvation by it. One of the friends had been to see a person who was about to join the Church. And he said to him, “Can you tell me what you would say to a poor sinner who came to ask you the way of salvation?” “Well,” he said, “I do not know—I think I can hardly tell you. But it so happened that a case of this sort did occur yesterday. A poor woman came into my shop and I told her the way. But it was in such a homely manner that I don’t like to repeat it.” “Oh, tell me! I should like to hear it.” “Well, she is a poor woman who is always pawning her things and, by-and-by, she redeems them again. I did not know how to tell her better than this. I said to her—‘Look here. Your soul is in pawn to the devil—Christ has paid the redemption money. You take faith for your ticket and so you will get your soul out of pawn.’”  
Now, that was the most simple, but the most excellent way of imparting a knowledge of salvation to this woman! It is true, our souls were pawned to Almighty vengeance. We were poor and could not pay the redemption money. But Christ came and paid it all and faith is the ticket which we use to get our souls out of pawn. We need not take a single penny with us. We have only to say, “Here, Lord, I believe in Jesus Christ. I have brought no money to pay for my soul, for here is the ticket, the money has been paid long ago. This is written in Your Word—‘The blood of Christ cleans from all sin.’” If you take that ticket you will get your soul out of pawn. And you will then say, “I’m forgiven, I’m forgiven, I’m a miracle of Grace.” May God bless you, my Friends, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #144 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

WAITING ONLY UPON GOD  
NO. 144

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 2, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“My soul, wait you only upon God.”  
Psalm 62:5.**

CALVIN translates this verse, “My soul, be you silent before God.” Rest calm and undisturbed. Your enemies are round about you and have sore beset you. Your troubles do surround you like strong bulls of Bashan. But rest, my soul, in God. Your enemies are mighty but HE is Almighty. Your troubles are grievous but He is greater than your troubles and He shall deliver you from them. Let not your soul be agitated. The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest—be not like they are. Be calm—let not a wave ruffle your untroubled spirit.

“Cast your burden on the Lord,” and then sleep on His bosom. Commit your way unto Jehovah and then rest in sure and certain confidence, for— *“He everywhere has sway,  
And all things serve His might.  
His every act is pure blessing,  
His path unsullied light.”*

Oh, that we had grace to carry out the text in that sense of it! It is a hard matter to be calm in the day of trouble. But it is a high exercise of Divine Grace when we can stand unmoved in the day of adversity and feel that—

*“Should the earth’s old pillars shake,  
And all the wheels of nature break,  
Our steadfast souls should hear no more  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”*

That is to be a Christian, indeed. Nothing is so sweet as to— *“Lie passive in God’s hand,  
And know no will but His.”*

I shall, however, this morning stand to the authorized version. “My soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” Here is, first, an exhortation and secondly, an expectation.

I. We begin with the EXHORTATION. The Psalmist was a preacher and it was quite right that he should sometimes make himself his congregation. The preacher who neglects to preach to himself has forgotten a very important part of his audience. He who never in his privacy speaks a word to his own soul does not know where to begin his preaching. We must first address our own soul. If we can move that by the words we may utter, we

may hope to have some power with the souls of others.  
And note where David begins his exhortation—“My soul, wait you upon  
God.” He addresses the very center of his being. “My soul, I preach to you.  
For if you go wrong, all is amiss. If you are amiss, my eyes follow after  
vanity, my lips utter leasing, my feet become swift to shed blood and my  
hands meddle with mischief. My soul, I will preach to you. My face, I will  
not preach to you. Some men preach to their faces and try to put on their  
countenances emotions which they never feel. No, countenance, I will  
leave you alone—you will be right enough if the soul is so. I will preach to  
you, O my soul and address my sermon to you. You are my only auditor—  
hear what I say.” “My soul, wait you only upon God.” Let us, then, explain  
the exhortation.  
1. First, the Psalmist means by this—My soul make God your only object in life. “My soul, wait you only upon God.” Make Him the summit of  
your desires and the object of your exertions. Oh, how many men have  
made a fearful shipwreck of their entire existence by choosing an object  
inferior to this high and noble object of existence, the serving of God. I  
could put my finger upon a thousand biographies of men who after having  
lived in this world and done great things, have nevertheless died unhappily because they did not first seek God and His righteousness. Perhaps there never was a mind more gigantic than the mind of Sir  
Walter Scott—a man whose soul was as fertile as the newly broken soil of  
the land of gold. That man was a good man I believe, a Christian. But he  
made a mistake in the object of his life. His object was to be a lord, to  
found a family, to plant the root of an ancestral tree the fruit of which  
should be heard of in ages to come. Magnificent in his hospitality, generous in his nature, laborious in his continual strife to win the object of his  
life, yet after all he died a disappointed and unsuccessful man. He reared  
his palace, he accumulated his wealth and one sad day saw it scattered to  
the wind and he had lost that for which he had lived.  
Had he fixed his eye upon some better object than the pleasing of the  
public, or the accumulation of wealth, or the founding of a family, he  
might have got the others and he would not have lost the first. Oh, had he  
said “Now I will serve my God. This potent pen of mine, dedicated to the  
Most High shall weave into my marvelous stories things that shall  
enlighten, convict and lead to Jesus,” he might have died penniless but he  
would have died having achieved the object of his wishes and not a disappointed man. Oh if we could make God our only Object we should rest  
quite secure and whatever happened it never could be said of us, “He died  
without having had what he wished for.”  
How many of you that are here today are making the same mistake on  
a smaller scale? You are living for business. You will be disappointed,  
then. You are living for fame. As certain as you are alive you will die disappointed, grieved and sad at heart. You are living to maintain respectability—perhaps that is the utmost of your desire. Poor aim that is! You  
shall be disappointed. Or even if you gain it, it shall be a bubble not worth  
the chase. Make God your one Object in life and all these things shall be  
added to you, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”  
There is no loss in being a Christian and making God the first object.  
But make anything else your goal and with all your running, should you  
run ever so well, you shall fall short of the mark. Or if you gain it, you  
shall fall uncrowned, unhonored to the earth. “My soul, wait you only  
upon God.” Say, “I love to serve Him. I love to spread His kingdom, to advance His interests, to tell the story of His Gospel, to increase the number  
of His converted ones—that shall be my only object. And when that is sufficiently attained, ‘Lord, let Your servant depart in peace.’”  
2. But the Psalmist meant other things beside this, when he said, “My  
soul wait you only upon God.” He meant, My soul, have no care but to  
please God. Perhaps the most miserable people in the world are the very  
careful ones. You that are so anxious about what shall happen on the  
morrow that you cannot enjoy the pleasures of today. You who have such  
a peculiar cast of mind that you suspect every star to be a comet and  
imagine that there must be a volcano in every grassy meadow. You that  
are more attracted by the spots in the sun than by the sun itself and more  
amazed by one sear leaf upon the tree than by all the verdure of the  
woods. You that make more of your troubles than you could do of your  
joys—I say—I think you belong to the most miserable of men. David says to his soul, “My soul, be you careful for nothing except God.  
Cast all your cares on Him. He cares for you and make this your great  
concern, to love and serve Him. And then you need care for nothing else at  
all.” Oh, there are many of you people that go picking your way through  
this world—you are afraid to put one foot down before another—because  
you fear you will be in danger. If you had grace just to turn your eye to  
God, you might walk straight on in confidence and say, “Though I should  
tread on Hell itself at the next step, yet if God bade me tread there it  
would be Heaven to me.”  
There is nothing like the faith that can leave care with God and have no  
thought but how to please Him. “Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not,  
neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your Heavenly Father  
feeds them.” “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not,  
neither do they spin—and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his  
glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Say not, “What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your Heavenly Father knows that  
you have need of all these things.”  
Oh, happy is the man who says, “I am a gentleman commoner upon the

bounties of Providence. Let God send me little, it will be enough. Let Him  
send me much, it will not be too much, for I will divide my wealth with  
those who have less. I will trust to Him. He has said, ‘Your bread shall be  
given you and your water shall be sure.’ Then let famine come, I shall not  
starve. Let the brook dry up, He will open the bottles of Heaven and give  
me drink. Whatever shall happen to this world, yet shall I be secure  
against all ills.” Some people talk about being independent gentlemen. I  
know an independent gentleman that lives on three shillings and sixpence  
a week. He has nothing but parish allowance and the charity of friends. But he says in sickness and in weariness, Jehovah will provide. If my  
Father knows I need more He will send me more. And if you hint to him  
that his parish allowance will be taken away, he will just smile and say, “If  
it does not come one way it will come another. For God is the Chancellor  
of my treasury and He will never let my funds run too low. I shall have it  
for God has said it—‘They that wait on the Lord shall not want any good  
thing.’ ” That is the right kind of independence—the independence of the  
man who knows no dependence except upon God. My soul, let this be  
your care, to serve God and wait only upon Him.  
3. Again, David meant this—My soul, make God your only dependence,  
and never trust in anything else. It is marvelous how God’s creation illustrates my text—David bids his soul take God for its only pillar. Have you  
ever noticed how the world displays the power of God in its want of any  
apparent support? Behold the unpillared arch of Heaven—see how it  
stretches its gigantic span. And yet it falls not, though it is unpropped  
and unbuttressed. “He hangs the world upon nothing.” What chain is it  
that binds up the stars and keeps them from falling? Lo, they float in  
ether, upheld by His omnipotent arm, who has laid the foundations of the  
universe.  
A Christian should be a second exhibition of God’s universe—his faith  
should be an unpillared confidence—resting on the past and on the eternity to come as the sure groundwork of its arch. His faith should be like  
the world. It should hang on nothing but the promise of God and have no  
other support but that. And he himself, like the stars, should float in the  
ether of confidence—needing nothing to uphold him but the right hand of  
the Majesty on high. But, fools that we are, we will be always getting other  
confidences. The merchant has a man who so understands his business  
that he thinks the whole establishment depends upon that one man. And if he should die or give up his situation, what would become of the busi  
ness?  
Ah, merchant, if you are a godly man, you have forgotten where your  
confidence ought to be—not in your man but in your God. The wife often  
says, “I love the Lord but if my husband died, where would be my dependence?” What? Have you buttressed the Almighty even with a husband’s  
love? Trust in Him and make Him your only consolation. He will supply  
your needs out of the riches of His fullness. Oh, we would not have half  
the trouble we have if we learned to live wholly upon God. But we are so  
dependent upon creatures. We get to leaning one on another. And our  
dear friend, into whose ear we have told our tale of misery seems to be  
quite necessary to our existence.  
Take heed, then—take heed—you are trying to prop that which requires  
no prop when you lean upon your friend. You are dishonoring Christ,  
when you make him your joy and confidence. And when in some grievous  
day, your friend shall be smitten from the earth—then you will begin to  
feel it would have been better for you if you had leaned upon your Heavenly Friend and made no one your strength and your support but God. This would be a good lesson for some who occupy the pulpit. There is  
so much time-serving everywhere. The Dissenting minister must make his  
prop out of his deacons. And the Clergyman will too much make his prop  
out of some high officials in Church or State who are likely to promote  
him. We shall never get an outspoken Gospel until we get a set of men  
who say, “I don’t care for the whole earth. If there is no one else right and  
I conceive myself to be so, I will battle the whole earth. And I ask no man’s  
wish, or will, or assent. ‘Let God be true and every man a liar.’ ” Oh, we  
want a few of those gigantic spirits who need no approvers—who can of  
themselves sweep their acre of men and slay them with their strong broad  
sword of confidence. And when we get these care-for-nothings, who care  
only for God, then shall the earth shake again beneath the tramp of angels and God shall visit our land, even as He did of old.  
4. Again, Beloved, “My soul wait you only upon God,” that is to say,  
make God your only guide and confidence. When we get into trouble the  
first thing we do is to knock at our neighbor’s door. “Have you heard  
about my trouble? Come and give me your advice.” If your neighbor were  
prudent he would say, “My Brother, have you gone to God first? I will give  
you no advice till God has given you His counsel.” It is laughed at as an  
enthusiastic idea that men should ever take counsel of God. “Oh,” say  
some, “it is superstitious to imagine that God will ever give to His people  
guidance in their temporal affairs.”  
It would be superstitious to you perhaps. But it is not to a David and it  
is not to any other child of God. He says, “My soul wait you only upon God.” Christian, if you would know the path of duty take God for your compass. If you would know the way to steer your ship through the dark billows, put the tiller into the hand of the Almighty. Many a rock might be escaped if we would let God take the helm. Many a shoal or quicksand we might well avoid if we would leave to His sovereign will to choose and to command. The old Puritans said, “As sure as ever a Christian carves for  
himself he’ll cut his own fingers.” And that is a great truth.  
Said another old Divine, “He that goes before the cloud of God’s Providence goes on a fool’s errand.” And so he does. We must mark God’s  
Providence leading us. And then let us go. But he that goes before Providence will be very glad to run back again. Take your trouble, whatever it  
is, to the Throne of the Most High and on your knees put up the prayer,  
“Lord, direct me.” You will not go wrong. But do not do as some do. Many  
a person comes to me and says, “I want your advice, Sir. As my minister,  
perhaps you could tell me what I ought to do.” Sometimes it is about their  
getting married. Why, they have made up their minds before they ask me,  
they know that.  
And then they come to ask my advice. “Do you think that such-andsuch a thing would be prudent, Sir? Do you think I should change my position in life?” and so on. Now, first of all, I like to know, “Have you made  
your mind up?” In most cases they have—and I fear you serve God the  
same. We make up our mind what we are going to do and often we go  
down on our knees and say, “Lord, show me what I ought to do.” And then  
we follow out our intention and say, “I asked God’s direction.” My dear  
Friend, you did ask it but you did not follow it, you followed your own.  
You like God’s direction so long as it points you the way you wish to go.  
But if God’s direction leads the contrary to what you considered your own  
interest, it might have been a very long while before you had carried it out.  
But if we in truth and verity do confide in God to guide us, we shall not go  
far wrong, I know.  
5. Once again—My soul, wait you only upon God, for protection in times  
of danger. A Naval officer tells the following singular story concerning the  
siege of Copenhagen, under Lord Nelson. An officer in the fleet says, “I  
was particularly impressed with an object which I saw three or four days  
after the terrific bombardment of that place. For several nights before the  
surrender, the darkness was ushered in with a tremendous roar of guns  
and mortars, accompanied by the whizzing of those destructive and burning engines of warfare, Congreve’s rockets.  
“The dreadful effects were soon visible in the brilliant lights through the  
city. The blazing houses of the rich and the burning cottages of the poor  
illuminated the Heavens. And the wide-spreading flames, reflecting on the  
water, showed a forest of ships assembled round the city for its destruction. This work of conflagration went on for several nights and the Danes  
at last surrendered. And on walking some days after among the ruins,  
consisting of the cottages of the poor, houses of the rich, factories, lofty  
steeples and humble meeting houses, I spotted, amid this barren field of  
desolation, a solitary house, unharmed.  
“All around it a burnt mass but this alone untouched by the fire, a  
monument of mercy. ‘Whose house is that?’ I asked. ‘That,’ said the interpreter, ‘belongs to a Quaker. He would neither fight nor leave his house  
but remained in prayer with his family during the whole bombardment.’  
Surely, thought I, it is well with the righteous. God has been a shield to  
you in battle, a wall of fire round about you, a very present help in time of  
need.”  
It might seem to be an invention of mine, only that it happens to be as  
authentic a piece of history as any that can be found. There is another  
story told, somewhat similar of that Danish war. Soon after the surrender  
of Copenhagen to the English, in the year 1807, detachments of soldiers  
were, for a time, stationed in the surrounding villages. It happened one  
day that three soldiers, belonging to a Highland regiment, were set to forage among the neighboring farm houses. They went to several but found  
them stripped and deserted. At length they came to a large garden, or orchard, full of apple trees, bending under the weight of fruit. They entered by a gate and followed a path which brought them to a  
neat farm house. Everything without bespoke quietness and security. But  
as they entered by the front door, the mistress of the house and her children ran screaming out the back. The interior of the house presented an

appearance of order and comfort superior to what might be expected from  
people in that station and from the habits of the country. A watch hung  
by the side of the fireplace and a neat bookcase, well filled, attracted the  
attention of the elder soldier. He took down a book—it was written in a  
language unknown to him but the name of Jesus Christ was legible on  
every page.  
At this moment, the master of the house entered by the door through  
which his wife and children had just fled. One of the soldiers, by threat  
signs demanded provisions. The man stood firm and undaunted, but  
shook his head. The soldier who held the book approached him and pointing to the name of Jesus Christ, laid his hand upon his heart and looked  
up to Heaven. Instantly the farmer grasped his hand, shook it vehemently  
and then ran out of the room. He soon returned with his wife and children  
laden with milk, eggs, bacon, etc., which were freely tendered. When  
money was offered in return, it was at first refused but as two of the soldiers were pious men, they, much to the chagrin of their companion, insisted upon paying for all they received.  
When taking leave, the pious soldiers intimated to the farmer that it would be well for him to hide his watch. By the most significant signs he gave them to understand that he feared no evil, for his trust was in God. And that though his neighbors, on the right hand and on the left, had fled from their habitations and by foraging parties had lost what they could not remove, not a hair of his head had been injured, nor had he even lost an apple from his trees.” The man knew that, “He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword.” so he just tried the non-resistant principle. And God, in whom he put implicit confidence, would not let him be in  
jured.  
It was a remarkable thing that in the massacre of the Protestants in  
Ireland, a long time ago, there were thousands of Quakers in the country  
and only two of them were killed. And those two had not faith in their own  
principles—one of them ran away and hid himself in a fastness and the  
other kept arms in his house. But the others, unarmed, walked amidst infuriated soldiers, both Roman Catholics and Protestants and were never  
touched, because they were strong in the strength of Israel’s God and put  
up their sword into its scabbard, knowing that to war against another  
cannot be right, since Christ has said, “Resist not evil. If any man smite  
you on one cheek, turn to him the other also.”  
“Be kind, not only to the thankful but to the unthankful and to the  
evil.” “Forgive your enemies.” “Bless them that hate you and pray for them  
that despitefully use you.” But we are ashamed to do that. We do not like  
it. We are afraid to trust God. And until we do it we shall not know the  
majesty of faith, nor prove the power of God for our protection. “My soul,  
wait you only upon God. For my expectation is from Him.”  
And now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, I cannot single out all your  
cases, but doubtless I have many cases here to which the text will apply.  
There is a poor Christian there. He does not know much more than where  
his next meal will come from. My Brother, He that feeds the ravens will  
not let you starve. Instead of looking to find friends to console you, tell  
your story into the ears of God. As sure as the Bible is true He will not  
leave you. Shall a father leave his children to die? No, the granaries of  
earth have no key but the Almighty’s will, “The cattle on a thousand hills  
are His.” If He were hungry He would not tell us. Shall He not supply your  
needs out of the riches of His goodness?—  
*“All things living He does feed  
His full hand supplies their need.”*  
Shall He forget you, when He clothes the grass of the field and when He  
makes the valleys rejoice with food? But is your anxiety about your character? Has someone been slandering you? And are you troubled and  
grieved, lest you should lose your good name? If a man has called you every name in the world, do not go to Law with him. “Wait only upon God.” If you have been reviled in every newspaper and falsely charged in every sheet, never answer—leave it alone. “Vengeance is Mine. I will repay, says the Lord.” Practice non-resistance in words, as well as in deeds. Just bow yourself and let the missiles fly over your head. Stand not up to resist. To resist slander is to make it worse. The only way to blunt the edge of calumny is to be silent—it can do no hurt when we are still. Where no wood is the fire goes out. And if you will not refute nor answer, the fire will  
die out of itself. Let it alone. “Wait you only upon God.”  
And now, what else is your danger? What else is your trouble? Are you  
afraid of losing your dearest child? Is your husband sick? Does your wife  
lie upon the bed of languishing? These are hard troubles. They cut us to  
the very quick—to see our dear ones sick and we incapable of helping  
them is a trouble, indeed. Then the strong man’s eye does weep and his  
heart beats heavily, because those he loves are sick. But “wait you only  
upon God.” Go to your chamber. Tell the Lord your dear one is ill. Pour  
out your heart before Him, and say to Him, “My Lord, spare me this trouble, if it is Your will. Take not my friends away. But this know, O God,  
though You slay me yet will I trust in You. Yes—  
*“Should You take them all away,  
Yet would I not repine.  
Before they were possessed by me  
They were entirely Yours.  
There! Let it go—one look from You  
Shall more than make amends.”*  
Oh, it is a happy way of smoothing sorrow, when we can say, “We will  
wait only upon God.” Oh, you agitated Christians, do not dishonor your  
religion by always wearing a brow of care. Come, cast your burden upon  
the Lord. I see you staggering beneath a weight which He would not feel.  
What seems to you a crushing burden, would be to Him but as the small  
dust of the balance. See, the Almighty bends His shoulders and He says,  
“Here, put your troubles here. What? Will you bear yourself what the everlasting shoulders are ready to carry?” No—  
*“Give to the winds your fears  
Hope and be undismayed.  
God hears your sighs and counts your tears, He shall lift up your head.”*  
No finer exhibition of the power of religion than the confidence of a Christian in the time of distress. May God vouchsafe such a carriage and bearing unto us through Jesus Christ!  
II. And now I close with the EXPECTATION. And upon that I shall be  
very brief. The Psalmist charges his soul to wait only upon God because  
he had no expectation anywhere else but there.  
I know very well what some of you are after. You have got an old grandfather, or an old grandmother, or an old great aunt and you are most fiercely kind to them—you are most provokingly loving! You almost run to the extreme of teasing them by the frequency of your affectionate embraces. If your aunt does not know what you do it for, if she wants to know, let her write to me, I can tell her. She has a few thousand pounds. I do not say that you have any affection for them but I should not wonder if you have some expectation of them and that is just the reason why you  
are always waiting upon her.  
You will take care of her because you well know which way the wind  
blows. And you trust that one day, if you put your sails in the right position there may be a valuable cargo brought to your haven—of course not  
at all through your design. You will go into deep mourning and lament the  
old lady’s death but at the same time you will feel it to be a magnificent  
consolation to you, almost greater than the suffering and affliction incurred, that you have become the possessor of her wealth. Now, worldly  
wise people always wait where their expectations are. David says, “My  
soul, do not imitate the worldly in this—wait you only upon God, for my  
expectation is from Him.”  
That is where I expect to get all I shall have and therefore I will wait at  
that door which I expect will be opened with the hand of munificent grace.  
What is there in the world that you are expecting, except from God? You  
will not get it, or if you get it, it will be a curse to you. That is only a  
proper expectation which looks to God and to God only. “My expectation is  
from Him.” Well you expect to have bread to eat and raiment to put on till  
you die, don’t you? Where do you expect to get it? The interest of that  
£600, or £1200 of yours in the funds? Well, if that is your expectation and  
not God, He will put some bitters in that little income of yours and you  
shall find it, if sufficient for your sustenance, not sufficient for your comfort.  
But you will be provided for, because you have a large business! Well,  
the mill may be burned down. The trade may break. The stream of prosperity may run into another’s lap and you may find yourself yet a beggar  
in the street, notwithstanding all you have, if that is your trust. No. If you  
are expecting to get anything from the world it is a poor expectation. I expect to be provided for till I die. But I expect that I shall have to draw from  
the bank of faith till I die and get all I need out of the riches of God’s loving kindness. And this I know, I had rather have God for my banker than  
any man that has ever lived. Surely, he never fails to honor His promises.  
And when we bring them to His Throne He never sends them back unanswered.  
You must hope in God, even for temporal supplies. And after all, what  
a little thing the temporal supplies are! We have heard of a king who once  
went into a stable and heard a stable boy singing. Said he to him, “And  
now, John, what do you get for your work?” “If you please Sir,” he said, “I  
get my clothes and my food.” “That is all I get” said the King, “for my  
work.” And that is all everybody gets. All else that you have got besides is  
not yours, except to look at. And other people can do the same. When a  
man gets a large park I can ride through it as much as he and I have not  
the trouble of keeping it in order—he takes care of it and I am much  
obliged to him for doing so.  
I can do as the poor Chinaman did, when he bowed before the mandarin. The mandarin was covered with jewels and the Chinaman said, “I

thank you for your jewels.” The mandarin was surprised—the next day he  
was again saluted by the man, who said as before, “I thank you for your  
jewels.” “Why,” said the mandarin, “what do you thank me for?” Said the  
Chinaman, “I always look at them every day and that is as much as you  
do—only that you are the pack horse that has to carry them and you have  
the trouble at night of taking care of them, while I can enjoy them just as  
much as you.”  
And so, dear Friends, if we are not rich, contentment can make us so.  
Contentment gives the poor man broad acres. Contentment gives him  
great riches upon earth and adds great enjoyment to the comparatively little that he has. And we have better expectations than that. We shall die  
soon. And then “my expectation is from Him.” Do we not expect that when  
we lie upon the bed of sickness He will send troops of angels to carry us to  
His bosom? We are believing that when the pulse is faint and few and the  
heart heaves heavily, that then some spirit, brighter than the noonday  
sun shall draw the curtains of our bed and look with loving eyes upon us  
and whisper, “Sister spirit, come away!”  
And do we not expect that then a chariot shall be brought, a triumphal  
chariot, such as earth’s conquerors have not seen? And in it we shall be  
placed and drawn by coursers of light up the eternal hills! In majesty and  
triumph we shall ride to yonder bright gates of pearl. Then shall the gates  
wide open swing and He shall say, “Come in, you blessed of the Lord, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundations of the  
world.” We are expecting wreaths of amaranth and harps of gold and  
crowns of glory. We are thinking when we have done with this poor clay,  
the poor terrestrial stuff this body’s made of, we shall be made white, like  
spirits who now shine as stars before the Throne of the Majesty on High  
and that we shall share those splendors and enjoy their happiness—  
forever blessed with them—  
*“Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in.”*  
Now, “My soul, wait you only upon God” if these are your expectations.  
And if your expectation is based upon God, my soul, live for God—live  
with only this care, to bless Him—live, looking for a better world but believing this world to be good enough, if we have God in it. You know what  
Luther said the little bird said to him? He sat upon the spray of the tree  
and he sang—  
*“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow.  
God provides for the morrow.”*  
And it chirped and picked up its little grain and sang again. And yet it had  
no granary. It had not a handful of wheat stored up anywhere. But it still  
kept on with its chirping—  
*“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow.  
God provides for the morrow.”*  
Oh, you that are not Christians, it were worthwhile to be Christians if it  
were only for the peace and happiness that religion gives! If we had to die  
like dogs, yet this religion were worth having to make us live here like angels. Oh if the grave were what it seems to be—the goal of all existence. If  
the black nails in the coffin were not bright with stars, if death were the  
end and our lamps were quenched in darkness—when it was said, “Dust  
to dust and earth to earth”—it would be worthwhile to be a child of God,  
only to live here—  
*“‘Tis religion that can give sweetest pleasures while we live; ‘Tis religion must supply solid comforts when we die.”*Remember, he that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized  
shall be saved. And you, as well as any other, if these two things are given  
you, shall be saved. He that trusts in Christ alone for salvation and then  
(to translate the word “baptized” the right way and it can only be rightly  
translated one way) “is immersed, shall be saved.” So stands the praise—  
believing first, Baptism afterwards. Believing, the great thing, Baptism the  
sign of it. Believing the great means of grace, immersion the outward and  
visible sign of the washing of the flesh and of the dedication unto God. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” May God give you  
grace to obey both commands and so enter into eternal life! But remember, “He that believes not shall be damned.” He that neglects the great essential shall perish. May God grant that none of you may know the terrible meaning of that word!

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A WILDERNESS CRY  
NO. 1427

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 4, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You: my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water; to see Your power and Your Glory, so as I have seen You in the sanctuary.” Psalm 63:1, 2.**

CHRYSOSTOM tells us that among the primitive Christians it was decreed and ordained that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm and, certainly, if we do not follow the ancient custom and actually sing the words every day, it is not because they are unsuitable or because their spirit has died out among us. This Psalm may be said or sung all the year round. Have we joyous days? Let us sing of the loving kindness which is better than love! Do the clouds return after the rain? Let us sound forth His praise whose right hand upholds us! Is it summertime with our souls? Then we may express the full assurance of our faith by joyfully crying, “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You!” Have we fallen upon the drought of autumn? Do the long hot days parch our spirits? Then may we chant the desire of our longing heart, “My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.”

Is it winter with our spirit and does everything tend to chill us? Nevertheless let us not be silenced or rendered sluggish by the cold, but let us say, “I will bless You while I live, I will lift up my hands in Your name.” Has the spring returned with all its wealth of fresh flowers and opening sweets? Then shall our glad voices sing aloud, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.” Is the day ended and has the darkness of night settled down upon our mind? Then in the language of the Psalm we will remember God upon our bed and meditate upon Him in the night watches! And because He has been our help, therefore, in the shadow of His wings we will rejoice!

We may sing this Psalm in the days of battle, when those round about us seek our soul to destroy it, for, “they shall fall by the sword, they shall be a portion for foxes.” And we may chant it with equal appropriateness in the time of victory, when we return from the conflict with banners gleaming in the sunlight of triumph, for, “the king shall rejoice in God: everyone that swears by Him shall glory.” I know of no time and no season in which this Psalm would sound unsuitably from a believing tongue! Let us cultivate its earnestness! Let us endeavor to be baptized into its spirit! Let us live, while we live, after the fashion of holy men like David, the Psalmist, whose assurance of heart even sorrow could not shake—whose fertility of mind the desert could not wither—whose joy of spirit solitude could not destroy!  
This Psalm, however, especially belongs to any who, by their circumstances or by their state of heart, feel themselves to dwell in a desert land. There is a stage of Christian experience in which we are in Egypt and we are brought up out of it with a high hand and an outstretched arm. This symbolizes conviction, regeneration and conversion. Then we know the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood—our enemies drowned in the sea and the new song put into our mouth. Happy are they who have come thus far on their life journey!

Then comes the stage of spiritual history which may be well described as wilderness experience wherein we have little rest, much temptation and consequent proving of heart and discovery of inward weakness. Many remain in this condition far longer than is necessary—what might be soon ended is drawn out into 40 years by unbelief! Then comes that blessed stage of experience in which faith begets peace and joy—then we have crossed the Jordan and entered into rest in Christ Jesus, “in whom, also, we have obtained an inheritance.” In the Man who is our peace we obtain an earnest of Heaven and begin to divide the land of promise, “for He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places.”

Each man claims his lot in Covenant provisions and sits under his own vine and fig tree, nothing scaring him. Yet even after we have been raised up together with Jesus and have obtained citizenship in Zion, we may find ourselves in the wilderness. As David, though king in Israel, had to flee across the Jordan to escape from Absalom, so may the most assured and the most sanctified of God’s people be driven, for a while, into the dry and thirsty land where there is no water—and there hide himself from the offspring of his own flesh. There are songs for the Lord’s banished ones to sing in a strange land, Psalms with which to arouse the silent land, sonnets to charm the howling wilderness into a fruitful garden and hymns to make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose!

I purpose to address myself, this morning, to any of my Brothers and Sisters who feel themselves to be just now in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. It may be the Lord will give them deliverance by His Word this morning—or if not delivered out of temporal trouble, they shall at least be made glad by His Holy Spirit and be led to magnify His name while yet in the land of drought!

I. Our first head, this morning, shall be this—TRUE SAINTS ARE SOMETIMES IN A DRY AND THIRSTY LAND WHERE THERE IS NO WATER. Children of God are not always in the same happy state of mind. To hear some people talk, who know but little of religious experience, you would fancy that the Christian’s life is all feasting and dancing. Children think that all there is in hunting is wearing a red coat and blowing a horn—they know nothing of the rough riding. We do, it is true, linger delightfully in the sweet Valley of Humiliation where men have found pearls and met with angels. We know that spot of which the Pilgrim’s guide has said, “Behold, how green this valley is, also how beautiful with lilies.”

But we can never forget that in this quiet meadow Christian met Apollyon and was hard put to it in the fight and, but a little farther in his journey, he came to the Valley of the Shadow of Death where there are deep ditches and quagmires—and a narrow pathway which runs hard by the mouth of Hell! Sweet rest is to be had in the Palace Beautiful, but there is also a Hill Difficulty to be climbed. Let not the young be deceived by fluttering words, for they may be sure of this—there are bitters as well as sweets in the pilgrim life—and he who would be a Christian must not count upon unbroken joy. All things are changeable. We live in a world which hourly varies. What do our thermometers and barometers mean? Are they not measures of perpetual change?

The things which live change even more than inanimate objects and the more of life usually the more of sensitiveness—and the more of sensitiveness so much the more of change! Your man of marble may appear to sweat through the condensation of the vapor around him, but he cannot possibly know anything of that dew of toil which covers the laboring limb. The cast in plaster is ignorant of the joy and the sorrow which flash through the man of flesh and blood! Your painted picture, hanging on the wall, represents a smiling ancestor who smiles on although his estates may have been alienated and his family disgraced! But not so the living parent who anxiously regards each turn in the affairs of his children! For him there are tears as well as smiles.

A man of stone changes not, but a man of flesh feels the movement of the years—the plow of time gradually furrows his forehead and the crow’s feet of age appear in the corners of his eyes. Living men must mourn and suffer as well as laugh and rejoice, for minds and hearts must change. Wonder not, therefore, that the glad-hearted sons of Zion are not always in the temple, but sometimes are driven into exile and sigh in a desert land! But beyond the fact of liability to change there are other reasons why God’s people, at times, are wanderers in the wilderness. In some senses, to a Christian, this world must always be a dry and thirsty land.

The new life which Divine Grace has implanted in us finds nothing here below upon which it can feed. The things which are seen are too gross, material, carnal and defiled to sustain life which comes by the Holy Spirit from the great Father. We are not carrion crows, else we might float upon the carcasses which abound in the waters around our ark! We are doves and when we leave the hand of our Noah, we find nothing to rest upon and we must go back to Him if we are to find food and rest for our souls. I am not speaking, now, of the world under its sorrowful aspect, only, but of the world at its best! It is a dry land for saints even when its rains are falling.

When the world dresses itself in scarlet and puts on its silks and satins, it is still a poor world for us. She may paint her face and tier her head, but she is a Jezebel for all that! The world, should she come to us as she came to Solomon, would still be a deceiver! If she would indulge us with all her riches and give us all her power and all her fame, she would still be a mere mocker to the heart which is born from above! If you could stand on a high mountain and see all the kingdoms of the world before you—and the glory thereof and hear a voice saying, “All this will I give you”—yet might you turn round to Satan and say, “And all this is nothing to me, a sop for a dog, but not food for a child of God!”

And then you might lift your eyes to the great Father above and say,

“Whom have I in Heaven but You? There is none upon earth that I desire beside You!” You shall take prosperity at its flood. You shall have health and strength. You shall have all that heart can wish. But, after all, if there

is a spark of Divine Life within you, your heart will compute the sum total of all earth’s joys and say, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!” To a citizen of Heaven, this world is “a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water.”

If it is so at its best, what is it at its worst? If its pillows of down cannot rest us, what shall we say of its thorns and briars? If its flood tide cannot bear us up, what shall we say of its neap tide and its ebb, when mire and dirt succeed a glassy sea? Ah, truly, best or worst, it is well for us to look above the world and to fix our heart where our treasure is preserved, even in Heaven! But, dear Brethren, we could bear up with this present state and be well satisfied with it if that were our only difficulty—far more grievous is the fact that we carry an evil within us which would cause drought in Paradise, itself, if it could go there!

The Christian gets into a land of drought because his own nature is dry! He finds a barren soil without because he has a barren heart within. Verily there is no doctrine more true to experience than this—corruption remains even in the hearts of the regenerate—and that when we would do good, evil is present with us! Within us there is still a carnal mind which is not reconciled to God, neither, indeed, can be! And, as long as we have this about us, if it is permitted, for a moment, to get the upper hand (and who among us is so watchful that this will never happen?) it is no wonder that the joys of Divine Grace seem to disappear and we find ourselves in a spiritual wilderness! We carry about with us enough evil to make another Hell, if the infernal pit were filled and its fires extinguished!

“Oh, wretched man that I am,” said the Apostle Paul, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He said this not because He was not a saint, but because he was so far advanced in the way of holiness! The more saintly a saint becomes, the more will he loathe and mourn over the remains of indwelling sin which he finds in his nature! This will set him longing and thirsting after more Grace. When our old unbelief begins to wither our faith; when our natural indifference commences to dry up our life; when our doubts parch the pastures of our hope and our sins drain the wells of our consolation, it is little wonder if we come into a dry and thirsty land where there is no water!

We may, dear Friends, have been so unwatchful as to have brought ourselves into this condition by actual faults of life and conduct. I would make it a matter of personal enquiry among you by asking thoughtful answers to a few questions. Have you restrained prayer? Do you wonder that the land grows dry? Has the Word of God been neglected? Have you left off its study through pressure of other concerns? Do you wonder if you have left the streams for which your soul thirsts? Have you been overly engaged in seeking temporal gain and has the hot desert wind of worldliness parched your heart? Has there been anything about your spiritual life that has grieved the Holy Spirit?

Have you been idle as a Christian? Have you been content to eat the fat and drink the sweet, but to do nothing to win souls? Or have you, while you have fed upon the Word of God, taken the sweet things of the Gospel as a matter of course and not blessed the Lord for them? Has there been a lack of humility or a deficiency of gratitude? If so, how can you wonder that you are in a dry and thirsty land? Have you been careless in your walk? In domestic life has sin been permitted in the family? Have you been winking at evil in your children? Have you permitted it in yourself? If so, remember, it is written, “He turns rivers into a wilderness and water springs into dry ground, a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.”

You may have fallen into a parched condition of spirit because you have forgotten Him of whom in happier days you sang, “All my fresh springs are in You.” Because you have walked contrary to God, God is walking contrary to you—and it is your duty to repent and return at once to your Lord—only by doing so will peace return to you! If these various things do not account for the Believer being in a dry and thirsty land, there are still some other reasons which I will briefly mention. Sometimes Christians become very hungry and thirsty when they are banished from the means of Grace. Poor as our ministry may be, yet there are many of God’s children who would miss it more than their daily food if it were taken from them!

God’s servants whom He calls to the work of the ministry are bound to think little of themselves and yet the loaves and fishes which they distribute to the multitude are by no means to be lightly esteemed—the people would faint by the way if they did not have them. It is a severe trial to some saints to be kept away from sanctuary privileges. I know that when you travel for pleasure or roam by the seaside for health—if you go to a place of worship on the Sabbath and find no spiritual bread, you fall into a miserable state of mind and sigh to spend your Sabbaths where the children’s portion is dealt out liberally and all the servants have bread enough to spare! David loved the very doors of the Lord’s House! He thirsted and pined because he was shut out from sanctuary privileges— and it was especially for that reason that he speaks of himself as being in a “dry and thirsty land, where there is no water.”

The same may happen when we are denied the sweets of Christian communion. David had poor company when he was in the wilderness in the days of Saul. His friends were not much better than freeloaders and runaways whom he would never have selected as friends had not the necessities of his own condition and of the political situation rendered it necessary that he should become a captain over them. They were a strange band of men! They were made up chiefly of those who were in debt and discontented—the rebellious against Saul’s wretched administration—men of broken fortunes and suspected loyalty.

Few of them were fit friends for the man after God’s own heart. I do not wonder that he looked, even, at the sons of Zeruiah who loved him best and were his own kinsmen—and felt that as for holy communion his soul was in a dry and thirsty land where there was no water! Believers are to keep out of worldly company and yet it sometimes happens that Providence throws the child of God among the ungodly, like Obadiah in the family of Ahab; Nehemiah in the palace of Artaxerxes and Daniel in the court of Darius. Your lot is hard if you are called to dwell among worldlings, for they have power to

 injure your piety but they cannot help you.

You look around upon a score of hard faces all eager after the almighty dollar and none of them caring for the almighty God—and I do not wonder that you feel yourself to be in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water!

We owe much more to Christian friends than we think—and especially the younger folk among us do well to value Christian associations and to be much in the company of them that fear the Lord and that think upon His name. If they are denied this refreshment, they will find life to be a dry land where there is no water. Yes, but the same may happen from other causes as well. Sometimes a believing man may be treated with gross injustice and endure much hardship as the result. David was blameless and yet Saul hunted him as a traitor! He was upright, yet his people revolted from him. It tends to make a good man sour in spirit to be misrepresented and treated as guilty when he knows that he is innocent—and this bitterness is very apt to put away from us many sources of comfort and leave us uncomfortable. Then many a spring becomes dry and the heart shrivels as under a burning sun.

Sometimes, too, domestic conditions may be so changed that we cannot feel as we would wish. I do not know how you feel, but I think many must acknowledge that when they get away from their own room and from their regular habits, they are not always able to commune with God as usual. One likes to read from the very same Bible and to kneel at the very same chair. When the time comes for meeting with God, you are, perhaps, roaming up and down amid the choicest scenery and though you are reverent and adoring, yet you find it hard to reach the sweetness of fellowship with God which you have been accustomed to enjoy at home. Everything may be very lovely around you while you are tourists—everything may be attractive and delightful and yet, I should not wonder but what you will find it to be a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

I can well conceive that your hearts long for an hour of your accustomed quietude and familiarity with God. You would give anything to be back in the little room, looking out upon the hills, or to have an hour in that secluded little garden where you have been accustomed to take your pocket Testament and sit down and hear the Voice of Jesus speaking to your soul and to speak to Him in return. Even hours and places have much to do with our heart’s condition. I know not how it is, but such strange creatures are we that in one place we cannot worship as we would like to do in another and, therefore, the soul finds its condition to be that of a wanderer in a dry and thirsty land!

Then, too, much depends upon health and physical conditions. In some forms of sickness the soul is apt to be grievously depressed and cast out of its proper condition. Some of you may remember the venerable Watts Wilkinson, the Golden Lecturer. I was reading his life the other day and he tells us that after many years of health he suffered a season of sickness. And he learned by experience that sickness is not the best time, as he had formerly thought it was, for drawing near to God. The effects of sickness are often very beneficial under the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, but they are seldom so at the time.

It is “afterwards” that these things work the fruits of righteousness— but at the time it is often with us as it was with Wilkinson who says that he never in his life felt so dull in prayer and so heavy in reading the Scriptures as during his illness. I believe that often the condition of the body operates upon the condition of the mind and that our being in a dry and thirsty laud where there is no water may be occasioned by a feverishness or a feebleness of the flesh. Lack of faith may sometimes be little other than a need of natural cheerfulness and we may mistake infirmity for iniquity. We have our times of natural sadness. We have, too, our times of depression when we cannot do otherwise than hang our heads.

Seasons of lethargy will also befall us from changes in our natural frame, or from weariness, or the rebound of over excitement. The trees are not always green—the sap sleeps in them in the winter—and we have winters, too. Life cannot always be at flood tide—the fullness of the blessing is not upon the most gracious at all times. We may always burn, but we cannot always flame! We may always grow, but we cannot always flower. And if we always bear fruit, yet the fruit is not always ripe, nor does the ripeness always wear the same delicate bloom. Till we are perfected we shall not be always at our highest point, otherwise earth would be turned to Heaven and time would have forgotten itself and merged its variableness in the immutability of eternity!

So you see there are many reasons why the best of saints are sometimes in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.  
II. The second head is a very short but very comforting one, that GOD IS STILL OUR GOD—“O God, You are my God.” Yes, He is just as much our God in the dry land as if we sat by Siloa’s softly flowing brook which glides by the oracle of God. O God, You are my God when I see the fountain leaping from the rock in a cascade of cool refreshment and You are just as much my God if every river bed is turned to a heap of stones and the burning sand on all sides mock my searching eyes! The Lord belongs to us by an eternal charter which will never lose its force, for the Scripture says, “This God is our God forever and ever.” This is a very sweet and precious Truth of God and should be remembered always!  
Of course, when a man falls into a dull dry state of soul, he may very well question his condition before God and he ought not to rest till the question is satisfactorily answered. But where there is living faith the fact is certain and all question may be dismissed. God is your God still, my dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever condition you are in, if you can now come and grasp Him by faith and call Him yours with the voice of love. Can you join me in words like these? Lord, I have lost my comforts; I have lost my assurances; I have lost my delights, but I still trust in You. I have no God but You, neither will I worship any other, nor repose my confidence elsewhere. Though You slay me, yet will I trust in You. The wounds of Jesus for my sin are still my soul’s one hope—the precious blood of Your dear Son is my sole confidence!  
If such is your language, you have not lost your God! All the other things you speak of may have gone for a while, but as long as you can still say, “O God, You are my God, early will I seek You,” you are still among the living in Zion and your time to rejoice shall soon come! Just think a minute—it is not possible that God’s love to His people should change with their condition—such a theology would represent God as very variable in His love! Yes, it would do worse than that, for it would make the Gospel into a Law and turn all evangelical Truth into legality!  
Does God love me because I love Him? Does God love me because I am bright and happy? Does God love me because my faith is strong and because I can leap like a hart in His ways? Why, then, He must have loved me because of something good in me—and that is not according to the Gospel! The Gospel represents the Lord as loving the unworthy and justifying the ungodly and, therefore, I must cast out of my mind the idea that Divine Love depends on human conditions! Can it be true that God only loves His children when they are in good spiritual health? Is it so with me? Do I love my child when he is strong and hate him when he is sick? When I see the spots of disease upon him do I put him away and say that he is no son of mine?  
If his poor eyes should fail him and he should become blind, should I cast him off? If his feet should fail him and he became a helpless cripple, should I disown him? If he lost his hearing and could not listen to my voice, would I discard him? Fathers, mothers, I speak to you! Come what may to your offspring, are they not still yours? And would you not still love them? Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? The Lord has said, “They may forget, yet will He not forget His people.” Be cheered, then, for into whatever state of unhappiness we may have wandered, the love of God does not depend upon our condition! It knows no ups nor downs, nor winters nor summers, nor ebbs nor flows, but abides forever sure!  
Even though the Lord should hide His face from us, He is still our God, for the Lord has taught us to cry, “My God, my God,” even when we have to add, “why have You forsaken me?” When the Lord first loved us we were in a worse state than we are in now, for though we feel dry and sapless we are not utterly dead as we were then. Remember “His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.” We were enemies and yet He reconciled us! And we are not enemies now, though we fear we are poor, cold-hearted friends. We are sadly sick, perhaps, but we are not actually under condemnation as we were when first of all His Sovereign Grace came forth to do the deed of redemption and deliver us from the wrath to come. And if the Lord loved us then, why should He not love us now? We have not fallen into any state which takes the Lord by surprise, for He knew well enough what we should be.  
However we may blame ourselves and I hope we do blame ourselves severely for every evil within our hearts, yet He foreknew what we should be and is by no means disappointed in us. There has nothing happened which our God did not foreknow and if He chose us knowing all this, can it be possible that when it comes to pass He should turn from His purpose and change His mind? No, never! Brethren, we have had great experiences, some of us, of God’s love in the past and this makes us feel that He can help us and will help us in the present! In the sanctuary we have seen His power and His Glory. Oh the delight, the heavenly joys which we have known at times in His service!

At Prayer Meetings I know we have had our hearts warmed within us and felt that we could scarcely be happier in Heaven! Sometimes, under a sermon, we have been fired as with new life and we have felt that we could begin again with double strength! If this has happened to us in former times, when we were heavy and depressed, why can it not happen again? Does not the Lord delight to revive the spirits of the faint and weary? Angels’ visits may be few and far between, but not the visitations of the Spirit of God, for He dwells with us and in us forever! Before we are aware, He can make us like the chariots of Amminadib, for He has done it and what He has done He is certainly able to do again! Why not comfort yourselves with these thoughts?  
Besides, if we are in the wilderness, is not God the God of the wilderness? Were not His greatest marvels worked when He led His people about through the howling wilderness and fed them with manna and revealed Himself in a fiery, cloudy pillar? Where did Hagar look to Him who saw her but in the wilderness? Where did Moses see the Lord in the bush but at the backside of the desert? Where did Elijah hear a voice speaking to Him but away there in the wilderness? And where did David, the Psalmist, meet with his God but in the lone, solitary land where there is no water? O my Soul, if you are in the desert now, expect your God to meet with you! Open your eyes and expect to see Him display His Grace now that you are as the dry ground! He will pour floods upon you now that you are empty! He will fill you with His Divine fullness! Your poverty prepares you to apprehend His riches! Your inward death prepares you to receive His everlasting life! Therefore, have hope and rise from your depression and fear!  
III. Thus much upon the second subject, by which we are led briefly to the third, namely, WHEN WE ARE IN A DRY AND THIRSTY LAND OUR WISEST COURSE IS TO CRY TO HIM AT ONCE. Now, Brothers and Sisters, I want to speak very practically to you, as I do to myself, for many of us are deeply and personally concerned in this matter. Very likely the warmth of the atmosphere on this warm summer morning may make you feel all the duller in devotion. You may not be enjoying the things of God because the air is heavy and makes you sleepy. Let us, then, bestir ourselves and break asunder the bonds of sleep!  
We can only do this by crying at once to God Himself. Let us go straight away to Jesus, our Friend and Physician, and let us cry, “O God, You are my God, early will I seek You. My soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You.” Observe that David does not first pray for deliverance from the dry and thirsty land and then say, “There, I will now go and seek God!” But no, in the desert, itself, he cries, “My soul thirsts for You.” Learn from this and do not say, “I will get into communion with God when I feel better,” but long for communion now! It is one of the temptations of the devil to tell you not to pray when you do not feel like praying. Pray twice as much, then! When you feel least like praying, then pray the more, for you need it the more!  
And when you feel very little like coming near to God, then cry, “My God, I must be in a terrible state, or else I should have a greater longing after You. Therefore will I not rest till I find You and come to You.” Do not, any of you, practice the sinner’s folly—he declares that he will tarry till he is better—and then he never comes at all. No, children of God must not say, “We will seek the Lord when we are better,” but you must seek Him at once! Practice the Gospel principle of, “Just as I am,” and come to Jesus just as you are! Lethargic, half asleep, almost dead in spirit, yet nevertheless come to Jesus! Make a plunge for it. Say, “I must have a sense of His love and I must have it now! I must not lose this blessed Sabbath morning! I must enter into fellowship with God.” Make a dash for it and you shall have it! Do not wait till you are delivered, but in the dry and thirsty land sigh after God!  
Neither, dear Friends, pray so much for ordinances as for the Lord, Himself. David does not say, “O God, You are my God, I will seek the sanctuary. My soul thirsts for a Prayer Meeting, my flesh longs for a sermon.” No, he sighs for God! He thirsts only for God! I believe that our Lord sometimes strikes all ordinances dry to make us feel that they are nothing without Himself. The means of Grace are blessed breasts at which the soul may suck when God is in them, but they are emptiness, itself, when He is not there. The preacher who has best fed you will only disappoint you if his Lord is not with him, or if you are not prepared to look beyond the man to the Master! The Lord loves to famish His people of all earthly bread and water—to bring them to wait upon only Himself.  
I charge you, Beloved, this morning, that whatever your state may be, make a direct appeal to the Lord that He would immediately give you Himself by Christ Jesus! Nothing less than this can meet your needs and this will meet your case, though all outward ordinances should be denied. What if no point of the sermon should impress or quicken you? Yet the silent power of the Spirit of God can glide into your heart and become life to your soul! Seek it, then, and seek it believing that it may be had and had at once! The child of God may rise at once from slumber into earnestness and may leap from lethargy into zeal!  
It is wonderful how speedily the Spirit of God works! He needs not hours and days and weeks in which to make us young again! He works with amazing mastery over the lapse of time and perfects in an instant His good work. It was all darkness, primeval darkness, thick and black as ebony itself and Jehovah said, “Light be!” Then flashed the day and all was brightness! So may it be black as Hell with you at this moment and an infernal night may brood over every faculty of your being—yet if the enlightening Spirit comes forth—day shall dawn, a day that shall surprise you, a day above the brightness of that which comes of the sun! Do not be afraid, dear children of God, you that have fallen into a mournful state! Do not be afraid to cry out to God, this morning, in the language of the Psalmist!  
I know we sometimes feel as if we must not and dare not pray. We have become so dull, so lifeless, so unworthy that we do not expect to be heard and feel as if it would be presumption to cry. But our heavenly Father loves to hear His children cry all day long! Rutherford says, “The child in Christ’s house that is most troublesome is the most welcome! He that makes the most noise for his meat is the best child that Christ has.” You may not quite agree with that as to your own children, but it is certainly so with our Lord! Rutherford says, “It is a good child that is always whining each hour of the day for a piece and a drink.” He speaks of a hungry soul hanging around Christ’s pantry door and commends him for so doing. Assuredly the Lord wishes His children to have strong desires after Himself! Desire, then, and let those desires be vehement!  
If you can cry out to Jesus, He will joyfully hear you! If you will give Him no rest, He will give you all the rest you need! The Lord finds music in His children’s cries. “Oh,” you say, “I would cry, but mine is such a discordant and foolish cry.” You are the very man to cry, for your sorrow will put an emphasis into your voice! Of all the cries your children utter, the one that comes closest home to you arises out of their pain and deep distress! A dying moan from a little one will pierce a mother’s heart! Look, she presses the baby to her bosom! She cries, “My dear dying child,” and weeps over it! You, too, shall be pressed to the bosom of Everlasting Love if you can only groan, or sob, or sigh! Only be careful that you are not happy in a dry and thirsty land! Be careful that you are not content away from God—for if you will not rest till you get at Him, you shall soon have Him! If you will groan after Him you shall find Him! A sigh will fetch Him!  
May there be much longing, panting and pleading among us at this hour! Do not let anyone here be satisfied to remain in a dull state. Do not say, “Well, but he says a child of God may experience dullness.” Yes, I know I did, but I did not bid you fall into it! Above all, I did not tell you to live in it! One of your children may fall and cut his knees, but I should not recommend all his brothers to try a tumble, nor should I exhort him to lie on the ground. The dry and thirsty land is really a dry and thirsty land to the Believer, but if you can be satisfied to dwell there, it is not a dry and thirsty land to you!  
Now, child of God, if you have fallen into a dull state, I beseech you to labor to rise out of it. And I do this, first, because you are not a fit person to be in such a state. Yours is the land that flows with milk and honey! You are like David, driven out of Canaan for a time, but you must never be satisfied till you get back to Jerusalem! Oh, cry unto the Lord to bring you back that you may see the King’s face and sit at the King’s table and delight yourself with the marrow and the fatness which you ought to feed upon every day! You are a king and a priest unto God—will you go about in sordid beggar’s rags and forget your dignity and sit on a dunghill with the paupers of this miserable world? No! Come away! Come away—the dry and thirsty land is not for you—yours is the land of plenty and of joy!  
Think of your obligations to your Savior. You have been bought with His precious blood! Your sins are forgiven you! You are a joint-heir with Him! Are you going to be cold and careless towards the Well-Beloved of your soul? I was about to say three-fourths of all the Christian people in this world live in such a way as rather to disgrace the Redeemer than to honor Him. I have not said that, but if I had chanced to make the statement I would not retract it, for I am afraid it is true. I am afraid that many of us are no credit to Christ. If worldlings look at us, they say, “Is

 that a Christian?” If my Lord were to send some of His sheep to a show, they would be far enough from winning a prize. If the prize were for joyous piety some would utterly fail! If the prize were for consistent courage and strength of heart, how few of us would be “highly commended.” Many of His sheep are no credit to their Feeder and reflect no honor upon their Shepherd. Out of your dumps, my Brothers and Sisters! Why should you be sitting in darkness any longer with such Grace to be had and such a Savior to give it? Just think—you are losing a world of joy! You are sitting like an owl in a haunted ruin, blinking your eyes, when you might be flying like an eagle straight up to the Sun of Righteousness, in full communion with the great Lord! Why are you down there, down in the dens and caves of the earth, howling away among the dragons—when you might be up there among the cherubim and seraphim magnifying the Lord, for, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”? I said you were children of God and, therefore, I am not condemning you, but I would brush you up if I could and bestir you to walk somewhat more worthily of the obligations imposed upon you by the Grace of God!  
Think, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you and I all get into a dull, sleepy state—what is to become of this poor world? You have to go to your class this afternoon—are you going there half awake and half asleep? Are you going to dream among your children all the afternoon? “Oh,” you say, “we do not do that.” Don’t you? Why, many a preacher is not above half awake when he delivers his sermon—he rather snores it than preaches it! Few of us ever were awake all through. We are awake half way! Oh that we were thoroughly awake, thoroughly alive, thoroughly in earnest! No wonder sinners are given to slumber when saints sleep as they do! No wonder that the unconverted think Hell a fiction when we live as if it were so! No wonder that they imagine Heaven to be a romance when we act as if it were so little a reality!  
Oh Lord, awaken us, even if it be by thunder claps! Oh God, for Jesus Christ’s sake, bring us out of the dry and thirsty land! Have You not said that if we drink of the river of the Water of Life, out of our belly shall flow rivers of living water so that we shall neither complain of thirst, ourselves, nor shall there remain a desert around us? Help us, then, to drink abundantly!  
I have thus spoken to as many as believe in Jesus Christ, but to you that are unbelievers, much of this may equally well apply, for you, too, are in a land still more dry and thirsty. Do not go about to sacraments and sermons, much less to priests, but go straight to God in Christ Jesus! Cry to HIM! O Sinner, cry to Him, “O God, though You are not my God, yet still early will I seek You! My heart longs for You! Come to me and save me!” Jesus will come to you and save you, even you, to the praise of the glory of His Grace. Amen.

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Sermon #2166 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

EXPERIENCE AND ASSURANCE  
NO. 2166

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.”  
Psalm 63:7.**

In their time of trouble the children of God return to their Father . It is according to their newborn nature to seek Him from whom it came. The believing heart is like the needle in the compass—you may turn it round with your finger east and west—but when you withdraw the pressure, it will, beyond all doubt, tremble backward towards its pole. With God, the regenerate heart is in its proper position. A mystic something draws the new life towards the Source from where it came. We may, alas, by the force of temptation, or by the demands of business, or by an overpowering lethargy become indifferent to our highest love—but this cannot long continue—we can never rest except in God! The winds of trouble blow the dove of our soul back to the ark. Our heart repents of its wanderings when they bring it into a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. Then we long after Divine refreshments and cannot be quiet till we have them. Then we cry, “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You”!

The soul, in coming back to God, will be greatly helped by meditation . Hence the Psalmist says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips: when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches.” The soul feasts when it meditates! I am afraid these eager days leave little space for meditation, yet there is no exercise more nourishing to faith, love and all the Graces. David says, “I remember You; I meditate on You.” A transient thought of God may bless us largely, even as a touch of the hem of the Savior’s garment healed a woman of her plague. But to meditate upon Him is, as it were, to lean our head upon His bosom and enjoy full fellowship in His love. Oh, for more meditation! It would mean more Grace, more joy!

The photographer can take an instantaneous photograph and so can we, by ejaculatory prayer and vehement desire, obtain immediate help from Heaven. But in a certain state of the atmosphere the object needs longer exposure—needs, in fact, that its image should rest longer upon the sensitive plate before it will completely imprint itself. Meditation does, as it were, set the Lord long before the soul so that it receives His image more completely. Happy is he who can say, “I have set the Lord always before me”! Thoughts of God are as when a man climbs a hill, looks upon a landscape and cries out exultingly, “How beautiful is this scenery!”

But if you would have a figure of meditation, you must see that man standing on the hilltop for a long space of time and marking the features of the landscape. Look, yonder is the spire of a village church! Mark the

cottages nestling around it! There flows a river and, hard by, a broad sheet of water, like a looking glass, reflects the sun. Mark the distant range of hills and the woods and wilds which lie between. Note well the valley bronzed with a thousand fields of corn divided like a garden by hedgerows. Such a view as this is instructive and abides in the memory. He understands the country best who has seen most of it—and we know the Lord, by His Spirit—far better by quiet meditation than by any other means.

We not only remember our God once, but we remember, and remember, and remember, and remember again till memory flowers into meditation. Thoughts of God crop the herbage, but meditation chews the cud—and it is the chewing of the cud which yields nourishment. Oh, that you and I may often cheer our sleepless hours by heavenly meditations, for thus shall the pure in heart see their God and thus shall they enter into the closest fellowship with Him! Among our subjects for meditation should be God’s gracious dealings with us. David meditated upon his whole life in the light of its connection with God. He read his diary through and specially dwelt upon the points where he had come into contact with the Invisible and the Infinite. He remembered the help he had received from Omnipotence. He knew God best by special times of gracious aid.

After all, it is not what we read in the Bible, but what we feel in the heart which actually gives us our best acquaintance with God. A hundred biographies of other men will not make so much impression upon us as the knowing of God in our own personal experience. If we can say of Him, “You have been my help,” we shall meditate upon Him to good purpose.

Once more— when the heart comes back to God, riding in the golden chariot of meditation, the natural instinct is to speak to Him. Hence my text is not only the Word of God, but a word with God! The Psalmist does not direct the words of the text to us, but to God Himself—“Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.” Beloved, it is a delightful thing to converse with God! Do you indulge this habit? If the Lord is your Father, should you not, as a child, speak with Him every day? If you are married to Christ, should not the spouse speak with her Well-Beloved? It were very strange if she did not! Private devotion ought to be a dialogue between the soul and God—by the Scripture the Lord speaks to us—and by prayer we speak to Him.

Sometimes, you know, in conversation with a friend, you have not much to say. Very well. You listen while your friend speaks. When prayer is not urgent, read your Bible and hear what God, the Lord, shall speak. And when you have heard His voice you will usually find it in your heart to pray to Him. If the prayer is soon over, because you have expressed all your thoughts, then let the Lord speak again and you listen diligently. But do speak to the Lord! Realize His Presence and then speak to Him as a man speaks with his friend. God has no dumb children, but He has some who hold their tongues to a fault when they are with Him. I fear that these same people use their tongues to a fault when they are away from Him.

O Brothers and Sisters, speak with God! This is the noblest use of speech. If half our talk with men were silenced and our talks with God were multiplied 10 times, it would be well. May I ask a question of every professing Christian? Have you spoken with God this morning? Do you allow a day to pass without conversation with God? Can it be right for us to treat the Lord with mute indifference? No! Let us often turn our hearts and our lips heavenward and say, “Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in Your name.” Does not our Lord love to hear us speak? Listen to His loving appeal in the sacred Canticle—“O My doves, that are in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely.”

With this as a preface, I now invite you to the text itself, which is a stanza of David’s song unto the Lord. “Because You have been my help”— This is experience. “Therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice”— this is expectation, or, viewing it in a still brighter light, “I will rejoice”— this is assurance. Here are three subjects to dwell upon. God help us to climb these three rounds of the ladder of light—experience, expectation, full assurance! If we stop at the top when we get there it may not be amiss. But if we have to begin again, let us rehearse matters in the same order—more experience, clearer expectation and fuller assurance.

I. First, then, EXPERIENCE—“You have been my help.” Experience is the child of faith and, strange to say, experience is the nurse of faith. No man can expect to experience the fulfillment of the promise till he believes the promise. But they believe the promise best who have had most experience of God’s faithfulness. David had experienced Divine help. He distinctly traced many of his deliverances to Divine help. He says, “You have been my help.” David did not ascribe his success in life to a powerful patron for he had none. I have heard men sigh for the bondage of patronage. One has cried, “If I were taken up by some great man, I should succeed in life.”

David had no patronage—on the contrary, he encountered strong opposition. His brothers pushed him into the rear and even his father kept him minding the sheep. In later life Jonathan was his friend, but he was not his patron for that generous prince always felt that David was his superior. If you have God for your Friend, you need not cringe before great men, for you shall joyfully say unto the Lord, “You have been my help.” Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm. But blessed is he that trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord. Neither does David ascribe his success in life to himself. There is no doubt that he was a man of genius, cast in a poetic mold and it is also clear that he was a valiant man, born for deeds of daring and high enterprise. He was also a man of judgment and counsel and as apt for government in peace as in war.

With all his faults, there is no more royal character upon the pages of Scripture than David, King of Israel. But he does not sacrifice to his own sword, or magnify his own bow. We read no word of his about his being a self-made man. No, rather, he sings, “It is God that subdues the people under me.” Brethren, have there not been instances in your lives in which the Lord has evidently interposed to help you? I can see His hand clearly

in places wherein no other help would have been sufficient. If anyone had to sketch my life, he could not do it fully unless I were, from my own secret thoughts, to supply certain gaps. Without God the Believer’s life is inexplicable. The Romans used to speak of Deus ex machinus, God appearing in an unexpected manner in the midst of a history to rescue the hero and change the scene. This is no figure of speech in the life of faith.

Every now and then we have witnessed a distinct interposition—a stretching out of the Divine hand—an inroad of the supernatural. To us has it been true, “He bowed the heavens also, and came down.” Others might think our experience fanatical if we were to tell it as we see it, but this we cannot help. To us it has been a real manifestation of the Divine thoughtfulness on our behalf. Looking back upon our lives we cannot help saying deliberately and as cool a statement of fact—the Lord has been our help. There, and there, and there we mark certain turning points in our life which cannot be accounted for to our own minds on any other theory than that here the Creator came into contact with His creature—the Redeemer stooped over His redeemed and the Comforter worked upon the soul which He indwelt. Yes, “O triune Jehovah, You have been my help!”

David felt it was so and he avowed it without hesitation. Furthermore, these words imply that David had often experienced this help. He does not make this statement in reference to one solitary incident in his life, or he would have said, “You were once my help.” He sees a continuity in the loving kindness of the Lord his God. He means, “You have all along been my help.” When he was a youth and kept his father’s flock, there came a lion and took a lamb out of his flock—and he, with dauntless courage—rushed upon the monster and saved the lamb from between his jaws. Another day a bear pounced on one of his helpless charge and the brave youth killed it. God helped him in those days of solitude in the wilderness.

None saw his daring deeds, but he communed with God and worked bravely, so as to prepare himself to be the shepherd and deliverer of the Lord’s own flock. In his early youth the Lord was his strength and his song. Soon he was taken away from solitude and introduced into public life and the Lord was his help. He had a strange introduction to the world. I might almost say that he was slung out into public life like a stone from his own sling. A gigantic Philistine stalked before the hosts of Israel, defying the servants of God to single conflict. Young David undertook to answer the champion’s defiance and then was fulfilled his brave words to King Saul, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” He ran to him in the name of the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel, whom he had defied and presently he returned to Saul bearing the braggart’s gory head. “Because You have been my help,” was David’s way of accounting for his slaying the lion, the bear and the giant.

In later life David had to attend in the court of envious Saul and he behaved himself wisely. He would confess to the Lord the reason for his wise behavior in these words, “Because You have been my help.” Put upon difficult enterprises, he achieved them. Jealously envied by the king, he gave him no ground for a charge, for God was his help. Driven at length into exile, to become the leader of a band of men hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, his life was still preserved—the Lord was his help. While yet a wanderer, he met with a great heart-breaking trouble. While he had been away from Ziklag, where his men were in residence, a band of marauders came upon the city, took the women and children captive and burned the city with fire.

When he and his band came back to the place, each man had to grieve over his ruined home, stolen substance and wife and family carried off. The rough men spoke of stoning David, for their hearts were bitter with a great sorrow. Then we read that, “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,” and very soon his mourning was turned into dancing—the captives were recovered, the spoil was reclaimed and the men-at-arms were glad. Truly David could say, “You have been my help.” I cannot go through all the life of David, but I hope you are familiar with it. In doing his duty as patriot and king, God was his help and enabled him to walk uprightly in his government. In his sufferings the Lord was his help and enabled him to be calm and brave. In the time of danger God was his help and kept him from the hand of the enemy.

And now, in this Psalm, though David is in the wilderness of Judah and probably hunted by his own son, yet he sings unto the Lord, “You have been my help.” Beloved Friends, I do not want you to stop with David any longer. I beg you, now, to come nearer home and review your own lives. I cannot, of course, give a sketch of the histories of all here assembled, but many of them will run on this wise—as a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, your life was a hard fight in the beginning and many a time you were ready to perish. Perhaps you began very low down in the scale and when you were about to rise, misfortune dragged you down. Many things were against you, but the Lord was your help.

In your own person you have suffered sickness, but when you have tossed upon the bed, in great anguish, God has been your help. You have experienced trial in your family. There are graves in the cemetery which you will never forget. Half your heart lies buried beneath the sod. Yet the Lord has been your help. When you hoped, by industry, to succeed, the times suddenly turned and swept away your gains. It seemed as if you could not prosper. You can say today, “I was brought low and the Lord helped me.” You are not in the workhouse. You have not been through the bankruptcy court. You still find that promise true, “Your bread shall be given you and your waters shall be sure.” You joyfully say this day, “O Lord, You have been my help.”

As for me, the very spot on which I stand bears witness to the loving kindnesses of the Lord. On this platform I have endured deep distress of mind while preaching to you and I have feared lest I should not be able to speak aright in the name of the Lord. But now, concerning these 37 years of my ministry, I joyfully say, “You have been my help.” Most of you, in your various walks of life, will have had occasion, again and again, to bless the Lord who has been your help.

These helps rendered to David had been very choice ones . He had often been helped in special ways. God had taken great care of him. He was the favorite of Providence and the darling of Heaven. Has it not been so with some of you? Have you not enjoyed choice morsels of experience? Are there not incidents in your life which you could scarcely tell lest the hearer should smile at your credulity and you should be found casting pearls before swine? To some of us, most special mercies have been vouchsafed and we have treasured them as choice things. I was rather astonished to learn that in the Hebrew the help is expressed by much the same word which is used in Genesis to describe the position of woman to man. God made Eve to be a helpmeet for Adam and here the Almighty God has been to us as suitable a help as the helpmeet He made for man!

Some of us have a dear one who has been our best earthly help and that in the best and happiest manner conceivable—a help exactly answering to our heart’s needs. David had found in his God a help of the kind which he needed—a help tenderly, wisely, Divinely suited for his every need. The Lord had answered to His servant’s needs and desires and had been his very present help, yielding wisdom for his folly and power for his weakness—and comfort for his sorrow. Wonder of wonders, that God the Omnipotent and Almighty should become a help in all things meet for man! Is not this a joyous thing? Have we not found it so? Confess this tender fact to your God and rejoice every day in the quiet of your own soul, saying, “You have been my help.”

God has been to us a very timely help . Has He not appeared in the very nick of time? Had there been another moment’s delay, it had been all over with us. But in our extremity the Lord found His opportunity. How speedily He came—

*“On cherub and on cherubim  
Full royally He rode  
And on the wings of mighty wind  
Came flying all abroad.  
And so delivered He my soul:  
Who is a Rock but He?  
He lives—  
Blessed be my Rock!*

*My God exalted be!”*  
Just when our own life ebbed out, the Divine life flowed in. Just when joy died within us, hope was born and our spirit revived.

God’s help has also been continuous to us . Though at the present moment there may seem to be a break and we are in the wilderness of Judah where the Lord is rather thirsted for than seen, yet this is only an apparent break. Beloved, up to now there has been no pause in the goodness of God to us! In the time of our darkness we could not see the link but, looking back, we can see it now. Life has been to us a continuous chain of love with every link well forged upon the anvil of power by the hammer of Wisdom. The Lord has never failed us. Did He not say, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you”? and has it not been so? Up hill and down dale, in the dark and in the light, in summer and in winter the constancy of God’s help has been proved. His faithfulness is a fountain of delight to us. The Lord has always been our help!

Observe, also, that the Lord has granted us educative mercy. David says, “Because You have been my help.” He says not that He has worked everything for us, but He has set us working, also. You see, if you do a thing for a man, it is well. But if you help him to do it, it may be better for him, for thus he learns the way. It is true that in many deeds of Divine Grace, the Lord does not help—He does all the work Himself. He chose us before we chose Him and without our choice of Him He quickened us. We could not help in our own quickening. He renewed us—we could not help in our own renewal. He, by His own power, made us new creatures and changed our hearts and gave us His Holy Spirit—we could not help in this, for this must be God’s own unaided work.

God made the grass, the grass did not help in its own creation—but God helps the grass to grow—and the grass grows by the Divine power. In the same manner, after we have come to spiritual life, then God helps us. Donne says, “God has not left me to myself. He has come to my succor. He has been my help—but then, God has not left out myself—He has been my help, but He has left something for me to do with Him and by His help.” We work because He makes us work and helps us in it. We bring forth fruit as branches of the vine, but He supplies the sap, so that He says, “From Me is your fruit found.”

Lord, You have been my help—I began with stammering a few sentences for You—but You have opened my mouth to show forth Your praise. Did you not begin with a faint confession of Christ? And now you dare to stand in the front of the battle! The Lord has so helped you that you have been trained for the conflict—“He teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight.” Help not only promotes the work, but it blesses the man, himself, by stimulating his powers and developing them! Blessed be the name of the Lord! He has not carried us like babes, but He has taught us to walk with Him as men and we are the stronger because we can say, “You have been my help.”

I close this first head when I have noticed the personal experience of the text—“Because you have been my help.” Oh, I like that word my! My help.” If David had said, “Because you were Abraham’s help,” there would have been good argument in it, for the experience of another man ought to encourage our faith. Suppose he had said, “Because You were Jacob’s help,” or “Moses’ help”? It would have been good reasoning. But, oh, it strikes more surely and comes more closely home to a man’s heart when he can say, “Because You have been my help.” An infidel once sneered at a poor woman and said, “How do you know the Bible is true?” She answered, “I have experienced the truth of it.” He replied, “Your experience! That is nothing to me.”

“No,” she said, “that is very likely. But it is everything to me.” And so it is. My experience may not convince another man, but my experience has rooted, grounded and settled myself. “But,” says one, “Surely, you are open to conviction?” Yes, I am always open to conviction. But there are some things upon which no man, nor angel, nor devil will ever alter my convictions already formed. There are a few things which we know—I

mean things which we have experienced. If we have experienced the truth of them, then we are past all argument to the contrary—we are sure and certain, fixed and rooted. It seems to me that there are two books which a Christian man ought to study—the one is this big Book, the inspired Word of God. The other is the little book of his own life. If the Believer lives long enough he will write into that little book all that there is in the great Book, only he will change the tense.

When the great Book says, “I will do this, and I will do that,” we shall find in the little book, “God has done so-and-so. In my own case the promise has been fulfilled.” The little book will be the echo of the Inspired volume, the record of the fact that the Lord has done according to His Word of promise! Thus experience becomes a stay and a strength to the child of God in times of darkness or controversy. God grant that you may go on writing up your personal memoirs and thus confirming the witness of the Spirit! Are not our lives the proof of God’s faithfulness? Is not this the sum and substance of them, “You have been my help”?

II. And now, secondly, EXPECTATION. David naturally expected that as God had been his help, so He would be his help. I like a text which has a, “because,” in it followed up with a, “therefore.” The text becomes a syllogism, an argument, a sure statement—because such-and-such a thing is fact, therefore such another thing must be fact. God, who has helped us, will help us. Experience becomes argument and the argument carries conviction with it. What we have experienced of God’s goodness is a revelation of Himself—God’s actions are Himself in motion! If, then, we have experienced God’s power, He is powerful and we know that anything is possible to Him. If I have experienced His acts of faithfulness, I conclude that He is always faithful and that He will keep His promise and His Covenant and will be true to all those who trust in Him.

Suppose I have watched His ways for 40 years and have found Him to be the same yesterday and today? Then I conclude that He is Immutable— the same in my age as in my youth—the same in my adversity as in my prosperity. I infer from the fact that God has been good to me that He will be the same to me all my days. Very well, then. As I am the same person, at least as far as my weakness and my necessity are concerned, I will go to God in the same way. The Lord is the same God in every respect—my need is the same as ever it was—His supplies are the same as ever they were! His will to bless me is still the same and His promise to bless me is the same, for it stands guaranteed in His blessed Word. Therefore I will have the same faith and the same hope in God. Looking back and making sure that the Lord has been my help up to now, I draw the conclusion that He will be my help to the end of the chapter.

This reasoning is good, since you have to deal with an unchanging God. You could not reason in that way in reference to man. No. You say, “I cannot go to my friend, Brown, for help, for I have been to him already.” You do not argue that you may freely go again because you have been already. Far from it. You say, “I have received as much from him as I could reasonably expect and I must not become a burden to him.” Or else it happens that your friend grows weary of you and answers you coldly— and so you feel that you can go no more to him. Earthly friends can be drawn upon so much that their generosity is exhausted and they feel that you are unreasonable in your requests. If, therefore, you have changeable man to deal with, there will be no logic in your reasoning.

But when you think of Jehovah who changes not, then you may infer great things and the most severe logic will support you. He was my help, He is my help and therefore He will be my help, even to the end. This kind of argument is very sure to a man’s own self and he is the person most concerned. We know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that He will not fail us. We know what we do know and if we cannot tell it to others, we are none the less sure of it ourselves. The Lord has been our help in very remarkable ways which put His graciousness beyond a doubt. And so our expectation is large and unquestioning—we look for endless, perfect, prompt and final deliverance from all evil. There is a force about personal experience which, to the man himself, is irresistible and the conclusion that comes from it is to him as certain as the existence of God. The hammer of Thor, which would have broken the globe, is not more mighty than the argument of personal experience before which all difficulties of faith are dashed in pieces.

It is clear that this is an accumulating argument. The young man who has known the Lord 12 months and experienced a great deliverance, is sure that the Lord is to be trusted. But when he has passed 20, 30, or 40 years of the same experience, his assurance will be doubly sure! To a believer in Christ every day teems with Providences and mercies. This tree bears its fruit every month and the fruit feeds faith wondrously. Every year is crowned with the loving kindness of the Lord and so, in old age, the faithfulness of God is a fact which is no more argued, but enjoyed! When the Believer dies he has nothing to do but to die. He is assured by an argument which has grown out of 40 years’ observation. He knows that God will help him, for He

 has helped him!

I stood by the side of a dear old friend and fellow helper yesterday. He is in his 92nd year and has taken to his bed through weakness. Instead of seeking sympathy or speaking to me in a doleful style, he pleasantly observed, “You see I am higher in the world than when you came last time, for I have left the parlor and come upstairs. Very soon I shall not be higher in the world, but higher than the world.” He said this with that same twinkle of the eye which I have noticed in him in the days of his strength when he was equally full of Grace and wit. There was no fear of death to daunt or dampen his spirit! He knew nothing of such a feeling. “Ah,” he said, “Isaiah was right when he described our experience in the passage, ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.’

“He begins flying, then goes to running and then to walking. But the Prophet calls this renewing his strength. It looks like losing strength and speed, does it not? Ah, but (he said) you know flying is not a suitable thing for daily life—it is all very well for young people, but it does not suit everyday life. Running is for another period, but it is not a practical pace

for a continuance. Quietly walking with God is a safe, lasting, everyday pace. You can keep on at that as Enoch did, till you walk away with God. I have now got to my walking days,” said the grand old man. Then he went on to expound the Scripture by other Scriptures. “John says, ‘I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you.’ That makes them mount up with eagles’ wings above the guilt of sin!

“To the young men he says, ‘I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the Wicked One.’ In that case there has been struggling and exertion, like the running without weariness. But when he gets to the fathers, he says, ‘I write unto you, fathers,’ not concerning a high joy, or a successful struggle, but ‘because you have known Him that is from the beginning.’ That is a walking, quiet, solid knowledge and it is the best of all.”

What a happy talk we had! We were two merry men sitting on the brink of Jordan communing together with happy hearts—he of 92 talking to me concerning all the way whereby the Lord had led us both since we knew each other these 34 years and more! Oh, yes, it is a blessed, blessed thing to grow in Grace as we grow in years and to increase our argument for faith as we increase our experience!

That argument will remain unchanged in death . When the earth shall rock, the stars shall fall and the heavens shall be rolled up by the hand of God like a worn-out vesture. When the Great White Throne shall be seen and the sentence of the righteous Judge shall be heard, our confidence will still be the same—“You have been my help, and nothing shall separate me from Your love”!

III. Lastly, and somewhat briefly, ASSURANCE. Here comes the richest cluster which grows out of our subject. The Psalmist says, “Therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.” Here is, first, contented assurance. David does not say, “I am in trouble and I must get out of it somehow and therefore I must sin rather than fall under the hand of the enemy.” No, he is quiet and patient. He does not make haste and demand immediate deliverance—he quietly waits the Lord’s time and rests under the all-covering wings. You hear no loud outcries from him—as of one struggling against fate.

The children of God, like sheep, are dumb before their shearers. David, grateful for past help, holds himself still and happily awaits the purpose of the Lord. He manifests no fear, no fret, no hurry, no worry. Neither does he cast his eyes towards man. “You have been my help,” he says—and he looks that way. “My soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” But where is Joab? Where are the three mighties? Where are all the royal bodyguard? The enemy is cruel and thirsting for blood—does David piteously beseech his watchmen to keep well their ward? No, he is calm and peaceful and sweetly says, “You have been my help; therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.”

David exhibited a very patient assurance. He likened himself to a young eagle beneath the mighty wings of its mother—“In the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.” You thought he would have said, “You will drive Your mighty talons into my adversaries and tear them to pieces.” Or, “You will strike them as an eagle destroys its prey.” No, he is not eager for the Lord to act—he is biding his time—no, waiting on the Lord’s time. He is quite content to be under His wings. What the great eagle may do, he leaves to the future while he nestles down in perfect quietness. May God give us patience always to possess our souls in Him! It is not ours to hasten the Divine vengeance, nor to wish for a personal triumph. It is ours to feel the bliss of safety in nearness to God.

Note, next, that it is the assurance of faith. “Because You have been my help, therefore”—what? “In the light of Your countenance I will rejoice”? No—he had, then, but little light—he was “in the shadow.” The wilderness cut him off from beholding God in the sanctuary. If you cannot see the face of God, His shadow may give you peace. Lord, I will pray to You to lift up the light of Your countenance upon me, but if You continue to hide Yourself, I will still trust You and be sure that You are the same God of Grace. Knowing that Your shadow is full of defense for me, I will rejoice therein. Notice also, it is continued assurance. We read not, in the shadow of Your wings have I rejoiced but, “I will rejoice.” He is rejoicing and means to go on rejoicing! His joy no man takes from him. He will rejoice so long as he has a God to rejoice in.

The best of all is this is rejoicing assurance. The text does not say, “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I trust,” but, “in the shadow of your wings will I rejoice.” That is going further than silent submission or humble trust. David is in the dark, but, like the nightingale, he sings in it! When the Lord seems to hide Himself, the soul remembers what the Lord was and resolves to be glad in Him as He was seen before. David lamented for Absalom, but he rejoiced in God! He rejoiced that the wings of the Lord safely preserved him and though they cast a shadow over him he would rejoice in the shadow as the evidence that the wings were really there!

O child of God, rejoice in the Lord in the dark! There is no honor to you in rejoicing when everything goes well with you—your faith wins credit if it leads you to rejoice in God when everything runs counter to your comfort. I may be speaking to some dear Brother who, in his business, finds things going very cross and the current of his affairs sets strongly in the wrong direction. Now is the time to show the difference between the joy of the spiritual life and that which merely comes of the natural life. Rejoice in God and prove that your joy flows from the upper springs. “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice.”

In conclusion, let me remark it is little wonder that so many do not understand trusting in God, for they have never tried it. Answers to prayer and fulfillment of Divine promises seem to them as idle tales. If we were to tell them what God has done for us, they would not believe us. There is William Huntington’s, “Bank of Faith”—well, I would not endorse every word of it, but I see no reason why it should not be accepted as a truthful narrative. When anybody calls it a “Bank of Nonsense,” as I have heard them do, I have answered, “It is because you do not know any better. Many other Believers could write books equally marvelous.” Still, unbelievers will be sure to mock, for it is out of their line altogether. Years ago, a Red Indian went down to Washington and when he returned to his tribe he began telling them the wonders he had seen among the pale faces. At last he told them that he saw a canoe fastened to a great ball rise up into the sky. One of his brother Indians shot him dead with his rifle—and leaping into the middle of the ring declared that such a liar was not fit to live another minute—and therefore he had killed him. The statement was quite true, but as it was outside of Indian knowledge, the man was shot. So the experience of a Christian is so far removed from the worldling’s line of things that he ridicules it—but it is true for all that.

Thousands of us can bear testimony to the Truth of the Gospel and we wish, above all things, that you would try it yourself! When you hear that those who trust in the Lord are delivered, I wonder some of you do not want to know our Savior. Yesterday a poor person called on a brother minister and asked for a ticket to go to the gentleman who was curing rheumatism. My friend knew nothing about the gentleman. “Oh,” she said, “he is at Croydon and he has been curing people who have been ill for years.” The preacher knew nothing of any tickets, but the person said that her father had failed to see the gentleman and he would try again.

Just so—from every quarter people will come where there is hope of being healed. How strange that men will seek help for their bodies and not for their souls. There is One who can help in every case of soul-sickness, why not go to Him? We have been healed. Why do you doubt? He will be a faithful helper to all those who put their trust in Him. Why do you not seek Him? We are honest people who bear witness of His helping us—why do you not believe us, so far as to try the Lord Jesus for yourselves? If you will not believe us, believe in God’s own Book and say, “I will look to Jesus for help.”

Oh, that you would trust the precious Jesus and His precious promises and His precious blood by that precious faith whose very trials are more precious than gold! Then shall you find every help you need between this spot and Glory’s gate. The Lord bring you to Jesus at once for His name’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 63.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—916, 34 (VER. I), 734.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1023 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAISES AND VOWS ACCEPTED IN ZION  
NO. 1023

**A SERMON  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion: and unto You shall the vow be performed. O You that hear prayer, unto You shall all flesh come.” Psalm 65:1, 2.**

UPON Zion there was erected an altar dedicated to God for the offering of sacrifices. Except when Prophets were commanded by God to break through the rule, burnt offering was only to be offered there. The worship of God upon the high places was contrary to the Divine command—“Take heed to yourself that you offer not your burnt offerings in every place that you see: but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.”

Hence the tribes on the other side of Jordan, when they erected a memorial altar, disclaimed all intention of using it for the purpose of sacrifice, and said most plainly, “God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the Lord our God that is before His tabernacle.” In fulfillment of this ancient type, we also “have an altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.”

Into our spiritual worship, no observers of materialistic ritualism may intrude. They have no right to eat at our spiritual altar, and there is no other at which they can eat and live for ever. There is but one Altar, Jesus Christ our Lord. All other altars are impostures and idolatrous inventions. Whether of stone, or wood, or brass, they are the toys with which those amuse themselves who have returned to the beggarly elements of Judaism, or else the apparatus with which clerical jugglers dupe the sons and daughters of men.

Holy places made with hands are now abolished. They were once the figures of the true, but now that the Substance has come, the type is done away with. The all-glorious Person of the Redeemer, God and Man, is the great Center of Zion’s temple, and the only real Altar of sacrifice. He is the Church’s Head, the Church’s Heart, the Church’s Altar, Priest, and All in All. “To Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Around Him we all congregate even as the tribes around the tabernacle of the Lord in the wilderness.

When the Church is gathered together, we may liken it to the assemblies upon Mount Zion, where the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel. There the song went up, not so much from each separate worshipper as from all combined. There the praise as it rose to Heaven was not only the praise of each one, but the praise of all. So where Christ is the Center, where His one Sacrifice is the Altar whereon all offerings are laid, and where the Church unites around that common

Center, and rejoices in that one Sacrifice, there is the true Zion.

If we this evening—gathering in Christ’s name, around His one finished Sacrifice, present our prayers and praises entirely to the Lord through Jesus Christ, we are “come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven.” This is Zion, even this House in the far-off islands of the Gentiles, and we can say, indeed, and of a truth, “Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion: and unto You shall the vow be performed.”

We shall, with devout attention, notice two things—the first is our holy worship, which we desire to render. And then the encouragement, the stimulating encouragement, which God provides for us—“O You that hear prayer, unto You shall all flesh come.”

I. First, let us consider the HOLY OFFERING OF WORSHIP WHICH WE DESIRE TO PRESENT TO GOD. It is twofold—there is praise, and there is also a vow—a praise that waits, and a vow of which performance is promised. Let us think, first of all, of the praise. This is the chief ingredient of the adoration of Heaven. And what is thought to be worthy of the world of Heaven, ought to be the main portion of the worship of earth. Although we shall never cease to pray as long as we live here below, and are surrounded by so many wants, yet we should never so pray as to forget to praise.

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is Heaven,” must never be left out because we are pressed with want, and therefore hasten to cry, “Give us this day our daily bread.” It will be a sad hour when the worship of the Church shall be only a solemn wail. Notes of exultant thanksgiving should ever ascend from her solemn gatherings. “Praise the Lord O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion.” “Praise you the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.”

Let it abide as a perpetual ordinance, while sun and moon endure, “Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion.” Never think little of praise, since holy angels and saints, made perfect, count it their life-long joy, and even the Lord Himself says, “Whoso offers praise, glorifies Me.’’ The tendency, I fear, among us has been to undervalue praise as a part of public worship, whereas it should be second to nothing. We frequently hear of Prayer Meetings, but seldom of Praise Meetings. We acknowledge the duty of prayer by setting apart certain times for it. We do not always so acknowledge the duty of praise. I hear of “family prayer.” Do I ever hear of “family praise”?

I know you cultivate private prayer—are you as diligent also in private thanksgiving and secret adoration of the Lord? In everything we are to give thanks. It is as much an Apostolic precept as that other, “In everything, by prayer and supplication, make your requests known unto God.” I have often said to you, dear Brethren, that prayer and praise are like the breathing in and out of air, and make up that spiritual respiration by which the inner life is instrumentally supported.

We take in an inspiration of heavenly air as we pray—we breathe it out again in praise unto God, from whom it came. If, then, we would be healthy in spirit, let us be abundant in thanksgiving. Prayer, like the root of a tree, seeks for and finds nutriment. Praise, like the fruit, renders a revenue to the owner of the vineyard. Prayer is for ourselves, praise is for God. Let us never be so selfish as to abound in the one and fail in the other. Praise is a slender return for the boundless favors we enjoy. Let us not be slack in rendering it in our best music, the music of a devout soul. “Praise the Lord. For the Lord is good: sing praises unto His name. For it is pleasant.”

Let us notice the praise which is mentioned in our text is to be a large matter of concern to the Zion of God whenever the saints are met together. You will observe, first, that it is praise exclusively rendered to God. “Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion.” “Praise for You, and all the praise for You,” and no praise for man or for any other who may be thought to be, or may pretend to be, worthy of praise. Have I not sometimes gone into places called Houses of God where the praise has waited for a woman—for the Virgin? Where praise has waited for the saints, where incense has smoked to Heaven, and songs and prayers have been sent up to deceased martyrs and confessors who are supposed to have power with God?

In Rome it is so, but in Zion it is not so. Praise waits for you, O Mary, in Babylon. But praise waits for You, O God, in Zion. Unto God, and unto God alone, the praise of His true Church must ascend. If Protestants are free from this deadly error, I fear they are guilty of another—for in our worship we too often minister unto ourselves. We do so when we make the tune and manner of the song to be more important than the matter of it. I am afraid that where organs, choirs, and singing men and singing women are left to do the praise of the congregation, men’s minds are more occupied with the due performance of the music, than with the Lord, who alone is to be praised.

God’s House is meant to be sacred unto Himself, but too often it is made an opera house, and Christians form an audience, not an adoring assembly. The same thing may, unless great care is taken, happen amid the simplest worship, even though everything which does not savor of Gospel plainness is excluded, for in that case we may drowsily drawl out the words and notes, with no heart whatever. To sing with the soul, this, only, is to offer acceptable song! We come not together to amuse ourselves, to display our powers of melody or our aptness in creating harmony—we come to pay our adoration at the footstool of the Great King—to whom alone be glory forever and ever.

True praise is for God—for God alone. Brethren, you must take heed lest the minister, who would, above all, disclaim a share of praise, should be set up as a demi-god among you. Refute practically the old slander that presbyter is only priest written large. Look higher than the pulpit, or you will be disappointed. Look far above an arm of flesh, or it will utterly fail you. We may say of the best preacher upon the earth, “Give God the praise, for we know that this man is a sinner.” If we thought that you paid superstitious reverence to us, we would, like Paul and Silas at Lystra, rend our clothes, and cry, “Sirs, why do you do these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that you should turn

from these vanities unto the living God, which made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.”

It is not to any man, to any priest, to any order of men, to any being in Heaven or earth besides God, that we should burn the incense of worship. We would as soon worship cats with the Egyptians, as popes with the Romanists—we see no difference between the people whose gods grew in their gardens and the sect whose deity is made by their baker. Such vile idolatry is to be loathed! To God alone shall all the praise of Zion ascend. It is to be feared that some of our praise ascends nowhere at all, but it is as though it were scattered to the winds. We do not always realize God.

Now, “he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” This is as true of praise as of prayer. “God is a Spirit,” and they that praise Him must praise Him “in spirit and in Truth,” for, “the Father seeks such” to praise Him, and only such. And if we do not lift our eyes and our hearts to Him, we are but misusing words and wasting time. Our praise is not as it should be if it is not reverently and earnestly directed to the Lord of Hosts. Vain is it to shoot arrows without a target—we must aim at God’s Glory in our holy songs, and that exclusively.

Note, next, that it should be continual. “Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion.” Some translators conceive that the main idea is that of continuance. It remains. It abides. For Zion does not break up when the assembly is gone. We do not leave the holiness in the material house, for it never was in the stone and the timber, but only in the living spirits of the faithful—

*“Jesus, wherever Your people meet,  
There they behold your Mercy Seat.  
Wherever they seek You, You are found,  
And every place is hallowed ground,  
For You within no walls confined,  
Inhabit the humble mind.  
Such ever bring You where they come,  
And going, take You to their home.”*

The people of God, as they never cease to be a Church, should maintain the Lord’s praise perpetually as a community. Their assemblies should begin with praise and end with praise, and ever be conducted in a spirit of praise. There should be in all our solemn assemblies a spiritual incense altar, always smoking with “the pure incense of sweet spices, mingled according to the art of the apothecary”—the thanksgiving which is made up of humility, gratitude, love, consecration, and holy joy in the Lord. It should be for the Lord alone, and it should never go out day nor night. “His mercy endures forever”—let our praises endure forever!

He makes the outgoings of the morning to rejoice—let us celebrate the rising of the sun with holy Psalms and hymns. He makes the closing in of the evening to be glad—let Him have our vesper praise. “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.” Could His mercy cease, there might be some excuse for stopping our praises—but even should it seem to be so, men who love the Lord would say with Job—“Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. And blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Let our praise abide, continue, remain, and be perpetual. It was a good idea of Bishop Farrar, that in his own house he would keep up continual praise to God. And as with a large family and household, he numbered twenty-four, he set apart each one for an hour in the day to be engaged specially in prayer and praise, that he might girdle the day with a circle of worship. We could not do that. To attempt it might on our part be superstition. But to fall asleep blessing God, to rise in the night to meditate on Him, and when we wake in the morning to feel our hearts leap in the prospect of His Presence during the day—this is attainable, and we ought to reach it.

It is much to be desired that all day long, in every avocation, and every recreation the soul should spontaneously pour forth praise even as birds sing, and flowers perfume the air, and sunbeams cheer the earth. We would be incarnate psalmody, praise enshrined in flesh and blood. From this delightful duty we would desire no cessation, and ask no pause. “Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion.” Your praise may come and go from the outside world, where all things ebb and flow, for it lies beneath the moon and there is no stability in it. But amidst Your people, who dwell in You, and who possess eternal life—in them Your praise perpetually abides.

A third point, however, is clear upon the surface of the words. “Praise waits for you”—as though praise must always be humble. The servants “wait” in the king’s palace. There the messengers stand ready for any mission. The servitors wait, prepared to obey. And the courtiers surround the throne, all eager to receive the royal smile and to fulfill the high command. Our praises ought to stand, like ranks of messengers, waiting to hear what God’s will is. For this is to praise Him. Furthermore, true praise lies in the actual doing of the Divine will, even this—to pause in sacred reverence until God the Lord shall speak—whatever that will may be.

It is true praise to wait subserviently on Him. Praises may be looked upon as servants who delight to obey their master’s bidding. There is such a thing as an unholy familiarity with God. This age is not so likely to fall into it as some ages have been, for there is little familiarity with God of any sort now. Public worship becomes more formal, and stately, and distant. The intense nearness to God which Luther enjoyed—how seldom do we meet with it! But, however near we come to God, still He is God, and we are His creatures. He is, it is true, “our Father,” but be it ever remembered that He is “our Father which art in Heaven.” “Our Father”—therefore near and intimate—“our Father in Heaven,” therefore we humbly, solemnly bow in His Presence.

There is a familiarity that runs into presumption—there is another familiarity so sweetly tempered with humility that it does not intrude. ‘‘Praise waits for You” with a servant’s livery on, a servant’s ear to hear, and a servant’s heart to obey. Praise bows at Your footstool, feeling that it is still an unprofitable servant. But, perhaps you are aware, dear Friends, that there are other translations of this verse. “Praise waits for You,” may be read, “Praise is silent unto You”—“is silent before You.”  
One of the oldest Latin commentators reads it, “Praise and silence belong unto You.” And Dr. Gill tells us that in the King of Spain’s Bible, it runs, “The praise of angels is only silence before You, O Jehovah,” so that when we do our best, our highest praise is but silence before God, and we must praise Him with confession of shortcomings. Oh, that we too, as our poet puts it, might—

*“Loud as His thunders speak His praise,  
And sound it lofty as His Throne!”*  
But we cannot do that, and when our notes are most uplifted, and our hearts most joyous, we have not spoken all His praise. Compared to what His Nature and Glory deserve, our most earnest praise has been little

more than silence.

Oh, Brethren, have you not often felt it to be so? Those who are satisfied with formal worship think that they have done well when the music has been correctly sung. But those who worship God in spirit feel that they cannot magnify Him enough. They blush over the hymns they sing and retire from the assembly of the saints mourning that they have fallen far short of His Glory. O for an enlarged mind, rightly to conceive the Divine Majesty. Next for the gift of utterance to clothe the thought in fitting language.

And then for a voice like many waters, to sound forth the noble strain! Alas, as yet we are humbled at our failures to praise the Lord as we would—

*“Words are but air, and tongues but clay, And His compassions are Divine.”*  
How, then, shall we proclaim to men God’s Glory? When we have done our

best, our praise is but silence before the merit of His goodness, and the grandeur of His greatness. Yet it may be well to observe here that the praise which God accepts, presents itself under a variety of forms. There is praise for God in Zion, and it is often spoken. But there is often praise for God in Zion, and it is silence. There are some who cannot sing vocally, but perhaps before God they sing best.

There are some, I know, who sing very harshly and inharmoniously— that is to say, to our ears. And yet God may accept them rather than the noise of stringed instruments carefully touched. There is a story told of Rowland Hill’s being much troubled by a good old lady who would sit near him and sing with a most horrible voice, and very loudly—as those people generally do who sing badly—and he at last begged her not to sing so loudly. But when she said, “It comes from my heart,” the honest man of God retracted his rebuke, and said, “Sing away, I should be sorry to stop you.”

When praise comes from the heart, who would wish to restrain it? Even the shouts of the old Methodists, their “hallelujahs” and “glorys,” when uttered in fervor, were not to be forbidden. For if these should hold their peace, even the stones would cry out! But there are times when those who sing, and sing well, have too much praise in their soul for it to enclose itself in words. Like some strong liquors which cannot use a little vent, but foam and swell until they burst each hoop that binds the barrel, so sometimes we want a larger channel for our soul than that of mouth and tongue, and we long to have all our nerves and sinews made into harp strings, and all the pores of our body made mouths of thankfulness.

Oh, that we could praise with our whole nature, not one single hair of our heads, or drop of blood in our veins, keeping back from adoring the Most High! When this desire for praise is most vehement, we fall back upon silence and quiver with the adoration which we cannot speak. Silence becomes our praise—

*“A sacred reverence checks our songs,*

*And praise sits silent on our tongues.”*  
It would be well, perhaps, in our public service, if we had more often the sweet relief of silence. I am persuaded that silence, yes, frequent silence, is most beneficial. And the occasional unanimous silence of all the saints when they bow before God would, perhaps, better express and more fully promote devout feeling than any hymns which have been composed or songs that could be sung.

To make silence a part of worship habitually might be affectation and formalism. But to introduce it occasionally, and even frequently into the service would be advantageous and profitable. Let us, then, by our silence praise God and let us always confess that our praise, compared with God’s deserving, is but silence. I would add that there is in the text the idea that praise waits for God

 expectantly. When we praise God, we expect to see more of Him by-and-by, and therefore wait for Him. We bless the King, but we desire to draw nearer to Him. We magnify Him for what we have seen, and we expect to see more.

We praise Him in His outer courts, for we shall soon be with Him in the heavenly mansions. We glorify Him for the revelation of Himself in Jesus, for we expect to be like Christ and to be with Him where He is. When I cannot praise God for what I am, I will praise Him for what I shall be. When I feel dull and dead about the present, I will take the words of our delightful hymn and say—

*“And a new song is in my mouth,  
To long-loved music set.  
Glory to You for all the  
Grace I have not tasted yet.”*

My praise shall not only be the psalmody of the past, which is but discharging a debt of gratitude, but my faith shall anticipate the future and wait upon God to fulfill His purposes. And I will begin to pay my praise even before the mercy comes.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us for a moment present our praise to God, each one of us on his own account. We have our common mercies. We call them common, but, oh, how priceless they are! Health to be able to come here and not to be stretched on a bed of sickness—I count this better than bags of gold! To have our reason, and not to be confined in yonder asylum. To have our children still about us and dear relatives spared still to us—to have bread to eat and raiment to put on—to have been kept from defiling our character—to have been preserved today from the snares of the enemy!

These are God-like mercies, and for all these our praises shall wait upon God. But oh, take up the thoughts suggested by the Psalm itself in the next verse, and you will doubly praise God. “Iniquities prevail against me. As for our transgressions, You shall purge them away.” Infinite love

has made us clean every whit!—though we were black and filthy! We are washed—washed in priceless blood! Praise Him for this! Go on with the passage, “Blessed is the man whom You choose and cause to approach unto You.”

Is not the blessing of access to God an exceedingly choice one? Is it a light thing to feel that, though once far off, we are made near through the blood of Christ? And this because of electing love! “Blessed is the man whom You choose.” You subjects of eternal choice, can you be silent? Has God favored you above others, and can your lips refuse to sing? No, you will magnify the Lord exceedingly, because He has chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure. Let us read on, and praise God that we have an abiding place among His people—“That he may dwell in Your courts.”

Blessed be God! We are not to be cast forth and driven out after a while, but we have an entailed inheritance among the sons of God! We praise Him that we have the satisfaction of dwelling in His house as children. “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, even of Your holy temple.” But I close the Psalm, and simply say to you there are ten thousand reasons for taking down the harp from the willows. And I know no reason for permitting it to hang there idle.

There are ten thousand times ten thousand reasons for speaking well of “Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.” “The Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad.” I remember hearing in a Prayer Meeting this delightful verse mutilated in prayer, “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we desire to be glad.” Oh, Brethren, I dislike mauling, and mangling, and adding to a text of Scripture. If we are to have the Scriptures revised, let it be by scholars, and not by every ignoramus. “Desire to be glad,” indeed! This is fine gratitude to God when He has done great things for us! If these great things have been done, our souls must be glad, and cannot help it. They must overflow with gratitude to God for all His goodness.

2. So much on the first part of our holy sacrifice. Attentively let us consider the second, namely, the vow. “Unto You shall the vow be performed.” We are not given to vow-making in these days. Time was when it was far oftener done. It may be that had we been better men we should have made more vows. It may possibly be that had we been more foolish men we should have done the same. The practice was so abused by superstition that devotion has grown half-ashamed of it.

But we have, at any rate, most of us, bound ourselves with occasional vows. I do confess, today, I have not kept a vow as I should desire. The vow made on my first conversion. I surrendered myself, body, soul, and spirit, to Him that bought me with a price, and the vow was not made by way of excess devotion or supererogation, it was but my reasonable service. You have done that. Do you remember the love of your espousals, the time when Jesus was very precious, and you had just entered into the marriage bond with Him? You gave yourselves up to Him, to be His forever and forever.  
O Brothers and Sisters, it is a part of worship to perform that vow! Renew it tonight, make another surrender of yourselves to Him whose you are and whom you serve. Say tonight, as I will, with you, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar.” Oh, for another thong to strap the victim to the altar horn! Does the flesh struggle? Then let it be more tightly bound, never to escape from the Altar of God.

Beloved, many of us did, in effect, make a most solemn vow at the time of our Baptism. We were buried with Christ in Baptism unto death, and, unless we were greatly dissembling, we avowed that we were dead in Christ and buried with Him, and also, we professed that we were risen with Him. Now, shall the world live in those who are dead to it, and shall Christ’s life be absent from those who are risen with Him? We gave ourselves up then and there, in that solemn act of mystic burial.

Recall that scene, I pray you. And as you do it blush, and ask God that your vow may yet be performed, as Doddridge well expresses it— *“Baptized into Your Savior’s death  
Your souls to sin must die.  
With Christ Your Lord you live anew,  
With Christ ascend on high.”*

Some such vow we made, too, when we united ourselves to the Church of God. There was an understood compact between us and the Church, that we would serve it. That we would seek to honor Christ by holy living. Increase the Church by propagating the faith. Seek its unity and its comfort by our own love and sympathy with the members. We had no right to join with the Church if we did not mean to give ourselves up to it, under Christ, to aid in its prosperity and increase. There was a stipulation made, and a covenant understood, when we entered into communion and league with our Brethren in Christ. What about that? Can we say that, as unto God and in His sight, the vow has been performed?

Yes, we have been true to our covenant in a measure, Brethren. Oh, that it were more fully so! Some of us made another vow, when we gave ourselves, as I trust, under Divine call, altogether to the work of the Christian ministry. And though we have taken no orders, and received no earthly ordination, for we are no Believers in man-made priests, yet tacitly it is understood that the man who becomes a minister of the Church of God is to give his whole time to his work—that body, soul, and spirit should be thrown into the cause of Christ.

Oh, that this vow were more fully performed by pastors of the Church! You, my Brethren elders and deacons, when you accepted office, you knew what the Church meant. She expected holiness and zeal of you. The Holy Spirit made you overseers that you might feed the flock of God. Your office proves your obligation. You are practically under a vow. Has that vow been performed? Have you performed it in Zion unto the Lord? Besides that, it has been the habit of godly men to make vows occasionally, in times of pain, and losses, and affliction. Did not the Psalm we just now sang prove it so?—

*“Among the saints that fill Your house, My offerings shall be paid.  
There shall my zeal perform the vows My soul in anguish made.  
Now I am Yours, forever Yours,*

*Nor shall my purpose move!  
Your hand has loosed my bands of pain,  
And bound me with Your love.  
Here in Your courts I leave my vow,  
And Your rich Grace record.  
Witness, you saints, who hear me now,  
If I forsake the Lord.”*

You said, “If I am ever raised up, and my life is prolonged, it shall be better spent.” You said, also, “If I am delivered out of this great trouble, I hope to consecrate my substance more to God.” Another time you said, “If the Lord will return to me the light of His countenance, and bring me out of this depressed state of mind, I will praise Him more than ever before.” Have you remembered all this? Coming here myself so lately from a sick bed, I at this time preach to myself. I only wish I had a better hearer. I would preach to myself in this respect, and say, “I charge you, my Heart, to perform your vow.”

Some of us, dear Friends, have made vows in time of joy—the season of the birth of the first-born child, the recovery of the wife from sickness. The merciful restoration that we have ourselves received—times of increasing goods, or seasons when the splendor of God’s face has been unveiled before our wondering eye. Have we not made vows, like Jacob when he woke up from his wondrous dream, and took the stone which had been his pillow, and poured oil on its top, and made a vow unto the Most High? We have all had our Bethels. Let us remember that God has heard us, and let us perform unto Him our vow which our soul made in her time of joy.

But I will not try to open the secret pages of your private notebooks. You have had tender passages which you would not desire me to read aloud—the tears start at their memory. If your life were written, you would say, “Let these not be told. They were only between God and my soul”— some chaste and blessed love passages between you and Christ which must not be revealed to men. Have you forgotten how you then said, “I am my Beloved’s, and He is mine,” and what you promised when you saw all His goodness made to pass before you?

I have now to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance and bid you present unto the Lord tonight the double offering of your heart’s praise and of your performed vow. “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.”

II. And now, time will fail me, but I must have a few words upon THE BLESSED ENCOURAGEMENT afforded us in the text for the presentation of these offerings unto God. Here it is—“O You that hear prayer, unto You shall all flesh come.” Observe, here, that God hears prayer. It is, in some aspects, the lowest form of worship, and yet He accepts it. It is not the worship of Heaven, and it is, in a measure, selfish. Praise is superior worship, for it is elevating. It is the utterance of a soul that has received good from God, and is returning its love to Him in acknowledgment. Praise has a sublime aspect. Now observe, if prayers are heard, then praise will be heard, too. If the lower form, on weaker wings as it were, reaches the Throne of the majesty on high, how much more shall the seraphic wing of praise bear itself into the Divine Presence?

Prayer is heard of God—therefore our praises and vows will be. And this is a very great encouragement, because it seems terrible to pray when you are not heard, and discouraging to praise God if He will not accept it. What would be the use of it? But if prayer and even more, praise is most surely heard, ah, Brethren, then let us continue and abide in thanksgiving. “Whoso offers praise glorifies Me, says the Lord.” Observe, too, according to the text, that all prayer, if it is true prayer, is heard of God, for so it is put—“Unto you shall all flesh come.” Oh, how glad I am at that Word!

My poor prayer—shall God reject it? Yes, I might have feared so if He had said, “Unto you shall all spirits come.” Behold, my Brethren, He takes the grosser part, as it were, and looks at prayer in His infinite compassion, perceiving it to be what it is—a feeble thing—a cry coming from poor fallen flesh, and yet He puts it, “Unto you shall all flesh come.” My broken prayer, my groaning prayer shall get to You! Though it seems to me a thing of flesh, it is nevertheless worked in me by Your Spirit. And, O my God—my song, though my voice is hoarse and oftentimes my notes most feeble, shall reach You! Though I groan because it is so imperfect, yet even that shall come to you. Prayer, if true, shall be received of God, notwithstanding all its faults, through Jesus Christ. Then so it will be with our praises and our vows.

Again, prayer is always and habitually received of God. “O You that hear prayer.” Not that did hear it or on a certain occasion may have heard it, but You that always hear prayer! If He always hears prayer, then He always hears praise. Is not this delightful—to think that my praise, though it is but that of a child or a poor unworthy sinner—God hears it, accepts it—in spite of its imperfections, He accepts it always? Oh, I will have another hymn tomorrow, I will sing a new song tomorrow. I will forget my pain, I will forget for a moment all my cares, and if I cannot sing aloud by reason of those that are with me, yet will I set the bells of my heart ringing!

I will make my whole soul full of praise. If I cannot let it out of my mouth, I will praise Him in my soul, because He always hears me. You know it is hard to do things for one who never accepts what you do. Many a wife has said, “Oh, it is hard. My husband never seems pleased. I have done all I can, but he takes no notice of little deeds of kindness.” But how easy it is to serve a person who, when you have done any little thing, says, “How kind it was of you” and thinks much of it.

Ah, poor child of God, the Lord thinks much of your praises, much of your vows, much of your prayers. Therefore, be not slack to praise and magnify Him unceasingly. And this all the more, because we have not quite done with that word, “Unto you shall all flesh come.” All flesh shall come because the Lord hears prayer. Then all my praises will be heard and all the praises of all sorts of men, if sincere, that come unto God. The great ones of the earth shall present praise, and the poorest of the poor, also, for You shall not reject them. And, Lord, will You put it so—“Unto You shall all flesh come”—and will You say, “but not such a one”? Will You exclude me?

Brothers and Sisters, fear not that God will reject you. I remind you of what I told you the other night concerning a good, earnest believing woman, who in prayer said, “Lord, I am content to be the second You shall forsake, but I cannot be the first.” The Lord says all flesh shall come to Him, and it is implied that He will receive them when they come—all sorts of men, all classes and conditions of men. Then He cannot reject me if I go, nor my prayers if I pray, nor my praise if I praise Him, nor my vows if I perform them!

Come then, let us praise the Lord! Let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker, for we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. I have done when I have said this. Dear Brothers and Sisters, there may be difficulties in your way. Iniquities may hinder you, or infirmities. But there is the promise, “you shall purge them away.” Infirmities may check you, but note the word of Divine help, “Blessed is the man whom You cause to approach unto You.” He will come to your aid, and lead you to Himself. Infirmities, therefore, are overcome by Divine Grace.

Perhaps your emptiness hinders you—“He shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house.” It is not your goodness that is to satisfy either God or you, but God’s goodness is to satisfy. Come, then, with your iniquity! Come with your infirmity! Come with your emptiness! Come, dear Brethren, if you have never come to God before. Come and confess your sin to God, and ask for mercy. You can do no less than ask. Come and trust His mercy, which endures forever. It has no limit. Think not harshly of Him, but come and lay yourself down at His feet.

If you perish, perish there. Come and tell your grief! Pour out your hearts before Him. Turn the vessel of your nature bottom upwards, and drain out the last dreg and pray to be filled with the fullness of His Grace. Come unto Jesus. He invites you! He enables you! A cry from that pew will reach the sacred ear. “You have not prayed before,” you say. Everything must have a beginning! Oh that that beginning might come now!

It is not because you pray well that you are to come, but because the Lord hears prayer graciously. Therefore, all flesh shall come. You are welcome! None can tell you no. Come! It is mercy’s welcome hour. May the Lord’s bands of love be cast about you! May you be drawn now to Him! Come by way of the Cross! Come resting in the precious atoning sacrifice, believing in Jesus. And He has said, “Him that comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” The Grace of our Lord be with you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 65.  
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SPRING IN THE HEART

NO. 675

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**You water the ridges abundantly: You settle the furrows: You make it soft with showers: You bless its growth.” Psalm 65:10.**

THOUGH other seasons excel in fullness, spring must always bear the palm for freshness and beauty. We thank God when the harvest hours draw near and the golden grain invites the sickle, but we ought equally to thank Him for the rougher days of spring, for these prepare the harvest. April showers are mothers of the sweet May flowers, and the wet and cold of winter are the parents of the splendor of summer. God blesses its growth, or else it could not be said, “You crown the year with Your goodness.” There is as much necessity for Divine benediction in spring as for heavenly bounty in summer, and therefore we should praise God all the year round.

Spiritual spring is a very blessed season in a Church. Then we see youthful piety developed and on every hand we hear the joyful cry of those who say, “We have found the Lord.” Our sons are springing up as the grass and as willows by the watercourses. We hold up our hands in glad astonishment and cry, “Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?” In the revival days of a Church, when God is blessing her with many conversions, she has great cause to rejoice in God and sing, “You bless its growth.”

I intend to take the text in reference to individual cases. There is a time of growth of Divine Grace when it is just in its bud, just breaking through the dull cold earth of unregenerate nature. I desire to talk a little about that and concerning the blessing which the Lord grants to the green blade of new-born godliness—to those who are beginning to hope in the Lord.

I. First, I shall have a little to say about THE WORK PREVIOUS TO THE GROWTH. It appears from the text that there is work for God, alone, to do before the growth comes. And we know that there is work for God to do through us as well. There is work for us to do. Before there can be growth in the soul there must be plowing, harrowing, and sowing. There must be a plowing and we do not expect that as soon as ever we plow we shall reap the sheaves. Blessed be God, in many cases the reaper overtakes the plowman! But we must not always expect it.

In some hearts God is long in preparing the soul by conviction—the Law with its ten black horses drags the plowshare of conviction up and down the soul till there is not one part of it left unfurrowed. Conviction goes deeper than any plow to the very core and center of the spirit till the spirit is wounded. The plowers make deep furrows, indeed, when God puts His hand to the work! The soil of the heart is broken in pieces in the Presence of the Most High. Then comes the sowing.

Before there can be a growth it is certain that there must be something put into the ground so that after the preacher has used the plow of the Law, he applies to his Master for the seed basket of the Gospel. Gospel promises, Gospel doctrines—especially a clear exposition of free Grace and the Atonement—these are the handfuls of corn which we scatter broadcast. Some of the grain falls on the highway and is lost. But other handfuls fall where the plow has been and there they abide. Then comes the harrowing work. We do not expect to sow seed and then leave it—the Gospel has to be prayed over. The prayer of the preacher and the prayer of the Church make up God’s harrow to rake in the seed after it is scattered. And so it is covered up within the clods of the soul and is hidden in the heart of the hearer.

Now there is a reason why I dwell upon this, namely, that I may exhort my dear Brethren who have not seen success to not give up the work but to hope that they have been doing the plowing, and sowing, and harrowing work, and that the harvest is to come. I mention this for yet another reason—and that is by way of warning to those who expect to have a harvest without this preparatory work. I do not believe that much good will come from attempts at sudden revivals made without previous prayerful labor.

A revival to be permanent must be a matter of growth and the result of much holy effort, longing, pleading, and watching. The servant of God is to preach the Gospel whether men are prepared for it or not—but in order to large success, depend upon it—there is a preparedness necessary among the hearers. Upon some hearts, warm earnest preaching drops like an unusual thing which startles but does not convict. In other congregations, where good Gospel preaching has long been the rule, and much prayer has been offered, the words fall into the hearers’ souls and bring forth speedy fruit.

We must not expect to have results without work. There is no hope of a Church having an extensive revival in its midst unless there is continued and importunate waiting upon God together with earnest laboring, intense anxiety, and hopeful expectation. But there is also a work to be done which is beyond our power. After plowing, sowing, and harrowing, there must come the shower from Heaven. “You visit the earth and water it,” says the Psalmist. In vain are all our efforts unless God shall bless us with the rain of His Holy Spirit’s influence.

O Holy Spirit! You, and You alone work wonders in the human heart, and You come from the Father and the Son to do the Father’s purposes and to glorify the Son! Three effects are spoken of. First, we are told He waters the ridges. As the ridges of the field become well saturated through and through with the abundant rain, so God sends His Holy Spirit till the whole heart of man is moved and influenced by His Divine operations. The understanding is enlightened, the conscience is quickened, the will is controlled, the affections are inflamed—all these powers, which I may call the ridges of the heart—come under the Divine working.

It is ours to deal with men as men, bring to bear upon them Gospel truth, and to set before them motives that are suitable to move rational creatures. But, after all, it is the rain from on high which alone can water the ridges! There is no hope of the heart being savingly affected except by Divine operations. Next it is added, “You settle the furrows,” by which some think it is meant that the furrows are drenched with water. Others think there is an allusion here to the beating down of the earth by heavy rain till the ridges become flat—and by the soaking of the water—are settled into a more compact mass.

Certain it is that the influences of God’s Spirit have a humbling and settling effect upon a man. He was unsettled once like the earth that is dry and crumbly, and blown about and carried away with every wind of doctrine. But as the earth, when soaked with wet, is compacted and knit together, so the heart becomes solid and serious under the power of the Spirit. As the high parts of the ridge are beaten down into the furrows, so the lofty ideas, the grand schemes, and carnal boastings of the heart begin to level down when the Holy Spirit comes to work upon the soul. Genuine humility is a very gracious fruit of the Spirit. To be broken in heart is the best means of preparing the soul for Jesus. “A broken and a contrite hear, O God, You will not despise.” Brethren, always be thankful when you see high thoughts of man brought down! This settling the furrows is a very gracious preparatory work of Divine Grace.

Yet again, it is added, “You make it soft with showers.” Man’s heart is naturally hardened against the Gospel. Like the Eastern soil it is hard as iron if there is no gracious rain. How sweetly and effectively does the Spirit of God soften the man through and through! He is no longer towards the Word what he used to be—he feels everything, whereas once he felt nothing. The rock flows with water. The heart is dissolved in tenderness. The eyes are melted into tears. All this is God’s work!

I have said already that God works through us, but still it is God’s immediate work to send down the rain of His Grace from on high. Perhaps He is at work upon some of you though as yet there is no growth of spiritual life in your souls. Though your condition is still a sad one, we will hope for you that before long there shall be seen the living seed of Divine Grace sending up its tender green shoot above the soil—and may the Lord bless its growth!

II. In the second place, let us deliver A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE GROWTH. After the operations of the Holy Spirit have been quietly going on for a certain season as pleases the great Master and Husbandman, then there are signs of Grace. Remember the Apostle’s words, “First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” Some of our friends are greatly disturbed because they cannot see the full corn in the ear in themselves. They suppose that if they were the subjects of a Divine work they would be precisely like certain advanced Christians with whom it is their privilege to commune, or of whom they may have read in biographies.

Beloved, this is a very great mistake! When Grace first enters the heart it is not a great tree covering with its shadow whole acres—but it is the least of all seeds—like a grain of mustard seed. When it first rises upon the soul, it is not the sun shining at high noon—it is the first dim ray of dawn. Are you so simple as to expect the harvest before you have passed through the growing season? I shall hope that by a very brief description of the earliest stage of Christian experience you may be led to say, “I have gone as far as that,” and then I hope you may be able to take the comfort of the text to yourselves: “You bless its growth.”

What, then, is the growth of piety in the heart? We think it is first seen in sincerely earnest desires after salvation. The man is not saved, in his own apprehension, but he longs to be. That which was once a matter of indifference is now a subject of intense concern. Once he despised Christians and thought them needlessly earnest. He thought religion a mere trifle and he looked upon the things of time and sense as the only substantial matters. But now how changed he is! He envies the meanest Christian and would change places with the poorest Believer if he might but be able to read his title clear to mansions in the skies!

Now worldly things have lost dominion over him and spiritual things are uppermost. Once with the unthinking many he cried, “Who will show us any good?” But now he cries, “Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon me.” Once it was the corn and the wine to which he looked for comfort, but now he looks to God alone. His rock of refuge must be God, for he finds no comfort elsewhere. His holy desires, which he had years ago, were like smoke from the chimney, soon blown away. But now his longings are permanent, though not always operative to the same degree. At times these desires amount to a hunger and a thirsting after righteousness, and yet he is not satisfied with these desires, he wishes for a still more anxious longing after heavenly things.

These desires are among the first growth of Divine life in the soul. “The growth” shows itself next in prayer. It is now real prayer. Once it was the mocking of God with holy sounds unattended by the heart—but now, though the prayer is such that he would not like a human ear to hear him, yet God approves it—for it is the talking of a spirit to a Spirit, and not the muttering of lips to an unknown God. His prayers, perhaps, are not very long—they do not amount to more than this—“Oh!” “Ah!” “Would to God!” “Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner!” and such-like short ejaculations, but, then, by God’s Grace, they are prayers.

“Behold he prays,” does not refer to a long prayer. It is quite as sure a proof of spiritual life within if it only refers to a sigh or to a tear. These “groans that cannot be uttered,” are among “the growth.” There will also be manifest a hearty love for the means of Grace, and the House of God. The Bible, long unread, which was thought to be of little more use than an old almanac, is now treated with great consideration. And though the reader finds little in it that comforts him just now, and much that alarms him, yet he feels that it is the book for him and he turns to its pages with hope.

When he goes up to God’s House he listens eagerly, hoping that there may be a message for him. Before, he attended worship as a sort of pious necessity incumbent upon all respectable people. But now he goes up to God’s House that he may find the Savior. Once there was no more religion in him than in the door which turns upon its hinges. But now he enters praying, “Lord, meet with my soul.” And if he gets no blessing, he goes away sighing, “O that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat.”

This is one of the blessed signs of “its growth.” Yet more cheering is another, namely, that the soul in this state has faith in Jesus Christ, at least in some degree! It is not a faith which brings great joy and peace, but still it is a faith which keeps the heart from despair and prevents its sinking under a sense of sin. I have known the time when I do not believe any man living could see faith in me, and when I could scarcely perceive any in myself, and yet I was bold to say, with Peter, “Lord, You know all thing, You know that I love You.”

What man cannot see, Christ can see. Many people have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but they are so much engaged in looking at it that they do not see it. If they would look to Christ and not to their own faith, they would not only see Christ but see their own faith, too. But they try to

 measure their faith and it seems so little when they contrast it with the faith of full-grown Christians that they fear it is not faith at all. Oh, little one, if you have faith enough to receive Christ, remember the promise, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”  
Poor simple, weak-hearted, and troubled ones, look to Jesus and answer, Can such a Savior suffer in vain? Can such an Atonement be offered in vain? Can you trust Him and yet be cast away? It cannot be! It never was in the Savior’s heart to shake off one that did cling to His arm. However feeble the faith, He blesses “its growth.” The difficulty arises partly from misapprehension and partly from lack of confidence in God.

I say misapprehension—now if like some Londoners you have never seen corn when it is green, you would cry out, “What? Do you say that yonder green stuff is wheat?” “Yes,” the farmer says, “that is wheat.” You look at it again and you reply, “Why, man alive, that is nothing but grass! You do not mean to tell me that this grassy stuff will ever produce a loaf of bread such as I see in the baker’s window—I cannot conceive it.” No, you could not conceive it, but when you get accustomed to it, it is not at all amazing to see the wheat go through certain stages. First the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear.

Some of you have never seen growing Grace and do not know anything about it. When you are newly converted you meet with Christians who are like ripe golden ears, and you say, “I am not like they are.” True, you are no more like they than that grassy stuff in the furrows is like full-grown wheat! But you will grow to be like they are one of these days. You must expect to go through the blade period before you get to the ear period! And in the ear period you will have doubts whether you will ever come to the full corn in the ear—but you will arrive at perfection in due time. Thank God that you are in Christ at all!

Whether I have much faith or little faith. Whether I can do much for Christ or little for Christ is not the first question. I am saved, not on account of what I am, but on account of what Jesus Christ is! And if I am trusting Him, however little in Israel I may be, I am as safe as the brightest of the saints.

I have said, however, that mixed with misapprehension there is a great deal of unbelief. I cannot put it all down to an ignorance that may be forgiven, for there is sinful unbelief, too. O Sinner, why do you not trust Jesus Christ? Poor quickened, awakened Conscience—God gives you His word that He who trusts in Christ is not condemned—and yet you are afraid that you are condemned! This is to call God a liar! Be ashamed and confounded that you should ever have been guilty of doubting the veracity of God!

All your other sins do not grieve Christ so much as the sin of thinking that He is unwilling to forgive you, or the sin of suspecting that if you trust Him He will cast you away! Do not slander His gracious Character. Do not cast a slur upon the generosity of His tender heart. He said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Come in the faith of His promise and He will receive you right now! I have thus given some description of “its growth.”

III. Thirdly, according to the text, THERE IS ONE WHO SEES THIS GROWTH. You, Lord—You bless its growth. I wish that some of us had quicker eyes to see the beginning of Grace in the souls of men. For lack of this we let slip many opportunities of helping the weaklings. If a woman had the charge of a number of children that were not her own, I do not suppose she would notice all the incipient stages of disease. But when a mother nurses her own dear children, as soon as ever upon the cheek or in the eye there is a token of approaching sickness, she perceives it at once.

I wish we had just as quick an eye, just as tender a heart towards precious souls. I do not doubt that many young people are weeks and even months in distress, who need not be, if you who know the Lord were a little more watchful to help them in the time of their sorrow. Shepherds are up all night at lambing time to catch up the lambs, as soon as they are born, and take them in and nurse them. And we, who ought to be shepherds for God, should be looking out for all the lambs, especially at seasons when there are many born into God’s great fold—for tender nursing is wanted in the first stages of the new life.

God, however, when His servants do not see “its growth,” sees it all. Now, you silent, retired spirits who dare not speak to father or mother, or brother or sister—this text ought to be a sweet morsel to you. “You bless its growth,” which proves that God sees you and your newborn Grace. The Lord sees the first sign of penitence. Though you only say to yourself, “I will arise, and go to my Father,” your Father hears you. Though it is nothing but a desire, your Father registers it. “You put my tears into Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?” He is watching your return. He runs to meet you and puts His arms about you, and kisses you with the kisses of His accepting love!

O Soul, be encouraged with that thought that up in the chamber or down by the hedge, or wherever it is that you have sought secrecy, God is there! Dwell on the thought, “You, God, see me.” That is a precious text— “All my desire is before You.” And here is another sweet one, “The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in them that hope in His mercy.” He can see you when you only hope in His mercy, and He takes pleasure in you if you have only begun to fear Him!

Here is a third choice word, “You will perfect that which concerns me.” Have you a concern about these things? Is it a matter of soul-concern with you to be reconciled to God and to have an interest in Jesus’ precious blood? It is only “its growth,” but He blesses it! It is written, “A bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench, till He brings forth judgment unto victory.” There shall be victory for you, even before the Judgment Seat of God, though as yet you are only like the flax that smokes and gives no light, or like the reed that is broken and yields no music! God sees the first growth of Grace.

IV. A few words upon a fourth point: WHAT A MISERY IT WOULD BE IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THIS GROWTH WITHOUT GOD’S BLESSING! The text says, “You bless its growth.” We must, just a moment, by way of contrast, think of how the growth would have been without the blessing. Suppose we were to see a revival among us without God’s blessing? It is my conviction that there are revivals which are not of God at all, but are produced by excitement.

If there is no blessing from the Lord it will be all a delusion, a bubble blown up into the air for a moment and then gone to nothing. We shall only see the people stirred to become the more dull and dead afterwards. And this is a great mischief to the Church. In the individual heart, if there should be growth without God’s blessing, there would be no good in it. Suppose you have good desires, but no blessing on these desires? They will only tantalize and worry you, and then, after a time, they will be gone and you will be more impervious than you were before to religious convictions. If religious desires are not of God’s sending, but are caused by excitement, they will probably prevent your giving a serious hearing to the Word of God in times to come.

If convictions do not soften they will certainly harden. To what extremities have some been driven who have had growth of a certain sort which has not led them to Christ! Some have been crushed by despair. They tell us that religion crowds the madhouse—it is not true—but there is no doubt whatever that religiousness of a certain kind has driven many a man out of his mind. The poor souls have felt their wound but have not seen the balm. They have not known Jesus. They have had a sense of sin and nothing more. They have not fled for refuge to the hope which God has set before them.

Marvel not if men go mad when they refuse the Savior! It may come as a judicial visitation of God upon those men who, when in great distress of mind, will not fly to Christ. I believe it is like this with some—you must either fly to Jesus or else your burden will become heavier and heavier until your spirit will utterly fail. This is not the fault of religion—it is the fault of those who will not accept the remedy which religion presents. A growth of desires without God’s blessing would be an awful thing, but we thank Him that we are not left in such a case.

V. And now I have to dwell upon THE COMFORTING THOUGHT THAT GOD DOES BLESS “THE GROWTH.” I wish to deal with you who are tender and troubled. I want to show that God does bless your growth. He does it in many ways. Frequently He does it by the cordials which He brings. You have a few very sweet moments, but you cannot say that you are Christ’s. At times the bells of your heart ring very sweetly at the mention of His name.

The means of Grace are very precious to you. When you gather to the Lord’s worship you feel a holy calm and you go away from the service wishing that there were seven Sundays in the week instead of one. By the blessing of God the Word has just suited your case as if the Lord had sent His servants on purpose to you. You lay aside your crutches for awhile and you begin to run. Though these things have been sadly transient, they are tokens for good.

On the other hand, if you have had none of these comforts, or few of them, and the means of Grace have not been consolations to you, I want you to look upon that as a blessing! It may be the greatest blessing that God can give us to take away all comforts on the road, in order to quicken our running towards the end. When a man is flying to the City of Refuge to be protected from the man-slayer, it may be an act of great consideration to stop him for a moment that he may quench his thirst and run more swiftly afterwards. But perhaps, in a case of imminent peril, it may be the kindest thing neither to give him anything to eat or to drink, nor invite him to stop for a moment—in order that he may fly with undiminished speed to the place of safety.

The Lord may be blessing you in the uneasiness which you feel. Inasmuch as you cannot say that you are in Christ, it may be the greatest blessing which Heaven can give to take away every other blessing from you in order that you may be compelled to fly to the Lord. You, perhaps, have a little of your self-righteousness left, and while it is so you cannot get joy and comfort. The royal robe which Jesus gives will never shine brilliantly upon us till every rag of our own goodness is gone. Perhaps you are not empty enough, and God will never fill you with Christ till you are. Fear often drives men to faith.

Have you ever heard of a person walking in the fields into whose bosom a bird has flown because pursued by the hawk? Poor timid thing, it would not have ventured there had not a greater fear compelled it! All this may be so with you. Your fears may be sent to drive you more swiftly and more closely to the Savior, and if so, I see in these present sorrows the signs that God is blessing “its growth.” In looking back upon my own “growth” I sometimes think God blessed me then in a lovelier way than now. Though I would not willingly return to that early stage of my spiritual life, yet there were many joys about it. An apple tree when loaded with apples is a very comely sight. But give me, for beauty, the apple tree in bloom. The whole world does not present a more lovely sight than an apple blossom!

Now, a full-grown Christian laden with fruit is a comely sight, but still there is a peculiar loveliness about the young Christian. Let me tell you what that blessedness is. You now probably have a greater horror of sin than professors who have known the Lord for years! They might wish that they felt your tenderness of conscience. You have now a graver sense of duty and a more solemn fear of the neglect of it than some who are further advanced. You have also a greater zeal than many—you are now doing your first works for God, and burning with your first love—nothing is too hot or too heavy for you! I pray that you may never decline, but always advance!

And now to close. I think there are three lessons for us to learn. First, let older saints be very gentle and kind to young Believers. God blesses their growth—mind that you do the same. Do not throw cold water upon young desires. Do not snuff out young Believers with hard questions. While they are babes and need the milk of the Word, do not be choking them with your strong meat—they will eat strong meat by-and-bye, but not just yet. Remember, Jacob would not overdrive the lambs. Be equally prudent. Teach and instruct them, but let it be with gentleness and tenderness—not as their superiors, but as nursing fathers for Christ’s sake. God, you see, blesses their growth—may He bless it through you!

The next thing I have to say is, fulfill the duty of gratitude. Beloved, if God blesses its growth we ought to be grateful for a little Grace. If you have only seen the first shoot peeping up through the mold, be thankful. And as you see the green blade waving in the breeze, be thankful for the ankle-deep verdure and you shall soon see the commencement of the ear! Be thankful for the first green ears and you shall see the flowering of the wheat, and by-and-by its ripening, and the joyous harvest.

The last lesson is one of encouragement. If God blesses “its growth,” dear Beginners, what will He not do for you in after days? If He gives you such a meal when you break your fast, what dainties will be on your table when He says to you, “Come and dine”? And what a banquet will He furnish at the supper of the Lamb! O troubled One! Let the storms which howl, and the snows which fall, and the wintry blasts that nip your growth all be forgotten in this one consoling thought—God blesses your growth, and whom God blesses none can curse! Over your head, dear, desiring, pleading, languishing Soul, the Lord of Heaven and earth pronounces the blessing of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Take that blessing and rejoice in it evermore. Amen.

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CROWNING BLESSINGS ASCRIBED TO GOD  
NO. 1475

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1879, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

(The second Sermon in commemoration of the completion of 25 years of his Ministry  
in the midst of the Church assembling in the Tabernacle).

**“You crown the year with Your goodness.”  
Psalm 65:11.**

GODLY men in olden times felt God to be very near them and they attributed everything they saw in Nature to the direct operation of His hand. They were not accustomed to speak of “the laws of matter,” “the operation of natural forces” and “the outcome of different causes.” They thought more of the First Cause, the foundation and pillar of all existence—and they saw Him at work on all sides. Hear how the Psalmist sings, “You make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. You visit the earth and water it. You prepare them corn when you have so provided for it. You water the ridges thereof abundantly; you settle the furrows thereof: you make it soft with showers; you bless the springing thereof. You crown the year with Your goodness.”

God was very near in those days. As Herbert says—  
*“One might have sought and found You presently At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well.”*

If the result of our philosophy has been to put God farther off from the consciousness of His creatures, God save us from such philosophy and let us get back, again, into the simple state in which we were children at home and God, our great Father, worked all things for us! Let us note the distinct mention of God throughout the Psalm, for it is well worthy of notice. And let our speech be more after the olden sort—with less of our supposed knowledge in it and a good deal more concerning the Presence and the goodness of God.

I am not about to use our text in reference to the outside world and to the husbandry of man, but we shall see how true it is within the Church, which is the husbandry of God. The language was meant to describe the field of Nature. but it is equally true of the garden of the Church. I am going to use the text in this way because of the peculiar circumstances under which we meet, celebrating, as we do, the 25th year of our happy union together as pastor and flock—a period which has, to the fullest extent been crowned with the goodness of the Lord! If I use the text for spiritual purposes I shall not err, for there is always a most striking analogy between the world of Grace and the world of Nature so that it would be hard to find anything said by Inspiration concerning the visible world which might not be correctly spoken with regard to the spiritual world.

But I do not depend upon that fact for my justification—I refer you to the Psalm itself. It is clear that it was written to praise God, not alone for His works in the harvest field and abroad upon the sea, but for His wonderful goodness towards His people, for thus the Psalm begins, “Praise waits for You, O God, in Sion.” It is Zion’s hymn which lies before us and, therefore, the Church which Zion represented may well appropriate the language and use it for herself! She may well say, concerning all the Lord’s mercy to her in her plowing, her sowing, her watching and the glad harvest of her spiritual husbandry, “You crown the year with Your goodness.”

The spirit of the text is joyful gratitude and my soul is so filled with it that I do not need so much to preach to you as to lead you in holy adoration of God for the great mercies with which He has surrounded us as a Church and congregation from the first day even until now!

I. And so our first head is DIVINE GOODNESS ADORED. “You crown the year with Your goodness.” Whatever of acceptable service we have rendered and whatever of real success we have achieved has come from the Lord of Hosts who has worked all our works in us! Whatever holy results may have followed from earnest efforts and whatever honor has redounded unto God from them is the Lord’s doings and it is marvelous in our eyes! “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Your name be glory for Your mercy and for Your Truth’s sake.” Your goodness, not ours, has crowned the work! Your goodness, indeed, makes every good work good and gives to every good its crown. From its first conception, even to its ultimate conclusion, all virtue is of You. From blade to full corn all the harvest is of You, O Lord, and to You let it be ascribed! Let us, therefore, praise the Lord with all our hearts for 25 years of prayer and effort, of planning and working, of believing and rejoicing which He has crowned with His goodness!

We will try to follow the run of the Psalm and our first note shall be this—praise must be for God alone. “Praise waits for You, O God, in Sion.” Not for men, nor for priests, nor for pastors, presbyters, bishops, ministers, or whatever you choose to call them—“Praise waits for YOU, O God, in Sion.” Whoever shall have done well in the midst of the Church, let him have the love of his Brethren, but let all the praise be unto You, O Most High! Far be it for the axe to exalt itself and forget him that fells therewith, or for the sword to deprive the conqueror of his glory. Praise is silent while the best of men are passing by—it lays its finger on its lips till the Lord approaches and then bursts forth in gladsome song because He appears!

Whatever else you do, my Brothers and Sisters, be sure that your soul magnifies the Lord and abhors the very idea of self-glorification. If the Lord has blessed you, shake off, as Paul shook off the viper from his hand, any idea of ascribing praise to yourself! We are mere vanity and to us belong shame and confusion of face—these are, so to speak, our belongings—the only dowry our fathers have left to us. What are we that the Lord should bless us? Did you bring a soul to Christ the other day? Bless the Holy Spirit who helped you, by His power, to do so Divine a deed! Did you bear bold testimony for the Truth of God but yesterday? Bless Him who is the faithful and true Witness, that at

 His feet you learned how to be true—and by His Spirit were enabled to be brave! “Not unto us! Not unto us!” With vehemence we deprecate the idea of honoring ourselves!

Again and again we put away the usurper’s crown which Satan proffers us. How can we endure the base proposal? Shall we rob God of His Glory? Even He from whom we derive our very existence? Perish, O pride, abhorred of God and man! O Lord, keep me from the approach of that shameful evil! Brothers and Sisters, if you have any esteem among men, cast your crown at Jehovah’s feet and there let it be for the honor of God only! In this spirit every action of the Christian Church ought to be done, for what says the second clause of the Psalm? “Unto You shall the vow be performed.” Brothers and Sisters, we ought to praise God in all that we do by doing it to His praise! There must be no motive of this kind—“I must give because others give. I must attend such-and-such a meeting because otherwise I should be missed.” Cast away from you, I pray you, the service of any master but your Lord in Heaven, for you cannot serve two masters!

Honor the Lord in all that you do. Whether you teach the classes of the school, or preach at the corner of the street, or hand a tract to a passerby, or preach to the multitude, let the vow be performed as unto the Lord. It is wonderful how sweet it is to do service when it is expressly done for Him. I do not marvel that the woman broke the alabaster box over Him. Breaking precious boxes and spilling priceless nard may be hard work of itself to selfish flesh and blood, but it becomes a self-gratifying luxury to do it unto Him. When our whole life shall be doing service unto the WellBeloved whom to serve is honor and delight and for whom to die were an unspeakable bliss —then shall we have learned how to live! Lord, You crown the year with Your goodness and, therefore, we would do all things as unto You, expecting Your Grace to assist our service; Your love to accept it; Your pity to forgive it and Your power to make it effectual to Your own Glory! Oh, that I had but power—and God the Holy Spirit has that power—first to take away from each of us all thought of self-glorification! And then to consecrate our entire being, even to our pulse and breath, to His praise whose love has made us what we are!

Further, Brothers and Sisters, in praising God we may be helped to do so and to see how He crowns the year with His goodness when we remember our answered prayers as a Church. What says the second verse? “O You that hears prayer, unto You shall all flesh come.” I say it and there is no boasting in the saying of it, but there is a glorying in God that prayers have been heard which have been put up by this Church in ways and manners which have not been less than marvelous! Such of you as have been with us from the beginning will remember times when, in our weakness and in our poverty, we cried to the Lord for help because of our need—and He heard us! Especially was this the case concerning the building of the house in which we are now assembled. Ah, how speedily He helped us! How liberally! How like a God!

When we have needed means to feed the children of our Orphanage, the Prayer Meeting on Monday night has been followed by a response before the week has gone round! When two or three of us have met together, unknown to all the rest, to lay special siege to Heaven upon the appearance of troubles which we did not wish to tell to others, we have seen the arm of God made bare among us and we could no more doubt it than we

could doubt our own existence! Oh, you that have had your prayers answered, praise the Lord who crowns your supplications with His acceptance! Remember that it is because of prayer that, as a Church, we have continued to advance from strength to strength—and shall not our praises balance our prayers? If the Lord gives goodness, shall not we give gratitude? Our prayers confessed our dependence—we felt that our years could never be crowned unless the Lord drowned them—and now that the blessing has come, let our praises prove our thankfulness while we cry, “You crown the years with your goodness.”

And, beloved Friends, it may greatly increase our praise of God for all His goodness if we think of our many sins. Have we tried to serve Him? Alas, how often have we failed! The iniquities of our holy things might long ago have provoked the Lord to wrath. Among us has there not been much that His pure and holy eyes must have grieved over? The watchers of the Church have sometimes come together in sore dismay over this and that which they have seen among the brotherhood and they have cried to God that He would put away the evil thing from among us, or help us to overcome the Evil One and reclaim the wandering. Nobody knows but God all the cares and anxieties which surround those that watch over such a flock as this! Who is sufficient for these things? Have we been made sufficient? Then infinite Grace has done the deed!

The best of us, whoever they may be, will be the first to bow before the Lord. And those among us who have exhibited a Christly character and have served the cause of Christ heartily will the most deeply feel that if the Lord had taken the candlestick out of its place and left us in the darkness, we had well deserved it. Eternally blessed be the name of the Ever Merciful! When we have sinned, we have always had an Advocate before the Throne of God and the blood of sprinkling has ever been upon us to make us clean in the sight of the Lord! Blessed be His name! Though iniquities prevail against us, yet, as for our transgressions, He has purged them away and still does His Church lift up her face and live in the smile of His love, rejoicing and triumphant! Beloved, this ought to make us praise God with all our hearts and the Psalmist manifested the wisdom of Inspiration in reminding us of it.

And once more, the sacred privileges which infinite mercy has bestowed upon us should compel us with glad alacrity to magnify the name of God! See how the Psalm proceeds—“Blessed is the man whom You choose, and cause to approach unto You, that he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, even of Your holy temple.” Many now present first learned in this house their election of God, for here they were called by almighty Grace and enabled to approach their heavenly Father! Blessed be the choosing and calling Lord who now gives us access to Himself and nearness to His Person! Do you remember when you first drew near to Him with weeping eyes and melting hearts because His love had broken down your rebellious wills? Oh, it was a sorrowful coming, but it was a true coming, for God was calling you!

And do you remember, afterwards, when you came to Him with glad hearts and rejoicing eyes, for the Lord had put away your sin and you stood “accepted in the Beloved”? Oh, that glad day! Last Sunday we sang—“Happy day, happy day.” And we may sing it every day and every morning and evening of our lives and not sing it too often! The Lord who chose us and called us and made us to approach Him has not, since that day, become our enemy, for He has allowed us ever since to dwell in His house! We are His children! We have not called upon Him like strangers, but we have dwelt in His house as sons and daughters! He has been abiding with us and we have been made to abide in Him! Shall we not praise Him for this? This very house of prayer has been, to some of you, a quiet resting place. You have been more at home here than when you have been at home.

I am bound to say that you remember more happy times you have had here than anywhere else—and these have put out of your memory the sad records of your hard battling in the world even for a livelihood! I know that many of you live by your Sabbaths. You step over the intervening space from Lord’s-Day to Lord’s-Day as if the Lord had made a ladder of Sabbaths for you to climb to Heaven! And you have been fed in the Lord’s house as well as rested. I know you have, for he who deals out the meat has been fed himself and when he is fed, he knows that others have like appetites and need like food and know when they get it! You have clapped your hands for very joy when redeeming Grace and dying love have been the theme and infinite, sovereign, changeless mercy has been the subject of the discourse!

You have been blessed every happy Sabbath you have had, my Brothers and Sisters—every holy Monday evening’s Prayer Meeting—every occasion on which God has met with you in any of the rooms of this building when a few of you, at early morning or late in the evening have met together for prayer! Every time, the visits of Jesus’ love have charmed your soul up to Heaven’s gate! By all of these bless and magnify His name who has crowned the years with His goodness! There had been no food for us if the Lord had not given us manna from Heaven! There had been no comfortable rest for us if He had not breathed peace upon us! There had been no coming in of new converts, nor going out with rapturous joy of the perfected ones up to the seats above if the Lord had not been with us and, therefore, to Him be all the praise!

I do not suppose that any stranger here will understand this matter. It may even be that such will judge that we are indulging in self-acclamation under a thin disguise—but this evil we must endure for once! You, my Brothers and Sisters, who have been together these many years, know what is meant and you know that it is not within the compass of an angel’s tongue to express the gratitude which many of us feel who, for these 25 years, have been banded together in closest and heartiest Christian brotherhood in the service of our Lord and Master! Strangers cannot guess how happy has been our fellowship, or how true our love! Only eternity shall reveal the multitude of mercies with which God has visited us by means of our association in this Church! It is to some of us friend, nurse, mother, home all in one!

If we sing more heartily about ourselves as recipients of Divine Mercy than some might think comely, we can only say that we cannot help it. If you drop in at a marriage and there is much said at the wedding feast

about the family and its history, you need not go and put it in the papers, nor even criticize the family greetings too closely. Very likely they do seem to look too exclusively at home affairs, but pardon them for once. Well, whether men forgive me or not, I must and will speak! But all I have to say is to ascribe every good thing unto the Lord, alone, even to the God of Abraham, “the God of the whole earth shall He be called.”

II. Now we will turn to a second point. In the second place, THE ENCIRCLING BLESSING OF THE DIVINE GOODNESS IS TO BE CONFESSED. The Psalmist sings—“You crown the year with Your goodness.” As though God circled the year and put a coronet about its head—a gem for every month, a pearl for every day—a matchless crown of unceasing goodness which surrounds the whole year! Now I venture to say that the period of 25 years, or a whole quarter of a century, wears its royal crown even more conspicuously than any single year! From the first day even until now God has enclosed the whole time with His goodness. I make no exceptions! We had a dark day, once, when we were scattered with sorrow, but as I read the fifth verse of the Psalm, it is easy to work it into our praise—“By terrible things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation.”

Standing happily among you, addressing you in this calm and quiet manner, recall that night in which the multitude seemed to be taken with sudden panic and to rush madly from the house—and then we heard of dead and wounded in our congregation—and the preacher’s heart was broken till he felt it would be well to die! Yet out of that calamity, with all its unspeakable grief, there sprang a blessing, the fruit of which we still continue to reap. Yes, I make no exception to anything! Sick and ill, oftentimes, has the preacher been, but valued lessons have thus been taught to him and through him taught to the people. Sickness has fallen here and there and sometimes affliction and poverty—but you have, all of you, learned something under the rod and you have blessed God for His fatherly discipline filled with eternal benefits! Yes, Lord, it is true in our case, “You crown the year with Your goodness.”

Now, let us just look at this all-encircling goodness of the Lord which we have seen from the first day till now. I saw it, first of all, in inspiring the few Brethren that met together as a Church with confidence in God at the very outset. Our first meeting for prayer was, I think, more largely attended than our first sermon. The Church was diminished and brought low, but the Brethren prayed with great reliance upon God and showed no sign of distrust. They did not say, “Die.” They did not believe in becoming extinct, but every man seemed resolved to set his face like a flint to win prosperity at the hands of God—and for this I thank Him! Is He not said in our Psalm to be the confidence of the ends of the earth? This confidence was the beginning of an endless chain of goodness!

Then the Lord was pleased in infinite mercy to prepare men’s hearts to hear the Gospel. It was not possible, they said, that great places could be filled with crowds to hear the old-fashioned Gospel! The pulpit had lost its power, so unbelievers told us, and yet no sooner did we begin to preach in simple strains, the Gospel of Christ, than the people flew as a cloud and as doves to their windows! And what listening there was at Park Street, where we scarcely had air enough to breathe! And when we got into the larger place, what attention was manifest! What power seemed to go with every word that was spoken! I say it, though I was the preacher, it was not I, but the Grace of God which was with me! There were stricken down among us some of the most unlikely ones! There were brought into the Church and added to God’s people some of those that had wandered far away from the path of Truth and Righteousness—and these, by their penitent love, quickened our life and increased our zeal!

The Lord gave the people, more and more, a willingness to hear and there was no pause in the flowing stream of hearers, nor in the incoming of converts. The Holy Spirit came down like showers which saturate the soil till the clods are ready for the breaking! And then it was not long before we heard on the right and on the left the cry, “What must we do to be saved?” We were busy enough in those days in seeing converts and thank God we have been ever since! We had some among us who gave themselves up to watch for the souls of men and we have a goodly number of such helpers now, perhaps more than we ever had and, thank God, these found and still find many souls to watch over! Still the arrows fly and still the smitten cry out for help and ask that they may be guided to the great healing Lord. Blessed be God’s name for this! He went with us all those early days and gave us sheaves even at the first sowing, so that we began with mercy and He has been with us even until now—till our life has become one long harvest-home!

I am bound to acknowledge with deep thankfulness that during these 25 years the Word has been given me to speak when the time has come for preaching. It may look to you a small thing that I should be able to come before you in due time, but it will not seem so to my Brothers in the ministry who remember that for 25 years my sermons have been printed as they have been delivered. It must be an easy thing to go and buy discourses at sixpence or a shilling—each ready lithographed—and read them off as hirelings do. But to speak your heart out every time and yet to have something fresh for 25 years is no child’s play! Who shall do it unless he cries to God for help? I read but the other day a newspaper criticism of myself in which the writer wondered that a man should keep on, year after year, with so few themes and such a narrow groove to travel in!

But, my Brothers and Sisters, it is not so! Our themes are infinite for number and fullness! Every text of Scripture is boundless in its meaning! We could preach from the Bible throughout eternity and not exhaust it! A narrow groove? The thoughts of God narrow? The Divine Word narrow? They know it not, for His commandments are exceedingly broad. Had we to speak of politics or philosophy, we had run dry long ago—but when we have to preach the Savior’s everlasting love—the theme is always fresh, always new! The Incarnate God, the atoning blood, the risen Lord, the coming Glory—these are subjects which defy exhaustion! Yet we bless the Eternal Spirit who gives both seed to the sower and bread to the eater, that we have had spiritual food for our people as often as the season has come round! I must render my special praise and if at any time you have been blessed by the Word of God I have spoken, you must render your

tribute, too.

All these years He has crowned us with His goodness by giving us the good Word to preach in His name. But, dear Brothers and Sisters, I am most happy to thank God for crowning the years with His goodness by helping us in the reaping and gathering in of souls. I say, “us,” advisedly. Here we have had a Church which from the first began to seek the souls of men. If any of you do not work for Christ, I should think you have a hard time of it among us, for one or another is pretty sure to use the oxgoad upon you! Both by example and by precept and by the general spirit of the brotherhood, idlers stand rebuked! Our Brothers and Sisters from the first began working for the good of men as best they could. Not in a fine, artistic manner—I do not think we ever tried that—we did it in a very bland manner, but we went at it with all our hearts.

Our young Brothers tried their hands at teaching and preaching—very likely it was intellectually very poor preaching—but it was full of heart and it did good in spite of its many imperfections. The teaching and the looking after converts; the trying to form new churches; the opening of Prayer Meetings and all sorts of holy works were not done after any set fashion— but somehow they were done and often done with a desperate valor and a simple faith which surprised and cheered me! Often and often have I brushed the tears from my eyes when I have received from some here present offerings for the Master’s work which utterly surpassed all my ideas of giving. The consecration of your substance by some among you has been Apostolic! I have known those who have so given from their poverty that they have sometimes given all that they had—and when I have even hinted at their exceeding the bounds of prudence, they have seemed hurt and pressed the gift, again, for some other work of the Master whom they love.

The Lord knows every one of your hearts—where you have come short He knows and may His Grace forgive—but where, as I most honestly bear witness, many here have gone up to the measure of their ability and even beyond it, He knows and will reward! For your zeal, industry and consecration I must bless the Lord who crowns the years with His goodness! There are few among you, I should think, who have worked for the Master who have not seen most encouraging results in the conversions of those for whom you have cared. Certainly there are many among you between whom and myself there might pass a telegraphic glance awakening glad memories. You have brought to me one after another souls that you have won. You wanted me to speak to them personally because you have an idea that I might be more tender than anybody else. I am afraid you think too highly of me in this respect. Still I have been right glad to see those you brought to me because they were your children.

How glad I have been that, inasmuch as I brought you to Christ through His Grace, when you have brought others to Christ I have seemed to be a sort of grandfather in your midst, rejoicing in your joy, triumphing in your success! And I mean it sincerely when I say that I look upon many of you with an intense love and satisfaction because God has made you great winners of souls. You have not sat here to listen to me and to enjoy your Sundays, but you have been sowers of the good Seed. You have many times denied yourselves the privileges of God’s house that you might go and look after others—and the Lord has given you your wages! How many you have brought back whose feet had almost gone! How many you have helped by sweet encouragement when they have been depressed! I know not all your labors of love, but God knows!

This much I do know, that the pastorate of this Church is practically carried out by the Church itself! Beloved elders labor with a diligence which I cannot commend too highly, still it were impossible with 5,000 persons to care for, that a few men should fulfill the service. You watch over one another in the Lord and for this I bless Him, to whom must be rendered all the praise. I feel the more free to speak about what He has worked by you and in you because you will not take any glory to yourselves but lay it at His feet. Lord, You have blessed us exceedingly beyond what we asked or even thought—and in return we bless You!

When I remember how, as a boy, I stood among you, Brothers and Sisters, and feebly began to preach of Jesus Christ and how these 25 years without dissension, yes, without the dream of dissension, in perfect love compacted as one man, you have gone on from one work of God to another and have never halted, hesitated or drawn back, I must and will bless and magnify Him who has crowned these years with His goodness!

III. Now I come to my closing point. It is this—THE CROWNING BLESSING IS CONFESSED TO BE OF God— not only the encircling blessing but the crowning blessing. What is the crown of a Church? Well, some Churches have one crown and some another. I have heard of a church whose crown was its organ—the biggest organ, the finest organ ever played—and the choir the most wonderful choir that ever was. Everybody in the district said, “Now, if you want to go to a place where you will have fine music, that is the spot.” Our musical friends may wear that crown if they please. I will never pluck at it or decry it—I feel no temptation in that direction!

I have heard of others whose crown has been their intellect. There are very few hearers. Indeed, not as many people by one-tenth as there are seats, but then they are such a select people, the elite, the thoughtful and intelligent! The ministry is such that only one in a hundred can possibly understand what is said and the one in the hundred who does understand it is, therefore, a most remarkable person! That is their crown! Again I say I will not envy it. Whatever there may be that is desirable about it, the Brother who wears it shall wear it all his days for me. I have heard of other crowns—among the rest, that of being “a most respectable church.” All the people are respectable. The minister, of course, is respectable. I believe he is, “Reverend,” or, “Very Reverend,” and everybody and thing about him is, to the last degree, “respectable.”

Fustian jackets and cotton gowns are warned off by the surpassing dignity of everything in and around the place. As for a working man, such a creature is never seen on the premises and could not be supposed to be—if he were to come he would say—“The preacher preaches double Dutch or Greek, or something of the sort.” He would not hear language which he could understand! This is not a very brilliant crown, this crown

of respectability—it certainly never flashed ambition into my soul.

Our crown under God has been this—the poor have the Gospel preached to them, souls are saved and Christ is glorified! O my beloved Church, hold fast what you have, that no man take this crown away from you! As for me, by God’s help, the first and last thing that I long for is to bring men to Christ! I care nothing about fine language, or about the pretty speculations of prophecy, or a hundred dainty things! I desire only to break the heart and bind it up—to lay hold of a sheep of Christ and bring it back into the fold is the one thing I live for! You, also, are of the same mind, are you not? Well, we have had this crowning blessing that, as nearly as I can estimate, more than 9,000 persons have joined this Church. If they were all alive now, or all with us now, what a company they would be! Some have fallen asleep and many are members with other churches, working for the Master where they are probably more influential than they could have been at home. Some of our members we were glad to lose because our loss was the gain of the universal Church. We sent them out to colonize and so to increase the Master’s kingdom. For these 9,000 and more let God be praised! It is a crown in which we must and will rejoice.

But another crown to any Church, I think, is when its members are maintained in their profession. If many are added and then they are scattered again—if they do but come to go, if they are found and then straightway lost—what is the benefit of it? But this has been our crown of rejoicing, that we have seen the young converts matured in Divine Grace. The blade has become the ear and the ear has become the full corn in the ear for which God is thanked! And there has been this about it, that as we built together as living stones, so we have remained together! I have a great many faults and I often wonder how it is you put up with me, but we have not thought of parting—the mortar which holds us together in the building is very binding. I am not so much surprised that I put up with you, for it is my duty and office to bear with all and none of you have caused me grief except such as have walked unworthy and grieved the Spirit of God. We have gone on well together, under God’s blessings, these many years and have no hesitation about continuing in the same loving unity.

During these 25 years I have had to attend to the quarrels and differences of scores of little Churches where their weakness should have been the strongest argument for union. Men usually divide when they are already too few for the work and this is a most grievous evil under the sun. Churches torn apart with contention have laid the wretched differences before me and I have had many a heavy burden to carry while trying to set things right. But I have not had to spend one five minutes in seeking to heal a breach in this Church or maintain its unity! The Lord has given us brotherly love and unto His name be praise! Brothers and Sisters who have been members of other Churches where you have seen trouble, you know what a comfort it is to be connected with a Church where we endeavor to walk in love to one another and where the noise of war has not disturbed our gates.  
Truly I must say and I do say it, “O Lord, You give peace in our borders and You fill us with the finest of the wheat. You crown the years with Your goodness.” But is this all? We ought to bless God for the fruitbearing ones that have been among us. Workers of all sorts are found for the different agencies of the Church as they are required and God has given us some whom He has honored exceedingly who are our strength for home work. But, besides that, this Church has, this day, an army of above 400 ministers trained at her side who are now scattered all over the globe preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, while as a militia we have some 80 or more disseminating godly books! Best of all, we have a growing band of missionaries! My heart leaped within me on Monday night when I heard the young people and saw how one and another of our Brothers were devoting themselves to mission work. This I reckon to be the brightest crown of all! If the Lord will but infuse the missionary spirit into us and force out many to go abroad to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ our cup will run over and we shall again have to say, “Praise waits for You, O God, in Sion, for You crown the years with your goodness.”

Last of all, and never to be forgotten, during these 25 years there have gone from us to the upper realms about 800 who had named the name of Jesus. Professing their faith in Christ, living in His fear, dying in the faith they gave us no cause to doubt their sincerity and, therefore, we may not question their eternal safety. Many of them gave us in life and in death all the tokens we could ask for of their being in Christ and, therefore, we sorrow not as those that are without hope. Why, when I think of them, many of them my sons and daughters now before the Throne of God, they fill me with solemn exultation! Do you not see them in their white robes? Eight hundred souls redeemed by blood! These are only what we know of and had enrolled. How many there may have been converted here who never joined our earthly fellowship, but, nevertheless, have gone Home, I cannot tell.

There probably have been more than those whose names we know, if we consider the wide area over which the printed sermons circulate. They are gathering Home, one by one, one by one, but they make a goodly company! Our name is Gad, for “a troop comes.” Happy shall we be to overtake those who have marched out ahead of us and entered into the Promised Land! Let us remember them and by faith join our hands with them. Flash a thought to unite the broken family, for we are not far from them, nor are they far from us, since we are one in Christ! This, too, is our crown.

And now I want one thing more. There is such a thing as a greed that is never satisfied and I have a great greed upon me now. I frankly confess my covetousness. Whenever the Lord gives us any great spiritual gift we want more, nor are we blamed for this, but bid to covet earnestly the best gifts! This, then, is my further desire. I should be rejoiced beyond measure if, on this night and during the next two or three days in which we keep holy day and bless the Lord for His goodness, some Brothers and Sisters were moved by the Holy Spirit to undertake some new work for Christ which they had not thought of before. Come, my Brother, may the Lord crown this year this day with His goodness by putting it into your heart to break up new soil and sow a fresh field for Jesus! Have you been an

idler? Buckle up! Today join the laborers and leave the loiterers! Get to the Master’s work!

Have you already been diligent? I have more hope in appealing to you! Brother, Sister, try something more—something more tonight! Roll over in your mind what there is that is left undone in the branch of holy service for which you are fitted, or for which you might get to be fitted and engage in it at once! Come now! Consecrate yourself to the Lord anew tonight and pray Him to lift you to a higher platform and into a nobler state of consecration! That would be a blessed crowning of the years with His goodness! And what if some young men here were to say, “We shall prosper in business, no doubt, for we feel up to the mark for it. God has given us brain and skill and a fair opening, but inasmuch as we have capacity we will consecrate it”?

I hear the sorrows of China borne on the wailing of the wind and the sighing of the sea! Millions upon millions are perishing for lack of knowledge—will no one pity them? The need of India’s teeming population cries to us in voices which pierce the heart—will no one listen and help? A voice comes forth from the excellent Glory, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” It were a crown to end the year with if there came from this and that set of useful, earnest Christian men the reply of individual hearts, “Here am I! Here am I! Send me!” The Lord give us this crown!

One thing more. Oh, if some hearts would yield themselves to the Savior tonight! If some were converted tonight, what a crown that would be to finish up these years with! Testimonial, Sirs? No testimonial can ever be given to the preacher which can equal a soul converted! These are the seals of our ministry and the wages of our hire! Socrates, on his birthday, had a present given him by each of his students. Some brought less and some brought more. Among the rest there was one who had nothing in the world to bring and so he came to Socrates and said, “Master, I give you myself. I love you with all my heart.” The sage judged this to be the most precious of all the tributes.

Will not some of you cry, “I do not know that I could be a missionary, or that I have any gifts, or talents, or substance that I could contribute, but, Lord, I give my heart to You to be renewed by Grace”? God bring you, poor sinner, to Jesus’ feet to surrender your whole nature to His sway that He may wash it in His blood, fill it with His Spirit and use it for His Glory! He says, “My son, give me your heart,” and when the heart is yielded, He accepts the gift! May the Eternal Spirit lead many to give themselves thus to Jesus this night and it will be the crowning joy of all the years! Amen and amen!

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THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER  
NO. 532

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“You crown the year with Your goodness. And your paths drop fatness.” Psalm 65:11.**

POSSIBLY objections might have been raised to a day of thanksgiving for the abundant harvest if it had been ordered or suggested by Government. Certain Brothers and Sisters are so exceedingly tender in their consciences upon the point of connection between Church and State that they would have thought it almost a reason for not being thankful at all if the Government had recommended them to celebrate a day of public thanksgiving.

Although I have no love to the unscriptural union of Church and State, I should on this occasion have hailed an official request for a national recognition of the special goodness of God. However, none of us can feel any objection arising in our minds if it is now agreed that today we will praise our ever-bounteous Lord and as an assembly record our gratitude to the God of the harvest. We are probably the largest assembly of Christian people in the world and it is well that we should set the example to the smaller Churches.

Doubtless many other Believers will follow in our footsteps, and so a public thanksgiving will become general throughout the country. I hope to see every congregation in the land raising a special offering unto the Lord, to be devoted either to His Church, to the poor, to missions, or some other holy end. Yes, I would have every Christian offer willingly unto the Lord as a token of his gratitude to the God of Providence.

I had almost forgotten that today we have to ask your contributions for the support of two ministers of our own body laboring in Germany. It is well that it so happens, because it furnishes an object for the practical expression of the thanks which we feel to Almighty God. While as the sum required for this object will at once be raised, our beloved college will be a worthy object for friends at a distance to assist with their free will offerings.

Without any preface, we will divide our text as it divides itself. Here we have crowning mercies calling for crowning gratitude. And in the same verse, paths of fatness, which should be to us ways of delight. When we have talked upon these two points, we may meditate for a few moments upon the whole subject and endeavor, as God shall help us, to see what duties it suggests.  
I. First of all, we have here CROWNING MERCIES, SUGGESTING SPECIAL AND CROWNING THANKSGIVING. All the year round, every hour of every day, God is richly blessing us—both when we sleep and when we wake His mercy waits upon us. The sun may leave off shining, but our God will never cease to cheer His children with His love. Like a river His loving kindness is always flowing with a fullness inexhaustible as His own Nature, which is its source. Like the atmosphere which always surrounds the earth and is always ready to support the life of man, the benevolence of God surrounds all His creatures—in it, as in their element—they live and move and have their being.

Yet as the sun on summer days appears to gladden us with beams more warm and bright than at other times, and as rivers are at certain seasons swollen with the rain, and as the atmosphere itself on occasions is fraught with more fresh, more bracing, or more balmy influences than before, so is it with the mercy of God—it has its golden hours, its days of overflow when the Lord magnifies His Grace and lifts high His love before the sons of men.

If we begin with the blessings of the nether springs, we must not forget that for the race of man the joyous days of harvest are a special season of excessive favor. It is the glory of autumn that the ripe gifts of Providence are then abundantly bestowed. It is the mellow season of realization, whereas all before was but hope and expectation. Great is the joy of harvest. Happy are the reapers who fill their arms with the liberality of Heaven. The Psalmist tells us that the harvest is the crowning of the year.

What if I compare the opening spring to the proclamation of a new prince, the latest born of Father Time? With the musical voices of birds and the joyful lowing of herds, a new era of fertility is ushered in. Every verdant meadow and every leaping brook hears the joyful proclamation and feels a new life within. The little hills rejoice on every side. They shout for joy. They also sing. Throughout the warm months of summer the royal year is dressing itself in beauty and adorning itself in sumptuous array.

What with the plates of ivory, yielded by the lilies, the rubies of the rose, the emeralds of the meads and all manner of fair colors from the many flowers, we may well say that, “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” No studs of silver or rows of jewels can vie with the ornaments of the year. No garments of needlework of divers colors can match the glorious vesture of Time’s reigning son. But the moment of the coronation, when earth feels most the sway of the year, is in the fullness of autumn. Then it is when the fields are covered with a dose of gold, and fruits are glowing with the rich hues of ripeness, and the leaves are burnished with inimitable perfection of tint and shade.

Then it is with a coronal of Divine goodness, amidst the glad shouts of toiling lads and the songs of rejoicing maidens, the year is crowned! Upon a throne of golden corn, with the peaceful sickle for his scepter, sits the crowned year bearing the goodness of the Lord as a coronet upon his placid brow. Or, what if we compare the year to a conqueror, striving at first with stern winter, wrestling hard against all his boisterous attacks, and at last joyfully conquering in the fair days of spring? He rides in triumph throughout the summer along a pathway strewed with flowers, and at last, mounting the throne amidst the festivities of harvest, while the Lord in loving kindness puts a diadem of beauty and goodness upon his head—

*“Cheerfulness and holy pleasure  
Well become our happy isle,  
When our God in copious measure  
Deigns to bless us with His smile;  
Joyful, then, all people come,  
Celebrate the harvest home.”*

We may forget the harvest, living as we do, so far from rural labors, but those who have to watch the corn as it springs up and track it through all its numberless dangers until the blade becomes the full corn in the ear, cannot, surely, forget the wonderful goodness and mercy of God when they see the harvest safely stored. My Brothers and Sisters, if we require any considerations to excite us to gratitude, let us think for a moment of the effect upon our country of a total failure of the crops.

What if today it were reported that as yet the corn was not carried, that the continued showers had made it sprout and grow till there was no hope of its being of any further use and that it might as well be left in the fields? What dismay would that message carry into every cottage? Who among us could contemplate the future without dismay? All faces would gather blackness. All classes would sorrow and even the throne itself might fitly be covered with sackcloth at the news.

At this day the kingdom of Egypt sits trembling. The rejoicing and abounding land trembles for her sons. The Nile has swollen beyond its proper limit, the waters continue still to rise, and a few more days must see the fields covered with devastating floods. If it is so, alas for that land, in other years so favored as to have given us the Proverb of “Corn in Egypt.” My Brothers and Sisters, should we not rejoice that this is not our case and that our happy land rejoices in plenty? If the plant had utterly failed and the seed had rotted under the clods, we should have been quick enough to murmur—how is it that we are so slow to praise?

Take a lower view of the matter—suppose even a partial scarcity—at this juncture, when one arm of our industry is paralyzed, how serious would have been this calamity! With a staple commodity withdrawn from us, with the daily peril of war at our gates, it would have been a fearful trial to have suffered scarcity of bread. Shall we not bless and praise our Covenant God who permits not the appointed weeks of harvest to fail? Sing together all you to whom bread is the staff of life and rejoice before Him who loads you with benefits!

We have none of us any adequate idea of the amount of happiness conferred upon a nation by a luxuriant crop. Every man in the land is the richer for it. To the poor man the difference is of the utmost importance. His three shillings are now worth four. There is more bread for the children, or more money for clothes. Millions are benefited by God’s once opening His liberal hand. When the Hebrews went through the desert there were but some two or three millions of them, and yet they sang sweetly of Him who fed His chosen people.

In our own land alone we have ten times the number. Have we no hallowed music for the God of the whole earth? Reflect upon the amazing population of our enormous city—consider the immense mount of poverty—think how greatly at one stroke that poverty has been relieved! A generous contribution, equal to that made for the Lancashire distress, would be but as the drop of a bucket to the relief afforded by a fall in the price of bread. Let us not despise the bounty of God because this great benefit comes in a natural way. If every morning when we awoke we saw fresh loaves of bread put into our cupboard, or the morning’s meal set out upon the table, we should think it a miracle.

But if our God blesses our own exertions and prospers our own toil to the same end, is it not equally as much a ground for praising and blessing His name? I would I had this morning the tongue of the eloquent, or even my own usual strength to excite you to gratitude, by the spectacle of the multitudes of beings whom God has made happy by the fruit of the field. My sickness today makes my thoughts wander and unfits me for so noble a theme, yet my soul pants to set your hearts on fire. O for Heaven’s own fire to kindle your hearts! O come, let us worship and bow down, let us exalt the Lord our God and come into His Presence with the voice of joy and thanksgiving!

But how shall we give crowning thanksgiving for this crowning mercy of the year? We can do it, dear Friends, by the inward emotions of gratitude. Let our hearts be warmed. Let our spirits remember, meditate, and think upon this goodness of the Lord. Meditation upon this mercy may tend to nourish in you the most tender feelings of affection, and your souls will be knit to the Father of spirits, who pities His children. Again, praise Him with your lips. Let Psalms and hymns employ your tongues today—and tomorrow, when we meet together at the Prayer Meeting, let us turn it rather into a Praise Meeting and let us laud and magnify His name from whose bounty all this goodness flows.

But I think, also, we should thank Him by our gifts. The Jews of old never tasted the fruit either of the barley or of the wheat harvest till they had sanctified it to the Lord by the feast of ingatherings. There was, early in the season, the barley harvest. One sheaf of this barley was taken and waved before the Lord with special sacrifices, and then afterward the people feasted. Fifty days afterward came the wheat harvest, when two loaves, made of the new flour, were offered before the Lord in sacrifice, together with burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, meat-offerings, drink-offerings and abundant sacrifices of thanksgivings to show that the people’s thankfulness was not stinted or mean.

No man ate either of the ears, or grain, or corn ground and made into bread, until first of all he had sanctified his substance by the dedication of some unto the Lord. And shall we do less than the Jew? Shall he, for types and shadows, express his gratitude in a solid manner and shall not we? Did he offer unto the Lord whom he scarcely knew and bow before that Most High God who hid His face amidst the smoke of burning rams and bullocks? And shall not we, who see the Glory of the Lord in the face of Christ Jesus come unto Him and bring to Him our offerings?

The Old Testament ordinance was, “You shall not come before the Lord empty.” And let that be the ordinance of today. Let us come into His Presence, each man bearing his offering of thanksgiving unto the Lord. But enough concerning this particular harvest. It has been a crowning mercy this year, so that the other version of our text might aptly be applied as a description of 1863, “You crown the year with Your goodness.”

Furthermore, Beloved, we have heard of heavenly harvests, the outflowing of the upper springs, which, in days of yore, awakened the Church of God to loudest praise. There was the harvest of Pentecost. Christ having been sown in the ground like a grain of wheat, sprang up from it and in His resurrection and ascension was like the waved sheaf before the Lord. Let us never forget that resurrection which crowned the year of God’s redeemed with goodness. It was a terrible year, indeed. It began in the howling tempests of Christ’s poverty, want, shame, suffering, and death. It seemed to have no spring and no summer, but yet it was crowned with an abundant harvest when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Fifty days after the resurrection came the Pentecost. The barley harvest had been passed wherein the wave-sheaf was offered. Then came the days of wheat harvest. Peter and the eleven that were with him became the reapers and three thousand souls fell beneath the Gospel sickle. There was great joy in the city of Jerusalem that day—all the saints who heard were glad, and Heaven itself, catching the Divine enthusiasm, rang with harvest joy! It is recorded that the saints ate their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. Pentecost was a crowning mercy, and it was remembered by the saints with crowning thanks.

May I not say that we have had the like crowning mercy shown to this our highly-favored land, in the revivals which a few years ago were so plentiful among us and which even now hover over our heads? The Spirit of the Lord suddenly fell upon many a city and village—where the Gospel had been preached with dull and heavy tones, suddenly the minister began to glow—the cords which bound his tongue were snapped, and like a seraph full of heavenly fire he began to tell of the love of Jesus. Souls were moved as the trees of the woods are moved in the wind—spirits long dead

in sin’s tremendous sepulcher woke up at the quickening breath! They stood upon their feet as a great army—they praised the Lord.  
Other towns and other villages received the like Pentecostal shower and  
we had hoped—O that our hopes had been realized—that all England  
would have been filled with the same Divine enthusiasm and that the effects would have continued among us. To a great extent the revival has  
departed and many of our Churches are more stolid and cold than ever.  
And our denomination—never too zealous, seldom guilty of excessive heat,  
seems to have now, I think, as little earnest life as it ever had. Back to  
their old beds of slumber—back again to their old dens of routine—  
downward again to Laodicean lukewarmness have they stolen. Their  
goodness was as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passes away. O  
that the Lord would once again crown the year with His goodness and  
send us revivals from the right hand of the Most High!  
Here it is, O well-beloved flock of my care and love, that I ask your  
gratitude, mainly and chiefly. My Brothers and Sisters, how the Lord has  
cheered and comforted our hearts while He has crowned our years with  
His goodness! Here these ten years have I, as He has enabled me,  
preached the Gospel among you. We have seen no excitement, no stirrings  
of an unwarranted fanaticism—no wildfires have been kindled—and yet  
see how the multitude have listened to the Gospel with unceasing attention. And the surging crowds at yonder doors prove that, as in the days of  
John the Baptist, so it is now—the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence  
and every man presses into it.  
As for conversions, has not the Lord been pleased to give them to us as  
constantly as the sun rises in his place? Scarcely a sermon without the  
benediction of the Most High—many of them preached in weakness, which  
none of you have known but the speaker—preached at times with throbs  
of heart and partings of anguish, which have made the preacher go home  
mourning that he ever preached at all. And yet success has come and  
souls have been saved! And the preacher’s heart has been made to sing  
for joy, for the seed rots not, the furrows are good, the field has been well  
prepared and where the seed falls it brings forth a hundredfold, to the  
praise and honor of the Most High.  
Brethren, we must not forget this! We might have preached for nothing.  
We might have plowed the thankless rock and gathered no sheaves. Why  
then does He bless us? Is it our worthiness? Ah, no. Is it for anything in  
the preacher or in the hearers? God forbid that we should think such a  
thing! It has been the Sovereign Mercy of God which has prospered His  
own Truth among us and shall we not, for this, praise and bless His  
name?  
If we, as a Church, do not continue to be as prayerful and as earnest as  
we have been, the Lord may justly make us like Shiloh, which He deserted, until it became a desolation where not one stone was left upon  
another. No, I venture to say if we do not progress in earnestness, if you,  
my Hearers, do not become more than ever devoted to the Lord’s cause. If  
there is not more and more of an earnest missionary spirit stirred up and  
nurtured among us, we may expect the Lord to turn away from us and  
find another people who shall more worthily repay His favors. Who knows but you may have come to the kingdom for such a time as  
this. Perhaps the Lord intends, by some of you to save multitudes of  
souls, to stir up His Churches and to awaken the slumbering spirit of religion. Will you prove unworthy? Will you say, “I pray you have me excused.” Will you not rather, in looking back upon the plentiful harvest of  
souls reaped in this place, consider that you are in debt to God and therefore give to Him the fullest consecration that Believers can offer, because  
of the crowning mercies which we as a Church receive? “You crown the

year with your goodness.”  
Beloved, one more remark here. We are looking forward to a time when  
this world’s year shall be crowned with God’s goodness in the highest and  
most boundless sense. Centuries are flying and yet the darkness lingers—  
time grows old and yet the idols sit upon their thrones. Christ does not yet  
reign. His unsuffering kingdom has not come. The scepters are still in the  
hands of despots and slaves still fret in iron bonds in vain. In vain, O  
earth, have you expected brighter days, for still the thick and heavy night  
rests over your sons. But the day shall come—and the signs of its coming  
are increasing in their brightness—the day shall come when the harvest of  
the world shall be reaped. Christ has not died in vain. He redeemed the  
world with His blood and the whole world He will have.  
From eastern coast to western, Christ must reign. Yet will the Seed of  
the woman chase the powers of darkness back to their evil habitations.  
Yet shall He pierce the crooked serpent and cut leviathan that is in the  
depths of the sea. Yet shall the trumpet ring and the multitudes represented in Him when He rose as the great wave-sheaf rise from the dead  
from land and sea. And yet, in the day of His appearing, shall the kings of  
the earth yield up their sovereignty, and all nations shall call Him blessed.  
Tarry awhile, Beloved, wait yet a little season and when you shall hear the  
shout, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns,” then  
shall you know that He crowns the year with His goodness.  
II. But we must leave this point and turn to the next. PATHS OF FATNESS SHOULD BE WAYS OF DUTY. “And your paths drop fatness.” When  
the conqueror journeys through the nations, his paths drop blood—fire  
and vapor of smoke are in his tracks and tears and groans and sighs attend him. But where the Lord journeys, His “paths drop fatness.” When  
the kings of old made progress through their dominions, they caused a  
famine wherever they tarried. For the greedy courtiers who swarmed in  
their camp devoured all things like locusts and were as greedily ravenous as palmer-worms and caterpillars. But where the great King of kings  
journeys, He enriches the land—His “paths drop fatness.”  
By a bold Hebrew metaphor—and the Hebrew poetry certainly seems to  
be the most sublime in its conceptions—the clouds are represented as the  
chariots of God—“He makes the clouds His chariot.” And as the Lord Jehovah rides upon the heavens in the greatness of His strength and in His  
excellency on the sky, the rains drop down upon the lands and so the  
wheel tracks of Jehovah are marked by the fatness which makes glad the  
earth. Happy, happy are the people who worship such a God, whose coming is ever a coming of goodness and of Divine Grace to His creatures! We see, then, dear Friends, that in Providence, wherever the Lord  
comes, His “paths drop fatness.” He may sometimes seem to pinch His  
people and bring them into want, but if there is not a fatness of outward  
good there will be a fatness of inward mercy. Even the trials which the  
Lord scatters like coals of fire in His path, do but burn up the weeds and  
warm the heart of the soil. Do but trust the Lord and appeal to Him in all  
your straits and difficulties and you shall find that when He comes forth  
out of His hiding place for your help, His paths shall drop fatness. Your  
poverty shall be removed and your dejection of spirit shall be cheered. Beloved, we believe that our text has a fullness of meaning if it is  
viewed in a spiritual sense—“His paths drop fatness.” In the use of the  
means, the sinner will find God’s paths drop with fatness. Are you hungry  
and thirsty? Does your soul faint within you? Are you longing to be satisfied with favor? Then, Sinner, wait upon the Lord and hearken diligently  
unto the message of His Gospel. Be constantly searching the Scriptures,  
or listening to His Truth as it is proclaimed in your ears. Especially, Sinner, remember that the ways of the Lord are to be seen in the Person of  
Christ. Go to those hands which are the ways of Divine justice. Go to  
those feet which are the pathways of infinite love. Explore that side where  
deep affection dwells, and you shall find fatness of mercy dropping there. No sinner ever did come to God and was sent away empty. You may attend the means, I grant you, and yet find no comfort, for means are not  
always God’s paths. But you cannot come to Christ, you cannot rest in  
Him and be disappointed. Trust in Him at all times and however deep  
your poverty, it shall have a superabundant supply. “His paths drop fatness.”  
You also who are His people, I know that sometimes your souls grow  
faint. Weary with the wilderness, worn with its cares, torn with its briars,  
you come up to the House of God and oh, if you come there to see your  
Master and not merely to join in the routine of service. If you come there  
seeking after Him and panting for Him as the hart pants for the water  
brooks, you will find that the most common services—poor though the  
minister is, and plain the place and simple the people—though the music  
may have but little charm for the ear of taste and the words of the speaker may have none of the trappings of oratory, yet sweet to you shall be the  
worship of God’s House, and you shall find that “His paths drop fatness.” So, too, in the use of those precious ordinances—Baptism and the  
Lord’s Supper. You that know the Truth and are made free by it, shall find  
that those paths drop fatness. I believe many of you are lean and starved  
because you are not obedient to your Lord’s command in Baptism. You  
know what He bids you do, but you stand back from it. You comprehend  
your duty and perhaps you say you are Baptists in principle, forgetting  
that this very principle of yours is that which will condemn you unless  
you carry it out. In keeping that commandment there is a great reward.  
And many besides the Ethiopian noble of queen Candace’s empire, have  
gone on their way rejoicing from the baptismal stream.  
It is peculiarly so at the Lord’s Table. I would not give up the Lord’s  
Supper as a means of Divine Grace for anything that could be devised. To  
the godless it must ever be a condemnation. But to the saint of God who  
comes there, desiring to be fed with the flesh of Christ, it becomes a feast,  
indeed. I do trust, dear Friends, that in a very short time we shall celebrate the Lord’s Supper every Sunday. I am convicted that a weekly celebration is Scriptural and I see more and more the need of it. I think it is  
an ordinance to which we ought not to prescribe our own times and our  
own seasons, where the Word of God is so very express and so plain. Such was Apostolic custom—search for yourselves and see, indeed, if  
there were no Apostolic precedent. Methinks the sweetness of the service  
and the delightful nature of the ordinance might suggest to Christians  
that it was well to have it frequently. We cannot be satisfied once a month  
with communion with Christ and methinks we hardly ought to be satisfied  
with the sign itself so seldom. God’s paths drop fatness—happy are they  
who diligently walk in them.  
Beloved, the Lord has other paths besides those of the open means of  
Grace and these, too, drop fatness. Especially let me mention to you the  
path of prayer. No Believer ever says, “My leanness, my leanness! Woe  
unto me,” who is much in the closet. Starving souls generally live at a distance from the Mercy Seat. Close access to God in wrestling prayer is sure  
to make the Believer strong—if not happy. The nearest place to the gate of  
Heaven is the Throne of the heavenly Grace. Much alone and you will  
have much assurance—little alone with God, your religion will be very  
shallow. You shall have many doubts and fears and but little of the joy of  
the Lord.  
Let us see to it, Beloved, that since the soul-enriching path of prayer is  
open to the very weakest saint. Since no high attainments are required.  
Since you are not bid to come because you are an advanced saint, but  
freely invited if you are a saint at all, let us see to it, I say, that we be often in the way of private devotion. Be much on your knees, for so Elijah  
drew the rain upon famished Israel’s fields.  
The like, certainly, I may say of the secret path of communion. Oh, the delights which are to be had by that man who has fellowship with Christ! Earth has no words which can set forth the holy mirth of the soul that leans on Jesus’ bosom. Few Christians understand it. They live in the lowlands and seldom climb to the top of Nebo. They live outside. They come not into the holy place. They take not up the privilege of priesthood. At a distance they see the sacrifice, but they sit not down with the priest to eat their portion and to enjoy the fat of the burnt offering. Brother, Sister, sit always under the shadow of Jesus! Come up to that palm tree and take hold of the branches. Let your Beloved be unto you as the apple tree among the trees of the woods, and you shall find a never-failing fruit  
which shall ever be sweet unto your taste.  
I must not forget that the path of faith, too, is a path that drops fatness. It is a strange path—few walk in it, even of professors. But they who  
in temporals and in spirituals have learned to lean on God alone, shall  
find it a path of fatness. As we spoke the other morning concerning the  
cedars up there upon that stormy ridge, unwatered by a single river, and  
yet always green, so shall the Christian be who lives alone upon his God.  
Wait only upon God. Let your expectation be from Him. The young lions  
may lack and suffer hunger, but you shall not want any good thing, for  
the paths of the Lord shall drop fatness for you.  
O my dear Hearers, I would to God the Lord would come into the midst  
of our Churches and congregations by His Spirit—then would His path  
drop fatness. We have a multitude of complaints at different times of the  
dullness and lethargy of the Churches. What we need is more of the Presence of the Holy Spirit—more of the holy baptism of His sacred influences.

In a very quaint sermon by Matthew Wilkes I remember he said that ministers were like pens—some of them were common goose quills, writing  
very heavily and often requiring sharpening. Others of them, he said—the  
college men—were like steel pens and while they could make good fine up  
strokes, they could not make such heavy down strokes as some of the  
quills could.  
But, he said, neither the one pen nor the other could do anything without ink. And therefore, he said, our ministers want more ink. The ink is  
the Holy Spirit—“written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living  
God.” And so Mr. Wilkes suggested that people, instead of finding fault  
with the minister, would do well to pray, “Lord, give him more ink—give  
him more ink!” There was much in that prayer, for we need often to be  
dipped in that ink, or else we cannot make a mark on your hearts. However experienced we may be in saved service, you and I cannot serve God  
effectually, nor see any power resting on our ministry, except as we get  
more of the Spirit of the living God.  
I would that the Churches laid to heart more and more the real need of  
the times. We have been building hosts of Chapels lately and raising thousands of pounds. And because there were revivals and we hear of them every now and then, we have been thinking that we are in a good state. Now I venture to say that all our denominations are in a bad state. There is one which I mention with profound respect, whose statistics cause me sincere sorrow. I believe that in that large, wealthy and most earnest body of Christians, the Wesleyans, the clear increase of all the Wesleyan Chapels in the whole metropolis, including a wide district around London, for the whole of this year, is far from equal to the annual  
increase of this one Church.  
If I am not mistaken, the increase throughout the whole of the United  
Kingdom is about four thousand five hundred, being scarcely two per cent  
upon the whole body. If our Baptist denomination could have as good and  
clear statistics, I exceedingly much question whether we should be found,  
taking the whole of us together, to be in a much better state. The fact is,  
denominations, when they are poor and despised and live upon God and  
are all earnest, always increase and have many conversions. But we are  
getting, all of us, so respectable, building fine Chapels and looking after  
schools and all sorts of things that the Spirit of God is departing from  
us—we are losing the Divine anointing and the blessed unction—we are  
congratulating ourselves upon an enlightenment which does not exist and  
upon an advancement that is all moonshine.  
Look at the journals for last week and see with horror a picture of superstition worthy of the dark ages exhibited in a country village, where, to  
my knowledge, there is both an Independent and Baptist Chapel and yet  
the people believe in witchcraft still! Is this, is this the effect of religion?  
Why, our places of worship do not operate as they should upon the people. They are, in most places, mere clubs where good people spend their  
Sundays, but the outlying mass is not touched. To a great extent we have  
lost the old fire, the Divine enthusiasm, the Pentecostal furor, that sacred  
flame of the first Apostles! We need all these, by God’s Grace, if ever we  
are to startle a dying world.  
And in this place, where God has favored us with much of His Presence, we are getting into very much the same condition. How many of you  
who once were earnest are now as cold as slabs of ice! Some of you do  
hardly anything for my Lord and Master. Converted, I trust, you are—but  
where is your first love? Where is the love of your espousals which made  
some of you talk of Jesus by day and dream of Him by night? O for a return to God’s paths—O for a revival once again in the midst of the  
Churches. Ten years ago we could speak honestly that the Churches were  
almost dead, but I think they are worse now, because they have cherished  
the idea that they are not so dead as they were!  
We are as bad as ever—with a name to live—whereas we are dead. O  
that some trumpet voice could wake our sleeping Churches once again!  
Can you live without souls saved? If you can, I cannot. Can you live without London being enlightened with the light of God? If you can so live, I  
pray my Master let me die. Can you bear to fight and win no victories? To  
sow and reap no harvests? Brethren, if you are right, you cannot endure  
it, but you must endure it till the Lord comes forth. Let us pray, therefore,  
with might and main, with a holy violence which will take no denial! Let  
us pray the Lord to come forth out of His hiding place, for His “paths drop  
fatness,” and there is fatness to be found nowhere else besides. III. And now I close. The whole subject seems to give us one or two  
suggestions as to matters of duty. “You crown the year with Your goodness.” One suggestion is this—some of you in this house are strangers to  
God, you have been living as His enemies and you will probably die so.  
But what a blessing it would be if a part of the crown of this year should  
be your conversion! “The harvest is past and the summer is ended and  
you are not saved.” But oh, what a joy, if this very day you should turn  
unto God and live! Remember, the way of salvation was freely proclaimed  
last Sunday morning, it runs in this style—“This is the Commandment,  
that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.”  
Soul, if this day you trust in Christ, it shall be your spiritual birthday,  
it shall be unto you the beginning of day! Emancipated from your chains,  
delivered from the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death, you shall  
be the Lord’s free man. What do you say? O that the Spirit of God would  
bring you this day to turn unto Him with full purpose of heart! Another suggestion. Would not the Lord crown this year with His goodness if He would move some of you to do more for Him than you have ever  
done before? Cannot you think of some new thing that you have forgotten,  
but which is in the power of your hands? Can you not do it for Christ today?—some fresh soul you have never conversed with—some fresh means  
of usefulness you have never attempted?  
And lastly, would not it be well for us if the Lord would crown this year  
with His goodness by making us begin from this day to be more prayerful?  
Let our Prayer Meetings have more at them and let everyone in his closet  
pray more for the preacher, pray more for the Church. Let us, everyone of  
us, give our hearts anew to Christ. What do you say today, to renew your  
consecration vow? Let us say to Him, “Here, Lord, I give myself away to  
You once more. You have bought me with Your blood, accept me again.  
From this good hour I will begin a new life for a second time if Your Spirit  
is with me. Help me, Lord, for Jesus Christ’s sake.” Amen.

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GOD IN HEAVEN, AND MEN ON THE SEA  
NO. 3321

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1912.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN SAILORS’ SOCIETY, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“By terrible things in righteousness will You answer us, O God of our salvation; who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.”  
Psalm 65:5.**

PLEASE read the 65th Psalm through. May it do you good, whether as landsmen you read of the Lord’s settling the furrows, or as sailors you hear of His stilling the noise of the seas. Notice the first two verses— “Praise waits for You,” “O You that hear prayer.” Holy men of old were accustomed to mix praise and prayer together—this is a happy mixture! We are not tied to one thing. We spread the sails of prayer and fly the flag of praise. To praise God without praying to Him would be impossible. To pray to God without praising Him would be ungrateful. Praise takes in a cargo of gold for the King of kings—and prayer stokes the fires to make the good ship steam towards the royal city! Brothers, keep to this throughout all the watches—pray and praise—and when you need a change, praise and pray! Keep the boat of the soul going with these two oars—praise and prayer.

Notice, also, in this Psalm, that when the saints of the olden time offered prayer and praise, they addressed themselves at once to God—not to saints and angels. David is not satisfied with talking about God, but he talks to Him, as in our text—“You will answer us, O God of our salvation.” There’s nothing like straight sailing—let us go directly to God. We ought not to think of what our fellow men will say of our praises. If they are not musical in the ears of men, it matters little, so long as they are sweet to the Lord our God! When we engage in public prayer, it is a pity to be thinking about how our words will sound in the opinion of our Brothers—let us only think of the Lord to whom we are speaking. We can’t steer two ways at once. If we make for the Mercy Seat, we need not consider the pews. Let us fix our eyes on the lighthouse at the mouth of the harbor and leave the church on the hill, and the windmill over yonder, for other people to look at. Brothers, look to your Captain and let your mates think what they like! Let us know our port and steer for it—and let the twin-ship of prayer and praise never take any course but that which carries our whole heart straight to Heaven!

I. First, then, dear Friends, let us consider WHAT THE LORD IS TO US. He is the “God of our salvation.”  
It is clear from this that we all need salvation. If it were not clear in this text, we could not doubt it, for the evidence surrounds us on every side. We have, sadly, sufficient proof of our lost estate. Human nature is waterlogged and ready to sink—and in God, alone, is our hope.  
The text tells us where salvation is, namely, in God. God is the God of our salvation. You have neither right ideas of yourself, nor right ideas of God unless you see that by nature you have need of being saved from sin

—saved by nothing less than a Divine hand! The greatest saint on earth is still a sinner. Let him have safely sailed on the sea of life for 60 years, he will be on the rocks before the morning watch unless the Lord saves him. The most intelligent man and the man of longest experience, still needs saving. The oldness of a ship does not increase its seaworthiness. Ask at Lloyd’s if a ship is any safer because it has been afloat more than 60 years. No man that lives is safe from rocks, quicksands and tempests, or even from foundering at sea unless the Lord God shall be always the God of his salvation! We have all need to ask for salvation from the guilt of sin, the power of sin and the curse of sin. And it should be our great joy that the Lord graciously condescends to provide all this for us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior!  
It is this salvation which brings God to us and us to God. I do not think that very many find God by what they see in Nature. Men see the works of God, but they do not see God in His works. There is such a thing, I suppose, as going “from Nature up to Nature’s God,” but it is a hard climb for cripples, like the most of us! To lift your foot even from the top of the highest mountain to the lowest step of the Throne of God is a tremendous effort. Human nature does not care for such an upward climb. The ready way to God, by which tens of thousands have come to Him, is by Jesus Christ our Savior. No man ever comes to God except by Jesus, who is the way of salvation. There may be other channels, but this is the only navigable one. Our boats draw too much water to get to God along the shallow straits of human learning. We shall be wise to keep to the deep waters of redeeming love, for by this channel God came to us. The glorious God came here to earth in the Person of His Son, that He might reconcile us to Himself and so save us. Where there is depth enough for God to come to man, there is a fair sea-way for man to come to God! Remember that the Lord Jesus came for our salvation. “God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” Salvation brought God to us and salvation must bring us to God, or else we shall be castaways. Blessed forever be our gracious and glorious God, for in every man that is saved, He is the God of his salvation in Christ Jesus!  
The salvation that we get is entirely from God. If you ever hear of salvation that does not come from God, depend upon it, it is not seaworthy, but will turn out to be one of those worm-eaten coffin ships! I would not trust a dog on board of it. If I were to preach a merely human salvation to you, it would not be worth your while to listen to me. “Salvation is of the Lord” is the saying of Jonah, from the depths of the sea! This salvation began in God’s everlasting purpose, in His sacred Covenant, in His Divine choice of His people. It is carried out by the life and death of our Savior. It is worked in us by the Holy Spirit, by whom we are quickened, illuminated, converted and brought to faith in Jesus. Salvation is of the Lord, from stem to stern, from truck to keel. There is not a bit of rope on board, nor even a spar up aloft which is of man’s merit or working. Christ is the A, and He is the Z of the salvation alphabet! He is not only the helper of our salvation, but the God of it, the Maker of it, the All-in-All of it! Have any of you a salvation which you have manufactured for yourselves? Then drop it overboard and row away from it, as fast as you can, lest it should be a torpedo to work your ruin. The only salvation that can redeem from Hell is a salvation which comes from Heaven! Eternal salvation must come from an eternal God. Salvation that makes you a new creature must be the work of Him who sits upon the Throne of God and makes all things new!  
It is a remarkable thing that in this salvation there is a strange mixture of the terrible and the gracious. “By terrible things in righteousness will You answer us, O God of our salvation.” In the death of our Lord Jesus we see the salvation of God—in this the Lord is terrible against sin, but most tender to the sinner. God did not put up the sword of His Justice, for He was bound to use it. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” To do right He must punish sin. And, oh, how terrible it is to view our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, bowing His head to death in the sinner’s place and bearing in His own innocent Person the wrath of God an account of sin! Our children’s hymn puts the Truth of God exactly— *“He saw how wicked men had been,  
And knew that God must punish sin  
So, out of pity, Jesus said  
He’d bear the punishment instead.”*  
In that verse, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, the Lord has perfected praise! It was indeed a display of terrible things in righteousness when the perfect Son of God was made to sweat great drops of blood and to be in an agony in Gethsemane. Terrible things in righteousness were manifest when He was scourged, spit upon and nailed to a tree and made to die without the comfort of His Father’s Presence, crying in anguish, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Ah, Friends, when the Father’s best Beloved bore those unknown sufferings by which the honor of the Divine Government was maintained, it was a very terrible day! Not even the pains of the lost are more terrible for a tender and devout mind to think upon, than our Lord’s being made a curse for us when He was hanged upon the tree. We seek salvation—the Lord Jehovah answers us and bids us behold it in the blood of His Only-Begotten Son—“By terrible things in righteousness will You answer us, O God.”  
So, also, when God came to deal with us by His Spirit, He mixed the terror with the Grace. If you have been praying to God to save you, then if He has answered you, you have had a vision of terrible things. To see your guilt, your present ruin and your future doom, is to be made to tremble terribly. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to our vessel, walking on the sea, He finds us in an awful storm. The sails are torn to ribbons, and every timber groans. We see ourselves wrecked by Nature before we see ourselves saved by Grace! Conviction of sin does not come to every sinner with the same degree of force, but to some of us, when we were under the bondage of the Law, neither sun nor moon appeared, the sea worked and was tempestuous and all hope that we should be saved was taken away from us! We reeled to and fro and staggered like drunken men. We were at our wits’ ends—we did not know then that the God of our salvation has His way in the whirlwind! The Lord comes to us with a drawn sword before He comes with a silver scepter! He designs to make us give up self-righteousness and self-confidence—and come and lay hold on Christ, to be our All-in-All. Men won’t take to the lifeboat of salvation while they think their own craft can be kept afloat. But when their vessel is settling down at the head, they are glad to see the lifeboat near!  
The God of our salvation has revealed Himself to many of us, not as One who winks at sin, but as a consuming fire. In these days a God is preached who is not in the Bible, nor yet on the sea. Our God is not the new god of proud philosophers, but the God of the olden times! We know that the true God is just, as well as gracious, and will by no means allow His Laws to be despised. You that go down to the sea in ships, you know that the God of the Sea is terrible upon the roaring billows, when the sea runs mountains high! He is tender, kind and loving, but oh, how terrible when He puts on His dark robes of tempest!  
He sets the heavens on a blaze and His terrible voice is heard above the roaring of the sea. The elements are in confusion. Deep calls unto deep, the heavens clasp hands with the ocean and the largest vessel seems like a cockle-shell, soon to sink and no more to be seen! He is a dreadful God, this God of ours! There is none like He in power and justice. Well may the seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” This makes us feel that He can smite with iron hands when once He comes forth to deal with sin. Behold the Red Sea! See how the adversaries of Jehovah sank to the bottom as a stone! He is terrible out of His holy places. He is the God of Heaven, but a pit is dug for the wicked. The Lord makes His saved ones to know Him as He is—not as He is made out to be by those who would seem to be wiser than the Scriptures!  
I trust that many of you can say of the Lord, “He is the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is my hope and my joy.” He is glorious in holiness and terrible in righteousness—and I love Him all the more because He hates iniquity and will not endure evil!  
The difficulty with most men is that they will not have God to be their Savior—they want to save themselves. Every man thinks he can be his own pilot to the port of Glory. But what can we do? What merit, what wisdom? What strength have we? We are proud fools and deceive ourselves! I have heard a story of a main on board a vessel which was coming home from the other side of the world. He was very conceited and interfered with everything. Every now and then a captain does get such a man on board. He was always grumbling and making trouble. The ship met with rough weather and this meddlesome gentleman picked up the notion that things were in a very bad way and the ship might go down. He was getting into everybody’s way and so the captain, calling him to one side, told him that it was highly important that he should keep very quiet for the next hour or two and that he should hold fast a certain rope to which he pointed out to him. Nobody could tell what might depend on his holding on to that rope and saying nothing to anybody! Our noisy friend felt himself to be a person of consequence, put his feet down, set his teeth together and in a very determined manner stuck to his rope! If anybody came along, instead of talking, as he was used to do, he held his tongue. Just as you must not speak to the man at the wheel, so he felt that no one was allowed to speak to him. Did not the safety of the ship depend upon his being quiet and holding tightly to that rope? He kept his post with due gravity till the wind dropped—and then he did not say much—for his sense of merit made him modest. He waited patiently for the passengers to present him with a piece of plate for having saved the ship. He felt, at any rate, that deep gratitude was due to him for his wonderful exertions. It was about the most difficult thing he had ever done in his life, for he had held his tongue for hours and thus made a martyr of himself to save them all! As nobody thanked him, he began to hint at the importance of the service he had rendered. But they did not seem to see it, for, you know, people will not always see a thing that is very plain. At last he stated his case more fully and became so exacting that the captain had to tell him that he had only given him that bit of rope to hold just to keep him quiet and that, really, he had not contributed, in the least degree, to the safety of the vessel! That is just what I feel inclined by do with certain vastly important persons who think they can do wonders in the things of God! If you will keep from boasting and stand out of the Lord’s way, that is as much as I hope for from you. And if the Lord leads you to trust yourself in Jesus’ hands, then all will be safe enough! With God to save us, what is there for us to do but to trust and not to be afraid?

II. I have set forth what God is to us. Now let us see WHAT GOD WILL DO FOR US. Don’t doubt it, the Lord has an open ear to hear His people’s prayers.  
He will answer us. This shows that we must all pray. Every believing man in the world must pray! And we shall never get into such a state of Grace that we have no need to pray.  
But what do we pray for? Well, according to the text, one of the most important things is to pray against sin. “Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, You shall purge them away.” Do we not need to pray daily for cleansing? This must be the prayer of the man who is seeking the Lord for the first time. Does the leak of sin gain upon you? Are the pirates of temptation all around you so that you cannot get away from them? Are you compelled to say, “Iniquities prevail against me”? Cry to the Lord Jesus to come to the rescue! A word from Him will stop the leak and drive the demons back when they are boarding you. Pray to Him at once!  
Do I address a backslider? Did you once acknowledge the name of Christ? Have you taken down the old flag? Are you now trading under other colors? Are you sorry it is so? Do iniquities prevail against you? Ah, then come to the Lord again! Ask Him to come and take possession of you. The pirates are coming board, now, and you cannot get rid of them, but as for your iniquities, He can purge them away.” He can sweep the deck of them!  
If you have long been a Christian and have not backslidden, you will have, as you grow in Grace, more and more a sense of the sin that dwells in you. You will be crying out every day, “Lord, keep me, for I shall perish utterly, even now, after all my experience, unless You preserve me from my inbred sin and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.” Cry to God tonight in that fashion. Ask to be steered clear of all evil and to be presented faultless. When we are close in shore we need a pilot more than ever. We shall be wrecked in the river’s mouth unless the Lord preserves us! Iniquities will prevail unless Omnipotent Grace prevails. In this direction we shall always need to cry mightily unto the Preserver of men.  
We also pray for nearer fellowship with God. Just let me read you the next words. “Blessed is the man whom You choose and cause to approach unto You.” Lord, help me to approach You, so as to know Your love and love You in return. Let us go on reading the record—“That He may dwell in your courts.” Lord, help me to be one of Your court and always to live in Your Presence.  
“We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, even of Your holy Temple.” Do you not long for that satisfaction? Is there not in your hearts, my beloved Brothers, a great desire to get nearer to God and to abide in His house?  
Oh, to have a continual enjoyment of the favor of God! May the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! Blessed be the name of the Lord our God! He will hear and answer that prayer! As He will help you to conquer sin, so will He also help you to grow in Divine Grace. There is no reason why we should not be far happier and far holier than we are. If we are straitened at all, we are not straitened in God, but in ourselves. It is not that there is no wind, but we do not spread enough sail. If you do not enter into the deep things of God with understanding, and if you do not enjoy them with delight, you must blame yourselves. You have not, because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. If a man will not take the tide while it flows, it will be his own fault if the ebb bears him away from the harbor. If we pray, God will answer.  
But, remember, if we pray to be delivered from sin, and to be brought nearer to the Lord, He may answer us by terrible things in righteousness. I would like to whisper these words in the ears of all praying men. Often you know not what you ask and, perhaps, if you really knew how God would answer you, you would not pray as you now do! You were praying the other day that God would sanctify you—and now you see more of the workings of evil in your nature than ever before! Crosses and losses have come upon you thick and threefold! Temptations and evil thoughts have beset you more fiercely than ever and you are saying, “Lord, is this the answer to my prayer?” Yes, by terrible things in righteousness He is answering you! The sheep desires to be brought near to the shepherd and the shepherd sends his black dog to fetch it home. Our trials and troubles, afflictions and adversities, are among the best medicines of our Great Physician. A trial has been love’s reply to earnest desire. God’s wisdom often chooses to give us a head wind to prevent our rushing upon sunken rocks.  
Dear Friends, God will answer you surely, though He answers you strangely! He answers roughly, but rightly. The help of no other can suffice you, but if you cry to God you shall find His strength to be allsufficient, both for crushing sin and for growth in Grace. See what the Lord has been doing for the earth during the last few weeks of spring! Only a few weeks ago we went out of doors and saw nothing but the earth wrapped in a winding-sheet of snow, or, perhaps, the dull, black ground soaking in rain. Where were the myriads of leaves that now clothe the trees? And where the kingcups and daisies which bedeck the meadows and make them bright as cloth of gold? Where was all this wealth of flowers? Where all this music of song birds? God came! He breathed in pity on the frozen brooks and loosed the waters from their icy chains. He unbound the iron bonds of winter. He made the world look up and laugh with flowers. Brothers, He will do the same with us! Though this may be the winter of our soul’s grief and it may be necessary that we should endure it for a little while longer, yet He will answer us— and after an interval of terrible storm He will bless us with rest and joy!  
III. The third point is this—WHAT THE LORD IS TO “THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.” He is “the confidence of the ends of the earth.” All men have a confidence and they are wise who place all their confidence in God!  
Who are “the ends of the earth”? They may be those who live in the extremes of climate—the dwellers at the poles and at the equator. These are so tried by cold and by heat that one would think they would hardly live in such regions if they did not confide in God. Those who live at the ends of the earth are farthest off. God is worthy to be the confidence of those who are farthest off from His Church, from His Gospel, from hope, from anything that is good and from God, Himself. This sermon may, one of these days, reach somebody who will say to himself, “I think that I am the farthest off from God of anybody that ever lived. I have been guilty of cursing and swearing and I have committed all manner of vice and so I have gone as far away from God and the very name of religion as it is possible for a man to go.” Friend, our God is worthy to be your confidence, even yours! You are permitted to put your trust in Him and find salvation in Him, even in His Son, Jesus Christ, who cries “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.”  
The ends of the earth may mean, also, those that are least known. Are there not men scattered abroad of whom nobody knows anything? They do not, themselves, know who their father and mother were and nobody cares to acknowledge them. Nobody calls them brother, or knows where they came from. They wish to be forgotten. They would not like to have their stories told. Their character is such that they can get on better without it than with it. Well but, Jesus Christ is worthy to be the confidence of those who are least known. They are known to Him! He knows their past and their present! Oh, that sinners who are far off in that way, and least known, would come and put their trust in Him!  
The ends of the earth are the parts that are least thought of. We dart a thought towards France with its Exhibition. We think of Germany and its vast army. We think of the United States and the many there of our kith and kin. These lie within the pale of our thought and consideration, but who cares for Dahomey or Nova, Zembla? Of the ends of the earth no one thinks! Do I speak to one who has been saying, “No man cares for my soul”? Do they quite pass you by? Are you like a man on a raft who has seen many a vessel go by, but cannot manage to make anyone see him and come to his rescue? Put your trust in the Lord, you who are derelict and drifting fast to destruction, for, “He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth.” Looking to God when you have no one else to look to, you will find in Him a true helper!  
The ends of the earth may also mean the most tried. Where the cold is most severe, or where the dog-star burns most furiously, there we have the ends of the earth. And you who are most poor or most sick, or who have least of ability and talent—you are those who should make God your confidence, for He delights to be the strength of the weak, the fullness of the empty! God’s Grace is the hospital for sick souls—come and enter it! He lifts the poor from the dunghill to set him among princes. Driven to your wits’ end, brought down to life’s dregs, take the Lord for your confidence and it shall be well with you!  
“The ends of the earth.” Well, they are the hardest to reach. We have around us men and women who are as hard to get at as the North Pole. We do not know how to speak to them so that they will understand us, for they are so ignorant. We would, if we could, do them good, but they are so depraved that we are half afraid that they will do us harm! It may be they are so proud and conceited that we can hardly get a good word in edge ways with them. Sailors, you must have met with fellows to whom you give a wide berth. You never felt inclined to take them on board. These ships are too far gone to be towed into harbor and you clear out, lest when they sink you should be sucked down with them! Yet the Lord is ready to help even these! Those whom no man can pity and no man can help, God can love and save! A mortal arm is too short to reach these shipwrecked souls. Cast away on an iron-bound coast, there is no hope for them but in the Lord of Salvation—but in Him they may trust, for, “He is the confidence of the ends of the earth.” Ho, my comrades, when you are at your worst, God is still at His best! When you are all misery, He is all mercy! When you are at “the ends of the earth,” you may be at the beginnings of Heaven!

IV. I shall not weary you, I trust, for I have come to the last point, which is this—WHAT IS GOD TO SEAFARING MEN? What should He be to sailors? He is the confidence of all them that are “afar off upon the sea.”  
In the life of a seafaring man we have a picture of the voyage of faith. Hundreds of years ago, when men went to sea at all, their boats kept always within sight of shore. Your Greek or Roman mariner might be quite a master of his galley, but he could not bear to lose sight of a headland which he knew, for he had no compass and knew little or nothing of astronomical observations. Here and there a lighthouse might be placed, but it would be regarded as a wonder. But at this day a ship may not sight land for a month and yet its position on the chart will be as certain as your position in the pew! The vessel will be steered entirely by observations of the heavenly bodies and by chart and compass—and yet at the end of thirty days it will reach a point which was never within sight and reach it as accurately as if it had been running on a tram rail instead of sailing over the pathless ocean! Its way is as certain as if it had traversed a railway from port to port! Such is the life of a Christian—the life of faith. We see not spiritual things, but yet we steer for them with absolute certainty! We ought not to wish to see, for, “We walk by faith, not by sight.” We take our bearings by the things in the heavens. We are guided by the Word of God, which is our chart, and by the witness of the blessed Spirit within, which is our compass! We see Him who is invisible and we seek a Heaven full of “things not seen as yet.” Glory be to God, we shall reach the harbor as sure as a bullet goes to the mark! We are making direct tracks for the Kingdom of God! We fly to Heaven by a bee line even when we cannot see our way! Don’t shift a point, Brothers. As the Captain of your salvation has set the helm, so let it remain. Trusting in God, we shall come to our desired haven in due time and shall not miss our way! We need not fear shipwreck, for He that taught us to sail the spiritual sea will guide us safely till we come to the Glory Land!  
Those that are “afar off upon the sea” are on an unstable element, but God is their confidence. They are never quiet, the boat is always rocking or rolling from side to side. On the sea they have no continuing city. Is it not so with us? We also dwell upon an unstable element. We talk of the solid earth, but it is only so in contrast with the waves. All things beneath the moon are changing. When I went to my annual resting place in Mentone, after the earthquake, I felt a delight in realizing that everything around me was unsubstantial. I looked at the churches and the houses which had tumbled down, and I said to myself, “Now I feel how unstable the earth is.” I went up and down stairs, wondering that the house did not move—regarding it all as likely to give way. Some such impression would be good for us all to carry daily about with us. We live in a world which passes away! This life is made up of shadows—substance lies elsewhere! The things which are seen are temporal. You have dreamed yourselves into the belief that you live in a solid, substantial world, but it is only a dream, for the world passes away! The elements which make up our life are no more to be depended upon than the waters of the sea! What is our life but a vapor? What does it depend upon, but air?—the breath of our nostrils! Remember, you may die at any moment. Death may board you before the next watch. Oh, to live like a man at sea! He has loosed his hold from all things and feels himself committed to an unstable element upon whose calm condition he cannot depend, for at any moment a storm may bear him away. The godly sailor’s confidence is in God. In God he has a foundation that cannot be moved! God is the mariner’s terra firma and He is ours! All else is fickle, but God is Immutable!  
Next, they that are upon the sea are liable to great dangers. They cannot tell at any time that there may not come up from the North a howling blast, or from the South a tremendous cyclone. When above them all is clear blue, save “a cloud the size of a man’s hand,” they know that within an hour the Heaven may gather blackness and the sea, which now sleeps in calm, may rage in fury. A sailor’s life makes him see the dangers which surround him, but you and I know that we also live in a world where tempests of trial may be upon us in a moment. When I go home after a time of spiritual enjoyment and feel supremely happy, I say to myself, “I may expect trying news. I cannot be long at ease.” In fact, one gets in this world to be afraid of too profound a calm, lest at the back of it should lurk a terrible tempest. Our sign is “The Checkers,” and close to the white square lies the black. At sea we may reckon upon all sorts of weathers—we must, therefore, keep the boat trim and never neglect to set the helm and keep the watch wide awake. The sailor must keep his eyes open, for rocks and quicksands lies below, and hurricanes and cyclones lurk above. If he is a Christian, his confidence is in his God and his watchfulness is towards the world. O true Believer, let your confidence be in God, whether on sea, or shore! Say, “O God, my heart is fixed; my heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise.” What if there should be the devil, himself, let loose upon us, as upon Job of old? Let us still trust in the Lord! When God gives the devil rope enough, he will soon be down upon us, but Brothers, we need not fear him, for Christ is the Master of the devil and He can pull him up short when he comes rushing out to attack us! Let us not be afraid. He that is the Confidence of them that are afar off upon the sea shall be our Confidence in a world of storms!  
But the men on the sea also are familiar with trouble. It is not only liability to storm, but the storm does break over them. I speak to many who have weathered no end of tempests. In your voyages across the mighty deep, you have found it no child’s play to be tossed up and down like a ball in the hand of the storm. You have even been floating on the angry waves, clinging to a hen-coop, or lashed to the rigging. I do not envy you your trying experience but, spiritually, we drink from the same cup, for we, too, have had our rough passages and have been well-near cast away!  
You do not want to see any more of such nights as you can remember, when sea and sky were blended in dread confusion—neither do I wish to see those months in which to me, also, the winds were contrary—what a mercy in such seasons to have confidence in God! What is to be done if this fails us? But while God is with us it does not matter whether we live or die. We shall be with the Lord if we die, and if we live, the Lord will be with us!  
Beloved Friends, those that go down to the sea in ships soon find out their own weakness. A man looks like a man when he is on shore, or in command of a fine boat sailing along merrily before the wind, but in a great storm what a poor creature a man is! There he goes—yonder wave has swept him from the deck as if he were a spar. You hear one plaintive cry and it is all over with him. The hungry deep thinks nothing of so small a mouthful! The wind still howls and the waves dance with a horrid glee. If not thus drowned, the strong man is often rendered useless as to helping others. He cannot stir, for he could not keep his footing. He needs to be lashed to the rigging or he will be washed away. The bravest, the wisest, the strongest man is just nothing at all in the day of storm. Then the man almost envies the seabird that is tossed “up and down, up and down, from the base of the wave to the billow’s crown” because it is always safe and comes up from the spray as fresh as ever! Dear Friends, you and I are often brought into conditions in which we fear that we are not worth half as much as the sea-swallows. We have no strength left at all—we are less than nothing and vanity. Oh, then, let God be our Confidence!  
I exhort all Believers here to have more confidence in God than in all besides. Believe in the Lord a thousand fathoms deep. You will never believe too much nor too well of God. If friends forsake, if all means of comfort fail, let your confidence be so thoroughly in God that such things make no difference to you! It is a grand thing to get off the stocks and really float on the main sea. It is glorious to have an anchor in the skies and to hold to that, alone, when everything else is dragging and the earth itself is dissolved! A sailor is often brought to where, if God does not help him, he will be swallowed up—and you and I are always in the same condition. God is our All and we rest in Him, but apart from Him we are eternally wrecked!  
God bless you, my shipmates! We are not yet come to the Pacific Seas—we are still rounding the Cape of Storms, but another name for it is the Cape of Good Hope! With God for our confidence we are not afraid. We shall all meet around the flagship of our Great Captain in the Fair Havens above. We are lying in these roads tonight very near each other, but may never cross each other’s track again on this life’s voyage. Meet me in the Islands of the Blessed, in the Land of the Hereafter, where the sun shall go no more down forever! The Lord Jesus steer you there! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2967 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CHURCH’S PROBATION  
NO. 2967

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1863.

**“You, O God, have tested us.”  
Psalm 66:10.**

THE Psalmist, who spoke these words in his song, told forth the experience of the godly in all generations. In the Patriarchal age, when Abraham was called to leave his kindred and go forth from Ur of the Chaldees, he was constrained to sojourn as a stranger among a people that he knew not, told to wait with patience for a son whom God would give him in his old age and, at length, commanded to take that son to the top of a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice! He might well say, “You, O God, have tested us.” Isaac could say the same when he tabernacled in the Land of Promise, having not so much as a foot of it that he could call his own except his father’s sepulcher. Jacob learned the same stanza when he was tested in Laban’s household, when he wrestled with God in Peniel and triumphed over the Angel at Jabbok! This he knew when he went down into Egypt and, dying, blessed the sons of Joseph. All the Patriarchs, as they fell asleep, could say, “You, O God, have tested us.” And this was the song of the Church during her sojourn in Egypt when she was lying among the pots—and during her wanderings in the wilderness when she passed through a desert land by a way which she had not traversed before. And this, too, was the voice of the Church under the conduct of Joshua when Israel came through Jordan and began to defy the hosts of the Canaanites—when they drew the sword against mighty adversaries who dwelt in cities fenced with high walls, gates and bars and came forth to battle in chariots that had scythes of iron—“You, O God, have tested us.” With such a word as this in their mouths, the judges fell asleep after they had avenged Israel and done mighty deeds for the Lord of Hosts! This David could well say, for he had seen affliction. This the kings who walked in his steps and this the Prophets who spoke in God’s name might all have said, “You, O God, have tested us.”

And God’s dear Son, the Captain of our salvation, was, Himself, tested and tested in all things, too! He was thrust into the hottest part of the glowing coals and tested as you and I have never been tested—tested to such an extent as our heart has not conceived! And among the professed followers of Jesus, all the sons of God are witnesses to this Truth, “You, O God, have tested us”—whether they were tested in dungeons where they lay victims of damp and mildew, or on racks where every bone was dislocated and every muscle snapped—or at the stake where they mounted in chariots of fire to Heaven, or on the rocks where they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented—in all these temptations and trials God tested them! And even to this day, though by less severe methods, yet by other tests, as I shall have to show, the Church has still the same song to sing and each dying saint must still subscribe his name to the long list. Yes, and every bright spirit around the Throne of God, in looking back upon his experience on earth, will have to swell the great chorus, “You, O God, have tested us.” There is not an ingot of silver in Heaven’s treasury that has not been in the furnace on earth and been purified seven times! There is not a gem of purest serene ray which that Divine Jeweler has not exposed to every sort of test! There is not an atom of gold in the Redeemer’s crown which has not been molten among the hottest coals so as to rid it of its alloy! It is universal to every child of God—if you are a servant of the Lord, you must be tested—you shall never enter Heaven unproved! You must be tested in the fire—the test, the assaying must take place upon every one of us. Nor do I think we ought to shun it. Perhaps it may happen that in the feeble words I speak tonight, some reason may be given which shall reconcile your hearts to the sternness of the test and even make you kiss the hand of the Refiner when He puts you into the fire!

I. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU, O GOD, HAVE TESTED IN YOUR PEOPLE? I think we may answer, He has tested everything. If we have anything that has not been tested, it either is to be tested or else it is so bad that it is not worth testing. Everything we have that God has given us will have to be tested. There is not a grain of Grace that will escape the probation—He is sure, in some way or other, to test and exercise it. We have no manna to lay in the cupboard to breed worms—the manna is given us to eat. The Rock that follows us with its refreshing streams flows that we may drink—when we shall cease to thirst, the river will cease to flow—we only have Grace given to us that it may be tested.  
I think we can say, looking back upon our lives, those of us who are in Christ Jesus, that the Lord has tested our sincerity. Ah, how many put on the harness when we first put it on—and where are they now? In our little Gospel experience, how many have we seen who have turned their backs in the day of battle? Yes, the young knights went out gaily enough to the field—but say nothing about their return! “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon,” how their shields were broken, their lances splintered and their plumes trailed in the mire! When any turn from Zion’s way, our best method of using their apostasy is as Cowper used it, for self-examination—  
*“When any turn from Zion’s way,  
(Alas, what numbers do)!  
I think I hear my Savior say,  
‘Will you forsake Me too?’”*

But, up to this time, one way in which God has tested our sincerity has been to keep our leaf green and, through Divine Grace, that sincerity has kept its hold, while some who, in the first flush of religious excitement, promised well for Heaven, afterwards withered and faded. While many who were like the fair blossoms of the spring upon the trees were blown down by the East wind, or fell with a shower on the ground, we have been left, by Divine Grace, to bring forth some little fruit, though not as much as we could desire! O Brothers and Sisters, it is a great mercy when God tests our sincerity, if, notwithstanding the defection of man and the fickleness and instability of our own hearts, we are able to say, “Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.”

It is a privilege to have our sincerity tested, but it is one which must be purchased at a sharp cost, for we cannot know our sincerity for God without being put where we are much tempted and troubled. I believe many young people think they have the Grace of God in their hearts, who, if they were really put in temptation’s way, would soon discover that it is only a sort of hereditary profession and not the true Grace of God they possess. I have a great suspicion about buying hothouse flowers in the street. All summer long you see people with their barrows with the finest flowers you ever saw, but most of them have been forced to bloom. And if you take them home and put them in your garden, on the first cold day they look pale and begin to droop, for they cannot bear the change of climate because they are forced. So I cannot doubt that there are many who join Christian Churches who have been forced—they have been in the hothouse of godliness in association with the saints—and when they are put away from Christian association, where is their piety? Where is their religion? Some of you, I know, have had to suffer this chilling trial. You have been shut up among blasphemers. You have been made to live among the ungodly and profane, or you have had temptations from the polite and the godless—yet, thanks be to God, you have been enabled to retain your hold on Christ! You can say, with the Psalmist, “You, O God, have tested us.” And if you are sincere, mark you, as surely as ever you have true godliness, it must and will be put to the test!

And God has also tested our vows of fidelity. Perhaps the fewer vows we make, the better, but when we do make them, how jealous should we be to keep them! What a mass of vows we once made when our blood was hot with the novelty of our new discovery of the beauty of religion! We think we will do we know not what! Our love laughs at impossibilities! We could leap like Curtius into the chasm and sacrifice ourselves for Jesus! Would to God that we were always in that frame of mind! But then we get to promising what we will do if we are put in certain positions—and our promissory notes are not written on stamped paper—they are only written on some common stuff of our own. And we put our signature, but still we dishonor the note when it comes due! We never pay our vows. God did not prompt us to the vow, but our own self-confidence and, therefore, it gets broken. When I look back upon what you and I promised we would do when we first began the Heavenly warfare, and how little we have really done, I think we can mournfully say, “O Lord, You have tested us.” Some people talk about the older Christians as being so dull and so lifeless, but let me put it to yourselves, how much better are you? And I, sometimes, in the early days of my preaching, was known to speak of the cool, freezing lips of some ministers and of the dilatory way in which they discharged their duties—but I have had, in looking at my text, to say of myself, “Lord, You have tested me.” And some of these vows that I made—to wit, how I would be the pillar of fire in His cause, and lead the souls of men, and win them to the foot of the Cross—how signally have they been broken, for, “You, O Lord, have tested us.” All those fine visions, like potters’ vessels when smitten with a rod of iron, have been broken into vile potsherds!

And how the Lord has been pleased, dear Friends, to test our professions and pretensions to eminence! Do you recollect—with some of you, it will not be very difficult to look back, certainly not with me—do you remember how you thought, when first you knew the Lord, how different you would be from that nervous Mrs. Much-Afraid? You went to see her when you were first converted and sat down and talked with her. And as you came away, you said, “That woman is a bag of nerves! If ever I live to her age, you will not find me so desponding.” You have been tested since then and how has it been with you? Do you remember how, when you came one evening from a Prayer Meeting, when some friend had prayed so long and so drearily, you said, “Please God, if ever I have the privilege of praying aloud at a Prayer Meeting, there shall always be life and earnestness in my prayer”? How has it been with you, Brother? I question whether any man ever attained to the eminence in piety that he once marked out for himself and whether we have not all had occasion to eat our words. Have I not said many things about what I would do if I was in somebody else’s place—and what I am sure I would do if I had that man’s ability and that man’s opportunity? We used to brag about the lofty heights which we would climb and the mighty summits on which we would stand—and here we are, still creeping along in the valley! Do not make this confession to lull your conscience, or to comfort yourselves for being in the lowlands. We ought to be on the mountains— we ought to be all we hoped to have been—it is wrong in us not to have gained what we longed for. We must cleanse ourselves for this. Oh, how it ought to humble us to think how God has tested us and brought us down!

My pastoral experience, which, if you call it short, has, nevertheless, been very, very broad and bears witness to this. Whenever I have seen a Christian talking large things about his loftiness in Grace and his attainments, I have always seen him, sooner or later, brought as low as the dust. I have known some Brothers and Sisters who have said that they never had a doubt of their acceptance—and I have thanked God for them and have hoped they never might—but I have seen some of them in such a condition as I pray I never may be in. I believe there are such things in the world, to this day, as those bullocks that pushed with side and with shoulder, and that fouled the waters with their feet where the trembling ones came to drink. Such professors as those will find that the Lord will bring them down before long. Those big saints will one day be glad enough to creep into a mouse hole and feel themselves thrice happy if they are permitted to be numbered among the meanest of the Lord’s people. As surely as we ever make these high pretensions to great things, we shall be brought down and we shall have to cry, “O Lord, we did exalt ourselves, we did promise high and great things, but you, O Lord, have tested us. And when it came to the test

 results, what insignificant, what worthless, what despicable worms we turned out to be!”

But, Beloved, we have not only been tested in our sincerity, and in our vows, and in our lofty pretensions, but have we not also been tested in our strength? How strong we are sometimes! As my friend, Will Richardson, who, though he is a poor laboring man, is a Divine I like to quote just as some people would quote St. Augustine, said to me one day, “Brother Spurgeon, if you and I ever get one inch above the ground, we get that one inch too high and the Lord will bring us down again.” How true that is! And the old man said, “O Sir, you know, in winter time, I feel as if I could do such a deal of mowing, and as if I could reap the fields at such a rate! But when the hot summer comes on, poor old Will wipes the sweat from his brow and he thinks it is hard work, reaping, after all, and he will be very glad when he can get home and lie down, for he is getting to be an old man. O Sir,” he said, “If I could reap in the summer as I think I can in the winter, then I should do all right.”

And is not that the way with us? When there is no trial to bear, we can do all things, or can bear all sufferings! When there are no duties to be performed, then our strength runs over and we have too much and some to give to our neighbors! But when we get into the work and the struggle, and begin to reap and to mow, the sweat of weariness is such that we long to be away from it! Our strength, when tested, is found to be less than nothing and vanity! “Blessed is the man whose strength is in You”— the man who can sing with the Psalmist, “All my springs are in You.”

You know, dear Friends, many streams that run in winter become dry in summer, but they tell us that those wells that sap the mainsprings never get dry. How happy is the Believer who has sapped the mainspring, who has got deep enough down in his faith and confidence in God not to be dependent on the land springs and the upper waters, but has got down to the mainspring, for then weeks of drought may be followed up by months without rain, but still his soul shall go on bubbling up and his fountain shall always flow!

Moreover, the Lord has tested our faith as well as our strength. Our faith is indeed our real strength because our faith is that by which we lay hold upon God’s arm. Has not your faith been tested, Brother? An untried faith is no faith. At least, I mean if a man has had faith for some considerable length of time and that faith has not been tested, I question whether it ever came from God. I may truly say of faith what the old naturalists used to falsely say of the salamander—that it lives in the fire. The natural element of faith is fire—it never gets on well unless it has some fire to try it. What do you think faith is given us for unless it is to be tested? Did you ever know a man build a house—and then shut it up and let no one live in it? Houses are built to be inhabited! So God does not give anything without a design. Do you know a man who keeps his wheat year after year and never puts it through the mill? Let me tell you that my God puts all His wheat through the mill—and you must all go between the big stones and you must have your crushing! You will never come out fit to be offered unto the Lord unless you have been between the stones—there must be “the trial of your faith.” We know that our friends in Australia, when they are panning gold, stand up to their waists in water, shaking the earth to and fro to get the golden grains out of it. And you and I, like spades full of earth, must be shaken to and fro that the earth may run away and that the pure gold may remain. Your faith is much more precious than gold, so it also must be tested in the fire. You, Mr. Greatheart, must prepare for a great many battles. And you, “Valiant-for-Truth,” depend upon it, you will have to fight until your arm bleeds and your sword grows to your hand, cemented with your own blood! “Father Honest,” there is warfare for you before you enter Heaven. You “Little-Faiths” and “Despondencies” and “Much-Afraids” may go on with but comparatively few trials, for God does not sail His small ships on the sea, but puts them in the shallow waters. But the great ships must cross the Atlantic and big waves may sometimes dash over you, to let the angels in Heaven see how well God can build His saints so that they can stand every storm that earth, or Hell, or Heaven, itself, can send against them! Your faith must be tested!

To sum up all in one, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, depend upon it there is nothing that you have that is good for anything which will not be tested. Your religious principles will be tested. Why should they not be?

There is a certain sort of Christian—I do not know whether I shall think them Christians soon—who profess to be better than anybody else. They are non-sectarians. They have left all sects to make a snug little party to go comfortably to Heaven by themselves. And instead of seeking the conversion of sinners, they seduce the members of our churches and compass sea and land to make one proselyte! And the more useful our church members are, the more do they seek to pervert them to their disorders—and the more industrious they are in every way to show their perfect hatred of the Church of the living God! I sometimes meet with persons who are afraid of them. They say, “What shall we do?” I can only say, if they are right, God prosper them! And if they are wrong, we are not afraid to meet them! We are not afraid that God’s cause will suffer by their attacks. I had hoped—there was a time when I was fool enough to hope so—that these were men who really meant what they said. But now they show themselves in their true colors—as the destroyers of every order in the Church and as special enemies of God’s ordained servants! Of course we can only bid them the defiance that they bid to us and, in God’s name, stand upon our bastions and our bulwarks, as our forefathers did aforetime, fearful of nothing they may do because our cause is God’s—and He has delivered us out of the hands of many a confederacy before and He will do so even unto the end!

Never fear, my Brothers and Sisters, any attacks from nominal Christians, or proud, conceited persons who think themselves too good to join with other churches who, in truth, are Babylon! They are the men of wisdom and say, “Stand by, for we are holier than you.” But what of the Pharisees of modern times from the South of England? What shall we say of them? Let them do their best and their worst, and fight as they will. If our course is right, we can bear to have it tested. I like to see breezes spring up—those fresh blasts that every now and then beat upon the good old ship. If she is all right, she will outlast them—and whether it is from disorders within or quarrels without, she will come out of the trouble!

If we have an ordinance, it ought to be tested—may Baptism be tested! Let the Lord’s Supper be tested! The Church can never be reformed except by these trials. I always court the trials if they are sent by a Brother in friendliness of spirit. It is only the bitterness with which they come that sometimes makes my blood boil about it. But I must look to the God that sends it and not to the man who may happen to be the second cause! Whether as individuals, or as a Church, or as a denomination, we shall have to say at last, “O Lord, You have tested us. Blessed be Your name that You have, for—

*“‘Our silver bears the glowing coals  
The metal to refine.’”*

II. And now let us turn to the second question, HOW HAS GOD TESTED US?  
Dear Friends, the Lord has tested us in a thousand ways. Many men think that the only test that God gives to His servants is that of trial. He often tests them by trials, by bereavements, by temporal losses, by sickness in body, by personal infirmity, by slander, by persecution—all these are, therefore, tests to a Christian. And a man who can go through all these and find his faith still keeping its hold and that he is able to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord”—such a man may thank God for the test! And, after all, dear Friends, the only Grace that is worth having is that which shall be with us when we go through fire and through water, and when men ride over our heads. Do not tell me of your sunshiny religion! Do not tell me of your summer-day godliness! You may sometimes see, on the Mediterranean, when the waters are calm and still, a little fleet with fair and beautiful sails floating gaily there—it is the nautilus coming up in the sunshine to float. But there is a black cloud yonder and at the first breath of wind that comes whistling across the waveless sea where is that fleet? Where is the nautilus? Every little creature has drawn itself into its shell and fallen to the bottom of the sea! Oh, there are too many of this kind, too many Christians who are with us when everything goes well—but where are they when the times have changed? To use John Bunyan’s expressive metaphor—they walk with Religion when she goes in her silver slippers. But when she is barefoot and men laugh at her through the streets, then where are they? Affliction does try men!  
But mark you, Believers, there are many others trials! Let me mention some of them that I often think severe. There is a very sharp trial which some Christians have to bear when they have fresh light given them and they shut their eyes against it. There are plenty of things that we never dreamt of in our philosophy that, after all, are true. Am I like a man who, whereunto he has attained, walks by the same rule but is still ready to advance further if the rule is more fully revealed? Hold on to the old and tested truth of the Grace of God which brings salvation, as with a deathgrip, but still, you are not yet perfect—there is a height beyond. Sometimes when you are reading a passage of Scripture, you say, “Ah, yes, yes; it must mean that!” You pray over it. “Yes, it must mean that! But if it means that, what about that text our minister preached from last Sunday week, what about that?” And you are apt to say, “Well, now, I won’t believe that, for it does not fit in with my system of theology.”

Is there not many a good “Hyper” Brother who has a full knowledge of the Doctrines of Grace, but one day when he is reading the Bible and he finds a text that looks rather wide and general, he says, “This cannot mean what it says! I must trim it down and make it fit into Dr. Gill’s Commentary”? That is the way many a Brother does. But is not this the right thing to say? “Now, this does mean what it says. The Lord knows better how to write than I do. There may be faults in my reading, but there cannot be any faults in His writing. Then, if such-and-such a thing is true, I will not doubt it. And if that other thing is true, I will not doubt it. And if they seem to contradict one another, I will believe them both. But I can never entertain a thought that they really do contradict one another—I believe that there is some fault in me—not in the Truth of God.”  
You sometimes go to the stationer’s and you ask for a picture of suchand-such a church. “Yes, Sir,” he says, and brings you out a picture. And you say, “There are two pictures here.” “Oh, no, Sir,” he says, “that is only one.” “But,” you say, “there are two and this one takes the view a little further to the right and that, apparently, a little more to the left. I do not understand your giving me two pictures.” “O Sir,” he says, “that is only one! And if you look at it correctly, you will find that the two will melt into one and stand out very clearly and beautifully—much better than in an ordinary print.” You look and look again, and say, “There seem to be two, as far as I can see—and I cannot make them to be one.” “Stop,” he says. He opens his drawer and fetches out a stereoscope. “Now,” he says, “just put your eyes there.” “Oh, yes,” you say, “I see it is only one now! The two pictures have melted into one!”  
I believe there are many Truths in Scripture that are just like two pictures on a stereoscopic slide—they are really one—only you and I have not the stereoscope! When we get to Heaven, we shall get a stereoscope and then they will appear to be one. And we shall see that conflicting Truths of God, such as free-agency and Divine Sovereignty, were only different views, after all, of the same Truth taken from a little different angle. And we shall see how God gave us both the Truths and how foolish we were to go against them.  
Now that man, I take it, is tested to be right who, when he is thus tested with superior light, says, “Well, yes, I have been wrong in many of my thoughts and reasoning. The more I learn of God’s Revelation, the more I will open my heart to receive it.” I like a Brother or Sister who is ready to advance. I think, as a Church, we ought to always be advancing. It strikes me, for instance, that the breaking of bread should be every Lord’s-Day. The more I read the Scripture, the more I feel that it is an ordinance that should be commemorated every Sabbath. “Well,” says somebody, “but it has been usually observed once a month and anyway, what does it matter?” If it is Scriptural to have it four times in the month, be it so, and let us get the benefit of the alteration and do it, saying, “If ever a Truth of God starts up, and fresh light comes, I will follow. Whatever You have to say to me, speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.” This is by no means a very small trial to a Christian man, to be tested by fresh Light of God!  
Don’t you think it is a very sharp trial to be tested by other loves? You have an only child. How fond you are of that girl! How your heart is knit to that boy! You have a dear husband—properly enough you love him, but ah, improperly enough you idolize him! Or, alas, it is a brother, or sister, or some other Christian, and your heart is set on that object. Do you know what Jesus says to you? He has said, “There is a disciple who loves Me—he says he does. I will see if he does—I will give him that child and I will see which he loves the better. I will give him that wife, I will give her that husband—I will see, now, whether I really am King in that heart or not.” And in how many ways have we mournfully to suspect that Jesus Christ was not King? O dear Friends, it is sad to think of how it would be if some of us were tested by that test—“If any man loves father or mother, son or daughter, more than Me, he is not worthy of Me.” If some are tested in that way, what a trial it must be to them! And there are many who fail here. And many more Christians would fail, perhaps, only that God, on a sudden, comes like a great iconoclast and breaks their images in pieces and utterly spoils their false gods—and then they are compelled to go to Christ and say, “Yes, we do love You.” But perhaps that was hardly true while the idol was in the way. It is a hard trial to have these fair things put in competition with Jesus—happy are you if you have been tested and yet have stood the trial!  
I believe that God often tests His servants by opening up to them fresh fields of labor. It has been my lot, when I have been busy about my Master’s service, here and there to come to a certain corner and see before me what I had never seen before—a great field ripe for the harvest! And perhaps flesh and blood have said, “Well, you have enough to do here—this is your lot.” I believe, then, God is trying the man to see whether he is willing to begin that new work which is opening to him. Perhaps it is a work in which nobody else has ever engaged. And when you begin it, some excellent friend shrugs his shoulder and says, “O dear Brother, how imprudent you are!” I think there is no word in the English language that deserves more of my esteem and yet for which I have a greater and more insufferable contempt from the misuse of it than the word, “prudence.” Oh, the many times I have it whistled in my ears, “Prudence!” And this is the meaning of the word, “prudence,” according to the translation I have given of it by these Brothers and Sisters—never act upon faith. If you can see your way clearly, that is to say if you are strong enough to do it yourself, do it, but never go beyond your own strength! Do not attempt anything in which other people would differ from you in opinion! Along the cool sequestered vale of life keep the tenor of your way even.  
If there is a giant Goliath, go to bed and let giant Goliath defy the hosts of Israel as he likes. If there are nations that need help— Macedonians that cry, “Come over and help us”—tell somebody else what the Macedonians said and say, “What a pity it is that nobody will go!” If Jesus calls, and duty, too, just mind that you are so far off that you cannot hear the call! Like some militiamen I have heard of, who always say, when the bugle sounds for them to come to drill, that they never heard it because they take wonderfully good care to be always so far away that the sound cannot reach them! And there are many such Christians as that—who always get out of the sound of the bugle! “Oh, yes, of course, Lord Shaftesbury presided at the meeting and the Bishop of London, and this member of the privy council, and that member of Parliament were present! And it must be the right thing to do, therefore I will go and do what I can to help, but I do not desire new work.  
Some woman who has discovered the missing link, or somebody or other, is going to try some absurd, Quixotic scheme for the conversion of the people, but I could not think of giving a shilling for that, because, you see, that is a work of prayer and faith! But the other has a committee, treasurer, vice-presidents and innumerable patrons—almost as many as the lords, governors and counselors that came to Nebuchadnezzar at the door of the burning fiery furnace.”  
Most people like those things in which there are plenty of great armies. But there are chosen men who always stand where there is nothing to rest upon but the bare arm of God. This seems to be the test of the Christian when he can dare to say, “This is the field of usefulness which God has put in my way. Though my strength is not sufficient, I have faith. Here I am, and I will do it.” “Who are you, O great mountain! Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” “Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead your captivity captive, you son of Abinoam.” “Shake yourself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem! Loosen yourself from the bands of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!” For your God is in the midst of you and if you will but do and dare for Him, when tested in the day of trial, you shall have His blessing upon you—and that right early and abundantly!  
III. Multitudes of other tests suggest themselves, but our time flies. Let us come, therefore, to the closing question—WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESULT OF ALL THOSE TESTS THROUGH WHICH WE HAVE PASSED?  
Well, I think, dear Friends, we have lost a good deal by our tests. We have gained much, but we have likewise had our heavy losses. “What,” says one, “lost anything by God’s testing me?” Yes, Brother, I will tell you one or two of the things you have lost. I think you have lost that habit of putting your trust so much in earthly things. So many trees have been cut down that you had built on, that you begin to wish to build somewhere beyond the stars—you find that this world is not your rest. If you have lost that, you have lost something. Have you not also lost that habit of talking so positively about what you mean to do? A good thing if you have! You do not glitter so much, but there is more gold in you. You do not flash and sparkle, and make as much noise, but the waters run stiller because they are deeper. You have lost that habit of boasting in an arm of flesh!  
As the result of your being tested, you have lost that disposition to invite trial. I know a Christian woman—I think she is here this evening— who had not any trouble, for some time, and she was very troubled about having no trouble. She prayed to God to send her some—she will never pray that prayer again! She was like a child whom I heard crying in the street and his mother opened the window and asked him what he cried for. And when he said, “Nothing.” She said he should have something to cry for before long. There are many children of that sort—they think they cannot be children of God because they are not always living in hot water. But when they get the trial, they never think that again—never! Those are some of the things we have lost. We go through the Red Sea of trial—some few things we leave in the Red Sea along with the Egyptians—may they never be washed up again!

One has learned, by being tested, to lose that habit of treading quite so hard on the ground as we used to do. Sometimes we used to tread on other people. By being tested, we tread more gently. We used to push and say, “If the man is in my way, I cannot help it.” Now we walk a little more carefully. We do not wish to touch other people’s sore places because we know our own. I heard a dear Brother say, the other night, that I comforted the doubters a great deal too much. I thought if that dear Brother had to go through some of the deep waters we have known in connection with this Church, he would find the doubters need a great deal more comforting than he thinks, for when one has been in the dungeon and has not been able to read his own title clear—and when there have been times when sin and Satan have so prevailed over Grace that one could only say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” then we have needed something very sweet and very comforting. I do not think that a Christian knows much of doing business on the great waters if he does not feel, sometimes, as if he would give all he has to have as good a hope as the meanest lamb in Jesus’ fold has. And, dear Friends, we lose that habit of being so hard and speaking so loftily—and these are blessed losses. Lord, send us many such losses!  
Then, we also gain much by being tested. I cannot tell all that we gain. I never read a list of the earrings and the bracelets that the Israelite women gained from the Egyptians. And I cannot, therefore, give you a category of all the golden jewels, all silver bracelets and the rich ruby tiaras that Christians get from the depths of their tribulation. We get all sorts of choice things. Was it not Rutherford who said that he drank many sorts of God’s wine, but the wine which was the sourest of all was the sweetest when it was down? And so it assuredly is. There are many sorts of bread that we eat that are very delightful—many breads of Heaven. But that which is baked on the coals, just as the bread which Elijah ate was baked—that is the meal that makes us go in the strength thereof for 40 days! All bread that comes from God is good, but that which the black ravens with their hoarse throats bring to us—that is the bread which is most fit for God’s prophets. All our passages through the fiery furnace make us like swords when they are well annealed—they are ready to cut right through the bone—it makes us true Jerusalem blades thus to be put through the fire again and again. Well, Brothers and Sisters, you and I will not cease from being tested until we get to Heaven and then it will be all over. And we shall sing and this shall be the sweet note of it, “You have tested us, O God, and blessed be Your name for it! Before we were afflicted, we went astray, but now have we kept Your Word.”  
There are many here who, I fear, if they were tested, would be found to be dross. Let such remember that God, by His Grace, can transmute the vile metal into the purest gold. One touch of the Cross of Christ, one drop of His precious blood can turn a sinner into a saint! “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” And however great and vile your sins may be, “there is life in a look at the Crucified One.” One glance at the bleeding Savior and your sins are forgiven. A simple act of trust in Jesus, and you are saved and then, from that time forth, though you will have trials, you shall bless God for them! And we shall meet in Heaven to praise the name of the Most High, world without end! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.  
END OF VOLUME 51. Sermon #819 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE MINSTRELSY OF HOPE  
NO. 819

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S DAY MORNING, JULY 5, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us.” Psalm 67:6, 7.**

“GOD, even our own God.” What an exceedingly sweet title! What a loveliness and liveliness of heart must have been in the man who first applied that endearing name to the God of Jacob! Though it is thousands of years ago since the sweet singer of Israel thus spoke of the Lord of Hosts, the name has a freshness and even a novelty about it to believing ears, “God, even our own God.” I cannot resist touching that string again, the note is so enchanting to my soul! That word, “own,” or “our own,” seems always to throw an atmosphere of delicious fragrance about anything with which it is connected. If it is our country*—*

*“Lives there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself has said,  
‘This is my own, my native land?’”*

Whether it is a land of brown heath and shaggy wood, or a far extended plain, all men love their own fatherland and in exile they are smitten with homesickness for their own country. It is so with regard to the house in which we were reared. That old roof tree, that ancient homestead—it may have been covered with thatch and have been one of a group of poor cottages, but still it was our own home and a thousand kindly thoughts gather around the fireside where we, in childhood, nestled beneath a parent’s wing. “Our own!” Why, all our relatives are endeared to us by the fact that they are our own!

“Father” is a silver word at all times. But, “ our father,” “our own father”—how the name grows richer and turns to a golden word! “Our own child.” “Our own brother.” “Our own husband.” “Our own wife”—the words are most melodious. We even feel the Bible to be all the dearer to us because we can speak of it as “our own old English Bible.” As the Jew’s book, coming from God in Hebrew. As a book for the Greek, coming in its latter half to the Gentile in the Greek tongue, it was a priceless treasure. But translated into our own familiar Saxon tongue, and, on the whole, translated so well, our own English Bible is doubly dear to us.

The sweetness of the words, “our own” led me to call the hymn-book from which you sing, “Our Own Hymn-Book,” hoping that, perchance, the very name might help to weave your affections round about it. But what shall I say of “our own God”? Words fail to express the depth of joy and delight which is contained within these three monosyllables, “Our own God.” “Our own” by the Everlasting Covenant in which He gave Himself to us with all His attributes, with all that He is and has, to be our portion forever and ever!

“The Lord is my portion, says my soul.” “Our own God,” by our own choice of Him, a choice most free, but guided by His Holy Spirit so that we who should have chosen our own ruin were sweetly led to make our election of the Lord, because He had made His election of us. “Our own God”—ours to trust, ours to love, ours to fly to in every dark and troublous night—ours to commune with in every bright and balmy day, ours to be our Guide in life, our Help in death, and our Glory in immortality! “Our own God,” affording us His wisdom to guide our path, His power to sustain our steps, His love to comfort our lives, His every attribute to enrich with more than royal wealth!

The man who can truthfully, out of a pure heart, look up to the Throne of the infinite Jehovah, and call Him, “My own God,” has said a more eloquent thing than ever flowed from the lips of Demosthenes, or fell from the tongue of Cicero! You are favored beyond all men, you to whom this is a household word, “our own God.”—

*“Our God! How pleasant is the sound!  
How charming to repeat!  
Well may those hearts with pleasure bound, Who thus their Lord can greet!”*

I think the Psalmist used this expression in this sublime ode as a kind of argument and assurance of the blessing which he foretold. “God shall bless us”—that is true, it is to be believed, but, “our own God shall bless us”—that sentence flashes conviction upon the most timorous! It wears assurance as a frontlet between his eyes! It bears upon its surface its own evidence! If the Lord has been gracious enough to make Himself our own God, He did not do this for nothing—there is a loving intention in it. If in the tenderness of His compassion He has said, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people,” it must be with a design to bless us with unspeakable blessings in Christ Jesus!

Covertly, there is a powerful reason urged in the delightful title and the more we think upon it the more we shall see it. This morning I intend simply to keep to the words, “God shall bless us. God shall bless us.” They have been sounding in my ears like far-off bells, ringing their way with a march of music into the deeps of my soul. May the same angelic melody charm the ears of all my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus. “God shall bless us. God shall bless us.”

Three personified passions I shall introduce into the pulpit this morning, and we shall discourse with them a little, or let them speak with us.  
I. The first is FEAR. Pale-faced Fear will be found everywhere. She meddles with every matter, intruding into the bedchamber of Faith, and disturbing the banquets of Hope. Fear lodges with some as an abiding guest and is entertained as though she were a dear, familiar friend. What does Fear say to us, this morning, in reply to our cheering text?  
Fear enquires, “Will God, indeed, bless us—for of late He has withheld His hand? There have been many hopeful signs, but they have disappointed us. We have expected the blessing for a long time. We have thought we have seen the signs of it, but it has not come. We have heard of revivals and rumors of revivals—men have risen up who have preached the Word with power, and in some districts there have been many conversions, but still, to a great extent, we have not received the blessing. God has not visited us as of old. We have seen the early cloud and expected rain. We have watched the morning dew and hoped for moisture, but all these have vanished and we are still left without the blessing. A thousand past disappointments lead us to fear that the blessing may not come.”

Listen, O Fear, and be comforted! What if you, too hasty and rash, have misjudged the will of the Lord? Is this any reason why He should forget His promise and refuse to hear the voice of prayer? Clouds have passed over the sky every day these many weeks and we have said full often, “Surely it must rain, and the thirsty fields must be refreshed,” but not a drop as yet has fallen. Yet rain it must before long!  
Even so is it with God’s mercy. It may not come today, and tomorrow we may not see it, but still God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. He has His own appointed time and He will be punctual, for while He never is before it, He never is behind it! In due season—in answer to the entreaties of His people—He will give them a shower of liberality. All manner of gracious blessings shall descend from His right hand! He will rend the heavens and in majesty come down—for, “God shall bless us.”  
“Yes,” says Fear, “But we have seen so many counterfeits of the blessing. We have seen revivals in which intense excitement has seemed, for a season, to produce great results. But the excitement has subsided and the results have disappeared. Have we not, again and again, heard the sound of trumpets, and the loud boastings of men, but glory was not the sum of it?” This is most sorrowfully true. There is no doubt that much of revivalism has been a sham—that there has been a windbag-filling—a bladderblowing in the Christian Church which has been terribly mischievous. The very name, “revival,” has been made to stink in some places by reason of the mischiefs associated with it!  
But this is no reason why there should not yet come a glorious and real revival from the Presence of the Lord! And such, my Brethren, I earnestly hope for and vehemently pray for! Remember the revival which passed over New England in the days of Jonathan Edwards? No one could call that spurious—it was as true and real as any work of God on the face of the earth could be! Nor could anyone describe the work of Whitfield, and of Wesley, as a mere spasm or a thing of transient existence—it was God’s right hand made bare and put to the work of Divine Grace in a marvelous manner! And it was a work done which exists in England to this day and shall remain even to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!  
We may expect, then, since it has been already given at other times, that God will bless His people with real and substantial advances—and will yet come to the front and make His enemies see that there is an irresistible power in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! O Fear, remember, if you will, the delusions of the past and be counseled by them—do not recall them as reasons for being dispirited and cast down, for God, even our own God, shall bless us!  
But Fear replies, “See how much there is in the present which is unlike a blessing, and which, instead of prophesying good, pretends evil! How few there are,” says Fear, “who are proclaiming the Gospel boldly and simply! And how many, on the other hand, oppose the Gospel with their philosophies or with their superstitions.” But listen, O Fear, “God shall bless us,” few though we are, for He saves not by many nor by few! Remember His servant, Gideon, and how he went up to fight against the Midianites, not with the thousands, for they were too many for the Lord of Hosts, but with the few hundred men that lapped! And with these—with no other weapons than their broken pitchers, and uncovered lamps, and sounding trumpets—with these did he put to rout the multitudes of Midian!  
Say not that Omnipotence can be short of instruments! He could quicken the very sand by the seashore into preachers of the Gospel if He pleased! And if He wanted tongues to tell of His love, He could make each stone a preacher, or each twinkling leaf upon the trees a witness for Jesus! It is not instrumentality that is necessary first and foremost—we need most the power which moves the instrumentality, which makes the weakest strong—and without which even the strongest are but weak!  
We heard it said, the other day, that the religion of Jesus Christ could not be expected to prosper in some places unless it had a fair start. Did that remark come from an infidel, or from a bishop? If I were asked and knew not, I know what my answer would be! A fair start, indeed! Put the religion of Jesus Christ into any arena and it asks but liberty to use its weapons—and even where that is denied it, it triumphs still! It only needs its own innate strength to be developed, and to be let alone by the kings and princes of this world, and it will work its own way. To be let alone, I said—let them oppose it if they like—yet still our faith will overcome the regal opposition! Only let them withdraw their patronage—that deadly thing which paralyzes all spiritual life—and the unshackled Truth of God will most surely prevail!  
We do not tremble, then! We must not, because the servants of God may be poor, or may not be gifted, or may be but few. God shall, even our own God, shall bless us! And if we are as few as the 12 fishermen, and as unlettered as they, yet as the 12 fishermen made old Rome’s empire shake from end to end, and laid colossal systems of idolatry even with the ground—even so will the Christianity of today! If God does but return in power unto her, in the midst of her weakness she will wax valiant in fight and turn to flight the armies of the aliens!  
But Fear always finds room for murmuring, and therefore she says, “The future, the black and gloomy future! What have we to expect from this wicked generation, this perverse people, but that we shall be given up, once more, to be devoured by the jaws of Antichrist, or to be lost in the mists of infidelity? Our prospects are, indeed, appalling,” so Fear says, though I confess, not using her telescope I discern no such signs of the times. Yet Fear says so, and there may be reason in it. Yet whatever that reason may be, it is counterbalanced in our mind by the belief that God, even our own God, will bless us!  
Why should He change? He has helped His Church before, why not now? Is she undeserving? She was always so! Does she backslide? She has done so oftentimes before, yet has He visited her, and restored her— and why not now? Instead of forebodings and fears, there seems to me cause for the brightest expectations if we can only fall back upon the Divine promise and believe that God, even our own God, shall yet, in this very age, bless us as He did in days of old!  
Remember the ship tossed with tempest on the Galilean lake? There was, indeed, a dreary outlook for the steersman of the boat! She must, before long, be driven on the rocky headland and she and her cargo must sink beneath the waves. Not so, not so, for can’t you see, walking upon the billows which congeal to glass beneath His feet, the Man who loves the company within the vessel and will not let them die? It is Jesus walking on the waves of the sea! He comes into the vessel and immediately the calm is as profound as if waves had not lifted their head, nor wind had blown!  
So in the darkest times of His Church’s history Jesus has always, in due time, appeared walking upon the waves of her troubles—and then her rest has been glorious! Let us not, therefore, be afraid—but casting fear away let us rejoice with glad expectation! What can there be to fear? “God is with us.” Is not that the battle cry before which devils fly, and all the hosts of evil turn their backs? “Immanuel, God with us!”  
Who dares to stand against that? Who will defy the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Ah, bring your might and come to push or pike, you mighty ones, but if God is for us, who can be against us, or if against us, who can stand? God is our own God—will He let His own Church be trampled in the mire? Shall the bride of Christ be led into captivity? Shall His Beloved, whom He bought with His blood, be delivered into the hands of her enemies? God forbid! Because He is God. Because He is for us. Because He is our own God, therefore we set up our banners and each man among us cheerily sings**—**  
II. We shall change the strain altogether when we introduce a second character, namely, DESIRE. Quick of step, bright of eye, warm of heart, Desire says, “Ah, God shall bless us, but O that we had the blessing! We hunger and we thirst after it. We are covetous for it as the miser after gold.” Therefore Desire says, “But what blessing will come, and after what fashion shall our own God bless us?” The reply to Desire is this—when God comes to bless His people, He brings all Grace with Him, for in the treasures of the Covenant there are not some things, but all things—not a few supplies for some of the Church’s necessities—but a redundant store from which all her needs shall be replenished!  
When the Lord shall bless His Church, He will give to all her members the Divine Grace of revival! They will begin to live after a higher, nobler, happier sort than they have done before. To bestir the Church and make it active is one of the highest gifts of the Holy Spirit, and this is greatly needed. I believe it is needed among us. Some of the most earnest Christians out of Heaven are members of this Church—but some are a very long way off from that and need to be brought into a sounder spiritual state.  
What is true of this one Church is true of all the Churches of Jesus Christ. They are too much like the virgins who slept because the bridegroom came not—too much apathy, too little love to God, too little consecration to His cause, too little pining and panting after the souls of men. When the Lord shall visit His Church, the first effect will be the quickening of the life of His own Beloved. Then will the blessing come in the next shape, namely, conversions in her borders, and additions to her membership. I hope that we shall never think that God is blessing us unless we see sinners saved. It is a very solemn delusion when ministers think they are prospering and yet do not hear of conversions.  
We, I trust, will be most uneasy if conversions should slacken in number among us. If God returns to us, and to all His Churches, the cry will be heard on the right hand and on the left, “What must we do to be saved?” The astonished Church will see such a multitude of children born to her that she will cry in amazement, “Who has begotten these? Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” When these two blessings come—a quickened Church and souls converted—then will the Word of the Lord be fulfilled, “The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.”

Then the Church will be strong. She will have wherewithal to refute her adversaries by pointing to her converts. She will become bold because she sees the result of her work. She will cease to doubt, for faith will be replenished with evidences. Then peace will reign. The young converts shall bring in a flood of new joy. Their fresh blood shall make the old blood of the Church to leap in its veins, and old and young, rejoicing together, shall rejoice in the abundance of peace! Brethren, I would if I had time this morning, paint you a picture of a Church blessed of God! But we must not—you know what it is—many of you have been members of such a Church. May the blessing continue. May it be increased—and may all the Churches throughout Christendom receive the benediction from the God of Israel such as shall make them rejoice with joy unspeakable!  
But Desire says, “I see what the blessing is, but in what degree will God give it, and in what measure may we expect it?” We say to Desire, “O you large-hearted one, God will give you according to the measure of your confidence in Him.” We are all too soon satisfied when the blessing begins to drop from above. We stop, like the king of old, when we have shot but one or two arrows, and deserve to be rebuked in the language of the Prophet, “You should have smitten five or six times, then had you smitten Syria till you had consumed it.” We are content with drops when we might have the cup full to the brim! We are childishly satisfied with a mere trace of water when we might have flagons, barrels, rivers, oceans if we had but faith enough to receive them!  
If there should be half-a-dozen persons converted today in this house, we should all be jubilant with thanksgiving—but ought we not to be sorry if there are not half-a-dozen hundred? Who are we that, by our narrow expectations, we limit the Holy One of Israel? Can we draw a line around Omnipotence and say, “To here shall You go, but no further”? Were it not wiser to extend our desires, and expand our hopes since we have to deal with One who knows neither limit nor boundary? Why not look for years of plenty, eclipsing the famous seven of Egypt? Why not expect clusters excelling those of Eshcol? Why are we so mean, so dwarfed, so straitened in our expectancies? Let us grasp at greater things—for it is reasonable, with the Lord to trust in—to look for greater things!  
I reckon upon days in which every sermon shall shake the house with its power, in which the hearers shall be converted to God by thousands as in the day of Pentecost! Was that to be the greatest trophy of God’s power, the Pentecost? Is the first sheaf to be greater than the harvest? How can it be? We believe that if God will again visit His Church, and I trust He is going to do so, we shall see nations born in a day, and the Gospel of Jesus, which has painfully limped like a wounded hind, will suddenly take to itself wings as of a mighty angel and fly throughout the midst of Heaven, proclaiming Jesus Christ both Lord and God!  
Why not? Who can justify the absence of the liveliest hope, since He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think? I hear Desire say, “Yes, I understand what the blessing is, and that it can be had in any measure, but how is it to be obtained and when will it come?” Follow me in a very brief review of the Psalm before us, because that will help us to answer the question. When is it that, “God, even our own God, shall bless us?” The Psalm begins with “God be merciful unto us.” That is the voice of a penitent people confessing their past misdeeds. God will bless His Church when she acknowledges her faults and humbles herself. When, with an evangelical repentance, she stands before the Mercy Seat, and cries, “God be merciful unto us!”  
We must never expect that the Lord will bless a proud and conceited Church—a hard-hearted and indifferent Church. When humbled and laid in the dust under a sense of her own shortcomings, then shall God be pleased to look upon her in mercy. I gather from the tenor of the first verse that God blesses His people when they begin to pray as well as when they confess their sins. The prayer is urgent, humble and believing, and therefore it must speed. “God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.” These agonizing desires are a part of the wailing of a Church conscious of having somewhat lost the blessing, and ill at ease until it is restored.  
We are sure to receive the benediction from God when the entire Church is instant and constant in intercession. Prayer is the best resort of an earnest people. Are we not witnesses of it? We have had Prayer Meetings in this house in which we have all been stirred as the trees of the woods are moved in the wind—and then we have always had the Presence of God afterwards in the conversion of souls. Our best praying times have always been followed by joyful harvest homes. The Churches everywhere must be prayerful—intensely so—or else they cannot expect that the sound of abundance of rain should be heard throughout their land.  
Awake to confess sin, O Zion, awake to soul-travail for the souls of men and then shall God, your Lord, visit you from on high! Come, Holy Spirit, and arouse Your slumbering people! Bestir Your sluggard host, for when Your power is felt, then has the bright day of triumph dawned upon us! As the Psalm runs, it speaks not so much of prayer as of praise, “Let the people praise You, O God. Let all the people praise You. Then shall the earth yield her increase.” The Church of God needs to get into a better state with regard to her praising her God. When mercy is received, if we accept it silently and without gratitude, we cannot expect to have more. But when every drop of favor makes us bless the Lord who gives to such undeserving ones, we shall soon have more, and yet more, and more!  
The praise ought to be universal. “Let all the people praise You.” It ought to be joyful and hearty, each man rejoicing in the exercise and casting all his strength into it. When shall we all wake up to this? When shall all the Lord’s elect magnify His glorious name as they should? When shall we sing at our work, sing in our households, sing everywhere the praises of God? If prayer and praise are sacredly blended and the Church becomes thoroughly anxious for the Divine blessing, then God, even our God, will bless us!  
If I were asked, now, to give some indications as to when a blessing may be expected, I should have to run somewhat in the same vein as we did last Thursday evening, and that I cannot avoid. I believe that when a great visitation of mercy is coming upon the Church there are certain signs which are given to the more spiritual, which assure them that it is coming. Elijah could hear “a sound of abundance of rain” before a single drop had fallen—and many a saint of God has had the conviction that a time of refreshing is coming long before it has come. Some souls are especially sensitive to Divine workings, just as some men’s bodies are peculiarly sensitive to changes of weather before they arrive.  
As Columbus was sure that he was coming to land because he saw strange land birds and floating pieces of seaweed and broken wood, so oftentimes the Christian minister feels sure that he is drawing near to a time of amazing blessing. He can scarcely tell another why he feels so sure, and yet the indications to him are sure. There are doves that come flying into our hands that tell us that the waters of indifference and worldliness are receding. They bring us olive branches of hopeful Graces flourishing among our people which let us know that the time to favor Zion is surely coming.  
Have you ever seen the ancient seer arise, take his harp down from the wall and begin to tune it? He puts every string in order. He lays his fingers among the unaccustomed strings and commences to sweep the strings with unusual energy of delight. Have you not enquired of him, “Gray Harper, minstrel consecrated to the Lord, why do you strike your song so full of cheer?” He replies, “Because I see afar the silken banners of a triumphant host returning victorious from the fray. It is the Church, made more than conqueror through Him who loved her! I hear the moving of the wings of angels. They are rejoicing over penitents and the Church is glad, for her glory returns seeing that her sons are many.”  
Men enlightened with the light of Heaven feel the shadow of the coming mercy and hear the far-off wheels of the chariot of mercy! These tokens, of course, will only be appreciable by the few, but there are others, tokens which are instructive to the many. It is a very certain sign that the Lord will bless His people when they feel in themselves an unusual and insatiable craving for the Divine visitation—when they feel as if the Church could not go on longer as she now is doing—when they begin to fret, and pant, and sigh, and hunger and thirst after something better.  
I would to God that all the members of this Church were gloriously dissatisfied without more conversions! And when this dissatisfaction arises in the Christian mind, it is pretty generally a sure indication that God is enlarging the hearts of His people that they may receive a larger blessing! Then there will come into prepared minds a sacred heaving of intense excitement and throes of awful purpose—mysterious longings to which they were strangers before! These will gravitate into impulses which they will be unable to resist! Men who had been dumb before will suddenly find a tongue! Others will become mighty in prayer who never were known as master suppliants up to that moment! There will be tears in eyes long dry before! We shall find professors talking to sinners and winning converts who kept in the rear in days now past and were never zealous until now!  
These stirrings of God’s hand—these sacred and mysterious motions of His ever blessed Spirit—are signs that He intends to bless His Church and that to a large degree. And, Brothers and Sisters, when every man begins to search himself, to see whether there is any obstacle in him to the blessing—when every single member of the Church exposes his heart to the search of God and cries, “Take away from me everything that hinders Your work! Fit me for greater usefulness! Put me where You will win glory by me, for I am consecrated to You,”

 then we shall hear the sound as of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, as David of old!  
Then shall we see the flowers spring up and we shall know that the time of the singing of birds is drawing near, and that spring and summer are close at hand! May God send us more and more of these gracious signs! I think I see them even now. Perhaps my wish is father to my thought, but I think I see comfortable signs that God intends to visit His Zion even now! And if we will but believe it, will but accept it and work in accordance with such expectation, unitedly praying and praising, and laboring and striving—rest assured this year, 1868, will not come to its close without such a display of the Divine power as shall make it an annus mirabilis, a year of our Lord, a year of Divine Grace, a year whose days shall be as the days of Heaven upon the earth!  
III. Lastly, I introduce to you a far fairer being than either of the other two—the sweet bright-eyed maiden HOPE. Have you ever heard the story of her matchless song? She learned in her youth a song which she sings evermore to the accompaniment of a well-tuned harp. Here are the words of her enchanting lay: “God will bless us. God will bless us.” She has often been heard singing this in the night, and, lo! stars have suddenly shone out of the black sky. “God will bless us.” She has been known to sing this in the midst of tempests and calms have followed the soothing song.  
Once upon a time certain strong laborers were sent forth by the great king to level a primeval forest—to plow it, to sow it—and to bring the harvest to him. They were stout-hearted and strong, and willing enough for labor, and well they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart laborer was named Industry—consecrated work was his! His brother Patience, with muscles of steel, went with him and tired not in the longest days, under the heaviest labors. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side, there stood his kinsman Self-Denial, and his friend, Importunity.  
These went forth to their labor and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister, Hope—and well it was they did, for the forest trees were huge and needed many sturdy blows of the axe before they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one they yielded, but the labor was immense and incessant. At night when they went to their rest, the day’s work always seemed so light, for as they crossed the threshold, Patience, wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged and Selfdenial would be strengthened, for they heard a sweet voice within sing, “God will bless us. God, even our own God, will bless us.”  
They felled the giant trees to the music of that strain! They cleared the acres one by one. They tore from their sockets the huge roots. They leveled the soil. They sowed the corn and waited for the harvest—often much discouraged, but still in silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly—“God, even our own God, will bless us.” They never could refrain from service for she never could refrain from song! They were ashamed to be discouraged! They were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice rang clearly out at morn and eventide, “God will bless us. God, even our own God, will bless us.”  
You know the parable, you recognize the voice—may you hear it in your souls today! God will bless us! We are few, too few for this great work, but God will bless us and therefore we are enough! We are feeble and little taught—with little experience and slender wisdom—but God will bless us, and we shall be wise enough and strong enough! We are undeserving, full of sin, fickle and frail—but God will bless us and our undeservingness shall be a foil in which to set the precious diamond of His mercy! God will bless us—there are glorious promises which guarantee the blessing! They must be kept, for they are yes and amen in Christ Jesus!  
The nations must bow down before Messiah! Ethiopia must stretch out her arms to receive her King. God will bless us! He has blessed His people. Let Egypt tell how God overthrew His Israel’s enemies. Let Canaan witness how He slew kings and overthrew mighty kings, and gave their land for a heritage, even a heritage unto His people. God will bless us! He has given us His Son—how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? He has given us His Holy Spirit to abide with us forever! How can He deny us any necessary aid or requisite benediction? Here is a song for each Christian man and woman engaged in holy work!  
Here is a song for your Sunday school classes this afternoon, you diligent teachers of our youth! If you have seen no good come of your work and you grow somewhat dispirited, here is a Psalm to raise your sinking spirits, “God will bless us.” Go on and teach the Gospel to the youngsters with redoubled zeal! Here is a sweet note for the minister who has been plowing a thankless soil and seen no harvest. “God will bless us.” Cease not from your energetic labors! Go back to your work, for you have such a blessing yet to come that you may well rejoice even in the prospect of its coming! Let each worker go forth to that form of Christian service which his Master has appointed him, hearing this bird of paradise warbling in his ears, “God will bless us.”  
Like David’s minstrelsy before Saul, it charms away despair! Like the silver trumpets of the priests, it proclaims a jubilee! O that like the rams’ horns of Israel it may level Jericho! Why, if just once this morning I could address with the eloquence of Peter the Hermit, when preaching the Crusade—when he made his hearers shout aloud, “Deus vult!” I, too, would stir your blood with the war-note of my text! I think this, “God will bless us,” might just as much stir you, and move you, and make you dash along like a mighty host of warriors as did the, “God wills it,” of the Hermit! God is with us! He will bless us!  
Why do you hesitate? Why do you grow weary? Why do you look to a human arm for strength? Why do you fear your enemies? Why do you seek slothful ease? Why do you get to your beds of rest? God will bless us! Up, you men-at-arms, and snatch the victory! Grasp your sickles, you farmers, and gather in the harvest! Hoist your sails, you mariners, for the favoring winds are coming! “God will bless us!” O for fire from off the altar to touch our lips! And what can be a better instrument with which to carry the flaming coal than the golden tongs of the text, “God will bless us”?  
One word of warning and we have done. Suppose the Lord should bless “us” in the plural, and not “you,” dear Hearer, in the singular! What if there should be showers of mercy and they should not drop on you? What if He should bestow a token for good upon His people but you should be left out? It may be so, for it has been so—and if such is the dreary fact, it will make you worse instead of better—for none is so dry as the fleece which remains dry when the floor is wet! None is so lost as those who are lost where others are saved. Tremble lest that should be your case!  
Yet it need not be so! Oh, blessed be God, I hope I can say it shall not be so! “Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near.” He has abundant pardons to bestow and He will give them freely to all who ask! All He asks of you is that you trust His Son and this faith His Holy Spirit gives. Do trust Him! Rest upon the merit of His precious blood and you will not be left out when He dispenses His favors, but you shall sing as cheerfully as all the rest, “God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us.”

*“For yet I know I shall Him praise, Who graciously to me  
The health is of my countenance, Yes, my own God is He.”*

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OUR LORD’S TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION  
NO. 2142

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY, MAY 11, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

INTENDED FOR READING  
ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 27, 1890.  
**“You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”  
Psalm 68:18.**

The hill of Zion had been taken out of the hand of the Jebusites. They had held it long after the rest of the country had been subdued, but David, at last, had taken it from them. This was the mountain ordained of Jehovah of old to be the place of the Temple. David, therefore, with songs and shouts of rejoicing, brought up the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to the place where it should remain. That is the literal fact upon which the figure of the text is based. We are at no loss for the spiritual interpretation, for we turn to Ephesians 4:8 where, quoting rather the sense of the passage than the exact words, Paul says, “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

The same sense is found in Colossians 2:15: “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Not misled by the will-o’-the-wisp of fancy, but guided by the clear light of the Infallible Word, we see our way to expound our text. In the words of David we have an address to our Lord Jesus Christ concerning His ascent to His Glory. “You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.”

Our Savior descended when He came to the manger of Bethlehem, a Babe—and further descended when He became “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” He descended lower, still, when He was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross—and further yet when His dead body was laid in the grave. “Well,” says our Apostle, “Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” Long and dark was the descent—there were no depths of humiliation, temptation or affliction which He did not fathom. Seeing He stood in their place, He went as low as Justice required that sinners should go who had dared to violate the Law of God.

The utmost abyss of desertion heard Him cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Low in the grave He lay, but He had His face upward, for He could not see corruption. On the third day He left the couch of the dead and rose to the light of the living! He had commenced His glorious ascent! To prove how real was His Resurrection, He stayed on earth

some 40 days and showed Himself to many witnesses. Magdalene and Peter saw Him alone—the 11 beheld Him in their midst. The two on the road conversed with Him. Five hundred Brethren at once beheld Him! He gave Infallible proofs that He was really risen from the dead and these remain with us unto this day as historic facts.

He ate a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb to prove that He was no phantom. He said to the Apostles, “Handle Me, and see that it is I, Myself, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see I have.” One laid his finger in the print of the nails and even thrust his hand into His side! Their very doubts were used to make the evidence clearer. The fact that Jesus died was put beyond question by the thrust of the spear—and the fact that He was alive, in a material form, was equally well established by the touch of Thomas.

Beyond a doubt, Christ Jesus has risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept. This being settled beyond question, the time came for our Lord to continue His homeward, upward journey and return unto the Glory from which He had come down. From “the mount called Olivet,” while His disciples surrounded Him, “He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” The rest of His upward progress we cannot describe. Imagination and faith step in and conceive of Him as rising beyond all regions known to us—far above all imaginable height. He draws near to the suburbs of Heaven and surely the poet is not wrong when he says of the angels—

*“They brought His chariot from on high  
To bear Him to His Throne;  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, ‘The glorious work is done.’”*

“Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” How high He ascended after He passed the pearly portal Paul cannot tell us, save that he says, “He ascended up far above all heavens,” and describes Him as, “set at God’s right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.” He describes our Master as, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” The Man Christ Jesus has gone back to the place from where His Godhead came! You are the King of Glory, O Christ! You are the eternal Son of the Father! You sit forever in the highest Heaven, enthroned with all Glory, clothed with all power, King of kings and Lord of lords! Unto Your name we humbly present our hallelujahs, both now and forever.

I. Now, concerning the text itself, which speaks of the ascent of our ever blessed Lord, we shall say, first, that OUR LORD’S TRIUMPH WAS SET FORTH BY HIS ASCENSION. He came here to fight the foes of God and man. It was a tremendous battle—not against flesh and blood—but against spiritual wickedness and evil powers. Our Lord fought against sin, death, Hell, hate of God and love of falsehood. He came to earth to be our Champion. For you and for me, Beloved, He entered the battle and wrestled till He sweat great drops of blood—yes, “He poured out His soul unto death.”

When He had ended the struggle He declared His victory by ascending to the Father’s Throne. Now His descent is ended. There was no need for Him to remain amid the men who despised Him. The shame, suffering, blasphemy and rebuke are far beneath Him now. The sun has risen and the darkness of night has fled. He has gone up beyond the reach of sneering Sadducees and accusing Pharisees. The traitor cannot again kiss Him. Pilate cannot scourge Him. Herod cannot mock Him. He is far above the reach of priestly taunt and vulgar jest—

*“No more the cruel spear,  
The Cross and nails no more;  
For Hell itself shakes at His frown,  
And all the heavens adore.”*

Now, also, our Lord’s work is done . We are sure that the purpose of His love is secure or He would not have returned to His rest. The love that brought Him here would have kept Him here if all things necessary for our salvation had not been finished. Our Lord Jesus is no sudden enthusiast who rashly commences an enterprise of which He wearies before it is accomplished. He does not give up a work which He has once undertaken. Because He said, “I have finished the work which You gave Me to do,” and then ascended to the Father, I feel safe in asserting that all that was required of the Lord Christ for the overthrow of the powers of darkness is performed and endured—all that is needed for the salvation of His redeemed is fully done!

Whatever was the design of Christ’s death, it will be accomplished to the fullest for had He not secured its accomplishment He would not have gone back. I do not believe in a defeated and disappointed Savior, nor in a Divine Sacrifice which fails to effect its purpose. I do not believe in an atonement which is admirably wide but fatally ineffectual. I rejoice to hear my Lord say, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me.” Whatever was the purpose of the Christ of God in the great transaction of the Cross, it must be fully effected—to conceive a failure, even of a partial kind—is scarcely reverent.

Jesus has seen to it that in no point shall His work be frustrated. Nothing is left undone of all His covenanted engagements. “It is finished” is a description of every item of the Divine labor and, therefore, has He ascended on high. There are no dropped stitches in the robe of Christ! I say again, the love that brought our Lord here would have kept Him here if He had not been absolutely sure that all His work and warfare for our salvation had been accomplished to the fullest.

Further, as we see here the ending of our Lord’s descent and the accomplishment of His work, remember that His ascent to the Father is representative. Every Believer rose with Him and grasped the inheritance. When He rose up, ascending high, He taught our feet the way. At the last His people shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air and so shall they be forever with the Lord. He has made a stairway for His saints to climb to their bliss and He has traveled it Himself to assure us that the

new and living way is available for us. In His Ascension He bore all His people with Him.

As Levi was in the loins of Abraham, when Melchisedec met him, so were all the saints in the loins of Christ when He ascended up on high. Not one of the number shall fail to come where the Head has entered, else were Jesus the Head of an imperfect and mutilated body! Though you have no other means of getting to Glory but faith in Jesus, that way will bring you there without fail! Not only will He not be in Glory and leave us behind, but He cannot be so since we are one with Him—and where He is His people must be. We are in the highest Glory in Jesus as our Representative and by faith we are raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies, even in Him.

Our Lord’s ascent is to the highest Heaven . I have noted this already but let me remind you of it again, lest you miss an essential point. Our Lord Jesus is in no inferior place in the Glory land. He was a servant here, but He is not so there. I know that He intercedes and thus carries on a form of service on our behalf—but no striving, vying and tears are mingled with His present pleading. With authority He pleads. He is a Priest upon His Throne, blending with His plea the authority of His personal merit. He says, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth” and, therefore, He is glorious in His prayers for us!

He is Lord of every place and of everything—He guides the wheels of Providence and directs the flight of angels—His kingdom rules over all. He is exalted above every name that is named and all things are put under Him. Oh, what a Christ we have to trust in and to love! And on this account we are called upon in the text to think much of His blessed Person. When we speak of what Christ has done, we must think much of the doing, but still more of the Doer. We must not forget the Benefactor in the benefits which come to us through Him. Note well how David puts it. To him the Lord is first and most prominent. He sees Him. He speaks to Him. “You have ascended on high. You have led captivity captive. You have received gifts for men.”

Three times he addresses Him by that personal pronoun, “You.” Dwell on the fact that He, the Son of David, who for our sakes came down on earth and lay in the manger—and hung upon a woman’s breast—has gone up on high into Glory! He that trod the weary ways of Palestine now reigns as a King in His palace. He that sighed, hungered, wept, bled and died is now above all heavens! Behold your Lord upon the Cross—mark the five ghastly wounds and all the shameful scourging and spitting which men have worked upon Him! See how that blessed body, prepared of the Holy Spirit for the indwelling of the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, was evilly treated! But there is an end to all this. “You have ascended on high.” He that was earth’s scorn is now Heaven’s wonder!

I saw You laid in the tomb, wrapped about with cerements and embalmed in spices—but You have ascended on high where death cannot touch You! The Christ that was buried here is now upon the Throne! The heart which was broken here is palpitating in His bosom this minute, as full of love and condescension as when He dwelt among men! He has not forgotten us, for He has not forgotten Himself and we are part and parcel of Himself! He is still mindful of Calvary and Gethsemane. Even when you are dazzled by the superlative splendor of His exalted state, still believe that He is a Brother born for adversity.

Let us rejoice in the ascent of Christ as being the ensign of His victory and the symbol of it! He has accomplished His work. If You had not led captivity captive, O Christ, You had never ascended on high. And if You had not won gifts of salvation for the sins of men, You had been here still suffering! You would never have relinquished Your chosen task if You had not perfected it. You are so set on the salvation of men that for the joy that was set before You, You did endure the Cross, despising the shame— and we know that all must have been achieved or You would still be working out Your gracious enterprise. The voice of the ascension is— CONSUMMATUM EST—“It is finished.”

II. Having led your thoughts that way, I would, secondly, remind you that THE LORD’S TRIUMPHAL ASCENT DEMONSTRATED THE DEFEAT OF ALL OUR FOES. “You have led captivity captive” is as certain as, “You have ascended on high.” Brethren, we were once captives—captives to tyrants who worked us woe and would soon have worked us death. We were captives to sin. We were captives to Satan and therefore captives under spiritual death. We were captives under many lusts and imaginations of our own hearts—we were captives to error, captives to deceit. But the Lord Jesus Christ has led captivity captive! There is our comfort!

Forget not that we were hopeless captives to all these—they were too strong for us and we could not escape from their cruel bondage. The Lord Jesus, by His glorious victory here below, has subdued all our adversaries and in His going up on high He has triumphed over them all, exhibiting them as trophies. The imagery may be illustrated by the triumph of Roman conquerors. They were known to pass along the Via Sacra and climb up to the Capitol, dragging at their chariot wheels the vanquished princes with their hands bound behind their backs.

All those powers which held you captive have been vanquished by Christ. Whatever form your spiritual slavery took, you are fully delivered from it, for the Lord Christ has made captives those whose captives you were. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” Concerning Satan, our Lord has bruised his head beneath His heel. Death also is overcome and his sting is taken away. Death is no more the King of Dread—“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Whatever there was or is which can oppress our soul and hold it in bondage, the Lord Jesus has subdued and made it captive to Himself.

What then? Why, from now on the power of all our adversaries is broken. Courage, Christians! You can fight your way to Heaven for the foes who dispute your passage have been already beaten in the field! They bear upon them the proofs of the valor of your Leader. True, the flock of the

Lord is too feeble to force its way—but listen—“The Breaker is come up before them and the King at the head of them.” Easily may the sheep follow where the Shepherd leads the way! We have but to follow those heavenly feet which once were pierced and none of our steps shall slide! Move on, O soldiers of Jesus, for your Captain cries, “Follow Me!”

Would He lead you into evil? Has He not said, “You shall tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet.” Your Lord has set His foot on the necks of your enemies—you wage war with vanquished foes! What encouragement this glorious ascension of Christ should give to every tried Believer! Remember, again, that the victory of our Lord Christ is the victory of all who are in Him. “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Now, the Seed of the woman is, first of all, the Lord Jesus—but also it is all who are in union with Him. There are still two seeds in the world—the seed of the serpent which cannot enter into this rest—and the Seed of the woman who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.

In these last is the living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever. Jesus, our Lord, represents them in all that He does—they died in Him, were buried in Him, are raised in Him and in the day when He triumphed they led captivity captive in Him. Looking at the great battle now raging in the world, I gaze with joyful confidence. We are fighting now with Popery, with Mohammedanism, with idolatry in the foulest forms—but the battle is, in effect, won! We are struggling with the terrible infidelity which has fixed itself like a cancer upon the Church of God and our spirit sinks as we survey the horrors of this almost civil war. How often we groan because the battle does not go as we would desire it!

Yet there is no reason for dismay. God is in no hurry as we are. He dwells in the leisure of eternity and is not the prey of fear as we are. We read concerning the multitude, when they needed to be fed, that Jesus asked Philip a question—but yet it is added, “However Jesus knew what He would do.” So today the Lord may put many questions to His valiant ones and, “for the divisions of Reuben there may be great searchings of heart,” but He knows what He is going to do and we may lay our heads upon His bosom and rest quietly. If He does not tell us how He will effect His purpose, yet assuredly He will not fail. His cause is sure to win the victory—how can the Lord be defeated? A vanquished Christ?! We have not yet learned to blaspheme and so we put the notion far from us! No, Brothers and Sisters, by those bleeding hands and feet He has secured the struggle. By that side opened down to His heart we feel that His heart is fixed in our cause.

Especially by His Resurrection and by His climbing to the Throne of God, He has made the victory of His Truth, the victory of His Church—the victory of Himself—most sure and certain!

III. Let us notice, thirdly, that OUR LORD’S TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION WAS CELEBRATED BY GIFTS. The custom of bestowing gifts after victory was practiced among the Easterns, according to the song of Deborah. Those to whom a triumph was decreed in old Rome scattered money among the populace. Sometimes it seemed as if every man in the city was made rich by his share of the spoils of vanquished princes.

Thus our Lord, when He ascended on high, received gifts for men and scattered largess all around. The Psalm says: “You have received gifts for men.” The Hebrew has it, “You have received gifts in Adam”—that is, in human nature. Our Lord Christ had everything as Lord—but as the Man, the Mediator—He has received gifts from the Father. “The King eternal, immortal, invisible,” has bestowed upon His triumphant General a portion with the great and He has ordained that He shall divide the spoil with the strong. This our Lord values, for He speaks of all that the Father has given Him with the resolve that He will possess it.

When Paul quotes the passage, he says, “He gave gifts to men.” Did Paul quote incorrectly? I think not. He quoted, no doubt, from the Greek version. Is the Greek version, therefore, compatible with the Hebrew? Assuredly! Dr. Owen says that the word rendered “received” may be read “gave.” And if not, for Christ to receive for men is the same thing as to give to men for He never receives for Himself, but at once gives it to those who are in Him. Paul looks to the central meaning of the passage and gives us the heart and soul of its sense. He is not intending to quote it verbatim, but to give in brief its innermost teaching.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has nothing which He does not give to His Church. He gave Himself for us and He continues, still, to give Himself to us. He receives the gifts, but He only acts as the conduit through which the Grace of God flows to us. It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell—and of His fullness have we all received. What are these great ascension gifts? I answer that the sum of them is the Holy Spirit. I invite your adoring attention to the sacred Trinity manifested to us here. How delightful it is to see the Trinity working out in unity the salvation of men!

“You have ascended on high”—there is Christ Jesus. “You have received gifts for men”—there is the Father, bestowing those gifts. The Gift itself is the Holy Spirit. This is the great generosity of Christ’s Ascension which He bestowed on His Church at Pentecost. Thus you have Father, Son and Holy Spirit blessedly co-working for the benediction of men, the conquest of evil, the establishment of righteousness. O my Soul, delight yourself in Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

One of the sins of modern theology is keeping these divine Persons in the background so that they are scarcely mentioned in their several workings and offices. The theology which can feed your souls must be full of Godhead and yield to Father, Son and Holy Spirit perpetual praise. Beloved, the gifts here spoken of are those brought by the Holy Spirit. “The water that I shall give him,” said Christ, “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” He said again, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” We read that He, “spoke of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should receive.” “If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” To conquer the world for Christ we need nothing but the Holy Spirit and in the

hour of His personal victory He secured us this Gift. If the Holy Spirit is but given we have in Him all the weapons of our holy war.

But observe, according to Paul, these gifts which our Lord gave are embodied in men, for the Holy Spirit comes upon men whom He has chosen and works through them according to His good pleasure. Therefore He gave some Apostles, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers. No one may be judged to be given of God to the Church in any of these offices unless the Spirit dwells upon him. All are given of God upon whom the Holy Spirit rests, whatever their office may be. It is ours to accept with great joy the men who are chosen and anointed to speak in the name of the Lord, be they what they may.

Paul, Apollos, Cephas—they are all the gifts of the risen Christ to His redeemed ones for their edifying and perfecting! The Holy Spirit, in proportion as He abides in these servants of God, makes them to be precious blessings of Heaven to His people and they become the champions by whom the world is subdued to the Lord Jesus Christ. These gifts, given in the form of men, are given for men. Churches do not exist for preachers, but preachers for Churches. We have sometimes feared that certain Brothers thought that the assemblies of Believers were formed to provide situations for clerical persons—but, indeed, it is not so.

My Brothers and Sisters in the Church, we who are your pastors are your servants for Christ’s sake. Our rule is not that of lordship, but of love. Every God-sent minister, if he discharges his duty aright, waits upon the bride of Christ with loving diligence and delights greatly to hear the Bridegroom’s voice. I wish that you who talk of my Lord’s servants as if they were rival performers would cease, thus, to profane the gifts of the ascended King. The varying abilities of those by whom the Lord builds up His Church are all arranged by infinite wisdom and it should be ours to make the most we can of them.

Comparing and contrasting the Lord’s gifts is unprofitable work. It is better to drink of the well of Elim than to grow hot and feverish in disputing as to whether it is better or worse than Beersheba or Sychar. One minister may be better for you than another, but another may be better for somebody else than the one you prefer. The least gifted may be essential to a certain class of mind—therefore despise no one. When God gives gifts, shall you turn them away contemptuously and say, “I like this one but the other I do not”? Did the Father bestow these gifts upon His Son and has the Holy Spirit put them into different earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be of God—and will you begin judging them?

No, Beloved, the Lord has sent me to preach His Gospel and I rejoice to feel that I am sent for your sake. I entreat you to profit as much as you can by me by frequent hearing, by abounding faith, by practical obedience to the Word. Use all God’s servants as you are able to profit by them. Hear them prayerfully—not for the indulgence of your curiosity, nor for the pleasing of your ear with rhetoric—but that you, through the Word of God, may feel His Spirit working in our hearts all the purpose of His will. Our conversion, sanctification, comfort, instruction and usefulness all come to us by the Holy Spirit—and that Spirit sends His powerful message by the men whom He has given to be His mouths to men.

See how wonderful, then, was that ascension of our Lord in which He scattered down mercies so rich and appropriate among the sons of men! From His glorious elevation above all heavens He sends forth pastors, preachers and evangelists, through whom the Holy Spirit works mightily in them that believe. By them He gathers the redeemed together and builds them up as a Church to His glory!

IV. I want the attention, now, of all who are unconverted for I have glorious tidings for them. To them I speak under my fourth head, OUR LORD’S TRIUMPH HAS A VERY SPECIAL BEARING. “You have received gifts for men”—not for angels, not for devils, but for men—poor fallen men. I read not that it is said, “for bishops or ministers,” but, “for men.” And yet there is a special character mentioned. Does the text particularly mention, “saints,” or those that have not defiled their garments? No, I do not read of them here.

What a strange sovereignty there is about the Grace of God! Truly He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, for in this instance He selects for special mention those that you and I would have passed over without a word! “Yes, for the rebellious, also.” I must pause to brush my tears away! Where are you, you rebels? Where are those who have lived in rebellion against God all their lives? Alas, you have been in open revolt against Him—you have raged against Him in your hearts and spoken against Him with your tongues!

Some have sinned as drunkards. Others have broken the laws of purity, truth, honesty. Many rebel against the light, violate conscience and disobey the Word—these, also, are among the rebellious. So are the proud, the wrathful, the slothful, the profane, the unbelieving, the unjust. Hear, all of you, these words and carry them home! And if they do not break your hearts with tender gratitude, you are hard, indeed. “Yes, for the rebellious also.” When our Lord rode Home in triumph He had a pitying heart towards the rebellious! When He entered the highest place to which He could ascend He was still the sinner’s Friend! When all His pains and griefs were being rewarded with endless horror He turned His eyes upon those who had crucified Him and bestowed gifts upon them! This description includes those who have rebelled against God, though once they professed to be His loyal subjects.

Perhaps I am addressing some who have so far backslidden that they have thrown up all religion and have gone back into the world and its sins—these are apostates from the profession which once they made. To these I would give a word of encouragement if they will turn to the Lord. Once upon a time John Bunyan was under great temptation from the devil. This trial he records in his, “Grace Abounding.” He thought that God had given him up and that he was cast away forever and yet he found hope in this text. I have copied out a little bit which refers to it—“I feared, also, that this was the mark that the Lord set on Cain, even continual

fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that He had charged him for the blood of his brother Abel.

“Then did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me, which burden did also so oppress me that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet. Yet that saying would sometimes come into my mind, ‘He has received gifts for the rebellious.’ Rebellious, thought I, why surely they are such as once were under subjection to their Prince, even those who, after they had sworn subjection to His government, have taken up arms against Him; and this, thought I, is my very condition! Once I loved Him, feared Him, served Him—but now I am a rebel and I have sold Him. I said, let Him go if He will, but yet He has gifts for rebels; and then why not for me?”

Oh, that I could cause every despairing heart to reason in this way! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would put this argument into every troubled mind at this moment—“And then why not for me?” Come home, dear Brothers and Sisters, come home, for there are gifts for the rebellious—and why not for you? I know you deserted the Lord’s Table, but the Lord of the Table has not deserted you! I know you have, as far as you could, forsworn the name of Christ and even wished you could be unbaptized—but that cannot be, nor can the Lord leave you to perish! I know you have eagerly done evil with both hands and perhaps now you are living in a known sin—and when you go home today you will see it before your eyes.

Nevertheless, I charge you, Return unto the Lord at once! Come to your Lord and Savior who still prays, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Behold how in His Glory He “has received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also.” O my Soul, I charge you, on your own account, hang on to this most precious declaration, for you, too, have been a rebel! Would God that all my Brothers and Sisters would be cheered by this dear Word and take it home to themselves with a believing repentance and a holy hatred of sin! I would print the words in stars across the brow of night—“Yes, for the rebellious, also.”

V. I have done when I have handled the fifth point, which is this—OUR LORD’S TRIUMPHANT ASCENSION SECURES THE CONSUMMATION OF HIS WHOLE WORK. What does it say? “That the Lord God might dwell among them.” When our Lord Christ came here at the first He was willing enough to “dwell” among us, but it could not be. “The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us,” like a Bedouin in his tent, but not as a dweller at home. He could not “dwell” here on that occasion. He was but a Visitor and badly treated at that.

“There was no room for Him in the inn,” where everybody else was freely welcome. “He came unto His own”—surely they will lodge Him—“but His own received Him not.” There was no room for Him in the Temple— there He had to use the scourge. There was no room for Him in the open streets for they took up stones to stone Him. Out of the synagogue they hurried him, to cast him down headlong from the brow of the hill. “Away with Him! Away with Him!” was the cry of the ribald crowd. This dear Visitor who came here all unarmed, without sword or bow—they treated as though He had been a spy or an assassin who had stolen among them to do them ill.

And so they ran upon Him with a spear and He, quitting these inhospitable realms which knew Him not, took Home with Him the marks of man’s discourtesy. O Earth, Earth! How could you drive away your dearest Friend and compel Him to be as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night? No, worse—as a man astonished who meets with wounding in the house of his friends? After He had risen again He went Home—that from His Throne He might direct a work by which earth should become a place where God could abide. Again is the Temple of God to be with men and He shall dwell among them.

This world of ours has been sprinkled with the precious blood of the Lamb of God and it is no longer as an unclean thing. Jesus is the Lamb of God who so takes away the sin of the world that God can treat with men on terms of Divine Grace and publish free salvation. The Lord God Himself had long been a stranger in the land! Did not the holy man of old say, “I am a stranger with you and a sojourner, as all my fathers were”? But Jesus, the Ascended One, is pouring down such gifts upon this sin-polluted world that it will yet become a new earth wherein dwells righteousness and the God of Righteousness! This promise is partly fulfilled before your own eyes this day for the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and He has never returned.

Jesus said, “He shall abide with you forever.” The Holy Dove has often been greatly grieved but He has never spread His wings to depart. This is still the dispensation of the Spirit. You hardly need to pray to have the Spirit poured out for that has been done. What you need is a Baptism of the Holy Spirit—namely, to go down personally into that glorious flood which has been poured forth. Oh, to be immersed into the Holy Spirit and into fire—covered with His holy influence—“plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea and lost in His immensity!” Here is our life and power, for thus the Lord God does dwell among us!

Ever since the Ascension, the Holy Spirit has remained among men though He has not been, at all seasons, equally active. All through the night of Romanism and the schoolmen He still tarried—there were humble hearts which rejoiced to be His temples even in those doleful days. Today He is still with His regenerated ones. In spite of impudent striving against the Divine Inspiration of His Holy Scripture and, notwithstanding the follies of ecclesiastical amusements, He is with His chosen. Lord, what is man that Your Spirit should dwell with him? But so it is and this is why our Lord went up to Heaven and received Divine gifts that by Him the Lord God might dwell among us.

But there comes a day when this shall be carried out to the letter. I think I hear the angels say, “You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” Now, “in like manner,” must mean in Person. In Person our Lord was taken up into Heaven and in Person He will come again! And when

He comes the Lord God will, indeed, dwell among us! Oh, that the day would come! We wait and watch for His glorious appearing—for then will He dwell among men in a perfect fashion. What happy days shall we have when Jesus is here!

What a millennium His Presence will bring—there can be no such auspicious era without it—any more than there can be summer without the sun! He must come, first, and then will the golden age begin! The central glory of that period shall be that the Lord is here. “The Lord God shall dwell among them.” Then shall be heard the song which will never end— earth’s homage to the Lord who renewed the heavens and the earth—and has taken up His dwelling in them. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for He that sits on the Throne shall dwell among them.”

Up till now this work has been going on and as yet it is incomplete. “Every prospect pleases and only man is vile,” is still most sadly true. The rankness of sin destroys the sweet odors of this world so that the pure and holy God cannot abide in it. But since the Lord Jesus has sweetened it with His sacred merits and the Spirit is purifying it by His residence in men, the Lord smells a savor of rest and He will not give up this poor fallen planet. Even now His angels come and go in heavenly traffic with the chosen.

Soon the little boat of this globe shall be drawn nearer to the great ship and earth shall lie alongside Heaven. Then shall men praise God day and night in His Temple. Heaven shall find her choristers among the ransomed from among men. The whole world shall be as a censer filled with incense for the Lord of Hosts. All this will be because of those gifts received and bestowed by our Lord Jesus in the day when He returned to His Glory, leading captivity captive! O Lord, hasten Your coming! We are sure that Your abiding Presence and glorious reign will come in due season. Your coming down secured Your going up—Your going up secures Your coming down again. Therefore we bless and magnify You, O ascended Lord, with all our hearts and rise after You as You draw us upward from groveling things. So be it! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Psalm 68; Ephesians 4:1-13.**  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—322, 317, 449.

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DAILY BLESSINGS FOR GOD’S PEOPLE  
NO. 3493

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1916.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE., NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1871.

**“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” Psalm 68:19, 20.**

WE observe that this Psalm is a very difficult one. One of the ablest commentators calls it a titanic Psalm. It is truly a giant Psalm and to master it means much labor. Yet it is by no means difficult to understand when it comes to practical duties and to those Doctrines which are vital. For instance, the two verses before us are very simple and do not need any explanation, but only need to be impressed upon our memory. So is it always throughout Holy Scripture—wherever there are difficult places, they do not touch vital Truths. The matter of our salvation is plain enough. The Book of Revelation may be difficult, but not the Gospel according to Matthew! With regard to the future, there may be many clouds, but with regard to that blessed day which is past, which was the crisis of the world’s history, when our Savior hung upon the tree, the darkness is past and the true light shines there. Don’t, therefore, busy yourselves most about those things which are most difficult, for they are usually of least importance. Concern your heart most with the simplicities of the Gospel, for it is there, in the way, the truth and the life, that the essential matter lies.

Let us come to these two verses and remark that they remind us first, of the mercies of life. “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.” They then assure us of the mercies of death. “He that is our God is the God of our salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” And then the two verses tell us of the common occupation of both life and death, namely, the blessing of God, whose mercy continues to us in both states. Blessed be Jehovah, whether I receive the daily load of His benefits, or whether He opens for me the gates of the grave.

Let us begin, then, and contemplate for a few moments— I. THE MERCIES OF OUR LIFE.  
The text says, “He daily loads us with benefits.” Let us keep to the

English version just now. Take the words of it. What is it that He gives us? Benefits. We have a very beautiful word in the English language— benevolence. You know that means good wishing, bene volens. He may be a benevolent man who is not able to do any act of kindness, to give any of his substance away for lack of any, but God’s goodness to us is not merely bene volens, in which He wishes us well, but it is beneficence or good doing! His gifts and benefits are deeds of goodness, acts of goodness. He does to us that which is good. He does not only wish us well and speak to us well, and direct us well, but He does well unto us. He does not only say, “I pity your last estate,” but He delivers the lost out of their ruin. He does not say, as the churl does, “Be you warmed and be you filled,” and does no more, but, wishing us well, He does well unto us—He warms our hearts with His love, fills them with His mercy and sends us on our way rejoicing. It is true God speaks well to us. What more could He say to us than He has said in His blessed Word? It is true He wishes us well. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live.” But the essence of His goodness lies in this—that He goes beyond wishes and words into acts

Begin, Brothers and Sisters, with the greatest of His acts. “He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.” In that gift He has already given us all things. And from that blessed pledge He has never gone back, but He has given us all that we need for this life and for the life to come—for you have Divine Grace and glory, and have abounded in each. The upper springs fail not, neither do the lower springs. If Christ is our perpetual Bread and Wine, so, too, our common bread, in answer to our prayers, is given us according to His assurance, “Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.” Will you try to think of the benefits which you have received, dear Brother, dear Sister? Turn them over in your mind—the benefits that you have actually yourself received—not only read of, and heard of, and had promises of, but that you have received. Oh, the benefits of early education! The being restrained from sin! Oh, the benefits of conviction! Of being enlightened and made to see the guilt of sin. Oh, the sweet benefit of being led to the Savior! Made to stand at the foot of the Cross, where the blood speaks better things than that of Abel. Oh, the benefit of perfect pardon and of righteousness which covers us and justifies us in the sight of God! What an unspeakable benefit is regeneration! Who shall prize the benefit of adoption? Who is he that shall describe the benefit of daily education in the things of God—of preservation from falling into final, vital sin—of sanctification carried on from day to day? We have benefits that we know of, but we probably have ten times as many that we know not of! Some of them come in at the front door of the house—some of the richest of them seem to steal in at the back door. They are among the most precious bounties that fly in with so soft a wing that we hear them not when they come. You shall sooner count the hairs on your head, or the sand upon beach, than you shall be able to estimate the number of His benefits!

Leave that word, then, and note the next. It is said in the text concerning God’s benefits, that He loads us with them—loads us with benefits! He does not put a little upon us of His goodness, but much—very much—until it becomes a load. Have you never known what it is to be bowed right down with such goodness? I have, I freely confess it! I have desired to praise Him, but a sense of love so bowed me down that I could only adopt the language of the Psalmist and say, “Praise is silent for You, O God, in Zion.” It seemed as if “words were but air, and tongues but clay, and His compassion’s so Divine,” that it was impossible to speak of them! His mercies, as our hymn said just now, come as thick and as fast as the moments do. In fact, it is literally so. Every moment needs heaving of the lungs, pulsing of the blood. The slightest circumstance might prevent one or the other. God’s continued benefits come to us even in the simple form of preserved life. We are constantly exposed to peril. “Plagues and death around us fly.” God preserves us from perils to the body. Our thoughts—where might they go? They might in a moment lead us into heresies and foul blasphemies. It is no little thing to be preserved from that spiritual pestilence that walks both in darkness and the noonday. Glory be to God, who sends us temporal and spiritual benefits so numerous and each one so weighty that we cannot say less than this, “That He daily

 loads us with His benefits, until we seem bowed down to the earth under a joyful sense of obligation to His mercy.” “He loads us with benefits.”

Oh, are any of you inclined to murmur? Do you think God deals harshly with you? Well, you are what you are by His Grace. Though you are not what you wish to be, yet remember you are not what, if strict justice were carried out, you would be. In the poor-house you might be—few admire that residence. In the prison you might be—God preserves you from the sin that would bring you there. In the lunatic asylum you might be—better men and women than you are have come to that. At the grave’s mouth you might be—on the sick bed, on the verge of eternity. God’s holiest saints have not been spared from the grave. In Hell you might be among the lost, wailing, but hopelessly wailing, gnashing your teeth in utter despair. O God, when we think of what we are not, because Your Grace has kept us from it, we cannot but say, “You have loaded us with benefits.”

But then think of what you are, you Christians. You are God’s children. You are joint-heirs with Christ. “All things are yours.” Yes, and “things to come,” you have guaranteed, too—preservation to the end, and you have, after the end of this life, glory without end! The “many mansions” are for you. The palms and harps of the glorified are for you. You have a share in all that Christ has, and is, and shall be! In all the gifts of His Ascension you have a part. In the gifts that come to us through His session at the right hand of God, you have your share. And in the glories of the Second Advent, the grand hope of the Church of God, you shall partake! See how, in the present, and in the past, and in the future, He loads you with benefits. There are two great words already.

But the next word is equally large. “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.” A poor man shall call at your door and you shall give to him all he needs for food, and cover him and give him something to make his heart glad. If you do it once, you reckon that you have done well. Supposing he should call again tomorrow? You might find it in your heart to do the same. But suppose he called upon you seven days in the week? I am afraid that by degrees that would become seven times too often, for we count, when we have done men a good turn, that someone else should see to them next time! If we load them especially with benefits, we say, “Don’t encroach. Don’t ride a willing horse too fast. You must not come again so often. You weary me.” Ah, this is man! But look at God. He daily loads us with benefits! How many days has He done that with some of us? Thirty years? “Ah,” says one, “I can talk of 60 years”—yes, and some of you of 70 and 80 years! Well, He has loaded you with benefits every day. You have never been above the rank of a pauper, as far as your God is concerned. But I will put it differently. You have been a gentleman commoner upon the goodness of God all your life. It has been your lot, like that of Mephibosheth, to sit daily at the King’s table and receive a portion from Him. And yet you murmur! You have been unbelieving, proud, idle—all sorts of ill-tempers have you shown. Yet has He daily loaded you with benefits. It has sometimes seemed to be a wrestling between our sin and God’s love, but up to this hour His love has conquered. We have drawn mightily upon His bank, but that bank has never been exhausted. The load of mercy which was used yesterday won’t do for today. Like manna, it must come fresh and fresh, and the blessing is that it does come fresh and fresh! When God draws the curtain and stands in the sunlight, mercy streams in on the sunbeam! And when He shuts the eyelids of the day and the evening comes, it is mercy that puts its finger upon our eyelids and bids us rest. He “daily loads us with benefits”—every day. And He loads us with benefits not only on bright days, but on dark days. When we are sick and tossing to and fro upon the bed, He still is loading us with benefits, only in another form. He sometimes sends His choicest mercies to us in black-edged envelopes. The very brightest gems of Heaven come to us and we know them not. They sparkle not until faith’s eyes have seen them. Nature has not perceived their excellence. How He loads us with benefits on Sabbath days! There is a dear Brother who is almost always here, who, when he sees me on Sunday mornings, generally makes use of some such exclamation as this, “Every day is good to me, but the Sabbath day is seven good days in one! It is blest seven times over!” And, indeed, so it is. He loads us with benefits on the Sabbath. But then we have our Monday mercies and our Tuesday mercies, too—and right on to the close of Saturday night, the Lord continues to heap on His mercies, one after another, that He may make us feel that we shall sooner weary with thanking Him than He will weary in giving us cause for thankfulness!

There is one other word—a very little one, but a sweet one, too— “Blessed is the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.” “Us.” Personal matters bring sweetness to our soul and herein lies the wonder. That God should load David with benefits was marvelous to David, but not to me. The marvel to me is that He should load me with benefits! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I do not feel your imperfections and, therefore, I do not so much perceive the Sovereignty of God in dealing graciously with you. But I know some of my own shortcomings, and they seem to me to be greater than those of others and, therefore, do I with gratitude admire the abounding mercy of God that He should load me with benefits—

*“Why do I meet to hear His voice,  
And enter where there’s room,  
While thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?”*

There may be some whose consciences will allow them to think that their praying made the distinction. I am not able to believe that—I am compelled to feel that if I enjoy the things of Christ that others do not, it is of the Lord’s mercy, and not of any goodness in me, but entirely of His Infinite Grace! Let us bless the Lord at this hour because He loads us with benefits when He might have passed us by! He might have allowed us to go on heaping up our transgressions until the measure thereof had been filled, and then He might have made us reap forever that which we had sown! Instead of this, He has made us—many of us—however unlikely persons—to be His chosen ones and He has loaded us with benefits.

I have spoken very simply entirely with the view that those hearts that have tasted that the Lord is gracious may now wake up all their powers to praise and bless the name of the Most High. We must not pass away from this, however, without observing that our translation is not literal— indeed, is not the meaning of the passage. Those of you who will look at your Bibles will perceive that the words, “who,” and, “with benefits,” are put in it italics to show that they are not in the Hebrew, but have been supplied by the translators, as they thought them necessary to the sense. But some of the best interpreters say that the passage means this, “Blessed is the Lord, who daily bears our burdens.” And I have little doubt that that is the correct translation. It is not so much that He loads us, as that He lifts our load for us and bears it for us. Well, at any rate, that is a sweet rendering, “He daily bears our burden,” and it is a rendering which is a word of rebuke to some of you. Did you not come into this Tabernacle tonight with your burdens on your back? Well, it was wrong you should ever have them! “Cast all your care on Him, for He cares for you.” A man who has a burden-bearer, certainly need not bear the burden himself! Faith is never burdened, because she knows where to lay her burden. She has a burden, but she puts it on the Almighty God! But unbelief, with a far less load than Faith easily carries, is bowed down to the dust. Arise, O child of God, whatever your burden is, and by an act of faith cast it upon God! You have done your little all—now leave it. Your fretfulness will not alter things. You cannot change the night, nor make one hair white or black. Why fret and worry? The world went on very well before you were born—it will when you are dead. Leave the helm. Whenever you have been foremost, you made a mistake. He that carves for himself will cut his fingers, but when God has been foremost and you have been content to follow, you have never had any mistake, then! And when God has been your Shepherd, you have been compelled to say, “I shall not want.” Oh, then, have done with burden-bearing, and take up the language of the text, “Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burdens.”

And then the text adds that He is “the God of our salvation.” In this life we ought to praise Him. His daily mercies are all sweetened with this reflection—that we are saved souls. Our morsel may be dry, but we dip it in this dainty sauce of His salvation1 It is true I am poor, but I am saved! It is true I am sick, but I am saved! It is true I am obscure and unknown, but I am saved! The salvation of God sweetens all! Then is it added to that, it is “our” salvation. He that can grasp the salvation which is in Christ and say, “This is mine,” is rich to all the intents of bliss and has his daily life gilded with joy!

And then it is added beyond that, “ our God.” God is ours! He that is our God is the God of salvation. His Omnipotence and Omniscience, His Immutability and His Faithfulness—all His attributes are ours! The Father is ours, the Son is ours and the Spirit is ours. The God of Election is ours! The God of Redemption is ours! The God of Sanctification is ours. Oh, with all this, how can we be cast down? Why should we repine? We have certainly abounding cause for blessing and praising the Lord! Those are the mercies of life. And now for a few minutes let us contemplate on—

II. THE MERCIES OF DEATH.  
“Unto God belong the issues from death.” This may mean several things. We will include its meanings under these heads. Unto God belongs

 escapes from death. Oh, blessed be His name, we may come very near the grave and the jaws of Death may be open to receive us—but the Pit cannot shut her mouth upon us until our hour is come— *“Plagues of death around me fly—  
Till He please, I cannot die!  
Not a single shaft can hit,  
Until the God of Love sees fit.  
What though a thousand at your side,  
At your right hand ten thousand, died?  
Our God, His chosen people saves,  
Amongst the dead, amidst the graves”*  
Whatever occurs around us, we need not be alarmed. We are immortal until our work is done. And amidst infectious or contagious diseases, if we are called to go there, we may sit as easily as though in balmy air. It is not ours to preserve our life by neglecting our duty—it is better to die in service than live in idleness—better to glorify God and depart, than rot above ground in neglecting what He would have us to do! Unto God belong the issues from death. We may, therefore, go without temerity into any danger where duty calls us.  
But then unto God belong the issues that lead actually down to death. It may be we shall not die. There are some who are comforted much by the belief that Christ will come and they shall not die. I do not profess to be among the number. I would as soon die as not, and rather, I think, if I might have my choice, for herein would be a greater conformity to the sufferings of Christ—in actually passing through the grave and rising again—than will fall to the lot of those who do not die. At all events, those who die not shall have no preference beyond them that sleep. So the Apostle tells us. “To” die is “gain”—and we will look upon it as such. But whenever we die, if we die, it will be at God’s bidding. No one has the key of death but the Lord of Life. A thousand angels could not hurl us to the grave. All the devils in Hell cannot destroy the least lamb in Christ’s flock! Till God says, “Return,” our spirit shall not leave the body and we may be well content to depart when God says the time is come. Oh, how blessed it is to think that the arrows of death are in the quiver of God and they cannot be shot forth unless as the Lord wills it! Unto the Lord belong the issues from death.  
Think of this, then, about your departed friends. The Master took them Home. Think about your own departure. It is not to be arranged by your folly nor by the malice of the wicked. It will all be planned and designed by the Infinite Love of God.  
But the text may mean something more. Unto God belong the issues from death—that is, the coming up from death again. We place the bodies of the saints in the territory of death, but they are only put there, as it were, because there is a lien upon them for a time. They must come out. They must be delivered, for His Word says if we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, “so also them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.” There shall not be a bone or a piece of a bone of one of the saints kept by the enemy as a trophy of his conquest over the Savior! Christ shall vanquish death entirely, and from the sepulcher He shall snatch all the trophies of the grave. We shall rise again, Beloved! What though our bodies rot? What though they feed plants and, in due time, feed animals, and pass through innumerable permutations and combinations? Yet He that made us can re-make us! And the voice that bade us live shall bid these bodies live again. “Unto God belong the issues from death.” In this we are comforted—to fall asleep—because the angel of the churches shall guard our dust.  
And then this further thought. The issues from death grasp all that comes after death. The spirit issues from death— indeed, never touched by it. Leaving the body behind a while, the soul enters into a Glory, waiting for the fullness. Then when Christ descends and the trumpet sounds, and the dead in Christ rise in the First Resurrection, then shall the reunited manhood enter into the fullness of the Glory with a manifested Savior. These issues from death belong to God, and God secures them to His people. He shall give them to them for whom He has appointed them. He shall give them to those whom He has made worthy by His Grace to be partakers of this heritage. They belong to Him—not to us by merit, but they are His gifts by Covenant and by Grace. Oh, then, how sweet it is to think, “The path down to the grave, my God has planted it. It is all His— all His own. And when my turn shall come to go into that garden wherein is the sepulcher, I shall be in my Father’s territory.” Jesus Christ is Lord of the sickbed. He makes the bed of His people in their affliction. Even down to the borders of the grave—to the edge of Jordan’s river—it is all Immanuel’s land and He often makes it the land of Beulah! And then, when I dip my foot in that chill stream, it is still my Master’s country! I am not out of the Presence of the Lord of Life now I am coming to the land of death-shade and through the river, but it is still the Master’s river and, on the other side, it is my Lord’s own land. When the shining ones shall meet me to conduct me up to the jeweled “city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God,” I shall be always at home, always in my Father’s country, never an exile, never come upon a tract of territory over which He has no power! “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for He is with me. His rod and His staff, even there have they sway, and they shall comfort me.” Be of good cheer, Beloved, “Goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life,” and life being ended, you shall “dwell in the house of your God forever.” In life and in death you shall prove the tokens of His special love. And now we wind up with this. Here is—  
III. THE COMMON OCCUPATIONS OF BOTH CONDITIONS. *“I will praise You in life,  
I will praise You in death—  
I will praise You as long  
As You lend me breath.”*  
“I will praise you forever and ever.” The one occupation of a Christian is to praise His God. Now, in order to do this, we must maintain, by God’s Grace, a grateful, happy, praiseful frame of mind. And we must endeavor to express that condition of mind by songs of gratitude. This should be our morning’s work. Should there not be the morning song? This should be the evening’s work. Let it be our vespers to bless and praise God! Israel had the morning lamb and the evening lamb. Let us make both ends of the day bright with His praise—and also during the day! We are in a wrong state of mind if we are not in a thankful state of mind. Depend upon it, there is something wrong with you if you cannot praise God. “Oh,” says one, “even in trouble?” Yes, in every bitter trouble, too, for Job could say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” “But are we never to be sorrowful?” Yes, yet always rejoicing. “How can that be?” Ah, may the Lord teach you! It is a work of Grace. Cast down, but yet, for all that, rejoicing in the Lord! He lifts up the light of His Countenance upon us, even when heart and flesh are failing us. I say again, there is something amiss with us when our heart does not praise God! Do as much as you can. When your heart is glad, try to praise Him with your lips. Do you work alone? Sing. Perhaps if you work in company, you cannot—but sing with the heart. Men of the world, I am afraid, sing more than we do. I do not admire most of their songs. They do not seem to have much sense about them— at least the modern ones. But let us sing some of the songs of Zion. You do not need to put your harps on the willows, but if they are there, take them down and praise the Lord who loads you with benefits in life and in death! Therefore, habitually praise Him. And, Brothers and Sisters, all our actions, as well as our thoughts and words, should tend to the praise of Him who always blesses us. You may stop praising God when He stops having mercy upon you—not till then! And as there is always a new mercy coming to your doors, let new praise be going up out of your hearts. “But how can I praise God by my actions?” asks one. “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.” I have tried to praise God by my preaching tonight. Some of you will go to your trades. Well, praise God at your trades! Any work, any lawful calling may be to the Christian priest—(and all Christians are priests)—the exercise of his sacred functions. You may make your smock-frock, if you will, a vestment! You can make your meal a sacrament. You can make everything in the house like the pots that were before the altar—the bells upon the horses shall be “holiness unto the Lord.”  
And, dear Brothers and Sisters, to close, let me remark that if we praise God ourselves by word and life, we ought to try to bring others to praise Him, too. You do not praise God, indeed, unless you want others to do so. It is a mark of sincere thankfulness that it desires others to assist it in the expression of its joy. Blessed be the Lord, this same Psalmist, here, who says for himself, “Blessed be the Lord,” is the writer of the 67th Psalm! You know how he says there, “Let the people praise You—yes, let all the people praise You! Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!” Then he says again, “Let the people praise You, O God; yes, let all the people praise You!” Do your utmost to be the means, in God’s hands, of bringing others to praise Him! Tell them what He has done for you. Tell them of His saving Grace. Invite sinners to Christ. Let it be— *“All your business here below  
To say, ‘Behold the Lamb!’”*  
and in this way you will be setting other tongues to praising God, so that when your tongue is silent, there shall be others that will take up the strain. Labor for this, Beloved, everyone of you. Labor for the extension of the choir that shall sing the praises of the Savior! I trust we shall never fall into that narrow-minded spirit which seems to say, “It is enough for me if I am saved and if those who go to my little place of worship are all right. It is quite enough.” No, Master, Your Throne is not to be set up in some little meeting in a back street, and there, alone. You are not to reign in some little corner of a city, and there, alone. You are not to take this island of Great Britain, and reign in it, alone—nor in Europe—only in one quarter of the earth, alone. Let the whole earth be filled with His praise! And what Christian heart will refuse to say, “Amen and amen”? God grant it may be so! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALMS 3; 4:1-6.**  
These may be called very properly morning and evening Psalms. Psalm 3 is the morning Psalm.

*PSALM 3.*  
A psalm of David when he fled from Absalom, his son.  
A dark hour, that, for David, preceded by the shadows of his own

sin—and now deepened by the horrible hatred of his own favorite child who conspired to take his kingdom and his life!

Verse 1. LORD how are they increased that trouble me! As if he could not measure his troubles. He stands amazed. He makes his appeal to God.

2, 3. Many are they that rise up against me. Many there are who say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. That is the worst of all, when they begin to ridicule his religion! He was a man who had said much of his faith in God—and in former days he had done great marvels by trusting in the living God—but now one and another dared to say openly that God had cast him off.

3. But You, O LORD, are a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head. The word in the Hebrew is a bigger word than the word, shield. It is a buckler—a kind of guard above, around, beneath—an allsurrounding defense. “You, Lord, are a shield for me. They cannot harm me. They cannot kill me. I am still guarded by God and, what is more, You are my glory. Though my glory is taken away, yet I glory in You! Whatever else I have not, I have a God, a God that I dare glory in, too, for there is no such God as He is. You are the lifter up of my head.” My head is still above water. I do not yet sink, and my head shall rise again. Though I bow it down like a bulrush, now, I shall one day praise Him. I know that I shall, for He is the health of my countenance.

4. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill. Selah. He means that he loved to pray alone, but to use his voice in prayer. I have heard many Christians say that they can pray better when they can hear their own voices—they are better able to collect their thoughts. The voice is not necessary to prayer. It is the mere body of prayer. Still, a right healthy body may help the soul and, sometimes, the use of the voice may help the spirit. David says that he cried to God—and then it happened to him, as it always happens to us—“He heard me out of His holy hill.”

5. I laid down and slept. Far from the palace and from the place of worship where he loved to meet with God.  
5. I awakened, for the LORD sustained me. I was kept through the night watches—through restless anxiety I slept. Now God sustains our hearts, even when we are asleep, or else we would not sleep. We would be restless and wakeful. But God gives us a peace before we fall asleep, which abides with us as a blessed balm of rest—and so we sleep.  
6, 7. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God, for You have smitten all my enemies upon the cheek bone. You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. They were like fierce lions threatening to devour him! They had already torn him in malice. God came and smote them on the jaw, so that they lost their strength to injure him.  
8. Salvation belongs unto the LORD: Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah. That is a sweet morning hymn! Sound Calvinistic Doctrine, that. “Salvation belongs unto the Lord.” It is He who saves man. It is He who delivers those who are saved. And here is the specialty and peculiarity of His Grace—“Your blessing is upon Your people.” Oh, to be remembered with them! Then, even if an Absalom should persecute us, the blessing is not withdrawn, for this is entailed upon the children of God. “Your blessing is upon Your people.” Now for the evening hymn.

**PSALM 4.**  
Verse 1. Hear me, when I call, O God of my righteousness: You have enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me and hear my prayer. Past experience is a sweet solace in the hour of trouble. “You have enlarged me when I was in distress.” Think of what God has been to you, you tried ones, for He will always be the same! And can He have taught you to trust in His name and thus far have brought you, to put you to shame? Is this God’s way—to be gracious to His people and then to turn against them? God forbid! Pray, then, with the grateful memory of all His loving kindness. “You have enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.”

2. O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love vanity and seek after lies? Selah. How long will you take to lies? How long will you abuse a character which deserves not your censure? How long will you pour contempt upon God, whom you ought to serve?

3. But know—He talks to them as if they did not know—while they thought themselves the most knowing people in the world!  
3. That the LORD has set apart him that is godly for Himself. He has marked him out to be His own peculiar treasure. “The Lord’s portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” Now if God has marked out His people to be His own, He will defend them! He will guard them against every adversary. They shall not be destroyed.

3. The LORD will hear when I call unto Him. The sweet assurance that prayer will prevail is one of the best comforts in the cloudy and dark day!  
4. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still. Selah. Tremble and sin not! Unhappily, there are many who sin and tremble not. They reverse the text. A trembling saint is often all the more saint because he trembles. Tremble and sin not. If there is not a mixture of prayer with our hope and our confidence, it is like meat without salt on it. It is apt to grow corrupt in prosperous sunny weather. Oh, for the fear of God in our hearts! Stand in awe and sin not. Commune with your own heart. A man ought to be the best of company to himself. It is one reason why we should be well acquainted with the Word of God—that if ever we are left alone, we may be good companions to ourselves. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” Hush that babel! Let God speak. Get to your bed, away from the noise of the streets and the roll of the traffic. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” Some men cannot bear stillness. The quiet of their own hearts disturbs them. There must be something very rotten in the state of the man’s life who loves not some seasons of solitude. Some of us are less alone when we are alone, and most at home even when others count themselves abroad. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.”  
5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Bring your prayers, your praises. Present to God your hearts, your love, your trust.  
5, 6. And put your trust in the LORD. There are many who say, Who will show us any good? Gaping about for some good thing! Thirsting— they know not what they are thirsting for! “Who will show us any good?” Come from the east, or the west, or the north, or the south—only bring us something that promises pleasure—and we are your men. There are many who say, “Who will show us any good?” But we say not so. Our saying is another sort.  
6. LORD, lift You up the light of Your Countenance upon us. Is not that what many of you are saying tonight? You know what you want. You know that there is nothing else that will satisfy you. “Lord, lift you up the light of Your Countenance upon us.” We are not well. Lord, we ask You that it may be well between our souls and You.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1523 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE  
NO. 1523

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 15, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of His enemies and the hairy scalp of such  
an one as goes on still in his trespasses.”  
Psalm 68:20, 21.**

WHATEVER may be said of the Old Testament dispensation, however dimly it may have revealed certain Truths of God, there was one matter about which it was clear as the sun. Under the Old Testament economy the Lord God of Israel is always most conspicuous. God is in all and over all—and from the pages of the Prophets, as well as from the lips of the temple choirs, we hear loudly sounding forth the note—“The Lord shall reign forever, even your God, O Zion, unto all generations. Hallelujah!” By priest and Prophet, saint and Seer, the one testimony is borne, “The Lord reigns.” You cannot read the Book of Job without trembling in the majestic Presence of the Almighty. Nor can you turn to the Psalms without being filled with solemn awe as you see David and Asaph and Heman adoring the Lord who made Heaven and earth and the sea.

Everywhere, from Abraham to Malachi, man is of small account and God is All in All. Very little consideration is given to any fancied rights and claims of man and wonder is expressed that the Creator should be mindful of him. We read no discourse upon the dignity of human nature, or upon the beauty of human character, but rather God, alone, is holy and when He looks from Heaven He sees none that does good, no, not one! Man is rolled in the dust from which he sprang and to which he must return. All his pride is cut down and his comeliness withered and over all is seen one God and none beside Him.

It will be a great offense if, coming into the brighter light of the New Testament, we are less vivid in our conceptions of the Glory of God. If God should be less clearly seen in the Person of our Lord Jesus than He was under the symbols of the Law, it will be the fault of our blinded hearts. It will be ill for us to turn day into night and, like owls, see less because the light is increased! Let it not be so among us, but let it be in our Churches as in Israel of old, of which it was said, “in Judah is God known. His name is great in Israel.” “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the fathers by the Prophets, has, in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,” and by Him, as the Incarnate Word, He has revealed Himself with a sevenfold splendor and, therefore, it should be our soul’s great delight to perceive God in all things—to rejoice in His Presence and to magnify Him in all things as King of kings and Lord of lords!

The Psalmist, in this particular case, ascribes to the Lord universal action and power over us, for he ascribes to Him the mercies of life and the issues of death. He says, “Blessed is the Lord who daily loads us with benefits.” The Lord heaps up His favors till their number loads the memory and their value burdens the shoulders of gratitude. He gives us so many mercies that the mind is burdened in endeavoring to calculate their worth! We are overwhelmed with a sense of His goodness and the consciousness that we cannot return any adequate thanks for such abundance of daily Grace. Such is our God in life and what will He be in death? Shall we be without Him there?

No, blessed be His name, “Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” His kingdom includes the land of death-shade and all the borders thereof. We shall not die without His permission, nor without His Presence! Though temporal mercies will find their end when life ends, yet there are eternal mercies which throughout eternal life shall manifest the goodness of the Most High. And meanwhile, by rescues, recoveries and escapes, we shall be preserved from prematurely descending to the tomb. If any of you, dear Friends, have been brought near to the gates of death; if you have been laid low by wearisome sickness; if your heart has sunk within you in a sort of mental death, you will, in coming back to health and strength, most heartily bless the Lord who finds for us a way of return from the suburbs of the sepulcher!

He is not only the God of life but the God of death. He keeps us in life and makes life happy. He keeps us from death and from the fierce agencies which wait to drag us to the grave. There are issues out of the dark border-land of sickness and peril and despair—and the Lord leads us by His own right hand to cause us to escape. Does He not say, “I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea”? We must and we will praise Him for this with a new song! I gather from our text that death is in the hand of God; that escapes from death are manifestations of His Divine power and that He is to be praised for them.

The outline of this morning’s discourse, as indicated by the text, is just this—first, the sovereign prerogative of God, “To God the Lord belong the issues from death.” Secondly, the Character of the Sovereign with whom this prerogative is lodged, “He that is our God is the God of salvation.” And then, thirdly, the solemn warning which this great Sovereign gives in reference to the exercise of His prerogative. Weighty are the words! May the Holy Spirit cause us to feel their power—“God shall wound the head of His enemies and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.”

I. First, then, with deep reverence, let us speak upon THE SOVEREIGN PREROGATIVE OF GOD—“Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” Kings have been accustomed to keep the power of life and death in their own hands. The great King of kings, the Sovereign Ruler and absolute Lord of all worlds reserves this to Himself—that He shall permit men to die, or shall give them an issue or escape from death at His own good will and pleasure. He can alike create and destroy. He sends forth His Spirit and they are created and at His own pleasure He says, “Return, you children of men,” and lo, they fall before Him like autumn’s faded leaves!

The prerogative of life or death belongs to God in a wide range of senses. First of all, as to natural life we are all dependent upon His good pleasure. We shall not die until the time which He appoints, for the time of our death, like all our time, is in His hands. Our skirts may brush against the portals of the sepulcher and yet we shall pass the iron gate unharmed if the Lord is our Guard. The wolves of disease will hunt us in vain until God shall permit them to overtake us. The most desperate enemies may waylay us, but no bullet shall find its billet in any heart unless the Lord allows it. Our life does not even depend upon the care of angels, nor can our death be compassed by the malice of devils. We are immortal till our work is done! We are immortal till the immortal King shall call us Home to the land where we shall be immortal in a still higher sense.

When we are most sick and most ready to faint into the grave, we need not despair of recovery, since the issues from death are in Almighty hands. “The Lord kills and makes alive: He brings down to the grave and brings up.” When we have passed beyond the skill of the physician, we have not passed beyond the succor of our God, to whom belong the escapes from death. Spiritually, too, this prerogative is with God. We are by nature under the condemnation of the Law on account of our sins and we are like criminals tried, convicted, sentenced and left for death. It is for God, as the great Judge, to see the sentence executed, or to issue a free pardon, according as He pleases! And He will have us know that it is upon His supreme pleasure that this matter depends.

Over the head of a universe of sinners I hear this sentence thundering, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Shut up for death, as men are by reason of their sins, it rests with God to pardon whom He wills—none have any claim to His favor and it must be exercised upon mere prerogative because He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious and He delights to pass by transgression and sin. So, too, does the Lord deliver His own believing people from those “deaths often” which make up their experience. Though we are delivered in Christ Jesus from death as a penalty, yet we often feel an inward death caused by the old nature which exercises a deadening influence within us. We feel the sentence of death in ourselves that we may not trust in ourselves, but in Jesus, in whom our life is hid.

It may be that for a season our joys are dampened, our spiritual vigor is drained away and we hardly know whether we have any spiritual life left within us. We become like the trees in winter whose substance is in them but the sap ceases to flow and there is neither fruit nor leaf to betray the secret life within. We scarcely feel a spiritual emotion in these sad times and dare not write ourselves among the living in Zion! At such times the Lord can give us back the fullness of life! Only He can restore our soul from the pit of corruption and cause us not only to have life but to have it more abundantly. The escapes from death are with the quickening Spirit and when our soul cleaves to the dust He can revive us, again, till we rejoice with unspeakable joy!

As the climax of all, when we shall actually come to die and these bodies of ours shall descend into the remorseless grave, as probably they will—in the hands of our Redeeming Lord are the escapes from death! The archangel is even now waiting for the signal—one blast of his trumpet shall suffice to gather the chosen from all lands—from the east and from the west, from the south and from the north! Then Death, itself, shall die away and the righteous shall arise—

*“From beds of dust and silent clay*

*To realms of everlasting day.”*  
“I am the Resurrection and the Life,” says Christ, and He is both of these to all His people. Is He not Life, for He says, “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”? Is He not Resurrection, for He says, “He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”? That bright illustrious day in which the saints shall rise with their Lord will show how unto God, the Lord, belong the escapes from death!

Our translation is a very happy one, because it bears so many renderings and includes not only escape from death, deliverance from condemnation, revival from spiritual death and uplifting from deadly mental depression, but recovery from death’s direct havoc by our being raised again from the tomb! In all these respects the Lord Jesus has the key of death— He opens and no man shuts—He shuts and no man opens. Concerning this prerogative we may say, first, that to God belongs the right to exercise it. This right springs, first, from His being our Creator. He says, “all souls are Mine.” He has an absolute right to do with us as He pleases, seeing He has made us and not we ourselves. Men forget what they are and boast great things, but truly, they are but as clay on the potter’s wheel and He can fashion them or can break them as He pleases. They don’t think so, but He knows their thoughts that they are vain.

Oh the dignity of man! What a theme for a sarcastic discourse! As the frog in the fable swelled itself till it burst asunder, so does man, in his pride and envy against his Maker, who, nevertheless, sits upon the circle of the heavens and reckons men as though they were grasshoppers and regards whole nations of them as the small dust of the balance! The Lord’s prerogative of creation is manifestly widened morally by our forfeiture of any consideration which might have arisen out of obedience and rectitude if we had possessed them. Our fault has involved forfeiture of the creature’s claims, whatever they may have been. We are all guilty of high treason and we have, each one, been guilty of personal rebellion and, therefore, we have not the rights of citizens, but lie under sentence of condemnation.

What says the Infallible Voice of God? “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” We have come under this curse—Justice has pronounced us guilty and by nature we abide under condemnation. If, then, the Lord shall be pleased to deliver us from death, it rests with Him to do so, but we have no right to any such deliverance, nor can we urge any argument which would avail in the courts of justice for reversal of sentence or stay of execution! Before the bar of justice our case must go hard if we set up any plea of notguilty. We shall be driven away with the disdain of the impartial Judge if we urge our suit upon that line! Our wisest course is to appeal to His mercy and to His Sovereign Grace, for there, alone, is our hope.

Understand me clearly—if the Lord shall suffer us all to perish, we shall only receive our just deserts and we have not, one of us, a shade of claim upon His mercy—we are, therefore, absolutely in His hands and to Him belong the escapes from death. This right of God to save is further made manifest by the redemption of His people. It might have been said that God had no right to save if, by saving, He would abridge His justice. But now that He has laid help upon One that is mighty and His only-begotten Son has become a Victim in our place—to magnify the Law and make it honorable—the Lord God has an unquestionable right to deliver from death His own redeemed for whom the Substitute has died! Our God saves His people in consistency with justice—no one can question His doing right even when He justifies the ungodly. His right and power over the escapes from death are, in the case of His own blood-bought ones, clear as the sun at noon and who shall dispute with Him?

Our text, however, puts the prerogative upon the one sole ground of lordship and we prefer to come back to that. “Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.” It is a doctrine which is very unpalatable in these days, but one, nevertheless, which is to be held and taught—that God is an absolute Sovereign and does as He wills. The words of Paul may not be suffered to sleep—“No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have You made me thus?” The Lord cannot do wrong. His perfect Nature is a law unto itself! In His case Rex is Lex—the King is the Law! He is the Source and Fountain of all right, truth, rule and order. Being absolutely perfect within Himself and comprehending all things, it is not possible for Him to do otherwise than right. He is Goodness, Truth and Righteousness itself and, therefore, the prerogatives of His Throne are not bound and to the Lord of Heaven and earth belong the issues from death!

Enough with regard to that matter of right. I go on to notice that the Lord has the power of this prerogative. With Him is the ability to deliver men from natural death. Jehovah Rophi is a Physician who is never baffled. Medicines may fail, but not the great Maker of all plants and herbs and useful drugs! Study and experience may be at a nonplus, but He who fashioned the human frame knows its most intricate parts and can soon correct its disorders! God can restore when a hundred diseases are upon us all at once. Take courage, you fainting ones and look up! Certainly, as to the soul, there is no case of man so far gone that God cannot find an issue out of its death. He can cast out seven devils and a legion of diabolical sins! To God, the Lord, belong the issues from death, however foul the sin and however forlorn the condition caused by transgression. He who raised Lazarus from the grave after four days can raise the most corrupt from the grave of their iniquities. O that awakened sinners would believe this!

I remember reading of an aged minister who had, for some years, fallen into deep despondency. He gave up his pulpit and kept himself very much alone, always writing bitter things against himself. At last, when he was on his sick bed, a servant of God was sent to him who dealt wisely with him. This good man said to the despairing one, “Brother, do you believe that passage, ‘He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him’?” “I believe it,” he said, “with all my heart, but I am convinced”—here the other stopped him. “I do not ask what your convictions may be, nor what your feelings may be, but I come to say to you that the man who trusts that promise lives.” This plain declaration of the Gospel was made, by the Divine Comforter, the means of supreme consolation to the despairing one!

May it be equally useful to all those who hear it. He who can hang his soul’s hope upon the infinite ability of Christ to save, is a saved man! He that believes on Him has everlasting life! What a blessing this is! The devil may tell me that I can never escape out of deserved death and that I am shut up forever under the just results of my trespasses. My own conscience, knowing my undeservingness, may also condemn me a thousand times over! But unto God, the Lord, belong the escapes from death and He can and will pluck me from between the jaws of death since I believe in Him! He is able to bring up those whom He ordains to save even from the utmost depths of despair!

The absolute right of God is supported by almighty power and thus His prerogative is made a matter of fact. Nor is this all—the Lord has actually exercised this prerogative in abundant cases. As to those issues from death which are seen in restoration from sickness, I need not remind you that these are plentiful enough. At times these have come in a miraculous form, as when Hezekiah had his life lengthened in answer to prayer and when many others were healed by the Savior and His Apostles. Life has been preserved in a lion’s den and in the belly of a fish; in a fiery furnace and in the heart of the sea. Death has no arrow in his quiver which can hurt the man whom God ordains to live! Out of imminent peril the Lord still delivers in the ordinary course of Providence and there are persons present, this morning, who are proofs of His interposing power. He has raised some of us from prostration of body and depression of spirit. He has rescued others from shipwreck and fire in very singular ways and here we are, living to praise God, as we do this day!

God has exercised this prerogative spiritually. In what a myriad of cases has He delivered souls from death! Ask yon white-robed hosts in Heaven, “Has not God displayed in you His sovereign power to save?” Ask many here below who have tasted that He is gracious and they will tell you, “He saved me.” According to His mercy He has issued a free pardon, signed by His royal hand, saying, “Deliver him from going down into the Pit, for I have found a Ransom.” Why His sovereignty has interposed to rescue us from death we cannot tell. We often ask, “Why was I made to hear His voice? How was it that I was chosen to live?” But we are silent with grateful wonder and invent no answer! Divine will, backed by Divine power, worked out the sovereign purpose of love and here we are, saved from so great a death by love invincible. Yes, indeed, to God the Lord belong the escapes from death!

Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, let Him have all the glory for it! If you are alive after a long sickness, bless the Lord, who forgives all our iniquities, who heals all our diseases! If you are saved from condemnation this morning and know it, bless the Lord who accepts us in the Beloved! If you feel, at this moment, that the death of sin has no dominion over you, for the life of Grace reigns within, then bless the Lord who has quickened you into newness of life! Glorify His name this day, who, in love to your soul, has delivered you from the pit of corruption and cast all your sins behind His back! Once more, if you have a glorious hope of a blessed resurrection and feel that you can smile on death because God smiles on you, then bless the Lord who will raise you up at the last day! Your Redeemer lives and you shall live because He lives! Therefore clap your hands with holy glee! Bless the all-glorious name of Him to whom belong the issues or escapes from death!

II. Thus have I set forth the prerogative. And now, secondly, follow me with your thoughts while I show THE CHARACTER OF THE SOVEREIGN in whom that prerogative is vested. We cannot, upon this earth, exhibit much love to human princes who claim absolute dominion. Imperialism is not to our mind. Among the worst curses that have ever fallen upon mankind have been absolute monarchs—nowadays men shake them off as Paul shook off the viper into the fire. The Lord grant we may see the last of all despotic dynasties and that the nations may be free. We cannot endure a tyrant and yet if we could have absolutely perfect despots, it might be the best possible form of government.

Assuredly, the great and eternal God, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, is absolutely perfect and we may be well content to leave all prerogatives and vest all powers in His hands. He has never trampled on the rights of the meanest, nor forgotten the weakest. His foot does not needlessly crush a worm, nor does He beat down a fly in wantonness. He has never done a wrong, nor worked an injustice. We oppress each other, but the Judge of all oppresses none! The Lord is holy in all His ways and His mercy endures forever and the amplest prerogatives are safely lodged in such hands.

Our text yet further tells us who it is in whose hands the issues of life and death are left—“He that is our God is the God of salvation.” Sinner, your salvation rests with God, but do not, therefore, be discouraged, for that God with whom the matter rests is the God of salvation, or of, “salvations,” for so the Hebrew has it. What do we mean by this? The Scripture signifies, first, that salvation is the most glorious of all God’s designs. Since this world was made, the working out of salvation has run through its story like a silver thread. The Lord made the world and lit up moon and stars and set Heaven, earth and sea in order with His eyes upon salvation in the whole arrangement. He has ruled all things by His supreme government with the same end.

The great wheels of His Providence have been revolving these 6,000 years before the eyes of men and among them. And at their back a hand has been always passing to conduct every movement to the ultimate issue which is the salvation of the covenanted ones! This is the object which is dearest to Jehovah’s heart. He loves best to save! God was pleased with Creation, but not as He is with Redemption. When He made the heavens and the earth it was everyday work to Him. He merely spoke and said, “It is good.” But when He gave His Son to die to redeem His people and His elect were being saved, He did not speak with the prosaic brevity of creation—He sang! Is it not written, “He shall rest in His love, He shall rejoice over you with singing”?

Redemption is a matter which Jehovah sings about! Are you able to imagine what it must be for God to sing? For Father, Son and Holy Spirit to burst forth into a joyous hymn over the work of salvation? This is because salvation is dearest to God’s heart and in it His whole Nature is most intensely engaged. Judgment is His strange work, but He delights in mercy! He has put forth many attributes in the accomplishment of other works, but in this He has laid out all His Being. He is seen in this as mighty to save. Herein He has bared His arm. For this He has taken His Son out of His bosom. For this He has caused His Only-Begotten to be bruised and put to grief. Salvation is the eternal purpose of the inmost heart of God and by it His highest Glory is revealed! This, then, is the God to whom belong the issues from death—the God whose grandest design is salvation! Sing unto His name and exult that the Lord reigns, even the Lord who is my strength and my song, who also has become my salvation.

If you ask, again, what this means—“He that is our God is the God of salvation”—we remind you that the most delightful works which the Lord has performed have been works of salvation. To save our first parents at Eden’s gate and give them a promise of victory over the serpent was joy to God. To house Noah in the ark was also His pleasure. The drowning of a guilty world was necessary, but the saving of Noah was pleasant to the Lord our God. He destroyed the earth with His left hand, but with His right hand He shut in the only righteous ones He found. To save His people is always His joy—He goes about it eagerly! He rode upon a cherub and did fly, yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind when He came to deliver His chosen! What noise He makes about His saving work at the Red Sea! The whole Scripture is full of allusions to the great salvation out of Egyptian bondage and even in Heaven they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb.

The Old Testament seems to ring with the note, “Sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” The Lord did greatly rejoice to make a way through the wilderness and a path through the deeps for His own people that He might work salvation for them in the midst of the earth. Afterwards, in the Old Testament, how well they keep the records of salvations! They tell us of the kings that oppressed the people, but how lovingly they linger over the way in which God redeemed Israel from her adversaries. What a note of joy there is about Goliath slain and the son of Jesse bearing his gory head and Israel delivered from Philistia’s vaunts! Well did they say, “He that is our God is the God of salvation.” He takes delight in deeds of Grace— these are His enjoyments. These are His recreations. He comes out in His royal robes and puts on His crown jewels when He rises to save His people and, therefore, His servants cry aloud, “O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard; which holds our soul in life and suffers not our feet to be moved.”

This, then, is the God in whom is vested all sovereignty over the issues from death. He takes pleasure, not in the destruction, but in the salvation of the sons of men! Where could the prerogative be better laid up? “He that is our God is the God of salvation,” also means that at this present time the God who is preached to us is the God of salvation. We live, at this moment, under the dispensation of mercy. The sword is sheathed, the scales of justice are put away. Those scales are not destroyed and that sword is not broken, nor even blunted, but, for a while, it slumbers in its scabbard. Today over all our heads is held out the silver scepter of eternal love. The angelic carol, first heard by shepherds at Bethlehem, lingers, still, in the upper air, if you have ears to hear it—“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

The mediatorial reign of Christ is that of multiplied salvations. “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” is the saving proclamation of the reigning God! The God of the Christian age is the God of salvation. He is set forth before us as coming to seek and to save the lost! He dwells among us by His abiding Spirit, not as a Judge punishing criminals, but as a Father receiving His wandering children to His bosom and rejoicing over them as once dead but now alive! God in Christ Jesus, our God and Savior Jesus Christ, is He who quickens whom He will and is ordained to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. Where else could all power be more safely laid up?

Once more, “He that is our God is the God of salvation” means this, that to His covenanted ones, to those who can call Him, “our God,” He is specially and emphatically the God of salvation. There is no destruction for those who call Him, “our God,” for, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Jesus came not to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved. “This God is our God forever and ever. He will be”—our destroyer? No, “He will be our Guide even unto death.” This God is our Sun and Shield and He will give Grace and glory. Now, mark well this fact—we who believingly call the Lord, “our God,” this morning will tell you that we are saved entirely through the Sovereign Grace of God and not through any natural betterness of our own, nor through anything that we have done to deserve His favor.

It was because He looked upon us with pity and kindly regard when we were dead in sin that, therefore, we live! When we were lying in our blood and in our filthiness, He passed by in the time of love and He said to us, “Live.” If He had passed by and left us to die, He would have been infinitely just in doing so, but His heart was otherwise inclined. He looked on us and said, “Live,” and we lived and we bless His name that we are still living and praising His eternal and infinite mercy! He who says, “I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal,” is He who has quickened us, though we were dead in trespasses and sins! Surely, He who has exercised His prerogative so kindly towards us may be trusted to exercise it towards all who come to Him according to His gracious invitation! If there is any man who says, “I rejoice in the election of God, because, although He has saved me, He has left others to perish,” I desire to have no sympathy with his spirit.

My joy is of a far different kind, for I argue that He who saved such an unworthy one as I am will cast out none that come to Him by faith! His election is not narrow, for it comprehends a number that no man can number, yes, all that will believe in Jesus! He waits to be gracious and he that comes to Him, He will in no wise cast out. The wedding feast needs countless guests and every seat must be filled. We wish that all the human race would come and accept the provisions of infinite Love and we are anxious to go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in! We rejoice to know that if any man is shut out from Christ and hope, he shuts himself out, though at the same time we feel that if any man is shut in, he did not shut himself in, but undeserved Grace worked out his salvation. Justice rules in condemnation, but Grace reigns in salvation!

In salvation we must ascribe all to Grace, absolutely and unreservedly. There must be no stammering over this Truth of God! Some begin to say Grace, but they do not come out with the word—they stutter it into, “free will.” This will never do! This is not according to the teaching of Holy Scripture, nor is it in accordance with fact. If there is any man here who thinks that he has been saved as the result of his own will, apart from the powerful Grace of God, let him throw his hat up and magnify himself forever. “Glory be to my own good disposition!” But as for me, I will fall at the foot of the Throne of God and say, “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ. Had You, O God, left me to my own free will, I had continued, still, to despise Your love and to reject Your mercy.”

Surely, all the people of God agree that this is the fact in their own case, however they may differ theoretically from the general statement. Yes, the prerogative of life and death is in good hands—it is in the hands of Him who is the God of our salvation and I beseech everyone here present who is not saved to be encouraged to bow before the Throne of the great King and sue for mercy of Him who is so ready to save! Go home and try to merit salvation and you will waste your efforts.! Go about to fit yourself for mercy and to fashion some good that may attract the notice of God and you will fool yourselves and insult the majesty of Heaven!

But come just as you are, all guilty, empty, meritless and fall before the great King whom you have so often provoked and beseech Him, of His infinite mercy, to blot out your transgressions, to change your nature and to make you His own and see if He will cast you away! Is it not written, “There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared”? And again, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” His Throne is a Throne of Grace! Mercy is built up forever before Him! He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy! Did ever a penitent sue for pardon at His sovereign feet to be rejected? Never! Nor shall such a case happen while the earth remains.

If you try to purchase His favor, you shall be refused. If you claim it as a right, you shall be rejected. But if you will come and accept salvation of the Divine charity and receive it through the Atonement of Christ Jesus, the Lord will find for you an escape from death! Hear the witness of Jeremiah and be encouraged to cast yourself before the Lord—“I called upon Your name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. You have heard my voice. Hide not Your ear at my breathing, at my cry. You drew near in the day that I called upon You—You said, fear not. O Lord, You have pleaded the causes of my soul; You have redeemed my life.”

III. Our last duty is to hear THE SOLEMN WARNING OF OUR SOVEREIGN LORD. A new god has been lately set up among men, the god of modern Christianity, the god of modern thought, a god made of honey or sugar. He is all leniency, gentleness, mildness and indifferent in the matter of sin. Justice is not in him and as for the punishment of sin, he knows it not. The Old Testament, as you are no doubt made aware by the wise men of this world, takes a very harsh view of God and, therefore, modern wisdom sets it on one side. Indeed, one half the Word of God is out of date and turned to waste paper!

Although our Lord Jesus did not come “to destroy the Law or the Prophets,” but to fulfill them, yet the advanced thinkers of these enlightened times tell us that the idea of God in the Old Testament is a false one. We are to believe in a new god who does not care whether we do right or wrong! By his arrangement all will come to the same end in the long run. There may be a little twisting about for awhile for some who are rather incorrigible, but it will all come right at last. Live as you like! Go and swear and drink. Go and oppress the nations and make bloody wars and act as you will. By jingo, you will be all right at last! This is roughly the modern creed which poisons all our literature.

But let me say by Jehovah—this shall not be as men dream! Jehovah, the Judge of all the earth, must do right. The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob is the God of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—the God of the whole earth shall He be called. He has not changed one whit in the stern integrity of His Nature and He will, by no means, spare the guilty! Read, then, the last verse of our text and believe that it is as true today as when it was first written and that if Jesus Himself were here, the meek and lowly One would say it in tones of tearful solemnity, but He would utter it, none the less—“God shall wound the head of His enemies and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.”

It is clear from these words that God is not indifferent to human character. Our God knows His enemies. He does not mistake them for friends, nor treat them as such. He regards iniquity as a trespass and, therefore, He has not broken down the boundaries of Law, nor the hedges of right— there are still trespasses and God perceives them and notes them down and such as go on in their trespasses are trying His longsuffering and provoking His justice! God sleeps not, neither does He wink at human sin, but calls upon all men everywhere to repent! And it is clear, too, that God has the power to smite those who rebel against Him.

Dream not of natural laws which will screen the wicked—“He shall wound the head of His enemies.” They may lift up those heads as high as they please, but they cannot be beyond the reach of His hands! He will not merely bruise their heels, or wound them on the back with blows which may be healed—but at their heads He will aim fatal blows and lay them in the dust. He can do it and He will! They may be very strong and their scalp covered with hair may indicate unabated strength, but they cannot resist Omnipotence! There may be no sign, as yet, of the baldness which comes of weakness, or of the scantiness of hair which is a token of old age—but vain are they who boast of vigor, for in their prime He can cause them to wither as the grass of the field!

The proud may vaunt themselves of their beauty—their hairy scalp, like that of Absalom, may be their boast—but as the Lord made the hair of Absalom to be the instrument of his doom, so can He make the glory of man to be his ruin. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. No man is out of the reach of God and no nation, either! The great ones stand on high upon their lofty places and they talk about the “vulgar crowd,” and despise the godly of the land. As for foreign races, how lightly are they esteemed, though one God has made them all! Populations and nations, what are they? Mere food for powder when a proud nation is set upon its own aggrandizement. Overturn their kingdoms, slaughter their patriotic defenders, redden the earth with blood, burn their houses, starve their women and children. Does God know and is there judgment in the Most High?

We are a great people, and have the men, the ships and the money. Who shall call us to account? Yet let the still small voice be heard! Thus said the Lord to a great nation of old, “You have trusted in your wickedness: you have said, None sees me. You have said in your heart, I am and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon you; you shall not know from where it rises: and mischief shall fall upon you; you shall not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know.” From such chastisements, good Lord, deliver us! When the Lord puts His hands to the work of vengeance, His smiting will be terrible, even an utter overthrow, for it will be a smiting upon the head!

If He does not smite His enemies until the hour of death, what a blow will they then receive! They boasted of their self-righteousness, or of their greatness but, oh, what terror will seize them when, at the last moment, while they dream of Heaven, they are thrown down into the unfathomable deep where woe shall be the everlasting reward of their daring rebellion against their King! Warriors of old times would, when they went to battle, often shave off all their hair except those locks which are on the back part of the scalp. Yet when they turned to flee it frequently happened they were grasped by their pursuers by their flowing hair! God does not often take the wicked by the forelock, for He has great patience and bears with them. In special cases, as when young men through dissipated habits hasten on their doom, He takes them in front—but as a rule He waits in mercy. And yet He suffers them not to go unpunished, for at the last, He seizes their hairy scalp. If for fourscore years infinite Patience should permit a man to continue in his rebellion, yet if he goes on in his trespasses, at the very last God shall thrust His hand into his hairy scalp and grasp him to his destruction!

Turn you, yes, you that know not God! Turn you at His rebuke this morning, for the rebuke is meant in love! And if I have used hard words, it is because my heart is honestly anxious that you would repent and escape to Him who has in His power the escapes from death! I am not like yon flatterers who tell you that there is a little hell and a little god, from which they naturally infer that you may live as you like. Both you and they will perish everlastingly if you believe them! There is a dreadful Hell, for there is a righteous God!

Turn you to Him, I entreat you, while yet, in Christ Jesus, He sets mercy before you! He is the God of salvation and entreats you to come and accept of His great Grace in Christ Jesus. The Lord bless this word according to His own mind and unto Him be praise forever and ever. Amen.

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SOME MARKS OF GOD’S PEOPLE  
NO. 2662

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1900.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 10, 1882.

**“Your God has commanded your strength: Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.”  
Psalm 68:28.**

DEAR Friends, at this time there is a special stir among the people. I know, from what I have seen and heard, that many are beginning to seek the Lord and others, who are not yet actually turning unto the Lord, are at least resolved to break off certain grosser sins and seek after something better. Well, there is something to be thankful for even in the waves of hunger pains which the prodigal feels before he says, “I will arise and go to my Father.” I value even the pains he has to endure when he would gladly fill his belly with the husks that the swine eat. Before we can pronounce anyone’s experience to be proof of the working of God’s Grace, we are glad if we see any signs of what usually comes when Grace enters the heart. So I am thankful when an ungodly man says, “It is time I changed my course,” for I trust that this is the first chipping upon the marble block—and that the great Sculptor, who fashions us in His own glorious image, will carry on the work and complete it to His own praise!

Just now, when I see these signs of a stir among the people, I think it is my business to repeat the exhortation I have often given, “Make sure work of the change you are contemplating—make sure work for eternity! Do not put up with anything that will fail you at the last. If you are looking for something better than you already possess, mind that you get the best that is to be had.” No, more, I would bid you give heed to our Lord’s own words, “I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness does not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” Mind that you buy all these things of Christ, for the terms on which you may have them are “without money and without price”—and you cannot get them anywhere else! I hope I am now addressing some who are saying, “We shall be glad and grateful if you will help us to judge as to our true condition and aid us to see whether we are Christians or not.” That is what I am going to try to do tonight.

The verse before my text describes God’s ancient people when they were assembled in the order of their tribes. “There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.” They belonged to various tribes of the children of Israel, but they were all numbered among the Lord’s people. And it is said of the whole of them, as if they were but one, “Your God has commanded your strength.” These words apply to all the armies of Israel, so you and I, dear Friends, had better consider and see whether we belong to His armies or not.

I. From our text, I learn that the first mark of the people of God is that THE LORD IS THEIR GOD.  
Notice, the first two words—“Your God.” This proves that they have a God. We cannot be God’s people unless we know His name and know that He is the living and true God—and that all the rest of the so-called gods are but fictions or idols of the heathen! There is one God who made Heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein. There is one God who has made us and from whom the breath in our nostrils has come. There is one God who has ruled in all past history and who is still the God of Providence, the Preserver and Director of His chosen people—the one God who, in the fullness of time, sent His only-begotten Son, who was equal with Himself, but who lived and died that the guilty sons of men might have their sins pardoned and their wandering feet directed back to the great Father’s house. The God of the Old Testament and the God of the New—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death.”  
First, God’s people believe in this God. If any do not believe in Him, they may call themselves what they please, but they are not the people of the living God! They may be the people of philosophy. They may be the people of the many dreams which men dream, nowadays, instead of believing in God, but they are not His people. I hope, Beloved, that we have no question about this matter and that we can say, without the slightest hesitation, “Yes, Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God.”  
He becomes our God, then, first, by our belief in Him, and next, by our reliance upon Him. This God is not merely an influence! Certainly, He is not a fiction. He is a real Person with whom we may speak and who will hear us and answer us according to His wisdom and goodness. The Apostle truly wrote, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets has, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son.” And He is still speaking to us, through Him, words of Grace, love and kindness. And He becomes our God, I repeat, when, believing in Him, we come and rely upon Him— implicitly trusting Him that, seeing we are sinful, He may cleanse us. That, seeing we are ignorant, He may teach us. That, seeing we are feeble, we may lay hold upon His strength and may thereby be preserved unto everlasting life!  
Let me ask all of you whom I am addressing—Are you trusting the living God? You know what it is, as a child, to trust your parents. As a friend, to trust a friend. Are you dealing just in that way with God? Then, are you relying upon Him, depending upon Him—especially relying upon Him as He is revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son, the sin-atoning Savior? If you are, you are His people! If you are not—whatever you may do, or be, or say, or think—you are not numbered among the people of God! Faith is the distinguishing mark of His elect. Where it is present, there is Grace and Truth. Where it is absent, the soul is dead in trespasses and sins.  
How does God yet further become my God? By my love to Him. As the result of having trusted Him, I find myself peaceful, happy, restful. I receive at His hands, pardon, and I know it is mine. I get love from Him and I feel it—and I love Him in return. This is another of the marks of the Lord’s people. The true child of God loves God! There are many men who are, to a certain extent, religious because they feel bound to be so by a law which they cannot resist. Ah, but we are not under law—we are under Grace—and we obey the commands of God because we love to do so! No man, who takes pleasure in sin, is a child of God, for the new nature hates sin! And though, alas, through the influence of the old nature which still remains within us, we are imperfect and often transgress the Law of the Lord, yet it is not our delight and we grieve that it should ever be the case with us. If a child of God falls into sin, he is like a sheep in the mud—up again, directly! But he who is still ungodly is like the sow that falls in the mud and wallows in it, for he is in his element—and he delights in it.  
There is a very important thing to be observed in connection with this point. That is that our love to God is one of the chief qualifications for serving Him acceptably. He who serves God out of love to Him, is the one who really and truly serves Him. The Lord of Love, the great King eternal, immortal, invisible, needs no slaves to grace His Throne! He wants those to do His bidding who serve Him with delight and pleasure. There is such a thing as self-denial ceasing to be self-denial when a man takes such pleasure in denying himself, for Christ’s sake, that the self-denial is a greater source of joy to him than the indulgence would have been—and that is just what true service for God is! Have I come here, tonight, because I am paid to do it? Or do I preach the Gospel with regret and loathing? Ah, no! The Gospel is as much my elements as the sea is the element of the fish. What else could I preach? Silent be this tongue forever, sooner than I should have anything to teach concerning the way of salvation except Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and His mighty mercy received by faith! Do not, many of you, Beloved, feel just the same as I do? We know that we are children of God and that He is our God because we love Him—and that love has put a new mainspring within us which moves our hands and all the wheels of our nature as they ought to be moved.  
How, next, does He become our God still more clearly? By our acknowledgement of Him when we come forward and say, “Let others do what they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” And when we say, “God has set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of sinners, we accept Him as our Savior and with our mouth we confess that we have done so. Let men hear it, let angels hear it, let devils hear it—it matters not to us how many hear our confession that we are set apart for God and for His Christ!” Our Christian profession is not a profession of perfection. No, no! It is not a profession that we are, in and of ourselves, any better than other people. But it does mean that we have believed in Jesus Christ unto the renewal of our nature and the salvation of our souls. He who has had that great work of Grace done in him and for him ought to say—and say at once—“This God is my God forever and ever; He shall be my Guide even unto death.” Let us be branded with the name of God! Let, us, Beloved, who have believed in Jesus, be God’s people and God’s, alone! And on all suitable occasions let us confess the blessed fact that we are not our own, for we are “bought with a price”— that price being more than we can ever calculate, even the precious blood of Jesus, God’s dear Son!  
Genuine people of God, then, have the Lord to be their God according to the first two words of our text, “Your God.” And, oh, Beloved, I have scarcely time to tell you in what a sweet way we get personal possession of God. After having trusted Him, relied upon Him, loved Him and confessed that we belong to Him, we get to be as conscious of His Presence as we are of the air we breathe! We are freely able to converse with Him and feel within our spirit that He is listening to what we say to Him—and that He is speaking back to us. “Oh,” says someone, “I do not believe that is possible!” Friend, you may do as you like about believing what I say, but, at any rate, if you have never enjoyed this experience, that does not prove that there is no such thing! We are as honest as you are and we have as much right to be believed as you have. If we were before a jury, we would be as good witnesses as you would be! We are not liars and we do solemnly declare that God’s Presence is so consciously realized by us that we are certain that in Him “we live, move, and have our being.” And we believe that spiritual communications—communications from the Holy Spirit—are frequent with us, checking us when we might fall into sin, stimulating us when we would be laggard, enlightening us when we are in difficulty and, sometimes, bearing us upward, as on eagles’ wings, till we seem to get into the very vestibule of Heaven, and could scarcely be happier than we are, or else, I think, we must die! Oh, yes, there is a God! We who believe in Jesus have this God as ours and we will rejoice in Him!  
That, then, is the first mark of the Lord’s people—the Lord is their God.  
II. A second mark of the Lord’s people is given in our text. Read the whole of the first sentence and you will see that he who feels that God has called upon him, to serve him with all his strength, is one of the Lord’s servants—“Your God has commanded your strength.” That is to say, ALL THE STRENGTH OF A CHRISTIAN—physically, mentally, morally, spiritually—IS AT GOD’S DISPOSAL.  
A true Christian acknowledges that all he has, and the best of all that he has, should always be consecrated and dedicated to his Lord. First, we are heartily to obey God’s commands. There is no part of our strength that we may reserve for ourselves—it all belongs to our Lord. We are to be like a soldier who, when he goes to war, thinks of nothing but how he shall discharge his duties so as to please his commanding officer.  
Now, my dear Hearer, is that the case with you? Has God commanded your strengths. “Well, Sir, I go to church. I go to chapel. I profess to be a Christian.” Yes, yes, yes, but there may he nothing in all that—has God the absolute and sole command of you? Is He your Commander-in-Chief? Has he come and taken possession of that strong will of yours and made it subject to His will? And if He has made you to be a man strong in faith, fervent in love, brave in holy daring and great in patience, do you desire to have all those forces used for His Glory, and His Glory alone? If not, you are not one of God’s people! But, if you do hold all your powers at His disposal, that is one of the marks of His people—and the more clear it is, the better! Beloved, God is to be served by us with all our heart and with all our mind—and with all our soul and all our strength.

After this fashion, also, we should fervently pray to Him. Oh, what poor prayers some people pray, when they bow their heads for a moment as they come into the House of God! Often, there is no prayer at all in it and it is the same when they kneel down by their bedside, nearly asleep, or when they get up in the morning rather late and the bell is ringing for breakfast and they hurry down—yet they call that prayer! Listen to the text, my Friends—“Your God has commanded your strength.” Take the pick of the day for prayer if you can! If you are half asleep at other things, be wide awake then! It is the best time for trading that you ever have—see that you make good use of it. This is the most noble exercise, except one, in which you can be engaged—get all the good that you can out of it! When you go up to the mountain, like Elijah on the top of Carmel, bring all the powers of your heart, mind and soul to bear upon this privileged occupation, and cry mightily unto God! Half-hearted prayers ask for a denial and usually get it. Pray as if you meant to be heard! Pray as he, who is starving, asks for bread, or for a drink of water if he is dying of thirst! Plead as he does who pleads for his life, for this is the way to prevail with God! Effectual fervent prayers bombard the gates of pearl and the Kingdom of Heaven is carried by the violence of that importunity which will not take a denial! “Your God has commanded your strength.” Oh, for more of this kind of prayer!  
And the same strength ought to go out when we praise God. Never ought our heart to be more energetic than when we say, “Blessed be His holy name!” And when we are singing in company with others, then we should also praise the Lord with joyous heartiness. I love to hear the bright, gladsome songs of people who really sing with their souls as well as with their voices. I have been in some congregations where, during the hymns, I have thought I needed a microphone to enable me to hear what they were singing, for they sang so very softly. Pull out the stops of your organ and let the music fly abroad, for, “your God has commanded your strength.”  
In a similar fashion, we should earnestly labor for the Lord. In the great warfare which we have now to wage against the world, the flesh and the devil, let us give to God the whole of our strength! Some people are said to work so hard for Christ that they wear themselves out. What a blessed consummation that must be! To wear ourselves away in our Master’s service—to let the zeal of God’s House eat us up—is the very best thing that can happen to us! I am sorry to say that I do not meet with many people who are too zealous. Some are so because they have not much brain, and what little they have easily catches fire. Very well, my Brother, if that is your case, burn away! There are some, however, who have more brains, but they seem to keep them very damp, so they never get thoroughly alight. But he who serves God aright should burn if he does not blaze, though it is better to be a burning and a shining light, as John the Baptist was. There should be a red, ruby-like heat in the very center of our soul. If there are no sparks and flames, yet should our heart be on fire for God. God never meant us to do His work halfheartedly—He wishes each of His people to feel and say, “My God has commanded my strength, and He shall have it.”  
And, lastly under this head, let us give God our strength by living wholly to Him in our ordinary life. It is a great mistake to make a division between what is “sacred” and what is “secular” in a Christian’s life. You are not only to serve God when you worship Him in this Tabernacle or in any other House of Prayer, you are to equally serve Him tomorrow morning when you take the shutters down from your shop windows! Pray to God, as you do so, “O Lord, take my shutters down and enlighten my darkness! I know that this day I cannot prosper without Your blessing. I mean to work hard at my business, but it is vain to rise early and to sit up late, unless You bless my effort. Lord, be with Your servant all the day long!” Here comes the first customer. Now pray the Lord that you may not say anything to him but what is right, and ask God to give you an opportunity of saying a good word to him about the Lord Jesus Christ! Here come half a dozen customers all at once! Now, you young men, pray the Lord to enable you to attend to your business as you ought to do it so as really to serve those who employ you—“not with eye-service, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” even while you are serving your earthly employer!  
All day long there are opportunities for glorifying God if man really wishes to do it. If the Spirit of God is with you all day, you will feel and say to yourself, “I will give to God all my strength. These things down here—this measuring out, either by yards or by bushels—this buying and this selling—must be done by somebody and I must, by some means, earn my bread by the sweat of my brow, or the sweat of my brain. And as this is what God has given me to do, I will do it thoroughly, with a single eye to His Glory, so that no one shall ever be able to truthfully say that Christianity makes me, in any respect, a worse man than I was before I knew the Lord.” “Your God has commanded your strength,” so live unto God in everything! Let your meals be sacraments! Let your garments be vestments! Let your common utterances be a part of a great life-Psalm! And let your whole being be as a burnt-offering ascending unto the Most High, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ! Oh, for the power of the Spirit of God to help you to do this!  
III. The next part of the verse will show you, dear Friends, that God’s people are known by this sign—THEY ASCRIBE TO HIM ALL THAT IS GOOD IN THEM AND IN THEIR FELLOW MEN. Let me read you the latter part of the text, “Strengthen, O God, what You have worked in us.”  
This applies, first, to the steps which lead to conversion—“That which You have worked for us.” There is no prayer, here, about what we have worked for ourselves, for that is all mischief and evil which needs to be forgiven and undone. The sooner all that nature spins is unraveled, the better. What God works is worth having worked for us and in us! There are some people who have very crude and false ideas about what the work of God is in the soul. I heard one say that the sinner is to take the first step towards salvation and then good will do the rest. But I have often said and now say it, again, that the first step is the one point of difficulty! You know the French story about Saint Denis, whose head was cut off, and then it was said that he picked it up and carried it in his hands for a thousand miles? That was what the priests of the Church of Rome declared, but one of Voltaire’s followers very wittily remarked that, as for the thousand miles, there was no difficulty in that—it was only the first step that had any difficulty in it—if the saint could manage that part, the rest would be easy enough! And it is just so in the matter of salvation! If the dead man can pick his own head up—if the dead sinner can make himself alive—why, then he can do very well without God the rest of the way to Heaven! But that can never be, for Jesus Christ is Alpha as well as Omega—the first as well as the last in the sinner’s salvation. And we may constantly say to Him—  
*“No sinner can be beforehand with Thee!  
Grace is most sovereign, most rich and most free.”*  
No, further. Not only does God begin it, but it is He who carries it on. If ever the work of Grace were to stop at a certain point and the rest of it were to be the work of nature, that linsey-woolsey garment would be unfit for a child of God to wear! Yes, and what is more, the work which God has begun, He must finish, too. If He has left anything to our unaided strength, we shall fall in that particular point—and all of it will become faulty and useless. The true people of God are resting, for the whole of their salvation, upon the Triune Jehovah—upon the Father’s love, upon the Son’s redemption and upon the Spirit’s effectual work upon the heart and conscience. It must be all of God and all of Grace, from the first even to the last—and they are the true people of God who feel and know this.  
Let me speak to some of you who have been taking the pledge lately. That is a very right thing to do. I wish that all did it, but that will not save you. The salvation of the soul is God’s work and you must come to Him for it. “But, supposing I abstain for the future, will not all be right?” Certainly not! What about the times when you have been drunk? “Oh, well, of course, the pledge will not wipe out that sin.” No, it will not. If you are a thief, would you tell the magistrates that they must not punish you because you are not going to steal again? “No,” they would say, “we must punish you for what you have done.” There are all your past sins and only the Lord Jesus Christ can blot them out.  
Perhaps a man says, “But, if I abstain from sin in the future, will not that do?” No, it will not. You owe your grocer a long bill, do you not? Call upon him and tell him that you cannot pay a halfpenny of the debt, but that you are not going to get into any more debt. “Oh,” says he, “but that will not do for me! There is a County Court somewhere and I shall get a summons for you to appear there.” So, if you go to God and say, “I am not going to sin in this way any more,” He will not believe you, but if He did, He would say, “What about the past?” “God requires what is past.” There is the stain of your past sin upon you—how can that be removed? Not by your tears. If you could shed an Atlantic full of tears, yet might the red spot of your sin turn every wave to carmine and the fatal spot would still be upon you. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash you clean and none are God’s people but those who know that—and who come to Him for salvation, cleansing and everything else—and who commit themselves, body, soul and spirit, unto Him.

IV. Now, lastly, the fourth mark of God’s people is that THEY PRAY TO HIM FOR THEIR STABILITY. “Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.”  
What is a man’s strength? Some think that their strength lies in their resolution. “Now,” says one, “I have said it, and I will keep to it. You know, I am not a man who is easily turned from his purpose. I have made up my mind and I will do it.” Yes, I have known several who have made up their mind, but it did not come to much when they had made it up. And I have known a great many persons promise and, having done that half a dozen times before and broken their promise every time, it did not come to much when that was done! “Oh,” says one, “do not think that I shall act like that! I pledge myself to act differently.” Yes, yes, and when a man has not a halfpenny in his pocket and he pledges himself that he will be a millionaire, I think to myself, “All right, but he had better not begin spending any of it yet.”  
A soldier puts on his armor to go out to fight—he has his helmet on his head and leg armor of brass on his legs, a breastplate and all the rest of the armor. “Am I not a brave fellow?” he asks. When you come back, you may be, but not just yet. Remember Ahab’s message to Benhadad, “Let not him that girds on his armor, boast himself as he that takes it off.” I believe in you, my dear Friend. You have made a promise and I believe that you will keep your promise. That is to say, I believe as much in you as I do in the majority of people. “How much is that?” you ask. Well, not too much, for I have seen too many men place much reliance upon them. I have not yet been 50 years among them, but there are several of them whom I would only trust as far as I could throw them—and there are some whom I would not trust as far as that. But there are others whom I thought I might trust out of my sight, and I have done so—and I have been bitten by them! I believe myself bound to give as much credence and confidence to your resolution as your resolution is worth, so please let me see how much it is worth by observing how you go on.  
“Oh,” says one, “but there is an addition to my resolution! There is my past experience. I am an experienced person. I am not like your young kids who are apt to be easily led astray again. A burnt child dreads the fire. My experience has made me very careful, steady and reliable.” Yes, I know. You are the man whom I would not trust with a bad farthing, because the very people who have demanded my trust on the ground that they could not be led astray, I have generally found were the men who had already gone far astray! I knew an old friend who used to attend here who was a very curious sort of man, but he had a great deal of common sense. A deacon of a church met him in Smithfield, one morning, and asked him for a loan of 50 pounds. He was going to say, “Yes,” for he knew and trusted him, but the deacon said to him, “Robert, you know you can safely lend that amount to me. I shall be sure to let you have it on the day that I promise. At my time of life, I am quite past temptation.” My old friend stopped and said, “I was going to let you have that 50 pounds but, as you have arrived at that point, I shall not lend you a halfpenny, for I am quite certain I should never see it again.” At that very moment the man knew that he was utterly bankrupt, and he failed, shortly after, for a very large sum, too, yet he said, “You may safely lend it to me, for I am quite past temptation.”  
“Well,” asks one, “then you would not have us believe in one another?” No, unless you want to believe a lie. David said, “Verily every man at his best is altogether vanity.” “You are not very complementary.” No. If you want compliments, do not come here, for I do not deal in them and I do not intend to. God’s Word is what I have to preach and that contains something better than compliments. Brothers and Sisters, your best resolutions and your best experience are as strong as a broken reed! They only need to be touched in a certain way and they will break again! You have already failed again and again—it is no use for you to start again as you started, then, for you will fail again! The same causes under the same circumstances will produce the same results!  
Now stop, my Friend, while I get a grip of your hand and say, “Come, let us pray together.” And this shall be our prayer, “Lord, if You have worked any good in us, however little it is, we dare not trust to it, or trust ourselves with it. But, Lord, do strengthen it. If it is only just a consciousness of sin, Lord, strengthen it till it grows into repentance. If it is only a little trembling desire to be right, Lord, strengthen it into a firm and brave resolve. If it is but a little hope in Christ, Lord, strengthen it until I can say, ‘I know whom I have believed.’ If I have a little germ of faith, Lord, strengthen it till the mustard seed grows into a tree. O Lord, I have promised to do this and that, but I know that I am as weak as water. I am apt to slip when I feel that I am standing most safely. Lord, help me! Lord, help me! Lend me Your strength!”  
Some of you have lately taken the pledge, “I promise, by the help of God, to abstain.” That is the thing for you, that, “help of God,” is what you need! I entreat any of you who are starting on a fresh life, do not start outside the help of God. Do not attempt to go on outside the help of God. And you, dear Friends, who are far advanced in the Christian life, never be so besotted as to think that you have gone so far by God’s aid and now you can traverse the rest of the road without Him! You cannot do anything in that way. Have you never noticed that we make our worst blunders over the plainest things? The children of Israel were commanded to slay all the Canaanites, but a company of Gibeonites disguised themselves in a very clever fashion, and the people said, “Their shoes are old and scarred. And their clothes—well, they must have come a long way, for they are dreadfully worn. These men look like travelers who have come from a very far-distant country.” They did not question the Gibeonites, for they said, “These are strangers, that is quite evident, so let us make a covenant with them and let their lives be spared.” Yet, all the while, these men were their next-door neighbors, living very close to them! On the plainest point, the Israelites were taken in—and it is often the same with us.  
Brothers and Sisters never trust in yourselves, even though your strength seems to be more than adequate for the occasion! Trust in God as much when you have a huge “Woolwich infant” to fire against your enemy as when you have nothing but a sling and a stone. When you are full of knowledge, full of wisdom and full of Grace, yet still be nothing and let the Lord your God be your All-in-All! Oh, what a blessing it would be if everyone of us would get to Heaven! I do not see why we should not, the Lord being our Leader! One thing I know—if we do get there, by-andby, there is not one of us who will throw up his cap and shout, “Hurrah! Glory be to myself! I did this!” No, no, no! But we will all go together and such crowns as Grace shall give us we will cast at Jesus’ feet. And the song, “Non nobis, Domine” shall go up from all of us, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your Truth’s sake.”  
Let us begin to learn that song, now, and let us sing it in life, in death and forever, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 68**

This was a Psalm sung at the removing of the Ark when it was taken up to its resting place on Mount Zion. All the tribes were gathered together and, in full pomp, they marched along, bearing the sacred chest. As they marched forward, the trumpets sounded and this Psalm rose up to God.

Verse 1. Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him. That is the way to move—God first and His people following closely after Him. That is the true order of revival—the Lord in the front, then all His children, quick of step, to follow where He leads. The Psalmist seems to take it for granted that there would be no fighting if God should arise, for all His enemies would be put to flight by His Presence.

2, 3. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yes, let them exceedingly rejoice. The courtiers of God ought to be clad in the silks of joy and to be bright with the jewelry of rejoicing!

4, 5. Sing unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name JAH, and rejoice before Him. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation. In the wilderness the Israelites were like a company of fatherless people. But God was their Protector and in all their trials and dangers He was their Defender.

6. God sets the solitary in families. He brings out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. They had been in a sad condition in Egypt, scattered and driven here and there. God promised to bring them all together, in great families, and to richly bless them.

7, 8. O God, when You went forth before Your people, when You did march through the wilderness; Selah: the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. If the translators had given us the original words, we would have valued this Psalm much more, for it contains nearly every name of God. This verse would run, “Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of Elohim, the Elohim of Israel.”

9, 10. You, O God, did send a plentiful rain, whereby You did confirm Your inheritance, when it was weary. Your congregation has dwelt therein: You, O God, have prepared of Your goodness for the poor. It rained manna and it rained quail. There are no difficulties about the commissariat of an army when God is the Commander-in-Chief! All those who put their trust in Him shall be provided for!

11. The Lord—Or, Adonai—  
11. Gave the word: great was the company of those that published it. When God speaks, He always has publishers of His message! Our Lord found a woman at the well and sent her back to the men of the city as His messenger. And He will find many others before His work is all done!  
12, 13. Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. Though you have lain among the pots. Grimy among the brick kilns, covered with clay and black with smoke—despised, rejected, earthbound. “Though you have lain among the pots.”  
13. Yet shall you be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. There are good times ahead for God’s people! Rich and rare blessings are laid up in store for them that fear Him. Therefore, let us rejoice in Him even now.  
14. When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon. Driven from the bare, bleak mountain-side in gusts like feathers, the snow flies before the wind! And so, when God scatters the mighty, they cannot resist Him—“It was white as snow in Salmon.”  
15. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. This hill of Zion is not high at all—it is a mere knoll compared with the lofty peaks—yet it was highly favored. So, to carnal eyes, Christ’s Kingdom on earth was little in comparison with the kingdoms of this world, yet, in the sight of God, it is greater than all of them!  
16. Why leap you, you high hills? This is the hill which God desires to dwell in. Yes, the LORD will dwell in it forever. There are grander places than Zion, but if God chooses to dwell there, His Presence gives her a glory and a greatness that no other spot can have. The forces at the disposal of Zion’s King are boundless—note how the Psalmist enumerates some of them.  
17, 18. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive: You have received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. As the Ark went up the hill of Zion, so has Christ ascended to eternal Glory! He is the true Ark of the Covenant and He is also the true Mercy Seat. Therefore, let our hearts rejoice in our ascended Savior who has “led captivity captive.” “You have received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also.” “In due time, Christ died for the ungodly.” “He made intercession for the transgressors.” Let rebellious sinners catch at this great Truth of God and, touched by the love and Grace of God, let them cease to rebel any longer.  
19, 20. Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. All glory be to His thriceblessed name for all that this verse includes!  
21, 22. But God shall wound the head of His enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea. Wherever His people may have gone, God will bring them all together again—“from Bashan”—or “from the depths of the sea.”  
23-35. That your foot may be dipped in the blood of your enemies, and the tongue of your dogs in the same. They have seen Your goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after, among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah, and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. Your God has commanded your strength: strengthen, O God, what You have worked for us. Because of Your temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto You. Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver: scatter the people that delight in war. Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, you kingdoms of the earth! O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: to Him that rides upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, He does send out His voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. O God, You are terrible out of Your holy places: the God of Israel is He that gives strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God. The Psalm ends with an ascription of praise unto God. So let our reading end—and our worship—and our lives! “Blessed be God.”

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THE TRUTH OF GOD’S SALVATION  
NO. 2356

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, APRIL 15, 1894. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 16, 1888.

**“O God, in the multitude of Your mercy hear me, in the Truth of your salvation.”  
Psalm 69:13.**

I WOULD have you admire the educational power of prayer, for prayer is, in itself, an education for a saint. God might have given us every blessing at once without our asking Him for anything, but He says, even of that which He has promised to His people, “I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them,” the reason being that, sometimes, the prayer for the blessing is as beneficial to us as the blessing, itself, and thus we are twice blessed—first in asking—and then in receiving! Prayer brings the mercy, but in fetching it for us, prayer, itself, gives us an additional blessing. We are, ourselves, graciously helped of God as we pray, and we grow thereby.

Will you also observe that, usually, when saints plead mightily with God, they draw their arguments from the Lord Himself? In this case, David speaks to God of, “Your mercy,” and, “the Truth of your salvation.” We do not bring pleas to God from abroad—we find them in Him with whom we plead. We say to Him, “You are such a One, therefore, will You not do this for me?” Or, “You have said it, therefore, do as You have said.” Our best pleas lie within the compass of God’s Character and God’s promises.

Now, because of this fact, you will at once see why prayer is so beneficial, for thus it helps us to communion. If we come to God and plead with Him on account of what He, Himself, is, we have, in that very pleading, fellowship and communion with Him. We have to think of Him, to consider Him, to endeavor to understand His attributes, and so we come into His Presence intelligently and profitably. This is no small gift, to have our fellowship with the Father fostered by our prayer to Him.

Out of this communion comes edification. Coming near to God, we learn more and more of Him, and we get that kind of knowledge which does not puff us up because it first breeds love, and then builds us up, and we, knowing more of God, are established in Him. “They that know Your name will put their trust in You.” Thus we grow in faith, love and every Grace, while prayer leads us to search out the Character of God in order to find these pleas that we use in our supplication. So that, praying is communion and praying is edification! I think that you will grow more in half an hour’s prayer than you will in an hour’s sermon-hearing! I am not sure that it will be so in every case, for God may bless a variety of means to different men and women, but I think that the most of us make our great advances in the Divine Life when we are pleading with God— pleading God’s own Character with our God, we are then getting near Him and being built up into Him.

And thus, you see, prayer even becomes a confession of faith. Public prayer may thus furnish a very useful means of instruction. That is not its main purpose, but it incidentally happens that, when we are seeking God, first, then other things are added to us in our public prayer. David, in this Psalm, instructs us concerning the multitude of God’s mercy and the Truth of His salvation. It does one good to hear a godly man pray. When he pours out his heart before God, his language may be very simple—as simple as it is fervent—but there is a kind of insensible teaching and a force of latent instruction which gets into our soul, almost unawares, when we are joining in the prayers of devout persons. Prayer may thus be speaking to the souls of others as well as unto God and, may be, for some men, the best testimony and witness to the Gospel which they are able to hear. It was certainly so with David.

But it is not my objective, tonight, to enlarge upon the manifold uses of prayer. I could not leave this point without notice, so I have given it to you by way of preface. Let it suggest to you to think still more how large a blessing has come to you through prayer, especially when prayer has taken the form of arguing with God because of the characteristics of His own Nature, finding pleas with Him in Himself.

In the words before us, David pleads with God the Truth of His salvation—“Hear me in the Truth of your salvation,” upon which I shall only make these two remarks—first, God’s salvation is a great reality and, secondly, We have proved it to be so.

I. First, GOD’S SALVATION IS A GREAT REALITY, a great Truth of God—“The Truth of your salvation.” There is a substance in it. It is not a shadow, it is not a myth, it is not a mere type or figure of speech. It is a substantial thing, there is the Truth of God in it—“The Truth of your salvation.”

And, first, let us view it in reference to the Lord, Himself. To God, His salvation is, in the highest sense, full of Grace and His Truth.  
If I may venture to speak concerning Him of whom we can know nothing except as He reveals Himself, I may say that the truest and deepest thought of God is for the salvation of His people. This lies in the very center of His heart and the drift of His other thoughts and acts is all towards this point. He has ordained His Son to be the Head of a great family, of which He is to be the First-Born among many brethren, and the planning of the whole of creation was arranged in reference to the saved ones— those who are to be redeemed from among men. At the present time, the whole scheme of God’s Providential working has a bearing upon the salvation of those whom He gave to His Son to be the reward of the travail of His soul. God’s thoughts are high and not as our thoughts, but they are directed toward this central idea. They rest on this foundation principle— the underlying thought of all His works is the display of the Glory of His Grace in the salvation of the sons of men. This is the white of the target at which He shoots all His arrows and He fails not to hit it. In the grand gathering of all the redeemed, this shall be the loudest note in their song, “Unto Him that loved us, and that washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be Glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” The display of all the characteristics of God in the salvation of His people is the subject of His truest, deepest thought.

This is, also, to Himself, the most solid and lasting of all His works. I speak with bated breath when I talk of the things of God, but let me show you, Brothers and Sisters, what I mean. God creates worlds as He pleases. We speak of them as though they had existed and were to exist forever, but, Brethren, even among the starry worlds that are visible to us, many changes have taken place. New stars appear—they are admired awhile for their brilliance, but soon they are gone from our sight. As for this round world in which we dwell, we talk of its “everlasting hills” and so forth, but it shall be burned up and shall pass away. Yon firmament, which seems like a new piece of azure-tinted cloth, is wearing out and, by-and-by, it shall be folded up like an old garment and put away as a worn-out thing. The things that are seen are, after all, but temporal. Do not suppose that you see anything solid—you only see shadows! Faith, alone, sees substance, but everything that the eye is capable of beholding is, of necessity, a temporal and temporary thing.  
Look over the history of the whole world. Empires have arisen, all the thoughts of great men have been concentrated upon forming armies, building up enormous establishments and by State-craft consolidating the power of their realm. A dynasty has been formed, king after king has sat upon the throne and they thought, as they built their palaces, and walked in them, that Assyria and Babylon would never pass away! God’s Providence lent itself to the building up of these great monarchies, but they were not substantial—they were only fading things, mere leaves upon the bay tree of existence. They came out and they, in due time, faded and dropped into the soil, again. But there is permanence in God’s salvation—it will never fade—it is not a temporary work! The salvation of His people shall enlist the wondering gaze of angels throughout eternity and the songs of cherubim, seraphim and the hosts of the redeemed by blood shall go up before the Throne of God forever and forever because of the Truth of His salvation! This great work, which He has accomplished, He has made to last forever. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a wonderful work is that of the salvation of the sons of men in its abiding results!  
And, further, I ask you to think, still from the God-ward aspect, of what Truth there is in salvation in this respect—it is that into which God has thrown His whole Self. When He makes a world, He speaks, and it is done! He commands and it stands forever fast. The morning light and all that is seen by it, are produced by His word and, in His Providence, He just nods and dictates the policies of empires. But in the work of salvation, He, Himself, comes! Behold the Cross! God, in the Person of His Son, bleeds and dies to save a soul! He has given Himself to this stupendous work. The Holy Spirit enters into human bodies and reigns and rules over human minds, abiding in them, continuing His gracious, comforting, enlightening and sanctifying work—He, Himself, personally dwelling in the saints! God throws His whole Self into the work of salvation!  
His little finger can create the stars and light them up or quench them at His will! But even His right arm is not sufficient for the redemption of His people! Both hands must bear the cruel nails! Both feet must be fastened to the accursed tree! The heart of the Son of God must be pierced by the soldier’s lance! He, even He, Himself, must come forth from the bosom of the Father and must descend, and still descend, and yet further descend till He goes down to the lowest parts of the earth—there to work out the salvation of His people! Oh, my dear Friends, when we come to the Truth of God’s salvation, we have reached the rocks! Now we have left the ever-rolling sea and landed on the Divine terra firma. Here shall you see God, indeed! In other things, you see only His reflection in a mirror, but, in salvation, you see the express Image of the Father’s Glory! In the work of the redemption of His chosen, you see God unveiling Himself as far as man is ever capable of seeing Him.  
I should need all night if I were to dwell upon these points. So let me observe, in the next place, that God’s salvation is a great reality to ourselves as well as to Him. Do you remember when you first grasped the true idea of God’s salvation, when you understood that God had of old thought out the plan of salvation and, in the fullness of time, had worked it out? Do you remember when you first saw that Truth of God and when you felt that it was just the salvation that you needed and that you must have it—that you must have it then, or else perish everlastingly? You did not lay hold upon it, in the hour of your distress, as upon a fiction. You did not grasp it as a thing that might be or might not be. Souls that have ever been drowning in the sea of wrath want to clutch at a real salvation and you clutched at it as real. That day when I saw Christ as my soul’s salvation, the great Sacrifice for sin was, to my soul, the most real thing I had ever seen! Otherwise it had not staunched the gaping wounds of my poor bleeding heart! Otherwise it had never brought balm and peace to my tortured spirit! I was a real sinner—I do not know whether you are— but I was. I had real pangs of conviction and I saw a real Hell before me—and I needed a real salvation—and I grasped it as such!  
Since then, dear Friends, God’s salvation has been wonderfully real to us. Have we not daily found it more and more so? You have had many things that you doted on and trusted in, but, after a while, these poor cobwebs have been unable to bear the weight that you have hung upon them, and they have all disappeared. But have you not found Christ’s salvation to be very real to you from that first day, even until now? If you have not, (excuse my putting it very plainly to you), you have missed your way. If you have not found a real Christ, you certainly need one! And if you have not found a real salvation and, by personal experience, known its reality, you are under a delusion and that comfort which you enjoy, tonight, is a false comfort! I wish that I could disturb you out of it, that you might find a real comfort. Remember that life is real, sin is real, death is real, judgment will be real and the final sentence will carry with it a real punishment! You need, therefore, to find in Christ Jesus the Truth of His salvation, a real salvation which, though you cannot touch it, is yet tangible to your soul, and which, if you cannot see it, is yet to be surely seen by the eyes of your spirit. But I shall be getting to my second head too fast if I dwell upon this point, so I will leave it.  
I think that we can say, dear Friends, that it is a real salvation to us in another sense. There is a Truth in God’s salvation in the way that it has operated on us. The way it worked in the change of your character, at first—was not that very real? And sometimes, now, when temptation suddenly comes upon you, does not God’s salvation pull you up with a very real check? Yes, and when you get somewhat indifferent in duty, does it not urge you on with a very real spur? Have not some of us said, “I will speak no more in the name of the Lord,” and have we not found His salvation to be in us, in the truth of it, like fire in our bones, so that we could not hold our peace? The most potent force upon a real Christian’s mind is the Truth of God’s salvation—it touches him in a way that nothing else can. We are like music boxes and the Savior holds the key— and when He winds us up, then every part of us begins to play, but not till then! The spiritual nature of man is like a mystic harp upon which only One can play so as to bring out the fullness of its music! And the hand that can play upon our hearts is the hand that was nailed to the Cross. The Truth of God’s salvation operates most powerfully upon our minds and so proves to us that it is real.  
Now, beloved Friends, to speak a little in detail of the Truth of this salvation, if we have really laid hold of the Truth of God’s salvation, we believe in a real Fall. We do not believe that Adam’s Fall is a mere fiction or parable, but we believe it to be a sad and terrible fact, for if there was not a real Fall, then there is no Truth of God in salvation! If we have not fallen from our first estate, we do not need picking up! But, alas, we have grievously fallen!  
Next, if you have the Truth of God’s salvation, you will believe in real sin. There are hosts of sham sinners about. They come into our Chapels and we preach the Gospel to them, but they never get any good out of it. You may relieve sham beggars, but God never does. He relieves those who are really in need. Truly needy persons never come to Him in vain, but your pretended, dressed-up, hypocritical sinners, who say, “Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners,” when they are neither miserable nor yet consciously sinful, God never relieves them! If you know the Truth of God’s salvation, you must believe in real sin. “Oh!” says one, “I have more than enough of that.” Then come and have real salvation! You who have really transgressed—you are the men and women for whom there is Truth in God’s salvation—but, if there is no truth in your sinnership, there is, to you, no Truth in Christ’s salvation.  
Once more, if we get to know the Truth of God’s salvation, we believe in a real Atonement. You know the description that is given of the Atonement as it is preached by some gentlemen of supposed “culture.” It is this—that Jesus Christ did something or other which, in some way or other, is probably more or less remotely connected with the pardon of sin. Such a salvation as that would not save a mouse! No, no, we must have a real Atonement—the Substitution of our Lord Jesus Christ for guilty sinners—the bearing of our sin in His own body on the tree! They say that it is unjust that Christ should suffer for us. On the contrary, I venture to affirm that it was in the highest degree

 just that He should die for His people, for He was one with us! His death was not merely substitution for us, but He had identified Himself with us. He came here on purpose that He might be one with His people and, being one with them, as the Second Adam, it behooved Him that He should suffer. It was right that, having married His Church, He should go with her for better and for worse, and bear her sins in His own body on the tree. And He did so, blessed be His name! And I believe that He really expunged His people’s sins, that He truly took away the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us and nailed it to His Cross that, by His precious death, He might put away all the transgressions of His people once and for all. You have not learned the Truth of God’s salvation if you do not believe in a real Atonement.  
Next, true faith brings to us a real pardon. If you have received the Truth of God’s salvation, you are really forgiven. It was no fictitious document that was presented to you in that day when your Savior said to you, “Go, and sin no more. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven.” It was a real pardon, signed by the King’s own hand, and your sins are gone—they shall not be mentioned against you any more, forever. “Do you believe this?”  
Now the Holy Spirit is working in you a real sanctification. Have you that sign and token of Grace? Have you given up evil habits? Have you quit your vices? Do you hate the very thought of sin? Are you watchful over all things within you and all things around you? Is “holiness unto the Lord” inscribed upon your whole life? If not, you have not a real salvation, and you do not know the Truth of that salvation! But if God has made you truly holy, by the sanctifying power of His Spirit, then listen once more.  
One part of the truth of this salvation is that there is a real Heaven for you. The Lord Jesus, Himself, says to you—  
*“You shall see My glory soon!  
When the work of Grace is done  
Partner of My throne you shall be.”*  
And you shall dwell forever in a true Heaven, with a true Christ, in true Glory and only then shall you know to the fullest, the Truth of His Salvation!  
Thus have I shown you that God’s salvation is a great reality to God, Himself, and also to ourselves.  
Further, if you would know the Truth of God’s salvation, remember that the term used, here, signifies that God’s salvation is real in its constancy. It will bear every strain and, therefore, it is that David uses it as a plea in prayer. He comes to God and he says, “Lord, I am in great distress. I beseech You, help me in my extremity by the Truth of Your salvation! Your salvation never fails, but endures every strain. Therefore, I beseech You, deliver me at this moment!” There are some times, when you are on your knees, and you need a master plea, that you can say, “Lord, if it is thus, then I beseech You, deliver Your servant. If this is a promise of Yours and You have spoken it, now do as You have said.” It is no impertinence to plead with God in this way—“If this salvation of Yours is a fiction. If you have never spoken peace to my heart, nor brought me into the new and spiritual life, then, Lord, You may leave me. But if this is, indeed, as I believe it is, Your love to me, Your Grace in me, Your work for me—if I have, indeed, received Your salvation, then I beseech You, help Your servant and deliver me!”  
You will find the value of such pleading if you have but faith to know that there is Truth in God’s salvation, in the fact of its perpetuity, its constancy, its unfailing power to bear you right through to the end as surely as it has borne you thus far. Oh, may God grant us Grace to feel that the truest and most real thing in earth or Heaven is the salvation of the blessed God! There is no doubt that it is so and that there is substance and endurance in it—and we do well to use this fact as a plea when we need a substantial argument in prayer.  
That is my first point, God’s salvation is a great reality.  
II. Now I shall ask your kind attention while, for a few more minutes, I speak upon the second head. WE HAVE PROVED IT TO BE SO—“The Truth of your salvation.”  
We have proved it, first, by our experience of a new life. Now reach for your diaries. “They are at home,” you say. Take out your pocketbooks, then. You have not brought them with you tonight? Use your memories, then. Think what has been the experience of the new life in your soul. If there is Truth in God’s salvation, you are not, now, what you once were, and you are now what you once never dreamed of being! There is within you, now, a life as much superior to the ordinary life of man as the life of an angel would be to that of the swine at the trough! Are you aware of that? Has such a life as that come into you? If so, that is one of the proofs of the Truth of God’s salvation to you. An ungodly man sitting here may say, “That is no proof to me.” No, of course it is not! You have not experienced it, so it cannot be evidence to you. Swine that were turned into angels would have, within themselves, a proof of some Divine operation upon them, would they not? Have you ever known what it was to be like the beast that perishes? Perhaps you have, for your thoughts never rose towards God—you were worldly, sensual, animal, perhaps devilish.  
I do not know whether you ever sank so low as that, but if the Grace of God has come into your heart and made you feel sorrows and joys that you never knew before, you have a proof of the Truth of God’s salvation! When Luther was talking with the pretended prophets who claimed to be Inspired, he said to one of them, “Did you ever have births and deaths within your soul?” The man looked at him in amazement. “You knew nothing of it,” said Luther—“You knew nothing of it, for he that knows the Lord has had births and deaths, creations and destructions within his own spirit.” It is even so.  
My Hearer, do you know anything about this? Ordinary men do not know it—they are soulish, they have the life of a soul, they are far above the brutes—but Christian men are as far above them as they are above the brutes, for they have received a third and higher principle of life! The Spirit of God dwells in them! The Spirit of God has become dominant in them and this has elevated them into quite another region. This world that you see is not the world in which Believers live. You see mountains and hills—so do they—but you do not hear them break forth into singing before you, as Believers do. You see the trees of the field, but you never heard them clap their hands, as saints have done. There are many things, I guarantee you, which have not entered into your philosophy unless you have been born again. He who has been regenerated and has burst the shell that held him, like the unhatched bird within it, has emerged into new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness—and that fact is to him the proof of the truth of his salvation.  
How else do we prove this? There is one sweet proof which we sometimes have of the Truth of God’s salvation and that is, our sense of sonship. It is a great thing to be able to say, “Abba, Father,” to know that God is our Father, not taking it as an abstract Truth that God is our Father, but feeling the Spirit of adoption witnessing within us, regarding Him not as Father in name only, but in reality, so that the thought of Him draws out emotions of love, delight, trust and nearest relationship. Oh, if you have that, you have proved the Truth of God’s salvation! By nature you are of your father, the devil, and his works you do. But if you are now of your Father who is in Heaven, and you love Him and you grow like He, that is a grand proof to you of the Truth of His salvation!  
Let me tell you one or two other things. Time flies, so I will only mention them. Sometimes, God gives us proofs of the Truth of His salvation by our ecstatic joy. This is not a theme that I like to speak of except in very select company, but, believe me, we do have “high days and holidays.” We have our hard days, sometimes, and you know about them, but you do not see our joys. Oh, if you did but know them, you would be willing to live a life of sorrow to have one day with us on the holy Mount with the transfigured Christ! I have thought, sometimes, that I never could doubt, again, after an experimental acquaintance with the banqueting house, and a sight of the banner of love waving over my head!  
Oh, the joy, the overwhelming joy, of the torrents of Divine Love when they come pouring into the soul! They bear everything away. If a man or a devil were then to come up and say to us, “There is no Truth of God in all this,” we would feel as if we could not do him the honor to pour contempt upon him! We are blessedly sure of the Truth of God’s salvation when we get a grip of Christ, when, with Mary, we sit at His feet! When, with John, we lie in His bosom! When, like the spouse, we even touch His dear lips and receive the kisses of His mouth! You who have enjoyed this delightful experience know the Truth of God’s salvation.  
Now let me turn to another leaf of the diary of which I spoke. You know something of the Truth of God’s salvation if you have done business in great waters and have had Divine support in trouble. Were you ever in this condition, that they said of you, “There is not a second person who justifies his course of action”? “It was proposed to pass a vote of approval of his conduct, but there was no one to second it.” Did you ever open letter after letter and find that this friend will never help you again? That the next is ashamed of you and that the next one blasphemes God and you, also? You go on being stripped of one thing after another till you seem to have come to your last rag and then you say, “Still, I do not falter, I do not mean to budge an inch. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that if all men forsake me, He will help me!” And you find, just then, a flush of joy come over you such as you never felt before, because now you are leaning on God’s bare arm and there is nothing between you and the Almighty!

I admire that saying of Luther, when he looked out of the window and exclaimed, “There stands the arch of Heaven, without a single pillar and yet it never falls.” That is the way to stand—when all the pillars are knocked away. So many of us are like ships on the stocks—there we lie, in the dock, and we shall never do any good as we are! But if the dogshores are all knocked away and there is nothing left to support us, we go slipping into the water and so begin our true lifework. God help you, dear Brothers and Sisters, by His own Presence! And if you have once known the Presence of God in the utter absence of every form of comfort or help from mortal man, you will have had a most convincing proof of His salvation! The Lord can help you when you are in a fever—He can help you when you have gone, time after time, to the grave, and now that your last friend is buried. He can help you when that little income is suddenly taken away. He can bear you up when the vilest slander is cast upon your spotless reputation. And you can still, for all that, say, “The Lord is my portion, says my soul and, therefore, will I hope in Him.” These are testing times, but it is then that you know the Truth of God’s salvation!  
And then, to turn over another leaf—a bright leaf this time—when all those troubles are ended and you get out of your difficulties—when God has worked great deliverances for you—then you know the Truth of His salvation! Then Miriam takes her timbrel! I do not remember hearing of her having a timbrel before. Miriam, where was your timbrel when you came out of Egypt? Why, then, poor Miriam was busy carrying some of her household goods like the rest who had their kneading-troughs upon their shoulders! But she found her timbrel when the Lord had triumphed gloriously and the horse and his rider had been thrown into the sea. Some of us have our timbrels at home. We are beginning to get our fingers ready for playing on them, for the Lord will work for His people, and He will bring forth His chosen, as He has said, “I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people, again, from the depths of the sea.” Then it is that we know the Truth of His salvation.  
But if you do not have these ups and downs, beloved Friends, you may know the Truth of God’s salvation, and you ought to know it by the sweet realizations of faith. Where faith is strong, it has the faculty of anticipation, and that is a blessed faculty of the Divine Life, the power of stretching out your hands across the ages and bringing the far-off distance near. Perhaps you and I may not be in Heaven for another 20 years—we cannot tell, but Faith sits still and sees Heaven all round about her—and sometimes she puts on her crown and takes it off and casts it at her dear Lord’s feet. Now and then she gets her heavenly harp and lays her fingers among the strings. I have known her put on all her holy array and walk in her white robes down the golden streets of Paradise—and she has seen and heard things which it were not lawful for her to utter!  
Do you ever have these good times? If you do not and you are a child of God, you are losing a great deal He is both able and willing to give to you! There lies, a little to the right of the road to Heaven, a hill called Mount Clear. Pass it not by in a hurry, but climb to the top of it and stand there. With a clear faith, believe in all that your God has told you— stay there till you can see! They say, “Seeing is believing.” That is not true—believing is seeing when you “believe” fast enough and steadily enough. I say not that every Believer can see all this at once. If you have good milk—of course you do not all have it pure—but if you have good milk, there is no cream on it at first. But if you stand it for a little while and let it be still, there will come some cream to the top.  
So it is with faith. It is good milk, but you must let it stand a while and then you will find the cream of enjoyment, assurance and realization which will make you feel, “I know that God’s salvation is true. I am sure of it, for I have as clearly perceived it by faith as if I had seen it with my natural eyes.” If the senses, faulty as they are, can convey any sort of conviction to the mind, much more can that higher and truer God-given sense of faith convey to us a conviction that it is even as God has revealed unto us!  
I wish any dear friend, here, who is not yet saved, might be led to test the Truth of God’s salvation. God, through Jesus Christ, can ease you of your burden at once! It is a cold wintry night. You came in here and you have had a little shelter, and you are going out, again, into the cold, but go not away with your burden—leave it in the pew! Better still, cast your burden upon the Lord! Jesus can give you ease and rest. Go not away with your foulness—Jesus can wash you! Go not outside till you, yourself, are whiter than the snow! The Lord grant you Grace to do so! Your faith will give you God. The longest arm of the greatest giant can never reach to Heaven, but the finger of faith can touch the Savior! Believe! Trust, and the work is done and you shall know the Truth of His salvation!  
Let us go our way with just this word of prayer. Lord, let us all know the Truth of Your salvation! May we all trust You! May we trust You more, and more, and more, and more, and more! May we trust You implicitly! May we trust You up to the hilt and glorify You thus by our childlike faith, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **Psalm 37:1-18.**

Let us read, tonight, part of the 37th Psalm. David, here, first of all, dissuades himself and us from falling into a very common evil—that of envying the wicked because of their prosperity and murmuring against God because we, perhaps, are not so highly favored in our earthly affairs.

Verses 1, 2. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of inequity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. No one envies the grass, let it be ever so green. No one envies flowers, let them be ever so fragrant, for we know that grass must be cut and that flowers must wither. Let us look upon the wicked in the same light—their time of perishing shall soon come, their end hastens on—therefore, let all envying be out of the question since they are such short-lived beings.

3. Trust in the LORD, and do good. There you have the secret of the active life of the Christian! The root of his activity lies in his faith—“Trust in the Lord.” The outward manifestation of his inner life is in the good that he does and where there is this faith, proven to be living faith by good works, there follows the promise—

3. So shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. It does not say, “Young man, verily you shall prosper in business.” It does not say, “O ambitious man, you shall dwell in a palace, or revel in luxuries,” but it does say to you, O humble-minded Christian, trusting in God, “Verily, you shall be fed.” You know, when the word, “verily,” is used, there is something upon which God sets His seal as being true—“Verily, you shall be fed.” God’s, “Verilys,” are better than men’s oaths. Believe, then, Christians, and let there be no more fretting about your temporal trials. I know you have come in here, tonight, very anxious and vexed with care and grief—take this, “Verily,” and lay it, like Isaiah’s lump of figs, upon the boil and, “Verily,” you shall soon be healed!

4. Delight yourself, also, in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Delight is a Christian’s duty. To sorrow, to mourn, to despair—these belong not to the Believer. “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Christians, here is a river to swim in—plunge into it! Here is a bottomless abyss of delights—the Person, the Grace, the works, the attributes of our Covenant God! And here is a promise given to each one of those who carry on this excellent duty, “He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

5. Commit your way unto the Lord; trust, also, in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. Put the helm of your ship into the hand of the Almighty Pilot. Leave the guidance of your pilgrimage to Him who has led many caravans across the desert and who has never suffered any to perish! What an easy way this is and yet how difficult do we find it to carry it out! It is to unload ourselves and put our burden on our God. Oh, that we had the sanctified commonsense to make us fulfill this duty!

6. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Leave your character with God—it is safe, there. Men may throw mud at it, but it will never stick long on a true Believer—it shall soon come off and you shall be the more glorious for men’s slander.

7-11. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. This is now a Gospel blessing, for Christ pronounced it upon the mount among His other benedictions— “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Somehow or other, the only persons who truly enjoy life and get happiness out of this present vale of tears, are the meek spirits, the men who can say—“Mine are the valleys, and the mountains mine; my Father made them all.” Even the possessions of other men make these people glad! They are like the man we have heard of in China who met a mandarin covered with jewels and, bowing to him, said, “Thank you for those jewels.” Doing this many times, at last the mandarin asked the cause of his gratitude. “Well,” said the poor but wise man, “I thank you that you have those jewels, for I have as good a sight of them as you have; but I have not the trouble of wearing them, putting them on in the morning, taking them off at night, and having a watchman keeping guard over them when I am asleep. I thank you for them—they are as much use to me as they are to you.” This meek man can walk along the broad acres of a rich man’s farm! He can see his noble oaks and other forest trees and he can say, “Thank God for them all! I have as much enjoyment from these as the rich man, himself, has, for they are mine to enjoy as truly as they are his.” “The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace,” not in the abundance of wealth, but in the abundance of

 peace! To a meek man, peace is his wealth, and holy quietness and calm his true riches!

12-18. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. The LORD knows the day of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. He knows their dark days and He will be their light—He knows their sunny days and He will be their shelter. He knows their last day and He will be their confidence. He knows their resurrection-day and He will be their glory—“Their inheritance shall be forever.”—

**“Go, you that boast in all your stores,  
And tell how bright they shine.  
Your heaps of glittering dust are**yours**,  
But my Redeemer’s**mine**.”**

**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—196, 210,191.** Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #631 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE BELIEVER SINKING IN THE MIRE

NO. 631

**A SERMON PREACHED  
BY C. H. SPURGEON**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”  
Psalm 69:14.**

MANY rivers and especially the Nile have on their banks deep deposits of black mud. And when any person seeks to leap on shore, if he should ignorantly or through misfortune spring upon this soft mud he would, unless speedily pulled out, be sucked under until he was utterly swallowed up and suffocated in the mire. Having no handhold or foothold, the more he labored to extricate himself from the thick adhesive mud the deeper he would descend until he would be choked in the filth, unless someone was near to help him out and save him from destruction. True Believers, Beloved, are sometimes in deep mire and in fear of being swallowed up. This was the state and condition of the Psalmist when he wrote this Psalm. He felt that he was sinking and could not deliver himself and therefore he cries unto God for strength in the words of the text, “Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”

Mr. Gadsby, in his “Wanderings,” narrates an incident which, with reflections of his own, I shall read to you at the outset. “Being brought to a stand as just mentioned, I hailed the captain to heave to and take me on board. One of the men was, therefore, sent in the small boat but the river near the western side was so shallow that he could not get the boat within some distance of the bank. He consequently, as is usual in such cases, jumped overboard that he might carry me to the boat on his back.

“No sooner, however, had he sprung from the boat than I heard him scream. I turned to see what was the matter and I found him struggling in the mud. He was sinking as though in quicksand. And the more he struggled the faster and deeper he sank. His fellow boatmen were not slack— they quickly saw the dilemma he was in and two of them dashed in and swam to the small boat. I was almost choked with terror and I breathed, or rather gasped with difficulty. ‘Can they reach the poor fellow?’ I said to myself. ‘If not, he must inevitably be swallowed up alive!’ Now they reach the boat! Now they are near him!

“And now, praise the Lord, he grasps firmly hold—O that death-like grasp!—of the side of the boat! But this was not until he had sunk up to his chest. Seeing him safe, I breathed more freely. And I feel that now, though only relating the circumstance, the excitement has caused an increased and painful action of the heart. How I thought of poor David! Had he really witnessed a similar scene to this, literally, when, speaking of the feelings of his soul spiritually, he said, ‘I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me’ (Psa. 69:2)?  
“O what an agonizing state to be in! And yet many of my readers, I

have no doubt, who never witnessed such a scene literally, know something about it spiritually, as David did, whether he had seen it with his bodily eyes or not. Well might he, in the struggling of his soul, exclaim, ‘Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink! (14). Let me grasp firmly hold of the ark and be pulled safely on board! Well! Just at the right time, just before the poor fellow’s arms (shall I say his arms of faith?) were disabled, swallowed up—deliverance came!”

The prayer of our text leads us to three reflections—first, that the true Believer may be in the mire and very near sinking. Secondly, that the true Believer may be in such a condition that God alone can deliver him. And thirdly, that in whatever condition the Believer may be, prayer is forevermore his safe refuge—if a man finds that his own strength fails, he can look up to Him who is an ever present help in time of trouble and cry unto Him, “Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”

I. We commence with the statement that THE TRUE BELIEVER MAY BE IN THE MIRE. Let us consider for a moment three things—What kind of mire the Believer may be brought into. Why God suffers him to be brought there, and how we can prove that he is really and truly a Believer although God suffers him to be brought into the mire. The truest Believer in the world may be brought into the deep mire of unbelief. Some of us who have preached the Word for years and have been the means of working faith in others and of establishing them in the knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible have, nevertheless, been the subjects of the most fearful and violent doubts as to the Truth of God and the very Gospel we have preached.

Times may have occurred to the best of God’s servants—when they have even doubted the existence of the God whom they have loved to serve—when even the Deity and reality of the Lord Jesus who has rescued them from sin by His precious blood has been a matter of grievous and horrible questioning. Little do people know, who are ignorant of the private history of God’s believing people, what struggles they have with their own base-born, wicked unbelief. It is not only Thomas who has said, “Except I put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

There have been thousands of eminent saints who have been attacked by unbelief and have been in doubt as to things which they once received as certain Truths of God and which still in their heart of hearts they know to be true. They could have died for those Truths one day. They could have established them beyond all doubt and question the next day. And yet upon the third they might be compelled, through strong temptation, to sit down and with tears streaming from their eyes, cry bitterly unto their Helper, “Oh, God, save me from this accursed unbelief which robs me of every comfort and takes the foundations away and lays my glory in the dust! What can I do? If the foundations are removed, what can the righteous do? O settle my soul upon Your Word and establish me in Your Truth, O You God of Truth.”

A man may be a true Believer and yet feel that he is sinking fast into the mire and clay of unbelief as some of us know to our lamentation and dismay. A Believer may be quite settled in his belief of the Gospel and may never doubt the inspiration of Scripture, the Atonement of Christ and all those precious Truths which are commonly received among us and yet, through sin or temptation, or some other cause, he may not have a full assurance of his own interest in those glorious and vital Truths!

A true Believer in Christ, in fact, may often suspect himself to be a hypocrite when he is most sincere—to be an apostate when he is most diligently following the Lord. And he may set himself down as the chief of sinners when the testimony of men and of God is that he is a perfect and an upright man—“one that fears God and eschews evil.” A Believer may be in a state of high spiritual health and yet may think himself to be sick unto death! He may be clothed in fair white linen and yet reckon himself to be naked, poor and miserable. He may be rich with all the treasures of his heavenly Father’s kingdom and yet may scarcely know where he can find a ready crust with which to supply his present pressing spiritual needs.

There are such things as princes in rags. And there have been such things and probably are now, as princes of the blood-royal peers of God’s own realm sitting on the dunghill. Many a justified and accepted saint has had to moan out under a deep sense of sin, just as the poor publican did, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” I dare say many of you think that God’s ministers never have any question about their interest in Jesus Christ. I wish they never had—Brethren, I wish sincerely I never had! It is seldom that I do—very seldom. But there are times when I would change my soul’s place with the poorest Believer out of Heaven—when I should be content to sit behind the door of Heaven—if only I might be numbered among God’s people!

True Believers sometimes droop into this state—whether they are God’s people or not, they cannot tell. Whether their sins are forgiven or not is a matter of solemn enquiry with their souls. Whether they have ever passed from death unto life or not is the great problem which they sit down and earnestly consider. And whether they are God’s people or not is a question they have great difficulty in answering. This is deep mire, indeed, for it is woe with another woe at its heels to lose the assurance of one’s present salvation.

In addition to this, at times the Lord’s chosen are brought into another kind of mire which will never swallow them up, but which may prove a matter of very severe trial to them while they are in it. I mean temporal trouble. When the soul is alarmed about spiritual things and bodily or pecuniary troubles come also, then the sea is boisterous, indeed. It is ill when two seas meet—when Moab and Ammon come against Judah at the same time—when both upper and nether springs appear to be dried up. When God, with both hands, thrusts us into the deep mire.

Certain of my Brethren are frequently in trouble. Their whole life is a floundering out of one slough of despond into another. You have had many losses in business—nothing but losses, perhaps. You have had many crosses, disappointments, bereavements—nothing prospers with you. Well, Brother, there is this consolation—you are one of a very large family—for many of God’s people pass though just such tribulation. It was said by Matthew Henry, I think, that, “Prosperity was the blessing of the Old Covenant, but that adversity is the peculiar blessing of the New.”

I do not know whether that is true or not, but I do know this, that

Christ has said, “In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” It is no sign, Beloved, that you are not a child of God because you feel the rod—it is rather a token of your being one of the adopted—because you are made to pass under the rod of the Covenant and to utter the prayer of David—“Lord, deliver me out of the

deep mire and let me not sink.” You are allowed to plead against the thing you so much fear. You may cry, “Leave me not to become penniless! Leave me not to dishonor my character!” But remember that none of your trials can prove you to be a lost man. Pray, Brother, the prayer of that good man who asked for neither poverty nor riches. Ask that you may have food convenient for you. Pray, “Give me this day my daily bread.” “Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”

I have not come to the blackest mire yet. God’s own people are, at seasons, suffered to sink in the mire of inward corruption. There are times when Believers have such a sight of the little Hell within their own hearts that they are ready to despair of the possibility of their being completely sanctified and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Our God, at seasons, permits the fountains of the great deep of human depravity to be broken up and then what floods of sin come pouring forth! We little know what lies secreted in our deceitful hearts—envy, blasphemies, murders, lust—there is enough in the heart of any man to make a full-grown devil if restraining Grace did not prevent it.

Today you may have had such enjoyments of the Lord’s Countenance that you have been ready to sing—“You have made my mountain to stand strong. I shall never be moved.” But tomorrow you may have such a sight of self that you may exclaim, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Remember if you have the nature of God in you, you have also the nature of the old Adam. You are one with Christ and, “as is the heavenly, such are they, also, that are heavenly.” But you are also one with Adam and, “as is the earthy, such are they, also, that are earthy.”

You are to be immortal, but you are reminded that you are mortal. You are one day to be raised in Glory. But you must remember as long as you are here, the time of Glory is not come. You drag about, to your shame, your weakness, your dishonor and your misery—a body of sin and death. The best of God’s children know this. And I think the holier they are, the more likely they are to feel the conflict within. It is the fashion in our country for men to wear black coats. I suppose it is because they do not show the dirt so much as a white garment—and if we wore white garments the filth would reveal itself and we should have to change them very often.

So, my Brethren, the more a Christian is like his Master, the more clearly he sees his own faults. Oh, Lord, grant us Divine Grace to see much of our sins through the tears of repentance and to see much of the Savior through the eyes of faith—for if we see little of Him we shall get into the plight of David when he was in the deep mire and cried, “Lord, deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”

Beloved, it is painful to reflect that the best of God’s people are allowed to fall into the mire of Satanic temptations. There is no knowing what suggestion Satan may thrust into the ears and into the soul of the greatest Believer that Heaven ever made. God may whisper in your ears one day and Satan the next and yet you may be a child of God on both occasions. Oh, Beloved, I dare scarcely say in the midst of this assembly what I know on this point. If I were only to reveal my own struggles and conflicts with Satan I might stagger some of you! But this I know, that no Christian minister will ever be able to enter into the trials and experiences of God’s people unless he has stood foot to foot with the arch Fiend and wrestled with the Prince of Hell.

Martin Luther was right when he said that temptation and adversity were the two best books in his library. He had never written his commentary upon Galatians if he had not been one who was frequently tempted and tossed about by Satan. That fiery, vehement nature of his was like a great coal fire burning up the works of Satan and all that Satan could do only stirred up the flame and caused it to burn more brightly. Satan will suggest not merely little sins, but the worst and foulest of sins to the best of God’s chosen people.

He will even venture in his baseness to urge the man of God to destroy himself when under depression of spirits. And although the saint hates the very thought, yet he may be driven to the verge of it by an influence which he feels that all his puny might is unable to resist. It is a fearful thing to fight with Apollyon. We shall sing of it in Heaven as one of the greatest and most marvelous mercies of God, that, “He delivered us out of the mouth of our cruel adversary.”

2 .Why is it that Believers are allowed to fall into it? The answer is they sometimes get into it through their own sin. It is a chastisement upon them. They were not faithful enough when they walked in the light and, therefore, they are put into the darkness. If they had minded their steps when they were going down the hill they would not have been subject to such afflictions in the valley. Rest assured that a great many of our sorrows are the foul weeds which spring up from the seeds of our own sins.

If you had been a fruitful tree, the pruning knife would not have been so often used. The rod is never taken down from the shelf except when it is absolutely necessary. And we are made to smart bitterly under it because we so greatly require it. God does not punish in a penal sense, but He does chastise. And He generally does it by permitting us to be filled with our own ways. We have to drink the powder of the idol calf which we have, ourselves, set up. We had need to walk with holy jealousy, for we serve a jealous God. O for Grace to serve Him well! Our heavenly Father sends these troubles, or permits them to come, to try our faith. If our faith is worth anything at all it will stand the test.

Superficial brilliance is always afraid of fire, but gold is not—the paste gem dreads to be touched by the diamond—but the true diamond fears no test. People who have a kind of confectionery godliness will wish to be preserved from temptations, for they cannot endure them. But the Christian counts it all joy when he falls into different trials, knowing that “tribulation works patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope. And hope makes not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us.”

My dear Friends, if your faith is only a sunshiny faith, get rid of it! For you may not have many bright days between this and Heaven. If your godliness can only walk with Christ when He wears silver slippers you had better give it up, for Christ very often walks barefoot. It is a poor faith which can only trust God when friends are true, the body full of health and the business profitable. That is true faith which holds by the Lord’s

faithfulness when friends are gone, when the body is sick, when our spirits are depressed, when we are driven from the enjoyment of assurances into the desert land and cannot see the light of our Father’s Countenance.

A faith that can say in the midst of the direst trouble, “though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”—this is Heaven-born faith, indeed! I believe in my Lord because He is a God that cannot lie. He is faithful and true to His every word and, therefore, let the whole creation go to rack and ruin—my faith shall not waver or give up its confidence. The Lord may also let His servants slip into the deep mire to glorify Himself, for He is never, perhaps, more glorified than in the faith of His own people.

When an architect has erected a bridge of whose enormous strength he is well satisfied, he has no objection that it shall be put to any test. “No,” he says, “let the heaviest train pass over it which has ever been dragged by a locomotive. Let the most terrible tempest come that has ever blown from the four winds! I have built my structure in a manner so substantial that the more it is tried and proved, the more you will admire its firmness and completeness. So our gracious God, Beloved, glorifies Himself by permitting His people to be subjected to trials and by enabling them to endure the strain.

We would never know the music of the harp if the strings were left untouched. We would never enjoy the juice of the grape if it were never trod in the winepress. We would never discover the sweet perfume of cinnamon if it were not pressed and beaten. And we would never know the warmth of fire if the coals were not utterly consumed. The excellence of the Christian is brought out by the fire of trouble. The wisdom of the Great Workman and the glory of His skill and power are discovered by the trials through which His vessels of mercy are permitted to pass.

Again, Beloved, trials are permitted to show the natural weakness of the creature that no flesh may glory in the Presence of God. Men of iron nerve are raised up to face all opposition and confront the powers of darkness. Their testimony never falters, their course is true and bright as the sun in the heavens and men rejoice in their light. With faith undaunted they beard the infernal lion in his den and in the day of battle seek the thickest of the fight. All the devils in Hell cannot frighten them and all the foes upon earth cannot stir them from their Divine purpose. They win souls as many as the sands of the sea and their spiritual children are for number, like gravel.

They revive the flame which lingers in the embers of the Church. They set the world on a blaze with heavenly fire. They comfort many and set free thousands of prisoners and yet, suddenly, and it may be in the last hour, their joy departs, their assurance flees and their confidence departs. May not this be necessary that men may not trace the champion’s noble bearing to the strength of his natural constitution, but discern that the eternal God was the support of his faith? We might have dreamed that the successful warrior was something different from other men—but when he is brought low we discern clearly that it was distinguishing Grace rather than a distinguished man which is to be seen and wondered at. The man was but an earthen vessel in which God had put His precious treasure, and He makes the earthiness of the vessel manifest that all men may see that the excellency of the power is not of us, but of God!

There is, perhaps, another reason why God permits His people to sink for a time into deep depression, and that is to make Heaven sweeter when they enter its pearly gates. There must be some shades in the picture to bring out the beauty of the lights. Could we be so supremely blessed in Heaven if we had not known the curse of sin and the sorrow of earth? Rest, rest, rest! In whose ear does that sound most sweet? Not in the ears of the loiterers who scorn all knowledge of the word “toil,” but in the ears of those who are exhausted and fatigued by the labors of the day!

Peace! Is there a man in England who knows the blessedness of that word, “peace”? Yes, there are some. The soldier knows it. He has heard the whiz of the bullet. He has seen the smoke of the battle and the garment stained with blood. And his heart has been stirred by the din, and the shrieks, and the death of the field of fight. To him, peace is a peerless gift. Who will know the peace of Heaven but those who have experienced the warfare of earth and have endured conflicts with sin and the Prince of the power of the air?

Beloved, there must be the foil of sorrow to bring out the bright sparkling of the diamond of Glory. The happiest moments of mere physical pleasure I can remember have been just after a long illness, or some acute pain. When pain is lulled to sleep, how happy one is! I saw a Brother the other day affected by the most painful of all bodily complaints. He was telling me of the sufferings he had endured, and he said, “I am so happy now it is all over.” And I suppose, my Beloved, that Heaven will derive some of its excess of delights—its overflowing joy—from the contrast with the pain and misery and conflict and suffering which we have had to pass through here below.

There will be something better to talk about than troubles in Heaven, but the recollection of them may afford a flavor to our happiness which it would have lacked without it. We shall, I doubt not, “with transporting joys, recount the labors of our feet.”

3. These are some of the reasons why God permits His people to sink, for awhile, in the deep mire where there is no standing. But the question is raised, “Are these men who are thus tossed about by doubts and vexed with the great depravity of their hearts, truly, at that time, God’s people?” Certainly they are! If they were not God’s people the pain of the temptation which they endure could not have reached them. This spot is the spot of God’s children and none others are marked with it.

The man who lives in sin as his element never feels the weight of it. A fish may be deep in the sea with thousands of tons of water rolling over his head, but it does not feel the load. But if a man has only a bucketful of water to carry upon his head, he feels the weight of it and rejoices to lose his burden. The sinner whose element is sin laughs at the weight by which a Believer is borne down. Conflicts and pains such as I have been speaking of are not possible to those destitute of spiritual life. Spiritual life is the first requisite for spiritual grief and spiritual contrition. Depend upon it, Beloved, that those who suffer as I have described are the children of God, for they show it.

They show it by the way in which they bear their trials. In their worst times there is always a clear distinction which marks them as separate from other men. If they cannot shout, “victory!” they bear patiently. If they cannot sing unto God with their mouth, yet their hearts bless Him. There is a degree of light even in their worst darkness—it never becomes Egyptian darkness—some one star, at least, gilds the gloom. In the blackest night there is still a candle somewhere or other for the Lord’s chosen.

If they get into the mire, they do not perish there. They cry for help when their woes surround them and in the very nick of time, when everything appears to be lost, their heavenly Father hastens to their aid. It is well known to the students of Christian biography that the most eminent of God’s saints have had to pass through trials similar to those which we have been describing. Luther was a man of the strongest faith—and yet at times of the faintest hope. He was and he was not, a firm Believer. His faith never wavered as to the truth of the cause which he advocated, but his faith as to his own interest in Christ, seldom, if ever, amounted to full assurance.

The force of his faith spent itself in carrying on with fearful vigor the war against antichrist and error of all shapes. He believed the Truth of God and held right manfully justification by faith. But he was at times very doubtful as to whether he, himself, was justified in Christ Jesus. He believed in salvation by the precious blood of Christ. But, especially at the last, it became a very serious matter with him as to whether he had ever been washed in that precious blood. Roman Catholic biographers—who, of course, if they can, will slander him—say that he had doubts as to everything which he preached and that at the last he found his faith was not in accordance with truth.

Not so! No man stuck to his testimony with more tenacity than the great Reformer! But yet I marvel not that they should say so. He never doubted the truth of the things which he preached, but he did doubt his own interest in them frequently. And when he came to die, his testimony, though amply sufficient, was nothing like so brilliant as that of many a poor old woman who has died in a humble cottage, resting upon Jesus.

The poor peasant who knew no more than her Bible was true, was utterly unknown to the Vatican and Fame’s trumpet will never resound her name—but yet she entered into eternal peace with far louder shouting of joy than Martin Luther, who shook the world with his thundering valor! “Here lies he that never feared the face of man,” is a most proper epitaph for John Knox. And yet at the last, for some hours, he passed through fearful temptation. And what do you suppose it was? The temptation of self-righteousness! The devil could not charge him with sin, for Knox’s life had been so straightforward and honest that no man could impugn his motives or deny his Christianity.

And, therefore, the devil came to him in another and more crafty way. He whispered, “John Knox, you have deserved well of your Master! You will get to Heaven well enough through your own merits.” It was as hard a struggle as the lion-hearted soldier of the Cross had ever encountered—to hold to his simple faith in Jesus Christ in his hour of peril. Now no Christian man denies that Luther and Knox were men of faith. And yet they were men who had to pray, “Deliver me out of the mire.”

I know as I look around on this congregation that some of you can heartily sympathize in the Truth before us. But if there are no others here who can, I can, by God’s Grace, most thoroughly say, “I know whom I have believed. And I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.” But I know, also, that the Christian life is one of stern conflict and battle. And though we do rejoice in the Lord always, yet there are times when it is as hard a work as we can possibly do. No, harder work than we can accomplish without the help of the Eternal Spirit—to keep our faith alive at all—for our souls are brought almost to death’s door.

I wished to enlarge on this matter for the comfort of those who are tossed to and fro by doubts and fears. I have been attempting to describe the case of those who, for the greater part of their lives have lived in the shade and seen but little of the light of God’s Countenance. O may the sun shine on them yet with cheering rays!

II. I turn very briefly to the second point—WHEN BELIEVERS ARE IN SUCH A STATE, THEY KNOW EXPERIMENTALLY THAT NO ONE CAN DELIVER THEM BUT THEIR GOD. The Word of God itself, if not laid home by the Divine Spirit, cannot help them. You may possibly be in such a condition that every promise scowls at you as though it were transformed into a threat. When you turn over the pages of the Book once so full of comfort to you it seems withered into a howling wilderness.

Even those promises which you have been accustomed to offer to others in their time of need appear to shut their doors against you. “No admittance here,” says one promise. Unbelief puts its burning finger right across another. Past sin accuses you and cries, “You cannot claim this Word, for your transgression has forfeited it.” So you may look through the whole Bible and find nothing upon which your souls may rest. You have noticed strong posts by the sides of rivers to which ships may be safely moored. To get the rope fairly round one of the promises of God will yield good enough moorings for a Christian—but there are times when we have great difficulty in getting the rope round so as to hold fast.

The fault is not in the promise but in us. At such seasons the preaching of the Gospel is apparently without power. You say to yourselves, “I do not know how it is, but I do not profit by the ministry as I once did. It used to make me leap for joy when I heard of the precious things of God. But I come away uncomforted from that table which once furnished me a feast of consolation.” It is not the fault of the minister—he still, as a good steward, brings forth things new and old. It is not the fault of the Word—it is still milk for babes and strong meat for full-grown men—but you painfully feel that

 you are changed. You lament in words like these, “I go where others go and find no comfort there.”

This is a case in which the Holy Spirit must Himself exercise His comforting office. It is only by the effectual application of the Word to your heart by the Holy Spirit that you can be brought out of this deep mire. At such times other Believers cannot aid you. Those about you can prove to you how foolish it is to be in such a state and you can even see your folly for yourself—yet you lie there helpless to lift hand or foot. They tell you of the faithfulness of God. They remind you of the glorious future and point to the land beyond the skies—but you only sigh, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove that I might fly away and be at rest, for there is no rest for me beneath the sky.”

Human sympathy is at a nonplus and all we can do is to weep with you, for we cannot dry your tears. Why does our gracious God permit this? Perhaps it is because you have been living without Him and now He is going to take away everything upon which you have been in the habit of depending. Another reason may be that He wishes to drive you to Himself. Oh, it is a blessed thing to live in the fountainhead! While our skin bottles are full, we are content like Hagar and Ishmael to go into the wilderness. But when those are dry, nothing will serve us but, “You God see me.”

We must then come to the well. We are like the prodigal. We love the swine troughs and forget our father’s house. Remember, we can make swine troughs and husks even out of the forms of religion. Do not misunderstand me. They are blessed things, but we may put them in God’s place and then they are of no value. Anything becomes an idol when it keeps us away from God! Even the bronze serpent is to be despised as Nehustan, a mere piece of brass, if I worship it instead of God.

The prodigal was never safer than when he was driven to his father’s bosom, because he could find sustenance nowhere else. And, Brothers and Sisters, I think our Lord favors us with a famine in the land that it may make us seek after the Savior more. The best position for a Christian is living wholly and directly on God’s Grace. The best position is still to be where he was at first, “Having nothing and yet possessing all things.” Not building a wooden house on the rock, piling it higher and higher with our own wood, and then getting up to the top and saying, “How high I am!” but having no wood at all—just keeping down on the bare, solid rock—this is wisdom!

When the wind comes and the storm blows, we shall see that the structures which we build will give way and fall to our own damage. But if we stand on the Rock which never shakes, we cannot suffer loss. I pray God that you and I may never get beyond the fountain filled with blood. Stand there, Brothers and Sisters, and be happy! Sinners blood-washed, sinners pleading, sinners accepted, we pray to always feel ourselves to be. Never for a moment think that our standing is in our sanctification, our mortification, our graces, or our feelings—but know that because Christ on Calvary offered a full, free, efficacious Atonement forever—one that believes on Him is, therefore, saved.

We are complete in Him, having nothing of our own to trust, but resting upon the merits of Him whose passion and whose life furnish for us the only sure ground of confidence. Beloved, when we are brought to this, then it is that God comes to help us. We are sure in our poverty to turn to Him afresh with new earnestness. Infants, when they are among strangers, are pleased with little toys and amusements. But when they become hungry, nothing will do for them but their mother’s breast. So it is with a child of God—he may for a time be satisfied and find pleasure in the things of this world—but he only finds lasting and sure happiness in being embraced in his Father’s arms.

When the boys walk out with us in fair weather they will run in front of us ever so far, but as soon as they see any danger in the way they quickly return to father’s side. So when everything goes well with us we frequently run a long way from God, but as soon as we are overtaken by trouble, or see a lion in the way, we fly to our heavenly Father. I bless God for the mire and for my sinking in it, when it makes me cry out, “Deliver me, oh my God, out of the deep mire and let me not sink.”

III. In the last place our text shows us that PRAYER IS THE NEVERFAILING RESORT OF THE CHRISTIAN in any case and in every plight. When you cannot use your sword you may take to the weapon of allprayer. Your powder may be damp. Your bowstring may be relaxed and your sword may be rusty. Your spear may be bent—but the weapon of allprayer is never out of order! Men have to sharpen the sword and the spear, but prayer never rusts. There is this blessed thing about prayer—it is a door which none can shut.

Devils may surround you on all sides but there is always one way open, and as long as that road is unobstructed you will not fall into the enemy’s hands. We can never be taken by blockade, escalade, mine or storm so long as heavenly succor can come down to us by Jacob’s ladder to relieve us in the times of our need. Prayer is never forbidden. Remember, Christian, it is never wrong for you to pray, for the gates of Heaven are open day and night. Your prayer is heard in Heaven in the dead of the night, in the midst of your business, in the heat of noonday, or in the shades of evening. You can be in poverty, sickness, obscurity, slander, doubt, or even sin—but it is still true that your God will welcome your prayer at any time and in every place.

Again, prayer is never futile. True prayer is forevermore true power. You may not always get what you ask for, but you shall always have your real needs supplied. When God does not answer His children according to the letter, He does so according to the spirit. If you ask for silver will you be angered because He gives you gold? If you seek bodily health, should you complain, if instead, He makes your sickness turn to the healing of spiritual maladies? Is it not better to have the cross sanctified than to have the cross removed? Was not the Apostle more enriched when God suffered him still to endure the thorn in the flesh and yet said to him, “My strength is sufficient for you”? Better to have all-sufficient Grace than to have the thorn taken away.

What is your condition my Brother, my Sister? Let me entreat you not to cease from prayer. There may be spiritual life in you and yet the devil may tempt you to say, “I cannot pray.” But you can pray! You do pray! You must pray! If you have spiritual life, although you can scarcely bend your knees and are almost afraid to utter words once dear to you, yet your soul desires, pants, hungers, thirsts—and that is the essential of prayer— that is the very marrow and essence of prayer.

Sobs and looks are prayers. And though you say you cannot pray, you must pray. You cannot help praying if you are a Christian. “I cannot breathe”—that might be true in a certain sense—I cannot, perhaps, breathe under an asthmatic affection without great difficulty and much pain. But I must breathe if I live! And so with you. You must breathe if you live. And you do pray, must pray if you are truly a child of God. At any rate, I pray by the power of God, the Holy Spirit, you may break through those evils, those nets of the devil which hold you in bondage and begin with your whole soul to pray. Never mind what form your prayer takes, but pray.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, everything depends now upon your prayer. If Satan can stop your prayer, he has stripped you of your last resort, your last hope! He will take you by storm if you leave off praying. Pray! If it costs you your life, pray! Go not to your ease and take not your rest until you have prayed. Give no sleep to your eyes till you have prayed. Slumber not until you have had dealings with God in prayer. Not pray?

Are you willing to be damned? Not pray? Are you willing to make your bed in Hell? Not pray? Shall devils be your companions? Shall Heaven’s gate be shut against you?

Not pray? Why, my Brothers and Sisters, you must pray now! Oh, send up the prayer from the very bottom of your heart—“O God, deliver me out of the deep mire and let me not sink. Save me, oh, my God! God be merciful to me a sinner.” May God the Holy Spirit sweetly compel you to pray! May He incline, guide, direct and instruct you how to pray, that this very night you may offer up a prayer which God in His great goodness will hear and answer!

Pray—“Lord, my soul is besieged. I am shut up by my sins. Oh, God, raise the siege and deliver me from the enemy. Lord, help me with Your almighty arm. Make my extremity Your opportunity. I am a foul beggar sitting on a dunghill. Lord, come and lift me up and put me among the princes and I will praise Your name forever and ever.” May the blessed virgin’s song be yours. “He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the humble and meek. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent away empty.”

And may you find in the goodness, and mercy, and loving kindness of God a speedy deliverance out of the deep mire, that you may not sink! May God give a blessing to these words to your comfort! I know some of you will say, “I am not in such a state.” Thank God that you are not! Be grateful for your mercies lest you lose them. Be thankful for your full assurance and your comfortable hope lest those favors should become dim, like dying tapers and waning moons. Rejoice now, oh Christian, as the young man does in his youth and let your heart cheer you in your youthful joy!

But remember, if you are not careful how you walk in these flowery paths. If you become too confident in your own strength or goodness, God will bring you down and make you cry out as sharply and as sorrowfully as David—“Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.”

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GOD’S KNOWLEDGE OF SIN

NO. 2551

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JANUARY 9, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 19, 1884.

**“O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.” Psalm 69:5.**

IT seems, then, that the best of men have a measure of foolishness in them and that, sometimes, that foolishness shows itself. How gentle and tender ought we to be with others who are foolish when we remember how foolish we are, ourselves! How sincerely ought we to rejoice in Christ, as made of God unto us wisdom, when we see the folly that is bound up in our hearts and which too often shows itself in our talk and in our acts! Yet while the best of men have folly in them, it is one of the marks of a good man that he knows it to be folly and that he is willing to confess his sin before God. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” If we stand as the Pharisee stood in the Temple and cry, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are,” we shall go home, as the Pharisee did, without the justification which comes from God. It is the truly good man who stands afar off with the publican and cries, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner,” and he, also, shall go to his house “justified rather than the other.”

There is one solemn thought which deeply impresses the man who is right at heart, but who sees his own foolishness and sin and mourns it— and that thought is that God sees it—and sees it more perfectly than he sees it, himself. His own sight of it makes him repent and humble himself. And his knowledge of God’s sight of it helps him to that repentance and humiliation. God sees everything concerning every man, but the most of men care not about God seeing them. They do not give it so much as a passing thought. It is the gracious man, the child of God who, from a broken heart, cries out, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.” And this it is that makes a Christian man so greatly value the precious blood of Christ and the perfect righteousness which Jesus Christ has worked out, albeit that Omniscience still perceives sin, yet Justice does not perceive it.

God knows we are sinners, but He imputes to all Believers the righteousness of Christ and looks upon them as they are in Him. He cleanses us in the precious blood of Jesus so that we are clean in His sight and, “accepted in the Beloved.” What a wonderful Atonement is that which hides from God that which cannot be hidden, so that God does not see what, in another sense, He must always see—and forgets what it is impossible for Him, in another sense, ever to forget! In a just and judicial way, God casts our sin behind His back and ceases to see iniquity in His people because they are clean, every whit, through washing in the—

*“Fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.”*

Now, looking at our text, I am going to call attention to the great Truth of the Omniscience of God, desiring that each one of us may say from our heart, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.”

I. First, concerning God’s knowledge of man’s sin, I remark that IT MUST BE SO. I am not going to argue, but just to talk a little to set this Truth of God before you with greater assurance of certainty.

God must know our foolishness, for, first, He is infinite in knowledge. We cannot conceive of a God whose knowledge is limited. That condition belongs to the finite, the creature, but not to the Infinite, the Creator, the great First Cause of everything! God knows all the past, all the present and all the future. He knows all the things that might have been and are not. He knows what might have come out of certain germs and what yet may come, which at the present seems to be far remote. All knowable things must be known to the Most High—the very Nature of God implies it and, therefore, He must know my foolishness, for I know something of it myself—He must know much more than I know and my sins are not hid from him, for they are not altogether hidden from myself. God must know perfectly what I only perceive in part, though that partial perception is terrible to my own heart. Yes, the infinite knowledge of God is an absolute certainty and, consequently, His knowledge of the folly and sin of every heart is beyond all question.

Moreover, God is everywhere present. At all times, He is in every place and, therefore, our foolishness and sin must be known to Him. It is not merely that you committed a folly or a sin and that it was reported to God. No, but He was there during the doing of it. What? Though the blinds were drawn and the doors were fast closed? Yet HE was there and all through the sin He stood by you and observed your every thought and every movement! There is no darkness that hides from Him, nor any other form of screen that can be used to shut out the glances of the eyes of the Eternal. He does not see from a distance, but He is on the spot. You cannot conceive of a place where God is not, for He fills all space! There could no more be a boundary to His existence than to His knowledge and, therefore, we are sure that our text is true, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from You.”

Moreover, God is also everywhere perceiving. He is never a blind God, nor a blindfolded God. His knowledge is never, even for a moment, stopped and rendered intermittent, but, as His Presence is on the highest hill and in the deepest cavern, far away on the wild sea or in the plain where the foot of man has scarcely made a track, so, in that Presence there is a constant sight, an unfailing observation at all times. You would not, I hope, reduce God to the level of One who has eyes and sees not! “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” The fact that eyesight and hearing come from Him proves how abundantly He possesses those faculties, Himself. He sees and He hears in every place and there was never anything done of man without His knowledge. The secret murder, the silent plot where everybody had sworn an oath of secrecy—all was known to God. There was never a thought in a human mind, although the man had not uttered it in words even to himself, but what the Lord perceived it. Does not this make the fact certain that He knows my foolishness and that my sins are not hidden from Him? Infinite in knowledge, everywhere present, and everywhere perceiving everything, He must know my foolishness and my sin. Dr. Watts forcibly expresses this idea in his hymn on God’s Omnipresence—

**“In all my vast concerns with You,  
In vain my soul would try  
To shun Your Presence, Lord, or flee  
The notice of Your eyes.  
Your all-surrounding sight surveys  
My rising and my rest.  
My public walks, my private ways,  
And secrets of my breast.  
If winged with beams of morning light,  
I fly beyond the west.  
Your hand, which must support my flight, Would soon betray my rest.  
If over my sins I think to draw  
The curtains of the night.  
Those flaming eyes that guard Your Law Would turn the shades to light.  
The beams of noon, the midnight hour,  
Are both alike to Thee—  
Oh, may I never provoke that power  
From which I cannot flee!**”

Beside that, God is always reading the heart. We have heard a good deal about thought-reading. I hope that the most of you will never be gifted in that direction, for such a power would make it very unpleasant for many. One said that he wished that he had a window in his bosom, that everybody might read his thoughts. I think that if he were at all a sensible man, he would need to pull the blind down before long! There is something which, now and again, crosses the purest mind which he would not wish another to perceive—and he who watches his thoughts with an exemplary vigilance will sometimes be off his guard and tolerate an imagination which he would not wish to pollute any other person’s mind. But though we cannot read each other’s hearts, God can read them. There is no possibility of lying to the Lord so as to deceive Him. He reads the hypocrite when he puts on his fine vestments and prays his prayer in the most devout style—and even when he gets into his closet and bows before his God only after a formal manner. We may have performed what looked like a holy deed. We may have sung a solemn Psalm. We may have appeared unto our fellow men to be among the excellent of the earth, but if it is not really so, no one can hide himself in secret, or conceal the deceit of his spirit in the dark place from the eyes of the Most High.

Though you should climb to the top of Carmel in the pride of your heart, or go down with Jonah to the bottoms of the mountains in your deceit, yet shall He find you out, strip you, unmask you and set you in the sunlight to be despised of men and all intelligent beings, as they, also, shall see your lies. O Beloved, God must have seen my foolishness! And my sins cannot be hid from Him since He reads the secrets of the heart and the tortuous passages of the soul are easily threaded by His unerring wisdom!

We are sure, also, that He knows our foolishness and our sin because He knows what is yet to be. To know what men have already done is a light matter compared with knowing what men will yet do. There are black crimes which are recorded by Moses in Scripture which Moses never could have known if God had not first seen them and then communicated the knowledge of them to him. There are many incidents mentioned in the Pentateuch which could only have come to the knowledge of Moses through the Revelation of the Spirit of God and, therefore, God Himself knew all about those events. But, throughout the prophecies there are intimations of the sins of men that would yet be committed and, more especially, that sin of sins—the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ—that crime of crimes is described in all its dreadful details!

Now, if God saw all that and recorded it by the agency of His servants centuries before it happened, there can be no hope that anything which has ever occurred has escaped the observation of the Most High! You are all books and every page is open to the eyes of the great Reader who reads you from the first letter to the last! There is nothing which any man can possibly conceal from God. Men love what they call, secrets, yet there are no such things in very truth where God is concerned, for He observes everything! It matters not what it may be—minute or majestic, malevolent or benevolent, a curse or a blessing—it all passes before that eye which never wearies or sleeps, or suffers anything to escape its notice! It is so, it must be so if God is God—He knows my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Him.

II. Now let us just turn the current of our thought while I ask, concerning God’s knowledge of man’s sin, AFTER WHAT FASHION IS IT? If God knows, in what particular way does He know?

The answer is, that it is complete knowledge. The Lord knows us altogether. I must confess that I cower down beneath that thought. That the Lord should know my public service is sufficiently awe-striking—but that He should know my private thoughts—ah, this sinks me into the very dust! The Lord knows not only the action, but the motive of the action— all the thoughts that went with my action, all the pride and self-seeking that came after it—and spoiled it when it might have been praiseworthy. “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord ponders the hearts.” The word, “ponders,” means that He weighs us, He takes the specific gravity of our actions. They may cover a great surface, yet there may be no real substance in them at all—but the Lord weighs them as goldsmiths weigh the metal that is subjected to their test. He takes care not to be deceived by anything that is apparent to our fellow men. “The fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold: but the Lord tries the hearts.” There is nothing hidden from God’s eyes—every separate part of us is open to His perpetual inspection! Think of that. God’s knowledge is complete and baffles all evasion.

It is also the knowledge of a holy Being. You, perhaps, know some people who see all they can, yet do not see all that can be seen. It is with them as it was with the lady who said to Turner, as she looked upon one of his notable paintings, “Mr. Turner, I have never seen anything like that.” “No,” replied the artist, “I don’t suppose that you have seen it. Don’t you wish that you could?” So, when God looks at a man’s life, He sees infinitely more in it than the man ever saw in it, himself, or than all his fellow creatures have seen. The keen eyes of envy and of malice will detect a fault, if fault there is, but keener is the eye of perfect holiness! The Lord’s eyes are as a flame of fire. Being, Himself, essential Truth, He truly discovers everything that is within us and makes no mistakes. When we are dealing with God, mistakes on His part are quite out of the question. He knows us after the manner of a perfectly holy Being and many a thing that looked white to us, is absolutely black to God! His eyes can see according to the clear white light of Heaven, but you and I can only see in some single ray of faint light—we see not as God sees. We shall, one day, be holy as He is holy, and we shall then look upon the affairs of this life in a strangely different light from that in which we look upon them now. And when once we get to Heaven, we shall realize how foolish we were to form the judgments that we did while we were here. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as, also, I am known.” Think of this, dear Friends—the eyes that see you are the eyes of a perfectly holy God who, therefore, more readily discovers your shortcomings and your sins than all the eyes of men could do!

Reflect, again, that God knows us with an abiding knowledge. It is a great mercy that time brings with it relief of our sorrows by the oblivion in which it steeps us. You lost your mother and you could not have lived a month suffering the pangs that you felt in the moment that you realized your loss. All your losses are the same as they were when they first befell you, but they do not eat into your spirit with that terrible force which was in them at the onset, for time has taken off their edge. It is so with sin—the first time that the youth told a lie, he could not sleep—but that first time was 40 years ago and he is almost sorry that I have brought it to his recollection! After a while, time covers up the remembrance of sin and we think that God has covered it up, too, but every sin, even of 50 years ago, is present to God’s eyes just as if you were committing it at this moment! And your whole life does not stand out to Him as the dim past and the bright present—it is all present to Him. As when a man looks on a map and the whole of the country is before him, so does God look down upon our life as it is spread out for His inspection—He sees it all at once. Up from the graves of forgetfulness where you have buried them, your sins perpetually rise and confront the Judgment Seat of God. Think seriously of this matter, for it is after this manner that God knows our foolishness and that our sins are not hid from Him.

The Lord has an eternal knowledge of our sins. He will never forget them. If they are not washed away by the blood of Christ, He can never forget or cease to be angry because of them! He has written the record of man’s sin in a book—He means it, therefore, to abide. He says, “Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures?” It is as if He had put men’s sin by, to be called as a damning witness against them in that Great Day when every action and word and thought shall pass before the Judgment Seat. I do not know how this thought makes you feel, but it makes me tremble while I speak of it!

For, further, all our sins are known to Him who is to be our Judge. There will be no need of witnesses in that last dread day, for the Judge knows all about us! There will be no need to call this one and that to bear testimony as to our sin, for the Judge saw it, heard it and He has never forgotten it, nor does His memory fail Him as to any of the details. He will flash that eternal light of His into the conscience of the criminal and write upon the tablet of his heart the revived memory of all that he had forgotten—and there cannot be a more terrible Hell for a man than to be in the grasp of his memory and of his conscience in the Last Great Day. Yet so it will be and I beg each unconverted man, woman and child to recollect that his foolishness and his sin are known to Him to whom he must give an account at the Day of Judgment.

One thought more might, perhaps, tend to impress some who have not yet felt the force of this Truth of God, and that is that this knowledge will be published. If God knows about our sin, it is tantamount to everybody knowing about it. “Oh,” says someone, “I trust it will not be so! I hope that nobody knows of that dark deed of mine.” I tell you, Sir, everybody shall know of it, “for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.” There shall come a day, the Day for which all other days were made, when the books shall be opened and every man shall give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil and, further, our Savior said, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.” Can we bear to have it all known? Yet known it shall be, written as across the sky, when those we have deceived and deluded shall discover what we were—and we shall wake up to everlasting shame and contempt unless we find shelter in the atoning Sacrifice and are washed in the precious blood of Christ! If I could speak of these Truths of God as I ought to speak of them, they would move your hearts. I pray God that they may.

III. And now, thirdly, WHAT THEN? If God sees everything and sees it in the fashion I have tried to describe, what then?  
Why, first, how frivolous must those be who never think about it! A man is about to commit a crime, but his child is present, so he hesitates, or somebody looks in the window and he cannot do the wrong he intended. How is it that men will tremble under the eyes of a child and almost at the presence of a dog—and yet God’s Presence is nothing at all to them? A man, about to steal, had taken his child with him to help him secure the booty. He looked all round and said, “There is nobody here, Boy.” But the lad said, “Father, there is one way you did not look—you did not look up—God can see you.” Just so. Men do not look up and if you tell them that God sees them, of what account is He to them? This is practical atheism, yet men say that they would not have crucified Christ. Sirs, as far as you can, you kill God, for you put Him out of your thoughts! You make nothing of Him and what is that but the Crucifixion of God? You despise Him so much that His Presence has no effect upon you, though the presence of any mortal man would have stopped you from your sin!  
Next, dear Brothers and Sisters, what care this ought to work in us! How diligently we ought to do our work for God! How earnestly we ought to pray when we know that we always have the great Taskmaster’s eyes upon us! Or, better still, that dear eye that looked in pity upon us when we were lost and ruined! The eyes of the Well-Beloved, who gave Himself for us, are always fixed upon us. “Fight, my children,” said a Highland chieftain, “fight and conquer, for your chieftain, though he lies here bleeding, has his eyes upon you.” And they fought like tigers under their leader’s eye and thus should Christians fight against sin when the eyes of the beloved Captain who died for them is always upon them! There must be no sleeping, there must be no “scamping” of our work, as bad workmen do when the master is away. It must be gold, silver and precious stones that we build with—and every stone must be well laid upon the one great Foundation. Everything must be done at the very best because God sees it. You know how the heathen sculptor put it—he was working with his chisel and hammer upon the back part of a statue of which only the front was to be seen. The back part was to be built into the wall, so someone said to him, “Why are you toiling so elaborately at that which will be hidden in the wall?” He answered, “The gods can see inside the wall.” The heathen gods could not see, but our God can and, therefore, the secret part of one’s life is, perhaps, the most important part of it! That which is never meant for the eyes of man, but wholly for the eyes of God, ought to have a double care exercised in the perfecting of it, that His eyes may rest upon it with a sacred complacency, according to His abounding Grace and mercy.

And what holy trembling this ought to put within us! It is often a joy to think that God knows everything. It was a true comfort to Peter when he could say, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” It is a great joy, when you are slandered and misrepresented, to be able to say, “Well, God knows the way that I take. And when He has tried me, He will bring me forth as gold. My true record is on high, so I need not fear what the record below may be.” That is a very delightful thought! At the same time, can any among you look forward to that Last Great Day without some trembling? Does it not take all your faith in the atoning blood and in the Divine Substitute to gird up your loins that you may face that Day without fear? Yes, and even that you may now live in the full conviction that your life is all known to God?  
Just let us think for a minute or two more about this subject and then I will close. The Lord knows all about us, so that He knows our omissions. I do not know any subject that so much depresses me, humbles me and lays me in the dust as the thought of my omissions. It is not what I have done about which I think so much as of what I have not done. “You have been very useful,” says one. “Yes, but might I not have been 10 times more useful?” “You have been very diligent,” says another. “Yes, but might I not, somehow, have been more diligent? Might I not have done my work in a better spirit? If I had been better, would not my work have been better? If I had borrowed more of my Master’s strength, which I might have had, might I not have accomplished much more?” Do you ever feel satisfied with yourself? If so, I would advise you to fling that satisfaction out of the window, as Jehu said of the painted Jezebel, “Throw her down!” A sense of satisfaction with yourself will be the death of your progress and it will prevent your sanctification. Many a man might have been sanctified if he had not thought that he was already sanctified. By that thought he clutched the shadow and so he lost the substance! Mind that such a thing as that does not happen to you.  
Our Lord knows all the faults of our holy things—the coldness of our prayers, the wandering of our thoughts, the scantiness of our alms-giving and the hardness of our hearts—so that they do not go in generous tenderness with the gift we feel bound to bestow. Our sermons, our Bible reading, our Sunday school teaching—the Lord sees the faults of them— while our friends often see the excellences of them. I have had many abusive letters at different periods of my life, but specially in the early part of my career in London I think that I had as much abuse as ever fell to the lot of anybody. But, as I read letter after letter, I said to myself, “O foolish writers, if you knew me better, you could say sharper things than these—that would sting me much more—but, happily, you have never been able to lay your hands on the truth. You have had to tell a lie in order to abuse me and that does not hurt me a bit. If you had known me as God does, you might have had something to say which would have caused me great sorrow.” If men could read the secrets of your soul, sincere though you have tried to be, they would see such failures, slips and errors that you would not dare to set your holiest things in the light of day—yet the Lord knows the sins—even of your holy things.  
Then the Lord also knows our lies. That is a very tender point. “We do not lie,” we say, but is there any man among us who is perfectly true? When you prayed, did you not say a little more than you had ever attained in your own experience? Or you were talking about yourself and you wished to be very sincere and truthful, but you put just a touch of color into the picture, did you not? At least you painted yourself with your finger over your scars—there are not many like Oliver Cromwell, who said, “If you make a portrait of me, paint me as I am, warts and all.” You may do that with the warts on your forehead, but I question whether you would like the warts on your character to be seen. “I hate flattery,” says one. Why, you are flattering yourself all the while that you are saying that! “But,” says one, “I feel that I am humble.” Do you? Then I guess that you are not really so, for he who is humble still laments his pride and thus shows his humility better than in any other way. But, whatever we are, God sees all our lies and there is nothing hidden from Him.  
Lastly, the Lord knows—and this is the best thing that He knows about us—He knows, concerning some of us, that we are clinging to Christ alone! Unless I am utterly deceived, I can truthfully say to the Lord Jesus Christ—  
*“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on You.”*  
Can you say the same, dear Friend? If you can, take heart. Do not be afraid of God knowing all, but rather say, as we read a little while ago, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Pray with David, “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Come and cast yourself upon the Omniscience of God, desiring to be cleansed—spirit, soul and body—and made meet to enter where the redeemed and glorified Church adores the Lord forever without fault before His Throne!  
God bless this searching message to every one of you for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. G. SPURGEON: **PSALM 139.**

1 *.*O LORD, You have searched me, and known me. God does not need to “search” us, for that implies a lack of knowledge, a knowledge obtained by search. But the meaning of the text is that God knows us as well as if He had examined us through and through, just as an excise officer searches a house to find contraband goods. “O Lord, You have searched me, and known me.”

2 *.*You know my sitting down, and my rising up. “Such commonplace things as these, my sitting down at home, my rising up to go to my business, You, O Lord, observe and know even such minor matters as these.”

2 *.*You understand my thoughts afar off. “Before the thought has entered my mind, You know what it will be. When I run far away from You in my own apprehension, You are still so near to me that You can hear my mind think and You know the meaning of my thoughts when I try to think crookedly.”

3 *.*You compass my path and my lying down, “You surround me when I go out, or when I rest at home; when I labor, or when I sleep. You set a fence around about my every action and my non-action, too.”

3 *.*And are acquainted with all my ways. “You know all that I do, as One that is most intimate and familiar with me. You, great God, ‘are acquainted with all my ways.’”

4 *.*For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether. “Not only the words of my tongue, but the words on my tongue, are known to You, O Lord.” As we sang just now—

*“My thoughts, before they are my own,  
Are to my God distinctly known!  
He knows the words I mean to speak,  
Ere from my opening lips they break.”*

5 *.*You have beset me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. “I am taken as in an ambush: I am held captive; I cannot get away. ‘You have beset me behind and before’—more than that, You have arrested me, ‘laid Your hand upon me.’”

6 *.*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. “You have it, but I cannot reach it. You have it, but, ‘I cannot attain unto it.’”

7, 8. Where shall I go from Your spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, You are there. For so it runs in the Hebrew. The translators put in the word, “are,” as you can see by the italics. “If I ascend up into Heaven, you there”—that is all the Psalmist says.

8 *.*If I make my bed in Hell, behold, You. Again it is more emphatic without the words supplied by the translators. “You, O God, are in the depths as well as in the heights, You are everything in every place, You are All in All.”

9, 10. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me. “I cannot go anywhere except You enable me to go.”

10, 11. And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. “There is no escaping that way, for the night shall be transformed into light, and I shall be as clearly perceived in the darkness as in the daylight.”

12. Yes, the darkness hides not from You. “It hides from eyes which are but mortal, but You are pure Spirit and You discern not through the impinging of light upon the retina of the eye.”

12. But the night shines as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to You. Now the Psalmist goes back to the very foundation and origin of his being.

13. For You have possessed my reins. “You are within the secret portions of my bodily frame.”  
13, 14. You have covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Therefore Galen, the oldest and the best-known of the ancient surgeons, was known to say that an undevout anatomist must be mad, as another said that an undevout astronomer was mad, for there is such a marvelous display of skill and wisdom, delicacy and force in the making of a man, that we may, each one, say, “I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”  
14-16. Marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows right well. My substance was not hid from You, when I was made in secret, and curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect and in Your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Still he dwells upon his birth and all that went before it—and he did well to speak of those marvels. We are too apt to forget God’s goodness to us in our infant days, but we should remember that we come not into this world without a Creator and in that Creator we find a Friend, the best we have ever had, the best we can ever have! Oh, for Grace never to wish to stray away from Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being!

17. How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! How often God has thought of each one of us! Remember that if you were the only man in all the world, He would not think more of you than He does now that you are only one of myriads of myriads! The infinite mind of God is not divided by the multiplicity of the objects brought before it, but His whole mind goes forth to contemplate each individual. What deep thoughts, what bright thoughts, what faithful thoughts God has had concerning us! “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”  
18. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with You. “Whether I sleep or wake, You are with me, but, better still, I am with You! Before I fell asleep, I put my soul into Your hands. And when I awoke, I found it there.”  
19. Surely You will slay the wicked, O God. It cannot be that God, who sees everything, will forever endure the wickedness of men. It cannot be that He will suffer all crime and villainy and blasphemy to escape with impunity! “Surely You will slay the wicked, O God.”

19. Depart from me therefore, you bloody men. “I do not want to be with you, or to have you with me, in the day when God metes out vengeance upon the ungodly.”

20-22. For they speak against You wickedly and Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD that hate You? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies. We are bound to love our enemies, but we are not bound to love God’s enemies. We are to wish them, as enemies, a complete overthrow, but to wish them, as men, a gracious conversion, that they may obtain God’s pardon and become His friends, followers and servants.

23. Search me, O God. Is it not amazing that what the Psalmist started with as a doctrine, now becomes a prayer? Before, he said, “O Lord, You have searched me, and known me.” Now he cries, “Search me, O God!

23. And know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. Every attribute of God works for the good of those who trust Him. If you are a Believer, you may ask for His infinite power to protect you and His infinite knowledge to search you.

24 *.*And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. May God first make that our prayer and then graciously hear it, for His great name’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—182, 190, 139 (SONG I).  
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OUR WATCHWORD  
NO. 1013

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 1, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Let such as love Your salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.” Psalm 70:4.**

THESE words occur at least three times in the book of Psalms and therefore we may regard them as especially important. When God speaks once, twice, thrice, He does, as it were, awaken us to peculiar attention, and call for prompt obedience to what He says. Let us not be deaf to the Divine voice, but let each one say, “Speak Lord, for Your servant hears.” You will observe that in this, and in the fortieth Psalm, this holy saying is put in opposition to the ungodly speeches of persecutors. The wicked say, “Aha, aha,” therefore let those who love God’s salvation have a common watchword with which to silence the malicious mockeries of the ungodly— let them say, “LET GOD BE MAGNIFIED.”

The earnestness of the wicked should be a stimulus to the fervency of the righteous. Surely if God’s enemies do not spare blasphemy and profanity—if they are always upon the watch to find reasons for casting reproach upon the name and Church of Christ—we ought to be more than equally vigilant and diligent in spreading abroad the knowledge of the Gospel which magnifies the name of the Lord. Would to God His Church were half as earnest as the synagogue of Satan! Oh that we had, in our holy cause, a tithe of the indefatigable spirit of those Scribes and Pharisees who compass sea and land to make one proselyte!

Even the Archfiend shames us by his preserving industry, for he goes up and down in the earth seeking whom he may destroy! The clause which we have selected for our text also follows immediately after another which may be looked upon as a steppingstone to it. Before we can love God’s salvation, we must be seekers of it. Therefore we read, “Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You.” There is a duty peculiar to seekers, let them see to it. And then there follows a further obligation peculiar to those who have found what they sought for. Let joy and rejoicing be first realized by the seeker through his receiving personally the Grace of God, and then let us go on a stage further.

The fresh convert has his business mainly within. It will be well for him if his heart can, in sincerity, be glad in the Lord. When Believers are young and feeble they are not fit for the battle. Therefore, let them tarry at home awhile, and under their vine and fig tree eat the sweet fruits of the Gospel, none making them afraid. We do not send our children to hard service. We wait till their limbs are developed and then appoint them their share in life’s labors. Let the newly called be carried like lambs in the Savior’s bosom, and borne as on eagles’ wings. “Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You.”

But when men have advanced beyond the earliest stage. When they are persuaded that Christ is theirs, and that they have been adopted into the family of God, then let them cheerfully accept active service. Let it not be now the main concern with them to possess a joyous experience on their own account, but let them studiously seek the good of their fellow creatures and the glory of God. Strong men have strength given them that they may bear burdens and perform labors—light is this burden and blessed is this labor. Let them “say continually, Let God be magnified.” I shall, therefore, hope that anything of earnest exhortation which shall be addressed to Believers at this time will come with double power to those of you who are advanced in the Divine life.

The more you know of God’s salvation the more you will love it, and the more you love it the more are you bound to recognize the sacred duty and privilege of saying continually, “Let God be magnified.” May each one of you here be willing to take up the obligation if you have enjoyed the benefit. It may simplify our discourse this morning if we arrange it under three heads. Here is, first, the character—“They that love Your salvation.” Here is second, the saying—“Let them say continually, Let God be magnified.” And here is, thirdly, the wish, the wish of the Psalmist and of the Psalmist’s Master, that all who answer to the character shall use the watchword, and say continually, “Let God be magnified.”

I. We will begin, then, by discriminating THE CHARACTER. The individuals here spoken of are those who love God’s salvation. Then it is implied that they are persons who are saved, because it is not according to nature to love a salvation in which we have no part. We may admire the salvation which is preached, but we shall only love the salvation which is experienced. We may hold orthodox views as to salvation though not ourselves saved. But we shall not have earnest affection towards it unless we are ourselves redeemed by it from the wrath to come.

Saved ones, then, are meant here, and we may add that they are so saved as to be assured of it, and consequently to feel the warm glow of ardent, grateful love. They love God’s salvation because they have grasped it. They possess it, they know they possess it, and, therefore, they prize it, and their hearts are wedded to it. Beloved, I hope that the large proportion of this congregation could say before the heart-searching God, “We are saved! We have come all guilty and heavy laden to the foot of the Cross. We have looked up. We have seen the flowing of the Savior’s precious blood. We have trusted in Him as our atoning Sacrifice, and by faith we have received full pardon through His precious blood.”

Happy people who have this blessing and know it! May no doubts ever becloud your sky! May you clearly read your titles to the mansions in the skies, written legibly and indelibly in the precious blood of Jesus Christ your Savior. You are the persons to whom we speak today. You know, and therefore love the salvation of God. But, more than this, to sustain and bring to perfection in the renewed heart an ardent affection towards the Divine salvation of a sort that will continue, and become practically fruitful, there must be an intelligent consideration, and an instructed apprehension as to the character of this salvation.

It is a great pity that so many professors have only a religion of feeling, and are quite unable to explain and justify their faith. They live by passion rather than by principle. Religion is in them a series of paroxysms, a succession of emotions. They were stirred up at a certain meeting, excited, and carried away. And let us hope they were really and sincerely converted—but they have failed to become to the fullest extent disciples or learners. They do not sit at Jesus’ feet. They are not Bereans who search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so—they are content with the mere rudiments, the simple elements—they are still little children and have need to be fed with milk, for they cannot digest the strong meat of the kingdom.

Such persons do not discern as many reasons for admiring and loving the salvation of God as the intelligent enlightened Spirit-taught Believer. I would to God that all of us, after we have received Christ, meditated much upon His blessed Person and the details of His work—and the various streams of blessings which leap forth from the central fountain of Calvary’s Sacrifice. All Scripture is profitable, but especially those Scriptures which concern our salvation. Some things lose by observation—they are most wondered at when least understood. But the Gospel gains by

 study—no man is ever wearied in meditating upon it, nor does he find his admiration diminished, but abundantly increased.

Blessed is he who studies the Gospel both day and night, and finds his heart’s delight in it. Such a man will have a steadier and more intense affection for it, in proportion as he perceives its excellence and surpassing glory. The man who receives the Gospel superficially and holds it as a matter of impression and little more, is quite unable to give a reason for the hope that is in him. He lacks that which would confirm and intensify his love.

Now, let me show you, Beloved, what it is in salvation that the thoughtful Believer loves. And I may begin by saying that he loves, best of all, the Savior Himself. Often our Lord is called Salvation, because He is the great Worker of it. He is the Author and Finisher, the Alpha and the Omega of it. He who has Christ has Salvation. And, as He is the essence of salvation, He is the center of the saved ones’ affection. Have you, Beloved, carefully considered that Jesus is Divine? That He counts it not robbery to be equal with God, being our Creator and Preserver, as well as our Redeemer?

Do you fully understand that our Lord is Infinite, Eternal, nothing less than God? And yet for our sakes He took upon Himself our nature, was clothed in that nature with all its infirmities, sin alone excepted, and in that nature agonized, bled, and died—the Just for the unjust—that He might bring us to God! Oh, marvel of marvels, miracle of miracles! The immortal Lord stoops to death! The Prince of Glory bows to be spit upon! Shame and dishonor could not make Him start back from His blessed purpose, but to the death of the Cross He surrendered Himself!

O, you who are saved, do you not love Christ, who is your Salvation? Do you not feel a burning desire to behold Him as He is? Is not His Presence, even now, a nether Heaven to you? Will not a face-to-face view of His glory be all the Heaven that your utmost stretch of imagination can conceive? I know it is so! Your heart is bound to Jesus, His name is set as a seal upon it! Therefore, I charge you to say continually, “Let God be magnified.” Glory be to the Father who gave His Son, to the Son who gave

Himself, to the Spirit who revealed all this to us!

Triune God, be You extolled forever and ever! But you love not only the Savior’s Person, for I am sure you delight in the plan of salvation. What is that plan? It is summed up in a single word—Substitution—

*“He bore, that we might never bear,  
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

Sin was not pardoned absolutely, else justice had been dishonored. But sin was transferred from the guilty to the Innocent One. “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” When our iniquity was found upon the innocent Lamb of God, He was “smitten of God and afflicted,” as if HE had been a sinner. He was made to suffer for transgressions not His own, as if they had been His own. And thus Mercy and Justice met together, Righteousness and Grace kissed each other.

Alas, there are many who fight against this plan! But I rejoice that I am surrounded by warm hearts who love it, and would die for it. As for me, I know no other Gospel, and let this tongue be dumb rather than it should ever preach any other. Substitution is the very marrow of the whole Bible, the soul of Salvation, the essence of the Gospel. We ought to saturate all our sermons with it, for it is the lifeblood of a Gospel ministry. We must daily show how God the Judge can be “just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes.”

We must declare that God has made the Redeemer’s soul a sacrifice for sin, making Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our plain testimony must be that, “He was made a curse for us.” That, “He His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” That, “He was once offered to bear the sins of many.” And that, “He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many.” About this we must never speak with bated breath, lest we be found unfaithful to our charge.

And why, Brethren, should we not joyfully proclaim this doctrine? Is it not the grandest, noble, most Divine, under Heaven? The plan so adorns all the attributes of the Godhead, and furnishes such a safe footing for a trembling conscience to rest upon, such a fortress, castle, and high tower for faith to rejoice in, that we cannot do otherwise than love it! The very way and plan of it is dearer to our souls than life itself! Oh, then let us always say, “Let God be magnified,” since He devised, arranged, and carried out this Godlike method of blending justice with mercy.

But, Beloved, we also love God’s salvation when we consider what was the object of it. The object of it towards us was to redeem unto Christ a people who should be zealous for good works. The sinner loves a salvation from Hell. The saint loves a salvation from sin. Anybody would desire to be saved from the pit, but it is only a child of God who pants to be saved from every false way. We love the salvation of God because it saves us from selfishness, from pride, from lust, from worldliness, bitterness, malice, sloth, and uncleanness. When that salvation is completed in us we shall be “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” and shall be renewed in holiness after the image of Christ Jesus our Lord.

That its great aim is our perfection in holiness is the main beauty of salvation. We would be content to be poor, but we cannot be content to be sinful. We could be resigned to sickness, but we could not be satisfied to remain in alienation from God. We long for perfection and nothing short of it will content us, and, because this is guaranteed to the Believer in the Gospel of Christ, we love His salvation, and we would say continually, “Let God be magnified.” I might thus enlarge upon every part of this salvation, and say that it endears itself to us under every aspect, and from every point of view.

We love His salvation because of one or two characteristics in it which especially excite our delight. Foremost is the matchless love displayed in it. Why should the Lord have loved men, such insignificant creatures as they are, compared with the universe? Why should He set His heart upon such nothings? But more, how could He love rebellious men who have wantonly and arrogantly broken His Laws? Why should He love them so much as to give up His Only-Begotten? These are things we freely speak of, but who among us knows what is their weight?

“God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” I believe that even in Heaven, with enlarged faculties, it will be a subject of perpetual wonder to us that ever God could love and save us. And shall we not love the salvation which wells up from the deep fountain of the Father’s everlasting affection? O Brethren, our hearts must be harder than adamant, and made of Hell-hardened steel if we can at once believe that we are saved and yet not love, intensely love, the salvation which was devised by Jehovah’s heart!

We love His salvation, again, because, in addition to the display of wondrous love, it is so safe a salvation, so real, so true—we have not given heed to cunningly devised fables. We have not chanced our souls upon a fiction. We run no risk when we trust the Savior. Though one of our

hymns puts it— *“Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.”*  
This is only a condescension to the feelings of trembling unbelievers, for there is no venture in it. It is sure and certain.

Did God lay on Christ my sin? Was it really punished in Him? Then there cannot exist a reason why I should be condemned, but there are ten thousand arguments why I should forever be “accepted in the Beloved.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Substitution is a basis for intelligent confidence. It satisfies both the demand of the Law and the fears of conscience. And gives to Believers a deep, settled, substantial peace, which cannot be broken.

We love this salvation because we feel that it places a foundation of granite beneath our feet instead of the quicksand of human merit. Justice being satisfied is as much our friend as even Mercy herself. In fact, all the attributes unite to guarantee our safety. We love God’s salvation, too, because it is so complete. Nothing remains unfinished which is necessary to remove sin from the Believer and give him righteousness before God. As far as atonement for sin is concerned, the expiation is most gloriously complete.  
Remember that remarkable expression of the Apostle, where he describes the priests as continually standing at the altar, offering sacrifices year by year, and even day by day, because atonement by such means could never be finished? Such sacrifices could never take away sin— therefore must they be perpetually offered, and the priest must always stand at the altar. “But,” says the Apostle, “this Man (our great Melchisidec), after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down (for the work was accomplished), sat down at the right hand of God.”

Jesus has performed what the Aaronic priesthood, in long succession, had failed to do. Though streams of blood might flow from bullocks, and from goats like Kishon’s mighty river. And though incense might smoke till the pile was high as Lebanon, with all her goodly cedars—what was there in all this to make propitiation for sin? The work was but shadowed, the real Expiation was not offered. It was a fair picture, but the substance itself was not there.

But when our Divine Lord went up to Calvary, and on the Cross gave up His body, His soul, His spirit—a sacrifice for sin—He finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Herein, my Brethren, we have strong consolation, the immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, His Word and Oath are our immovable security. By the Atonement we are infallibly, effectually, eternally saved, for He has become the “Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

How we love this salvation! Our inmost heart rejoices in it! I rejoice to preach it, Brethren, and I delight to muse upon it, appropriating it to myself by faith in solitary thought. How it makes the tears stream down one’s cheeks with joy, to think, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me—He took my sins and He destroyed them. They have ceased to be, they are annihilated, they are blotted out like a cloud, and like a thick cloud have they vanished.” Surely, we should have lost sanity, as well as Grace, if we did not love this salvation, beyond the choicest joys of earth

II. Thus I have described the character, and now, secondly, we will meditate on THE SAYING. Every nation has its idiom, every language has its Shibboleth, almost every district has its proverb. Behold the idiom of gracious souls! Listen to their household word, their common proverb—it is this, “Let God be magnified! Let God be magnified!” Let us proceed at once to the consideration of it. I trust it belongs to us—it certainly does if we love His salvation. Observe that this is a saying which is founded upon truth and justice. “Let God be magnified,” for it is He that saved us, and not we ourselves.

We trace our salvation, not to our ministers, nor to any pretentious priesthood. None can divide the honors of Grace, for the Lord alone has turned our captivity. He decreed our salvation, planned it, arranged it, executed it, applied it, and secures it. From beginning to end salvation is of the Lord, therefore, let God be magnified! Moreover, the Lord worked salvation that He might be magnified thereby. It was God’s object in salvation to glorify His own name. “Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel.” Truly we desire that the Lord’s end and purpose should be fully accomplished, for it is His well-deserved due. O You who bled upon the Cross, may Your Throne be glorious! O You who were despised and rejected of men, be You extolled, and be You very high. You deserve all glory, great and merciful God! Such a gift, such a sacrifice, such a work! You ought, indeed, to be lauded and had in honor by all the intelligent universe.

The saying is settled deep in truth, and established in right. This saying is naturally suggested by love. It is because we love His salvation that we say, “The Lord be magnified.” You cannot love God without desiring to magnify Him, and I am sure that you cannot know that you are saved without loving Him. For here is a wonder, a central wonder of wonders to many of us—that ever we, in particular, were saved. I do not think I could be so wonder-struck and amazed at the salvation of you all as at my own. I know it to be Infinite Mercy that saved any one of you, or all of you. I say I know it, but in my own case I feel it is an unspeakable and inconceivably great mercy which has saved me.

And I suppose each Brother here, each Sister here will feel a special love to Christ from the fact of being himself or herself an object of His love. We never sing, I am sure, with warmer hearts any hymn in our hymn-book than that one—

*“What was there in us that could merit esteem,*

***Or give the Creator delight?  
’Twas even so Father, we ever must sing,  
For so it seemed good in Your sight.”***

The Lord might have left us as He has left others to carry out their own wills, and willfully to reject the Savior. But since He has made us willing in the day of His power, we are forever beyond measure under obligations to Him. Let us say continually, “The Lord be magnified, which has pleasure in the prosperity of His servants.”

Moreover, this saying of our text is deeply sincere and practical. I am sure David did not wish to see hypocrites multiplied. But such would be the case if men merely said, “Let God be magnified,” and did not mean it. No doubt there is a great deal among professors of mere expression without meaning. It is sadly evident that much godly talk is only talk, but it ought not to be. You know how often charity is assumed, and men say to the naked and hungry, “Be you warmed, and be you filled.” But they give nothing to the poor, except vain words, which cannot profit them. So, too, often professors will sing—

*“Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel,  
Win and conquer, never cease!  
May your lasting wide dominion  
Multiply and still increase,”*

and so on. But there it ends. They have said it, but they have done nothing for it.

Now, as he is condemned as a hypocrite who merely utters words of charity without deeds, so is he who shall say, “Let God be magnified,” but who does not put forth his hand and throw in all his energies to promote that which he professes to desire. The wish must be, and oh, if we are saved by Grace, it will be sincere, intense, and fervent in every believing heart! Moreover, it must not only be sincere, but it must be paramount. I take it that there is nothing which a Christian man should say continually, except this, “Let God be magnified.”

That which a man may say continually is assuredly the master thought of his mind. Listen to the cherubim and seraphim. They continually cry, “Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts!” Why cry they thus continually? Is it not because it is their chief business, their highest delight? So should it be with us! Our end and aim should ever be to glorify Him who redeemed us by His most precious blood. You are a citizen, but you are more a Christian. You are a father, but you are more a child of God. You are a laborer, but you are most of all a servant of the Most High. You are wealthy, but yet more enriched by His Covenant. You are poor, but you are most emphatically rich if Christ is yours. The first, chief, leading, lordly, master thought within you must be this, “Let God be magnified.”

And, Brethren, the text tells us this must be continual. How earnest you feel about the cause of Christ when you have heard an inspiriting sermon, but how long does it last? Ah, those old days of mission enterprise, when Exeter Hall used to be crowded because missionaries had interesting stories to tell of what God was doing—what enthusiasm there used to be— where is it now? Where is it now? Echo might well answer “where is it now?” To a great degree it has departed. The zeal of many rises and falls like a barometer. They are hot as fire, and cold as ice, in the shortest space of time. Their fervor is as transient as the flame of thorns, and hence it is very hard to turn it to any practical account.

Oh, for more of the deep-seated principle of intense love to God’s salvation, steady and abiding, which shall make a man say continually, “Let God be magnified.” We would desire to wake up in the morning with this on our lips. We would begin with the enquiry, “What can I do to magnify God this day?” We would be in business in the middle of the day, and yet never lose the one desire to magnify God. We would return to our family at night, urged by the same impulse, “How can I magnify God in my household?”

If I lie sick, I would feel that I must magnify God by patience. If I rise from that bed, I would feel the sweet obligation to magnify Him by gratitude. If I take a prominent position, I am doubly bound to magnify Him who makes me a leader of His flock, and, if I am unknown and obscure in the Church, I must, with equal zeal, magnify Him by a conscientious discharge of the duties of my position. Oh, to have one end always before us, and to press forward towards it, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left!

As though we were balls shot out of a rifled cannon we would rush on, never hesitating or turning aside, but flying with all speed towards the center of the target. May our spirits be impelled by a Divine energy towards this one only thing, the Lord be magnified! Whether I live or die, may God be glorified in me! According to the text, this saying should be universal among the saints. It should be the mark of all those that love God’s salvation, pertaining not to a few who shall be chosen to minister in public, but to all those whom Grace has renewed. All of us—women as well as men, illiterate as well as learned, poor as well as rich, silent as well as eloquent—should after our own ability say, “Let God be magnified.”

Oh, would to God we were all stirred up to this! Our Churches seem to be half alive. It is a dreadful thing to read of the punishment practiced by ancient tyrants when they tied a living man to a corpse, and he had to go about with this corpse strapped to him and rotting under his nostrils. And yet that is too often the condition of the living ones in our churches— they are bound by ties of Church union to a portion of the Church which is spiritually dead, though not so manifestly corrupt as to render it possible for us to cut it off. The tares, which we may not root up, hamper and dwarf the wheat. O God, the Holy Spirit, make the Church alive right through, from the crown of its head to the sole of its foot, so that the whole Church may cry continually, “Let God be magnified.”

You will notice that the cry is an absolute one. It does not say, let God be magnified by me if He will please to make me successful in business, and happy, and healthy—it leaves it open. Only let God be magnified, and He may do what He wills with me. As a poor soldier in the regiment of Christ, I only care for this—that HE may win the day. And if I see Him riding on His white horse and know that He is conquering though I lie bleeding and wounded in a ditch, I will clap my hands and say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Though I am poor, and despised, and reproached, this shall compensate for all, if I can only hear that “Him has God highly exalted, and given Him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

I would close my eyes in death, and say my soul is satisfied with favor and has all she wants if Jesus is exalted. Remember how David put it— when he had said, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory,” he added, “Amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.” He desired no more than that. That was the ultimatum of his wishes.

Beloved, I trust it is the same with us. Nor is there any limit as to place or persons. My heart says, “Let God be magnified among the Wesleyans! The Lord be magnified among the Independents! The Lord be magnified among the Episcopalians! The Lord be magnified among the Baptists!” We pray very earnestly, “Let God be magnified in the Tabernacle,” but we would not forget to cry, “Let God be magnified in all parts of London, in all counties of England, and Scotland, and Ireland.” We desire no restriction as to race—let God be magnified both in France and in Prussia. In Turkey and in Italy. In the United States and in Australia—among any and every people! So that God’s name is magnified, what matters it how or where? We know no politics but this, “Let God be magnified.”

All nationalities sink before our relation to our God. Christians are cosmopolitan. We are burgesses of the New Jerusalem—there is our citizenship. We are freemen of the entire new creation. What is all else to God’s Glory! So long as the Lord is glorified, let the empires go and the emperors with them. Let nations rise or fall, so long as He comes whose right it is to reign. Let ancient dynasties pass away, if HIS Throne is but exalted. We would never dictate to the God of history. Let Him write out as He pleases the stanzas of His own august poem—but let this always be the close of every verse, “The Lord be magnified! The Lord be magnified! The Lord be magnified!” This is the continual saying of all them that love His salvation.

III. We had much to say under our second head, but time will not tarry for us, therefore we must proceed to the last, which is THE WISH. Holy David, and David’s perfect Lord both wish that we may say, “Let God be magnified.” This wish is promoted by an anxiety for God’s Glory. It is a most holy wish, and it ought to be fulfilled. I shall ask your attention only for a minute or two to the reasons of the wish.

Why should it be wished? First, because it always ought to be said, “Let God be magnified.” It is only right, and according to the fitness of things, that God should be magnified in the world which He Himself created. Such a handiwork deserves admiration from all who behold it. But when He newly made the world, and especially when He laid the foundation of His new palace in the fair colors of Jesus’ blood, and adorned it with the sapphires of Grace and Truth, He had a double claim upon our praise!

He gave His Son to redeem us, and for this let His praise be great and endless. Things are out of joint if God, the Redeemer, is not glorified. Surely the wheels of Nature revolve amiss if God, the Loving and Gracious, is not greatly magnified! As every right-hearted man desires to see right and justice done, therefore does he wish that those who love God’s salvation may say continually, “Let God be magnified.” But, we wish it next, because it always needs saying. The world is dull and sleepy, and utterly indifferent to the Glory of God in the work of redemption. We need to tell it over and over and over again, that God is great in the salvation of His people.

There are many who will rise up and deny God’s Glory. Revilers of all sorts abound in rage. But over and above their clamor, let the voice of Truth be heard, “Let God be magnified.” They cry, “the Bible is worn out.” They doubt its Inspiration, they question the Deity of Christ, they set up new gods that have lately come up that our fathers knew not. Let us confront them with the Truth of God, let us oppose them with the Gospel, let us overcome them through the blood of the Lamb, using this one only war cry, “Let God be magnified.” Everywhere, in answer to all blasphemy, in direct conflict with profanity, let us lift up this voice with heart and soul, “Let God be magnified.”

And, again, we desire this, because the saying of this continually does good to the sayers. He who blesses God blesses himself. We cannot serve God with the heart without serving ourselves most practically. Nothing, Brothers and Sisters, is more for your benefit than to spend and be spent for the promotion of the Divine honor. Then, again, this promotes the welfare of God’s creatures. We ought to desire to spread the knowledge of God because the dark places of the earth will never cease to be the habitation of cruelty till they become the Temple of the Lord of Hosts.

While we are sitting complacently here, myriads are dying—souls are passing into eternity unforgiven. The wrath of God is abiding still upon the sons of men, for they know not Christ! What stronger motive could there be for desiring that God’s name should continually be magnified? I have been told, and I believe it is the general impression, that at this particular time there is a great cessation of the zealous spirit which once ruled among Christians. We have passed over the heroic age, the golden period of missions, and we have come to the time in which the Church rests upon her oars, takes matters quietly.

What if I say, regards them hopelessly? Very few young men are now coming forward, at least in our denomination, to offer themselves for missionaries. The funds are barely sustained and nothing more. I fear there is among those who conduct the affairs of missions, too little of faith, and too much of bastard prudence, of which the latter had better be banished to the bottomless pit at once, for it has long been the clog upon the chariot wheels of the Gospel. Faith is too much cast into the background, and the work is viewed in a mercantile light, as though it were a rule of three sums—so much money and so many men, and then so many conversions—whereas it is not so. God works not according to arithmetical rules and calculations!

There is, I fear, on the whole, a general backsliding from the right state. And what a sad thing it is that it should be so, since at our best we were never too zealous. Few can bring the charge of fanaticism against the English Baptists—we have been too solid, if not stolid, for that. I almost wish it were possible for us to err in that direction, for if an evil, it would, at any rate, be a novelty, if not an improvement. Why is this, and from where does it come? Years ago our fathers compassed this Jericho. They passed round it according to the Master’s bidding, and are we about, after having done the same these many years, to relinquish the task, and lose the result? Do we fear that the walls will never fall to the ground?

Brethren, I believe it is the duty of the Christian Church to go on working quite as earnestly and zealously and believingly, if there are no conversions, as if half the world were transformed in a twelve month span. Our business is not to create a harvest but to sow the seed. If the wheat does not come up—if we have sown it aright—our Master does not hold us responsible. If missions had been an utter failure it would be no sort of reason why we should give them up. There was a great failure when the hosts of Israel, on the first occasion, went round Jericho—a dreadful failure when they marched round the city twice, and the walls shook not.

It was an aggravated failure when they had compassed it four times. It was a most discouraging defeat when they had tramped round it five times. And, on the whole, a breakdown—almost enough to drive them to despair—when they had performed the circuit six times and not a single brick had stirred in the wall. Yes. But then the seventh day made amends, when the people shouted and all the walls fell flat to the ground! Brethren, it is not yet time to shout, but we must continue marching and say, “Let God be magnified.” The longer the walls stand, and the longer we wait, the louder will be our shout when they lie prostrate before us, as they shall, for, “Verily, verily, I say unto you there shall not be one stone left upon another that shall not be cast down.”

Remember the Greeks when they attacked old Troy—you have the record in ancient story. They waited many years till their ships had well near rotted on the seas, but the prowess of Hector and the armed men of Troy kept back the “King of men,” and all the hosts of the avengers. Suppose that after nine years had dragged along their weary length, the chiefs of the Greeks had said, “It is of no avail, the city is impregnable! O Pelasgi, back to your fair lands washed by the blue Aegean, you will never subdue the valor of Ileum.”

No. They persevered in the weary siege, with feats of strength and schemes of art till at last they saw the city burned and heard the dire lament—“Troy was, but is no more” Let us still continue to attack the adversary. We are few, but strength lies not in numbers. The Eternal One has used the few where He has put aside the many. In our weakness lies part of our adaptation to the Divine work—only let us gather up fresh faith, and renew our courage and industry—and we shall see greater things than these.

“Pshaw,” says one, “Protestant Christianity is in a miserable minority, it is ridiculous to suppose it will ever be the dominant religion of the world.” We reply that it is ridiculous, no, blasphemous, to doubt, when God has sworn with an oath that, “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” God’s oath is better evidence than appearances, for, in a moment, if He wills it, He can give such an impetus to the Christian Church, that she shall in her enthusiasm spread the Gospel, and at the same time He can give such a turn to the human mind, that it shall be as ready to accept the Gospel as the Church is to spread it!

Observe how the Church grew during the first few centuries. After the Apostles had died you do not find in the next century the name of any very remarkable man. But all Christians then were earnest, and the good cause advanced. They were mostly poor, they were generally illiterate, but they were all missionaries. They were all seeking to glorify God, and, consequently, before long down went Jupiter! Saturn lost his throne, even Venus was abjured, and the Cross, at least nominally, became supreme throughout all Europe.

It shall be done again. In the name of the Eternal, let us set up our banners! Oh, you that love the Lord and His salvation, vow it in your souls! Determine it in your hearts, and God the Holy Spirit being with you, if you have but faith in Him, it will be no empty boast, no vain vaunting. God shall speak and it shall be done. The Lord of Hosts is with us! The God of Jacob is our refuge! And such being the case, nothing is impossible to us! May the Lord stir us up with these thoughts and fling us like firebrands into the midst of His Church and the world—to set both on a blaze with love through the love that burns in our hearts. “Let God be magnified.” Amen and Amen!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 40.  
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PLEADING  
NO. 1018

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 29, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying.”  
Psalm 70:5.**

YOUNG painters were anxious, in the olden times, to study under the great masters. They concluded that they should more easily attain to excellence if they entered the schools of eminent men. At this present time men will pay large premiums that their sons may be apprenticed or articled to those who best understand their trades or professions. Now, if any of us would learn the sacred art and mystery of prayer, it is well for us to study the productions of the greatest masters of that science. I am unable to point out one who understood it better than did the Psalmist David. So well did he know how to praise that his Psalms have become the language of good men in all ages.

And so well did he understand how to pray, that if we catch his spirit, and follow his mode of prayer we shall have learned to plead with God after the most prevalent sort. Place before you, first of all, David’s Son and David’s Lord, that most mighty of all Intercessors, and, next to Him, you shall find David to be one of the most admirable models for your imitation. We shall consider our text, then, as one of the productions of a great master in spiritual matters, and we will study it, praying all the while that God will help us to pray after the like fashion.

In our text we have the soul of a successful pleader under four aspects—we view, first, the soul confessing—“I am poor and needy.” You have, next, the soul pleading, for he makes a plea out of his poor condition, and adds, “Make haste unto me, O God!” You see, thirdly, a soul in its urgency, for he cries, “Make haste,” and he varies the expression but keeps the same idea—“Make no tarrying.” And you have, in the fourth and last view, a soul grasping God, for the Psalmist puts it thus—“You are my help and my deliverer.” Thus with both hands he lays hold upon his God, so as not to let Him go till a blessing is obtained.

I. To begin, then, see in this model of supplication, A SOUL CONFESSING. The wrestler strips before he enters the contest, and confession does the like for the man who is about to plead with God. A racer on the plains of prayer cannot hope to win, unless, by confession, repentance, and faith, he lays aside every weight of sin. Now let it be ever remembered that confession is absolutely necessary to the sinner when he first seeks a Savior. It is not possible for you, O Seeker, to obtain peace for your troubled heart till you shall have acknowledged your transgression and your iniquity before the Lord.

You may do what you will, yes, even attempt to believe in Jesus, but you shall find that the faith of God’s elect is not in you unless you are willing to make a full confession of your transgression, and lay bare your heart before God. We do not usually think of giving charity to those who do not acknowledge that they need it—the physician does not send his medicine to those who are not sick. There is too much to be done in the world of necessary work for us to undertake works of supererogation. And, surely, to clothe those who are not naked, and to feed those that are not hungry is to attempt superfluous work which will bring us no credit.

God will not do this—you must be empty before you can be filled by Him—and you must confess your emptiness, too, or else assuredly He will not come to fill the full, nor to lift up those who are already high enough in their own esteem. The blind man in the Gospels had to feel his blindness, and to sit by the wayside begging. If he had entertained a doubt as to whether he were blind or not, the Lord would have passed him by. He opens the eyes of those who confess their blindness, but of others, he says, “Because you say we see, therefore, your sin remains.”

He asks of those who are brought to Him, “What will you that I should do unto you?” in order that their need may be publicly avowed. It must be so with all of us—we must offer the confession, or we cannot gain the benediction. Let me speak especially to you who desire to find peace with God, and salvation through the precious blood—you will do well to make your confession before God very frank, very sincere, very explicit. Surely you have nothing to hide, for there is nothing that you can hide.

He knows your guilt already, but He would have you know it, and therefore He bids you confess it. Go into the details of your sin in your secret acknowledgments before God—strip yourself of all excuses—make no apologies. Say, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge.” Acknowledge the evil of sin. Ask God to make you feel it. Do not treat it as a trifle, for it is not.

To redeem the sinner from the effect of sin, Christ Himself must die— and unless you are delivered from it—you must die eternally. Therefore, play not with sin—do not confess it as though it were some venial fault which would not have been noticed unless God had been too severe. But labor to see sin as God sees it, as an offense against all that is good—a rebellion against all that is kind. See it to be treason, to be ingratitude, to be a mean and base thing. Do not think that you can improve your condition before God by painting your case in brighter colors than it should be. Blacken it—if it were possible to blacken it—but it is not possible.

When you feel your sin most, you have not half felt it. When you confess it most fully you do not know a tithe of it. But oh, to the utmost of your ability make a clean breast of it, and say, “I have sinned against Heaven, and before You.” Acknowledge the sins of your youth and your manhood, the sins of your body and of your soul, the sins of omission and of commission, sins against the Law and offenses against the Gospel. Acknowledge all, neither for a moment seek to deny one portion of the evil with which God’s Law, your own conscience, and His Holy Spirit justly charge you.

And oh, Soul, if you would get peace and approval with God in prayer, confess the ill desert of your sin. Submit yourself to whatever Divine Justice may sentence you to endure—confess that the deepest Hell is your desert, and confess this not with your lips only, but with your soul. Let this be the doleful ditty of your inmost heart—

*“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath, I must pronounce You just in death.  
And, if my soul were sent to Hell,  
Your righteous Law approves it well.”*

If you will condemn yourself, God will acquit you. If you will put the rope about your neck and sentence yourself, then He who otherwise would have sentenced you will say, “I forgive you, through the merit of My Son.”

But never expect that the King of Heaven will pardon a traitor, who will not confess and forsake his treason. Even the most tender father expects that the child should humble himself when he has offended, and he will not withdraw his frown from him till, with tears, he has said, “Father, I have sinned.” Dare you expect God to humble Himself to you, and would it not be so if He did not constrain you to humble yourself to Him? Would you have Him connive at your faults and wink at your transgressions?

He will have mercy, but He must be holy. He is ready to forgive, but not to tolerate sin. And therefore, He cannot let you be forgiven if you hug your sins, or if you presume to say, “I have not sinned.” Hasten, then, O Seeker, hasten, I pray you, to the Mercy Seat with this upon your lips—“I am poor and needy, I am sinful, I am lost. Have pity on me.” With such an acknowledgment you begin your prayer well, and through Jesus you shall prosper in it. Beloved Hearers, the same principle applies to the Church of God.

We are praying for a display of the Holy Spirit’s power in this Church, and in order to successful pleading in this matter, it is necessary that we should unanimously make the confession of our text, “I am poor and needy.” We must own that we are powerless in this business. Salvation is of the Lord and we cannot save a single soul. The Spirit of God is treasured up in Christ, and we must seek Him of the great Head of the Church. We cannot command the Spirit, and yet we can do nothing without Him. He blows where He will. We must deeply feel and honestly acknowledge this.

Will you not heartily assent to it, my Brothers and Sisters, at this hour? May I not ask you unanimously to renew the confession of this morning? We must also acknowledge that we are not worthy that the Holy Spirit should condescend to work with us and by us. There is no fitness in us for His purposes, except He shall give us that fitness. Our sins might well provoke Him to leave us—He has strived with us, He has been tender towards us—but He might well go away and say, “I will no more shine upon that Church, and no more bless that ministry.”

Let us feel our unworthiness, it will be a good preparation for earnest prayer—for, mark you, Brethren, God will have His Church, before He blesses it, know that the blessing is altogether from Himself. “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord.” The career of

Gideon was a very remarkable one, and it commenced with two most instructive signs. I think our heavenly Father would have all of us learn the very same lesson which He taught Gideon, and when we have mastered that lesson, He will use us for His own purposes.

You remember Gideon laid a fleece upon the barn floor, and in the morning all round was dry and the fleece, alone, was wet. God alone had saturated the fleece so that Gideon could wring it out, and its moisture was not due to its being placed in a favorable situation, for all around was dry. He would have us learn that if the dew of His Grace fills any one of us with its heavenly moisture, it is not because we lie upon the barn floor of a ministry which God usually blesses, or because we are in a Church which the Lord graciously visits.

We must be made to see that the visitations of His Spirit are fruits of the Lord’s Sovereign Grace, and gifts of His infinite love, and not of the will of man, neither by man. But then the miracle was reversed, for, as old Thomas Fuller says, “God’s miracles will bear to be turned inside out and look as glorious one way as another.” The next night the fleece was dry and all around was wet. For skeptics might have said, “Yes, but a fleece would naturally attract moisture, and if there were any in the air, it would be likely to be absorbed by the wool.”

But, lo, on this occasion, the dew is not where it might be expected to be, even though it lies thickly all around. Damp is the stone and dry is the fleece. So God will have us know that He does not give us His Grace because of any natural adaptation in us to receive it. And even where He has given a preparedness of heart to receive, He will have us understand that His Grace and His Spirit are most free in action, and Sovereign in operation—and that He is not bound to work after any rule of our making.

If the fleece is wet, He bedews it, and that not because it is a fleece but because He chooses to do so. He will have all the Glory of all His Grace from first to last. Come then, my Brethren, and become disciples to this Truth of God. Consider that from the great Father of Lights every good and perfect gift must come. We are His workmanship, He must work all our works in us. Grace is not to be commanded by our position or condition—the wind blows where it will, the Lord works and no man can hinder. But if He works not, the mightiest and the most zealous labor is but in vain.

It is very significant that before Christ fed the thousands, He made the disciples sum up all their provisions. It was well to let them see how low the commissariat had become—for then, when the crowds were fed—they could not say the basket fed them, nor that the lad had done it. God will make us feel how little are our barley loaves, and how small our fishes, and compel us to enquire, “What are they among so many?”

When the Savior bade His disciples cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they dragged such a mighty catch to land, he did not work the miracle till they had confessed that they had toiled all the night and had taken nothing. They were thus taught that the success of their work was dependent upon the Lord, and that it was not their net, nor their way of dragging it, nor their skill and art in handling their vessels—but that altogether and entirely their success came from their Lord. We must get down to this, and the sooner we come to it the better.

Before the ancient Jews kept the Passover, observe what they did. The unleavened bread is to be brought in and the paschal lamb to be eaten— but there shall be no unleavened bread, and no paschal lamb—till they have purged out the old leaven. If you have any old strength and selfconfidence—if you have anything that is your own, and is, therefore, leavened, it must be swept right out. There must be a bare cupboard before there can come in the heavenly provisions upon which the spiritual Passover can be kept. I thank God when He cleans us out. I bless His name when He brings us to feel our soul-poverty as a Church—for then the blessing will be sure to come.

One other illustration will show this, perhaps, still more distinctly. Behold Elijah with the priests of Baal at Carmel. The test appointed to decide Israel’s choice was this—the God that answers by fire let Him be God. Baal’s priests invoked the heavenly flame in vain. Elijah is confident that it will come upon his sacrifice, but he is also sternly resolved that the false priests and the fickle people shall not imagine that he, himself, had produced the fire. He determines to make it clear that there is no human contrivance, trickery, or maneuver about the matter.

The flame should be seen to be of the Lord, and of the Lord alone. Remember the stern Prophet’s command, “Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And then he said, Do it a second time. And they did it a second time. And he said, Do it a third time. And they did it a third time. And the water ran round all over the altar. And he filled the trench also with water.”

There could be no latent fires there. If there had been any combustibles or chemicals calculated to produce fire after the manner of the cheats of the time, they would all have been dampened and spoiled. When no one could imagine that man could burn the sacrifice, then the Prophet lifted up his eyes to Heaven and began to plead—and down came the fire of the Lord which consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the altar stones and the dust—and even licked up the water that was in the trench!

And when all the people saw it they fell on their faces, and they said, “Jehovah is the God! Jehovah is the God.” The Lord in this Church, if He means greatly to bless us, may send us the trial of pouring on the water once, and twice, and even three times. He may discourage us, grieve us, and try us, and bring us low till all shall see that it is not of the preacher, it is not of the organization, it is not of man—but altogether of God, the Alpha and the Omega, who works all things according to the counsel of His will.

Thus I have shown you that for a successful season of prayer the best beginning is confession that we are poor and needy.  
II. Secondly, after the soul has unburdened itself of all weights of merit and self-sufficiency, it proceeds to prayer, and we have before us A SOUL PLEADING. “I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer: O Lord, make no tarrying.” The careful reader will perceive four pleas in this single verse. Upon this topic I would remark that it is the habit of Faith, when she is praying, to use pleas. Mere prayer sayers, who do not pray at all, forget to argue with God. But those who would prevail bring forth their reasons and their strong arguments, and they debate the question with the Lord.  
They who play at wrestling catch here and there at random, but those who are really wrestling have a certain way of grasping the opponent—a certain mode of throwing, and the like. They work according to order and rule. Faith’s art of wrestling is to plead with God, and say with holy boldness, “Let it be thus and thus, for these reasons.” Hosea tells us of Jacob at Jabbok, “that there he spoke with us.” From which I understand that Jacob instructed us by his example. Now, the two pleas which Jacob used were God’s precept and God’s promise.  
First, he said, “You said unto me, Return unto your country and to your kindred”— as much as if he put it thus—“Lord, I am in difficulty, but I have come here through obedience to You. You did tell me to do this. Now, since You commanded me to come here—into the very teeth of my brother Esau who comes to meet me like a lion—Lord, You can not be so unfaithful as to bring me into danger and then leave me in it.” This was sound reasoning, and it prevailed with God.  
Then Jacob also urged a promise—“You said, ‘I will surely do you good.’ ” Among men, it is a masterly way of reasoning when you can challenge your opponent with his own words—you may quote other authorities, and he may say, “I deny their force.” But, when you quote a man against himself, you foil him completely. When you bring a man’s promise to his mind, he must either confess himself to be unfaithful and changeable, or, if he holds to being the same, and being true to his word, you have him— and you have won your will of him.  
Oh, Brethren, let us learn thus to plead the precepts, the promises, and whatever else may serve our turn! But let us always have something to plead. Do not reckon you have prayed unless you have pleaded, for pleading is the very marrow of prayer. He who pleads well knows the secret of prevailing with God, especially if he pleads the blood of Jesus, for that unlocks the treasury of Heaven. Many keys fit many locks, but the master key is the blood and the name of Him that died but rose again, and ever lives in Heaven to save unto the uttermost.  
Faith’s pleas are plentiful, and this is well, for Faith is placed in various positions, and needs them all. She has many needs, and having a keen eye she perceives that there are pleas to be urged in every case. I will not, therefore, tell you all faith’s pleas, but I will just mention some of them— enough to let you see how abundant they are. Faith will plead all the attributes of God. “You are Just, therefore spare the soul for whom the Savior died. You are Merciful, blot out my transgressions. You are Good, reveal Your bounty to Your servant. You are Immutable—You have done thus and thus to others of Your servants, do thus unto me. You are Faithful, can you break Your promise? Can You turn away from Your Covenant?”  
Rightly viewed, all the perfections of Deity become pleas for Faith. Faith will boldly plead all God’s gracious relationships. She will say to Him, “Are You not the Creator? Will You forsake the works of Your own hands? Are You not the Redeemer? You have redeemed Your servant, will You cast me away?” Faith usually delights to lay hold upon the fatherhood of God. This is generally one of her master points—when she brings this into the field she wins the day. “You are a Father, and would you chasten us as though You would kill? A Father, and will You not provide? A Father, and have You no sympathy and no heart of compassion? A Father, and can You deny what Your own child asks of You ?”

Whenever I am impressed with the Divine majesty, and so, perhaps, a little dispirited in prayer, I find the short and sweet remedy is to remember that although He is a great King, and infinitely glorious, I am His child, and no matter who the father is, the child may always be bold with his father. Yes, Faith can plead any and all of the relationships in which God stands to His chosen!  
Faith, too, can ply Heaven with the Divine promises. I need not enlarge here, for this, I trust, you all do so continually. When you can, as it were, bring home the Lord’s Word to Himself, it is well. That is the conquering argument, “Do as You have said.” “You have spoken it, and You have made Your promise to be yes and amen in Christ Jesus to Your own glory by us. Will You not fulfill it? Will You run back from Your own word? Will You fail to carry out Your own declaration? That is far from You, Lord!”  
Brethren, we want to be more businesslike and use common sense with God in pleading promises. If you were to go to one of the banks on Lombard Street and see a man go in and out and lay a piece of paper on the table, and take it up again and nothing more. If he did that several times a day, I think there would soon be orders issued to the porter to keep the man out because he was merely wasting the clerk’s time, and doing nothing to purpose. Those city men who come to the bank in earnest present their checks—they wait till they receive their gold and then they go—but not without having transacted real business.  
They do not put the paper down, speak about the excellent signature and discuss the correctness of the document! No, they want their money for it, and they are not content without it. These are the people who are always welcome at the bank and not the triflers. Alas, a great many people play at praying—it is nothing better. I say they play at praying because they do not expect God to give them an answer—and thus they are mere triflers who mock the Lord. He who prays in a businesslike way, meaning what he says, honors the Lord. The Lord does not play at promising. Jesus did not sport at confirming the Word by His blood, and we must not make a jest of prayer by going about it in a listless unexpecting spirit.  
The Holy Spirit is in earnest, and we must be in earnest, also. We must go for a blessing, and not be satisfied till we have it—like the hunter who is not satisfied because he has run so many miles—but is never content till he takes his prey. Faith, moreover, pleads the performances of God— she looks back on the past and says, “Lord, You did deliver me on such and such an occasion. Will You fail me now?” She, moreover, takes her life as a whole, and pleads thus—  
*“After so much mercy past,  
Will You let me sink at last?*  
“Have You brought me so far that I may be put to shame at the end?”  
She knows how to bring the ancient mercies of God, and make them arguments for present favors. But your time would all be gone if I tried to exhibit even a thousandth part of Faith’s pleas. Sometimes, however, Faith’s pleas are very singular. As in this text, it is by no means according to the proud rule of human nature to plead—“I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God.” It is like another prayer of David—“Have mercy upon my iniquity, for it is great.” It is not the manner of men to plead so— they say, “Lord, have mercy on me, for I am not so bad a sinner as some.”  
But Faith reads things in a truer light and bases her pleas on Truth. “Lord, because my sin is great, and You are a great God, let Your great mercy be magnified in me.” You know the story of the Syrophenician woman. That is a grand instance of the ingenuity of Faith’s reasoning. She came to Christ about her daughter, and He answered her not a word. What do you think her heart said? Why, she said in herself, “It is well, for He has not denied me. Since He has not spoken at all, He has not refused me.”  
With this for an encouragement, she began to plead again. Presently Christ spoke to her sharply, and then her brave heart said, “I have gained words from Him at last. I shall have deeds from Him by-and-by.” That also cheered her. And then, when He called her a dog. “Ah,” she reasoned, “but a dog is a part of the family, it has some connection with the master of the house. Though if does not eat meat from the table, it gets the crumbs under it, and so I have You now, great Master, dog as I am! The great mercy that I ask of You, great as it is to me, is only a crumb to You! Grant it, then, I beseech You.”  
Could she fail to leave her request? Impossible! When faith has a will, she always finds a way, and she will win the day when all things point to defeat. Faith’s pleas are singular, but let me add, faith’s pleas are always sound. After all, it is a very telling plea to urge that we are poor and needy. Is not that the main argument with mercy? Necessity is the very best plea with benevolence, either human or Divine. Is not our need the best reason we can urge? If we would have a physician come quickly to a sick man, “Sir,” we say, “it is no common case, he is on the point of death, come to him, come quickly!”  
If we wanted our city firemen to rush to a fire, we should not say to them, “Make haste, for it is only a small fire.” But, on the contrary, we urge that it is an old house, full of combustible materials, and there are rumors of petroleum and gunpowder on the premises. Besides, it is near a timber yard, hosts of wooden cottages are close by, and before long we shall have half the city in a blaze.” We put the case as badly as we can. Oh for wisdom to be equally wise in pleading with God—to find arguments everywhere—but especially to find them in our necessities!  
They said, two centuries ago, that the trade of beggary was the easiest one to carry on, but it paid the worst. I am not sure about the last at this time, but certainly the trade of begging with God is a hard one, but undoubtedly it pays the best of anything in the world. It is very noteworthy that beggars with men have usually plenty of pleas on hand. When a man is harshly driven and starving, he can usually find a reason why he should ask aid of every likely person. Suppose it is a person to whom he is already under many obligations, then the poor creature argues, “I may safely ask of him again, for he knows me, and has been always very kind.”  
If he never asked of the person before, then he says, “I have never worried him before. He cannot say he has already done all he can for me. I will make bold to begin with him.” If it is one of his own kin, then he will say, “Surely you will help me in my distress, for you are a relation.” And if it is a stranger, he says, “I have often found strangers kinder than my own blood. Help me, I entreat you.”  
If he asks of the rich, he pleads that they will never miss what they give. And if he begs of the poor, he urges that they know what want means, and he is sure they will sympathize with him in his great distress. Oh that we were half as much on the alert to fill our mouths with arguments when we are before the Lord! How is it that we are not half awake, and do not seem to have our spiritual senses aroused? May God grant that we may learn the art of pleading with the eternal God—for in that shall rest our prevalence with Him—through the merit of Jesus Christ.  
III. I must be brief on the next point. It is A SOUL URGENT—“Make haste unto me, O God. O Lord, make no tarrying.” We may well be urgent with God, if as yet we are not saved, for our need is urgent. We are in constant peril, and the peril is of the most tremendous kind. O Sinner, within an hour, within a minute, you may be where hope can never visit you! Therefore, cry, “Make haste, O God, to deliver me: make haste to help me, O Lord!” Yours is not a case that can bear lingering—you have not time to procrastinate. Therefore be urgent, for your need is so.  
And remember, if you really are under a sense of need, and the Spirit of God is at work with you, you will and must be urgent. An ordinary sinner may be content to wait, but a quickened sinner wants mercy now. A dead sinner will lie quiet, but a living sinner cannot rest till pardon is sealed home to his soul. If you are urgent this evening, I am glad of it, because your urgency, I trust, arises from the possession of spiritual life. When you cannot live longer without a Savior, the Savior will come to you, and you shall rejoice in Him.  
Brothers and Sisters, members of this Church—as I have said on another point—the same Truth holds good with you. God will come to bless you, and come speedily, when your sense of need becomes deep and urgent. Oh, how great is this Church’s need! We shall grow cold, unholy, and worldly. There will be no conversions, there will be no additions to our numbers. There will be diminutions, there will be divisions, there will be mischief of all kinds—Satan will rejoice, and Christ will be dishonored— unless we obtain a larger measure of the Holy Spirit! Our need is urgent, and when we feel that need thoroughly, then we shall get the blessing which we want.  
Does any melancholy spirit say, “We are in so bad a state that we cannot expect a large blessing”? I reply, perhaps if we were worse, we should obtain it all the sooner. I do not mean if we were really so, but if we felt we were worse, we should be nearer the blessing. When we mourn that we are in an ill state, then we cry the more vehemently to God, and the blessing comes. God never refused to go with Gideon because he had not enough valiant men with him, but He paused because the people were too many.  
He brought them down from thousands to hundreds, and He diminished the hundred before He gave them victory. When you feel that you must have God’s Presence, but that you do not deserve it—and when your consciousness of this lays you in the dust—THEN shall the blessing be guaranteed! For my part, Brothers and Sisters, I desire to feel a spirit of urgency within my soul as I plead with God for the dew of His Grace to descend upon this Church. I am not bashful in this matter, for I have a license to pray.

Begging is forbidden in the streets, but, before the Lord I am a licensed beggar. Jesus has said, “men ought always to pray and not to faint.” You land on the shores of a foreign country with the greatest confidence when you carry a passport with you, and God has issued passports to His children, by which they come boldly to His Mercy Seat. He has invited you. He has encouraged you. He has bid you come to Him, and He has promised that whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. Come, then, come urgently, come importunately, come with this plea, “I am poor and needy: make no tarrying, O my God,” and a blessing shall surely come. It will not tarry. God grant we may see it, and give Him the Glory of it.  
IV. I am sorry to have been so brief where I had need to have enlarged, but I must close with the fourth point. Here is another part of the art and mystery of prayer—THE SOUL GRASPING GOD. She has pleaded, and she has been urgent. But now she comes to close quarters. She grasps the Covenant Angel with one hand, “You are my help,” and with the other, “You are my deliverer.” Oh, those blessed “mys,” those potent “mys.” The sweetness of the Bible lies in the possessive pronouns, and he who is taught to use them as the Psalmist did, shall come off a conqueror with the eternal God.  
Now Sinner, I pray God you may be helped to say this evening to the blessed Christ of God, “You are my help and my deliverer.” Perhaps you mourn that you cannot get that length, but, poor Soul, have you any other help? If you have, then you cannot hold two helpers with the same hand. “Oh, no,” you say, “I have no help anywhere. I have no hope except in Christ.” Well, then, poor Soul, since your hand is empty, that empty hand was made on purpose to grasp your Lord with—lay hold on Him!  
Say to Him, this day, “Lord, I will hang on You as poor lame Jacob did. Now I cannot help myself. I will cleave to You—I will not let You go except You bless me.” “Ah, it would be too bold,” says one. But the Lord loves holy boldness in poor sinners. He would have you be bolder than you think of being! It is an unhallowed bashfulness that dares not trust a crucified Savior. He died on purpose to save such as you are. Let Him have His way with you, and trust Him. “Oh,” says one, “but I am so unworthy.” He came to seek and save the unworthy. He is not the Savior of the self-righteous—He is the sinners’ Savior—“Friend of Sinners” is His name. Unworthy one, lay hold on Him!  
“Oh,” says one, “but I have no right.” Well, but that is the very reason you should grasp Him, for right is for the Court of Justice—not for the Hall of Mercy. I would advise you not to try your rights, for you have no right but to be condemned. But you need no rights when dealing with Jesus. Nothing makes a charitable person refuse his alms like a beggar’s saying, “I have a right.” “No,” says the giver, “If you have rights, go and get them. I will give you nothing.” Since you have no rights, your need shall be your claim—it is all the claim you want!  
I think I hear one say, “It is too late for me to plead for Grace.” It cannot be—it is impossible! While you live and desire mercy, it is not too late to seek it. Notice the parable of the man who wanted three loaves. I will tell you what crossed my mind when I read it—the man went to his friend at midnight. It was late, was it not? Why, his friend might have said, and, indeed, did, in effect, say to him that it was too late. But yet the pleader gained the bread after all. In the parable the time was late—it could not have been later. For if it had been a little later than midnight, it would have been early the next morning, and so not late at all.  
It was midnight, and it could not be later. And so, if it is downright midnight with your soul, yet, be of good cheer! Jesus is an out of season Savior—many of His servants are “born out of due time.” Any season is the right season to call upon the name of Jesus! Therefore, do not let the devil tempt you with the thought that it can be too late. Go to Jesus NOW! Go at once and lay hold on the horns of the altar by a venturesome faith, and say, “Sacrifice for sinners, You are a Sacrifice for me. Intercessor for the graceless, you are an Intercessor for me. You who distributes gifts to the rebellious, distribute gifts to me, for a rebel I have been. When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Such am I, good Master—let the power of Your death be seen in me to save my soul.”  
Oh, you that are saved and, therefore, love Christ, I want you, dear Brethren, as the saints of God, to practice this last part of my subject. And be sure to lay hold upon God in prayer. “You are my help and my deliverer.” As a Church we throw ourselves upon the strength of God and we can do nothing without Him. But we do not mean to be without Him—we will hold Him fast. “You are my help and my deliverer.” There was a boy at Athens, according to the old story, who used to boast that he ruled all Athens, and when they asked him how, he said, “Why, I rule my mother, my mother rules my father, and my father rules the city.”  
He who knows how to be master of prayer will rule the heart of Christ, and Christ can and will do all things for His people, for the Father has committed all things into His hands. You can be Omnipotent if you know how to pray—Omnipotent in all things which glorify God. What does the Word itself say? “Let him lay hold on My strength.” Prayer moves the arm that moves the world. Oh for Grace to grasp Almighty love in this fashion! We want more holdfast prayer! More tugging, and gripping, and wrestling prayer that says, “I will not let You go.”  
That picture of Jacob at Jabbok shall suffice for us to close with. The Covenant Angel is there, and Jacob wants a blessing from Him—He seems to put him off, but no put-offs will do for Jacob. Then the Angel endeavors to escape from him, and tugs and strives—so He may, but no efforts shall make Jacob relax his grasp. At last the Angel falls from ordinary wrestling to wounding him in the very seat of his strength. And Jacob will let his thigh go, and all his limbs go—but he will not let the Angel go!  
The poor man’s strength shrivels under the withering touch, but in his weakness he is still strong—he throws his arms about the mysterious Man, and holds Him as in a death grip. Then the Other says, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” Mark, He did not shake him off, He only said, “Let Me go.” The Angel will do nothing to force him to relax his hold, He leaves that to his voluntary will. The valiant Jacob cries, “No, I am set on it, I am resolved to win an answer to my prayer. I will not let You go except You bless me.”  
Now, when the Church begins to pray, it may be, at first, the Lord will make as though He would have us go further, and we may fear that no answer will be given. Hold on, dear Brethren. Be you steadfast, unmovable, notwithstanding all. By-and-by it may be there will come discouragements where we looked for a flowing success. We shall find Brethren hindering—some will be slumbering—and others sinning. Backsliders and impenitent souls will abound. But let us not be turned aside. Let us be all the more eager. And if it should so happen that we ourselves become distressed and dispirited, and feel we never were so weak as we are now— never mind, Brethren, still hold on—for when the sinew is shrunk the victory is near!  
Grasp with a tighter grip than ever. Be this our resolution, “I will not let You go except You bless me.” Remember the longer the blessing in coming, the richer it will be when it arrives. That which is gained speedily by a single prayer is sometimes only a second-rate blessing. But that which is gained after many a desperate tug, and many an awful struggle, is a fullweighted and precious blessing. The children of importunity are always fair to look upon. The blessing which costs us the most prayer will be worth the most. Only let us be persevering in supplication, and we shall gain a broad far-reaching benediction for ourselves, the Churches, and the world! I wish it were in my power to stir you all to fervent prayer. But I must leave it with the great Author of all true supplication, namely, the Holy Spirit. May He work in us mightily, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— Genesis 32; Luke 11:1-13.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #998 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MORE AND MORE  
NO. 998

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JULY 2, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“But I will hope continually, and will yet praise You more and more.” Psalm 71:14.**

WHEN sin conquered the realm of manhood, it slew all the minstrels except those of the race of Hope. For humanity, amid all its sorrows and sins, Hope sings on. To believers in Jesus there remains a royal race of bards, for we have a hope of Glory, a lively hope, a hope eternal and Divine. Because our hope abides, our praise continues—“I will hope continually, and will yet praise You.” Because our hopes grow brighter and are every day nearer and nearer to their fulfillment—therefore the volume of our praise increases. “I will hope continually, and will yet praise You more and more.” A dying hope would bring forth declining songs. As the expectations grew more dim, so would the music become more faint.

But a hope immortal and eternal, flaming forth each day with intense brightness, brings forth a song of praise which, as it shall always continue to arise, so shall it always gather new force. See well, my Brethren, to your faith, and your faith and hope, for otherwise God will be robbed of His praise. It will be in proportion as you hope for the good things which He has promised to your faith, that you will render to Him the praise which is His royal revenue, acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ and abundantly due from you. David had not been slack in praise—indeed, he was a sweet singer in Israel, a very choirmaster unto the Lord—yet he vowed to praise Him more and more.

Those who do much already are usually the people who can do more. He was old. Would he praise God more when he was infirm than he had done when he was young and vigorous? If he could not excel with loudness of voice, yet would he with eagerness of heart. And what his praise might lack in sound, it should gain in solemn earnestness. He was in trouble, too, yet he would not allow the heyday of his prosperity to surpass in its notes of loving adoration the dark hour of his adversity.

For him on no account could there be any going back. He had adored the Lord when he was but a youth and kept his father’s flock. Harp in hand, beneath the spreading tree, he had worshipped the Lord, his Shepherd, whose rod and staff were his comfort and delight. When an exile he had made the rocky fastnesses of Adullam and Engedi resound with the name of Jehovah. In after time, when he had become king in Israel, his Psalms had been multiplied, and his harp strings were daily accustomed to the praises of the God of his salvation. How could that zealous songster make an advance in praise?

See him yonder dancing before the Ark of the Lord with all his might— what more of joy and zeal can be manifest? Yet he says—“I will yet praise You more and more.” His troubles had been multiplied of late, and his infirmities, too. Yet for all that, no murmuring escapes him. He resolves that his praise should rise higher and higher till he continued it in better lands forever and ever!

Beloved, it is an intense joy to me to address you this morning after so long and sad an absence. And I pray that the Holy Spirit may make my word stimulating to you all. Our subject is that of our praising God more and more. I do not intend to exhort you to praise God. I shall take it for granted that you are doing so, though I fear it will be a great mistake in the case of many. We must, however, take that fact for granted in those to whom we address ourselves upon our particular topic. For those who do not praise God at all cannot be exhorted to praise Him more and more. To those I direct my speech who now love to praise God. These would I charge to resolve with the Psalmist—“I will yet praise You more and more.”

I. Our first business shall be to URGE OURSELVES TO THIS RESOLUTION. Why should we praise God more and more? Here I am embarrassed with the multitude of arguments which beset me. So many crowd around me that I cannot number them in order, but must seize them somewhat at random. It is humbling to remember that we may very well praise God more than we have done, for we have praised Him very little as yet. What we have done, as Believers, in glorifying God is far, far short of His due.

Personally, upon consideration, we shall each admit this. Think, my dear Brothers and Sisters, what the Lord has done for you. Some years ago you were in your sin, and death, and ruin. He called you by His Grace. You were under the burden and curse of sin. He delivered you. Did you not expect, in the first joy of pardon, to have done more for Him—to have loved Him more—to have served Him better? What are the returns which you have made for the gifts which you have received? Are they at all fitting or adequate?

I look at a field loaded with precious grain and ripening for the harvest—I hear that the husbandman has expended so much in rent, so much upon the plowing, so much upon enriching the soil, so much for seed—so much more for necessary weeding. There is the harvest, and it yields a profit—he is contented. But I see another field—it is my own heart. And, my Brother, yours is the same. What has the Husbandman done for it? He has reclaimed it from the wild waste by a power no less then Omnipotent. He has hedged it, plowed it, and cut down the thorns.

He has watered it as no other field was ever watered, for the bloody sweat of Christ has bedewed it to remove the primeval curse. God’s own Son has given His whole self that this barren waste may become a garden. What has been done it were hard to add up—what more could have been done none can say. Yet what is the harvest? Is it adequate to the labor expended? Is the tillage remunerative? I am afraid if we cover our faces, or if a blush shall serve us instead of a veil, it will be the most fit reply to the question. Here and there a withered ear is a poor recompense for the tillage of infinite love. Let us, therefore, be shamed into a firm resolve and say with resolute spirit—“By the good help of infinite Grace, I, at any rate, having been so great a laggard, will quicken my pace. I will yet praise You more and more.”

Another argument which presses upon my mind is this—that where we have praised God up till now, we have not found the service to be a weariness to ourselves, but it has ever been to us both a profit and a delight. I would not speak falsely even for God, but I bear my testimony that the happiest moments I have ever spent have been occupied with the worship of God. I have never been so near Heaven as when adoring before the Eternal Throne. I think every Christian will bear like witness. Among all the joys of earth, and I shall not depreciate them, there is no joy comparable to that of praise.

The innocent mirth of the fireside, the chaste happiness of household love—even these are not to be mentioned side by side with the joy of worship—the rapture of drawing near to the Most High. Earth, at her best, yields but water, but this Divine occupation is as the wine of Cana’s marriage feast. The purest and most exhilarating joy is the delight of glorifying God and so anticipating the time when we shall enjoy Him forever.

Now, Brethren, if God’s praise has been no wilderness to you, return to it with zest and ardor, and say—“I will yet praise You more and more.” If any suppose that you grow weary with the service of the Lord, tell them that His praise is such freedom, such recreation, such felicity that you desire never to cease from it. As for me, if men call God’s service slavery, I desire to be such a bond slave forever and would gladly be branded with my Master’s name indelibly! I would have my ear bored to the doorpost of my Lord’s house, and go no more out. My soul joyfully sings—

*“Let Your Grace, Lord, like a fetter,*

*Bind my wandering heart to You.”*  
This to me shall be ambition—to be more and more subservient to the Divine honor. This shall be gain—to be nothing for Christ’s sake. This my All in All—to praise You, my Lord, as long as I have any being.

A third reason readily suggests itself. We ought surely to praise God more today than at any other previous day because we have received more mercies. Even of temporal favors we have been large partakers. Begin with these, and then rise higher. Some of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, may well be reminded of the great temporal mercies which have been lavished upon you. You are today in a similar state with Jacob when he said— “with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.”

When you first left your father’s house to follow a toilsome occupation, you had a scant enough purse, and but poor prospects. But where are you now as to temporal circumstances and position? How highly God has favored some of you! Joseph has risen from the dungeon to the throne! David has gone up from the sheepfolds to a palace! Look back to what you were and give the Lord His due. He lifts up the poor from the dust and sets them among princes. You were unknown and insignificant, and now

His mercy has placed you in prominence and esteem. Is this nothing? Do you despise the bounty of Heaven? Will you not praise the Lord more and more for this?

Surely, you should do so, and must do so, or else feel the withering curse which blasts ingratitude wherever it dwells. Perhaps Divine Providence has not dealt with you exactly in that way but with equal goodness and wisdom has revealed itself to you in another form. You have continued in the same sphere in which you commenced life—but you have been enabled to pursue your work—have been preserved in health and strength. You have been supplied with food and raiment, and what is best, have been blessed with a contented heart and a gleaming eye.

My dear Friend, are you not thankful? Will you not praise your heavenly Father more and more? We ought not to overestimate temporal mercies so as to become worldly. But I am afraid there is a greater likelihood of our underestimating them and becoming ungrateful. We must beware of so underestimating them as to lessen our sense of the debt in which they involve us before God. We speak sometimes of great mercies. Come now, I will ask you a question—Can you count your great mercies?

I cannot count mine. Perhaps you think the numeration easy! I find it endless. I was thinking the other day, and I will venture to confess it publicly, what a great mercy it was to be able to turn over in bed. Some of you smile, perhaps. Yet I do not exaggerate when I say I could almost clap my hands for joy when I found myself able to turn in bed without pain. This day, it is to me a very great mercy to be able to stand upright before you. We carelessly imagine that there are but a score or two of great mercies—such as having our children about us—or enjoying health and so on. But in trying times we see that innumerable minor matters are also great gifts of Divine love and entail great misery when withdrawn. Sing, then, as you draw water at the nether springs, and as the brimming vessels overflow! Praise the Lord yet more and more.

But ought we not to praise God more and more when we think of our spiritual mercies? What favors have we received of this higher sort! Ten years ago you were bound to praise God for the Covenant mercies you had even then enjoyed. But now, how many more have been bestowed upon you? How much cheering amid darkness? How many answers to prayer? How many directions in dilemma? How many delights of fellowship? How many helps in service? How many successes in conflict? How many revelations of infinite love?

To adoption there has been added all the blessings of heirship. To justification all the security of acceptance. To conversion, all the energies of indwelling. And, remember, as there was no silver cup in Benjamin’s sack but Joseph put it there, so there was no spiritual good in you till the Lord of Mercy gave it. Therefore, praise the Lord! Louder and louder yet be the song! Praise Him on the high-sounding cymbals! Since we cannot hope to measure His mercies, let us immeasurably praise our God! “I will yet praise You more and more.”

Let us now go on a little farther. We have been proving through a series of years the faithfulness, immutability, and veracity of our God—proving these attributes by our sinning against God and their bearing the strain of our misbehavior—proving them by the innumerable benefits which the Lord has bestowed upon us. Shall all this experience end in no result? Shall there be no advance in gratitude where there is such an increase in obligation? God is so good that every moment of His love demands a life of praise. It should never be forgotten that every Christian, as he grows in Grace, should have a loftier idea of God.

Our highest conception of God falls infinitely short of His Glory, but an advanced Christian enjoys a far clearer view of what God is than he had at the first. Now, the greatness of God is ever a claim for praise. “Great is the Lord, and”—what follows?—“greatly to be praised.” If, then, God is greater to me than He was, let my praise be greater. If I think of Him now more tenderly as my Father—if I have a clearer view of Him in the terror of His Justice—if I have a clearer view of the splendors of His Wisdom by which He devised the Atonement—if I have larger thoughts of His eternal, immutable love—let every advance in knowledge constrain me to say—“I will yet praise You more and more.”

I heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You— therefore while I abhor myself in dust and ashes, my praise shall rise yet more loftily! Up to Your Throne shall my song ascend! I did but see as it were the skirts of Your garment, but You have hidden me in the cleft of the rock Christ Jesus, and made Your Glory pass before me! And now will I praise You even as the seraphs do, and vie with those before the Throne in magnifying Your name! We learn but little in Christ’s school if the practical result of it all is not to make us cry—“I will yet praise You more and more.”

Still culling here and there a thought out of thousands, I would remind you that it is a good reason for praising God more as we are getting nearer to the place where we hope to praise Him, world without end, after a perfect sort. Never have we made these walls ring more joyously than when we have united in singing of our Father’s House on high, and the tents pitched—

*“A day’s march nearer home.”*

Heaven is indeed the only home of our souls, and we shall never feel that we have come to our rest till we have reached its mansions. One reason why we shall be able to rest in Heaven is because we shall there be able perpetually to achieve the object of our creation.

Am I nearer Heaven? Then I will be doing more of the work which I shall do in Heaven. I shall soon use the harp—let me be carefully tuning it—let me rehearse the hymns which I shall sing before the Throne. For if the words in Heaven shall be sweeter and more rich than any that poets can put together here, yet the essential song of Heaven shall be the same as that which we present to Jehovah here below—

*“They praise the Lamb in hymns above,  
And we in hymns below.”*

The essence of their praise is gratitude that He should bleed—it is the essence of our praise, too. They bless Immanuel’s name for undeserved favors bestowed upon unworthy ones, and we do the same.

My aged Brethren, I congratulate you—for you are almost Home! Be yet more full of praise than ever! Quicken your footsteps as the Glory Land shines more brightly. You are close to the gates of pearl! Sing on, dear Brothers and Sisters, though infirmities increase, and let the song grow sweeter and louder until it melts into the infinite harmonies. Shall I need give another reason why we should praise God more and more? If I must, I would throw this one into the scale, that surely at this present juncture we ought to be more earnest in the praise of God, because God’s enemies are very earnest in laboring to dishonor Him.

These are times when scoffers are boundlessly impudent. Did it not make your blood chill when you heard revolutionists in unhappy Paris talk of having “demolished God”? It struck me as almost a sadder thing when I read the proposition of one of their philosophers who would have them become religious again—that they should bring God back again for ten years at least—an audacious recommendation as blasphemously impertinent as the insolence which had proclaimed the triumph of atheism.

But we need not look across the Channel—perhaps they speak more honestly on that side than we do here. For among ourselves we have abounding infidelity which pretends to reverence Scripture while it denies its most plain teachings. And we have what is quite as bad—a superstition which thrusts Christ aside for the human priest—and makes the sacraments everything, and simple trust in the great Atonement to be as nothing.

Now, my Brethren, those who hold these views are not sleepers, nor do they relax their efforts. We may be very quiet and lukewarm about religion (alas, that we should be)—but these persons are earnest propagators of their faith, or no faith—they compass sea and land to make one proselyte. As we think of these busy servants of Satan, we ought to chide ourselves and say—“Shall Baal be diligently served, and Jehovah have such a sleepy advocate? Be stirred, my Soul! Awake, my Spirit! Arouse you at once, and praise your God more and more!”

But, indeed, while I give you these few arguments out of many that come to my mind, the thought cheers my spirit that with those of you who know and love God there is little need for me to mention reasons! For your own souls are hungering and thirsting to praise Him. If you are debarred for a little time from the public service of God, you pant for the assemblies of God’s House, and envy the swallows that build their nests beneath the eaves. If you are unable to accomplish service which you were accustomed to perform for Christ’s Church, the hours drag very wearily along.

As the Master found it His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him, so when you are unable to do that will, you are like a person deprived of his meat and drink and an insatiable hunger grows upon you. O Christian Brothers and Sisters, do you not pant to praise God? I am sure you feel now—“O that I could praise Him better!” You are, perhaps, in a position in which you have work to do for Him, and your heart is saying, “How I wish I could do this work more thoroughly to His praise!”

Or possibly you are in such a condition of life that it is little you can do, and you often wish God would make a change for you—not that it should be one more full of comfort—but one in which you could be more serviceable. Above all, I know you wish you were rid of sin and everything which hinders your praising God more and more. Well, then, I need not argue—for your own heart pleads the holy cause. Suffer me to conclude this head with a fact that illustrates the point.

I know one who has been long privileged to lift his voice in the choir of the great King. In that delightful labor there are none more happy than he. The longer he was engaged in the work the more he loved it. Now, it came to pass that on a certain day this songster found himself shut out of the choir—he would have entered to take his part—but he was not permitted. Perhaps the King was angry. Perhaps the songster had sung carelessly. Perhaps he had acted unworthily in some other matter. Or possibly his Master knew that his song would grow more sweet if he were silenced for awhile. How it was I know not, but this I know, that it caused great searching of heart.

Often this chorister begged to be restored, but he was as often repulsed, and somewhat roughly, too. I think it was more than three months that this unhappy songster was kept in enforced silence with fire in his bones and no vent for it. The royal music went on without him. There was no lack of song, and in this he rejoiced, but he longed to take his place again. I cannot tell you how eagerly he longed. At last the happy hour arrived, the king gave his permit—he might sing again. The songster was full of gratitude, and I heard him say—you shall hear him say it—“My Lord, since I am again restored, I will hope continually, and will yet praise You more and more.”

II. Now let us turn to another point. Let us in the Spirit’s strength DRIVE AWAY THAT WHICH HINDERS US FROM PRAISING GOD MORE AND MORE. One of the deadliest things is dreaminess or sleepiness. A Christian readily falls into this state. I notice it even in the public congregation. Very often the whole service is gone through mechanically. That same dreaminess falls upon many professors and abides with them—and instead of praising God more and more, it is as much as ever they can do to keep up the old strain—and barely that. Let us shake ourselves from all such sleep!

Surely if there were any service in which a man should be altogether and wholly awake, it is in praising and magnifying God! A sleepy seraph before the throne of Jehovah, or a cherub nodding during sacred song? It were ridiculous to imagine! And shall such an insult to the majesty of Heaven be seen on earth? No! Let us say to all that is within us, “Awake! Awake!” The next hindrance would be divided objects. We cannot, however we may resolve, praise God more and more, if, as we grow older, we allow this world to take up our thoughts.

If I say, “I will praise God more and more,” and yet I am striking out right and left with projects of amassing wealth, or I am plunging myself into greater business cares unnecessarily—my actions belie my

resolutions. Not that we would check enterprise. There are periods in life when a man may be enabled to praise God more and more by extending the boundaries of his business. There are persons, however, whom I have known who have praised God right well in a certain condition—but they have not been content to let well enough alone—and they have been for aggrandizing themselves. And they have had to give up their Sunday school class, or the village station, or attendance at the visiting committee, or some other form of Christian service, because their moneygetting demanded all their strength.

Beloved, you shall find it small gain if you gain in this world, but lose in praising God. As we grow older, it is wise to concentrate more and more our energies upon the one thing, the only thing worth living for—the praise of God. Another great obstacle to praising God more is, self-content. And this, again, is a condition into which we may very easily fall.

Our belief is we must not confess our praise when we may be overheard. We are all very fine fellows, indeed. We may confess when we are praying, and at other times that we are miserable sinners—and I daresay we have some belief that it is so—but for all that, there is within our minds the conviction that we are very respectable people and are doing exceedingly well upon the whole. Why, comparing ourselves with other Christians, it is much to our credit that we are praising God as well as we are. Now I have put this very roughly, but is it not what the heart has said to us at times? Oh, loathsome thought—that a sinner should grow content with himself! Self-satisfaction is the end of progress.

Dear Friend, why compare yourself with the dwarfs around you? If you must compare yourself with your fellow men, look at the giants of other days! Better still, relinquish the evil habit altogether! Paul tells us it is not wise to compare ourselves among ourselves. Look to our Lord and Master who towers so high above us in peerless excellence. No, no, we dare not flatter ourselves, but with humble self-condemnation we resolve to praise the Lord more and more.

To rest on the past is another danger as to this matter. We did so much for God when we were young. I occasionally meet with drones in the Christian hive whose boast is that they made a great deal of honey years ago. I see men lying upon their oars today, but they startle me with a description of the impetus they gave to the boat years ago. You should have seen them when they were master-rowers in those former times! What a pity that these Brethren cannot be aroused to do their first works. It would be a gain to the Church, but it would be an equal benefit to themselves.

Suppose God should say, “Rest on the past. I gave you great mercies twenty years ago—live on them.” Suppose the eternal and ever Beloved Spirit should say, “I worked a work in you thirty years ago. I withdraw Myself, and I will do no more.” What would happen to you, then? Yet, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you still have to draw afresh upon the Eternal Fountains, do, I beseech you, praise the ever-blessed Source of all. May God help us, then, to shake off all those things which would prevent our praising Him!

Possibly there is some afflicted one here, in so low a state, so far pressed by poverty or bodily pain that he is saying—“I cannot praise God more and more—I am ready to despair.” Dear Brother, may God give you full resignation to His will, and the greater your troubles the sweeter will be your song. I met in an old Divine a short but sweet story which touched my heart:

A poor widow and her little child were sitting together in great want, both feeling the pinch of hunger and the child looked up into the mother’s face, and said—“Mother, God won’t starve us, will He?” “No, my child,” said the mother, “I do not think He will.” “But, Mother,” said the child, “if He does, we will still praise Him as long as we live, won’t we, Mother?” May those who are gray headed be able to say what the child said, and to carry it out. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” We have received good at the hands of the Lord—shall we not also receive evil? “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” “I will yet praise You more and more.”

III. Very briefly LET US APPLY OURSELVES TO THE PRACTICAL CARRYING OUT OF THIS RESOLUTION. I have given you arguments for it and tried to move away impediments. Now for a little help in the performance of it. How shall I begin to praise God more and more? Earnestness says—“I shall undertake some fresh duty this afternoon.” Stop, dear Brothers and Sisters! Just a minute! If you want to praise God, would not it be as well, first, to begin with yourself?

The musician said—“I will praise God better.” But the pipes of his instrument were foul. He had better look to them first. If the strings have slipped from their proper tension, it will be well to correct them before beginning the tune. If we would praise God more, it is not to be done as boys rush into a bath—head first. No—prepare yourself—make your heart ready. You need the Spirit’s aid to make your soul fit for praising God. It is not every fool’s work. Go, then, to your chamber—confess the sins of the past—and ask the Lord to give you much more Divine Grace that you may begin to praise Him.

If we would praise God more and more, let us improve our private devotions. God is much praised by really devout prayer and adoration. Sermons are not fruits—they are sowings. True song is fruit. I mean this, that the green blade of the wheat may be the sermon, but the wheat ear is the hymn you sing, the prayer in which you unite. The true result of life is praise to God. “The chief end of man,” says the Catechism, and I cannot put it better, “is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.”

And when we glorify God in our private devotion we are answering the true end of our being. If we desire to praise God more, we must ask for Divine Grace that our private devotions may rise to a higher standard. I am more and more persuaded, from my own experience, that in proportion to the strength of our private life with God will be the force of our character and the power of our work for God among men. Let us look well to this. Again, however, I hear the zealous young man or woman saying—“Well, I will attend to what you have said. I will see to private

prayer and to heart work, but I mean to begin some work of usefulness.”

Quite right. But wait a little. I want to ask you this question—Are you sure that your own personal conduct in what you call your everyday life has as much of the praise of God in it as it might have? It is all a mistake to think that we must come here to praise God. You can praise God in your shops, and in your kitchens, and in your bedrooms. It is all a mistake to suppose that Sunday is the only day to praise God. Praise him on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, everyday, everywhere. All places are holy to holy people—and all engagements holy to holy men if they do them with holy motives—lifting up their hearts to God.

And whether a man swings the blacksmith’s hammer, or lays his hand upon the plow tail—that is true worship which is done as unto the Lord and not unto men. I like the story of the servant maid, who, when she was asked on joining the Church, “Are you converted?” “I hope so, Sir.” “What makes you think you are really a child of God?” “Well, Sir, there is a great change in me from what there used to be.” “What is that change?” “I don’t know, Sir, but there is a change in all things. But there is one thing, I always sweep under the mats now.”

Many a time she had hidden the dust under the mat. It was not so now. It is a very excellent reason for believing that there is a change of heart when work is conscientiously done. There is a set of mats in all our houses where we are accustomed to put the dirt away. And when a man gets in his business to sweep from under the mats—you merchants have your mats, you know, when you avoid the evils which custom tolerates but which God condemns—then you have marks of Grace within.

Oh, to have a conduct molded by the example of Christ! If any man lived after a holy sort, though he never preached a sermon or even sung a hymn, he would have praised God. And the more conscientiously he acted, the more thoroughly would he have done so. These inner matters being considered, let us go on to increase our actual and direct service for God. Let us do what we have been doing of Christian teaching, visiting, and so on. But in all let us do more, give more, and labor more. Who among us is working at his utmost, or giving at his utmost? Let us quicken our speed.

Or suppose we are already doing so much that all the time we can possibly spare is fully occupied. Let us do what we do better. In some Christian Churches they do not want more societies, but they want more force put into them. You may trip over the sand of the sea shore and scarcely leave an impression. But if you take heavy steps there is a deep footprint each time. May we, in our service of God, tread heavily and leave deep footprints on the sands of time. Whatever you do, do it heartily! Throw yourselves into it! Do it with all your might.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” Oh, to be enabled to serve God after this fashion—this would be to praise Him more and more! Though I do not say that you can always tell how far a man praises God by the quantity of work that he does for God, yet it is not a bad gauge. It was an old aphorism of Hippocrates, the old physician, that you could judge of a man’s heart by his arm. By which he meant that by his pulse he judged of his heart—and as a rule, though there may be exceptions—you shall tell whether a man’s heart beats truly to God by the work that he does for God.

You who are doing much, do more! And you who are doing little, multiply that little, I pray you, in God’s strength, and so praise Him more and more. We would praise God much more if we threw more of His praise into our common conversation—if we spoke more of Him when we are by the way or when we sit in the house. We should praise Him more and more if we fulfilled our consecration, and obeyed the precept, “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

We would do well if we added to our godly service more singing. The world sings—the millions have their songs. And I must say the taste of the populace is a very remarkable taste just now as to its favorite songs. They are, many of them, so absurd and meaningless as to be unworthy of an idiot. I should insult an idiot if I could suppose that such songs as people sing nowadays would really be agreeable to him. Yet these things will be heard from men, and places will be thronged to listen to hear the stuff.

Now, why should we, with the grand Psalms we have of David, with the noble hymns of Cowper, of Milton, of Watts—why should not we sing as well as they? Let us sing the songs of Zion—they are as cheerful as the songs of Sodom any day. Let us drown the howling nonsense of Gomorrah with the melodies of the New Jerusalem. But to conclude, I would that every Christian here would labor to be impressed with the importance of the subject which I have tried to bring before you. And when I say every Christian, I may correct myself and say, every person here present. “I will yet praise You more and more.”

Why some of you present have never praised God at all! Suppose you were to die today, and soon you must—where will you go? To Heaven? Where would Heaven be to you? There can be no Heaven for you! They praise God in the only Heaven I have ever heard of! The element of Heaven is gratitude, praise, adoration—and you do not know anything of this— therefore it would not be possible for God to make a Heaven for you! God can do all things except make a sinful spirit happy, or violate Truth and Justice. You must either praise God or be wretched forever!

O my Hearer, there is a choice for you—you must either worship the God that made you, or else you must be wretched. It is not that He kindles a fire for you, nor that He casts upon it the brimstone of His wrath, though that is true. But your wretchedness will begin within yourself, for to be unable to praise is to be full of Hell. To praise God is Heaven. When completely immersed in adoration, we are completely filled with felicity. But to be totally devoid of gratitude is to be totally devoid of happiness.

O that a change might come over you who have never blessed the Lord, and may it happen this morning! May the work of regeneration take place now! There is power in the Holy Spirit to change your heart of stone in a moment into a heart of flesh—so that instead of being cold and lifeless, it shall palpitate with gratitude. Can’t you see Christ on the Cross dying for

sinners? Can you look on that disinterested love and not feel some gratitude for such love as is there exhibited? Oh, if you can look to Jesus and trust Him, you shall feel a flash of life come into your soul! And with it shall come praise and then shall you find it possible to begin the happy life, and it shall be certain to you that as you shall praise God more and more, so shall that happy life be expanded, be perfected in bliss.

But Christians, the last word shall be to you. Are you praising God more and more? If you are not, I am afraid of one thing, and that is that you are probably praising Him less and less. It is a certain truth that if we do not go forward in the Christian life, we go backward. You cannot stand still—there is a drift one way or the other. Now he that praises God less than he did, and goes on to praise Him less tomorrow, and less the next day, and so on—what will he get to? And what is he?

Evidently he is one of those that draw back unto perdition, and there are no persons upon whom a more dreadful sentence is pronounced, often spoken of by Paul, and most terribly by Peter and Jude. Those “Trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” The “wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” It would have been infinitely better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, after a fashion, to have turned aside!

Better never to have put their hand to the plow, than having done so, after a sort, to turn back from it. But, Beloved, I am persuaded better things for you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak. I pray that God will lead you on from strength to strength—for that is the path of the just. May you grow in Grace, for life is proven by growth. May you march like pilgrims towards Heaven, singing all the way. The lark may serve us as a final picture, and an example of what we all should be. We should be mounting—our prayer should be, “Nearer, my God, to you.” We should be mounting—our motto might well be, “Higher! Higher! Higher!” As we mount, we should sing, and our song should grow louder, clearer, more full of Heaven. Upward, Brothers and Sisters! Sing as you soar! Upward! Sing till you are dissolved in Glory! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 71.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3022 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S INNUMERABLE MERCIES  
NO. 3022

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 22, 1868.

**“I know not the numbers thereof.”  
Psalm 71:15.**

THE writer of this Psalm describes all the dealings of God with him under the head, “righteousness” and, “salvation.” That description is perfectly accurate, for all that God does for His people is, first of all, in faithfulness to His promise. As He has spoken, so He does. Never, even in the sharpest trial, can the heir of Heaven accuse God of being unfaithful to what He has promised. He told His disciples that they would have to endure tribulation—and when it came, they proved the truth of His prophecy—and everything that God does to us, whether little or great, whether sharp or kind, will prove to have been done in accordance with His faithful Word.

And then the Psalmist calls the dispensations of God’s Providence by the name of salvation. And this term is also the right one, for everything that He does for us who are His people tends to our ultimate salvation. He is working out our deliverance from inbred sin as well as from outward temptation and trial. Very often the darkest days that we have are bright with Divine Mercy, even though we cannot discern the brightness. There is a good reason, a necessity, for all that He sends to us and that reason is to be found in the fact that He intends to present us “faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy.” Open your diaries, Beloved, and write across the record of your daily experiences, “All this is being done to us in righteousness and all this is working out our full salvation.” Never read the book of your life’s history without putting that headline upon every page! Emblazon that motto as an illuminated picture at the beginning of every distinct chapter of your life—and believe that it is all righteousness and all salvation from first to last!

Having thus comprehended all God’s mercies under these two heads, the Psalmist adds, “I know not the numbers thereof.”  
I. In considering these words, let us think, first, of THIS THING WHICH WE DO NOT KNOW, NAMELY, THE NUMBER OF GOD’S MERCIES.  
Have you ever tried to count them? Probably you never did that for even any day in your life. I would like you to undertake that task and to jot down every mercy you receive from God in a single day—from the moment when the eyelids of the morning are opened till the moment when the curtains of the night are drawn. If your judgment were sufficiently enlightened to discern all the items, you would find that your arithmetic would fail to tell the total of them. But, Brothers and Sisters, the days of most of us have been many and there are some here who are approaching the longest period of human life. If the mercies of one day would surpass their computation, what shall we say of the mercies of all these days in which they have been living as gentlemen-commoners upon the bounty of God, pensioners upon the loving kindness and faithfulness of the Most High? Truly, they may say, in the retrospect of all the loving kindness of the Lord, “We know not the numbers thereof.”  
Let me now—not by way of attempting to help you to count the mercies of God, but by way of showing you the utter impossibility of even numbering them—just remind you, first, of the Divine Promises which have been fulfilled to you. They are very many. As you turn over the pages of Sacred Writ, you see them sparkling like grains of gold in the bed of some African or Australian river. God’s Words of promise are there in great abundance, each of them as mighty as those Words of power which built the skies and, in your experience, from first to last, these Words of promise have been fulfilled. It would be a colossal task for you to write out all God’s promises that have been fulfilled to you. Take your Bible and put a pencil mark in the margin for each one that has been proved true to you. Your task will be blessed to your memory and will move you to gratitude. And the most of God’s promises have been fulfilled to us over, and over, and over again! We have taken these promissory notes into the great Bank of Heaven and we have received what was promised in them. But we have taken them to the bank, again, for, strange to say, after the Lord has fulfilled His promise today, that promise still stands good for tomorrow and right on until the end of time! Reckon up the multitude of God’s promises and think of the many times in which those promises have been fulfilled to you and others of His children, for this will help you to realize how innumerable are the mercies of God!  
Think of the mercies of God in another form, namely, the many deliverances which have been vouchsafed to you. You have had deliverances when you knew nothing of your danger, when the Lord— *“Watched over your path  
When, Satan’s blind slave, you sported with death.”*You have had deliverances from sickness when, had death come to you, you would have died unforgiven. You had deliverances, perhaps, in childhood, from many temptations which would have been your lot had you been born under less happy auspices. Then came the great deliverance when your soul was released from the bondage of sin and Satan—and how many deliverances are wrapped up in that one? David says that God delivered him from all his fears—and that day when He delivered us from all our sins, He emancipated us from every yoke of bondage that had rested on us. O happy day of glorious liberty when Christ made us free indeed! Well may, each one of us, sing—

*“Oh happy day, that fixed my choice*

***On You, my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.  
‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done!  
I am my Lord’s and He is mine—  
He drew me and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.  
High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,  
That vow renewed shall daily hear  
Till in life’s latest hour I bow  
And bless in death a bond so dear.”***

From that day onward, our march through the wilderness has been a series of remarkable deliverances and salvations! You have been delivered, dear Friends, from pride—you have been brought low when you were exalted above measure. You have been delivered from depression of spirits—your eyes have been delivered from weeping and your heart from fainting. You have been delivered in your seasons of bereavement. You have been succored in your times of pain and sickness. You have been delivered during the rush of business and you have been delivered in the time of solitary temptations. You have been delivered from self, from sin, from Satan, from the evil that alarmed you and from the more insidious mischief that sought to fascinate you! Until now the Lord has held you up and you have been kept in safety even while passing by the dens of lions, or fighting with Apollyon down in the Valley of Humiliation. Can you count all your deliverances? I feel sure that you must say with the Psalmist, “I know not the numbers thereof.”

Let us think for a minute or two, just to stir up our gratitude to God, of the innumerable mercies attending our very existence. Any physician can tell you what a wonderful thing our life is. Dr. Watts truly wrote—

*“Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And dies if one is gone!  
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings  
Should keep in tune so long!”*

The operations of Nature are conducted in a most intricate manner. The continuation of our life depends upon the slenderest thread—yes, often, upon particles of matter which are so minute as scarcely to be perceived by the eyes! As the blood circulates through our system, there is a risk of death at every beat of our pulse. As the air is inhaled by us, there is a further risk every time our lungs are inflated. I am not an anatomist, neither is it a part of my duty to dissect the fabric of the human body— but those who have searched into it have told us that life is a continued miracle from the cradle to the grave. We cannot even imagine what innumerable mercies, from the crown of our head to the souls of our feet, are concerned in our continuing to still be in the land of the living!

Think, again, of the numberless mercies connected with happy existence—any one of which taken away would make life sadder—many of which removed would make life an intolerable torture. Can you ever pass a lunatic asylum without thanking God that your reason has not left her throne? Can you pass by a place where idiots are dwelling without thanking God that your mind has not become lowered till it has almost ceased to be? Can you go by our great hospitals without blessing God that you are not tossing on a bed that grows hard through unceasing pain? Can you look upon the many diseased folk whom we see in our streets and not thank God for the health you enjoy? I like to feel grateful for every minute that my teeth do not ache, or that my head does not ache, for some of these lesser pains do so distract us that we can scarcely attend to our daily duties! When we have to endure these pains, we think how grateful we should be if they were gone—but when they are gone, we are apt to forget the mercy which has removed them!

Think, dear Friends, of the mercies which have made life happy for you in your domestic circle. “Ah,” say some of you, “but we now have sore sorrows there.” Yes, it may be so, but you ought to think how long you had almost unalloyed happiness! If a man lends you something and after a long while takes it back, you ought not to mourn because he takes it, but to thank him for letting you have it so long! Think of the ten thousand mercies that cluster around a happy fireside. What music there is in that blessed word, “home!” Yes, and with all the troubles that a family may bring, those dear little prattlers bring a world of happiness with them and you ought to be thankful if they are still spared to you— and not only spared, but in robust health, firm of limb, clear in intellect and many of them hopeful and promising in moral and spiritual things! Truly, if I were to attempt to record the mercies that make life happy here below, I would need a vast volume written within and without with thanksgiving! And even then I should have to make the Psalmist’s confession, “I know not the numbers thereof.”

Take another measuring line. Beloved Friends, think of the preventing Providences of God and you have quite another vista opened before you. Walking in the street yesterday, you might have fallen and injured yourselves, for another did so. Sitting even in your house, the deadly fever might have entered—it did go in at a neighbor’s door or window. In travelling, you might have been killed as many others have been, or have been mangled and scarcely escaped with life. We talk of Providences when we have hairbreadth escapes—but are they not quite as much Providences when we are preserved from danger? I have told you before what the old Puritan said to his son who had ridden several miles to meet him. “Father,” said the son, “I have had a remarkable Providence! My horse stumbled badly three times, yet did not throw me.” “Ah, my Son,” said the father, “I have had a still more remarkable Providence than that, for my horse did not stumble once.” We do not think, as we should, of the preventing Providences of God which keep off evil from us. It is a mercy that so many of you are not brought to poverty—that when so many others are out of work, you workingmen are not among the unemployed, but are able to provide for your families. We could probably all make a long list of trials from which we have been preserved and, after making out the list, we would still have to say, “We know not the numbers thereof.”

But when I turn to a still wider field, the best arithmetician must find his powers in vain. Think of the bounties of God’s Grace. Your sins, though many, are all forgiven and every forgiveness a mercy—do any of you know the numbers thereof? The evils which sin has worked in you, all remedied by the Great Physician, or to be ultimately removed by His gracious hand—do you know the numbers thereof? Think now, you are the elect of God—trace the streams of His love up to that Eternal Council in which He planned your redemption and then say, with David, “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.” Besides that, you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ! Do you know the number of mercies included in that one word, “redeemed”? It includes that mercy of mercies—God descending to take our Human Nature into union with Himself! It includes the whole life of Christ and His death upon the Cross—yes, and His Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Glory of His Second Coming—for all this has to do with your redemption! Truly, you know not the numbers thereof! You have also been called by Grace. You resisted God’s calls, perhaps hundreds of times, yet were the sweet persuasions of the Holy Spirit continued until you were at last constrained to yield! And repentance was given to you, faith was worked in you—you were made to pray and your prayers were heard and answered. Do you know the numbers of all these mercies?

Further, the work of sanctification has gone on in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Every good thought you have ever had, every right word you have ever spoken, every holy action you have ever done has been a mercy from God to you! He gave these blessings to you, or else you would never have had them—and I challenge you to try to count this great budget of mercies! Besides all that, you are this day an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ! You have Heaven in reversion, assured to you by the faithful promise of God who cannot lie! Sit down and take your pen and count your mercies if you can. Even as you count them, your mercies multiply—and every beating pulse increases the innumerable multitude of them so that you must utterly despair of counting them! To what shall I liken them? To the countless odors that rise from the garden when the summer’s sun is smiling on the innumerable beauties that are gathered there? Shall I liken them to the drops of dew that sparkle on ten thousand times ten thousand blades of grass? Shall I liken them to the innumerable birds and insects that fly in the air, or to the fishes without number that swim in the seas, or to the beasts untold that wander on the mountains or range the woods and forests? Shall I liken them to the innumerable leaves of autumn that fall when the frost comes, or to the shells or sands upon the seashore, or to the stars of Heaven which no man can number? I know not whereunto to liken God’s mercies to you, for all comparisons fail me—and I can only wonderingly say with the Psalmist—“I know not the numbers thereof.”

II. Now, turning from that to another point—as we know not the numbers of God’s mercies, we need not be surprised that THERE ARE OTHER MATTERS WHICH ARE ALSO BEYOND OUR KNOWLEDGE.

To know the numbers of certain things would not be so difficult as to know their value. My God, I know not the numbers of Your mercies and I do not even know the value of any one of them! If I were to take one of them and try to estimate its worth, I would find that it would exceed all my powers of computation. I have never been able to weigh one of them in the scales and especially Your loving kindness in working by Your Grace in my soul. To have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus— angels, can you tell what a priceless gift this is? Devils, call

 you tell—for you are still covered with sin! Lost spirit in Hell, can you even imagine what it must be to be a forgiven soul? Bright spirits before the Throne of God who have washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—do not even you, who have experienced this wonderful bliss, continue to marvel at the greatness of it? Then, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we need not be surprised that we do not know the value of the mercies which our God has so abundantly bestowed upon us!

It is even more to be regretted that we have never felt due gratitude for the mercies of God to us. We might be forgiven for not being able to number that which reaches almost to the infinite. That would be an imperfection rather than a sin, but alas, we have been so ungrateful that we have not been thankful to God for the favors which He has so liberally showered upon us. They have been buried in forgetfulness and yes, have gone on, from year to year, as if we owed nothing to the Lord, but had received all His good gifts by mere chance! How many men are like the swine that eat the acorns which fall from the oak, but never thank the tree on which they grew, or the God who made it grow? They receive the benisons of Heaven, but thank not the God of Heaven for them as they should. The mercies of God are uncountable—the ingratitude of man is unaccountable! We, Christian men and women, cannot tell how it is that we can be so stolidly indifferent when we ought to be so devoutly thankful to God for all His goodness to us.

And, Beloved, as our gratitude has never kept pace with God’s goodness, I am also sure that our praises have not. How many tongues there are that are blistered through their murmuring and complaining because of the hard lot which God has given them? There are some of us who have learned too well how to make discord, yet who know little about harmonious praise. Yet our God is a good God. Let us say so and stand to it—and repent that we have not said it more often and proclaimed it more publicly among the sons of men! God has been so gracious to us that we cannot count His mercies! May we be pardoned for our past silence concerning them—and henceforth may our mouth be filled with His praise and with His honor all day.

And, my dear Brothers and Sisters, as we have fallen short in our praise, I am sure that we have fallen much more short of anything like a proper return for God’s goodness in our conduct and conversation. If we had been His slaves, we could not have served Him worse than we have done though we are His children. If He had been a tyrant to us, we could scarcely have done less for Him than we have done although He is our Father! I have often felt that I could blot my diary with tears again and again, and again, as I have said to myself—

*“What have I done for Him who died  
To save my guilty soul?  
How are my follies multiplied  
Fast as my minutes roll!  
Much of my time has run to waste,  
My sins how great their sum!  
Lord, give me pardon for the past,  
And strength for days to come!”*

Let these practical reflections abide in your memories, dear Friends. You do not know the number, or the value, or the weight of God’s mercies. You do not feel the gratitude for them that is due. You do not give to God the praise that is fitting, nor live the life that is consistent with His goodness to you. Here are reasons for deep humiliation and for seeking the Grace that will enable us to mend our ways.

III. Now, lastly, while there are these things which we do not know, THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH WE DO KNOW, which ought to increase our thankfulness.

First, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you and I know very well the source from which all these mercies come to us. We cannot count them, but we know that they all spring from the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord towards His own people. We can trace every one of these sacred drops of mercy to the Fountain of God’s discriminating, distinguishing Love. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. It was according to the greatness of His loving kindness to us, before the earth was, that He chose us to be a people to show forth His praise—a people to be “filled with all the fullness of God.” Let us trace even our common mercies up to this source and let us especially see the love of God in every spiritual gift that we receive, for so shall we be moved to praise and bless Him more than we have ever yet done!

Further, we know the channel through which every mercy comes to us. It comes through our blessed Lord and Mediator, Jesus Christ. And— *“There’s never a gift His hand bestows  
But cost His heart a groan.”*

I like to see the mark of my Master’s sufferings upon every jewel with which He adorns my spirit—to know that if I am righteous, it is in His righteousness! If I am washed, it is in His blood! If I am saved, He is my Savior! If I am fed, He is my food. If I am glad, He is my crown of joy and if I ever enter Heaven, He will be my bliss forever! All-in-All is He to His people—everything comes to us through Him—so that we have a reason for gratitude in the way in which the mercy comes to us as well as in the mercy itself! We do not know the numbers of God’s mercies to us, but we do know that every one of them comes to us by way of the Cross and bears the mark of the Redeemer’s blood upon it!

We do not know the number of God’s mercies, but we do know the rule of them. That is to say, we know that they are always sent in love. If they seem to be stinted, it is love that stints them. And if they are increased, it is love that increases them. The whole of the day God’s Love is shining upon us and when the natural sun has gone to its rest, there is no harmful moon to smite, us, but the same Love of God makes it light within our soul. If the Lord chastens me, it is because He loves me. If He takes away your child, your husband, or yourself, Believer, it is because He loves you! The rule of every mercy is the great rule of our Father’s wisdom, our Father’s faithfulness, our Father’s affection!

We know, also, with regard to all God’s mercies, the design of them. We know that they are all sent to us to be tokens of His Love and helps in our journey to Heaven. In addition to the mercy and the love that gives it, and the way by which it comes, there is a blessed end that sanctifies it all. The Lord said to Israel, concerning the Angel whom He promised to send with them, “He shall bless your bread and your water.” Oh, to have the common mercies of life so blessed that they become spiritual helps to us! It can be so, for it is the design of God—in all that He sends to us—to bring us nearer to Him.

Then, we know, over and above all this, the grand climax of it all. I know not the numbers thereof, but I know, my God, that when I shall have received my last mercy on earth, I shall receive my first enjoyment in Heaven! When I shall have had the last blessing of this mortal life, I shall have the first blessing of the life everlasting! When the goodness and the mercy that have followed me to the brink of Jordan shall cease, I shall have angels there to escort me up to the celestial hills, and to admit me to my Savior’s Presence where there are pleasures forevermore! It is an endless chain, Beloved! When it has seemed to conclude in one place, it begins in another. David said, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” And what did he say next?—“And I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.” Forever to behold the face of their Father, in His House above, is the portion of all the children of God!

After all that I have said, I hope you will all say that a Christian’s life is a happy one. It is! It is! We have our cross to carry. We have our daily sorrows, losses and trials—but each one of us can say, with Dr. Watts—

*“I would not change my blest estate,*

*For all that earth calls good or great!”*  
We enter our Master’s service and accept the cross and all He gives us. We take the road to Heaven with all its thorns and briers. Yes, let what will come, He is so good and blessed a God who has made Himself to be His people’s portion that if the rod is a part of the Covenant, then blessed be the rod and the hand that wields it—and let the Lord be praised from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, since God is never wearied in giving, let us never be wearied in serving Him! Let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord! Since He never stays His hand in bestowing mercies upon us, let us never stay our patient endurance of any of the ills of life that He is pleased to send us. And since His mercy will continue with us as long as we are here, let us never cast away our confidence in Him! Let us stay ourselves upon Him and fall back into His arms when we are weary. If we faint, let us faint on His bosom.

I wish that all of us here, constantly receiving, as we do, so many mercies, had more thought of the hands and heart from which they come. Alas! Alas! With many, “the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib,” but these people do not know God! Feed a dog and he will get to know you. But there are men and women who know not the God who made them and in whose hands their breath is! Let this text abide with you—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.” You have not done anything amiss, you say. You do not drink, or swear, or lie, but, “all the nations that forget God” are to have the same portion as “the wicked” will have. Beware, you that forget God! And if you would remember Him, the easier way to do that is to see His love in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ! Think of Jesus bleeding for sinners. Trust yourself to Jesus and so you shall be saved, for, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.”

May God bless you all, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 71.**

This Psalm, written by an old man, is especially suitable for an old man. It is numbered seventy-one and it may suit those who have reached that age—but it is also appropriate to us all in prospect of the days of feebleness that will come to us, sooner or later, if we are spared to grow old.

Verse 1. In You, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. “Stand by me, O Lord, for I only stand as You uphold me—and if You should leave me, after I have trusted in You—what could I say or do? Therefore, O Jehovah, since I put my trust in You, ‘let me never be put to confusion.’”

2. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape. “I am like a poor dove taken in a net—I cannot get away. Stretch out Your hand, O Lord, and tear the net and so deliver me, and cause me to escape. I cannot do anything for myself, except pray to You to deliver me.”

2 *.*Incline Your ear unto me, and save me. “My prayer is weak. Therefore, O Lord, bend Your ear down to my lips, that You may catch my faintest words. Listen to my lisping, O Lord, and save me.”

3. Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress. If David wrote this Psalm after the rebellion of his wicked son, Absalom, I think there is an instructive illustration here. You remember that when the troops went out from Mahanaim to fight with Absalom, David commanded the three captains of the host—Joab, Abishai and Ittai—“Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.” They might slay his followers, but he commanded them to spare him. Alas, David’s command was ineffectual, for Joab slew Absalom! But God’s command was certain to be obeyed, so the Psalmist wrote, “You have given commandment to save me,” with the full assurance that he would be saved. And all God’s people can say to Him, “You have commanded angels and men, ‘Touch not My anointed, and do My Prophets no harm.’” And each Believer can say to Him, “You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress.”

4, 5. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hands of the wicked, out of the hands of the unrighteous and cruel man. For You are my hope, O Lord GOD: You are my trust from my youth. Happy is the man who can truthfully say that, “You are my trust from my youth.” God does not cast off His old servants, as men often do. Those who give Him the best of their days will not find that He will desert them when the feebleness of age creeps over them.

6. By You have I been held up from the womb: You are He that took me out of my mother’s womb: my praise shall be continually of You. We do not think, as often as we should, of what we owe to God for His care over us at the time of our birth. Our mothers returned thanks on their own behalf and ours, but, as we look back, we are bound to return thanks, too, for that kindly care of God in our most extreme weakness—when the little candle of life was scarcely lighted and might have been so easily blown out. Then, as God took care of us in our first infancy, do you not think that He will take care of us when we get into our second childhood? We are never likely to be quite as weak as we were then, but, as the Lord guarded us at that time, will He not guard us in those dark days which are already looming before some of us? Of course He will! Therefore, be of good courage, for He shall strengthen your heart and your praise shall be continually of Him.

7. I am as a wonder unto many. A prodigy to some, a monster to others, a marvel, a mystery, a riddle to all, but here is the solution to the problem that puzzles so many.

7. But You are my strong refuge. Even the weak are strong when God is their refuge! The most defenseless are safe when God is their defense. Wonder not at the mysterious life of a Christian, for this Truth of God explains the mystery—“You are my strong refuge.”

8. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all day. What a blessed mouthful, and what a sweet mouthful this is—and what a blessed means of keeping the mouth from saying unkind, slanderous, or murmuring words!

9, 10. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails. For my enemies speak against me and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together. When the lion is sick, every cur is bold enough to bark at him. Men were afraid of David when he was strong, but when he grew feeble, they began to howl at him and gather round him like a pack of hounds around a wounded stag. Worst of all, they uttered this monstrous lie, which was most grievous to David’s heart.

11. Saying, God has forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. If they had possessed even ordinary compassion, they would have said, “Since there is none to deliver him, let us not attack him. If God has forsaken him, he is in misery enough, so let us try to comfort him.” But, instead of doing this, they acted after the fashion of their father, the devil, who has no tenderness and nothing of a compassionate spirit within him.

12. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. Notice the still more intense grip of faith in the second clause. The Psalmist first says, “O God,” then He says, “O my God.” It is grand pleading when we so grasp God with the personal grip of faith that we cry, “O my God, make haste for my help.”

13, 14. Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt. But I will hope continually, and still yet praise You more and more. Hoping and praising are among the very best styles of living. Hoping honors God in secret—and praising honors Him in public. Oh, for more of these two good things!

15. My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. When David spoke of those who hated him without a cause, he said that they were more than the hairs of his head. He could not count them, but he went as near to doing so as he could. But when he began to speak of God’s mercies as displayed in His righteousness and His salvation, he did not draw any comparison, or attempt to number them. This is a calculation in which we are utterly lost—our system of numeration fails us altogether when we come to deal with the loving kindness of the Lord!

16. I will go in the strength of the LORD GOD: I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only. He did not reckon that any other righteousness was worth mentioning—and certainly not his own. The best of men, those who have been the most noted for their good works, have always been the first to feel that they had no works in which they could put any trust! One godly man, when he was dying, said to a friend, “I have been trying to separate my good works and my evil works from one another, but I have found the task too great for me—so I have thrown them all overboard and now I will float to Heaven upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.”

17. O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I

declared Your wondrous works. [Mr. Spurgeon delivered a remarkable discourse upon this text, illustrating the theme from his own early experience. See Sermon No. 2318, Volume 39—GOD’S PUPIL, GOD’S PREACHER—AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org. ] I pray very earnestly for you young people, and I beg you to pray for yourselves, that you may have the great privilege of being able to say with the Psalmist, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” They make good scholars who go to school early and keep at school long—and have such a blessed Schoolmaster as the Psalmist had—“O God, You have taught me.” David’s mother taught him much that was good, but it was still better for him to have God as his Teacher. Then, after being a scholar, he became a pupil-teacher. He still went on learning, but he also began to teach—“Until now have I declared Your wondrous works.” All God’s scholars ought to be pupil-teachers, always learning more and more from Him, and then teaching others all that they learn.

18. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shown Your strength unto this generation, and Your power to everyone that is to come. Old men ought to tell younger men what God has done for them. There is great weight in the testimony of a godly man of ripe experience. Full of years, he speaks of what he knows, and testifies of what he has seen, tasted and handled of the Truth of God. We need many a Nestor in the camp of Christ, whose valor in former times and whose experience in days of battling for the right may inspire with valor the younger men to whom he speaks!

19. Your righteousness, also, O God, is very high, who has done great things: O God, who is like unto You? The more we know of God, the less we think of all others. We sink ourselves out of sight and all other creatures seem to be as nothing in comparison with our God.

20. You, which have shown me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth. This we shall experience in part even in our present lifetime, but we shall much more fully experience it on the Resurrection Morning—

*“When Christ His risen saints shall bring From beds of dust, and silent clay,  
To realms of everlasting day.”*

21. You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. Think of poor old David talking like this when he was driven into exile and many of his former friends had forsaken him—“‘You shall increase my greatness.’ I shall get good out of this evil. I shall rise by this fall. I shall be a gainer by these losses.”

22. I will also praise You with the psaltery, even Your Truth, O my God. “When I have proved Your Truth. When my joyful experience has proved that every promise of Yours is true to Your servant, then I will praise both yourself and Your Truth, O my God.”

22, 23. Unto You will I sing with the harp, O You Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto You. That is the best kind of praise to God when our very lips are happy in singing—when we do not merely speak the sound, but when the meaning wells up from our heart and our lips are glad to sing it out.

23, 24. And my soul, which You have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all daylong: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame that seek my hurt.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2164 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH’S FIRM RESOLVE  
NO. 2164

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 18, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.”  
Psalm 71:16.**

This is a Psalm of David’s old age and we will carefully notice the characteristic feature of it. It is not addressed to men concerning God, but it is addressed to God Himself, for He was David’s dearest Friend. Our Psalms and hymns are not for man’s criticism, but for the Lord’s acceptance. This is the tenor of the Psalm—David has been with his God and he is now ready for anything. This grand old man, in his later days, is exposed to enemies quite as fierce as those which he had to encounter in his earlier times, but instead of gathering his friends together and conversing with them, and seeking their counsel, he gets quite alone and begins to cry, “In You, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.”

Trusting alone in God makes us grandly independent towards men. The man of God shuts the door—he realizes that the Lord is in the chamber with him and he speaks to Him, saying, “Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: You have given commandments to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress.” He pours out his heart before God and pleads with Him, “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.” It is a delightful sight! There are two in the room, though you can only see one with the natural eye. The man whom you see, discerns another, a great and glorious One and he talks with Him “as a man talks with his friend.”

Is this a fancy picture to you, my Brother, my Sister? Is this merely a sketch of something which happened ages ago? Have you not often been one in that scene? I know that I have been there and I trust that it has been so with you. These are the choicest joys we know—these lone communings with Jehovah, our God! That room where we are alone with God is the nearest to Heaven of any place between here and Paradise! I wish that we more often enjoyed communion with closed doors. We might. Why don’t we? Whatever we gain by occupying our time otherwise can, at the best, be only compared to silver—but this is the golden way of spending our hours!

When we are with God, we have the All-in-All for company and He fills our minds better than a thousand finite beings could do. The Lord our God has filled our heart and filled our room—and filled the universe for us—and we are overflowing with blessedness! It is good to come here and mingle with God’s people in public worship. As my well-beloved Brother,

Mr. Williams, said in prayer just now—many a Thursday night have the saints of God come in here burdened and they have gone away lightened, for God has met with them! Our Thursday nights are little Sabbaths in the middle of the week—resting places between the Sundays—oases in the desert of our toil.

But there is something closer and less likely to be a mere form—our private meetings with God. I pray you, make many secret appointments with your Lord and keep them! Have many trysting places where you and your Well-Beloved meet. I am certain that it will be imperative upon you to meet Him whenever you are in sore trouble—your sense of need will drive you to it. I do not know that Jacob ever spent a whole night with God till he was about to meet his brother Esau and was in great fear that he would smite the mother with the children. Then it was that he said—

*“With You all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.”*

I guarantee you Jacob was a greater gainer by that fright than if he had never heard a whisper of opposition! It was well for him that he had an Esau, with armed men, to drive him to his God. He could say afterwards, “It was good for me to have been afflicted.” Anything that brings us into close fellowship with God, however evil in itself, works for us the grandest form of good.

Now, if there are any here very much like David. If they are growing old and if, being aged, they are also surrounded by slander, persecution and reproach, let them see what David did. If they are met by great difficulties and even by malicious adversaries, let them go where David went! Go and sit before the Lord and pour out your heart before Him. I think I see David sitting there, naturally full of sorrow—an old man, compassed with infirmities and, at the same time, bowed down with troubles—and there he is rejoicing in the faithful God, of whom he says, “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have showed Your strength unto this generation and Your power to everyone that is to come.”

He has realized the Presence of his God in secret and his troubles are laid before God in prayer. Gradually they subside. He began to speak very hopefully. Now he rises from hope to a joyful confidence. The old man goes on talking there, as some would say, “to himself.” But we know better—he was conversing with his God—and before that hallowed interview is over he has reached such a happy state of mind that he says, “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto You.” His fingers long to join his lips and he is looking for his psaltery and his harp that instrumental music may aid his tongue and that so he may praise God with all his might!

Communion with God is a great maker of music so that he who went into the chamber halting, comes out leaping. He that meets God with tears in his eyes, comes forth from holy solitude with songs in his mouth. May it be so with you! When you are far away from any house of prayer where you are likely to hear what will comfort and bless you, go to God straightway and tell Him all that is in your heart. Forget minister and congregation and go straight to Him who is far greater than Churches and pastors! Pour out your troubles where they will meet with Divine sympathy. Confess your trust into His ear who is never weary of His people’s voice and you shall have found the greatest strength that is to be found this side of Heaven! And you shall sing, “You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.”

Taking as my text this particular verse in David’s talk with God, I want you to notice, first of all, his resolve—“I will go.” Secondly, his reliance—“I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” And thirdly, his message, which he intends to deliver always —“I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.”

I. Now, here is, first, HIS RESOLVE. “I will go,” he says. From this it is clear that he will not sit still. Look! He has come a long way already and he is getting weary and faint. The flesh suggests to him that he has had enough of it, while the devil hints to him that he has done too much already and that the best thing he can do now is to give up struggling, battling, warring and contending, and just sit down and let things go as they will.

Do you not hear the advice of Unbelief, “Let affairs drift. You cannot help yourself, old man! You have got into a very sad condition. Give up your confidence in Heaven. Perhaps you have been under a delusion all these years and trust in this God of yours is sheer fanaticism. Do not go on with it! Be reasonable, like the many that are round about you who are criticizing and amusing themselves—and while professing everything—are believing nothing. Give up the contest and drop the sword with which you contend for your Master and let things go as they may.” So whispers Satan. So murmurs the flesh. So advises the worldly friend.

The brave old man gets up, and cries, “No, I will go! I will not sit still. I will not give it up. I have not finished my lifework. I have more to do. I have further testimony to bear for my Master. I shall not idly quit the field, but still bear the battle’s brunt. I shall not quit the pilgrimage—I will go, even now, though it is with tottering footsteps. Bring me my staff. I will go with the rest of the chosen company. I have not been behind in the marches of the past, for I have led the way as a leader of God’s people. I have sung unto His name and taught the host to sing that His mercy endures forever. Shall I now turn tail? Shall I now linger in the rear? No,” he says, “I will go.”

Look! He girds himself once again to follow the Lord and he goes forward as bravely as when he first started on his pilgrim way! That picture is no imaginary sketch. It has occurred to ourselves. It is a likeness taken but a few days ago. Dear Friend, it may be a photograph of you. Some of you of very cheerful spirit, always bright and jubilant, do not know what it is to get discouraged. But there are others of another temperament who at times are sorely put to it and they are tempted to abstain from the Lord’s service. Prudence makes the man say, “Really, I have undertaken more

than I can accomplish.”

As our dear Friend said in prayer, there are many of the Lord’s servants who have work to do for which they feel quite unfit and, while they are under such a feeling, the hint comes to them, “Get out of it, or you will come down with a run. You are like a man walking on a tightrope—if you once get to the other end alive, never try it again, or you will regret it. That simple reliance on God—why, it is like standing on the top of a church spire—it needs a very cool head and a miraculous nerve. You will make a slip one of these days and then religion will be laughed at through you.” So says Unbelief! But it is a grand thing if, in the moment of discouragement, the child of God can gather himself up again, gird up the loins of his mind and, in holy sobriety, hope to the end and say, in the language of the text, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will not be kept back by the world, the flesh, or the devil.”

It is my impression that David meant, “ I will go to war.” He was a man of war from his youth up and, of course, after many years of fighting, which is by no means pleasant work—and after many serious risks, it might naturally suggest itself to the aged man that he had better quit the tented field. Yet the old man would go. In fact, he went to battle so long that, one day, in the midst of the fight, he fainted and then his people insisted upon it that he should not go any more, for they saw that it would be out of all character to let the old man expose himself to certain death. Did they not say to him, “You are worth 10,000 of us”? If he were to fall, the very Light of Israel would be quenched. But there was “fight” in the old lion till the very last. The same spirit that made him go as a boy to fight with Goliath still burned in him when he became an old man and he still said, “I will go.”

When he could not literally go to any physical conflict, you can see that to the end he fought for God and for truth, by his laws, his government, his influence, and his prayers. When he could not do one thing he did another. His enemies that gathered about him to destroy him found that they had a very difficult task before them, for it was not true, though they said it, that the Lord was no longer on his side. They told a lie when they uttered that cruel taunt, “God has forsaken him.” And they proposed more than they could carry out when they said, “Persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him.” David turned a bold front towards them to the very last, setting his face like a flint, resolving that he would administer justice and maintain the cause of God in Israel as long as he lived.

Well, dear Friends, you are not called to be soldiers in the literal sense—the most of you, at any rate—but you are called to be soldiers of the Cross. These are fighting times and no one must back out of the conflict. Be not cowards! Be not neutrals. Show your colors and fear no opposition. Every day wear the red Cross on your arm, by avowing your faith in the atoning blood. Still have a good word for Christ and the old, old Gospel. Be not ashamed of the doctrines of Grace, nor of those who make a stand for them. Still “contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.” And still say—“I will go in the strength of the Lord God, to make mention of His righteousness, and of it only.”

The text may be used in many senses. “I will go in the strength of the Lord,” may mean that he will go forward and make progress in Divine things. I will go on studying the Word of God to get a clearer apprehension of its meaning. I will go forward pleading with the Lord to prove more effectually the power of prayer. I will go on subduing evil habits. I will put down, by God’s strength, this sin and that. I will go forth conquering and to conquer against the world, the flesh and the devil, where ever I am called to encounter. I will not be content with present attainments. I will not rest in any joy that I have yet known, nor be content with any measure of holiness which God has granted me. As the eagle cries, “Superior,” and spreads its wings to meet the sun, so will I rise higher and higher, singing—

*“Nearer, my God, to You,  
Nearer to You.”*

I know that some think it perilous work to climb into the higher form of spiritual life and to aim even at perfection, but I will not flinch from it. If I do not reach it, yet will I aspire to it. I will go. “I will go in the strength of the Lord.” Don’t you think that large numbers of God’s people are content with a very poor form of spiritual life because they do not think it possible to advance further? They have little joy and little strength because they are content with the joy and strength they have and do not aspire to more. We make a great mistake, dear Friends, some of us, as to the whole style of our life! I met with a story, which seemed to me a rather pretty one.

There was a young woman, fair to look upon, who was seen by a very wealthy man who determined to make her his wife. She had been brought up to habits of rigid economy, for the family was straitened in circumstances. Her father was not of the very poorest, certainly, but still poor enough. And on her marriage day he gave her all that he could afford, namely, five pounds, and that was put into the bank. Her husband, on that day, told her that he had placed money in the bank in her name and he handed her a checkbook, that she might draw out whatever money she desired. Well, having been properly brought up, she spent her money very, very carefully.

Five pounds was an enormous sum to her and she felt frightened at running through so vast a sum. She found, however, that in the circle in which she was called to move, her five pounds was at last gone and so she even ventured to draw a check for 10 pounds. In considerable fear she went down in the carriage to the bank to see whether they really would give her 10 pounds all at a time. And when she got it she was surprised and overjoyed. She drew again, until at last she had actually spent 50 pounds! One day her husband said to her, “Don’t you know how to manage a checkbook, my dear? I scarcely understand your account at the bank.”

She modestly replied, “I hope I have not been extravagant.” “You little goose,” he said, “I put a thousand pounds in the bank for you and I thought that you would soon spend it. Most women would. But instead of

that, you have only spent 50 pounds. You cannot behave yourself as my wife on such a pittance. Remember, you may be a poor man’s daughter, but you are a rich man’s wife—so just begin to spend according to my riches and not according to your father’s economy.” This is our case in reference to our Lord Jesus. We know we are a poor man’s children. My original father “broke” long ago. There was nothing left of all the family estate. When father Adam was in business, he became a bankrupt and he left us nothing but a sea of debt.

But then we are married to King Jesus, who is heir of all things and He puts the checkbook of the promises into our hands that we may draw from the riches of Divine Grace! Do not let us live according to our natural quality, but let us live according to our supernatural elevation and begin to spend according to the wealth of our Husband! Very few women need encouragement to spend money—but very many Christian women and Christian men need very great encouragement to draw upon the goodness of God—and to live at that high and noble rate of Divine Grace to which they are entitled by the election of God, by the call of the Holy Spirit and by their heavenly union with the Lord Jesus Christ!

I wish that we could pluck up courage and say, “I will go in for great Grace, eminent holiness and close conformity to Christ. I will draw upon His riches in Glory and spend at a royal rate. Why should I not show forth all that Grace can do? Is there any reason why I should be weak and wavering? I would be as David, yes, as my Lord. Yes, I will rouse myself, the Holy Spirit helping me, and I will seek the highest and best things that a Christian man can know. I will go.”

Let us cheerfully use this text whenever any service is proposed to us. A young man has been asked to preach at a small cottage meeting. He has been hesitating during the last two or three days whether he shall or not. I want him to feel that if this is a work in which he can glorify God he should say, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” There is a Sister, here, who has been invited to take a class of young women. She thinks that she is hardly fitted for the Bible class proposed to her and yet she is the only person available and evidently the finger of God points to her. I want her to say, with David, “I will go in the strength of the Lord.”

Have you rendered no service to your Savior? Have I the unhappiness to be addressing some member of a Church who has really done nothing for the Redeemer? Do you understand what the Gospel is? Do you know what its effect upon the heart is? If so, how can you remain idle? I do not understand you or your religion! A man who is saved—who is saved—who has no longer to live with a view to his own salvation but is saved—what can he do but feel, “Bought with Your blood, my gracious Lord, I belong to You and now I must spend all my days in serving You”? It is an instinct of the Christian life to wish to be doing something to glorify God and to save the souls of others! If you have not that instinct, I should question whether you are really born of God at all.

Can hard hearts have been renewed? Will the Lord own sluggards as His children? Did the heavenly Husbandman really plant an utterly barren tree? Be it so, that, up to now you have done nothing. May the Holy Spirit at once awaken you and may you say, before you leave this Tabernacle—“I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Your righteousness”!

We have also before us a man who will go to suffering with holy resignation. A sister, just now, sent a letter asking us to pray for her while she undergoes an operation. May the Lord sustain her! It is a prayer we often have to put up in this large congregation for some of the very dearest and best among us. Dear Friends, the text is for you with regard to the suffering you have to encounter—may you go forward to it without fear! Some of us have to take turns at the two forms of appointed exercise—we are sometimes serving, sometimes suffering—and occasionally we carry a pair of baskets and both work and suffer.

The Lord will be with us under every form of trial—He will sustain us under personal pain, or bereavement, or business care, or cruel persecution. Therefore, Believer, do not linger, but say, “I will go, I will go”—

*“If but my fainting heart be blest  
With Your sweet Spirit for its guest,  
My God, to You I leave the rest;  
‘Your will be done!’”*

Grand words were those of our Lord when, the supper being ended and the next thing was the bloody sweat, He said, “Arise, let us go from here”! He does not merely wait for the trial to come, but He advances to take up His Cross and to bear the grief which was laid upon Him by His Father. So let us say tonight, “I do not know how dark the rest of my way may be. I see that it is covered with thorns and briars, but in the Lord’s name, solemnly, in syllables spoken each one of them in deep determination, I declare that I will go in the strength of the Lord.”

Beloved, may it be so when we come to die! In a short time, unless the Lord shall come, you and I will have to go upstairs and gather up our feet in the bed and die to meet our fathers’ God. Well, if it should happen to be some disease which gives us warning and opportunity to think beforehand—we will go onward, with death in full view—without any trepidation in the strength of the Lord! Some of us know what it is to lie for days and weeks, looking into eternity, till our eyes have been able to gaze steadily on death and all the future. We have grown so used to the prospect and so peaceful in reference to it that we have almost been sorry to come back again to life and its trials and sins! When we are so prepared and even so jubilant at the prospect of passing into the world of spirits, we almost reluctantly turn our face earthward again.

When the time does actually arrive, our God will give us Grace to say, “I will go. I will go. My Lord has called me over the river and I will go. I hear His sweet and mighty voice saying, ‘Arise, My Love, My fair one and come away’! I answer to it gladly, My Master, I will come.” I will go in the strength of the Lord God. Perhaps I have said enough upon this point.

May we be ready to march when the trumpet sounds! Without fear or question may we say at once, “Where He leads me I will follow.”

II. Now, secondly, notice HIS RELIANCE. He is ready to go, but he tells us how—“I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” He would go glorying in strength already received. Deep down in the middle of the words (I cannot give you the critical way in which we come at it, but it is so), David means that while others put on their garments and array themselves in beauty, he will put on the strengths of Jehovah (it is in the plural), and they shall make garments for him. It is a wonderful picture to me. While others glory in another strength, he takes God’s might as it has been displayed in his past career and he puts it on as his armor.

He would not wear Saul’s armor, nor any fabric of carnal wisdom, neither now nor when he went against Goliath. He said to the giant, “I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts.” He put on as a coat of mail the secret strength of God which he had verified and demonstrated in his own past career when he slew the lion and the bear. What a wonderful thing it is for a child of God to stand clothed with those garments of Glory and beauty which are made up of what God has worked in him and worked for him! How happy is he to be renewed in might by remembering the strength of God which he has up to now experienced! These are a fit marching dress for his soul to wear! He may go forward to his future without fearing—who has such a past to reflect upon!

David means that he would go relying upon a strength which did not alter. The Source from which we draw our strength, dear Friends, is as full of Omnipotence as when David drew from it—certainly as full as when we went to it in our younger days! Our own strength is much less as our years increase, but it is not so with the Lord strong and mighty! Where we could have traversed a county, we now weary with a mile. Old men find that they cannot do what they once did, but God can do all things evermore. Our own strength is a cistern soon drained dry, but we need not thirst for we can tap the great “deep that lies under.” Our faith knows how to bore an Artesian well when surface water fails. Let us bore deep and then the stream will flow in summer and in winter, never frozen, never parched—and we may be always “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

So David means that he would go in the all-sufficiency and the immutable power of the Most High. He felt that he would go, also, in a power which sanctified his going. “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” Where will a man go in that strength? To the theater? Verily, it is a sort of constructive blasphemy to imagine a Christian’s going there in the strength of the Lord! Will he enter upon a speculation in which he will, in all probability, rob other people if he succeeds and injure others if he is disappointed? No, not in the strength of the Lord God! There are a thousand things that a man could not think of doing in the strength of the Lord God and yet professing men venture upon them, to their sin and shame. In the strength of the devil a man might attempt many of the doubtful enterprises and amusements of modern professors—but in the strength of the Lord God—no. It were profanity to talk of it.

Do you see what a limit this puts upon a Christian’s action? And yet it is no limit which in the least restricts his gracious liberty. It is such a boundary as he himself would set up. You are strong to do what you ought to do and it is only what you ought to do that you would wish to attempt in the strength of the Lord God. You are weak if you transgress, for the strength is gone from you when you attempt to do what would dishonor God. And is not this as it should be? Is it not just as you wish it to be? Come, Beloved, you see that not only did David get strength, but he obtained holiness, also, from the Lord his God for, if he would go in the holy strength of the most holy God, he could not go amiss.

Again, in this text I notice that he is confident as to the sufficiency and adaptation of God’s strength to every trial or work to which he might be called. The Hebrew, being plural, hints at this. “I will go in the strengths of the Lord God.” If I shall require mental vigor, God can give it to me. If I shall need physical strength, He can give it to me. If I shall need spiritual power, He can give it to me. If the particular demand is a clear sight that I may detect and baffle the cunning of the enemy, He can give it to me. If I require courage and quick resolve, He can give them to me. If my special need is firmness of mind in the day of temptation, He can give it to me. If it is a patient temper, He can give it to me. Nothing is needed by a Believer but that which the strength of God supplies when it is needed!

As our days our strength shall be. We shall find the supply always equal to the demand. “Oh,” says one, “my way is very strange. I could not tell you the singular difficulty of my case.” Dear Friend, I do not wish to know the particulars, but I am sure that however strange the case is to me and to you, it is not new to God! If you go in the strength of the Lord God, you have exactly that which is suited for your perplexing path of pilgrimage. It is one of the miracles of God that to each man He is just such a God as he needs. It is like the Welsh woman that I spoke to you about on Monday night. She would have it that Jesus Christ was not a Jew—she was certain that He was a Welshman!

But how was that? How could the Lord Jesus Christ be a Welshman? She answered, “He always speaks to my heart in Welsh.” Truly, good Woman, He always speaks to my heart in English and he speaks to the heart of each man in his own mother tongue so that the miracle of Pentecost is repeated in our fellowship with Jesus and every man hears in his own language the wonderful Grace of God! Jesus knows how to adapt His Truth, not only to each nationality, but to each personality and to each peculiarity of that personality. Jehovah is the special God and the special Strength of each individual Christian. He is my God and my father’s God, as well as your God—and no other could be so expressly suitable to me as I find the Lord my God to be. It is a wonderful thing and we ought to render personal thanksgiving for it.

Now I will dwell for just a minute practically upon this. This text, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God,” should rise to the lips of everybody here who is engaging in new service. You are attempting what you have

never tried before. Come, now, see to every buckle of your harness and every portion of your armor. You can see to it all at once by saying, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” Possibly you are in great weariness tonight. “I cannot do any more,” you say. “The fact is, I am beginning to feel that I am an old man.” Yes, but perhaps you are feeling this in two ways—there is another old man besides old age—and when you begin to feel weary in well doing, may not the old nature have a finger in it as well as the old body? Now is the time to rouse yourself out of lethargy, shake off sinful sloth and declare with determination, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.”

Or, possibly, you have come to a fresh peril. You have reached a very hard bit of the road where real danger lurks. I remember that, in going over the Grimsel, we came to a place which was called “Hell Place.” It was a narrow road by the side of a precipitous gorge. The way was very slippery and the horses began to slip about. We soon dismounted and then we had to walk over a bit of rock which was as smooth as ice. You come to such a place now and then in the road of life and you feel more than half inclined to go back. But you must not go back. Believers may not go back. It is written, “If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” You must, tonight, put down your foot and resolve that you will never turn to the right hand nor to the left, but keep your face forever Zion-ward. Say, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.”

Or perhaps you are going away from us altogether, dear Friend. You have come in here for the last time tonight, for you are going to live far away in the country. Or you have already taken your passage to New Zealand, or Australia, or Canada. Very well, go in the strength of the Lord God. That is the way to go to unknown lands! I do not think that a Christian man ought to go downstairs in his own house in any other strength and, certainly, he should not take a journey on which the rest of his life may depend without having sought guidance, or without fixing his reliance upon God! “But,” says one, “there is no journey for me. I fear that I am going to suffer a long illness.

 I feel that great afflictions are coming upon me.” Very well, go in the strength of the Lord God. When my deacon behind me here, whom you all know and love so well—my dear Brother Mr. William Olney—had to undergo operation after operation, we prayed for him and it is wonderful how the Lord sustained him by giving him calm faith.

He was not half so troubled about himself as we were. I know that he said in his heart, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God,” and he was enabled to go on from one operation to another without fear. And here he is among us, still, to serve his Lord and Master! Be you also calm, dear Brothers and Sisters, when your trial hour comes. “Oh, it is not that!” says one, “but mine is a miserable family trouble. There is a lot in it that is wrong—mischief I cannot tell to anybody. I seem to get no help.” Well, go in the strength of the Lord God. That is the right way to go. If you have nobody else to help you, go in His strength.  
I told you of a good woman who was speaking about Mr. Hudson Taylor years ago. She said, “Poor Mr. Hudson Taylor! I do not think that he can depend upon any of the missionary societies to help him. He has nobody to trust to but God.” She said it in that kind of style, too—“nobody to trust to but God.” And whom do you want to trust to but God? It is a glorious thing to get all the dog shores knocked away so that the ship may be launched from the stocks and may float upon the great ocean! We are apt to be hampered by friends. They stand between us and the Lord. I know I have been so hampered, but I am finding deliverance from these poor creature confidences in a very painful but effective manner. I have lost a great many on whose fidelity I thought I could depend. But since I depend on the Lord all the more, I am a gainer by ungrateful desertions.

“Oh!” you say, “do not talk like that.” I speak the words of soberness. It is a mercy to be saved from our friends. I believe that oftentimes our trust in friends makes us live like frequenters of lodging houses who herd together in a miserable old shanty. When our friends are gone and thus the old shanty comes down, what then? Why, we go off to a palace! We live at once in the palace of assurance with God, resting in Him along. Oh, it is a poor life—the life that depends upon things! It is a poor life that is buttressed and shored up by this and that— but that is the best life which dwells under God’s sky and has no fear that the sky-blue arch will fall! As the heavens stand without shores and unsupported, except by the word of God, so stands the man of God!

Remember how Luther realized this? When they said that Duke George would oppose him, he said, “If it rained Duke Georges, I would not care, so long as God is with me!”—

*“Fear Him, you saints, and you will then  
Have nothing else to fear.  
Make you His service your delight,  
He’ll make your needs His care.”*

“I will go in the strength of the Lord God.”

III. Now I have only a minute to speak upon the last point. I will save that for another time, I think. David informs us as to HIS MESSAGE—“I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.” The only testimony that he was going to bear for the rest of his life would be a testimony to the righteousness of the Lord God. Here was enough work for a lifetime and here was the man who was at home in the work! I cannot go into it. Therefore I say this—Bear your testimony to the righteousness of God in Providence. Stand to it that the Lord never does wrong. He is never mistaken, but whatever He ordains is, and must be, unquestionably right.

Bear witness, next, to His righteousness in salvation, that He does not save without an Atonement. That He does not put away sin without being strictly just. That He does by no means spare the guilty, but has laid on Christ that which was due to human sin that He might be “just and the Justifier of him that believes.” Go on, then, to tell everybody that the righteousness which saves you is the righteousness of God, not your own righteousness. There is no such thing as human righteousness—the two words make up a contradiction. Any righteousness that you could gain

by your own works would be filthy rags at the best—and filthy rags are not righteousness. We have no personal merit. We are justified by imputed righteousness. Make mention of the righteousness of Christ which covers you from head to foot—

“ *Jesus, Your blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress.  
‘Midst flaming worlds, in You arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.”*

Declare the righteousness of God as to a future state. Declare that whatever Scripture speaks of the ungodly is true and that God is righteous in it. Never mind the quibbles and the inventions of this present age—God’s Character can never be harmed by these dreamers. Stand by your God and you may rest assured that time shall never change the essential Truth that He is a holy and a righteous God and will justify His ways to men.

But the time has gone, so I have only to say this—there is no other righteousness worth talking about—if you will mention the righteousness of God you will do much good. Make mention of the righteousness of God to convince men of their unrighteousness. Talk of it to win their admiration for the Lord Jesus. Oh, that everybody in this place knew how righteous the Lord Jesus was, not only in life, but in Nature! Talk of the righteousness of God to show men the way of salvation. Tell them how the Lord laid our sins upon Christ and that, while He is infinitely gracious, He is infinitely just. Then go on to point convicted sinners to where righteousness is to be had. He that believes in the Lord Jesus shall find himself made of God’s wisdom and righteousness.

Talk of that perfect righteousness, also, for the comfort of Believers. Nothing will give them greater joy than to see how they are accounted righteous in the righteousness of Christ and, “accepted in the Beloved.”—

*“His only righteousness I show,  
His saving truth proclaim;  
‘Tis all my business here below  
To cry, ‘Behold the Lamb!’”*

Here is a happy vocation for the remainder of our sojourn here below! Forever and only make mention of God’s righteousness. To him be glory forever. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 71.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 681, 674. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2318 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GOD’S PUPIL, GOD’S PREACHER— AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
NO. 2318

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 23, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JULY 28, 1889.

**“O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.”  
Psalm 71:17.**

You notice how much David is at home with God. He talks about Him. He does better, he talks to Him. He hears God speaking to him and he keeps up a dialog with God. Where did this holy familiarity come from? It sprang from long acquaintance! David as a boy had known God. He knew Him when he was old and gray-headed and, you know, old friends use language to one another which would not be tolerated in occasional acquaintances. There are certain things which they who have long known the Lord and who abide in Him, may say to God and of God, which might not be said by others. It might even verge on blasphemy if others were to say the same things. When you read books like Rutherford’s Letters, or Madame Guyon’s Sonnets, or George Herbert’s Poems, you must not think that everybody may speak so. These were the Johns and the Marys, the favorites of Heaven—they had dwelt so long with the King that He permitted to them, no, He fostered in them, things that would be impertinences in strangers and might not even be seemly to beginners in the things of God. Oh, may you and I live long enough and well enough to be on very intimate terms with God! May we walk with Him till, one of these days, we walk away with Him, and they say of us, “He was not, for God took him”!

David here tells us, no, he tells God, rather than us, that he had been God’s pupil all his life—“O God, You have taught me from my youth”—and then he says that he had been God’s pupil-teacher—“and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.” When we have listened to David on these two points, the preacher will venture, with some hesitancy, but still under a sort of compulsion, to use the words, himself, and say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.” The preacher using the Psalmist’s language in the hope that many here will make bold to come into the same lot and take a share in the same heritage, that many here, especially many young people may say in later days, “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.”

I. First, then, let us think of DAVID AS A PUPIL. God was his Teacher. “O God, You have taught me from my youth.”  
This shows that David had a teachable spirit and if you had asked him where it came from, he would have said that God gave him a teachable spirit. God is not only the Teacher of our spirit, but he gives us a teachable spirit. Have we all received that precious gift? The “genius of the age” is against a teachable spirit. You would suppose, now, to hear some men preach that Christ said, “Go you into all the world and make critics of every creature, and they shall be saved thereby.” But that is not the Gospel! I do not so much blame the age for its errors, as for the fundamental error of not being willing to be taught. Men have cast off authority and wherein authority in religious things is not of God, it is well cast off, but I fear that in casting off the evil, many have gone far towards casting off even Divine Authority. No, you are not to think what you like. You are not to believe as you please. No man may control you, but God has never given liberty to your thought or to your understanding to be free from His government! What He reveals, you are to accept—to take it as Infallibly true, to bow the knee of your intellect before it, to believe that, “He teaches to profit” and to expect the fulfillment of the promise—“All your children shall be taught of the Lord.”

A teachable spirit, although it is despised by many, is a happy spirit. It is a growing spirit. It is a restful spirit. It is a heavenly spirit and whoever has it must ascribe the possession of it to the Spirit of God who leads us into all Truths of God and makes us willing to be led therein. Oh, that we may have such a spirit, that we shall count it an honor to say, “O God, You have taught me”! Some would count that as a dishonor. They would say, “O God, even You cannot teach us! There is more in our honest doubt than in all the faith You can give us,” which, being interpreted, is a lie! No, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us seek and covet earnestly a teachable spirit, that, like David, we may be taught of God.  
In David’s acknowledgment, we learn that God took him very early into His school. “You have taught me from my youth.” What a mercy it is to begin to know God before we begin to know anything else! The first words of the Bible are very significant—“In the beginning, God.” The first words of this Book should be the first words of every life-book—“In the beginning, God.” Happy shall you be if your first intelligible thoughts shall be of your Maker, your Benefactor, your Friend. Happy shall you be, for, as you shall grow in understanding, you shall also grow in acquaintance with your God! And every ripening faculty shall be sanctified as it opens, so that your first morning shall have no dew but the dew of holiness and of Divine Life resting upon it!  
Where was David taught in his youth? I suppose in the pastures of Palestine. When he was keeping his father’s flock, he sat down—he thought, he meditated, he prayed. Beneath the stars that looked down on him like so many eyes of Divine Love, he sat at night and spoke with God, and God talked with him. And among the sheep he learned to sing, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want,” There he learned of God so well that when a lion and a bear came against his flock, and took away a lamb, he fell upon the monstrous beasts and, in the strength of God, tore them asunder— and he remembered to ascribe the glory of his deeds to God and to praise His holy name! He spent his school-days well. He passed the highest standards and he carried the certificates in the skin of the lion and the paw of the bear. Oh, blessed is the young man, who is taught of God as to be equal to the duties of his station and able to find God is his strength in carrying them out!  
David’s words also mean that God kept him in His school as a youth. Generally, boys go to Sunday school till they begin to feel themselves young men. You half insulted one just now when you called him a lad! He is “a young man” and his companion is not a girl, she is “a young woman.” She could not go with girls, now that she is a young woman. And these young people think they are too big for the Sunday school! And very often this is the point where the Church of God loses touch with them. It was not so with David. He could say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” He kept on being taught as he grew up to be a young man. He still walked with God and so well did he use his early lessons that, going to the army to meet his brothers, he saw the giant Goliath defying the armies of the living God and he came forward and said to Saul, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” And he puts in practice, as a young man, the lessons of his boyish days. Glorifying God, he slings his stone and lays the giant low. How well did God teach him, by his many struggles, educating his faith and increasing his Divine Graces! When he was at the court of Saul, he continued, as a young man, to still learn by the songs of those who said, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” and by the sneers of envious courtiers, yes, and even by the javelin of the jealous king, he kept on learning and being taught of God, so that he behaved himself in a simple way in the sight of Israel, being instructed of the Most High.  
When he became a man, even when he became a king, he still continued to be taught of God. With a crown on his head, he was still a scholar and disciple of the great God. Swaying a scepter, he was still nothing but a child before a father when he thought of God. It is beautiful to notice, in David’s life, how often he says, “Bring here the ephod.” He would know the will of God! He would listen to Nathan the Prophet—he would enquire of the Lord’s servants that he might learn more of God! David, as a man, was taught of God in his trials, in his crosses, in his comforts, by his friends and by his enemies. He was always being taught of God. Sometimes, alas, he forgot his lesson, or he blotted his book—but he never left the school. He was chastened, but he was never cast out—he still continued as God’s pupil. We find him, as a gray-headed man, still penning his Psalms and being taught of God—perhaps in his last days learning most, learning most sorrowfully, staining his book with tears, discovering more of himself and more of the mercy of God, more of the power of temptation and more of the power of the Sacrifice that puts away sin—more of the wanderings of his heart and more of that free Spirit who upholds us and makes us walk in the ways of God. He was always being educated. A Christian has never finished his education till he stands before the golden Throne of God.  
There are many aged men who can say with David, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” They find themselves learners, yet, for they are “unstable, weak, and apt to slide.” O young people, you who are just beginning life, I do pray that you will begin learning soon enough to be able to say afterwards, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” There are some here who can never say that. Whatever becomes of them, however much God may bless them, they can never say it, for they have reached the middle of life, and they have not gone to school to the great Teacher. Well, if you cannot say all that you could wish to say, may the Lord take you into His school, now, though you are a ten o’clock scholar, and yet teach you, so that you shall learn enough music to sing among the angels to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made you to be accepted in the Beloved!  
Surely, dear Friends, we are so foolish that we need to be taught, and we cannot have a better Teacher than the Omniscient God! Let us, therefore, pray, tonight, that if we are at God’s school, we may stay there. And that if we are not there, we may go there at once. May all our names be put down in the roll of scholars of the College of Christ, the University of Grace, this very night, and God shall have the praise!  
II. But now I want you, for a minute or two, to notice DAVID AS A PUPIL-TEACHER. While he was a pupil, he was also teaching. He says, “Until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.”  
Observe, then, that David taught people what he saw. He saw God’s works all around him. Ah, me, that is a great sight! God is at work everywhere and there are none so blind as those who will not see His works. But the mass of men do not see God. You see the working of machinery. You see the working of the laws of Nature. You see the working of the laws of supply and demand. But many of you cannot see the working of God! May the Lord open your eyes, poor blind bats, for if there is anything that stares in the face of the man who is willing to see it, it is God, and God at work in Providence, in Nature, in Grace and in all sorts of ways! I read of one, the other day, of whom somebody said that when he stayed at his house, he noticed that he talked as if he saw God always before him—and truly, that is how every Christian should talk, for we should see God always before us! David said, “I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” We do not see God as we should and we shall never teach aright for God until we have a kind of instinctive feeling of the Presence of God—till we are conscious that God is in us, round about us and at work for us!  
God’s work that David saw was very much work in himself, work for himself and work in other men’s hearts. Being taken into the School of God, he was made to observe things—he had object lessons put before him and he learned to read God’s work. And as he saw it, he wondered. “Until this time,” he said, “have I declared Your wondrous works.” He who is a stranger to wonder is a stranger to God, for God is wonderful every way, everywhere and always! It is all wonders when you get near to God and see what God does. And, you know, no man teaches a thing so well as when he is struck with it himself! When it astonishes him, he will then tell it to others with gusto and with emphasis. So David made a fine pupilteacher, because, seeing God’s work, he wondered at it and spoke of it as a wondrous thing.  
We find that David took opportunity to declare God’s wondrous work, sometimes, with his pen, writing his Psalms. Sometimes with his voice, singing those Psalms. Sometimes talking to a few, sometimes speaking to many. Now, dear Friends, what I want you all to do is, if you have seen God’s work and have been struck with it, you should declare it—tell it to others! I know that some of you, at any rate, love God and fear Him, but you never speak about Him. Ah, me, have you a dumb devil, or are you possessed with a dumb spirit? The Lord cast it out of you! There is no way of learning so good as that of teaching! A young man who was going to Cambridge, said, I think it was to Archbishop Whateley, that he was going to get a “coach,” that is, a tutor, to coach him through his studies. “Do not do that,” said the other, “Take a pupil—you will learn better that way.” And I believe that it is so. To teach is a wonderful way of learning! I know that by experience. To read hard all day and then, in the evening, to go and preach what you have read, will stamp it indelibly upon your memory and lead you to a better knowledge of it than any other method that a philosopher could suggest! Therefore, first learn of God and then teach to somebody else what you have learned. You will keep it that way. You will never lose it. If you keep on only learning and learning, and learning, and learning—your hoarding it up will breed mildew and I know not what besides. But if you learn it and then

 teach it, that will keep it sweet and you will never forget it. This is David’s pupil-teachership—he is being taught of God—and he is teaching others.  
And David had this happiness, that he could say, “You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.” That is, he kept on teaching and he kept on teaching the same thing. What must the ministries of some of our ministers be like? The first five years are spent in teaching Evangelical Doctrine. The next five years are spent in pulling that all to pieces. The next five years are spent in teaching some new philosophy—no, not five years—they are not so long as that over any one thing. I mean, the first five months are spent in teaching some new philosophy, then a month in pulling that to pieces, another month in making a new theory and another month in pulling that to pieces!  
Oh, what kind of a life must it be? “I never saw,” said Poor Richard, “an oft-removed tree, nor yet an oft-removed family, that thrived.” Surely an oft-removed Doctrine, when a man is perpetually shifting the soil around it, can never thrive, or do much good. Here the great-hearted veteran says, “You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.” All this he ascribed to God—he gave God the glory of his learning and of his teaching, also. May you and I do the same! So far about David.  
III. Now for a few words about myself for the honor and Glory of God. I could not help saying something, tonight, about what Hugh Miller calls, “MY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS.” “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.”  
I went down, last week, to Maidstone in Kent. It is as near as possible to the day, 40 years ago, when I left the school called a, “College,” there. I thought that I must go down and look at the spot and specially at a tree which stands by the Medway River. Under that tree I spent many hours and many days, and even many weeks reading all day long. “In schooltime?” you ask. Yes, my master thought that I should do better under that tree than in the classroom. And he was a wise man. He gave me my books and left me to myself. And as I stood, last week, under that tree, with the smoothly flowing river at my feet, I could thank God for His mercy to me for all these 40 years and I could say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.” There may be some young people here, tonight, just come back from school. Some young people who are just finishing their school days. I would to God that they would spend some time in holy, quiet thought about their future—about whom they will serve, who shall be their Teacher, for whom they will become teachers—and how the life which has now become more public than before shall be spent.  
As I stood there, last week, I could not help praising God that, not long after I left that school, He led me to faith in Christ and to rest in Him. He allowed me to find eternal life and I could not but thank God that I went to that school for 12 months. It was a Church of England school. I had never seen anything of Church of Englandism till that time, but there was a turning in my life, through being there, to which I owe my being here! The Church of England Catechism has in it, as some of you may remember, this question, “What is required of persons to be baptized?” And the answer I was taught to give and did give, was, “Repentance, whereby they forsake sin. And faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.” I looked that answer up in the Bible and I found it to be strictly correct as far as repentance and faith are concerned and, of course, when I afterwards became a Christian, I also became a Baptist—and here I am—and it is due to the Church of England Catechism that I am a Baptist! Having been brought up among Congregationalists, I had never looked at the matter in my life. I had thought myself to have been baptized as an infant and so, when I was confronted with the question, “What is required of persons to be baptized?” and I found that repentance and faith were required, I said to myself, “Then I have not been baptized! That infant sprinkling of mine was a mistake! And please, God, if ever I have repentance and faith, I will be properly baptized.”  
I did not know that there was one other person in the world who held the same opinion, for so little do Baptists make any show, or so little did they do so, then, that I did not know of their existence! So I feel grateful to the Church school and grateful to the Church Catechism, for what I learned at Maidstone. I do not know that I have any vivid gratitude for any other question in the Catechism, but I am very thankful for that particular one, for it led me where it was never intended to lead me by those who wrote it. It led me, however, as I believe, to follow the Scriptural teaching that repentance and faith are required before there can be any true Baptism.  
Well now, what shall be your schools and schoolmasters? Dear young people, I long that each of you may be able to say, “O Lord, You have taught me from my youth.” You must, first of all, be taught by the Holy Spirit. He is willing and able to come into your mind and to influence it in a very extraordinary but very effectual way. He can teach your reason, reason! And cause your understanding to understand aright. He can take away from you the bent of prejudice. He can remove from you the depraving influence of sin and He can give you to understand those things which are essential to your peace and eternal salvation. Seek the Spirit of God, then, to begin with.  
Then your next school will be the Inspired Word of God. Believe in this Bible from the first word of Genesis to the last line of Revelation. It will never mislead you! It has never misled anybody. It will tell you the truth as to your conduct, as to your condition before God, as to what you are to believe and what you are to do. If you search well the Scriptures, if the Law of God instructs you and if the Gospel of God teaches you, then God will be teaching you, for this is the school-book of the family of love and they who will accept it, and believe it, shall be taught of the Spirit of God who indited it!  
Have not all of us, who are in the School of Christ, learned much, in the next place, from the means of Grace? “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.” I have to bear my willing witness to the benefit received in the congregation of God’s people. “What?” you ask, “Why, you do not hear any sermons!” No, I hear very few except my own and they are not the best. But preaching them is probably of more service to me than hearing them is to you, for there is a care of the Word of God that is necessary and the searching of it in the preparation of the sermon, and the waiting upon God for help in the service—all these have been, to me, a means of Grace. Paul so regarded it when he said, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” He found that it was a means of Grace to him to be permitted to preach. Certainly, you young people must take care that you do not neglect the public services of God’s House. They will teach you from your youth.  
Another method of teaching is that of observation of others. If we would be taught of God, we must keep our eyes open to see how He deals with others. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.” Watch the hypocrite. Keep your eye on the prosperous sinner. If you do, you will soon find God teaching you wondrous things.  
You will also be taught by conversing with the people of God. Young Christian, get much with old Christians—I do not mean with all of them— some of them will not help you much. But I mean those who live near to God and are real and genuine saints. Speak with them. Tell them your difficulties and ask them how they have got through the same trials. Compare the footsteps of the flock with your own footsteps. Many an old child of God will be a precious mine of instruction to you. The first lessons I ever had in theology were from an old cook in the school where I was an usher. She was a good old soul and used to read The Gospel Standard. She liked something very sweet, indeed—good strong Calvinistic Doctrine—but she lived strongly as well as fed strongly. Many a time we have gone over the Covenant of Grace together and talked of the personal election of the saints, their union to Christ, their final perseverance and what vital godliness meant. And I do believe that I learned more from her than I would have learned from any six doctors of divinity of the sort we have nowadays! There are some Christian people who taste, and see, and enjoy religion in their own souls—and who get at a deeper knowledge of it than books can ever give them though they should search all their days! Get with such people of God, the experienced people, the tried people, and you will be able to say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.”  
Another schoolmaster is self-examination. A very sour, crabbed schoolmaster is this one! Very few like him, especially if you take a lesson every night before you go to sleep and look through the actions of the day. It is not a very pleasant exercise—there are so many faults to find, so many mistakes made, so many good things omitted. But, if you cannot have self-examination every day, at any rate have it sometimes. You will learn better by your mistakes than if you had never made a blunder. Sometimes even a grave fault may save you from 10 grave faults, if it is well observed and avoided in the future—and God teaches you thereby. You learn nothing by self-examination unless the Lord is your Master, but, if He is with you, then your acquaintance with yourself will help you to an acquaintance with Him! There are two prayers always worth praying, “Lord, show me myself” and, “Lord, show me Yourself.” May both be heard and you will be well taught of God!

But there is a schoolhouse to which I have gone and to which I expect to go again. I cannot commend it to you for its pleasant situation, or for the beauty of its architecture. It is called the schoolhouse of sore affliction. Whoever does not go to that school, every minister whom God blesses to the salvation of souls will have to go there! It is an absolute necessity of a true shepherd of God’s tried people that he should be tried. There may be exceptions, but I do not think that there are and, dear Friends, you, each one of you, if you are to be taught of God, will have to be afflicted. There are some Truths of God that are never learned. I suppose they may be learned, but they never are, except in the dark. Today, in the middle of the day, we could not see the stars. But if we had gone down a well, we might have seen them. And often the dark hole of affliction reveals stars of promise and glittering Truths of God which otherwise we never could have seen! I will appeal to my experienced Brothers and Sisters here. Have you not learned more in trial than anywhere else? Do you not owe more to the hammer, the file, the anvil and the forge than to all the comforts that you ever received? Here it is that God really fashions us. Till He gets us into the fire and the hammer begins to ring upon us, there seems to be no shaping us after the method of Divine working.  
And, dear Friends, once more I come to a place on which I stood in the middle of the sermon. God has taught me, and He has taught many of us, by setting us to work to bless others. If any Christians cannot learn quickly, let them get to work for Christ and they will soon learn! “Oh,” says one, “I am so full of doubts and fears.” Get to work for the Lord! “Oh,” says another, “I never have much joy and peace.” Get to work for the Lord! Another cries, “I am afraid that I am not saved! I am often afraid that I am not and yet I do believe in Jesus Christ.” Tell somebody else about Jesus Christ! Do not think so much about yourself. That dog-hole of selfishness can never afford you any comfort. While the first and last concern of a man is simply his own feelings, or his own enjoyment, he cannot get any good feelings, or any enjoyment, either. Remember what the farmer does down in the country on a cold winter’s day. There stand the boys, with chill blisters on their hands and they want to get near the fire. They cry out, “Oh, Father, it is so cold!” He says, “You go and do a bit of plowing, Johnny. You go and do a little hedging and ditching, William.” And they come in with rosy cheeks and they say, “The weather is beautiful! It is quite bracing and we are all in a glow.” And yet it may be that the thermometer has gone down while they have been out, but they have been warmed by their work!  
I wish I could turn some Christian people out of their pews and get them, at this time of night, out into the lodging-houses, or in some corner, preaching, or going to some sick persons in the hospital to read and pray with them. You may depend upon it, being taught of God is best done, all other things being equal, when, with a teachable mind towards God, we have a teaching mind towards others! When you will to bless your fellow man, you shall get a blessing. “The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed”—for himself? No, I have purposely made a mistake there. It is not so, just look it up –“The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his”—well, it says, “friends,” but, you know, they were a curious kind of friends! Job called them, “miserable comforters,” and so they had been. But when he took to praying for them, then the Lord turned his captivity.  
Begin to pray for your disagreeable neighbors. Begin to pray for your unconverted friends and the Lord will turn your own captivity while you are doing that! By blessing others, you shall be blessed yourself. God grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. **PSALM 77.**

This Psalm is headed, “To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.” He was one of the great singers. There is opportunity given in the Psalms for each of the singers to take his turn. It does not do for any of us to be idle in reference to the praise of God. It is called, “A Psalm of Asaph.” His Psalms have usually a dark tinge about them. He was a meditative man, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” but also a man of strong faith and of an exulting spirit. You need to do business in great waters to understand Asaph—he is one who does not wade, but he gets into “waters to swim in.” Thus he begins—

Verse 1. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. The use of the voice in prayer is not essential, but usually, when men grow earnest, they use the voice as well as the mind. It was because of the intensity of his prayer that the Psalmist felt compelled to cry—not to use stilted, stately language—but the natural cry of pain. “I cried unto God with my voice.” You will find it very helpful in private prayer to use the voice—many of us do. Some have not the opportunity of doing so, but if you can be unheard of men and can use your voice, you will find it helpful. Twice says the Psalmist, “I cried unto God with my voice.”

2. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. This is the best place to go in the day of your trouble.  
2. My sore ran in the night. A better rendering would be, “My hand was stretched out in the night.” The Psalmist continued to pray.  
2. And ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. Rightly so, if the comfort came from man, if the comfort were doubtful and ineffectual. Wrongly so, when right comfort was presented to him, comfort from God. I am afraid that in the time of our trouble, we often increase it by being unwilling to be comforted.  
3. I remembered God, and was troubled. What? Trouble, even, from remembering God? Then this is trouble, indeed! And yet this has been the experience of the saints of God many a time. “I remembered God”—His holiness, His justice, my offenses against Him—and was troubled.”  
3. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Turned over, overwhelmed. Without comfort, or hope of comfort.  
3. Selah. Tighten the harp strings—they have gone flat through such hard striking. These deep notes have put the strings out of order. The man in his grief cannot sing well and he had need to say, “Selah.” Sursum corda. Lift up the heart! Prepare yourself, again, for song.  
4. You hold my eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. Yet he was speaking! But it did not seem to him like speaking. It was rather an inarticulate wail than the language of a man.  
5. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. A little holy history is good reading for a heavy heart. You will often stumble on a record of God’s Providential dealings, or a paragraph concerning His wonderful love, that will cheer your heart. Yet it did not cheer the heart of the Psalmist just then.  
6. I call to remembrance my song in the night. “How I used to sing like the nightingale, with the thorn at my breast. I call that to remembrance.” But we cannot always sing old songs. Old experiences may have but little warmth in their ashes, though often in their ashes live their routine fires.  
6. I commune with my own heart. A very proper thing to do, but not much comfort generally comes of it. It is like stirring water that is already muddy—the more you stir it, the more muddy it becomes.  
6. And my spirit made diligent search. When a man can deal with himself like this, his trouble will not last long! God save me from a dumb sorrow, sorrow that cannot think and cannot judge, and cannot weigh itself! Now listen to the Psalmist’s questions. Does doubt question your faith? Then let faith question your doubts. Here is a Catechism for a desponding heart. I commend it to you who are in trouble. Put your soul through its paces—ask these questions.  
7. Will the Lord cast off forever? Has He ever done so? He may seem to cast off for a little while, but, “Will the Lord cast off forever?”  
7. And will He be favorable no more? It is a long lane that has no turning. The Lord may take down the rod, but will He always use it? Will He always chide?  
8. Is His mercy clean gone forever? If His favor is gone, yet is His mercy gone? Does not the Psalm say, “His mercy endures forever”? If I cannot claim favor as a saint, may I not hope for mercy as a sinner? “Is His mercy clean gone forever?”  
8. Does His promise fail forevermore? Oh, what a question that is! God’s promise may tarry, but it never fails, and if it seems to fail for the time being, will it fail forevermore?  
9. Has God forgotten to be gracious? What hot shots these are for unbelief! I guarantee you that however deep your unbelief may be, tonight, if, by earnest prayer, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you ply it with these questions, it will have to yield.  
9. Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah. Can it be so? Was it ever so to any of God’s people? Now comes, “Selah,” again. Tighten the harp strings once more. We shall have sweeter music from this time on!  
10. And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. “But I will remember,” is added by the translator. Surely it was to the Psalmist an infirmity to be thus in trouble. He called it Benoni, son of sorrow, but it was not infirmity to God. He called it Benjamin, son of the right hand. There is a sort of parallel between Asaph and the woman who named her child Benoni. Certainly it is a great infirmity—it is a sin—to doubt God, and to be cast down and troubled.  
11. I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember Your wonders of old. Think of what God has done for His people. How He has delivered them, how He has lifted them from the dunghill and set them among the princes, even among the princes of His people! Think of His wonders of Grace and be no more discouraged.  
12. I will meditate also of all Your work, and talk of Your doings. Those who talk ought to meditate, otherwise they grind wind. Those who meditate

 will talk, otherwise the miller grinds only for himself.  
13. Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Or, “in holiness.” God’s way is always a holy way, a righteous way.  
13. Who is so great a God as our God? When we think of the greatness of God, if we simply dwell upon His power, we make a mistake. The greatness of God lies mainly in His moral attributes, in His completeness, His wholeness, His holiness.  
14, 15. You are the God that does wonders: You have declared Your strength among the people. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. “Selah,” again. In looking back, the Psalmist has remembered the history of the whole nation. He thinks of what God did for His ancient people. Indeed, he is on the verge of a great song! Well may he tune the strings again. He has in thought gone back to the Red Sea. He is standing like Miriam, by the waters that devoured the foes of Israel, and he must sing as she did! In a high poetic strain he writes—  
16. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. At the very sight of God the sea began to flee, to lay bare its depths. “The floods stood upright as an heap,” in their fear and dread of the Presence of God, “and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.”  
17. The clouds poured out water. The floods above answered the floods below and came to the help of the Lord, “to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”  
17, 18. The skies sent out a sound: Your arrows also went abroad. The voice of Your thunder was in the Heavens: the lightning lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. There was a great storm. Thunder and lightning gathered about the sea. When God spoke, the waters rolled back and swallowed up all the warriors of Egypt. Heaven and earth joined in battle against God’s foes—not only did the sea flee, but there appears to have also been an earthquake.  
19. Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known. Not foreknown. Who could have foretold that God would lead His people through the sea? His footsteps are not now to be found. God’s ways we cannot guess and even when we have seen them, we cannot understand them. Child of God, does the sea roll before you tonight? Are you in extreme distress? Are you crying as the Psalmist did? With your voice do you cry unto God? Then expect deliverance from Him!  
20. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron did not lead them—God led His people, “like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” Here the Psalm breaks off with great abruptness. Had it been a human composition, it would have been rounded off with great discretion, but God knows best where to stop. I sometimes wish Brothers and Sisters would do the same in their prayers—they need not keep on till they have worn us out— they may break off short if they like. So may we in our sermons! Perhaps they would be better remembered if the second half was never spoken.

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GOD, THE CHILDREN’S TEACHER  
NO. 3271

A SERMON TO CHILDREN.

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, OCTOBER 15, 1911— THE DAY OF SPECIAL PRAYER FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND OTHER WORK AMONG CHILDREN.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 2,1869.

**“O God, You have taught me from my youth.”  
Psalm 71:17.**

[SPECIAL NOTE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, PARENTS, ETC. Mr. Spurgeon seldom preached especially to children—his Sermons are all so simple that boys and girls as well as the common people heard him gladly and understood his words easily. The accompanying discourse is one of the very few delivered to a congregation of young people by the beloved preacher who has been for nearly 20 years at Home with the Lord. It was preached at the Tabernacle during a series of special services in March, 1869—and it is now published in the regular weekly series at the time of special prayer for the children and young people in Sunday schools, Bible classes, Christian Endeavor Societies, etc., in the hope that all who are interested in the spiritual welfare of the young will aid in its widespread circulation among them.]

DAVID was a very great man and at the time he used these words he ruled a kingdom and wore a crown. But he needed to be taught and he tells us that he had been to school and that the wisdom he had was given to him by the great Teacher who taught in that school. You who are at school now must take care that you use well the privilege you have. You will not be wise without learning. Learning does not grow up in our heart like weeds do in the fields, but it must be sown in us—as good wheat and barley must be cast into the ground if there is ever to be a harvest.

David did well in life because he had been well taught in his youth. He was one of those in whom God fulfilled that text, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” You know when boys go to school, their teacher feels very anxious that they should turn out well and be a credit to him. The teacher is very sorry when, after all his trouble, the boy becomes a dunce. But he is very happy when he sees some lad prosper in life because he says, “I trained that boy.” The success of the scholar brings honor and credit to the teacher. So David speaks of God having taught him in order that he may give honor and Glory to God. David feels that he owes so much to his God that he cannot help saying what he does. “Lord,” he seems to say, “if I have learned anything—if I have learned how to fight giant Goliath, if I have learned how to bear my troubles, if I have learned how to pray, if I have learned how to preach and how to be a king—I got it all from You. I was the scholar, you were the Teacher, and unto Your name be all the praise.” Now, I shall not keep on any longer with the preface to my sermon. It is a cold, damp night and people do not like to be kept outside the doors at such a time. We will just put our finger on the latch and get to the inside of our sermon at once.

I. As soon as we come into it, the first thing we see is THE GREAT TEACHER. Who is the Teacher? David says, “You have taught me from my youth.” Who taught David?

THE CHILDREN: God!  
Mr. SPURGEON: Yes, that is right, God was David’s Teacher. He says in the text, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” I have no doubt that David had other teachers, but all the teachers he had would not have been of any practical use to him if he had not also been taught by God.  
Now, if God is the Teacher, we shall notice, first, that God is an effective Teacher. David had been taught by his good mother. I know he had a godly mother, for he says, “Lord, truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid.” He calls his mother, God’s handmaid, which shows that she was one of God’s servants. I have no doubt that she took David on her knee and taught him God’s Word while he was but a child, for he had such a love of it afterwards that he must have had a love of it while he was yet little! After his mother, I have no doubt his father taught him. What was the name of David’s father?  
THE CHILDREN: Jesse!  
Mr. SPURGEON: Quite right. And we believe that Jesse was also one of God’s people and that he would have been sure to teach his son wisely and train him up in the way he should go. I think there was another person who taught David, namely, the Prophet Samuel. You recollect that Samuel anointed David while he was yet a youth. He poured oil on his head and told him that he would one day be a king of God’s people. I feel sure that Samuel told him what God’s will was and tried to train him so that he might, when he became a king, do God’s good pleasure rightly. But all these teachers—his mother, his father and the Prophet—could not have taught David if God had not taught him, too. You see, dear Children, your teachers, though they are very good and kind, can only get at your ears—but God gets at the heart—and that is where we most need to be taught. Suppose my watch should get out of order so that it would not run and I could not get it open? All I could do in polishing up the gold outside, or cleaning the glass, would not make it run! I must take it to some watchmaker who could get at the inside and who could touch the mainspring, or clean out the wheels. Now, your teachers cannot get at that which is inside of you as they could wish, unless God helps them. But God can get at the heart, which is like the mainspring of the watch. He can get at our thoughts and feelings, which are like the wheels. I trust that you, my dear Children, may be taught of God from your youth because God is an effectual Teacher!  
The next point is that God is a condescending Teacher. Have you ever thought of this? The great God made yon blue sky, the sun and the moon, and all those bright stars that we see at night. He piled up the big mountains and poured out the great seas and oceans from the hollow of His hands and He is so great that all the things in this world are just like nothing when compared to Him—and yet He stoops to teach children! He stooped to teach David. David says, “You have taught me from my youth.” Would not some of you girls like to go to school if the Queen would but teach a class? I am sure that nearly all the young ladies and all the little girls in London would be tearing away to the place if the Queen would but teach a class! You would think it such a great honor to be taught by Her Majesty. Oh, but when God teaches, what a wonderful stoop of condescending love that is! He who made the world and bears all things up by His everlasting might, condescends to be a teacher of little children! “You have taught me from my youth.” Perhaps you have heard of that holy man, Mr. John Eliot. He went away from all his home comforts, out among the Red Indians, and spent his life in preaching to them. And when he was sick and near to death, he was lying in a hut upon a hard couch—and what do you think was the last thing he did? He had a New Testament and he was teaching a little Red Indian boy his A B C, and making him spell out some simple text from God’s Holy Word. “Oh, but,” one said, “does this great missionary teach that little redfaced, copper-colored boy?” “Yes,” replied Eliot, “I prayed to God that I might never live to be useless. So now I cannot preach, I am trying to teach Jesus Christ to this one little boy.” That was very kind of him, but think of the kindness of the great God who wheels the stars along and calls them all by their names—that He should condescend to teach

 us! Dear Children, do not refuse to be taught by God! But on the contrary, let this be your resolve, “My Father, You shall be the Guide of my youth.” Ask the Lord to teach you, for as surely as He taught David, He is willing to teach you!  
My next remark is that God is a loving Teacher. I know you boys and girls in the Sunday school classes like to have a smiling-faced teacher. You do not care to have one who is very cross and short-tempered with you and inclined to give you a box on the ear! You like somebody who is very kind. I cannot tell you how kind God is to us, how patient, how compassionate, how tender. A good mother was telling her little girl a lesson over ever so many times—I think it was 19 or 20 times—and someone said, “How can you have the patience to tell the child the same thing 20 times?” “Why,” she replied, “I tell her 20 times because 19 are not sufficient.” Now, our God not only tells us 20 times, but twenty thousand times if necessary! “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” From our very earliest childhood, right on, God keeps teaching us with great patience, and yet some of us are so wicked or so thoughtless that we forget what He teaches us almost as soon as we hear it! And we go on to do the wrong thing which He tells us not to do, and we forget to do the right thing which He bids us do. Yet He does not strike us dead! He still continues preaching to us, teaching us on the Sabbath and on the weekdays by His Book, and by His Spirit, and by His ministers, and by our teachers, and in a thousand ways! Oh, what a kind and patient Teacher the Lord our God is! But I must not keep you long on any one point.  
The next Truth is that God is a wise Teacher. Have you ever thought what a wise Teacher God is? I will prove to you that He is very wise, for, do you know He teaches not only men, but He can teach beasts? Did you ever see a beaver? Perhaps you did at the Zoological Gardens. Well, those beavers have flat tails and they know how to use them just like bricklayers use their trowels! And they will go and nibble away at trees, get bits of wood and go down to a river and build a house! Nobody could build such a house, so fit for beavers, as they build! They daub it, and plaster it—you would think that they had been apprenticed to a plasterer, they do the work so well! Who taught the beavers to build a house? Why, God! And how wise He must be to teach even the animals He has created! How wise He must be to teach the beaver to build a house! But God not only teaches beasts, He also teaches fish—and I never heard of any man who could teach a fish as God does! The fishes of the sea know exactly the day of the month when they ought to begin to go round the English coast. And the herring and the mackerel come exactly to the time, though nobody rings the bell to say to them, “It is such a day of the week, and such a month of the year and you ought to swim away.” When the time comes for them to go back again, away they go—and they seem to understand everything that they should do! If God can teach even the fish of the sea, what a wise Teacher He must be!  
It is said that many years ago, there was a very wise man who lived at Cambridge and he taught scholars Latin and Greek, and many things that seemed very strange to the people who lived there. And the news flew abroad that there was a wonderful man there who knew everything—a little about the stars and a great deal about all sorts of things! The young men all over Europe began to flock to him and that is how there came to be a University at Cambridge, for the fame of the man’s learning drew those who wanted to be taught, to come and be his pupils. Now, when God can teach even the beasts and the fishes, you boys and girls and grownup people, too, ought to say, “Lord, let us be scholars in Your school!” Why, my dear friend over here, Mr. Johnson, is such a good teacher that the boys come and fill the schoolhouse! If he were a bad teacher, he would not have half the number of boys that he has. A good teacher is sure to draw pupils—and God is the best and wisest Teacher. Oh, may His Grace draw you to His school, that you may be able to say with David, “You have taught me from my youth”!  
I have only one more point to speak upon under this head, so do not grow weary. God is a necessary Teacher. It is really necessary that everyone of us should be taught of God, for if we are not, somebody else will teach us—and that somebody else will so teach us that we shall lose our souls forever! There was a sad sight seen some years ago, I daresay the likes of it have been seen far too often. A minister called at a house and he saw a woman crying, oh, so bitterly, and she refused to be comforted! The minister said, “My good woman, what is the matter?” She answered, “Oh, my boy, my boy, my boy!” “What, is he ill?” “Oh, no, Sir, worse than that!” “Is he dead?” “Worse than that.” “What is the matter?” “Oh, my boy, my boy!” “Where is he?” “Oh, Sir, he is in prison—in prison for stealing—and it is all my fault!” “How is that?” he asked. “Why, I took him to the theater, and if there is any place where children can learn to do wrong, it is there!” And so she began to cry again. “I took him there and that was the first step in his ruin! And now my boy is lost.” Ah, if you do not go to God to teach you, the devil will teach you! Do you know the devil has plenty of teachers? I see them on Sunday—I mean bad boys and bad girls who teach other boys and girls to do wrong—the devil can make a Sunday school teacher out of a very small boy! “Come,” he says, “I’ll teach you.” And he teaches that boy to say bad words and to do wrong things—and then away the boy goes and teaches others! A bad boy is like a sheep that comes into the flock with a disease in it and the disease goes from one sheep to another—  
*“One sickly sheep infects the flock,  
And poisons all the rest.”*

But if we have God for our Teacher, we shall not be taught to sin, but we shall be taught everything that is good.  
II. But now we are going on to the second head and that is, THE LESSONS WHICH THE GREAT TEACHER TAUGHT DAVID.  
One of the lessons which God taught David was to value his soul. We all need to be taught that lesson. We generally value our bodies and take care of them and, up to a certain point, that is right. Some of us like to look into the mirror, for we think we are rather pretty. But there is danger in that mirror as well as in others. I like to see the boys well-washed and clean, and I am pleased when they keep themselves tidy. And though I do not like to see girls dressed very finely, yet it is very nice to see them neat and trim. But, after all, you know the body is only like the shell of the nut—the inside is the nut itself. It is the soul hat is the thing we ought to care about. Some time ago there was a great fire. What a noise there was in the street! Here come the engines! People are gathering together all round the house and there is a woman shouting and crying, “Oh,” she says, “come and help me! Do come and help me! I want to save some of my things. She gets a bed downstairs, she brings out a box, she has secured some little trinkets and jewelry and she gets everything that she can out of the fire, and then says to herself, “Dear me, am I not fortunate in having saved so much?” The fire is burning, the house is crackling, everything is being consumed and all of a sudden the woman starts up and says, “Oh, dear! Where’s my child?” The neighbors cry, “What? Did you not think of your child first?” “Oh,” she replied, “what a foolish woman I’ve been! I have saved these paltry things and forgotten my child, my precious child!” That is like a person who cares only for his body— what he shall eat, what he shall drink, what he shall put on, and then at last, when he comes to die, he says, “Oh, dear! I have forgotten my soul and now my soul must be cast away forever into the everlasting burning that never shall be quenched.” Dear Children, I hope God will teach everyone of you in the Sunday school to look after the welfare of your soul and to remember that if you were to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul, all the gain would be an eternal loss!  
The next lesson that God taught David was to value the world aright. David, I am sure, valued the world aright because he says, “There are many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift You up the light of Your Countenance upon us!” And he says again, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You.” Young people generally think of this world. I will tell you a story and ask you a question. There was a little boy carrying a basket of peaches and he had to cross a railway. Just as he crossed it, the train came up and went right over him and crushed him to atoms. A little girl heard that story, and I do not think you could guess what question she asked, because it was such a silly question that you never would guess it, I think. Her mother said the dear little boy was all crushed to pieces by the train going over him, but the little girl was silly enough to say, “Mother, what became of the peaches?” Was not that a foolish question to ask? Now, when I hear of people dying, and I often do hear of persons who have been living without God and without Christ, and they have been said to be “worth” perhaps £20,000, or £50,000, what silly question do you think I hear people ask? They say, “How much money did he leave?” As if that was of any consequence at all compared with the other question, “What has become of his soul? Where is his immortal spirit?” The little basket of peaches that the child carried was nothing compared with the boy, himself, and all that you can ever gain in this world is nothing compared with your own self, your own real self—your soul! So I hope you will be taught by God’s Grace to put the world in its right place and look at it as being

 nothing compared with the saving of your soul!  
Another thing that David was taught of God was to see his sin. I know that, in your classes, you have read the 51st Psalm. How much David talks about his sin in that Psalm! He says, “My sin is always before me.” This is one of the lessons that every boy and every girl here must learn if they would enter Heaven. You must learn that you are a sinner and learn it so that it makes you mourn and cry out before God. I saw, last week, in the West End of London, two soldiers, with bayonets fixed, one walking on one side of a soldier, and the other on the other side of him. And the man who was walking in the middle had a coat over his hands. I knew what that meant—he had handcuffs on his wrists. He had been deserting and he had his hands chained together, but he did not want the people to know it and, therefore, he had asked his comrades to be kind enough just to throw a cloak over his hands so that he might not look as though he was chained. I do not blame him for that. But, you know, the devil—though men are all chained by nature and are, all of them, slaves—puts something over them so that they cannot see their chains and they walk on believing that they are free, whereas they are in the worst possible bondage! One of the best lessons you can learn is to find out that you are a slave and that you need someone to set you free! To find out that your soul is sick and needs to be healed! Oh, may God’s Spirit teach you that—and teach it to you in your youth!  
But, better still, the next lesson that God taught David was, where the remedy was for all his sins. If you read the 51st Psalm, you can hear him say, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” David knew that the blood of Jesus Christ could take away his sin. I have heard, but I do not know whether it is true, that a little creature called the ichneumon, which lives in Egypt, lives by killing and eating snakes. It is a very useful little creature, for it destroys many things that would be deadly to men. But sometimes these snakes bite the ichneumon and he would die, but the story goes that there is a kind of grass growing near the river which heals snakebites—and as soon as ever the ichneumon gets bitten and feels the poison—he runs away to this little herb and nibbles at it, and gets healed directly. Whether it is true or not, you and I have been bitten by the old serpent, Satan, and there is “the Plant of Renown,” the Lord Jesus Christ—and if we go and feed upon Him, all the wounds that sins can make will soon be healed!  
Well, these were very good lessons to be learned by David. Let me remind you what they were. God taught him to value his soul, to value the world aright, to see his sin and to see the remedy for it. Another thing David learned was to live as in God’s sight. How wonderfully David talks, in various parts of the Psalms, about God seeing him! When I was a boy, about the size of many of these boys that I see before me here, my father made me learn that long Psalm, the 139th in which Dr. Watts puts thus the great Truth of God that God is everywhere and can see everyone—

*“If mounted on a morning ray  
I fly beyond the Western sea,  
Your swifter hand would first arrive,  
And there arrest your fugitive.  
Or should I try to shun Your sight  
Beneath the spreading veil of light,  
One glance of time, one piercing ray,  
Would kindle darkness into day.  
The veil of night is no disguise,  
No screen from Your all-searching eyes;  
Your hand can seize Your foes as soon  
Through midnight shades as blazing noon. O may these thoughts possess my breast, Wherever I rove, wherever I rest!  
Nor let my weaker passions dare  
Consent to sin, for God is there.”*

One other lesson David learned was this, he learned to prepare to die. This is one of the grandest lessons that any man can ever learn for, you know, we must all die. There was a great king who was a great warrior as well as a king. His name was Saladin and when he was very ill in his tent, he said to his generals who gathered round him, “Go and fetch the crescent banner around which my warriors have always rallied in the day of battle.” So they brought it in, on a long lance, and they unfurled the colors right before him. And the dying man said, “Take off the colors, and look, there is the shroud that I have had prepared to wrap me in when I am dead. Now, put the shroud on the lance instead of the colors.” And they did so. These were the last words he uttered, “Go and take that shroud on the lance, and go through every street of the city and cry aloud, ‘This is all that remains of the mighty Saladin! This is all that remains of the mighty Saladin!’” And this is what will be said of all of us, “This is all that remains of that fair girl with the beautiful hair!” “This is all that remains of that dear boy who was once so full of mirth and laughter!” “This is all that remains of that gray-headed man, so wise and learned!” “This is all that remains of the merchant with all his wealth!” Or, “This is all that remains of the preacher with all his speech.” Oh, to be ready, thoroughly ready, whenever the summons shall come for us to leave this world behind us and go to the better land!

III. Now the third head is about WHEN THE SCHOLAR WENT TO SCHOOL. I hope none of these boys who go to school ever go too late. “Dilly, dilly dollar,” don’t they say? “Ten o’clock scholar.” He is always a bad scholar who comes in late. Those who go to God’s school are never very good scholars if they go too late. When did David go to God’s school, according to the text?

THE CHILDREN: “In his youth!”  
Mr. SPURGEON: That is right—in his youth. He says, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” He went to school in his early days and that is one of the reasons why he turned out so good a scholar, because he went to school early. Why should we go to God’s school early? I think we ought to do so, first, because it is such a happy school. Schools used to be very miserable places, but nowadays, I really wish I could go to school again. I went into the Borough Road School the other day, into the Repository where they sell slates, pencils, books and all such things. The person who was there said to me, “Do you want to buy any of these things?” I said, “What are they?” He opened a box, and I said, “Why, they are toys, are they not?” He answered, “No, they are not. They are used for the lessons that are taught in the Kindergarten school.” I said, “Why, if I were to take them home, my boys would have a game with them, for they are only toys!” “Just so,” he said, “but they are what are used in the Kindergarten school to make learning the same as playing, so that little children should play while they are learning.” Why, I thought, if that were so, I would like to go at once! Now, those who go to God’s school are made much more happy than any toys can make children! He gives them real pleasure. There is a verse, I don’t know how many of you know it. I will say the first line, you say the second, if you can.  
Mr. SPURGEON: “‘Tis religion that can give”  
The CHILDREN: “Sweetest pleasures while we live!”  
Mr. SPURGEON: “‘Tis religion must supply  
The CHILDREN: “Solid comfort when we die!”  
Another reason why boys and girls should try to get to God’s school very early is because they will not have so much to be sorry for afterwards. Two or three times during the last fortnight I have heard good men pray in the Tabernacle, and each one has said something like this, “O God, save my dear children! Grant that they may never go into sin as I did, that they may never have so much to repent of and to weep over as I had!” That was the father of some boy here, I expect. And oh, I know if he were here tonight, he would say, “Dear Boy, dear Girl, do not go into sins which will afterwards cause you to weep.” This story will show you what I mean. A boy’s father once said to him, “Now, John, I will tell you what I am going to do to make you look at yourself a little. Every time you do wrong, I am going to drive a nail into that post—and every time you do right, and are a good boy, I shall draw one out.” “Well,” John thought, “I will not have any nails in that post if I can help it.” But they did get in somehow—boys will be boys and girls will be girls—and there were a lot of nails in the post! And the boy felt very sorry as he saw them, for they seemed to speak to him, and to say, “You disobeyed your father that day. You disobeyed your mother another day,” and he thought he would be a good boy. So he tried with all his might and got half the nails out—and after a while, he got every nail out of the post. And what do you think he said, then? His father said to him, “You have got all the nails out, John.” “Yes, Father,” he said, “but there are the holes still there. There are the holes still there.” Now when God’s Grace comes to a man who has led a wicked life from his boyhood, it pardons him and takes the nails out. “Ah,” he says, “but there are the holes still there! I remember the sins I did and they have done me serious hurt, though God has forgiven me.” One good man said, “I never shall forgive myself, to think that I lived so long without serving God.” Get then, dear Children, to God’s school early, that you may not have the holes in the post, nor have so much to be sorry for in your later life!  
Another reason why I would have boys and girls go to God’s school early is because it will make them most useful. A man cannot be very greatly useful who has only the end of his life to use for God. The tree that has been transplanted very lately cannot be expected to bear much fruit. But a tree that was put into the soil when but a cutting and that has continued to grow there, year after year, is more likely to become a good fruit-bearing tree.  
One other reason why I would have you go to God’s school soon is that you will die soon. Even if you live long, life will be very short. Oh, that God’s mercy would take you into God’s school now, even tonight, that you may be able to say with David, “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” Let this be your cry—

**“Soon as my youthful lips can speak  
Their feeble prayer to Thee,  
O let my heart Your favor seek;  
Good Lord, remember me!”**  
IV. Now the last thing and this is the most important of all tonight, and it will not take many minutes to tell you about it. The last thing is this. David said, “God, You have taught me from my youth.” But David is now dead. I wonder whether there are some here tonight who can say the same as he did? I hope there are many. So the last head is, THE SCHOLAR—WHERE IS HE? THE SCHOLAR—WHERE IS SHE?  
Pass those questions all round the building and I hope there are many who will be able to say, “O God, You have taught me”—Mary, Jane, Thomas, William—“You have taught me from my youth.” I do not suppose you could make much of a speech tonight if you were on this platform, but do you know, if I could have my choice between being able to speak as well as Mr. Gladstone, who spoke so grandly last night, or only be able to say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth”—if I could only have one of the two—I would certainly choose the latter! There is more music in that sentence than in all the eloquence of the greatest orator!  
I shall now ask a question or two, and then I shall have done. All the children here believe that when we have gone from this life, we shall go into another world. And you are all hoping, I am sure, that when you die, you will go to that happy land of which we sometimes sing— *“There is a happy land,  
Far, far away,  
Where saints in Glory stand,  
Bright, bright as day!  
Oh, how they sweetly sing,  
Worthy is our Savior King,  
Loud let His praises ring,  
Praise, praise forever!  
Come to this happy land,  
Come, come away—  
Why will you doubting stand?  
Why still delay?  
Oh, we shall happy be  
When from sin and sorrow free  
Lord, we shall live with Thee,  
Blest, blest forever!  
Bright in that happy land  
Beams every eye!  
Kept by a Father’s hand,  
Love cannot die.  
On then to Glory run,  
Be a crown, and kingdom, won—  
And bright above the sun,  
Reign, reign forever.”*  
May we have that crown and kingdom! That is what we are looking for. A little girl came home one Sunday and asked her mother a question. Little boys and girls will sometimes ask questions which cannot be very easily answered. She said, “Mother, do you believe what Teacher told me today?” “What’s that, dear?” “Why, she said that we are only going to stay in this world for a little while, and that we are going to another world. Do you believe it, Mother?” “Oh, yes, my Dear, of course I do—the Bible says so!” “Then, Mother, you know aunt Eliza is going to Australia?” “Yes, what about that?” “She is getting ready, is she not?” “Yes, she is packing up her trunks and getting ready.” “Then, Mother, if you are going into another world, why don’t you get ready, too?” A very proper question for a child to put, and a very proper question for me to put to you here! If you are going to another world, dear Children, may God’s Holy Spirit help you to get ready to go!  
Dear Children, I hope you will be scholars who will learn that the next world is the one for us to look for.  
This world is but a very poor thing at the best. A great man, a very rich man and a mighty emperor, invited a friend of his youth to come and stay with him. And this friend, when he entered into the palace, was quite dazzled by the marble, ivory, gold, silver and gems on every side, and he said to the great man, “How happy you must be with all this wealth! I never saw such a palace, nor such servants in livery, nor such gardens!” “Ah,” said the other, “I will, one of these evenings, tell you what I think of all I have.” So, one evening, a servant brought to this gentleman, on a golden dish, an apple so lovely that it seemed as if such an apple never grew! It was, as we sometimes say, like wax, perfect. He took it off the golden dish but put it back again, and the servant took a knife and cut it down the middle—and inside it was full of black dust and a great worm dropped out of it! The emperor said nothing, but looked at his friend, and his friend knew that he meant, “That is like my life—all outside looks very beautiful, but inside there is a worm.” Now, in all the joy that this world ever gives to us there is a worm! The only apples that have no worms grow only in Paradise, and there, dear Children, if God shall teach us, we shall sit and pluck new fruit from the celestial tree. Let us go there and leave this poor world behind, seeking a better rest, where immortal fruits grow!  
A gentleman bought a pear tree, and planted it in his garden. The first year it did not have any pears on it, but the second year there was a good show of bloom and after a while there was one little pear. So the gentleman said to his wife, “Now we shall know whether that really is as good a pear tree as the gardener told me it would be.” To his children he said, “Now, mind none of you touch that pear, for I am very particular to know about it—to see whether it is worthwhile to keep the tree.” One of his little boys was very fond of pears and he watched that pear and saw it grow. It kept on growing and his father said to him, “Now, John, I know you will not touch that pear. You may have any of the other fruit in the garden, but you must not touch that pear.” John said, “No, Father.” Yet, somehow, as that pear began to swell and get ripe, John’s mouth watered after that particular pear and he thought, “Oh, I should like to eat it!” He passed close by it, sometimes, but he did not touch it. At last, one night, a beautiful, bright, moonlight night, as he lay in bed, he looked out of the window and he could see the pear tree down in the garden, and he thought, “Father won’t know I took the pear—he’ll never think I would go out at night. I’ll put on my slippers—it’s a nice moonlight night—and I’ll slip down and get that pear.”  
He went downstairs, though he hardly liked being out alone at night and, opening the back door, he went out into the garden and stood underneath the tree. He was getting on his tiptoes to reach the pear, when, between the leaves, a ray of light came right straight into his eyes. It was the gleam of a star and that star seemed to be watching him! And at the same moment that ray of light came through the leaves from that particular star, his heart seemed to say the four words which he said were the best words he ever heard, for they were, all his life long, a blessing to him—“You, God, see me.” Down he went on to his feet, no more on his tiptoes, glided upstairs, took off his slippers and went to bed, so thankful to think that the star had looked at him and saved him from doing wrong! It seemed to be like God’s light looking right through the trees and the text seemed to be God’s Word reminding him how wrongly he was acting!  
Now, he who goes to God’s school, and has learned to live as in God’s sight, has learned one of the best lessons that ever could be taught him. I hope that none of us here, whether men, or women, or boys, or girls, will ever be satisfied till, in everything, we act as in God’s sight! Nobody would cheat in the shops, then! Nobody would tell a lie, then, if they knew that God was always looking upon them!  
One other thing and I will finish. I think some dear boys and girls ought to be very earnest just now, and ask the Lord to take them into His school because there are many who are very anxious about them. There was once a boy of the name of Stoddart, and he was a very bad boy, or rather, he was a very bad young man. One night his pastor met him outside a little Chapel into which several people were going. The young man said, in a joking, saucy, naughty tone, “What are you doing?” And the minister, who was an old man, turned round and said, “Young man, this is what we are doing—your mother asked us to meet tonight and pray for you.” Young Stoddart walked away and said, “Then, if these people are praying about me, it’s high time I should pray for myself!” And before the meeting was over, in he crept and you cannot tell the joy there was when he came in to say he thanked them for praying for him—and desired to pray for himself! He became a famous preacher in America and brought many souls to Christ—and was the man who preached a sermon at the chapel where afterwards Jonathan Edwards became a minister of Christ, and was the means of a great revival of religion!  
Now we are praying for you! And John, and Mary, and William, and James, I want you to say, as this young man did, “Then it is high time we should pray for ourselves.” God bless everyone of you, and bless you tonight, for Jesus Christ’s sake!  
And I must say just this one sentence or so. The way to go to God’s school is this—Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, died on the Cross to open the door into that great school. And if any of you, my dear young Friends, will trust in Jesus Christ to save you, because He died for sinners, you are then inside His school and you shall be taught and trained. And as I told you about the little ichneumon that ate the grass and was healed, so shall you have all your sins forgiven and your soul-wounds healed—and you shall go on your way rejoicing!

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THE OLD MAN’S SERMON  
NO. 1256

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 26, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have showed Your strength unto this generation, and Your power**

**to everyone that is to come.”  
Psalm 71:17, 18.**

I EXPECT, during the present week, to have the pleasure of preaching at Kettering, to celebrate the centenary of the ministry in that place of Mr. Toller and his father. My esteemed friend, Mr. Toller, has for about 55 years proclaimed the Gospel of the Grace of God to the same people, and with the 45 years of his father’s previous pastorate the century is completed! Having this very pleasant task before me, I have been led to consider the subject of old age and especially the old age of Believers, and have concluded that “

the reminiscences of an old man” would furnish us a suitable topic for this morning’s discourse. I was the more led to choose the subject because on Sabbath week the children and young people will have a claim upon the preacher, since that day has been selected by the Sunday School Union for special prayer.

To balance accounts, let us give this morning’s service to our grave and reverend seniors. David has here spoken as an aged man and what he has said has been echoed by thousands of venerable Believers. His experience of the past, his prayer for the present and his aspiration for the future have all occurred to others who are his equals in years. And those of us who are in middle life will, before long, be glad to say, “Amen” thereto. “O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until this time have I declared Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.”

David, in this passage, may be regarded as the model of an aged Believer converted in early life. And we feel quite safe in taking all his expressions and putting them into the mouths of veteran soldiers of the Cross.

I. The first thing we shall dwell upon, this morning, will be HIS SCHOLARSHIP, or a good beginning. “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” The Psalmist was an instructed Believer. He had not merely been saved, but taught—conversion had led to instruction. I call the attention of all young Christians to this. How desirable it is, not merely that you should be forgiven your sins and justified by faith in Christ Jesus, and that your hearts should be renewed by the operations of the Holy Spirit, but that you should go to Jesus’ school and take His yoke upon you and learn of Him.

Do you not know that this is the good part which Mary chose, and which the Lord declared should not be taken away from her? She chose to sit at His feet to learn of Him. Do not suppose that to be saved from Hell is everything! You need, also, to be instructed in righteousness. If you seek to know the Lord more and more, it will save you from a thousand snares, cause you to grow in Divine Grace and enable you to be useful. That will be a fruitful old age which was preceded by an instructed youth. We ought to know the Truth of God and understand it, for if we do not, we shall always be weak in the faith.

That David was exceedingly well instructed is clear from his Psalms which contain a mine of doctrine and a wealth of experience never surpassed even by other Inspired writings. If one had no other book than the Psalms to study, he might, by the blessing of God’s Spirit, become one of the wisest of men. Aim, then, my Brothers and Sisters to be disciples now, that in your old age you may look back with joy on the days spent in heavenly learning. All his instruction the Psalmist traced to his God. “O God, You have taught me.” He had entered Christ’s College as a scholar. Most wisely had he chosen to learn of Him who has Infinite Wisdom to impart and Divine skill in communicating it.

The Lord not only endeavors to teach, but He does so. He knows how to make His children learn, for He speaks to the heart and teaches us to profit. “O God, You have taught me.” What a blessed thing it is when we are fully convinced by the Holy Spirit that to learn anything aright we must be taught of God! Too many appear to fancy that everything they need to know they can discover for themselves. They think they can work it out by their own thoughts, or, at any rate, the profound learning of their favorite authors will carry them through.

My Brother, my Sister, you who have grown gray in your Master’s service, I am sure you have learned to mistrust your own understanding and are glad to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child. You know by experience that all you have ever learned apart from God has been a lesson of sorrow or of folly. You have obtained no true light except from the great Father of lights. No heavenly truths are learned aright till by the Holy Spirit they are burnt into the soul. Blessed are those who have gone to school of such a Master—they shall be among the wise who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament!

The Lord had taught David, in part, by His Word, for we find David delighting in the Scriptures and meditating in them both day and night. He taught him also by His ministers. He gathered no little instruction from Samuel and he learned some pointed lessons from Nathan, while Gad, the king’s Seer, no doubt, also ministered to his building up. God’s children are willing to be taught by God’s servants. He had also been instructed by the Holy Spirit—many a precious Truth of God had been communicated to him in the quiet of the sheep walks, or in the solitary caverns of the hills— and even when he had become a king he was awakened in the night watches that he might hear the voice of the Lord, his God.

Moreover, the Lord taught him by Providence. He learned much from his shepherd’s crook, much from his sling and stone, much from the hatred of Saul, much from the love of Jonathan. He must have learned much afterwards of his own heart from his own trials, follies and sins. And he must have seen much of man’s worthlessness from the ingratitude of Absalom, the treachery of Ahithophel, the brutality of Joab and the blasphemy of Shimei. His whole life was a source of education. Whether he stood on the hill Mizar or traversed the valley of Baca. Whether he exulted in green pastures or sunk in the deeps where all God’s waves and billows went over him. Whether he sang a hallelujah or chanted a Miserere, everything was training him for a yet nobler existence. Therefore he could say to the most High, “You have taught me.”

O beloved Christian Friends, in looking back can you not see how everything has been instructive to you when you have been willing to learn? What a school have some of us passed through—a school of trial and a school of love! We have sat on the hard floor of discipline, we have felt the rod of correction and, on the other hand, our eyes have sparkled with delight as we have studied the illuminated book of fellowship and peered into the secrets of the Lord which is with them that fear Him.

In us has been fulfilled that ancient Covenant promise, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” David also had the privilege of beginning early. “O God, You have taught me from my youth.” I was a scholar in Your infant class. I was put to You to learn my letters and when I learned to spell out Your name as my Savior and Father, it was Your Grace which taught it to me. All true learning begins at Christ’s feet and it is well to be there in our youth! If you would be a good scholar, you must be a young scholar. David felt that he needed to be instructed of God from his youth, for in one of his Psalms he says, “Remember not the sins of my youth, and my former transgressions.” So that even pious David had sins of his youth to mourn over and, therefore, needed, as well as others, to learn the way of holiness when young.

The dire necessity which the foolishness of nature has laid upon us from our earliest days is met by early Grace. My aged Brothers and Sisters, I would urge you, at this moment, to bless the Lord for the Grace which in early days saved many of you from falling into grievous sin! The sin which the Psalmist mourned over, he was enabled by Divine teaching to master. He says himself, “How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Your Word,” and so David had done and, therefore, his early life was marked by great purity and simplicity of character, because he had so well been taught of God.

Especially had he been taught to trust his God, for in the fifth verse of this Psalm he says, “You are my hope, O Lord God, You are my trust from my youth.” And being so taught he had practically proved his faith, for while he was yet in his youth he smote the uncircumcised Philistine! And in the name of God he delivered Israel. Blessed is that young man who practically shows, by daring deeds, that he is a disciple of Jesus! Blessed is that old man who, in looking back, confesses that he needed teaching from his youth up, but also rejoices that he received instruction from the Lord and was led into the way of righteousness.  
Further, notice David tells us he kept to his studies. He says, “O God,

You have taught me from my youth,” which implies that God had continued to teach him and, so, indeed, He had. The learner had not sought another school, nor had the Master refused His pupil. Some make slight progress because they seem to begin well but afterwards turn aside to folly. They profess to be taught of God at one time, but they grow weary of the plain Gospel of Jesus and resort to heresy-mongers and inventors of strange doctrines. Good is it for the heart to be established in the Truth of God and to yield itself to no teacher but the Lord.

Venerable Brother, I hope you can say, “O God, You have taught me from my youth. I have not bowed my soul to every wind of doctrine and made myself as the bulrush, which yields to every passing breath of air. But I have, by Your Grace, been steadfast, unmovable, holding fast the Word of Truth.” It is equally clear that he was still learning. The oldest saint still goes to the school of the Lord Jesus. Oh, how little we know when we know most! The wisest saints are those who most readily confess their folly. The man who knows everything is the man who knows nothing. The man who cannot learn any more is the man who has never learned anything aright. To know Christ and the power of His Resurrection creates an insatiable thirst after a still closer acquaintance with Him.

Our eager desire is yet more fully “to know Him.” I half wish that I could leave the pulpit and that some venerable Brother could come forward and tell you how God began with him and repeat the first lessons that he learned. I should like to hear him tell how God has had patience with him and has taught him still—how sometimes he has had to smart under the rod before he could be made to learn at all—and yet the Lord has been gentle with him. I should like “such an one as Paul the aged” to tell you how, by everything that has happened, bad and good, bright and dark, his education has been carried on! And I should like him to tell you how glad he is to continue to be a learner, though now so far advanced in life. The best instructed of our elder Brethren are those who most earnestly cry, “What I know not, teach me!” And, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.”

Though my venerable friend has earned unto himself a good degree, he still keeps to his old Bible, and his old Master. Though now able to teach others, also, he is none the less a disciple, sitting at the feet of Jesus! Yes, he is all the more teachable because of what he already knows. Thus, Brethren, we have seen that the model of aged Believers is an instructed saint who owes all he knows to Divine teaching, who began to learn early and has persevered in his sacred studies even to this day—

*“’Twas Yours, O Lord, to train and try  
My spirit from my youth;  
And to this hour I glorify  
The wonders of Your Truth.”*

II. Secondly, pass on to consider HIS OCCUPATION. His scholarship was a good beginning, his occupation was a good continuance—“Until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.” This was David’s chief employment. It is true he had other work to do, for he was at first a shepherd. He then became a royal harper, afterwards grew into a warrior and at last climbed to a throne! Still, his life’s main bent and objective was to magnify the Lord by declaring His wondrous works. You and I, Brethren, have each one his calling, and if it is a lawful calling, let us abide in it and let us not dream that it would honor God for us to leave our daily occupations upon pretence of serving Him in a more spiritual way by living upon other people.

Still, our earthly vocation is but the shell of our heavenly calling which is the kernel of our life’s pursuit. Our temporal business must be subservient to our spiritual business and we must declare the Glory of God in some way or other. David magnified the Lord by his Psalms. How sweetly has he therein declared God’s ways of mercy and of faithfulness! He glorified God by his life, especially by those heroic deeds which made all Israel know the mighty works which God could do by a feeble but trustful man. He, no doubt, often declared the wondrous works of God in private conversation with Believers and unbelievers by narrating his personal experience of the Lord’s mercies.

You and I, if we have been to God’s school, must follow the same occupation. Some of us can preach. Let us be diligent in it. Others of you teach in the Sunday school—I beseech you put your whole hearts into that blessed work. All of you can, by written letters or private conversation, and especially by consistent lives, declare the wondrous works of God and make men know the glories of the God of Grace! Let us be eager in this sacred work. Men do not care to know their God, but we must not allow them to be ignorant. Tell them of that love of His against which they daily offend and of His readiness to forgive their provocations.

Publish and proclaim salvation by Grace. It is sweet in old age to remember that you did this. Notice here, dear Friends, that David had chosen a Divine subject. “Until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.” God’s works he had declared, not man’s! He had not talked of what man could do or had done. Note verse sixteen—“I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.” Neither the virtues of saints, nor the prerogatives of priests, nor the infallibility of pontiffs, nor anything of the sort had degraded the Psalmist’s lips! Those lips had reserved themselves for the glory of God, alone! “My tongue, also, shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long.” We ought to speak of what God has done in creation, Providence and Grace—and especially should we point out the marvelous nature of those works—for there is a wonder about them all.

Truly, Brothers and Sisters, here is a great subject for us—the wonders of electing love, the wonders of redeeming Grace, the wonders of the Holy Spirit’s converting power, the wonders of sanctification, the wonders of sin conquered and of Grace implanted! Such wonders never cease! Wonders of Grace belong to God and it should be your business and mine, in the spirit of holy reverence, to tell others what God has done, that we may set them wondering and adoring, too! David had a blessed subject, a subject of which the main point was the blending of righteousness with salvation. Did you notice the 15th verse, “My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day”? That is the great Christian doctrine—medulla theologiae, the very pith and marrow of theology—the

Atonement in which Grace and Justice unite in the sacrifice of Jesus. O Beloved, I could wish to have no other subject to speak upon, and to  
have my tongue touched with a live coal from off the altar to preach of  
only Substitution! I desire to speak of it first and foremost and beyond all  
else! I would show forth daily how God is just and yet the justifier of him  
that believes in Jesus! How He smites for sin and yet smites not the sinner! How He is severe, relaxing none of the penalty, and yet laying none of  
the penalty upon the guilty because The Guiltless One has borne it all! Make it, dear Friends, the occupation of your lives is to instruct men in  
this saving Truth of God. Teach them this if nothing else. If there are some  
doctrines you cannot understand, yet get a grip of this one. If some are  
too high for you, yet let this be your daily theme—Christ crucified—at  
whose Cross righteousness and peace have kissed each other! This was  
David’s occupation. My aged brethren in Christ, this has been your occupation, also, and you do not regret it. You only wish you had been more  
diligent in it.  
Now notice that while David’s subject was Divine, it had also been uniform. He says, “Until this time have I declared Your wondrous works.” It is  
a sad thing when a good man turns aside to error, even if it is but for a little season. Some ministers have preached terribly. I should think they,  
themselves, do not know what they have taught, for they have gone from  
one line of thought to another and contradicted themselves over and over  
again. Beware of being men given to change, ready to catch every new disease! I confess I feel an admiration for a man who can say, “What I taught  
in my youth, I teach in my old age. That which was my hope and confidence when first the Spirit of God opened my mouth—that and no other—  
is my hope and confidence still.”  
As men grow in years they ought to think more deeply, to understand  
more clearly and to speak with greater confidence. And it is their wisdom  
to correct many errors of detail which occurred through the immaturity of  
their early days. But still, it is a great thing to hold fundamental Truths of  
God from the very first. There are not two Christs nor two Gospels—if  
there is another Gospel it is not another, but there are some that trouble  
us. Oh, my Brother, if the Lord has taught you from your youth, abide in  
that which you have learned—hold to it now that your hair is gray! Let us  
see that “the Old Guard dies but never surrenders.”  
Even we, who are younger than you are, have resolved to abide in the  
grand old Truths of God. Our banner was nailed to the mast long ago!  
Surely the veterans will say the same. All my salvation and all my desire  
are centered in the Covenant of Grace and the Gospel of redemption by  
the blood of Jesus! As for novelties of doctrine, I have one answer for them  
all—  
*“Should all the forms which men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”*  
That is good word of permanence—until this time— “Until this time have I  
declared Your wondrous works.” Until this time, also, have our aged fathers come, holding, still, the things most surely believed among us. But,  
dear Friends, notice that the style which David used was very commendable. “Until this time have I declared,” says he. Now by “declaration” I understand something positive, plain and personal.  
David’s teaching about his God had not been with an, “if,” or a, “but,”  
or a, “perhaps,” but it had been, “Thus and thus, says the Lord.” He had  
declared the Truth of God openly. His teaching had not been misty and  
foggy so that his people could make what they liked out of it according to  
their tastes. Neither had it been mystical, metaphysical, transcendental  
and philosophic—he had declared it, cleared it, explained it and brought it  
into prominent notice—so that he who ran might read it. He had also declared it as known to himself and certified by his own experience. It is a  
blessed thing to give a personal tinge to our testimony by saying, “Thus  
and thus have I experienced and so has the Lord dealt with me.” Herein will lie much of the interest of our testimony. Dear Brothers and  
Sisters, you who have attained to a ripe old age, I trust you are able in  
looking back to say, “Yes, I have spoken honestly for God from my inmost  
heart and, therefore, I have spoken with decision, proving by my personal  
experience the truth of the Divine promises. God has always been true to  
me and though some may think me an egotist I can bear the censure, for I  
am unable to restrain myself from uttering my grateful acknowledgments!  
Surely if I did not speak, the stones would cry out! I must proclaim the  
faithfulness of the living God.”  
David’s style had in it very much of holy art and loving devotion, for he  
says, “Your wondrous works,” which shows that he, himself, had wondered while he spoke. I like to hear a good man talk of God’s love, feeling  
it to be too deep for him, speaking of it with tears, as though it overcame  
him—telling his tale as though it were more marvelous to him than he  
could make it appear to his hearers. David had done his work in the spirit  
of adoring wonder and grateful love, for, my Brethren, he had always before him this one objective—to make God great in men’s thoughts. May I  
ask you who are getting on in years, are you making this your one occupation? And, if you happen to be teachers or preachers, do you teach the  
salvation of God with the sole aim of glorifying God?  
Oh, it must come to this, for all Divine service which is not rendered  
with this motive is unacceptable and idle work! If we could preach with

the tongues of men and of angels so as to surpass Apollos or if our objective were to shine in the eyes of men, our preaching would be as sounding  
brass or a tinkling cymbal! If there is any mixture in the motive, dead flies  
are in the ointment of the apothecary and it gives forth an ill savor! But if  
this is our one sole desire, to glorify God by making men see what a great  
and blessed God He is, our labor will be as the incense upon the golden  
altar! Upon such service we shall be able to look back in our old age with  
thankfulness.  
How is it with you, my Brother, my Sister, in reviewing the past? And  
how are matters with you who are in the prime of your strength—are you  
about your Father’s business and living for God in all that you do? Oh,  
then, happy shall you be when gray hairs shall adorn your heads with a crown of glory, for the silver light shall not rest on your heads only, but shall cast its sheen of gladness upon your hearts, also, as you remember  
that until this time you have declared His wondrous works! III. Thus I pass on to the third thing in the text, namely, HIS PRAYER,  
which was a good omen—“Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O  
God, forsake me not.” What a plaintive prayer it is. It shows you, Brethren,  
that David was not ashamed of his former reliance. He felt that he should  
not have come so far if God had not led him. He saw his absolute dependence upon God in the past, the necessity which had always existed for his  
entire reliance on the Divine Omnipotence. I hope that from our youth we  
have known the necessity of dependence upon God, but I am certain that  
dependence is a growing feeling.  
Growing Christians think themselves nothing. Full-grown Christians  
think themselves less than nothing! Good men are like ships—the fuller  
they are, the lower they sink in the stream. The more Grace a man has,  
the more he complains of his need of Grace. Grace is not a kind of food  
which creates a sense of fullness, but as I have heard of some meats that  
you can eat till you are hungry, so it is with Grace—the more you receive  
the more you long for. David knew the secret springs from which all his  
blessings had flowed and he pleads with the Lord never to stop the Divine  
fountain of all-sufficiency, or he must faint and die.  
This proves, dear Friends, that David did not imagine that past Grace  
could suffice for the present! Past experience is like the old manna, it  
breeds worms and stinks if it is relied upon. The moment a man begins to  
pride himself on the Grace he used to have six years ago, you may depend  
upon it, he has very little now. We need new Grace every day! The Presence of God with me yesterday will not suffice for the present moment—I  
must have Grace now. David acknowledged his present dependence, and it  
was wise to do so. Men always stumble when they try to walk with their  
eyes turned behind them.  
It is very remarkable that all the falls, as far as I remember, recorded in  
Scripture, are those of old men. This should be a great warning to us who  
think we are getting wise and experienced. Lot and Judah and Eli and  
Solomon and Asa were all advanced in years when they were found faulty  
before the Lord. Cool passions are no guarantees against fiery sins unless  
Grace has cooled them rather than the decay of nature! There was great  
need for David to say, “O God, forsake me not,” and his own case proved  
it. I have heard say by those who drive much, that horses more often fall  
at the bottom of the hill than anywhere else. Where the driver thinks he  
needs not hold them up any longer, down they go!  
And thus many men have borne temptation bravely for years—and just  
when the trial was over and they reckoned that they were safe—they  
turned aside to crooked ways and grieved the Lord. You are greatly surprised aren’t you? You would have believed it of anybody sooner than of  
them, but so it is. Take this, then, as a caution, lest we spoil a lifelong  
reputation by one wretched act of sin. My very heart cries, “O God, forsake me not.” The Psalmist saw that many enemies were watching him  
and, therefore, he pleaded, “Forsake me not.” He had many temptations to grow weary in his Master’s service and he prayed, “Forsake me not.” He felt, also, the natural decay of his physical force and he cried, “my strength fails,” and therefore he pleaded, “Forsake me not.”— *“With years oppressed, with sorrows worn, Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,  
To you, O God, I pray;  
To you my withered hands arise,  
To you I lift these failing eyes;  
Oh, cast me not away!”*  
The Psalmist, by this prayer, confessed his undeservingness. He felt  
that for his sins God might well leave him. Hence that prayer in the 51st  
Psalm, “Cast me not away from Your Presence; take not Your Holy Spirit  
from me.” But he humbly resolved not to be deserted. He could not bear  
it! He held his God with eagerness and cried in agony, “O God, forsake me  
not.” His heart was desperately set upon holding to his one hope and consolation and, so, he pleaded as one who pleads for life, itself. You now  
have the prayer before you—what do you think, Brethren—will the Lord  
answer it? You who are feeling your strength fail through old age have  
been praying, “O God, forsake me not.” What do you think, will the Lord  
answer your prayer?  
Yes, that He will! It is not possible for Him to do otherwise. Do you  
think it is like our Lord to leave a man because he is growing old? Would  
any of us do it? Son, would you cast off your father because he totters  
about the house? Brother, would you leave your elder brother because he  
is now aged and infirm? Do we, any of us, as long as we have human  
hearts in our bosom, pitilessly desert the aged? Oh no! And God is far better than we are! He will not despise His worn-out servants! The feeble  
meanings of the most afflicted and infirm are heard by Him, not with weariness, but with pity. Do you think the Lord will turn off His old servants?  
Would you do so?  
Among men it is common, enough, to leave poor old people to shift for  
themselves. The soldier who has spent the prime of his life in his country’s service has been left to beg by the roadside, or to die of starvation.  
Even the saviors of a nation have been allowed, in their old age, to pine in  
penury. How often have kings and princes cast off their most faithful servants and left them exposed to their enemies! When time has wrinkled the  
handsome face and bowed the erect figure, the old man has no longer  
found a place in the throng of courtiers. But the Lord deals not so! The  
King of kings casts not off His veteran soldiers, nor His old courtiers! He  
indulges them with peculiar favors.  
We have a proverb that old wine and old friends are best and, truly, we  
need not look far to see that the oldest saints are frequently the best esteemed by the Lord. He did not forsake Abraham when he was well on in  
years, nor Isaac when he was blind, nor Jacob when he worshipped upon  
the top of his staff. Who among us would turn off an old servant? Some  
skinflints who have no sense of shame might do so, but they are a disgrace to their kind! I know my Lord and Master will never act as they do,  
for He is Love, and His mercy endures forever! If He has blessed us in  
youth and middle age, He will not change His ways and desert us in our declining days. No, blessed be His name, at eventide it will be light and He will show Himself more tender than ever to us, for He has said, “Even to old age I am He, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made,  
and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you.”  
No, my Brothers and Sisters, Jesus will not forget his old Barzillais,  
nor, though, like Peter, others should gird us and take us where we would  
not, He will not turn away His face from us, but will love us to the end.  
Why, Brethren, if the Lord had meant to cast us off, would He not have  
done so long ago? If He needed occasion for discharging us from His service, has He not had plenty? My Lord has had reason enough to send me  
packing hundreds of times if He had willed to do so! He has not waited all  
these years to pick a quarrel with you at the last, I am sure, for He might  
have justly removed you from His household years ago. If He had meant to  
destroy you, would He have shown you such things as He has done? If He  
meant to leave you, would He not have left you in your troubles 20 years  
ago?  
He has spent so much patience and pains and trouble over you that He  
surely means to go through with it! Why should He not? Has He begun to  
build and is He not able to finish? Trembling Friend, remember that your  
vessel has been steered across the ocean of life for 70 years and, surely,  
you can trust the Lord to pilot you for the few years which remain! Did  
you say that you are nearly 80 and do you still doubt your God? How long  
do you expect to live? Another 10 years? Cannot you trust Him for that?  
Why, you will not be here so long as that, in all probability, and since the  
Lord has been good to you so long, why do you doubt now? Oh, do not so!  
It is almost Saturday night, the week’s work is nearly done and you will  
soon enjoy the everlasting Sabbath—can you not rely upon your God till  
the day breaks and the shadows flee away?  
“Ah,” you say, “you are only a young man, it is very well for you to talk.”  
I know it. I know it. And yet I believe that when I grow old I shall be able  
to talk as I do now and even more confidently, for I trust I shall then be  
able to say, “He who taught me from my youth and kept me to this day,  
will not, now, let me go.” Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, though you cried  
in prayer, “O God, forsake me not,” do not sink so low as to imagine that  
He can forsake you, for that were to mistrust His royal Word, in which He  
said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”  
IV. Our last point is this, here is HIS WISH, or a good ending. “Forsake  
me not until I have showed Your strength unto this generation and Your  
power to everyone that is to come.” He had spent a lifetime in declaring  
God’s Gospel, but he wanted to do it once more. Aged saints are reluctant

to cease from active service. Many of them are like old John Newton, who,  
when he was too feeble to walk up the pulpit stairs of St. Mary Woolnoth  
Parish, was carried up to his place and preached on! His Friends said,  
“Really, Mr. Newton, you are so feeble, you ought to quit.” And he said,  
“What? Shall the old African Blasphemer ever leave off preaching the  
Grace of his Master as long as there is breath in his body? No, never.” It is harder work to leave off than to go on, for the love of Christ constrains us, still, and burns with young flames in an aged heart. So here the good man pines to show forth, once more, God’s strength. I think I hear somebody say to the aged man, “You are very unfit to show forth God’s strength, for by reason of years your strength is failing.” But such a speech would be foolish, for the very man to show forth the Lord’s strength is the man who has none of his own! It is no small thing to be in a condition to need great help, and so to be fitted to receive it, and qualified to illustrate what great things Divine power can accomplish! My aged Friend, your weakness will serve as a foil to set forth the brightness of Di  
vine strength!  
The “old man eloquent,” feels that if he could bear one more testimony,  
everybody would know it was not the strength of his natural spirit or his  
fine juvenile constitution which upheld him! If he spoke up for his Maker,  
all men would say, “That feeble old man who testified so bravely for his  
Lord is, himself, the best of all testimonies to the power of Divine Grace,  
for we see how it strengthens him!” Moreover, he thought that if he witnessed for his Lord the young people would note the strength of Divine  
Grace which could last out so many years—they would see that many waters could not quench love, neither could the floods drown it! They would  
see the strength of God’s pardoning mercy in blotting out his sins so long  
and the power of God’s faithfulness in remaining true to His servant, even  
to the end.  
Because of all this he eagerly desired to bear one more testimony. And,  
do you notice the congregation he wished to address? He would testify to  
the generation that was growing up around him! He wished to make  
known God’s power to his immediate neighbors and to their children, so  
that the light might be handed on to other generations! This should be on  
the mind of all who are going off the stage of action—they should think of  
those who are to come after them! They should pray for them and help  
them. The aged man’s thoughts should be fixed upon the spiritual legacies  
which he will leave and, as good old Jacob gathered up his feet in the bed,  
and then divided his blessing among his sons, so should the venerable Believer distribute benedictions.  
Your work is almost done, it only remains to leave behind you a  
monument by which you may be remembered. Marble and brass will perish, but the Truth of God will remain! Set up a memorial of faithful testimony! Not much longer will you mingle with the sons of men. Your seat  
will be empty and the place which knows you today will know you no  
more. Hand on, then, the blessed treasure of the Gospel! You die, but the  
cause of God must not. Speak now, so that when you are gone it may be  
said of you, “He, being dead, yet speaks.” Call your children and your  
grandchildren together and tell them what a good God you have served!  
Or, if you have no such dear ones, speak to your neighbors and your  
friends, or write it down that other eyes may read it when yours are glazed  
in death.  
Reach out your hands to the ages yet to come and present them with  
the pearl of great price. Pray God to enable you to set your mark upon the  
coming generation and then set about winning youth to Jesus by a cheerful, bold, unhesitating witness to His love and power! Willing to go, we all ought to be, but we ought scarcely to desire departure till we have seen the interests of the cause of God secured for coming time! If there is one more soul to be saved, one more heart to be comforted, one more jewel to be gathered for the Redeemer’s crown, you will say, dear Friend, I am sure “Let me wait till my full day’s work is done.”—  
*“Happy if with my last breath  
I may but lisp your name,  
Preach you to all, and say in death,  
‘Behold, behold the Lamb!’”*  
With this last practical thought I send away my venerable Brothers and  
Sisters, asking them to take care that their eventide shall be made to glow  
with the special light of usefulness by their abundant witnessing. I would  
urge the Lord’s veterans to yet more valorous deeds. If, like David, you  
have slain the lion and the bear and the Philistine when you were young,  
up! Do another deed of daring, for the Lord lives, still, and His people have  
need of you! Though your joints are rather rusty and your limbs can  
hardly bear you to the battlefield, yet limp to the conflict, for the lame  
take the prey. He who helped you when you were but a youth and ruddy  
will help you now though you are old and infirm—and who knows what  
you may do?  
One of the finest paintings I ever saw to move one’s soul was the picture of old Dandolo, the Doge of Venice, leading the way in an attack at  
sea upon the enemies of the Republic. He was far past the usual age of  
man and blind—yet, when the efforts of others failed to save his country,  
he became the leader—and was the first to board the ships of the enemy.  
The young men felt that they could not hold back when they saw the heroic conduct of the blind, gray-bearded man! His brave example seemed to  
say, “Soldiers of Venice, will you ever turn your backs?” And the response  
was worthy of the challenge!  
Oh, my honored Brethren, deserving reverence for your years, show us  
your metal! Let the young ones see how victories are won! Quit yourselves  
like men and let us see how he who is washed in the blood of Jesus would  
not hesitate to shed his own blood in the Redeemer’s cause! Your zeal will  
stimulate us, your courage nerve us and we, too, will be valiant for the  
Lord God of Israel! So may God’s Spirit work in you and in us. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 71.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—71 (SONG I), 71 (SONG II), 733.  
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GOD OUR CONTINUAL RESORT

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**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.” Psalm 71:3.**

DAVID, in his younger days, had been obliged to hide himself away with his followers in the great caverns and rocks of his native land. In the cave of Adullam, by the rocks of the wild goats, he had dwelt amid the most stern surroundings of Nature. No doubt he had climbed aloft upon the mountain’s side and then had penetrated into one cave after another and treated them as chambers of his house of rock. There he had spent both nights and days, looking from on high upon the plains beneath, often seeing his cruel pursuers passing by in eager hunt for him while he was secure in his rocky fastness.

Nothing leaves a clearer impression upon the memory than a residence amidst such scenes. You might live for an age in such a town as this and forget it all. What is there to remember in this labyrinth of bricks and mortar? But when you get into the clear bracing atmosphere of the hills— when you tread their sublime heights, or descend into their mysterious hollows—you cannot forget it! A day of leaping, like the wild goats, from crag to crag, ended by a night amid the dread seclusion of a mountain den makes a clear mark on the surface of life which can never be erased—a man will carry such memories with him to his grave.

This must have been especially the case with a genius so poetic as that of David. I would not hesitate to place the King of Israel among the first masters of song. If you take the whole company of the poets, together, you cannot find one who did more for devotional prose than David. All the altars of God in the world have been set alight by flame from David’s lamp. When men worship God in any language, they quote one or other of the Psalms. What better expressions can they borrow or invent? With such a soul as his, and such eyes, and such a tongue, and such a harp, it was no wonder that, in his riper days, when he had known the soft luxury of palaces, he could not refrain from rehearsing the sublime memories of his earlier and more adventurous days—and drawing inspiration from the wild and sublime scenery among which he had been reared. The man, as full of Grace as of genius, as saturated with the Spirit of God as with the spirit of poetry, could not but in his loftiest songs speak of his God in language culled from the cave—“Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.” Or, as some read it, “Be You to me a rock of repose.” The deep quiet of the enormous recesses in the lone rocks was remembered by the Psalmist and worked into his prayer.

I shall want you to carry the thought of those rocks and those caves with you, because it will form a background for our subject and help us to illustrate it.

What a gracious heart David must have had, to speak like this of his God! He desired to be upon the most intimate terms with the Lord, his God. He wished to dwell not merely with God, but in God. He cries, “Be You my strong habitation.” Not merely did he long to dwell in the house of the Lord forever, but he would have the Lord to be his house! He would be surrounded by God and that not as with a dungeon, in which he was forced to be, but as the habitation of his choice, for his pleasure and rest. He would not merely live in God’s world, but within God Himself! He would realize the meaning of Moses, when he said, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” What a man of God David must have been, despite his infirmities and sins! None but a mind in harmony with God as to the great principles of truth and purity would ever have desired such constant converse with God as that which is implied in the words, “Whereunto I may continually resort.”

The wicked say, “No God,” but David sighed for none but God! The mere pretender would have God on Sabbaths and high days and in times of trouble. But David would have God all day and every day. The formalist is satisfied with a word with God in the morning and another at night. When he is either hurried or sleepy, he forces from himself the tax of a minute or two in prayer. But he that loves the Lord delights to walk with Him always! Yes, to make his home with God and to abide in Him! Some would like a Sabbath once in the month, but David would make all his days holiness unto the Lord. Many would like to speak with the Lord from a distance, but David would live and move and have his being in his God. By this, the man after God’s own heart, proved that his own heart was after God. Judge yourselves, therefore, at the very outset, as to what your own condition of heart is. If you can repeat the words of David from your very soul, bless the Grace of God that has taught you to do so! And if you cannot so pray, breathe a silent prayer to Heaven saying—Lord, teach me to love You and long for You. I would gladly acquaint myself with You and be at peace.

Without inventing any mechanical divisions, I would remark that the text naturally suggests three things. The first is that God was to David, a delightful repose—He was his habitation, or home. Secondly, that David found in his God peaceful security—“Be You my strong habitation.” God was his fortress, his castle, his high tower, his rock of defense. And then, thirdly, David had continual access to his God—“Whereunto I may continually resort.” Those five words are as a musical box set to the most charming air—they discourse a quiet harmony to my soul, such as one hears when listening to the brook which warbles as it flows—“Whereunto I may continually resort.”

I. Let us dwell on this for a few minutes. David found in his God, DELIGHTFUL REPOSE. “Be You my strong habitation.” That is, be my house and home. David was one of those who had made the Most High his habitation and, therefore, did God continually preserve him. He was one of the favored ones who dwelt in the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most High, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

Observe what wonderful condescension he had experienced from the Lord! What infinite Grace, that God should allow His servants to think of Him as their house! My God, You are the Glory of Heaven and the angels veil their faces in Your Presence and yet I dare to say, “Be You my habitation.” My God, You are terrible in righteousness; You are a consuming fire! All things perish at Your Presence when once You are angry, yet You permit me to dwell in You and to find in You, not destruction, but eternal life! Brothers and Sisters, we aspire not merely to be reconciled to God, nor even to draw near unto Him, but to enter into Him and to hide ourselves beneath Him! It is one of the sublimities of Christian experience to be in God the Father and in Christ Jesus. Do we understand this? We have never reached the sum of our Grace-given privileges till we are more at home with God than with anyone else in the universe! What a wonder that the eternal God is our refuge! What condescension that the Infinite Jehovah should be the abode of His saints!

David had realized in his God peculiar love. In a man’s own home, he expects to find love. Pity on the poor wretch who is disappointed there. When we are abroad in the world, my Brothers and Sisters, we reckon to meet with rough handling and to receive scant consideration. But within our own doors we enter the sanctuary of love. If we receive and return love anywhere, it is within the walls of our own habitation. That is how David felt towards the Lord, his God. Abroad he had many enemies and faithless friends not a few, but they were all outside of his real life. When he came to his true life in God, he breathed an atmosphere of love! He dwelt in One who loved him better than he loved himself! Do you know what this means, dear Brothers and Sisters? Is God the center of your repose because in Him is love? Are your affections all set on Him? And do you know that He loves you and takes a Divine delight in you? “He shall rest in His love”—do you rest in it? Oh, that your heart may be filled to the brim with a sweet consciousness that you are the object of infinite affection! May you say of the Lord Jesus, “Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” And may you hear the Father say, “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” He that dwells in love dwells in God, for God is Love! Oh blessed experience, to dwell in God as the abode of love!

Moreover, home is the place of special rest. At home we are unloaded of the world’s huge load. The advocate takes off his gown and says, “Lie there, Mr. Barrister, and let the father come to the front.” The tradesman takes off his apron, the warrior his harness, the bearer his yoke, for they are at home. And if a man may rest anywhere on earth, it must surely be in his own habitation! Is not our God our rest? O Beloved, is there, indeed, beneath the sun, any repose for a poor soul except in God? There remains a rest for the people of God and that rest is God, Himself! “Return unto your rest, O my Soul; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” When we know Jehovah’s Truth, His faithfulness, His power, His wisdom, His Grace, then we rest in Him! When we see Him glorified in the majesty of His love in the Person of the Well-Beloved Savior, who has redeemed us from death and Hell, then we who have believed do enter into rest.

The Lord makes us partakers of His own Sabbatic rest! The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. Beloved, have you not sweet recollections of times when you had been tossed with tempests and not comforted, but obtained access to God and so entered into a deep calm? When wearied and bewildered, the Presence of the Lord has brought you perfect peace and you have felt yourself at home. Then have you sung—

*“Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall.  
My soul has safely reached her home,  
Her God, her Heaven, her All.”*

We have not yet read all the meaning that couches beneath this sweet word, “habitation,” or home. Our habitation is the place of joyful freedom and hearty naturalness. One is not stiff and starched at home. You are not guarded, there, as to what you say or do, for you are not exposed to criticism and misrepresentation. Some of us cannot open our mouths without seeing a reporter’s pencil twinkling across his prepared paper. Our steps are dogged by those who take notes and print them! We live under the microscope. We can hardly think without being published, with this addition, that what we do not think is often imputed to us! Do not wonder if we walk somewhat under constraint. But at home, a man feels, “Well, these dear children and the dear wife of my love, and these kind friends—I am not afraid of them—they will not misjudge me.”

Did you ever feel that with relation to God? Are you yourself when alone with Him? Are you at ease in His Presence? Those firm, stately prayers we sometimes hear, majestic and cold—we find no fault with them except that there is nothing in them to suit rapt devotion or to express the spirit of adoption. Do you pray after a more living, loving fashion? God’s children dare to be familiar with Him. God so knows our hearts that it is of no use to be reserved before Him—therefore let us unlock our hearts and talk with Him as a man talks with his friend. Are there not a thousand things you could not tell to any but your God? Have you not griefs, yes, sins, which it were wrong to reveal to any but to Him? O our God, we have not to study our language while with You! Our soul speaks to You without words; her thoughts and emotions rise to You in their pure spirit, without the encumbering embodiment of speech. Our heart leans against Your heart and You know what we mean, even as You have made us to know what You mean, for “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He will show them His Covenant.”

Religious people sometimes start back from the prayers of a true saint and say, “He is too familiar!” Of course a child is too familiar for the imitation of a stranger—but have you ever blamed a child for climbing his father’s knee? And yet you would not think of copying him! Boy, do you know what you are doing? You are playing with a learned judge, before whom prisoners tremble and courts are hushed! Even wise counselors speak to him as, “My lord.” That urchin does not say, “My lord.” Look! He is plucking him by the beard! He is kissing his cheek! What presumption! No! He is the judge’s child—he who is judge to others is, “father,” to him! So the saints of God say, “Our Father which are in Heaven,” ever reverentially, but yet with sweet familiarity! They are at home with Him. Beloved, may you know what that means by the teachings of the Spirit of sonship, for only He can teach us the blessed freedom of being at home with God!

A man’s habitation is also the place of his intimate knowledge. David knew the Lord even as he knew the caves in which he had sheltered. David could have served as guide to the great hollows of Adullam and these, in their vastness and sublimity, may be likened to the mysteries of God. There is a weird charm to my mind about caves—I like to visit all that are in my way. One is pleased to pass from one subterranean room to another and mark the secrets which are revealed by the glare of the torches. Here there is a spring of water, there a grand stalactite—here is an ascending staircase leading to another hollow—and there you must go down by a ladder to a greater depth. This is a fair allegory of the way in which the Spirit of God leads us into all the Truths of God. In God, even in Christ Jesus, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and, within these hiding places we find our habitations. David was so much at home with God that he entered by earnest trust into one attribute after another and delighted in them all! He knew the Lord. He could say, “My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.” He loved to dwell in the rocky strongholds of eternal Love, unchanging Grace, almighty Wisdom, unspotted Holiness, unerring Purpose and infinite Power. O Brothers and Sisters, seek to have the same clear knowledge of the Lord as David had, till you can say that you are at home with God, who is your habitation!

Home, also, has about it the thought of tender care. Where are we so lovingly watched over as at home? Where else are there such soft pillows for our aching heads, such gentle words for our wounded spirits? “Take me home,” says the sick child. I had the great sorrow, yesterday, of speaking to a dear Brother whom I had hoped would be spared for great usefulness in a distant land. But he had just received, from the doctor’s examination, the solemn information that he was hopelessly diseased. We proposed that he should go to the seaside, but I saw which way his heart went. He thought of his wife and his habitation and he said, “Let me go home. If I must die, let it be in my own house.” He spoke as I would have done in like case. At home, one might not have all the skill of the hospital at your command, but one would be sure of a certain priceless tenderness which no nurse can rival. Lord, You have been my dwelling place—I will die in Your arms! When I am sick and weary there is none like You, my God! When my heart breaks, none can bind it up but You, my God! I turn to You when in my mortal sickness, like Hezekiah, I turn my face to the wall—“Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” Yes, my unrest is all over when I get to You. The ship is in harbor. The bird is in its nest. My heart has found the bosom on which it loves to recline. I have all things, my Lord, when I have You! You say, “As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you.”

There is much more in this first part of the verse than I can possibly set before you. I have only opened the windows and I now invite you to look out upon the landscape so full of beauty!

II. Secondly, David had realized in God, PEACEFUL SECURITY. “Be You my strong habitation”—“My rock of habitation.” Now, the child of God, when he enters into the Lord by faith, feels himself perfectly safe. Safe, first, from all risk of the Lord’s changing or failing. God Himself is strong, His Love is immutable, His Power is unfailing. This is the solid ground of our security. When the winds are out in all their fury, those of us whose habitations stand on the top of a hill know the value of stability. There are periods in the rage of the storm when our habitation shakes like a ship which trembles from stem to stern—and though this is very exciting, it does not create a sense of peaceful security! When once we enter into God, we do not shake or know fear. Rise winds, roar waves, blow tempests, howl hurricanes! There is no shaking our sure abode in God! David, in the rocks, had often defied the storm, for he felt that though the earth should be removed and the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, he would not fear. Such is the confidence of every child of God! God changes not, God’s arm is not shortened; God is not vanquished; no purpose of God shall be defeated; no decree of His shall fail! Rocks may dissolve, but the eternal God changes not and His people in Him shall have a sure abode!

But David also felt great safety from his enemies. When he climbed the rocks and crept into his cavern, he knew that his enemies could not follow him. Had Saul come with all Israel at his back, David’s band could have kept armies at bay. He must often have felt like the eagle when it has flashed upward to its nest on the craggy rock and from there looks down upon the hunters. He is almost out of sight, but he can see all the movements of the foe. However long the range of the rifle, the noble bird knows no fear, for he is beyond range. I think I see him sitting there quietly, eying the enemy, of whom he knows no dread. Thus may a child of God defy the great adversary!

“Let us sing,” said Luther, “the 46th Psalm, and defy the devil.” The devil’s restless nature is fretted by the serenity of the firm Believer in God—and let him be fretted! His utmost rage is insufficient to hurt a single hair of the head of a Believer! No adversary can carry by storm our impregnable stronghold. Tyre stood a siege of 13 years, but our fortress has been beleaguered throughout the ages and never captured! Security, itself, is our portion for time and for eternity when we trust in the Lord. I love to think of the child of God as getting into God and resting secure beyond the evil designs of the malicious hand, the crafty mind and the slanderous tongue. No stone will be left unturned to do us ill and yet no stone of our rocky habitation shall be dislodged! “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn.”

The trials of life shall not harm us. The bereavements of death shall not cause us to despair. Sickness shall help on our sanctification. Poverty shall increase our wealth of experience. When God blesses, nothing curses! If God is for us, who can be against us? Under the shadow of the Almighty we are out of harm’s way. In God we dwell on high and our place of defense is the munitions of rocks. What would be a crushing disaster to us, apart from God, now turns to a benediction with God to overrule it! O child of God, trust in God, for He is worthy of all confidence! In Him you are secure in every sense. He that keeps you does neither slumber nor sleep—who, then, can do you ill? You are secure from the penalty of sin, for Christ has put it away from you, bearing the chastisement of your peace. Hidden beneath His Atonement, you are secure from the wrath of God—your transgression is forgiven, your sin is covered—thus the sting is taken from every evil.

You are secure against final overthrow by your own natural and constitutional weaknesses, for the Lord will cleanse your blood which He has not cleansed. He will purge you thoroughly and cleanse you from all your idols—and write His Law upon your inward parts so that you shall not depart from Him. You are secure against all the trials and troubles of Providence, since these shall work together for your good! The griefs and pangs of death you need not fear, since God is with you and will raise you from the grave! The terrors of eternity are not for you—immeasurable joys are your portion! Once safe in God, what is there to fear? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect”? Who shall “separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?”

A blessed sense of perfect security ought to be enjoyed by every believing man and woman. You ought to be as serene as the glorified, since around you there is a wall of fire and God is with you as a glory and a defense. The enemies may gather together, but they only gather to be scattered! Those that love God and are the called according to His purpose are beloved of the Lord and He will interpose His eternal power and Godhead between them and evil. When God is our Friend, the whole universe is under bond to keep the peace towards us! The beasts of the field are at peace with us and the stones of the field are in league with us! The stars are our lights, the heavens are our curtains, angels are our servitors, the elements are our providers, time is our rehearsal and eternity is our anthem of joy! Be glad and rejoice in God—and say with the Psalmist—“Be You my strong habitation.”

III. We have now reached our last point, upon which we may be somewhat more lengthy than upon the others. David’s God was to him a place of CONTINUAL RESORT. “Whereunto I may continually resort.” I was talking, the other day, with a man of God who has very much service and great care upon him. And as we communed, the one with the other, he said to me—“That expression of the Psalmist is very sweet to me, ‘Whereunto I may continually resort.’ It rises frequently before my thoughts.” Indeed, I did not wonder, for it is an exceedingly choice expression. Happy are we that the gate of communion with God is never locked! In our pastoral cares, in our business trials, in our family afflictions, in our personal conflicts there is this saving proviso, that we may always flee unto God for succor! “Whereunto I may continually resort,” said David while the veil was yet untorn—may we not say the same with emphasis, today, now that we have access to the holiest by the blood of Jesus?

There is joy in this thing in itself. Is it not a great bliss to have the entree of Jehovah’s palace day and night? Is it not Heaven below to have access without ceasing to Father, Son and Holy Spirit? How blessed to enter the golden gate unchallenged and remain unrebuked in the pavilion of the King of Kings! O Believer, you may come when you will to the Throne of Grace and never fear a repulse! You may come not only into the King’s palace, but what is infinitely more, into the King, Himself, for He is your habitation, whereunto you may continually resort! The Persian kings forbade anyone to come near them—and if any ventured into the king’s court and the monarch did not stretch out the silver scepter, the guards cut them down at once. Yet there were certain favored courtiers who, by special privilege, had the right to approach the king at all times, guard or no guard. These were the noblest in the king’s dominions.

Such honor have all the saints! No cherub with flaming sword guards the way of approach to God against any child of the great Father! You have a privilege that is much greater than any dignity belonging to the mightiest monarchs of earth—the privilege of perpetual converse with God at whatever hour you will! It ought to make your heart leap for joy to think of it! Come in the dewy morning, come at dusky night, come in the midnight’s dreariest hour—the Lord is always ready to receive you—and you may speak freely with Him. This is His Word—“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find.” “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Continual access to the God of all Grace is a perpetual fountain of joy!

There is a great comfort in it as an outlook. “Whereunto I may continually resort.” Throughout all future time, I may draw near unto God! The day may come when I shall be sorely sick and be compelled to stay in my bed. And then I may resort unto God! I shall not be able to go up to the House of the Lord, but still, I may resort to God, who is more than house and home! No form of disease shall shut me out from my heavenly Father! I may lie on my bed and sleep—and when I awake I shall still be with Him. Old age steals on apace and, perhaps, my feet will not be able to bear me to the place of the assembly—but even then I may resort to God. When my ears shall grow dull of hearing and I shall not enjoy the preaching of the Word of God—even then I shall hear the still small voice of the Spirit in my heart! When I am so far gone with age that my bed will become the best place for me, I shall still enjoy His Presence and sing His praises! O Brothers and Sisters, fear not the future, for the Lord says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

“Should fate command you to the utmost verge of the green earth, rivers unknown to song,” yet may you continually resort to God. If you should be a castaway upon the salt sea, the Lord sits upon the floods and you shall resort to Him there. If you were like Alexander Selkirk, out of humanity’s reach, yet you would not be out of reach of Divinity! Oh no, even in the dreariest solitude you may continually resort to Him whose company is better than that of all mankind! In death and in eternity this is the perpetual privilege of every Believer in Christ—he may still draw near unto God.

Now, this continual resorting to God is not only a joy in itself and in its outlook, but it is a joy which answers so many blessed purposes. I wish you would read this 71st Psalm quietly at home in the light of my text— then you will see that David found, in coming to God, everything that he needed.

First, he found an escape from present ills—“Deliver me in Your righteousness and cause me to escape.” As the cony does not fight its foe, but hides itself in the rock, so you, in your time of trouble, need not go forth to conflict, but may resort continually to your God. Stop up the rabbit’s burrow and you might soon take him—keep a Believer from his God and you would soon destroy him—but so long as he can reach his hiding place, no enemy can wreak vengeance on him.

David also looked upon God as the place of his prayer, for he says, “Incline Your ear unto me and save me.” We may always pray and when our prayer is too weak to rise to Heaven, we may expect the Lord to bow His ear to hear our groans. Prayer is never out of season—it is a tree which yields its fruit every day! Whenever a trouble drives you to your knees, the Lord waits to be gracious. There are certain hours during which it is difficult to send a telegram to a friend, but we can, at all times, speak with God by the telephone of prayer. No grief is too little, no trial too heavy, no hour too early, no moment too late for prayer! “Whereunto I may continually resort.” The Mercy Seat abides in its place, the veil remains torn and whoever has faith in God may come to the Throne of Grace whenever he pleases.

David, by resorting to the Lord, received upholding. “By You have I been held up from the womb...I am as a wonder unto many, but you are my strong Refuge.” He had kept his footing in slippery places by keeping close to God. He had surprised his enemies by the way in which he avoided their snares. When he was tempted, he overcame the temptation by resorting to God. When he did not resort to God, he fell, as others have done.

David also resorted to God for strength. “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.” He looked beyond himself to the unfailing power of the Almighty and expected to be strengthened when infirmities crept over him. Do you need more power for service, more patience for suffering? Resort to God. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Go to the Strong for strength! By prayer and faith gird yourself with Omnipotence! When you need renewing, run to Him who sustains all things. Go and draw water from the well of strength! Let down your bucket—drain it dry and let it down again—for to this fountain you may “continually resort.” If you lack strength, you are not straitened in Him—you are straitened in your own heart. Believe in God and be strong according to your faith.

See how David went to God continually in holy praise. Every hour is canonical for a man who is ready to praise God. “Let my mouth,” he says, “be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all the day.” We may sing unto the Lord even when the voice is cracked and the lungs have failed! We need never be afraid that He will reject our praises on account of age or infirmity! We may sing to Him in any place, from the cellar to the attic! We may sing at our work and sing in our rest, yes, sing aloud upon our beds!

When we have done singing and wish for matter for instructive conversation, we shall find abundance of it in the Lord. “My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.” We shall always find fresh matter in the Lord. No fear, you preachers, of running dry, if the Lord is your subject! Who can exhaust the Infinite? Who can come to a standstill for lack of themes when the Triune God is the Object of his continual meditation? O you servants of the Lord, fill your seed baskets from this granary, whereunto you may continually resort!

David also continually resorted to God for quickening. Notice how he puts it in the 20th verse—“You, who have showed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me, again, and shall bring me up, again, from the depths of the earth.” Have any of you got down there? Do you want to rise out of them? Those depths of the earth are not pretty places, but we stumble into them, sometimes, by careless walking—would you rise from them into newness of life? Then resort to God and He will bring you up from the lowest deeps! He will raise you from death to life, more fitted for holy service than ever!

The fact is, whatever you need, you have only to go to God for it, and whenever you need it, you may go. Whatever your condition, you may still resort to the Lord. If you cannot come as a saint, you may come as a sinner. If you cannot come boldly, you may come trembling! When you feel most unfit to resort to God, you may still go to Him, for He is your Fitness and your Physician. When you feel that you dare not go, you may still go to Him—“Whereunto I may continually resort.”

There is a blessed positiveness about my text. “I may continually resort.” I may, I am sure I may! Just now, in the courts of law, it is the Long Vacation—nothing can be done in Chancery this month, for the poor lawyers must rest—but there is no Long Vacation in the courts of King’s Bench above! You may plead your suit and urge your case with God every day in the year. The Lord allows, permits, invites, commands you to plead with Him! “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.”

I may continually resort to God, that is to say, He prompts me to do so—His Spirit helps my infirmities—He teaches me how to pray. Is not this sweet? What more can you desire? You know the way, for Christ is the Way—that way is always accessible, for Christ is always with us unto the end of the world. Come, tried Believer, ring the night bell and call up the great Physician! You have only to call upon Him and He will be with you in an instant. Yes, before you call, He will answer you! Why, then, do you resort to man so often and to God so seldom? Why drink so far down the stream, where it is muddy and polluted, when the pure fountainhead may be reached? Men will grow weary of you, but you cannot weary God. You may come to the Lord even though conscious of sin and backsliding. You may come to Him though your soul is sick and faint. He will restore you while you are yet coming! Before you are aware, He can fill you with Divine Love. You have but to turn the helm towards the harbor of His Love and the wind will turn, too, and you shall be happy in the Lord! Come, then, at once, to God in Christ Jesus, just as you are! In all your backsliding and coldness of heart come to Him for renewal! The Lord has not grown indifferent, nor has He shut His door against petitioners.

You may continually resort to God, for He is never like Baal, on a journey, or asleep—He waits to be gracious—He listens for His people’s cry. You may continually resort to Him with confidence that you shall not seek His face in vain, for the Lord is never unable to help His people. Whatever the form of their trial, He is prompt to come to their rescue. One of old exclaimed, “The Lord was ready to save me.” All the day long, all the night long and all the year long, in every case, and in every place, the Lord sits at receipt of supplication and holds Himself in readiness to commune with His people!

Listen to a parable—A certain young man traded and in all things he prospered for a while. In all his dealings he was wise and prudent and none were able to overreach him. The cause of his wisdom was that he had a father, a man of amazing knowledge, of great experience, of large wealth and great influence. His son never entered upon a transaction without consulting his father. Whenever he felt himself at all in difficulty, he hastened to ask counsel of his father. Whenever he needed money to meet a sudden demand, he drew upon his father. Their love to each other was more and more manifest as the one trusted and the other helped. Does anybody wonder that the young man grew rich? But, after a while, the son grew cold towards his father and seldom sought his advice. There was no quarrel, but the young man was growing independent of his father and preferred to act upon his own judgement. He failed to ask and to receive substantial help—which would have been freely given—and he fell into great losses which might readily have been avoided. The young man became weak as others! He was the prey of deceivers. He spent labor and thought and substance upon matters which ended in failure. He grew poorer and poorer, till he trembled on the verge of bankruptcy. Do you wonder? Do you pity him? Do you see in him your own portrait? If so, change it all and say of your heavenly Father—He is my Friend and Counselor and, to Him I do continually resort. This will be your wisdom, your strength, your happiness and your spiritual wealth!

Multiply your approaches to God. Let them become incessant, constant, continual! No man ever resorted to God to excess. It might be possible to spend too much time in the posture of devotion, but you can be in the spirit of prayer and praise all day long and yet never run to extravagance. “Pray without ceasing” is the command of our Infallible Lord. Towards men there is a limit of resort, but to God there is none. By your continual coming, you will not weary the Lord. Through your importunity, you will prevail with Him. I had a dear friend whose company I esteemed, but all of a sudden he did not come to see me. He stayed away and, as I knew he had not ceased to love me, I wondered why. At last I found that the good Brother had taken it into his head that he might outrun his welcome—he had read those words of Solomon, “withdraw your foot from your neighbor’s house; lest he be weary of you, and so hate you.”

I admired my friend’s prudence, but I labored hard to make him see that Solomon knew nothing of me and that I was more wearied when he stayed away than when he came! I hope he made me an exception to a very sensible rule. But never get that thought into your head concerning your God! Will you weary my God, also? You may weary Him by withdrawing prayer, but never by abounding in supplication! Abide with your God and cry to Him day and night—and let this be the music of your whole life, “whereunto I may continually resort.”

Our immediate practical conclusion is this—If we may continually resort to God, let us go to Him at once. Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving and prayer even now! Here are several thousands of us who profess to have come here to worship—let us all draw near unto God, this morning. Let each one hasten to his footstool for himself, individually. Forget the vast congregation! Forget everything but that which is holy and spiritual—and come unto your God who, at this moment, calls you to His footstool. “Alas, I have been so worldly all the week”! This is to be confessed and repented of, but it must not, now, keep you from God. “But I feel dull and dead.” I know it and the Lord knows it, too! But you may still approach Him. You remember what our Lord Jesus said of the Laodicean Church? That He would spue it out of His mouth—but what does He say afterwards? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” He says to the same Church, “If any man opens the door, I will enter in”—enter into the same Church which had so disgusted Him—“and will sup with Him”—sup with that Church of which, just now, He was so sick!

Come, then, you lukewarm ones and, in coming to Jesus, you will cease to be disgusting to Him! Come, you whose spiritual state would make Jesus, Himself, sick. He stands at your door and knocks! Open to Him and He will enter in, and He will have no distaste of you, but He will delight in you! You have returned from your health resorts—now come to a still healthier resort! Come, see how graciously Jesus can restore your souls and make you full of His life and joy! He will forget your sins and, instead of His being sick of you, He will make you glad in Him until you shall cry out with the spouse, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love!” Blessed love sickness!

If you never have come to Jesus before, come, you chief of sinners, now! Come, you that have but little spiritual feeling! Come just as you are, since Jesus, from this platform, says, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” “Whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.” That God who is the house of His people, sets wide His doors and writes over them in letters of light, “Whoever will, let him come.” Jesus comes to the door! He beckons to you and persuades you to enter, saying, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” The Lord enable you to come, for His dear mercy’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 71.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—71 (SONG 1), 91 (SONG 2), 627. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1037 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE POOR MAN’S FRIEND  
NO. 1037

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“For He shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him who has no helper.”  
Psalm 72:12.**

THIS is a royal Psalm. In it you see predictions of Christ, not upon the Cross, but upon the Throne. In reference to His Manhood as well as to His Godhead, He is exalted and extolled and very high. He is the King—the King’s Son, truly, with absolute sway, stretching His scepter from sea to sea, and “from the river even unto the ends of the earth.” It is remarkable that in this Psalm which so fully celebrates the extent of His realm and the sovereignty of His government, there is so much attention drawn to the minuteness of His care for the lowly, His personal sympathy with the poor, and the large benefits they are to enjoy from His kingdom. Where Christ is highest and we are lowest, and the two meet, there is “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.”

I might almost raise the question whether this Psalm is more a tribute of homage to the Messiah, or a treasury of comfort for His poor subjects? We will compound the controversy by saying that as Christ, here, is highly exalted, so His poor needy ones are highly blessed. And while it is a blessing to them that He is exalted, it is an exaltation to Him that they are blessed!

Turning to our text without further preface, we shall note in it the special objects of great Grace. “He shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper”—then the special blessings which are allotted to them. Here it is said that He shall deliver them, but all through the Psalms there are scattered promises full of instruction and consolation all meant for them. And, lastly, the special season which Good has appointed for the dispensing of these favors—“He shall deliver the needy when he cries.” That shall be God’s time. When it is our time to cry, it shall be God’s time to deliver.

I. First, then, notice THE SPECIAL OBJECTS OF GREAT GRACE. There is a three-fold description—they are needy, they are poor, they have no helper. They are needy. In this they are like all the sons of men. We begin life in a needy state. We are full of needs and cannot help ourselves in our infancy. We continue throughout life in a needy state. The very breath in our nostrils has to be the gift of God’s goodness. In Him we live and move, and have our being. And, as we grow old our needs become even more apparent. The staff on which we lean reveals to us our needs, and our infirmities all tell us what needy creatures we are.

We need temporal things and we need spiritual things. Our body needs, our soul needs, our spirit needs! We need to be kept from evil. We need to be led into the paths of righteousness. We need on the outset that Grace should be implanted. When it is implanted, we need that it be nurtured— when nurtured, we need that it be perfected and made to bring forth fruit. We are never a moment without need. We wake up and our first glance might reveal our needs to us. And when we fall asleep it is upon a poor man’s pillow, for we need that God should preserve us through the night. We have needs when we are on our knees, else where would be the energy of our prayers? We have needs when we try to sing, else how should our uncircumcised lips praise Him aright?

We have needs when we are relieving the needs of others, lest we become proud of our almsgiving. We have need in preaching, need in hearing. We have need in working, need in suffering, need in resting. What is our life but one long need? All men are full of needs. But God’s peculiar people feel this need—they not only confess it is so, but they know it experimentally. They are full of needs. Once they thought that they were rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing. But now, through the enlightenment of God’s Spirit, they feel themselves to be naked and poor, and miserable. Their needs were great before, but they appear, now, to be incalculable—more in number than the hairs of their heads.

They have need of a covering for the sins of the past. They have need of help against the temptation of the present. They have need of perseverance as to the entire future. If there are any people under Heaven who could claim the title of “needy,” above all others, it is not the pauper in the workhouse, nor the mendicant who asks alms in the streets—it is the child of God, for he feels himself to be so dependent that the more he gets from his great Benefactor the more he requires—and the more he must have to satisfy the enlarged desires of a heart that begins to know the will of God concerning us. Our needs are great and constant.

The second description given is that he is poor—“the poor also.” A man might be needy and be able to supply his own need. As fast as his needs arise, he might have sufficient wealth to be able to procure what he needed. I speak merely of his temporal needs. But with regard to us in spiritual things, we are not only needy, but we are poor to utter destitution—there is nothing within our reach that we can help ourselves with. We have need of water for our thirst, but Nature’s buckets are empty and her cisterns are broken. We have need of bread, but Nature’s granary is bare. Like the prodigal son in a far-off country, there is a famine—a mighty famine in that land—and we are in need.

We have need of clothing. We have found that we are naked and we are ashamed—but our fig leaves will not serve us and we are too poor to buy a garment for ourselves. We are so poor that when a need comes, it only shows us how empty the treasury is. And every need, while it draws upon us, meets with no fitting response. There is nothing, nothing, nothing in human nature at its very best that can keep pace with its own needs. Speak of self-reliance! It is well enough in matters of the world, but selfreliance is absolutely madness in the things of God! We have heard of selfmade men, but if any man would enter Heaven he must be a God-made man from first to last—for all that can come out of human nature will still be defiled.

The stream shall never mount higher than the fountainhead, and the fountainhead of human nature is pollution. It cannot rise higher than that, let it do its best. We are very needy and very poor. If there are any poor in all the world who have tasted the bitter ingredients of this cup of sorrow, it is God’s people. We are very needy and very poor, though we did not always think so. When the discovery was first made to us, we felt the smart as those do “who have seen better days.” Once we fancied ourselves able to do our work and sure to get our wages. We hoped to merit a reward for our good conduct, and we thought it was only for us to add a little piety to our decent morals in order to be well pleasing to God and our own conscience. Ah, Sirs, when we woke from these foolish dreams and faced our own abject poverty, how ashamed we were! How we shunned the light! How we sat alone and avoided company—how fear preyed on our heart—with what anguish we chattered to ourselves, saying, “What shall I do? What shall I do?” Poor, indeed, we are, and we know it.

Moreover, it is said they have no helper. Now, until God enlightens us, we seem to have a great many helpers. We fancy—perhaps we once fancied—that a priest could save us. If we have a grain of Divine Grace we have given up that idea! Perhaps we imagined that our parents would help us—that our godly ancestry might stand us in some stead—but we have long ago been brought to the conviction that we must each stand personally before God, for only personal religion is of any value. At one time we placed some dependence upon the ministry we attended and hoped that in some favored hour that ministry might be of use to us. But, if God has awakened us, we look higher than pulpits and preachers now!

Our eyes are up towards the hills where comes our help, and as to all earthly things, we see no help in them. “Cursed is he that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm.” “He shall be like the heath in the desert—he shall not see when good comes.” The Lord grant us all to be reduced to this—that we have no helper, because when we have no helper here, He will become our Helper and our Salvation! Put the three words together and you have a very correct description of the awakened people of God— needy, poor, and having no helper. We have felt this, Beloved, very keenly, some of us, just before we looked to Christ. Oh, we can remember, now, when we wanted to have our sins forgiven us! We would have given all we had if we could but have found mercy—we were full of needs.

We turned all our good works over, but they had all become moldy and worm-eaten, and they stank in our nostrils. We tried our prayers. We used to fancy if we began to pray earnestly it would all be well with us, but alas, alas, we found our prayers to be poor comforts—broken reeds! We looked all around us and we could get no consolation. Even Scripture did not seem to cheer us. The very promises seemed to shut their doors against us. We had no Helper. Oh, do you remember, then, when you cried to God in your troubles and He delivered you? I know you have verified the Truth of the promise in our text, “He shall deliver the needy when he cries.”

Since that time we have been equally needy—we have been making fresh proof of our poverty—and getting into straits from which we could by no means extricate ourselves. Indeed, when a Christian is richest in Divine Grace he is poorest in himself. The way to grow rich in Grace is to feel your poverty. Whenever you think you have stored up a little strength, a little comfort, a little provision against a rainy day, you are pretty sure to have the trouble you bargained for and to miss the resources you counted on. Estimate your true wealth before God by your entire dependence on Him! The more you have, the less you have, and the less you have, the more you have. When you have nothing at all in yourself, then Christ is All in All to you!

The perpetual condition of every child of God in himself is that of a needy and poor and helpless one. On the high mountains with his Lord, rejoicing in His love, yet is he even there in himself less than nothing and vanity—still poor and needy. There have been times when we felt this very powerfully, perhaps very painfully. Has Satan ever beset you, my Brothers and Sisters, with his fierce temptations? No doubt many of you have had to feel the ferocity of his attacks. Perhaps blasphemous thoughts have been injected into your mind—dark forebodings, such as these, “God has forsaken me.” Perhaps he has said, “He has sinned himself out of the covenant—he is a castaway,” and your poor little faith has tried to hold on to Christ—but it seemed as if she must be driven from her hold.

While others found it, as you thought, easy to get to Heaven, you realized the truth of the text—“The righteous scarcely are saved.” You have had to fight for every inch of ground and it seemed to you very often as though you had not a spark of Grace in you, not a ray of hope—and surely not so much as a single grain of the Grace of God within your heart. Ah, and at such times you have been poor and needy and you have had no Helper. And, perhaps, at such seasons, too, temporal trouble may have come in. Whoever may go through the world without trouble, God’s people never do—

“*The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.”*“In the world you shall have tribulation” is as sure a promise as that other, “In Me you shall have peace.”

The trials of God’s servants are sometimes extremely severe. Not a few are literally as well as spiritually poor. Hunger, privation and embarrassment haunt their steps. And when you once come to be poor, how often does it happen that you have no helper? In the summer of prosperity your friends and acquaintances are as numerous as the leaves of the forest! But in the winter of your losses and distresses, your friends are few, indeed—your neighbors stand aloof, your old mates desert you— like the wind, your trials have borne them all away as sere leaves and you cannot find them. But, do not think that the Lord has cast you off because He is thus chastening you with the rod of men! Take it as an exercise of your faith, and go to Him and plead this promise, “He shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper.”

Thus I have set before you the character of God’s special objects of Sovereign Grace. They are poor and needy spiritually. Do you ask why is it that God selects these? Our first answer is He gives no account of His matters. He does as He wills. He is Sovereign—who shall say unto Him, “What are You doing?” And, in order that He may make that Sovereignty clear to the sons of men, He is pleased to select those whom naturally we might expect Him to pass by. Did not Jesus lift His eyes to Heaven full of gratitude and say, “I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight”? Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen, but God has chosen the poor of this world—He has chosen the things that are despised, (and as the Apostle puts it)—“Things that are not, has God chosen to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence.”

When the chariot of the Eternal comes from above, He bids it roll far downward from the skies. He passes by the towers of haughty kings. He leaves the palaces of princes and the halls of senates, and down to the hovels of cottagers the chariot of His Divine Grace descends—for there He sees, with joy and delight, the objects of His everlasting love. “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” is the word of Divine Sovereignty, and God makes it true by taking the poor and the needy and them that have no helper.

Still, if we may enquire into the reason, we see in the poor and the needy and the helpless, a reason for God’s Grace. They are the persons who are most willing to accept it—for they are the persons who most require it. Your generosity will not stand to be dictated to, but, at the same time, you usually prefer to give to those who need the most. Wise mercy seeks out chief misery and God, therefore, delights to give His blessings to those who need them most, not to those who fancy they deserve them—they shall have none of them—but those who need them, they shall have all of them.

When a soul is made to feel its own poverty, it does not set itself up in rivalry with Christ! It does not pretend to be able to help itself. It has no disputing about the terms of the Gospel. A sinner, when he is thoroughly famished, has such an appetite that he eats such things as God’s mercy sets before him, and he raises no question. A proud Pharisee will say, “I will not submit to this—to be saved by faith alone—I will not have it! To accept mercy as the absolute gift of Heaven, irrespective of my character, I cannot endure it!”

The high soul of a Pharisee, I say, kicks at it. But when God has brought a man low, till, like the publican, he cries, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” he is glad to be saved in God’s way—and no matter how humbling the plan of Grace, nor how the sinner is debased and Christ exalted—the poor sinner loves to have it so! It is a way suitable to his own needs, a way which he accepts for the very reason that God has adapted it to his position. Hence, if there are reasons they lie here—not in man’s merit but on the Lord’s mercy. The fact that bare misery, when touched and guided by the Spirit of God, makes the soul to open its mouth like the hard chapped soil to drink in the rain as soon as the rain descends from above, is an argument why Grace so commonly flows in this course.

In choosing to bless the poor and needy by His Grace, the Lord finds for Himself warm friends—those who will give Him much praise, contend earnestly for His reign and for His Sovereignty—and endure much abuse for very love to His dear name. Why, if the Lord were to save the Pharisees, they would hardly say, “thank You,” they are, themselves, so good. They reckon themselves to be so excellent that if they had salvation they would take it as a matter of course, and, like the nine lepers, they would never return to thank Him that healed them! But when the Lord saves a great sinner—a man that feels there is nothing good in him—oh, how that man talks of it and tells it to others! He cannot take any praise to himself—he knows that he had nothing to do with it—that it is all of the Grace of God.

And, oh, see how that man will stand up for the Doctrines of Grace! He is as the valiant men in Solomon’s song, “each man with a sword on his thigh because of fear in the night,” for the Doctrines of Grace are not to him matters of opinion, but matters of experience! They are dear to him as his own life. “What?” he asks, “is not God the Giver of salvation? Is not salvation all of God, from first to last? I know it is.” “Don’t tell me. Whatever your arguments, however smooth may be the form and fashion of your theology, it does not tally with what I have tasted and handled and felt—unless it is Grace from first to last, I am a lost man! And, if I am, indeed, a child of God, then will I contend for the Doctrines of Grace, and will do till I die,” he says.

I know I felt, myself, last Sunday night, after I had talked to you about the difficulties of salvation, that if ever I got to Heaven I would praise and bless God with all my soul. I felt like that good old woman who said that if the Lord ever saved her He should never hear the last of it, for she would tell it everywhere and publish it abroad throughout all eternity that the Lord had done it—that He was a good and gracious God to have mercy on such a soul as she was. Now, since one object of God in bestowing His mercy is to glorify Himself, He does wisely in bestowing His mercy upon the poor and the needy, and such as have no helper. The Lord give to you, my dear Hearer, to be brought down to this tonight. I know many of you have been brought there and are there now. Let my text encourage and cheer you!

Dear objects of Almighty Love, He finds you on the dunghill but He lifts you from it! He finds you in the dust, but is not this the song of Hannah and the song of Mary, too—“He has put down the mighty from their seat, and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent empty away”? It is God’s way of dealing with the poor and lost—rejoice at it—it is full of encouragement to you!

But I say to any of you that have never been humbled. You good people who have always been good people. You that have always kept the Law from your youth up and gone to Church regularly, or to Chapel regularly. I say to you people—The Lord have mercy upon you and let you see that your goodness is filthiness! That your righteousness is unrighteousness! And that the best that is in you is bad—and that the bad that is in you that you have never seen as yet will be your ruin—your eternal destruction unless God sets it before your eyes and brings you down to loathe yourself, and feel yourself to be abominable in His sight—and abominable, also, in your own sight, when His Law comes, with power, home to your souls!

Thus I have spoken upon the special objects of Divine Grace. II. Now, a few words upon THE SPECIAL BLESSING WHICH THE GREAT KING HAS STORED UP FOR THESE PEOPLE. Kindly look at the second verse. “He shall judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice.” So that one of the special blessings for God’s poor is that they shall be judged with justice. Alas, they are often judged with harshness! Or they are judged in ignorance! Or they are judged by malice—not judged by righteousness, nor by justice! When their enemies see them, they say, “These are a broken-spirited people. They are moping and melancholy, wretched and sad.”  
Thus hard things are spoken against them and unkind stories are told of them. Sometimes they say they are out of their minds, and then they will insinuate that they are only hypocrites and pretenders. Slander is very busy with the children of God. God had a Son that had no fault but He never had a son that was not found fault with. Yes, God Himself was slandered in Paradise by Satan! Let us not expect, therefore, to escape from the venomous tongue. One blessing, however, that will always come to God’s needy ones is this—Christ will right them. He will judge them with justice. Are you harshly spoken of at home? Don’t be angry. Don’t provoke in return—don’t answer railing with railing. “He shall judge His poor with righteousness.”  
Leave it to Him. Wait, wait, till the judgment sits, for who are these that they should judge you? Their opinion, though it is bitter as gall to your spirit, does not really affect your character or your destiny. If you are right before the Lord, through faith in Christ, they cannot make you wrong by anything they say. God judges and God knows. “He searches the heart and tries the reins.” You remember how David, among his brothers, was much despised? He had not the appearance and the carriage that his elder brothers had, and even Samuel, the Lord’s Prophet, thought the others to be better than David, and said of them, “Surely the Lord has chosen these.”  
David was, therefore, despised of his brothers, but what did it matter? The Lord looked not as man looks, for man looked upon the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. Bide your time, you that are one of a family and alone. Or, if for Christ’s sake you have been despised, have courage tonight and let not your spirit be bowed down. “Rejoice you in this day and leap for joy, for so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you.” The King will speedily come and when He comes, then will this Word be verified. “He shall judge His people with righteousness and His poor with justice.” There is one mercy for you—to have your wrongs righted and your character cleared. God’s poor and needy ones, you will perceive, if you turn a little further down, shall be saved from oppression.  
Fourth verse: “He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.” The Lord’s people are like sheep among wolves—the wolves treat them injuriously. Christ Himself was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. His people may expect to be oppressed, too. But they have this for their comfort, that Christ will surely deliver them and He will break their oppressors in pieces. Are you, tonight, oppressed by Satan? Have you things laid to your charge by him that you know not of, and does conscience oppress you with the remembrance of sins which have been forgiven?  
Have you ever believed, concerning them, in the Atonement of Christ? Well, bow your head meekly, and go to the Mercy Seat once again, pleading the precious blood, and He shall break in pieces the oppressor! There is no answer for Satan like the blood! And there is no answer for conscience but the blood! Plead it before God! Plead it in your own soul and you shall find that the great and glorious King in Zion shall, in your hearts, break in pieces the oppressor! There is another special mercy, then—help against the oppressor. The third blessing is that of our text— “He shall deliver the needy.” Deliver them! You are brought into great troubles—you shall be delivered out of them! You are just now the subject of many fears—you shall be delivered from your fears!  
It seems as though the enemy would soon exult over you and put his foot upon your neck, and make an end of you—you shall be delivered! You are like a bird taken in the fowler’s net, and he is ready to wring your neck and take the breath out of you—but you shall be delivered out of the hand of the fowler and brought safely through the perils that threaten you! Oh, that we all had faith! Oh, that we all could exercise faith when in deep waters! It is a fine thing to talk about faith on land, but we need faith to swim with when we are thrown into the flood! May you, tonight, get such a grip of this precious Word that you may take it before the Lord and say, “I am poor and needy and have no Helper. O God, deliver my soul now.”  
But, we have not exhausted the string of blessings. A little further down in the Psalm, at the 13th verse, you will notice it is said of the King—“He shall spare the poor and needy.” If He apparently lays heavily upon them, yet will He, by-and-by, stay His hand. If He bids one of His rough winds blow, He will stop the other. As He is said to temper the wind to the shorn lamb, so will He certainly temper it to His people—they shall be afflicted, but it shall be in measure—He shall spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him. The rod shall make them smart but shall not make them bleed. They shall be made to suffer, but they shall not be called to die. Perplexed, but not in despair—persecuted, but not forsaken! There shall always be a gracious limit put to the blows that come from Jehovah’s hand for His own people.  
Oh, what a mercy to be among His poor ones and to feel that He will spare us. He spared not His own Son, but He will spare us, the poor and needy! He smote Him with the blows of avenging Justice, but concerning us it is written, “The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but the Covenant of My love shall not depart. As I have sworn that the waters shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.” He will spare His people! He will bring them safely through, and, meanwhile, He will not let the waters be deep enough to overwhelm them.  
There is one other blessing which sums up all the rest. You find it in the 14th verse: “He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence.” Redemption belongs to the Lord’s poor people. He bought with a price His poor ones, and as the ransom has all been paid, they belong to Christ and none shall take them out of His hands. He that redeemed them by price will redeem them by power. He will, if it is necessary, divide the Red Sea again to redeem His people! And, if by no usual means His servants can be preserved, He will bring unusual means into the field. There are no miracles now, we say, but if they are ever needed for the safety of God’s people, there shall be miracles as timely and as plentiful as of yore! “Heaven and earth may pass away, but His Word shall never pass away.” He would sooner shake the heavens, themselves, than suffer one of His children to famish, or utterly to perish, rest assured of that. Oh, what glorious comfort there is in all this! We shall be spared! We shall be redeemed! We shall be delivered! We shall be saved! We shall be revenged and cleared before the judgment-bar of God! And all because the great King has made the poor and needy the special objects of His love. Oh, my soul revels in this! I cannot speak out the thoughts I feel, much less the joy that arises out of them! And what a mercy it really is, that the great King, the King who rules from the river to the ends of the earth is the poor man’s Friend!  
I am very poor and needy and helpless tonight, but the King has made me His favorite. He counts me one of His courtiers—and it is the same with you, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you, too, are poor and needy! He rules, and He rules on the Throne for us! He is great and has dominion but He uses all His greatness and His dominion for us! As Joseph in Egypt was invested with power for the good of His brethren, or at least such sovereignty as he held of Pharaoh he laid out for the welfare of his father’s house, so Jesus has all power and authority in Heaven and earth—all might, majesty, and dominion for the good of His people. He has the King’s signet ring upon His finger, but He uses it for His own beloved ones that He may enrich, and honor, and cheer, and perfect them! His Glory is concerned in every one of us.

If one of the least of His people should perish, His crown would suffer damage. He is the Shepherd and Surety of the flock, and at His hand will the Father require all those who are committed to Him. He cannot, therefore, let us perish, for then He would not be able to say at the last, “Of all that You have given Me I have lost none.” He must and will preserve us! We are wrapped up in His honor! His power, I say—His crown, His Glory, His very name as the Christ of God anointed to save sinners—all are wrapped up and intertwisted in the salvation of every poor and needy soul that is brought to rest in Him.  
III. And, now, our closing word is, THE SPECIAL SEASON WHEN ALL THIS SHALL BE TRUE. He shall deliver the needy when he cries. Ah, while I have been preaching there may have been some poor child of God here who has said, “I am poor and needy. And I am in great distress but I have not been delivered.” And there may be some sinner here who has said, “God has taught me my poverty and need, and I know I have no Helper, but I cannot find I have been delivered.”  
Perhaps, dear Friends, you have been praying for months—praying very bitterly, too, after a sort—and you have been desirous that you might find mercy. God’s time—when will it come? Well, it will come when you cry. That is something more, I take it, than a mere ordinary prayer. A child asks you for something and you may perhaps deny it. But you know there is a difference between asking for a thing and crying for a thing. Oh, when you get so that you must have it. When your heart breaks for it! When your needs are so extreme that you cannot stand up under them! Well, now, when it comes to this, that you must have Christ or perish—“Give me Christ or else I die!” When it seems as if you cannot put your prayer into words any more. When all that you can do is only fall at the foot of the Cross and say—“O God, I cannot pray, but my very soul groans after You to have mercy upon me”—then is the time! Then is the time, but not till then, when God will deliver you!  
The Lord loves to hear the prayers of His people and He sometimes keeps them waiting at the posts of His door that they may pray more. It is always a blessing for us to pray as well as to get the answer to prayer. Prayer is, in itself, a blessing. When the Lord hears us knock faintly at the door, He does not open. We may knock and knock again—He likes us to knock—it does us good to knock. But when it comes to the point that it is all knocking with us, and our very soul and body seem to knock, and our heart and flesh cry after God, the living God—when we shall thus come to appear before God and open our mouth and pant vehemently for the mercy He has promised—then it will come! When you cannot take a denial, you shall not have a denial!  
The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force. There is none so violent as the man who is in desperate need! There is a person who has been without bread many hours and he asks you for charity in the street. You would pass him by, but he is famished, and he says, “Oh give me bread or I die!” He compels you to it. And such is the prayer that prevails with God. When the soul cannot wait! When it dares not wait! When it fears lest it should shut its eyes and open them in Hell— oh, God will not keep such a soul waiting long! I am always glad when I hear of convicted souls saying, “I went up into my chamber with the resolution that I would never come down again till I had found the Savior.” I always delight to hear of men and women who say, “I went upon my knees and cried to Him, saying, I will not let You go except You bless me.” He will bless you!  
But if you will let Him go, He will go. And if you will not let Him go, you shall have your request of Him. “But who am I,” says one, “that I should plead thus? I have no right to hold Him thus.” ‘Tis true, but when a man is hungry, when a man is dying, he does not think of rights. He holds you right or wrong. His need is his right. Poor Soul, go and plead your need before God! Plead your sin! Tell Him you are wretched and undone without His Sovereign Grace. Use the strange argument which David used, the strangest in all the world—“For Your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great!”  
Plead the very greatness of your sin as a reason for mercy! Plead the damnable character of your sin! Plead the certainty that you will soon be cast into Hell! Plead the fact that He might justly drive you from His Presence forever! Plead all that before Him and say, “Lord, if ever the heights and depths of Your Grace might be seen in saving an undeserving soul, I am just that one! If Your mercy wants to honor itself by saving the most undeserving, ill deserving, Hell-deserving sinner that ever lived, Lord, I am the man! If You want a platform on which to erect a monument of infinite Grace that men shall stand and wonder, and angels shall gaze on it with astonishment—Lord, here I am! If You want emptiness, here is one who is all emptiness! If You, as the Good Physician want a bad case, a glaring case, a desperate case to operate on, You will never have a worse case than mine! O God, turn aside and have pity upon me and show Your mighty power.”  
This is the way to plead. Not your merits—they will never get a hearing—but your misery, your sin, your guiltiness before God—these are the arguments! And then if faith can come in and plead the blood, and say, “Did You not send Your Son to save sinners?” Has He not said He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? Is it not written that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save not the good, but that which was lost?” Oh, if you can plead the blood in that fashion, you will not fail! His name is the Savior—He came to save His people from their sins! He died for the ungodly! He justifies the ungodly—the unrighteous He makes righteous through His own merits! If you can plead this, oh, then, you shall not wait long, for though God does not deliver till we cry, yet He does deliver when we cry. “He will deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper.”  
Oh, what a mercy it is when the tide is ebbed right out and there is nothing left! It will turn now! It will turn now! The streams of Grace will turn now! When you are empty. When you are overwhelmed. When you are like a dish wiped out and there is not anything good left in you—now will God come to you! The darkest part of the night is that which precedes the dawn of the day. When God has killed you, He will make you live! When He has wounded you through and through, He will come to your healing—  
*“‘Tis perfect poverty alone, That sets the soul at large. While we can call one mite our own, We get no full discharge. But let our debts be what they may, However great or small.  
As soon as we have nothing to pay, Our God forgives us all.”*  
May it be so now, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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HOMAGE OFFERED TO THE GREAT KING  
NO. 3100

A SERMON  
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1908.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

*“And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised.” Psalm 72:15.*

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same verse is #717, Volume 12—PRAY FOR JESUS —Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

I BELIEVE we must refer the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy to the times of the latter-day Glory when Jesus Christ shall again appear upon the earth. Then “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Then “they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust.” It has been a great question as to whether Jesus Christ is to come again in Person or by His Spirit. Many passages of Scripture seem to point to His actual and Personal coming and, somehow or other, it does delight my soul to anticipate that Christ may yet come to the scene of His former battles and make it the scene of His future triumphs. I am rejoiced to think that His head, once crowned with thorns on earth, may on earth itself wear a crown of Glory and that His feet that were once wearied in His pilgrimage here with the flinty stones of Jerusalem may yet “stand on the Mount of Olives,” while He ushers in “the day of the Lord in the valley of decision.” And that His shoulders which once wore the purple robe in mockery may yet be visibly clothed with the royal attire of universal empire when “the Lord shall be King over all the earth.”

I am somewhat confirmed in this conviction by the words of the text, “And He shall live.” It does strike me that such a prophecy as that would not be necessary concerning Jesus Christ, either as God or Man, if it were not that He is again to visit the earth. It is quite certain that, as God, “He shall live,” for God over all, blessed forever, only has in Himself immortality and it is quite impossible that the Godhead should ever expire while, as Man, Jesus Christ must live, for when the just are raised, they die no more, but have life eternal—and when they ascend up into Heaven, as Jesus has done, they have a life that God confers upon them which becomes as immortal as the very life of Deity itself! So that it does appear to me that neither in respect to His Manhood or His Godhead, would it have been necessary to say, “He shall live,” unless we are to understand it in the same sense that we should read it if it was written of His first coming—He shall live as the God-Man. He shall live on earth as other men do. He shall live here below. And I do think that no exegesis can fully explain the passage unless we interpret it as to His actually living, residing here as very Man upon the earth once more.

Be that as it may, the text, we trust, has a fulfillment in your ears this night and has been, in a certain manner, fulfilled ever since the time when it was written, “to Him,” to Christ Jesus, there is “given of the gold of Sheba.” To Him prayer is also made and to Him praise continually ascends. Here are three things which are, throughout all time, even till the dawning of eternity, always to be bestowed on Christ! The first is

 the gift of property—the gold of Sheba. The second is the gift of prayer and the third is the gift of praise.

I. To commence with the first, I shall be allowed here to make some remarks with reference to THE PECUNIARY MATTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH because no man on earth will ever suspect me of making any personal allusion either to my own Church or congregation, or with regard to myself or any institution connected with this place of worship. In nothing have I to find fault with my Church and people! Let it go forth to Christendom at large that in their collections and contributions to the cause of God, they stand second to no Church beneath the blue sky. I have simply to tell them that such-and-such a thing is needed for sacred purposes—and forth comes their money. It is always bestowed at the time it is required and, therefore, it cannot be suspected that in anything I say, there is the least allusion to them, except it be to their honor.

It is written that “to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.” I think that this ought continually to be impressed upon the minds of all Christians. Since Jesus Christ is the Son of God and their Savior, and has given Himself for them, they are not their own, but are bought with a price. Their possessions as well as themselves are the absolute property of their Redeemer! They have, in fact, nothing whatever in their own private right. They have made over themselves to the Lord Jesus, to have and to hold them through life and even till death and forever and ever. They are not to call their own their purse, their lands, their houses, nor anything that they have—but to give up everything to their Lord. From the moment when He Himself comes to them and unfolds their interest in His Covenant, they are henceforth to consider themselves as His servants, as His children, “having nothing, yet possessing all things,” because they have all things in Christ.

Were this well considered, my Friends, how much greater liberality should we find among Christians, especially in the support of Gospel ministers? When God sends an ambassador into the world, wherever He sends him, the people are bound to receive him in some kind of honor and respect. Jehovah Himself has said that the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn is by no means to be muzzled. But it is the disgrace of our denomination, as well as of many others, that not a few of the best of God’s servants are toiling weekday after weekday and Sabbath after Sabbath upon a miserable pittance scarcely sufficient to maintain the family of a day-laborer! I thought, the other day, when reading Martin Luther’s “Table Talk,” that it was rather too bad for him to say what he did, but since then I have myself felt similar indignation when I have thought upon this subject. He said, “If I were God, and the world were to behave so wickedly to me as it does to Him, I would kick it all to atoms.” I thought it was a dreadful thing to say, but I have myself been almost inclined to say that had I been the everlasting God and sent ambassadors down from Heaven, and had they been treated as they are now, I would have called every one of them back straightway and would have said, “Is that the way you despise My sent servants? Will you show them no honor? Will you do them despite as you have always done?” Yes, I thought, I would call them back, revoke their charters and say, “Henceforth I will send no more ambassadors.” But, Beloved, ambassadors are not thus received by you and they ought not to be anywhere! God’s servants should have what they require and it should always be said, “Christ lives, and to Him in the person of His ministers— is always given of the gold of Sheba.”

It is a terrible thought to me that although God’s Word says, “Owe no man anything,” yet that the Church should be more in debt than any corporation in England! I do not think that the debts of all the people put together would equal the debts of professing Christians—debts which they have entered into often on account of religion. I would stand fast by the practice of owing no man anything and if I did not see the means of doing anything for my God, I would stop till I did. “Owe no man anything,” is a Christian principle, and one that we are bound most decidedly and continually to observe. Therefore should the Churches be in debt? Why should there not be money to send forth missionaries abroad? It is just this—there is not enough of the love of Christ in the Church and there is not enough of preaching Christ—otherwise there would be more of Christian giving! Where Christ is exalted, there will be a willing, generous people.

I do not believe it is so much the fault of Christians that they have not given more to the cause of God, as it has been the fault of ministers that they have not more fully preached Jesus Christ. They have not extolled His name. They have kept back His Doctrines and put them in the background. This is why God has allowed His Church to become poor and suffered her funds to dwindle down. And it serves her right, for if she does not love her Husband, she ought to be poor! And if she does not extol Jesus, there ought to be no funds! But can you find a Christexalting people, among whom the Gospel is preached in all its fullness, whose necessities God does not supply? There may indeed be some cases where it is so, when God tries them for their good. But I believe, as a rule, that once let our pulpits have the clear Gospel sound in them. Once let the good old Doctrines of the Puritans come forth. Once let the Gospel be preached in all its fullness—none of your shams, for we have abundance of them—but the blessed Gospel of Christ! Once let this fidelity prevail and God will provide the funds, God will open the hearts of the people to pour the money into your coffers. The silver and the gold are His and the cattle on a thousand hills—and it is the fault of the Church herself that she has become poor! When God restores to her the language of Canaan. When Christ is exalted in His people’s hearts and they can hear the sweet and savory notes of Jesus Christ preached, then they will say, “Can we refuse to do anything for such a Gospel as this?” Half-hearted preachers beget half-hearted professors! A lukewarm Gospel has made people’s hearts lukewarm! We must have a reform—a lasting reform by the help of God’s Spirit—otherwise, who knows whereunto this bankruptcy of Christendom shall tend? And who can tell what shall eventually become of the Church? Once let Jesus be preached thoroughly, here, there and everywhere, and then “to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba,” and as much as ever His Church shall need shall be continually offered as a willing tribute!

Thus much, then, about money have I felt constrained to say, for I do believe that many of my Brothers are half ashamed to speak out about the temporal claims of religion. For myself, I always deem it one of the noblest things we can do to give to the cause of God. Everyone knows what value we attach even to some little flower given by the hand of a friend, and God loves the little gifts of His people. As one of our old divines says, “It is not the value of the gift so much as the intention of the giver that is prized. For we should keep an old cracked sixpence if given to us by a friend—not because we think much of the sixpence— that, perhaps, we would scarcely have stooped to pick up—but because a friend has given it to us and for his sake we never spend it or give it away.” So the little that we give to God is of great esteem in His sight. Every little gift we give to Him is remembered and at last He will take us and say, “My child, on such-and-such a day you gave Me this.” “Why, Lord, I scarcely thought of it! I found such a cause requiring help, and I assisted it.” “Ah, My child! Here is your gift—I have stored it up here to show to you when you came to Me. Have I forgotten your little acts of affection? No, I have stored them up in the cabinet of My memory—they are tokens of your love to Me, even as you have had numberless tokens of My love to you.” But what few memorials of your love some of you will have to look upon when you get there! You only give a trifle now and then—that is all. God grant that you may have the heart to give unto Jesus “of the gold of Sheba” in far greater abundance!

II. Then comes the second offering. The gold first, and THE PRAYER afterwards—not because the gold is the more valuable, but because, in some respects, gold, when it is given with a true heart, is the better test.

“Prayer also shall be made for Him continually.” Notice those words again, “Prayer also shall be made for Him.” Now we all know that prayer is continually made unto Jesus Christ. We are accustomed to address the Second Person of the Trinity as God in the form of prayer and, more frequently, prayer is made through Him when we address the First Person of the united Godhead through the mediation of the Son. But the Psalmist says, “Prayer also shall be made for Him.” We can understand how Jesus Christ should pray for us but, at first, it does seem to stagger us that we should be allowed to pray for Him. That He should be our Intercessor, that He should bend His knees on our behalf and point to our names engraved on His breastplate is a Truth of God so frequently mentioned in Scripture that we receive it unhesitatingly. But for us to become intercessors for Christ, to bind the breastplate on our breast, to wave the censer on His behalf, to plead for Him, pray for Him and beg for Him—this does somewhat astonish us! And yet our surprise is due rather to the expression than the fact, for it is a thing we are doing every day. Prayer is made for Christ continually.

Let me tell you that you virtually pray for Christ, Beloved, whenever you pray for one of His people. Will you understand me if I say that Jesus Christ has gone through a great many editions? Every one of the Lord’s people is but another copy of their blessed Master. They are, as it were, particles of Christ beaten out into humanity again—pieces of that mighty wedge of gold beaten out into plate afterwards. They are partakers of Christ’s Nature, they are part of His fullness. And whenever we do a kindness to one of them, we do it unto Him. Whenever we pray for one of His servants, we pray for Christ! You prayed for that poor miserable looking penitent who was afraid to call himself a Christian, though he was so in deed and in truth. Do you know that you then prayed for Christ? You interceded for that simple-minded woman who did not know the way to Heaven and who asked you to put up a prayer to God that she might be taught. Do you know that you then prayed for Christ, for she was part of His flesh and blood and was afterwards brought into His family. Do you know that whenever you put up a petition, even for the weakest and most despised of His little ones, you are praying for Him? What a physician does to the remotest member of my body, is done to the entire frame. Whatever is done to any part of my flesh is done to myself. And when we pray for Christ’s people, the members of His body, we are really praying for Christ.

We pray for Christ, also, when we pray for the spread of the Gospel and for the increase of His Kingdom. When we implore of God, at our Missionary Prayer Meetings, that all His mighty promises may be fulfilled—that the people may fall under Him as willing captives—that the idols may be hurled from their thrones—that the Mother of harlots and abominations may receive her sudden doom and the merchandise of her seven-hilled city cease forever—that Mohammedanism and all false superstitions may be overturned—when we pray in the simple words which our Savior taught us, “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done, in earth, as it is in Heaven”—then we are praying for Christ in full sympathy with all saints, by whom prayer is made for Him continually! And, best of all, when we bend our knees and cry out for His Second Coming—when we beg of Him to cleave the skies and come to Judgment—or when, with other and more literal expectations, we ask Him to come and reign upon the earth and make His people kings and princes unto Him—when we ask the Ancient of Days to come and reign gloriously on earth with His ancients, then we are praying for Christ!

We ought to do so. Recollect, O Christian, in your prayers, whatever you forget, always to pray for your Redeemer! It is your privilege to have your name written in the list of those for whom He pleads and it is your honor to be allowed to plead for Him. Stop a moment—a worm pleading for God? The finite asking a blessing on the head of the Infinite? Less than nothing begging that the Eternal All may be blessed? Oh, were it not told you in Scripture, it would be blasphemy to attempt it! You may pray to Him with the most dread and solemn awe—and you may prostrate yourself at His feet. But to pray for Him, to beg on His behalf, how amazing this seems! For Jesus to take your petition to His Father gives a glory and a dignity to your very poorest prayer—but for you to turn petitioner to the King of kings on behalf of His own Son—do you not admire the condescension that permits that? I think I see you coming, poor, weak, helpless one, and God says, “For whom do you plead?” You say, “I plead for Jesus.” “What? You, a poor beggar? What? You, full of sin, littleness, nothingness—do you plead for My eternal Son? Are you making supplication for Him?” Do you not, yourself, think it amazing that you should be allowed to ask for a blessing on His head? Yes, then never slight this privilege! Never forget it—with your prayer, continually mingle His name.

III. Now comes the last point and here we must be somewhat longer, for we shall have, we hope, more thoughts—“Daily shall He be PRAISED.” Jesus is not only continually to have gold and prayer, but He is to have daily praise ascribed to Him. Let me go over the list of things which prove that Jesus Christ shall daily be praised.

First, I think, Jesus daily shall be praised as long as there is a Christian ministry. There have been professed ministers who have never exalted Christ at all. There have been some who took upon themselves the office for a morsel of bread, not being called by God—but has there ever been a time when there have not been faithful men of God? Has there ever been a season when God has not sent His Prophets throughout the land to speak in living words, from burning hearts and fervid souls, the very Word of God? No and there never shall be! If God should now put out those lights that shine in London or elsewhere—if He were now to say to the Churches, “Your candlesticks shall be removed out of their places, I will take those ministers away,” by tomorrow He would send others! And if the enemy should come and cut off the heads of all those who now speak God’s Word, would that be able to stop the perpetual thunders of the Gospel? No, for God would tomorrow find men who should rise up and even in the palaces of kings should yet dare to speak the name of God!

Men have thought they could put down the Gospel. They have used the rack and brought forth the stake, but what have they accomplished? They have but spread it more! All they have ever done to stop that mighty stream and bank it up has failed. It has retarded it a little while till, with overwhelming might, the stream has swept away the rock, dashed down the hillside and carried everything before it! They have attempted to amalgamate the Gospel with free will, carnal reason, natural philosophy and such-like doctrines of men, which would, if it were possible, frustrate the counsels of God. They have spoken ill of the Gospel, they have given hard names to those who preach it—but have they been able to stop it, or shall they? No, never, while there is a God, He shall have His Calvins and His Luthers! He shall have His Gills and His Scotts, He shall have His devoted servants who are not ashamed or afraid of the Gospel of Christ! There never shall come a day when the Church shall be bereft of mighty champions for the Truth, who shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, but continually, to the latest period of time, men shall be raised up to preach Free Grace in all its Sovereignty, in all its Omnipotence, in all its perseverance, in all its Immutability! Until the sun grows dim with age and the comets cease their mighty revolutions— till all nature does quake and totter with old age and, palsied with disease, does die away—the voice of the ministry must and shall be heard, “and daily shall He be praised.”

Men cannot put out the light of Christianity! The pulpit is still the Thermopylae of Christendom and if there were but two godly ministers, they would stand in the pass and repulse a thousand, yes, ten thousand! All the hosts of mankind shall never vanquish the feeble band of Christ’s followers, while He sends forth His ministers. On this we rely as a sure word of prophecy, “Your teachers shall not be removed into a corner anymore.” And we believe that, by this ministry, Christ shall be praised daily!

But suppose the pulpit were to fail? We still have other means whereby Jesus Christ’s name would still be praised. The ordinances that He has instituted will always continue to perpetuate His praise. There are two Scriptural ordinances, in both of which Jesus Christ is very much praised. There is, first, that holy ordinance of Believers’ Baptism in which Jesus Christ is much honored, for it has a special relation to Him. “Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” When you descend into the pool at Baptism, you hear these sacred words pronounced, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” And you are especially reminded there that unless you have believed in Jesus with all your heart, you have no right to this sacred avowal of fellowship with Christ, but are sinning against God in so doing. The Scriptures have taught us that whoever dares to administer that ordinance to any but those who believe with their heart and profess with their mouth, dares to touch with sacrilegious hands, God’s own institution, and is guilty of breaking down the hedges of the Church and throwing open to the world that which was never intended but for the Lord’s own family! We solemnly admonish you to have an eye to Jesus Christ in that blessed ordinance! We bid you, before you come, to examine yourselves whether you are in the faith. And when you are there, we remind you that afterwards you are bound to live unto Christ— you have now passed the Rubicon of life—you have now come on the other side of the flood that divides the world from the Church! You have now, as it were, taken the veil and renounced the world—you are dead with Christ, you have been buried with Him by Baptism into death. By that very ordinance you honor the name of the Savior—and while that ordinance lasts, Jesus Christ shall be praised!

Nor less at the blessed Supper of the Lord shall the name of Jesus be praised. I think the moments we are nearest to Heaven are those we spend at the Lord’s Table. I have sometimes looked at your faces, my Brothers and Sisters, at the Lord’s Table, and if anyone wanted to see men’s faces when they looked as if angels themselves were smiling in their eyes, such have your faces been when I have broken the bread and the wine has been passed to you! When those morsels have been in our lips, simple as the sign was—and when we have drunk the wine, simple and unceremonious as the whole affair was—what a sweet and holy influence it has had upon our hearts and how we did feel that we could praise God! I have thought, sometimes, that I could almost have leaped from the Table and have said, “Oh, let us praise the glorious Redeemer!” When we have seen Him on the Cross and beheld Him as our Substitute, we have felt our hearts were burning hot, that they could scarcely be held within our bodies and we wanted all to rise up and sing—

*“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall—  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of All!”*

Even if the pulpit is gone, there still remain these two ordinances in each of which Jesus Christ “shall be praised.”

But suppose that these were to cease? Suppose it possible that we could not meet together in our public assemblies to celebrate these sweet memorials, or to hear the Word of God? Yet there is another opportunity for praising God—there is the family of Christians—and while there is a family on earth where Christ’s name is named, it shall be daily praised. I trust there is no Christian here who has a house without a family altar. If I came into your house and heard that you had no fireplace in the winter time, I would certainly advise you to build one. And if I heard that any of you had not a family altar, I would say, “Go home and lay the first brick tonight—it will be a good thing if you do so, I am sure.” We had some beautiful instances, last night, at our Church Meeting, of young persons who, even though their parents were not godly, boldly started family prayer in the house. And we heard, in many cases, that the parents felt that they had no objection, and never wished to have it stopped! After they have once had the incense smoking in their house, they do not want to have it put out. My Brothers and Sisters, I cannot make out how you Christians live who have not family prayer in your houses! When I step into a Christian’s house in the morning and we have a passage of Scripture, and a little prayer to God, it seems to put the heart and mouth into play for the whole day—there is nothing like it! And when we sit and talk of what Jesus said and did, and suffered for us here below, as old Dyer says, it is like locking the heart up by prayer in the morning and bolting the devil out! We cannot get on half as well when we have not had that prayer in the morning.

And then, how do you get through at night? I do not understand at all how you professing Christians can get through the day without prayer and have no family prayer at night. I would feel like the good man who stopped at an inn and when he heard there was no family prayer, said, “Get my horses out! I can’t stay in a house where there is no family prayer!” It does seem to me terrible that you should go on without prayer, that there should be no morning and evening sacrifice. I cannot make out how you live without it. I could not. I cannot understand how your piety gets on, nor what it feeds upon. I think wherever there is a Christian family, there should be daily praise in it. And mark this and solemnly hear me tonight—I do not speak unadvisedly with my lips—you will find that where sons and daughters have turned out a curse to their parents, when they have been a shame and disgrace to their parents and those parents have been Christians, it might have been set down to this—that while the parents have been Christians, they were not Christians at home! They had not family prayer, they never reared a family altar. I believe nine out of ten of such cases can be explained in that way without in the least touching the text, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Well, supposing we had no family prayer. Suppose we had no ordinances in the house and the altar did not smoke there? Yet daily should Jesus Christ be praised, for still there would be our own hearts and we could praise Christ there. If they put us in prison and we could not speak to one another, we could still praise Him! Or if our tongues were dumb, there is a language of the heart which can be heard in Heaven. With stammering words, or with actions which speak louder than words, our hearts shall always praise Him! Beloved Brothers and Sisters, do you think you will ever have done praising Christ as long as you are alive? I knew a woman who said to me, “Sir, if Jesus Christ does save me, He shall never hear the last of it.” I thought it was a good saying. And shall He ever hear the last of it from you, Beloved? The last of it? Never! When we lie dying, the last word we give Him on earth shall be praise—and the first word we begin in Heaven shall be instinct with praise. And while eternity lasts and immortality endures, we will ascribe praise, honor and blessing to Him forever! Can we who are pardoned rebels, liberated slaves—can we whose souls are quickened from the dead by His Spirit, whose sins are washed away by His precious blood— can we ever cease to praise Him? No! Surely the very stones would speak if our lips were silent, or our hearts refused to pay Him grateful homage! Daily, daily, daily, “Daily shall He be praised.”—

*“I’ll praise Him while He lends me breath, And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers!  
My days of praise shall never be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures.”*

But, then, supposing the innumerable company of His redeemed could perish and their immortality were swallowed up in death, yet even then, Christ would be praised daily! If all of us had departed from the boundless sphere of being, look up yonder and see the mighty cohorts of cherubs and seraphs. Let men be gone and they shall praise Him! Let the troops of the glorified cease their notes and let no sweet melodies ever come from the lips of sainted men and women—yet the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, who always chant His praise! There is an orchestra on high, the music of which shall never cease, even were mortals extinct and all the human race swept from existence—

*“Immortal angels, bright and fair,  
In countless armies shine!  
At His right hand, with golden harps,  
They offer songs Divine!”*

Again, if angels were departed, still daily would He be praised, for are there not worlds on worlds, and systems on systems that could forever sing His praise? Yes! The ocean—that place of storms—would beat to His Glory! The winds would swell the notes of His praise with their ceaseless gales! The thunders would roll like drums in the march of the God of armies! The illimitable void of ether would become vocal with song and space itself would burst forth into one universal chorus, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” And if these were gone—if creatures ceased to exist, He who always lives and reigns, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelt, would still be praised! Praised in Himself and glorious in Himself the Father would praise the Son and the Spirit would praise Him and, mutually blessing One Another, and rendering each Other beatified, still daily would He be praised!

Now, dear Friends, I am conscious that I have not been able to enter into this mighty subject, but here are three things which we, as Christians, are bound to give to Christ—the gold of Sheba, our prayers and our praises. It is for us to see what we have given to Him. I wish we could keep a little book to see what our gifts to Jesus Christ come to in a year. I am afraid, dearly Beloved, that with some of you it would be a very miserable amount. I would lend you a small piece of paper out of my waistcoat pocket to put it down on—and there would be room enough. But it is not so with some of you, I know. You often pray for Christ, you often praise Him and you are often ready to give Him “of the gold of Sheba.” That is well, but let me tell you this one thing—there are none of you who need be afraid of praising Jesus Christ too much! We do sometimes praise men too much—we say so much in their favor, so much in their praise and then, afterwards, we find out they never deserved it. But I will be bondsman for my blessed Master tonight that you will never praise Him more than He deserves! If you like to speak of Him in the most unmeasured phrases. If you borrow all the tongues of men and angels and talk about Him forever. If you praise Him and call Him God. If you call Him the most perfect of men, if you style Him, The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God—you will never say too much of Him!

So, Christian, begin to praise Jesus Christ now. You need not be afraid that you will be too extravagant in the praise you bestow upon Him, for when your hair begins to be white with the sunlight of Heaven gleaming on it, you will find that you never said enough about Him. Let the hoary-headed patriarch speak. Now he comes near his end. He totters and stoops and lifts his eyes to Heaven, and says, “Praise Christ too much? I thought Him lovely when I first knew Him. I knew Him to be lovely a little afterwards, when He helped me along, and I lived to prove that He was most lovely. But now I have got still further and I can say, ‘He is altogether lovely, and there is none to be compared with Him.’ I thought at first that each sweet mercy demanded a fresh song and I did, sometimes, feel a glow of devotion to Him. I then thought I must praise Him more and dedicate myself more to His service. But now,” he says, “could I give my body to be burned for Jesus, I feel that He deserves it! His love in times past, His manifold helpings, His continual unchangeableness render me devoted to Him forever.” And, like the servant of whom we spoke on Monday night, the old Christian feels that he is ready to have his ear bored to the doorpost forever! He never wants to go away.

I have said this because many persons nowadays say, “Ah, So-and-So is young—he’ll be sobered down, by-and-by.” I am sure, Beloved, it is a great pity if he should be. There are very few people in the present day who need much sobering with regard to religion. There is not so much fear of religious enthusiasm as there is of religious torpor and sleep. I should like to see a few enthusiastic Christians—“not drunk with wine, wherein is excess—but filled with the Spirit.” But what do men say? Why, “the man has got no moderation—he is mad!” A person, passing by here the other day, said to another, “You know who preaches there, don’t you?” “No, I do not.” “Why, everybody knows that fellow! Everybody goes to hear him, but, you know, he’s rather touched in the brain.” “Yes,” said a friend of mine, “and I’ll tell you another little thing, by way of a secret— he’s rather touched in the heart, too—and that’s better still.” Well, Beloved, we do not mind what they say about our being “touched in the brain.” We believe it is well to be “touched in the heart” too! We may be mad, but it is a sweet madness, it is a blessed delusion, it is a most excellent “touch.” And we only pray that the Master may touch us all. “Touched in the brain!” Ah, we have precious need to be in these days, for the brains are wrong enough originally! “Touched in the brain!” Most decidedly we require it, for most men’s brains are very far from what they should be. “Touched in the brain!” May God “touch” every man’s brain and every man’s heart! And the more we are touched of God, whether it is touched in the brain, or touched in the hand, or touched in the purse, or touched anywhere, it is always good so long as we are touched of God!

You know it was objected against David that he must not go and fight Goliath because his brother said he had come to see the battle in the pride of his heart. He did not stop to give an answer. The best answer he could give was to go and cut Goliath’s head off and bring it back in triumph! So, many of you who are young in years and full of zeal, are advised not to do this and that and the other. Do not mind what they say! Go forth in the name of your God and you shall do great exploits. If the great and trained veterans are afraid of the battle, then raw and inexperienced recruits must stand in the forefront. While it is written, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength,” let it be known and proclaimed, let it be thundered forth from the skies and let earth re-echo the sound that Christ must and shall be praised! If one class of ministers will not do it, another shall! What the learned will not do, the ignorant must! What the polite and refined cannot do, the rough and untutored must, for, verily, it must and shall be done! If those who stand up with all their boasted prestige among men cannot exalt Christ, He will raise up humble but devoted followers and by the weak things of the world, confound the mighty! Of old He raised up a shepherd to be a king, a herdsman to be a Prophet and a fisherman to be an Apostle! Those who dishonor Him shall be lightly esteemed—but those who honor Him, He will honor! Go, Christian, and exalt Christ! Love Him and exalt Him! Love your Master, talk about your Master, preach of your Master and, by the help of the Spirit, you shall yet come off more glorious than your foes, if not here, yet in that day “when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #717 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAY FOR JESUS

NO. 717

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 21, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
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**“Prayer also shall be made for Him continually.” Psalm 72:15.**

HAVING on one or two occasions made use of the phrase, “praying for King Jesus,” I have been somewhat surprised to find that it was not understood, and I have been rather astonished at receiving several notes asking for an explanation of what I supposed to be a matter of common knowledge. It seemed to hearers and readers of my sermons as if the phrase must be a mistake, as if it could not really be a correct thing to do—to pray for the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet one moment’s reflection would have shown them that the expression is Scriptural, that you have it here if you have it nowhere else, “prayer also shall be made for Him continually.”

Our Lord is undoubtedly intended, in this passage, for He it is in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed, and whose name shall continue as long as the sun. It is quite easy to see how we could pray for Christ if He were still on the earth. I suppose that when He was a Child His parents prayed for Him. They needed not to pray some of the prayers which we offer for our offspring, for He was sinless, but I can scarcely imagine that a mother’s love could have been restrained from seeking the richest blessings for her heavenly Child. And when He grew up, and came among men, and His lovely Character began to be known, how could His disciples do otherwise than pray that He might be speeded in His good work?

Can we suppose them to have been loyal to the Master if they did not often join their prayer with His that His kingdom might come? Indeed, what is the prayer which He has taught us, “Our Father which are in Heaven,” but in a certain sense, prayer for Jesus? “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven”—it is Christ’s kingdom, and Christ’s will, as well as the will of the Father, and the kingdom of the Father. That great cry which went up in the streets of Jerusalem when Jesus, in the days of His flesh, rode through them in state was a prayer—“Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.” Did not the multitude thus implore blessing upon the head of Him who came in Jehovah’s name?

His disciples might have done well if they had prayed for Him and with Him in Gethsemane, and it was a part of His griefs to find that they could not watch with Him one hour. It was ordained that He should tread the winepress alone. I think we shall all see that the same spirit which made holy women minister to Him of their substance—which made the daughters of Salem weep for Him as He was led to His Crucifixion—must have prompted all His sincere followers to say Amen to this prayer, “Father, glorify Your Son”—and what was this but praying for Him?  
But it will be said, “None of these things apply to Him now.” My Brothers and Sisters, think a little, and you will see that we can still pray for Jesus, and you will remember that in our hymns we often do so! As, for

instance, when we sing  
*—*

*“Let all that dwell above the sky,  
And air, and earth, and seas,  
Conspire to lift Your glories high,  
And speak Your endless praise.”*

For albeit that He is, in one sense, exalted to the utmost height of glory and reigns victorious over His enemies, yet, in another sense He is here in the midst of His chosen host striving with principalities and powers. “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,” is the blessed assurance that Jesus is our Captain in the great fight of faith, and is still present in the battlefield.

His great cause is here! His enterprise and business are here below! The work which He undertook to accomplish is not yet accomplished in the person of every one of His elect. His blood has been fully shed and His Atonement has been perfected, but those for whom the Atonement was made are not yet all gathered in. Many sheep He has which are not yet of His fold. We are therefore to pray for Him, that the good work which He has undertaken may be prospered, and that one by one those whom His Father gave Him may be brought to reconciliation and to eternal life.

Brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ describes Himself as being still persecuted and still suffering. He said to Saul, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” He calls His people Himself! They are His mystical body, and in praying for the Church we pray for Christ! He is the Head of the body, and you cannot pray for the body except you pray for the Head! We must put them all into one prayer. He is still struggling with the hosts of darkness in His Church. He is still striving for the victory over sin in His people, and His people are waiting and longing for His second advent which shall fulfill their brightest hopes.

We must still pray for Him, not personally, but relatively—for His cause, for His kingdom, for His Gospel, for His people, for His bloodbought ones who as yet are in the ruins of the Fall—for His second coming, and glorious reign. In this sense, I take it, the text is meant that “prayer also shall be made for Him continually.” And now, Brothers and Sisters, I want, keeping to the one thought of the text, to show the light which gleams from it.

I. And, in the first place, if it is so, if we do, indeed, pray for Christ continually, how this thought ELEVATES THE TONE OF OUR PRAYERS! Think awhile—there are some prayers which are terribly narrow, selfish, and contracted—the suppliant mentions nothing but his own experience, or, at the widest, the trials of his household. He goes through his own private interests, and rehearses the sorrows of his own little sphere. He repeats them. He never seems to get beyond them.

At family prayer in such a case, “Give us this day our daily bread” seems to be the major petition, and, “Forgive us our debts” is perhaps the only other. The man prays like the blind horse at the mill—he travels round, and round, and round continually the same circle of prayer. Now, if that Brother could but get into his mind once and for all that there were a great many others to pray for beside himself and beside his family—if he could remember that Paul wills, in the name of the Holy Spirit, that prayer should be made for all ranks and conditions of men—if such a man could hear all the ministers of Christ saying, “Brethren, pray for us,” and could remember that we are to pray for all the household of faith, why that would tend to get the man off his narrow selfishness!

And if he could grasp the still higher thought that in coming to the Mercy Seat we may come for Christ as well as by Christ, and may have a prayer to pray even for Him who is the Apostle, and High Priest of our profession, he would surely look upon prayer as being altogether a different thing from what he had conceived it to be! He would get out of that narrow rut and begin to pray something more worthy of a child of God! Full conviction of this thought would save us from selfishness in connection with those prayers which have a wider circumference but have their secret center in ourselves.

We do pray for the conversion of sinners, but I have been afraid, sometimes, lest I have been praying for sinners to be converted under my own ministry, with the view of being thought a useful preacher. And it is not impossible that some of you, in your classes, seeking to do good, may have desired usefulness with the view of wearing it as a jewel to ornament yourselves—or, if you sought not honor for self exactly—it may have been for some honored person whom your affection has made to be part of yourselves.

Now I do not think I ought to desire conversions for the sake of my minister, even though his ministry may be very dear to me, nor for the honor of my Christian Sister or Christian Brother, though their work may be exceedingly precious in my sight. I must take care that I supplicate for souls to be saved, and the kingdom of Christ to be advanced with no sinister aim mingling with the prayer.

Now if I pray it for Christ, if I pray that sinners may be converted for His glory, to show forth the power of His Gospel, to let men see that the pleasure of the Lord is prospering in His hands, then I shall ask for the mercies which I need with a better Grace and be less likely to “have not, because” I “have asked amiss.” And do you not see, also, how this would lift us beyond the narrow hounds of sectarianism? I mean just this—there is a possibility of desiring the extension of the Savior’s kingdom only in one direction—namely, in that direction in which we are most interested. It is right for a man to love that body of Christians with which he is most intimately connected, and to love them best because he believes that they are most faithful to the Truth of God—but he should not desire their increase merely for the prevalence of a party name!

He must desire it for the increase of the one great universal Church of Christ, and for the extension of the Truth of God because it is the Truth of God—not because it happens to be a Truth which he has received. I heard a speech the other day by a beloved Wesleyan Brother, and it did me much good to hear it. He said, “If God is pleased to scourge us Wesleyans for our sins, and to withhold a large measure of success, I will then pray that he would bless you Baptists, and make up through you what the Church may lose through us.” When I heard him say it and knew he meant it, I could not but feel my soul knit to such a man—a man who loves the Church of Christ and loves it for Christ’s sake, for the sake of souls—and for the Truth’s sake. This is just how all of us ought to feel— that we wish to see all the Churches multiply and increase—and wherever Truth is preached, wish to see that Truth prevail.

Dear Friends, if we adopt the thought that we must pray for conversions for Jesus’ sake, we shall be uplifted from the realm of jealous bickering! We shall say, “No, I do not desire conversions because of that Church, or that man, or that body, nor even merely because of the whole Church itself! But I desire the extension of the Truth of God for Christ. I pray for Him.” Your minds will be enlarged, your souls will be expanded, and you will have come to the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

Moreover, I have noticed, dear Friends, that when we can ask for any deliverance as for Christ, we may pray very earnestly against an evil without any bitterness mingling with the prayer. It is the duty of every Christian to pray against Antichrist, and as to what Antichrist is. No sane man ought to raise a question. If it is not the Popery in the Church of Rome and in the Church of England, there is nothing in the world that can be called by that name. If there were to be issued a hue and cry for Antichrist, we should certainly take up those two churches on suspicion, and they certainly would not be let loose again, for they so exactly answer the description.

Popery anywhere, whether it be Anglican or Romish, is contrary to Christ’s Gospel! And it is the Antichrist, and we ought to pray against it! It should be the daily prayer of every Believer that Antichrist might be hurled like a millstone into the flood and sink to rise no more. If we can pray against error for Christ because it wounds Christ, because it robs Christ of His glory, because it puts sacramental efficacy in the place of His Atonement and lifts a piece of bread into the place of the Savior, and a few drops of water into the place of the Holy Spirit, and puts a mere fallible man like ourselves up as the vicar of Christ on earth—if we pray against it because it is against Him—we shall love the persons though we hate their errors! We shall love their souls though we loathe and detest their dogmas, and so the breath of our prayers will be sweetened because we turn our faces towards Christ when we pray. We are to pray for Him.

Do you know, dear Brothers and Sisters, it seems to me to make prayer so sweet to think that we can pray for Jesus! The Mercy Seat is inestimably precious to us when we can pray there for ourselves. When we can bring the case of a dear child or loving friend it is a blessing for which to be perpetually grateful. Oh the blessedness of prayer! Our hearts might break for lack of a way of expressing our love if we had not this method of telling it out before the Mercy Seat on the behalf of those dear to us. But, Beloved, to think that I may pray for Christ—that I may pray for Him who prayed for me, and plead on His behalf who with sighs and tears pleaded on the behalf of poor helpless me—it ought to be a very great comfort to some of you who cannot do much else beside pray for Jesus.

I dare say you have thought, “I wish I could preach for Christ.” It is a very laudable wish! Covet earnestly the best gifts. But if you feel that you cannot speak to edification and are thus debarred from that honorable exercise, you must seek another mode of service. Then you have said, “I wish I could give to Christ’s cause. If He would make me His steward. If He would trust me with money, how willingly would I consecrate it to Him!” But you have no money and you are, perhaps, so poor you cannot do anything in that direction—though you would do very much if you could. Now, what a mercy it is that there is this which you can do—you can pray for Christ! You can come to the treasury and drop in your prayers, and if they are all you have, they will be like the widow’s two mites which were not precious to Christ because they were mites nor because she was a widow—but because they were all her living.

Ah, if your prayers are all you can give God—and all your living—drop them into the Church’s treasury, and say, “Well, I cannot do much else, but my daily constant prayer shall go up that the Lord would prosper the Gospel of His dear Son and make Him to rule and govern the wide world over.” Dear Friends, here is room for questioning ourselves. Have you and I been neglectful in this form of prayer? If we have, I am persuaded that it will cast a flatness and a staleness over all our devotional exercises. If you have not prayed for Christ, I am afraid, dear Friend, that much of your own prayer will have been displeasing to God. Remember that the same Christ who tells us to say, “Give us this day our daily bread,” had first given us this petition, “Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

Do not let your prayers be all about your own sins, your own needs, your own imperfections, your own trials! Let them climb the starry ladder and get up to Christ Himself! And then, as you draw near to the bloodsprinkled Mercy Seat, offer this prayer continually, “Lord, extend the kingdom of Your dear Son.” Such a petition, fervently presented, will tend to elevate the spirit and tenor of our prayers.

II. In the second place, praying for Christ will suggest to us MANY THEMES OF PRAYER. To pray for Christ is a very large topic, for it will bring before us something fresh for every day in the week. I must plead for Christ’s cause on earth according to its present condition and circumstances. Consequently I shall need to keep my eyes open to see in what plight the kingdom of Christ is. As a general looks along the whole line of battle and sends reinforcements where the line appears to be most weak, so will the true man who prays for Christ look along the line of the Church’s work and pray most for that which is in the worst state—offering up his prayers for Christ according as Christ’s cause seems to need those prayers.

There are some topics which constantly claim our care—you may always pray for them. One is that Christ may have always enough witnesses for the Truth on earth. Your Lord has said, “Pray you the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest.” It is a prayer much forgotten, but it needs to be revived in the Church before we shall see much revival. There are many Churches now that cannot find pastors. In some districts, especially in America, there are Churches by the score without ministers, and apparently they must remain so for years to come. There is a general complaint throughout all denominations of a shortage of earnest first-class men who shall devote themselves to the ministry. And this shortage will be and will increase until the Church takes it up and prays that He who ascended up on high and received gifts for men would be pleased to give her again her Apostles and ministers, her teachers and her evangelists, each according to his proper station.

We must pray for men of God, and you need never be afraid that the prayer will be needless in your lifetime, for if we had ten times as many witnesses for Christ, the world needs them. Look at China with its millions, India with its teeming masses, and even our colonies wide and far spread with a fearful lack of preachers of the Word! There are large companies of men who speak our language and who left our shores, who, for lack of teachers, are almost subsiding into heathendom and will perish for lack of knowledge unless there is a fresh host raised up of preachers of the Cross of Christ!

Pray, then, dear Friends, that God would find out and equip men to be heralds of peace to the people, and help those of us who labor even beyond our strength to aid young men whom God has called to His work to get the knowledge which their office requires. Another prayer may always go with it, namely, pray for those that are already in the field. “Brethren, pray for us,” said the Apostle. If you have nothing to pray for, for yourselves, here stands one before you who needs all your prayers and feels that he needs them, and humbly with his whole heart begs you to let him live in your private devotions.

Brethren, we are rich when you enrich us with your supplications! We are strong when you strengthen us with your prayers! A few loving tears shed for us in private will be of more value to us than anything else you can possibly bestow upon us. Some of my Brethren are fainting from lack of success—hundreds of them are growing cold because of the coldness of the church members who surround them. Some of them are struggling with poverty—all of us, alas, are too weak for the work we have engaged in! Pray for us! You are praying for Christ, and if we are His servants—if He has truly sent us—you pray for the Master’s business when you pray that the servants may do that business well. You pray for the Owner of the vineyard when you ask that the trimmers of the vines may know how to execute their tasks.

And when these two prayers have passed from your hearts to your lips, there is another—pray that God would open doors of utterance to us among the people. Ask that God would send the spirit of hearing throughout this city to begin with, and then throughout all England. It is poor gain that you have the preachers unless the people will listen—the trumpet sounds in vain if men stop their ears! God can, in a moment, as we know by past experience, influence people to say, “Come and let us go up to the house of the Lord.”

I believe that through the last visitation of the cholera there is a spirit of hearing in London such as has not been for many years. Thank God for this! Ask that a desire to hear may be continued and increased. Intercede with the great Lord of All that in every country the hearing ear may be bestowed—that God’s faithful servants may be cheerfully received and be enabled to accomplish their errand with a hundred-fold success. But, my Brothers and Sisters, I have only opened the bag. I have only commenced the list of matters for which you could pray if you would really pray for Christ! I would ask you, then, to pray especially for the conversion of many souls. This is Christ’s delight, His love, His heart’s joy.

You were told last Sunday morning that there was “joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents.” The angels sing, but Christ is the Choirmaster there. He is the chief Musician, for He has the greatest joy! It is His joy, His Heaven to see sinners saved! Pray, pray for Him, then! You are praying for the Shepherd when you pray for the lost sheep. You are praying for the King when you ask that the lost jewels of His crown may be found and set therein! Oh that we loved souls as Christ loves them! Then we would hunger and thirst after their salvation! Oh for the tender heart of the weeping Savior, that no soul might go down to Hell not sprinkled with our tears!

Brethren, pray for those who are saved, or who make a profession of it, that they may be kept from falling into sin. You are in an eminent degree praying for Christ when you offer such an intercession, for He is crucified afresh when professors fall. If I had an offer now of losing this right arm or having to endure in this Church some such falls as we have had to mourn over, and as the world has seen of late among high professors, I do feel I can say without hypocrisy I would choose to be cut limb from limb sooner than see those whom I have loved and honored fall from the faith. It is a bitter thing to us, who are ministers of Christ—it is our curse and plague—it costs us sleepless nights and miserable days when we hear of those that apparently did run well but turn back to the world!

Pray for professors that they fall not! And as you hope to be kept yourselves, I charge you pray for every tempted soul that his faith fail him not in the trying hour. Forget not to pray for the Church of God that it may be knit together in one. Do not ask that it may be made uniform—that is neither desirable nor probable—but pray that all Christians may be one as the Father is one with the Son. That is, one in spirit, so that we, divided as we always shall be as to our thoughts upon many points, may be one in the hope that animates us—in the spirit that actuates us. Pray that we may be one in the life of God that pulsates in our souls. Pray that the Churches may be knit together in holy love and may strive together for nothing but the advancement of the faith of Christ.

Nor have I done. When you have thus prayed for Christ, and I am sure it is all for Christ if you so pray, then ask that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Let no ideas of doctrine check you in such a prayer—you are bound to pray it! The example of Prophets and of Apostles urges you forward! Your allegiance to King Jesus should constrain you to it. You believe that He will come, but believe also the Truth of God which is equally certain that He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Though you may not be able to reconcile that universal reign with the other Truth of His coming as a thief in the night, do not try to reconcile it! Believe it because you find it in the Bible and, believing it, pray that you may see it. Do not indulge the thought that Christ is not to reign in China. That He is not to be King where the gods of the heathens rule. My Brothers and Sisters, He is to be so! Do not think He has only suffered upon Calvary to gather out a few from among men! The day is coming when He shall gather out a multitude that no man can number—who shall be His in the day of His appearing. Pray for this. Pray for the all-conquering progress of the Gospel of King Jesus!

Do not restrict your thoughts and limit your desires. Be ambitious for Christ. Nothing but universal monarchy ought to content you, as only it will content the Master. The little stone cut out of the mountain without hands must fill the whole earth, and every other image, though it is an image of gold or iron, shall be broken in pieces before the dominion of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ! Pray for it, my Brothers and Sisters! Pray for it day and night, and let the verse of Dr. Watts be true of you—

*“For Him shall endless prayer be made,  
And praises throng to crown His head.”*

Thus I have tried to show you that this doctrine of praying for Christ instructs us in a variety of topics. I should again like to ask the question, whether you really have been up to the mark in this—whether there has not been a good deal of negligence upon many of these points? I am afraid I shall have to confess negligence myself, and perhaps most of you will. But do not let us remain satisfied with confession! Let us ask for Divine Grace that our prayers, from now on, shall be larger, wider, broader, more heavenly, more generous, more like the thoughts of the Infinite Mind, while we chiefly, and above all things, remember the work, and interest, and cause of Christ! As He remembers us, so let us remember Him.

III. Thirdly, it appears to me that if we were to look upon our prayers as being in a great measure prayers for Christ, this would tend to inspire us with PECULIAR EARNESTNESS. I must pray for Christ or else I am not consistent with my profession. I profess to be His servant. What? And not ask for the success of my Master? I avow myself to be His disciple—a disciple, and not anxious that the Truths which I receive from my Teacher should win their way? I call myself His friend. He calls me so in return—a Friend—and not show myself friendly enough to put up a word of prayer for Him? He has said I am His brother—a brother who does not pray for his brother is most unbrotherly! Moreover, He has deigned to call the collective body of His people His spouse—a spouse that does not pray for her husband is most unwifely. We must not so act if we are Christians in deed and in truth.

One of the first marks of Christians was that they met together and sung hymns in the honor of one called Christ. And another mark is that they meet together and pray for the extension of the kingdom of one whom they called Jesus. I have a second reason for so praying, namely, that gratitude dictates to me to pray. Oh, what has Jesus done for me! When I am praying for His Church I am apt to think of her faults, perhaps of her unkindness to me, and my prayer lacks force. But when I pray for Christ, so good, so tender, so self-denying, laying down His life for His sheep. When I think of His bleeding out that life for me—for me a sinner and once His enemy—how can I but pray for Him? Pray for You, Jesus? This is but a poor return for all Your groans and bloody sweat and agony for me.

I think I shall love prayer better than I have ever done if I am able to remember that I can speak a word in God’s ear for Him whose blood speaks for me! It will be a delightful satisfaction for me in my times of communion with my Father who is in Heaven to say to Him—“and, my Father, there is One whom You love, who died on my behalf, though I deserved it not, and I pray You glorify Him. Increase His kingdom! Help me to honor Him. Cause human hearts to feel His power. Give Him dominion over tens of thousands of the sons of men.”

Does it not, dear Friend, quicken the pulse of your prayer? Do you think it possible to pray at a sluggish rate when you pray for Jesus? I have heard some people say, “I could not speak upon any subject but one,” and that one subject has been some kind friend who helped them in time of trouble. “Oh,” they say, “I could speak about him! That is a topic I could always find words upon.” Someone to whom you are grateful holds a key with which to unloose your tongue. And if you cannot pray for anything else, surely you can, you must, you shall pray for the Lord Jesus! As both our consistency and our gratitude will thus quicken us to prayer if we pray for Christ, surely our love to Him will tend to do the same.

Loved of Christ from before all worlds, we love Him in return. We never pray more fervently, I suppose, than for those whom we love best. He who does not love sinners cannot pray aright for them. When we love sinners, then the prayer is fervent. And when we love Jesus, then will the prayer be earnest. Love is the flaming torch to kindle the pile of our devotions. Brethren, we have something more than love to Christ. We are, if we are true Believers, one with Him—members of His body. All that concerns Him concerns us, not because we are partners merely, but because we are part and parcel of Himself. There is but one Christ, and His Church is one with Him.

We, members of His Church, are each one in living union with Him. No man, says Paul, ever yet hated his own flesh! Now, if I, professing to be a Christian, were to neglect Christ, I should be neglecting myself since He takes me into union with Himself. Do I ask that His kingdom may come? It is a kingdom in which I am to reign! Do I ask that His glory may be increased? It is a glory of which I am to be a partaker! Do I crave that His joy may be full? That joy is to be in me! How can I but pray when I am one with the Savior for whom I put up my supplications?

I am afraid I cannot put what I mean into words which carry it home to you. But to my own mind it is like a wafer made with honey which I can roll under my tongue and enjoy in its sweetness, to think that I have the possibility of pleading for Jesus! I feel convinced that it has a tendency to blow up the flame of prayer. I trust that the man who traveled slowly before will all at once put on his speed when he comes to pray for Christ Jesus.

IV. Very briefly, in the fourth place. If I can look at my prayers in the light which has been mentioned, it will tend very much to give me SPECIAL ENCOURAGEMENT in offering them at the Mercy Seat. He who has to present a petition will go with great confidence when he feels that the person for whom he makes intercession is exceedingly well worthy. Brothers and Sisters, if I pray for a guilty sinner I may have confidence. But when I pray for such a One as the Lord Jesus, my confidence can have no bounds set to it! Observe what He is! He is in constant favor with God. “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

From the excellence of His Character and the dignity of His Person, He deserves to be the Beloved of His Father, and He is such. He is God’s wellbeloved. It is easy work, then, to plead for Him. Now, if I pray for my minister, for the Church, for the conversion of sinners, I may feel a little difficulty. But when I can make sure that I am praying for these for Christ’s sake and with a view to His honor—and am thus virtually praying for Christ—why then, if enabled by the Holy Spirit, it becomes easy to pray because I know I must succeed when I am asking honor for Him whom the King delights to honor!

Brethren, when I think upon the merits of Christ in the matter of His mediatorial sufferings, how it encourages me to pray! I ask that He may be crowned who was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. Can this be denied? Is not the crown well earned? Can the reward be withheld? I ask that the pierced hand may be filled with the scepter, and that the feet once nailed to the Cross may be planted upon earth’s dominions as upon a footstool. Can it be refused? Am I not asking that which His merit deserves? Which His triumph claims and wins? In this case I have something more to plead, I have God’s promise. It is written, “He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands.”

It is easy work to pray when we are grounded and bottomed, as to our desires, upon God’s own promise! How can He that gave the word refuse to keep it? Immutable veracity cannot demean itself by a lie! And eternal faithfulness cannot degrade itself by neglect. God must bless His Son—His covenant binds Him to it. That which the Spirit prompts us to ask for Jesus is that which God decrees to give Him! Brothers and Sisters, whenever you are praying for the kingdom of Christ, let your eyes behold the dawning of the blessed day which draws near when the Crucified shall receive His coronation in the place where men rejected Him! The cause of Christ is downtrodden now—it shall not be so forever.

We have been for centuries like soldiers that keep the field against a foe inveterate and mighty. We have been wearily waiting in the trenches. We have been mournfully standing behind the bulwarks. But the day is coming when the Master shall say to us what the Hebrew Prophet said to Israel’s tribes at the Red Sea, “Forward, forward!” And then we will be no longer merely keeping the ground but winning province after province for King Jesus! No longer storing our arrows in our quivers that they may be ready for the onslaught—but fitting them to the string and sending them like a mighty shower—we shall march to triumph and to universal victory!

Courage, you that prayerfully work and toil for Christ with success of the very smallest kind! It shall not be so always. Better times are before you. Your eyes cannot see the blissful future! Borrow the telescope of faith. Wipe the misty breath of your doubts from the glass. Look through it and see the coming glory! Messiah’s kingdom comes! The trumpet soon shall sound! Peace shall be proclaimed! His saints shall reign in joy! Before long the millennial era shall begin and Jesus shall have His own.

Behold Him reigning upon the throne of His father David. The kings of the Isles bring him presents, Sheba and Seba offer Him their gifts. It must be so, Brethren! Christ has not died merely to win this little island, and a few other nations! He has died to redeem this whole round world as a jewel which He will wear in His crown, and He shall have it! I say the whole round world yet shall shine like a pearl in His diadem! He must, He shall reign over all nations till every enemy is put under foot. The sails that whiten every sea shall bear His messengers to the islands of the South. The caravans that cross the desert shall convey His ambassadors to proclaim in the far-off oasis or among the wandering Bedouins His sacred name. The gates of brass which deny Him entrance must be broken! The bars of iron that shut out His heralds from any land must be snapped.

Hoary systems of superstition must crumble and the moles and bats shall yet be the sole companions of the gods of heathendom. Rejoice, rejoice! The cause for which you plead is one which Heaven ordains to bless! Everlasting decrees stand like lions to guard the throne of Christ! The mighty arm of the Most High is made bare to avenge His own elect. High shall the banner of the Cross be lifted! Soon shall the shout of victory make Heaven’s loftiest arches ring and Hell itself shall tremble at the dreaded sound—for the King immortal, eternal, invisible, must reign and put down all dominion and power—and then shall He give the kingdom to God, even the Father.

V. In closing, the last thought which occurred to me was this—when we put our prayer in such a light that we pray for Christ it DEMANDS CONSISTENT ACTION. I cannot pray for Christ and then rise from my knees and go and sin against the very kingdom which I hope to spread! I ask you what is it but damnable hypocrisy for a man to say, “Your kingdom come,” and then to go out, and by inconsistent conduct, pull down the walls of Zion? What shall I say of that professor whose daily life in ordinary business is a continual splattering the Gospel with mud, and yet he says, “Your kingdom come”? Away with the hypocritical lips which can honor Christ in public, when the hands, the true token of the heart, will afterwards privately pluck down the Cross!

Ah, my Hearers, how many professors do this! How many who even give and contribute liberally will afterwards, in the way in which they get their money, or seek to get it, or in the conduct of their daily business, or in their families, bring infinitely more discredit upon religion than their contributions can ever bring honor to the Cross? If you pray for Christ, live like He lived! If you profess to desire His prosperity, do not, I pray you, cause Him to be wounded in the house of His friends!

But further, this is not enough. If I really pray for Christ I must take care to be on my watch to know what to pray for, so as to make my prayer a sensible prayer—a prayer of the understanding. Some members of the Church do not know what the Church needs at the present moment. They could not plead for Sunday schools, for they never take the trouble to enquire into their present condition. Could some of you pray for our own school as it should be prayed for? You could pray a sort of general hit-ormiss prayer, but you do not know whether the Sunday school is well attended. You do not know whether the teachers are godly young men and women and knit together in love, or whether they are all divided and split into factions.

We ought to know, as Church members, it seems to me, something about all the agencies—but all about some one agency in which we take particular concern. And we should get to be acquainted with the condition of the Church of which we are members. And also, as far as our means will allow us, we should be acquainted with the condition of the Church of God at large. We should take interest in it, feeling that it is our own concern. And then when we pray we should pray with better spirit, understanding what we are asking for. Then, Friends, if we did this we are not afraid but what the last thing would be well attended to, namely, that we should take care that we add to our prayers our continual personal service.

The old fable of the priest who would not give the man a farthing but would give him his prayers, is very like many professors. They pray for the kingdom, but what are they doing? Many young men who are quietly at home in England ought to be missionaries abroad! Many others who are following their calling successfully ought to have devoted themselves to the ministry. And there are many Christian men who are making money for themselves who have got enough and ought to shut up shop for themselves and keep shop for Christ—they ought to make money for Christ with as much earnestness as I would preach the Gospel for Christ!

I have no doubt that many would thus serve the Master far more eminently than do half the professed preachers. Oh, if you are not doing something for Jesus let your closets chide you! Let your hymns, which you have been singing about His coming and His triumph—let them provoke you! But oh, my Brothers and Sisters, instead of appealing to all these considerations, I shall put it upon this footing—by Him who loved you, if, indeed, He loved you! By Him who died for you, if, indeed, you have a share in His passion! By Him who lives for you, if, indeed, you have been quickened together with Him! By Him who pleads for you this day before the Eternal Throne, if, indeed, your names are on His breastplate—I do charge you—live to Jesus!

Live now to Him! Live while you live! Live with all the possible energy of life! Let the love of Christ be an all-consuming passion with you! Find out some way in which to increase His kingdom. Ah, my Hearers, I bless God for you because the most of you are serving Him. I rejoice in you! You are the jewels of my crown of rejoicing because you do serve the Master! Many of you live even Apostolic lives in your eagerness to spread abroad the Truth of God! But alas, some of you I might speak of “even weeping,” because you are indifferent and almost dead to the blessed power of love within the soul!

May God revive us all! May the Holy Spirit constrain us to more consecrated living! I am in hopes that the Prayer Meetings held every morning and evening will be the means of bringing the Church into a warmhearted, happy, holy, earnest state and that there will not be one left among us whose soul shall have been so dead as never to himself have said, “This is my work. Christ is my King. And now I will live for Him and pray for Him in the hope that I may at last die and be with Him where He is, and behold His glory—the glory which His Father gave Him—and be one with Him in Heaven forever and ever!”

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JESUS—“ALL BLESSING AND ALL BLESSED”  
NO. 2187

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1891,  
**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” Psalm 72:17.**

THERE are many famous names in human history, but many of them are connected with deeds which have brought no blessing upon mankind. To bless and to be blessed is the noblest sort of fame and yet how few have thought it worth the seeking! Full many a name in the roll of fame has been written there with a finger dipped in blood. It would seem as if men loved those most who have killed the most of them! They call those greatest who have been the greatest cutthroats! They make their greatest illuminations over massacres of their fellows, calling them victories. To be set aloft upon a column, or represented by a public statue, or to have poets ringing out your name, it seems necessary to grasp the sword and to hack and slay your fellow men! Is it not too sadly true that when men have been cursed by one of their leaders, they, from then on call him great? O misery, that wholesale murder should be the shortest method of becoming illustrious!

There is one name that will last when all others shall have died out— and that name is connected with blessing—and only with blessing. Jesus Christ came into the world on purpose to bless men. Men, as a race, find in Him a blessing wide as the world. While He was here, He blessed and cursed not. All around Him, both by speech, act, glance and thought, He was an Incarnate blessing. All that came to Him, unless they willfully rejected Him, obtained blessings at His hands. The home of His infancy, the friends of His youth, the comrades of His manhood, He blessed unsparingly! He labored to bless men. To bless men, He parted with everything and became poor. To bless men, at last He died. Those outstretched hands upon the Cross are spread wide in benediction—and they are fastened there as if they would remain outstretched till the whole world is blessed!

Our Lord’s resurrection from the dead brings blessings to mankind. He has won for us redemption from the grave and eternal life. He waited on earth, a while, until He ascended, blessing men as He went up. His last attitude below the skies was that of pronouncing a blessing upon His disciples. He is gone into Glory, but He has not ceased to bless our race. The Holy Spirit came among us soon after the Ascension, because Jesus had received gifts for men—yes, also for the rebellious. The wonderful blessings which are comprised in the work, Person and offices of the Holy Spirit—all these come to us through Jesus Christ, the ever-blessed and ever-blessing One! He still loves to bless. Standing at the helm of all affairs, He guides the tiller of Providence with a view to the blessing of His chosen. He still spends His time in making intercession for transgressors, that the blessing of God may rest upon them, while His Spirit, who is His Vicegerent here below, is always occupied with blessing the sons of men.

Our Lord Jesus will soon come a second time and in that glorious hour, though His left hand must deal out justice, His right hand will lavish blessing! His chief end and bent in His coming will be that He may largely bless those loving hearts that watch for His appearing. Christ is all blessing. When you have written down His name, you have pointed to the Fountain from which all blessings flow—you have named that Sun of Righteousness to whose beams we owe every good and perfect gift! From the beginning, throughout all eternity, the Lord Jesus blesses men—

*“Over every foe victorious,  
He on His Throne shall rest!  
From age to age more glorious  
All blessing and all blessed.  
The tide of time shall never  
His covenant remove,  
His name shall stand forever,  
That name to us is—Love.”*

I purpose, at this time, if the Lord shall help me, to speak very simply about the fullness of blessing which comes from our Master and Lord. First saying, dear Friends, that we ourselves are living proofs of the statement that men shall be blessed in Him. Then, desiring to say, in the second place, that we have seen it to be true, also, in others. And, thirdly, expressing our conviction that it shall be true, on the largest scale, with the nations—“All nations shall be blessed in Him,” and, therefore, they shall call Him blessed.

I. First, then, WE OURSELVES ARE LIVING WITNESSES THAT MEN ARE BLESSED IN CHRIST. You and I do not pretend to be great sages, famous philosophers, or learned divines. We feel when a pin pricks us, or when a dog bites us. We have sense enough to know when a thing tastes well or bad. We know chalk from cheese, as the proverb has it. We know something about our own needs and we also know when we get those needs supplied. We have not mastered the extraordinary, but in the commonplace we feel at home. A man is none the worse witness in court because he does not know all the technical terms used in science. A judge is never better pleased than when he sees, in the witness box, some plain, blunt, honest fellow who will blunder out the truth. We will speak the Truth of God at this time, so far as we know it, whether we offend or please. Every man is to speak as he finds and we will speak concerning Jesus Christ as we have found Him. I will try, if I can, to be spokesman for all present who are believers in Christ. And I ask a patient hearing.

We bear witness that we have been blessed in Him. How much, how deeply, how long and in how many ways we have been blessed in Him, I will not undertake to say, but this I will say most emphatically—for many of you now present, whose lives and histories I know almost as I know my own, we have in verity, beyond all question, been blessed in Jesus to the highest degree and of this we are sure! We believe and faith grasps the first blessing—that we have received a great blessing in Christ by the removal of a curse which otherwise must have rested upon us. That curse did overshadow us, once, for it is written, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” We could not keep the Law. We did not keep it. We gave up all hope of keeping it. Therefore, the dark thunder-cloud of that tremendous sentence hung over us and we heard the voice of justice speaking out of it, like a volley of the dread artillery of God in the day of tempest! The thunder of the curse rolled heavily over our heads and hearts. How some of us cowered down and trembled!

We can never forget the horror of our soul under the near apprehension of Divine wrath! To be cursed of God meant all woes in one. Some of us were brought very low, indeed, by the frown of a guilty conscience. We gave up, even, the dream of hope. We thought ourselves effectually, finally and everlastingly condemned and so, indeed, we should have found it, had there not been a Divine Interposer! But now that curse is taken from us and we do not dread its return, for He was made a curse for us, of whose name we are speaking now—even He “who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” No curse now remains—only blessing abides! Hallelujah! If our Lord had done nothing else for us but the rolling away of the curse, He would have blessed us infinitely—and we would have blessed Him forever. If He had accomplished nothing but the bearing away of our sin into the wilderness—as the scapegoat of old bore away the iniquity of Israel—He would have done enough to set our tongues forever praising Him. He has lifted from the world the weight of the eternal curse and, therefore, let all the bells of our cities ring out His honor and all the voices of the villages sing forth His praise! O you stars of light, shine to His Glory, for He is blessed beyond all earthly measure!

The negative being removed, we have had a positive actual experience of blessing, for God has blessed us in Christ Jesus and we know that none are more blessed than we are. We are not at all, now, the men that we used to be as to our inward feelings. Some years ago, under the apprehension of Divine wrath, we were so unhappy and troubled that we could find no rest. But now we are blessed in Christ so greatly that we are at perfect peace and our soul has dropped its anchor in the haven of content! Our joy is usually as great as formerly our sorrow used to be. We feared our sorrow would kill us—we sometimes think, now, that our joy is more likely to do so, for it becomes so intense that at times we can scarcely bear it, much less speak of it!

As we could get no rest before, so now, by faith, we feel as if we never lost that rest, for we are so quiet of heart, so calm, so settled, that we sing, “My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is fixed!” Not because temporal circumstances are quite as we would wish them, but because we have learned to leave off wishing, we are now more than satisfied! Getting God’s blessing upon everything, we have learned to be content and something more—we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We used to fret, before we knew Him, but His love has ended that. We thought we could do things better than God could and we did not like His way of managing— but He has taught us to be like children, pleased with whatever our Father provides—and, therefore, we joyfully declare, “My soul is even as a weaned child! I have nothing to wish for. I need nothing but what my Father pleases to give me.” Having God’s sweet love, we would not give a snap of the finger for all that princes call their treasure, or all that great men reckon to be their honor. Unto us who believe, Christ is precious— both treasure and honor in one! In fact, Christ is ALL! It is a delightful calm of mind which the Believer enjoys when He dwells in Christ.

Humble faith puts the soul into the guardian hand of the Redeemer and leaves it there in the restfulness of entire trust. Grace baptizes us into blessedness. It plunges us into that sea of everlasting rest in which we hope, forever, to bathe our weary souls. Yes, blessed be His name, the Lord Jesus has made life worth living! It is no longer, “something better not to be.” We

 must speak well of the condition into which He has introduced us since we have known His name. “Well, Jack, old fellow,” said one who met a man who had lately joined the Church, “I hear you have given up all your pleasures.” “No, no,” said Jack, “the fact lies the other way. I have just found all my pleasures and I have only given up my follies.” Every Christian man and women can confirm that way of putting it! We who have believed in Jesus have lost no real pleasures, but we have gained immensely in that direction. If anything sinful was once a pleasure to us, it is not so now—when we discovered it to be evil, it ceased to be pleasure—and we thrust it away without regret! We have lost nothing by conversion that was worth the keeping, but what we gained by coming to Christ has been an inconceivable recompense to us. Is it not so, Brothers and Sisters? Are we not blessed in Christ?

Now, there are some of us who, if we were asked to tell what blessings we have received from Christ, would scarcely know where to begin—and when we had once begun—we would never leave off unless it were from sheer lack of time or strength. Brethren, certain of us owe all that we have to the influence of the Lord Jesus. From our birth and childhood we were indebted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of us now present had the great happiness to spring from godly parents—before we knew the meaning of language, that softly sweet name of Jesus Christ was sung in our ears! The kindness that we received in our earliest days was, very much of it, due to, “Gentle Jesus,” of whom our mothers taught us to sing! He found for us the first swaddling bands of love and watched over our first sleep. Ah, those poor children of the back streets—children who are trained in infamy and blasphemy—how sad their start in life! But some of us had great advantages which were granted us of Sovereign Grace by His dear pierced hands! We bless the Lord who saved our parents and, through saving them, sent to our trembling infancy a mine and a mint of blessing.

In our opening childhood we began to understand for ourselves the loving influence of an affectionate and anxious mother. And then golden showers of Divine Grace fell on us from the love of Jesus. We remember, some of us, those hours on the Sabbath, when Mother would talk with us of heavenly things—with tears in her eyes persuading her boy to give his heart to Jesus, early, and not to let his first days be spent in sin. We remember a wise and prudent father, whose example and instruction all went the same way. The comforts of our home—and they were many—we owed them all to Jesus, for His love made our parents what they were and created a holy, happy atmosphere around us! He might have left our father to frequent the drunkard’s haunt and might have suffered our mother to be what many mothers are—unworthy of the name—and then our childhood would have been utter wretchedness and our home the nursery of vice. Education in crime might have been ours—we might have been tutored for the gallows.

Since that, we have had to shift for ourselves and have left the parental roof, but I, for one, have been casting my thoughts back, to see if I could remember any good thing that I have which I do not owe to the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not know that I have anything that I cannot distinctly trace to Him and His influence! I have many Christian friends—most valuable friends, I find them—but my association with them commenced in the House of God and the friendship between us has been cemented by common service yielded to our blessed Master! Many of you would hardly have had a friend in the world if it had not been that Jesus introduced you to His disciples—and they have been the best friends you have ever had, or ever will have! You used to know certain fine fellows who called themselves your friends and as long as you had a shilling to bless yourself with, they stuck to you to have sixpence of it. You know the style of their friendship and you must now have serious doubts as to its value.

Well, they left you when you became Christians and their departure has been a very gainful loss to you! When they cleared out, altogether, you found that their removal was for your good, if not for their own. But those friends you have made in Christ have been really helpful to you. They have deeply sympathized with you and, as far as they could, they have helped you. Many have been carried through sharp trials by the help of Christian hands. But, whatever you may have to say on the point, I am personally a debtor, over head and ears, to my Savior. What is there—I repeat the question—that I do not owe to Jesus? I am again and again thinking, and thinking, and thinking—but if anything which I call my own is worth having, I must trace it to Him. And are you not, dear Friends, many of you, compelled to say the same? Among the best things you have are your Sabbaths—but they are His days—His resurrection days. Your Bible, too, is a priceless treasure, but that is His Testament—His legacy of love! The Mercy Seat is a storehouse of wealth—but He is that Mercy Seat, and His own blood is sprinkled on it! You have nothing, dear Friend, that you do not owe to Jesus, the Fountain of salvation. You are blessed in Him!

I might single out another class of persons, who, from quite another point of view, would be compelled to say that they, also, have been blessed in Christ. They started in another way and were upon a road which led to death, but they have been rescued. Some of you started life in the midst of an entirely worldly family. There was kindness—parental kindness, in the home, but it was unwise. Abundance of temporal enjoyment was always supplied, but there was a very scanty recognition of anything like religion and, indeed, no knowledge whatever of personal piety. It is little wonder that young persons who are trained in a godless manner and allowed to do very much as they like, should plunge into this sin, and into that. That some young men are saved is a special miracle, for their circumstances make their ruin almost inevitable. I am addressing some of my Christian Brothers and Sisters who remember what liberty to sin was and how they availed themselves of it. They took large license to destroy themselves under the pretence of seeing the world. They were never content except when they were gratifying their passions and obeying the commands of the devil. In their salvation they have been blessed, indeed!

But you, also, who have gone to no great extent in open sin, you, also, have been signally blessed in Christ by gracious and unmistakable conversion. In receiving the Lord Jesus into your soul, what a change has been made! From what a bondage have you been rescued! Into what a new life have you been brought! What new scenes now open up before you! What new hopes, what new joys, what new prospects are all your own! Do I speak to some who plunged into the very grossest sin and yet can say, “But we are washed, but we are sanctified”? Blessed be our dear Master’s name for Grace to such individuals! Such, indeed, are blessed in Him. I know that I am addressing those who had, in their earliest days, the very worst example—who have been brought into the House of God from the place where Satan’s seat is—who cannot, after years of godliness, get out of their memory the recollection of the bad, depraved old times of their youth. In your salvation Jesus has worked a blessed deed. You could drink as others drank. You could fall into sins of uncleanness as others did.

Let us say very little about these open evils. I do not like to hear men talk about their old sins as if they were adventures—they are a shame and a sorrow to all right-minded persons. We humbly hint at them to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, for great Grace it was in the case of some of us. Oh, but the day in which you first knew that dear name! When you first felt repentance melting your hard heart! When you first felt hope springing up in your formerly insensible spirit—then you began to see that there was something nobler and better to live for than merely to gratify sensual passions. Then you began to see that you were an immortal spirit and not meant to fatten like the swine, but were created to be a brother of the angels and to be akin to God, Himself—that was a happy day—a day written in Heaven and made bright with the light of seven days! When Jesus changed your nature, forgave your sins and made you to be like Himself, you were, indeed, blessed in Him!

I want you now, to look back again. I ought not to tire you, even if my talk should seem dull and commonplace, because to remember what God has given and to be grateful concerning it, ought to be a sweet pastime to each one of us. It is not only a duty, but a recreation to be grateful! I do not know any emotion which can give greater joy than that of thankfulness to the Most High. Dear Friends, the Lord has greatly blessed us in the name of Jesus in times of very special trouble. I may not be able to describe your personal trial, but I will take one as a specimen. Depression of spirits comes upon the man. He scarcely knows how or why, but his soul melts because of heaviness. There is, at the back of his sadness, probably some real trial—this he is very apt to magnify and make more of than needs be—and also to expect a dark and terrible calamity to come which will not come. But yet the foreboding is as real a trial as if the catastrophe had actually occurred. The poor despondent creature cannot endure himself and almost grows weary of life. Like the king of Israel, who had all that heart could wish—gardens, palaces, singing men and women—who had all the appurtenances, both of folly and of wisdom, to make him happy, yet he cries, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!” Nothing will cheer this child of grief—he is downcast and desolate.

If you have ever gone through that experience, it has been a very great delight to you when you have got alone and thought of your Lord Jesus, whose everlasting love cannot cease towards you, whose fullness of Grace cannot be exhausted, whose power and faithfulness will always stand you in good stead. If, by a sort of desperate resolve, you have cast yourself upon Him, to sink or swim, to find everything in Him, or else to have nothing, you have risen up altogether a new man! You have felt, “I can face the adversary. I can meet the trial, for Jesus is mine!” Despair of spirit has fled when you have leaned hard on the Cross-Bearer. I have been one of the cave dwellers and the dark has shut me in, but Jesus has been my Heaven below. I may have a degree of heaviness about me, but still, I trust in the Lord, and I am not afraid, for the name of Jesus has caused me to be strong! Yes, men shall be “blessed in Him” by the strength which He gives in the hour of need.

You remember the loss of that dear little child. How blessed you were in Jesus when He came and solaced you! You remember your father’s death, or the loss of your husband, or the death of the dearest earthly friend. Yes, then in such times you knew how precious Christ could be and how blessed you were in Him! Some of you have passed through the desert of poverty. You have frequently been very hard pressed, but still, though you cannot tell how, you have had just enough. You are yet alive though death seemed certain. You have been “blessed in Him,” and so you have survived every storm. Some of you have had little enough of earthly comfort and yet you have not been unhappy. I have sometimes admired a dog for his economical use of comforts. When it has been a long, rainy day and the sun has just peeped out and there has been a gleam of sunlight on the floor—I have seen him get up and wag his tail—and shift his quarters so as to lie down where the bit of sunshine was! It is a fine thing to have just that state of mind—never to go sullenly into the shadow, but always cheerfully to accept the square yard of sunshine and make the most of it! There is something, after all, to be thankful for—something for which to praise the name of God. And if the Lord Jesus Christ had taught us nothing else but that—the practice of lying down wherever there is a trace of sunshine and, better still, of always finding sunshine in His dear name—I am sure we are bound to say that we have been “blessed in Him.”

Well, every year will teach us more and more fully how blessed we are in Jesus, and there will come a day—the last of our earthly days—when we shall know on a higher scale how blessed we are in Him! One of the most pleasant scenes that I ever see is the dying bed of a fine old Christian. I saw one but a few days ago, who, since I was at his bedside, has entered into rest. It was very pleasant to talk with him about what the Lord had done. He was ready to speak well of the dear name. There was much self-depreciation, but much more honoring of Christ by testimony concerning support given in the hour of affliction and succor in the time of need. Brothers and Sisters, you think it will be hard to die? You may not find it so. One, when he was dying, said, “Is this dying? Why, it is worthwhile going through all the troubles of life, even for death’s own sake, if it is like this, for I have such heavenly enjoyment as I never could have imagined.” Some of God’s saints are very needlessly anxious about dying. I knew one to whom it was always a burden. He went to bed one night and he never woke up—thus answering his own fears, for he did not even know when he passed away, but died in his sleep! He was gone, gone, gone to Heaven without a pang! When you see how Believers pass away to be with their Lord in Glory, you have a commentary upon the words of my text—“Men shall be blessed in Him.”

But do you see them? Their spirits have ascended unto God, their Father. How full of bliss they are! Disembodied they are, but they are not destroyed. Their poor earthly frames are still in the grave, yet their liberated spirits are supremely blessed, for they are, “forever with the Lord” and they are blessed in Him. Wait you but a very little while and the trumpet shall ring out from the angel’s mouth, “Awake, you dead, and come to judgement!” And then shall men be blessed in Him, if they are, indeed, “in Him.” When the righteous, restored to their bodies, shall, in their perfect manhood, behold Him face to face and dwell with Him, world without end, “men shall be blessed in Him.”

I do not feel satisfied with the style of my speech at this time, but we who speak the Word are by no means masters of ourselves. I cannot rise to the height of this great argument and I do not think that, if I were to try a hundred times, I could ever satisfy myself when speaking upon this most Divine theme. My Lord is the most blessed Master that ever a servant had and He has blessed me personally so unspeakably that, if I were to bear my witness with the tongues of orators and angels by the space of a century, yet must I cease from the task and humbly confess—“I have not told you the half—nor can I tell you even the tenth of how good my Well-Beloved is to me.” I suspect that you are, most of you, of my mind and say, “Neither can we.” I sometimes tell you the story of what happened to me when I declared, in a sermon, that in the Heaven of the grateful, I would sing the loudest of them all, because I owed more to the Grace of God than anybody else. I meant it not out of any sense of superiority, but rather of inferiority. One good old soul, when I came down the pulpit stairs, remarked to me, “You have made a great mistake in your sermon.” I answered, “No doubt I made a dozen.” “No, but,” she said, “the great mistake was this—you said that you owed more to God than anybody else, but you do not owe anything like so much as I do. I have had more Grace from Him than you have. I have been a bigger sinner than you ever were. I shall sing the loudest!”

“Well, well,” I thought, “I will not quarrel with her; it shall make me the more glad to find myself outdone.” I found that all the Christians were much of the same mind. Brothers and Sisters, we will have it out when we get up yonder. But you shall praise God, indeed, if you praise Him more than I will—and you must be double debtors to my Lord if you owe Him more than I do! If you are more unworthy and more undeserving than I am, you must, indeed, be unworthy and undeserving! And if His rich, free, Sovereign Grace has exhibited itself more fully in you than it has in unworthy me, it has, indeed, overflowed all its banks! We will leave the loving contest for the present, but when all the birds of Paradise reach their nests above, there shall be a competition of adoring praise—and all of us will do our best to bless the name of the Lord!

II. Our second head was to be a practical one—we can only give a few minutes to it. WE HAVE SEEN OTHER MEN BLESSED IN CHRIST. Our observation confirms our experience. If this were the proper time, I could narrate many instances—which I could also confirm by producing the individuals—in which men have been remarkably blessed in Christ. What social changes we have seen in those who have believed in Him! They have not been the same persons—in many respects they are new. I have known persons at whose houses I have visited—well, you could not have believed that the man who lodged in the house, where he was first found, could ever have risen to occupy a room in a house at all like that in which he came to reside! The room in which I conversed with him was a palace, compared to the dog-hole in which he once existed. There was a change in his dwelling. There was a change in his wife. You would hardly know the woman—she is so different from the wretched slut and slave who called him, “husband,” with a sigh and a sneer! She is here, now, sitting with him, and they are as happy as angels! I shall not point them out, but they are as good as any of you. We have known the case in which, from rags— absolute rags—the coming of Christ into the soul has lifted a man into competence, respectability and position.

Godliness has a gain about it—an honest, worthy gain for the life which now is. It teaches men habits of thrift, prudence and temperance—and delivers them from the thralldom of drunkenness and other vices—by which the major part of poverty is occasioned. It is worth mentioning even such blessings as these, as the poor little children know. They used to run away when Father came in, for they were afraid of him, but now, instead of that, they are watching for the time when his work is done, to go toddling down the street to meet dear Father, for the luxury of being brought home in his arms! Our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed some men and some women at such a rate that the devil, himself, would not have the impudence to say it was not a blessing! Liar as Satan is, he could not deny that godliness has brought sunshine where there was none—the blessing has been too distinct and manifest for any to deny it!

What a moral change have we seen in some! They could not speak without an oath, but the habit of profane swearing ended in a minute and they have never been tempted to it since! Rash, bad-tempered men, who would break up the furniture of the house in their passion, have become as gentle as lambs! Such furies usually become quiet, peaceable and longsuffering—Divine Grace has a marvelous influence upon the temper! Men of hot passions that used to give a word and a blow—but generally the blow, first—now watch themselves and guard against their infirmity! They take a little time to think before they let fly a hard word or give a sharp look. The change that we have seen in some men has been as complete as that which could have been worked by that fabled mill, into which the legend says that they put old men, turned the handle and ground them young again! Truly a far greater renovation is worked in mind and heart where Jesus comes. Men are “blessed in Him”!

Then, as to mental blessing. What have we seen? This have I seen—here is one case out of many. A young man who had fallen into sin, came to me in deep despair of mind. He was so desponding that his very face bore witness to his misery. He wore the aspect of one who could not live much longer as he then was. I had tried to set the Gospel clearly before him on the previous Sabbath, but he told me that he could not grasp it, for that by his sin he had reduced his mind to such a state that he felt himself to be little better than an idiot. He was not speaking nonsense, either, for there are vices which destroy the intellect. I told him that Jesus Christ could save idiots—that even if his mind was, in measure, impaired as the result of sin, yet there was quite enough mind left to be made glad with a sense of pardon, seeing there was more than enough to make him heavy with a sense of guilt. I cheered that Brother as best I could, but I could effect nothing by my own efforts. Soon the Lord Jesus Christ came to him— and he is now a happy, earnest, joyful Christian! Not long ago he sent an offering of thanksgiving to God for having lifted him up from the deeps into which he had fallen. I hope there is a long life of real usefulness before him.

We cannot mention one tenth of what we personally know! Eternity will open a great book of record. I call upon the spirits of the just made perfect to witness what the Grace of God did for them! I call upon parents, here, to tell the pleasing story of the conversion of their sons and daughters! And I call upon those who watch for their fellow men to say whether they have not met with many cases in which men have been blessed in Jesus by being snatched from between the jaws of madness, itself, by the sweet, calming influence of the always dear and blessed name of our Redeemer! Yes, indeed, and of a truth, men are and shall be blessed in Him!

The practical point is, Brothers and Sisters, since we need to do good, let us preach up our Lord Jesus Christ as the Sovereign balm for every sinner’s wound! If you want to be philanthropists, be Christians! If you would bless your fellow men with the best of all blessings, convey to them the knowledge of Jesus Christ! Do not believe that there is anything you can do for your children which will be more effectual than teaching them about Jesus! Do not think that anything in the workshop can soften the vulgarities, silence the blasphemies and end the profanities of your fellow workmen, like setting Jesus Christ before them! When the Moravian missionaries first went to Greenland, they tried to tell the Greenlanders about the existence of a God—they spent some months in such preliminary subjects before they came to the Gospel—but they never gained the attention of the people. Discourses upon such necessary subjects as the Godhead, the immortality of the soul and the like, were flavorless to the Greenlanders.

It happened, one day, that one of the missionaries, translating the Gospel according to John, read out these words—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “What is that?” said the Greenlanders. “What is that? We never heard the likes of that. Why have you not told us that before?” Nothing had been done till the missionaries came to the Gospel, itself! Then they reached the Greenlander’s heart—awakened his dormant intellect and led him to Jesus! Oh, let us keep on with the subject of Christ Crucified! Whatever there is not in our shop window, let us always have Christ as the chief article of our heavenly commerce. Whatever there may lack of Grace and beauty in our speech, and our outward appearance, may there be no lack of Jesus Christ set forth among the sons of men, for, “men shall be blessed in Him” and not without Him! Great schemes of socialism have been tried and found lacking— let us look to regeneration by the Son of God—and we shall not look in vain. Nothing has come of newfangled preaching from the first day till now—but never has the old faith of Jesus failed! Men have been blessed in Jesus and they shall be blessed in Him as long as the race shall exist.

III. Lastly, this whole matter is to extend till THE ENTIRE WORLD SHALL BE BLESSED IN CHRIST. Even at this moment the whole world is the better for Christ. But where He is best known and loved, there is He the greatest blessing. What snatched many an island of the southern sea from barbarism and cannibalism? What, but Jesus Christ preached among them? Men have been blessed in Him in Europe, America, Asia and everywhere. Africa and other lands, still plunged in barbarism, shall receive light from no other source but that from which our fathers received it centuries ago—from the great Sun of Righteousness.

Men shall be blessed in Christ because where He comes, oppression cannot live. You may tell me that the governor of such an empire is a despot. Oh, yes, but despots cannot long flourish where there is an open Bible! Tyrannies may last a generation or two, but all the world knows that their time is short. They will go down—they must go down where Christ is lifted up! That Inspired Book is a testimony for human liberty, louder than all others. It is a declaration of the rights of men under King Jesus— despotism must fall before it, sooner or later. We, in this country, owe our liberties, beyond everything, to the Christianity which is the outflow of a present Christ among us. Slavery? What a plague it was upon the fair hands of our sister nation across the Atlantic! The spot is washed away and it was true religion which forced the washing! There would have been no freeing of the slaves from fetters if it had not been for the Christianity which, after long silence, at last spoke out! And when it spoke, it was as when a lion roars.

The Christianity of England is always pleading for the slave, for the aborigine, for the down-trodden. Leave our politicians alone and we shall soon have all the infamies alive again! Slavery would be tolerated, if not encouraged, if there were not Christian souls upon the watch. What saves us from war at this moment? What influence is it that is always contrary to war and always cries for peace? Why, it is the Christian element among us which counts anything better than bloodshed! Let the Christian element spread and it will be a power to bless mankind! It shall, in proportion as it spreads, put down evil and foster good. Already many a monopoly has been ended and many a liberty has been gained. Much religious intolerance has been subdued by the power of Jesus Christ over His people and I do pray, dear Friends, that we may live to see all nations more manifestly affected by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May every nation be ruled by just and righteous laws! May every nation be willing to submit exterior disputes to the arbitration of justice!

It will be so one day. The nations shall be friends and all men shall feel that they are members of one great family. “Do unto others as you would that they should do to you,” is the sum of the moral teaching of our Divine Lord—and if that is followed, it will bring about a halcyon era, the likes of which the world has never seen! If His Spirit will come and renew men’s hearts—and teach them to love and to obey the Lord their God—then shall all nations call the Redeemer, blessed and, from every corner of the whole earth, the song shall go up, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!” Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 72.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—72 (SONG I), 343, 386.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:  
The Preacher feels himself restored and would thank his friends for their prayers for his recovery. He now entreats their intercession that he may, on his return, be clothed with new power from above. Errors, which are at once ludicrous and horrible, are rising up among those who would be leaders of religious thought—we shall need Divine strength to be faithful to the one and only Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Wisdom and power can only come from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in working, and in answer to prayer He can supply all that is needed. “Brethren, pray for us!”

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #27 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE ETERNAL NAME  
NO. 27

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 27, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT EXETER HALL STRAND.

**“His name shall endure forever.”  
Psalm 72:17.**

No one here requires to be told that this is the name of Jesus Christ which “shall endure forever.” Men have said of many of their works, “they shall endure forever.” But how much have they been disappointed! In the age succeeding the Flood, they made the brick, they gathered the slime and when they had piled old Babel’s tower, they said, “This shall last forever.” But God confounded their language. They finished it not. By His lightening He destroyed it and left it a monument of their folly. Old Pharaoh and the Egyptian monarchs heaped up their pyramids and they said, “They shall stand forever,” and so, indeed, they do stand. But the time is approaching when age shall devour even these. So with all the proudest works of man, whether they have been his temples or his monarchs, he has written “everlasting” on them. But God has ordained their end and they have passed away. The most stable things have been evanescent as shadows and the bubbles of an hour, speedily destroyed at God’s bidding. Where is Nineveh and where is Babylon? Where the cities of Persia? Where are the high places of Edom? Where are Moab and the princes of Ammon? Where are the temples or the heroes of Greece? Where are the millions that passed from the gates of Thebes? Where are the hosts of Xerxes, or the vast armies of the Roman emperors? Have they not passed away? And though in their pride they said, “This monarch is an everlasting one—this queen of the seven hills shall be called the eternal city,” its pride is dimmed—and she who sat alone and said, “I shall be no widow, but a queen forever,” has fallen. She has fallen and in a little while she shall sink like a millstone in the flood, her name being a curse and a byword and her site the habitation of dragons and of owls. Man calls his work eternal—God calls them fleeting. Man conceives that they are built of rock—God says, “No, sand. Or worse than that—they are air.” Man says he erects them for eternity—God blows but for a moment and where are they? Like baseless fabrics of a vision, they are passed and gone forever!

It is pleasant, then, to find that there is one thing which is to last forever. Concerning that one thing we hope to speak tonight, if God will enable me to preach and you to hear—“His name shall endure forever.” First, the religion sanctified by His name shall endure forever. Secondly, the honor of His name shall endure forever. And thirdly, the saving, comforting power of His name shall endure forever.

I. First, the religion of the name of Jesus is to endure forever. When impostors forged their delusions, they had hopes that perhaps they might, in some distant age, carry the world before them. And if they saw a few followers gather around their standard, who offered incense at their shrine, then they smiled and said, “My religion shall outshine the stars and last through eternity.” But how mistaken have they been! How many false systems have started up and passed away! Why, some of us have seen, even in our short lifetime, sects that rose like Jonah’s gourd in a single night and passed away just as swiftly! We, too, have beheld prophets rise who have had their hour—yes, they have had their day, as dogs all have—but like the dogs, their day has passed away and the impostor, where is he? And the arch-deceiver, where is he? Gone and ceased. Specially might I say this of the various systems of infidelity. Within a hundred and fifty years how has the boasted power of reason changed! It has piled up one thing—and then in another day it has laughed at its own handiwork, demolished its own castle and constructed another—and the next day a third. It has a thousand dresses! Once it came forth like a fool with its bells, heralded by Voltaire. Then it came out a braggart bully, like Tom Paine. Then it changed its course and assumed another shape, till finally we have it in the base, bestial secularism of the present day— which looks for nothing but the earth, keeps its nose upon the ground and like the beast, thinks this world is enough, or looks for another through seeking this! Why, before one hair on this head shall be gray, the last secularist shall have passed away! Before many of us are 50 years of age, a new infidelity shall come and to those who say, “Where will saints be?” we can turn round and say, “Where are you?” And they will answer, “We have altered our names.” They will have altered their names, assumed a fresh shape, put on a new form of evil—but still their nature will be the same—opposing Christ and endeavoring to blaspheme His Truths! On all their systems of religion, or non-religion—for that is a system, too—it may be written, “Evanescent—fading as the flower, fleeting as the meteor, frail and unreal as a vapor.” But of Christ’s religion it shall be said, “His name shall endure forever.” Let me now say a few things—not to prove it, for that I do not wish to do—but to give you some hints whereby possibly I may one day prove it to other people, that Jesus Christ’s religion must inevitably endure forever.

And first, we ask those who think it shall pass away, when was there a time when it did not exist? We ask them whether they can point their finger to a period when the religion of Jesus was an unheard of thing. “Yes,” they will reply, “before the days of Christ and His Apostles.” But we answer, “No, Bethlehem was not the birthplace of the Gospel. Though Jesus was born there, there was a Gospel long before the birth of Jesus and a preached one, too, although not preached in all its simplicity and plainness, as we hear it now. There was a Gospel in the wilderness of Sinai. Although it might be confused with the smoke of the incense and only to be seen through slaughtered victims, yet there was a Gospel there.” Yes, more, we take them back to the fair trees of Eden, where the fruits perpetually ripened and summer always rested. Amid these groves we tell them there was a Gospel and we let them hear the voice of God, as He spoke to recreant man and said, “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” And having taken them thus far back, we ask, “Where were false religions born? Where was their cradle?” They point us to Mecca, or they turn their fingers to Rome, or they speak of Confucius, or the dogmas of Buddha. But we say, you only go back to a distant obscurity. We take you to the primeval age. We direct you to the days of purity. We take you back to the time when Adam first trod the earth. And then we ask you whether it is not likely that as the first-born, it will not also be the last to die? And as it was born so early and still exists, while a thousand ephemera have become extinct, whether it does not look most probable that when all others shall have perished like the bubble upon the wave, this one, only, shall swim, like a good ship upon the ocean and still shall bear its myriad souls, not to the land of shades, but across the river of death to the plains of Heaven?

We ask next, supposing Christ’s Gospel to become extinct, what religion is to supplant it? We enquire of the wise man who says Christianity is soon to die, “Pray, Sir, what religion are we to have in its place? Are we to have the delusions of the heathen, who bow before their gods and worship images of wood and stone? Will you have the orgies of Baechus, or the obscenities of Venus? Would you see your daughters once more bowing down before Thammuz, or performing obscene rites as of old?” No, you would not endure such things! You would say, “It would not be tolerated by civilized men.” “Then what would you have? Would you have Romanism and its superstition?” You will say, “No, God help us, never!” They may do what they please with Britain, but she is too wise to take old Popery back again while Smithfield lasts and there is one of the signs of martyrs there. Yes, while there breathes a man who marks himself a free man and swears by the constitution of Old England, we cannot take Popery back again. She may be rampant with her superstitions and her priestcraft but with one consent my hearers reply, “We will not have Popery.” Then what will you choose? Shall it be Mohammedanism? Will you choose that, with all its fables, its wickedness and libidinousness? I will not tell you of it. Nor will I mention the accursed imposture of the West that has lately arisen. We will not allow Polygamy, while there are men to be found who love the social circle and cannot see it invaded. We would not wish, when God has given to man one wife, that he should drag in twenty, as the companions of that one. We cannot prefer Mormonism. We will not and we shall not! Then what shall we have in the place of Christianity? “Infidelity!” you cry, do you, Sirs? And would you have that? Then what would be the consequence? What do many of them promote? Communist views and the real disruption of all society as at present established. Would you desire reigns of terror here, as they had in France? Do you wish to see all society shattered and men wandering like monster icebergs on the sea, dashing against each other and being at last utterly destroyed? God save us from Infidelity! What can you have, then? Nothing. There is nothing to supplant Christianity. What religion shall overcome it? There is not one to be compared with it. If we tread the globe round and search from Britain to Japan, there shall be no religion found, so just to God, so safe to man.

We ask the enemy once more—suppose a religion were to be found which would be preferable to the one we love—by what means would you crush ours? How would you get rid of the religion of Jesus? And how would you extinguish His name? Surely, Sirs, you would never think of the old practice of persecution, would you? Would you once more try the efficacy of stakes and fires, to burn out the name of Jesus? Would you try racks and thumbscrews? Would you give us the boots and instruments of torture? Try it, Sirs and you shall not quench Christianity. Each martyr, dipping his finger in his blood, would write its honors upon the heavens as he died. And the very flame that mounted up to Heaven would emblazon the skies with the name of Jesus. Persecution has been tried. Turn to the Alps. Let the valleys of Piedmont speak. Let Switzerland testify. Let France, with its St. Bartholomew. Let England, with all its massacres, speak. And if you have not crushed it yet, shall you hope to do it? Shall you? No, a thousand are to be found and ten thousand if it were necessary, who are willing to march to the stake tomorrow! And when they are burned, if you could take up their hearts, you would see engraved upon each of them the name of Jesus. “His name shall endure forever,” for how can you destroy our love to it? “Ah, but” you say, “we would try gentler means than that.” Well, what would you attempt? Would you invent a better religion? We bid you do it and let us hear it. We have not yet so much as believed you capable of such a discovery. What then? Would you wake up one that would deceive us and lead us astray? We bid you do it. For it is not possible to deceive the elect! You may deceive the multitude, but God’s elect shall not be led astray. They have tried us. Have they not given us Popery? Have they not assailed us with Puseyism? Are they not tempting us with wholesale Arminianism? And do we therefore renounce God’s Truth? No! We have taken this for our slogan and by it we will stand—“The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible,” is still the religion of Protestants. And the same Truths of God which moved the lips of Chrysostom, the old Doctrine that ravished the heart of Augustine, the old faith which Athanasius declared, the good old doctrine that Calvin preached is our Gospel now—and God helping us—we will stand by it till we die! How will you quench it? If you wish to do it, where can you find the means? It is not in your power. Aha! Aha! Aha! We laugh you to scorn!

But you will quench it, will you? You will try it, do you say? And you hope you will accomplish your purpose? Yes. I know you will, when you have annihilated the sun. When you have quenched the moon with drops of your tears. When you have dried up the sea with your drinking. Then shall you do it. And yet you say you will.

And next, I ask you, suppose you did, what would become of the world then? Ah, were I eloquent tonight, I might perhaps tell you. If I could borrow the language of a Robert Hall I might hang the world in mourning. I might make the sea the great chief mourner, with its dirge of howling pain and its wild death march of disordered waves. I might clothe all nature—not in robes of green, but in garments of somber blackness. I would bid hurricanes howl the solemn wailing—that death shriek of a world—for what would become of us, if we should lose the Gospel? As for me, I tell you fairly, I would cry, “Let me be gone!” I would have no wish to be here without my Lord! And if the Gospel is not true, I would bless God to annihilate me this instant for I would not care to live if you could destroy the name of Jesus Christ. But that would not be all—that only one man should be miserable—for there are thousands and thousands who can speak as I do. Again, what would become of civilization if you could take Christianity away? Where would be the hope of a perpetual peace? Where governments? Where your Sunday schools? Where all your societies? Where everything that ameliorates the condition of man, reforms his manners and moralizes his character? Where? Let echo answer, “Where?” “They would be gone and not a scrap of them would be left. And where, O men, would be your hope of Heaven? And where the knowledge of eternity? Where a help across the river Death? Where a Heaven? And where bliss everlasting? All were gone if His name did not endure forever. But we are sure of it, we know it, we affirm it, we declare it. We believe and always will, that “His name shall endure forever”—yes, forever! Let who will, try to stop it!

This is my first point. I shall have to speak with rather bated breath upon the second, although I feel so warm within as well as without, that I would to God I could speak with all my strength as I might do.

II. But, secondly, as His religion, so the honor of His name is to last forever. Voltaire said he lived in the twilight of Christianity. He meant a lie. He spoke the truth. He did live in its twilight. But it was the twilight before the morning—not the twilight of the evening, as he meant to say. For the morning comes, when the light of the sun shall break upon us in its truest glory. The scorners have said that we should soon forget to honor Christ and that one day no man would acknowledge Him. Now, we assert again, in the words of my text, “His name shall endure forever,” as to the honor of it. Yes, I will tell you how long it will endure. As long as on this earth there is a sinner who has been reclaimed by Omnipotent Grace, Christ’s name shall endure! As long as there is a Mary ready to wash His feet with tears and wipe them with the hair of her head. As long as there breathes a chief of sinners who has washed himself in the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. As long as there exists a Christian who has put his faith in Jesus and found Him his delight, his refuge, his stay, his shield, his song and his joy, there will be no fear that Jesus’ name will cease to be heard! We can never give up that name! We let the Unitarian take his gospel without a Godhead in it. We let him deny Jesus Christ. But as long as Christians—true Christians, live—as long as we taste that the Lord is gracious, have manifestations of His love, sights of His face, whispers of His mercy, assurances of His affection, promises of His Grace, hopes of His blessing—we cannot cease to honor His name! But if all these were gone—if

 we were to cease to sing His praise, would Jesus Christ’s name be forgotten then? No. The stones would sing, the hills would be an orchestra, the mountains would skip like rams and the little hills like lambs. For is He not their Creator? And if the lips of all mortals were dumb at once, there are creatures enough in this wide world besides. Why, the sun would lead the chorus. The moon would play upon her silver harp and sweetly sing to her music. Stars would dance in their measured courses. The shoreless depths of ether would become the home of songs. And the immense void would burst out into one great shout, “You are the glorious Son of God. Great is Your majesty and infinite Your power!” Can Christ’s name be forgotten? No. It is painted on the skies. It is written on the floods. The winds whisper it. The tempests howl it. The seas chant it. The stars shine it. The beasts low it. The thunders proclaim it—earth shouts it—Heaven echoes it!

But if that were all gone—if this great universe should all subside in God, just as a moment’s foam subsides into the wave that bears it and is lost forever—would His name be forgotten then? No. Turn your eyes up yonder. See Heaven’s terra firma “who are these that are arrayed in white and from where have they come?” “These are they that came out of great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the Throne of God and praise Him day and night in His temple.” And if these were gone. If the last harp of the glorified had been touched with the last fingers. If the last praise of the saints had ceased. If the last hallelujah had echoed through the then deserted vaults of Heaven, for they would be gloomy then—if the last immortal had been buried in his grave—if graves there might be for immortals—would His praise cease then? No, by Heaven, no! For yonder stand the angels. They, too, sing His glory. To Him the cherubim and seraphim do cry without ceasing, when they mention His name in that thrice holy chorus, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Armies.” But if even these were perished—if angels had been swept away, if the wing of seraph never flapped the ether. If the voice of the cherub never sung his flaming sonnet. If the living creatures ceased their everlasting chorus, if the measured symphonies of glory were extinct in silence, would His name then be lost? Ah, no. For as God upon the Throne—He sits—the Everlasting One, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And if the universe were all annihilated, still would His name be heard, for the Father would hear it and the Spirit would hear it and deeply engraved on immortal marble in the rocks of ages, it would stand—Jesus the Son of God—coequal with His Father. “His name shall endure forever.”

III. And so shall the power of His name. Do you enquire what this is? Let me tell you. Do you see yonder thief hanging upon the cross? Behold the fiends at the foot thereof, with open mouths. Behold they are charming themselves with the sweet thought that another soul shall give them meat in Hell. Behold the death bird, fluttering his wings over the poor wretch’s head. Vengeance passes by and stamps him for her own. Deep on his breast is written “a condemned sinner.” On his brow is the clammy sweat, expressed from him by agony and death. Look in his heart—it is filthy with the crust of years of sin. The smoke of lust is hanging within, in black festoons of darkness. His whole heart is Hell condensed. Now, look at him. He is dying. One foot seems to be in Hell. The other hangs tottering in life—only kept by a nail. There is a power in Jesus’ eyes. That thief looks—he whispers, “Lord, remember me.” Turn your eye again there. Do you see that thief? Where is the clammy sweat? It is not there. Where is that horrid anguish? Is it not there. Positively there is a smile upon his lips! The fiends of Hell, where are they? There are none— but a bright seraph is present, with his wings outspread and his hands ready to snatch that soul, now a precious jewel and bear it aloft to the palace of the great King! Look within his heart—it is white with purity. Look at his breast—it is no longer written “condemned,” but “justified.” Look in the Book of Life—his name is engraved there. Look on Jesus’ heart—there on one of the precious stones He bears that poor thief’s name. Yes, once more, look! See that bright one amid the glorified, clearer than the sun and fair as the moon? That is the thief! THAT IS THE POWER OF JESUS! And that power shall endure forever. He who saved the thief can save the last man who shall ever live. For still—

*“There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.  
The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day—  
O may I there, tho’ vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.  
Dear dying Lamb! That precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Is saved to sin no more.”*

His powerful name shall endure forever.

Nor is that all the power of His name. Let me take you to another scene and you shall witness something else. There on that deathbed lies a saint. No gloom is on his brow, no terror on his face. Weakly but placidly he smiles. He groans, perhaps, but yet he sings. He sighs now and then, but more often he shouts. Stand by him. “My Brother, what makes you look in death’s face with such joy?” “Jesus,” he whispers. What makes you so placid and so calm? “The name of Jesus.” See, he forgets everything! Ask him a question. He cannot answer it—he does not understand you. Still he smiles. His wife comes, enquiring, “Do you know my name?” He answers, “No.” His dearest friend requests him to remember his intimacy. “I know you not,” he says. Whisper in his ear, “Do you know the name of Jesus?” and his eyes flash glory and his face beams Heaven! His lips speak sonnets and his heart bursts with eternity! For he hears the name of Jesus and that name shall endure forever! He who landed one in Heaven will land me there. Come on, Death! I will mention Christ’s name there. O grave! This shall be my glory, the name of Jesus! Hell dog! This shall be your death—for the sting of death is extracted— Christ our Lord. “His name shall endure forever.”

I had a hundred particulars to give you. But my voice fails, so I had better stop. You will not require more of me tonight. You perceive the difficulty I feel in speaking each word. May God send it home to your souls! I am not particularly anxious about my own name, whether that shall endure forever or not, provided it is recorded in my Master’s book. George Whitfield, when asked whether he would found a denomination, said, “No, Brother John Wesley may do as he pleases, but let my name perish. Let Christ’s name last forever.” Amen to that! Let my name perish. But let Christ’s name last forever! I shall be quite content for you to go away and forget me. I dare say I may not see the faces of half of you again. You may never be persuaded to step within the walls of a conventicle. You will think it perhaps not respectable enough to come to a Baptist meeting. Well, I do not say we are a very respectable people. We don’t profess to be. But this one thing we do profess, we love our Bibles! And if it is not respectable to do so, we do not care to be had in esteem. But we do not know that we are so disreputable, after all, for I believe, if I may state my own opinion, that if Protestant Christendom were counted out of that door—not merely every real Christian, but every professor—I believe the Paedo-Baptists would have no very great majority to boast of. We are not, after all, such a very small disreputable sect. Regard us in England we may be. But take America, Jamaica, the West Indies and include those who are Baptists in principle, though not openly so and we surrender to none, not even to the Established Church of this country, in numbers! That, however, we care very little about. For I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ’s name last forever! I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. You will say, “Why?” Because when everybody else sees Baptism by immersion, we shall be immersed into all sects and our sect will be gone. Once give us the predominance and we are not a sect any longer. A man may be a Churchman, a Wesleyan, or an Independent and yet be a Baptist. So that I say I hope the Baptist name will soon perish. But let Christ’s name last forever. Yes, and yet again, much as I love dear old England, I do not believe she will ever perish. No, Britain! You shall never perish. The flag of old England is nailed to the mast by the prayers of Christians, by the efforts of Sunday schools and her pious men.

But I say let even England’s name perish. Let her be merged in one great brotherhood. Let us have no England and no France and no Russia and no Turkey—but let us have Christendom. And I say heartily, from my soul, let nations and national distinctions perish, but let Christ’s name last forever. Perhaps there is only one thing on earth that I love better than the last I have mentioned and that is the pure Doctrine of unadulterated Calvinism. But if that is wrong—if there is anything in that which is false—I for one say let that perish, too and let Christ’s name last forever. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus—“Crown Him Lord of all!” You will not hear me say anything else. These are my last words in Exeter Hall for this time. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! “Crown Him Lord of all.”

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2451 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

“BLESSED IN HIM”  
NO. 2451

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1896.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 7, 1886.

**“Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
Psalm 72:17.**

I wish that I could speak at my very best concerning the glorious Him who is mentioned in the text, but I have hardly got into full working order after my season of rest. One’s voice becomes rusty, like an unused key, and one does not, at first, feel quite at ease in speaking after a time of comparative quietude. Do not, however, think that my subject is a poor one—if there are defects in my discourse, remember that it will only be the speaker who is poverty-stricken—not the great King and Lord of whom he is speaking. “Men shall be blessed in Him.” O Sirs, if one had the tongues of men and of angels, and if one could only, for once, use that speech which it is not lawful for a man to utter—those words which Paul tells us that he heard when he was caught up to the third Heaven— if we could even speak as never man yet spoke, we could not fully set forth all the glories of Him of whom this text speaks!

David’s thoughts, doubtless, rested in part upon Solomon when he said, “Men shall be blessed in him”—and our Lord, Himself, spoke of Solomon in all his glory. But what poor stuff is human glory at the very highest! The, “Him,” mentioned in the text, the higher and the greater Solomon who is truly meant in these words, has a real Glory—not of earthly pomp and fading tinsel, nor of gold and pearls and precious stones, but the more excellent Glory of Character and the true beauty of Holiness. In Him all Divine excellences are blended. I cannot hope to set Him forth as He deserves. I cannot tell you all His virtues and His glories, but, oh, He is very dear to many of us! His name is engraved on the fleshy tablets of our hearts and when we lie upon our last bed and all other things shall be forgotten in the decay of nature, we shall still remember that dear name which is above every name! The contemplation of our Savior’s blessed Person shall then absorb every faculty of our being! “Men shall be blessed in Him,” the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Savior, the Redeemer, the God Over All, blessed forever, who is also bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh!  
As I should fail altogether to speak of Him as He deserves, I will not attempt the impossible task, but will try to speak of men being blessed in Him. That is a note a little lower. If we cannot reach the highest octave, we may attain to a lower one. Yet, while we speak of the blessing that comes from Him, let us still think of Him from whom the blessing comes, and let us remember that as all blessings come from Him, it is because all blessings are laid up in Him—because every conceivable good is stored up in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, “and of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.”

I. My first remark concerning the text is that it makes mention of AN AMAZING CONDITION—“Men shall be blessed in Him.” It is an amazing condition to be blessed, for, by nature, men are not blessed. We are born under a curse. Our first father turned aside the blessing when he disobeyed God’s command and, in the early dawn of the day of our race, he darkened our sky once and for all. The curve still abides upon man, that in the sweat of his face he shall eat bread, and upon woman, that in sorrow she shall bring forth children. How much woe lies in the curse that falls upon us in consequence of our own personal sin! “Who slew all these”—these comforts and joys of life? Oftentimes, they have been slain by a man’s own hands through his own sin, or through the sins of those who surround him. The trail of the old serpent is everywhere! You cannot open your eyes without discovering that man is not blessed, but oftentimes abides under the curse. Put that Truth of God down before you and then read the text, “Men shall be blessed in Him.”

Apart from Him, they are accursed! They wring their hands and wish they had never been born—and some sigh and sorrow almost without ceasing. Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward, and it is an amazing thing that any man should be blessed—so amazing, that no man is ever blessed until he comes to be connected with the Lord Jesus Christ—“Men shall be blessed in Him.”

Many people who forget all about the curse, nevertheless acknowledge that they are unhappy. Go up and down among the whole race of men and how few you will find really happy! I believe that none are truly happy until they are in Christ, but even if they were happy, that is not the word that is used in our text. It does not say, “Men shall be happy in Him.” It gives us a fuller, deeper, richer word than that—“Men shall be blessed in Him.” To be more happy may be a thing of time and of this world only. I do not mean that the happiness may not be true and real, but still, compared with all that the word, “blessed,” implies, the word, “happy,” has no eternity, no depth, no fullness, no force in it! So that, even if men were happy, they would not come up to the fullness of the promise in our text. But, alas, the mass of men are unhappy—sighing for this and mourning for that—never blessed, but only hoping to be so. The text, therefore, comes in with its sweet silvery ring, telling that men shall cease to be unhappy and that they shall rise even above merely being happy—they shall come to be “blessed in Him.”

I regret to say that there is a third class of people who, when they rise above the curse and are not absolutely unhappy, yet nevertheless are in a state of doubt and hesitation. We could not positively say that they are cursed, for we hope that some part of the blessing has fallen upon them. We may not call them unhappy, yet we know that they are not eminently happy. They hope that they are saved, or they trust that they shall be safe at the last, but they are not sure that the blessings of salvation are already theirs. Our text does not say that, in Christ, this condition of luminous haze, if I may so call it—this condition of doubt and uncertainty is all that is to be attained. No, but it says, “Men shall be blessed in Him”—and no man can call himself truly blessed till he knows that he is blessed, till he is sure of it, till he has passed the period of dubious questioning, till he has come out of the miry and boggy country of hesitation and doubt and stands upon the firm ground of full assurance, so that he can say, “I am God’s child. The Father’s love is fixed upon me; I have a part and portion in the Covenant of Grace—I am saved.”

Now it is to that blessed condition that the text directs our thoughts— it promises that men shall be delivered from the curse, that they shall be lifted up from their natural unhappiness, that they shall be rescued from their doubtful or their hopeful questioning—and shall even come to be blessed! God shall pronounce them blessed. He shall set upon them the broad seal of Divine approbation and call them blessed! And with that seal there shall come streaming into their hearts the sweetness of intense delight which shall give them experimentally a blessing to their own conscious enjoyment!

Let me tell you what Christ does for a man who is really in Him and then you will see how he is blessed.  
The man who comes to Christ by faith and truly trusts Christ has all the past rectified. All his sins, whatever they may have been, are pardoned in a moment as soon as he believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His iniquities are blotted out and are as if they had never been committed. As the cloud passes away and is no more to be seen, so the thick clouds of our sins are dispersed by Christ as soon as we believe in Him! Nor will they ever return to darken our sky. The forgiveness which God gives is not temporary, but eternal! Once pardoned, you are pardoned forever—the act of Divine amnesty and oblivion stands fast forever and ever. Is not that man truly blessed, then, who is made free from sin? David says, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” This is the blessedness which Christ gives to those who are in Him, that, as for the past, in its entirety, with all its blackness, with all its aggravated sin, He has taken it upon Himself and borne the penalty due on account of it—He makes a clean sweep of it and says of the man who trusts in Him, “Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you; go in peace.” That is one part of the blessedness of those who are in Christ—the past is all forgiven.  
At the same time, the man who is in Christ receives present favor. As soon as we truly believe in Jesus, there steals over our heart a delicious sense of rest according to His gracious invitation and promise, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And as we go on to serve the Lord and take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, we find rest for our souls, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I believe that, oftentimes, a child of God, when he realizes his union to Christ, feels so blessed that he does not know of anything that could make him more blessed than he is! He says, “I am perfectly content with my Lord and with what I am in Him. With myself, I am always dissatisfied and always groaning because I cannot entirely conquer sin, but with my Savior I am always satisfied! I am triumphant in Him and rejoicing in Him, indeed, blessed in Him.”  
Some of you know what a blessed thing it is to be a child of God and an heir of Heaven—how blessed it is to have the Throne of Grace where you can take your troubles and to have a Helper who is strong enough to deliver you. I spoke, the other day, with a Christian friend, and I said to him, “My life sometimes seems to be like that of a man walking upon a tight rope. The walk of faith is very mysterious—one false step, or one slip and where would we be?” My friend replied, “Yes, it is so, no doubt. But then, underneath are the everlasting arms.” Ah, that is a blessed addition to the figure—there is no slipping off the rope on which God calls us to walk, but if there were, underneath are the everlasting arms, and all is well! And the Christian, when he knows that and lives as one should live who is in Christ, is, even now, a truly blessed man!

But that is not all, for he who believes in Christ has his future guaranteed. He does not know how long he shall live and he does not want to know, for his Father knows. God knows all that you and I may wish to know—and as He knows it, it is better than our knowing it! Whether our life is long or short, He will be with us unto the end. And as our days our strength shall be. He will sanctify to us every trial we meet and nothing shall, by any means, harm us. He will bring us safely to our journey’s end and we shall go through the cold death stream without a fear! We shall rise triumphant on the shore of the hill country on the other side and we shall behold our Savior’s face without a veil between forever and forever! All this is an absolute certainty if we are the children of God, for it is not possible that one of the Divine family should perish—that one bought with the blood of Christ should ever be cast away! He will keep His own and preserve them even to the end. Are they not blessed, then, and is not the text full of sweetness as to this amazing condition, “Men shall be blessed in Him”?  
Where are you, you blessed men and women? Where are you? Come and enjoy your blessedness! Do not be ashamed to be happy! I believe that some Christians are a little frightened at themselves when they find that they are full of joy and if, perhaps, they should ever break through the rules of decorum and express their joy, then they turn crimson! It was not thus with the saints of old, for sometimes they spoke and sang so loudly of the joy of their hearts that even their adversaries said, “The Lord has done great things for them,” and they replied, “The Lord has done great things for us; therefore we are glad!” And again they lifted up their hallelujahs. Then were their mouths filled with laughter and their tongues with singing. So let it be with you, for you are, indeed, a blessed people if you are in Christ!  
II. Having thus dwelt upon this amazing condition, I now give you another keyword. The text says, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” This is A WIDE STATEMENT.  
Oftentimes, the greatest Truths of God lie in the shortest sentences. There is a great mass of Truth within the compass of these few words— “Men shall be blessed in Him.” There are only six words, here, but to make the wide statement true requires breadth of number. You could not well say, “Men shall be blessed in Him,” if those to be blessed were a very few. It is not possible that the Election of Grace should consist of a few scores of persons making up an especially favored denomination— otherwise the Psalmist would not speak after this wide fashion, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” The Holy Spirit is not given to exaggeration and He would have put it, “A few men will be blessed in Him.” But here there is nothing of the kind! It is, “Men shall be blessed in Him,” meaning the great mass of the human race, vast multitudes of the sons of Adam! I believe that when this dispensation comes to an end, notwithstanding all the dreary centuries that have passed, Christ shall have the preeminence as to numbers as well as in every other respect—and that the multitudes who shall be saved by Him shall far transcend those who have rejected His mercy. The text says, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” That is to say, the most of men, innumerable myriads of men shall get the blessing that Jesus purchased by His death on the Cross.  
But when the text says, “Men shall be blessed in Him,” it implies great width of variety. “Men”—not merely kings or noblemen, but, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Men—not working men, or thinking men, or fighting men, or this sort of men, or the other sort of men, but men of all sorts— “Men shall be blessed in Him.” It is a delightful thought that Christ is as much fitted to one rank and one class of persons as to another— *“While Grace is offered to the prince,  
The poor may take their share.  
No mortal has a just pretense,  
To perish in despair.”*  
Christ is the Christ of the multitude! His Father says of Him, “I have exalted One chosen out of the people,” but He is equally the Christ of the most refined and eclectic. He comes with equal Grace to those who stand in the highest or the lowest earthly position. “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Of course, the word, “men,” includes women and children—it means the human race! “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Do not, therefore, let anyone say, “I am a strange, odd person,” for the text puts in this little-big word, “men,” which takes you in, whoever you may be! If you come to Christ, you are included in this promise, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” So that there is a width of variety implied here.  
Our text also indicates length of period. “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Men have been blessed in Him these many centuries, Christ has shone with all the radiance of Omnipotent Love upon this poor fallen world, but His light is as full as ever and, however long this dispensation shall last, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Though some of those men are, perhaps, gray with years and decrepit through age, yet the promise still stands, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” And while that verse has the word, “shall,” in it, why should not the grayest head receive the Divine blessing? Why should not a man who is on the borders of the grave yet lay hold of this blessed text and say, “I will trust Him in whom men shall be blessed”?  
Further, the text suggests fullness of sufficiency concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a wonderful depth of meaning in this passage when it says, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” “Oh,” says one, “men shall he blessed by philosophy, or by Christ and philosophy!” Not at all. It is, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” “But they shall be blessed in Him through trade and commerce and the like.” Not so! “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Have we not, who are half a century old, heard a great number of theories about how the millennium is to be brought about? I remember that at one time free trade was to bring it, but it did not! And nothing will ever make men blessed unless they get into Christ—“Men shall be blessed in Him.” The quacks are crying up this remedy and that, nostrums old and new—but there is only one true Physician of souls! It is the Christ of God who alone has the balm that will cure the disease of sin! When He is received, the world shall be blessed. But as long as He is rejected, the curse will still remain upon the sons of men. “Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
Oh, that our fellow men would receive Him! Oh, that they would bow down before the Crucified and acknowledge Him as their Lord and Savior! Oh, that all would look up to His wounds, still visible in His Glory, and put their trust in Him! Then should come that glorious time when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth and every evil shall be put away. His unsuffering Kingdom must yet come! Oh, that it might come speedily! But it can only come through Himself, not by any other means. “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Anything short of trusting in Him will end in eternal failure. You have noted, dear Friends, these two things, the amazing or, singular condition, and the wide statement.  
III. Now I want to dwell for a minute or two, for the exaltation of our Lord, upon THE FULL ASSURANCE which is expressed in this text— “Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
The Prophet speaks here, my Brothers and Sisters, in a very positive manner. There is no quiver in his voice, there is no hesitancy about his speech. I am afraid that at the present moment there are some, even of godly men, who tremble for the Ark of the Lord and the hand of Uzzah is visible here and there! But the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord needs no steadying hand from you or from me—the cause of God is always safe in His own keeping. The cause of the Truth of God is always secure, for God preserves it. Let us not be afraid, neither let us be discouraged. It is a grand thing to get a sentence like this with a, “shall,” in it—“Men shall be blessed in Him. “ It is not, “perhaps they may be,” but, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Not, “perhaps they may be blessed under certain conditions,” but, “Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
This means, in the first place, they shall not try Him and fail. There never was a man who came to Christ who failed to get a blessing from Him! There never was one who believed in Jesus and yielded himself up to the gracious sway of the Prince of Love who did not get a blessing from Him. I have never met with a Christian yet, who, in life or in death, has said, “I have been disappointed in Christ. He has deceived me. I sought and hoped for blessedness, but I have missed it.” Never can this be truly said! “Men shall be blessed in Him.” If they really come to Him, they shall not miss this blessedness.  
No, I go further and say that they shall not desire Him and be denied. There was never a soul that desired to be blessed in Christ and was willing to yield itself up to Christ, that Christ did ever reject! There is no one in Hell who can truthfully say, “I came to Jesus and He spurned me.” And there never shall be one such, for it is written, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” The foot that was nailed to the Cross never spurned a sinner yet. The hand that was pierced never pushed away a penitent! Christ is all invitation—there is no rejection about Him—He constantly bids sinners come to Him and this text is true for you, whoever you may be, “Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
I am glad to go as far as that and to say that none who ever came to Christ failed to get a blessing from Him—and that none who desire to come to Him have ever been denied by Him! But I am going still further. “Men shall be blessed in Him,” that is to say, they shall come to Christ and get the blessing. Some, alas, will not come to Him. But, O Sirs, if any of you refuse to come, do not make any mistake about the matter! You think that by refusing His invitation you will thwart Christ and defeat the purposes of God, but that is absurd! The King’s wedding feast shall be furnished with guests—and if you who are bid will not come, there are others who will! He will send His servants out into the highways and hedges to compel others to come in, that His house may be filled! Do not imagine that the result of the death of Christ depends upon you and that it is in your power to prevent the accomplishment of the Almighty purposes of the Savior’s love! No, no! “He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

If you believe not, I must say to you what Christ said to the Jews, “You believe not, because you are not of His sheep.” His sheep hear His voice and He knows them, and they follow Him, and He gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish. “All that the Father gives Me,” He says, “shall come to Me.” Not one of those whom God has given to His Son shall be left to perish! They shall all come to Him and so the text shall be fulfilled, “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Do not imagine that when Jesus hung there on yonder bloody tree and groaned away His life for men, He was dying at a whim! There was at the back of Him the Eternal Purpose and the Covenant that cannot be changed—and the Invincible One who, without violating the will of men, can yet achieve the will of God, making men willing in the day of His power—turning them from darkness to light and from the power of sin and Satan unto God!  
Be of good courage, my Brothers and Sisters—the consequences of redemption are not left in jeopardy! Those results which God has purposed will, to the last jot and tittle, be fulfilled. “Men shall be blessed in Him.” It is not to me a question whether Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God—she shall do it, though I may not live to see it. It is not to me a question whether the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ—they must become His! Let us work in this confidence and believe every promise in this blessed book. If we get down-hearted and full of fear, we are unworthy of our Lord. If we served a temporal prince with limited power, we might talk with bated breath, but the banner that gleams on high, above our ranks, is the banner of the Lord God Omnipotent—and the shout that shall be heard at the last, is this—“Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”  
I ask you—Is it not very natural that He should reign? If He really is Omnipotent, are not all the certainties as well as the probabilities in favor of His universal dominion? Must He not reign? Yes, says the Spirit, “He shall reign forever and ever.” “Men shall be blessed in Him.” There is the tone of full assurance about this blessed prophecy! Therefore, let us rejoice and praise the name of the Lord.  
IV. Now, lastly, I want you with all your hearts to think of my text with A PERSONAL APPROPRIATION—“Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
Dear Hearers, are you blessed in Christ? Will you answer the question personally? Do not pass it around and say to yourself, “No doubt there are many who think that they are blessed who are not.” Never mind about them! For the present moment, ask this question of yourself, “Am I blessed in Christ?” Some people think that they have Christ as their Savior, but their religion brings them no blessedness. They go to Church or to Chapel very regularly. They are, apparently, a good sort of people, but a part of their religion consists in being, on the whole, as comfortably miserable as they can! As to anything like blessedness, that does not enter into their minds. Now, if my religion did not make me really happy, I would seriously question whether I was a possessor of the religion of the happy God, for “Men shall be blessed in Him.”  
“Oh,” says one, “but we have so many trials and troubles!” Ah, that we have! Do you know a man or woman who does not have any? I should like you to mark all the doors in London where people live who have not any trouble—it will not cost you much for chalk! There is nobody without trouble! If a man could be without trouble he would be without a blessing, for in this world one of the rarest blessings—one of the richest, truest blessings that God ever sends to His children is adversity! He sends more blessings upon the black horse than He ever sends upon the gray one! It is the messenger of sorrow who often brings the choicest jewels to our door. Ah, there is many a woman who has not left her bed these dozen years, or had a fair night of rest all that long time who is truly blessed! There is many a man who is as poor as poverty can make him, shivering in the cold, tonight, and scarcely knowing where to find another bit of coal to keep his little fire alight—yet he is blessed! If it were necessary, I could get some of you to stand up and testify that though you have very little of this world’s joys, and very little of temporal goods, yet you can say, “Yes, I am blessed, I am blessed indeed—  
*“‘I would not change my best estate,  
For all that earth calls good or great!  
And while my faith can keep her hold  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.’”*  
Well, you have that blessedness, then, enjoy it! What would you think of a man who went thirsty when he had a well in his back yard? What would you think of a person who always went about poverty-stricken though he had millions in the bank? Think of Mr. Vanderbilt standing in the street and asking passers-by for a half-penny! Yet I have seen children of God act like that in spiritual things. A little boy came up to me in an Italian town and asked me to give him a soldo—he meant a halfpenny. He was quite a moneyed man, for he had a farthing in his pocket! He took it out and showed it to me and he seemed delighted with it. But then he said that it was the only one he had in the world. You might think, from the way some persons act, that they had about a farthing’s worth of faith, but that is all they have. Is it not so? O you who have Christ and God, this world and worlds to come and whom God has pronounced blessed—what? Are you going to live the starveling life of the unblessed and the unsaved? I pray you, do not! Gentlemen, live according to your quality! Peers of the upper house—for you are such if you are born again—I beseech you, act in accordance with your true nobility. Has not Christ made you princes and kings? And has He not said that you shall reign with Him forever and ever? Look up, then! Lift up your heads and say, “Yes, He has blessed me, and I am blessed, indeed! My poor spirit dances for joy because of Him!”—  
*“‘My heart it does leap at the sound of His name.’”*“But,” says one, “I have never enjoyed that.” My dear Friend, if you can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may enjoy it! To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to trust yourself with Him just as you are—to cast your guilty soul on Him. Oh, that you would do it! That one act will mark your passing from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light. That one act will be the means of your coming into the glorious liberty of the children of God and your life shall be totally changed from that time forth so that you shall joy in God by Jesus Christ our Lord! “Men shall be blessed in Him.” Are you to be one of those men? God grant that you may be! The Lord add His blessing, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—72 (SONG I), 436, 438.  
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 72.**

This is a Psalm which relates to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, not as the Man of Sorrows, but as the King of Glory—not as David, struggling to secure the throne—but as Solomon, seated upon it, and reigning in peace.

Verse 1. Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness unto the king’s Son. Our Lord Jesus Christ is both a King and the Son of a King. He is King of kings and, therefore, our Sovereign by His own native right. But He is also our Sovereign Prince as the Son of God. Oh, that the Lord would visibly give into His hands power over all the people of the earth! “Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness unto the king’s Son.”

2. He shall judge Your people with righteousness and Your poor with judgement. It is the peculiar characteristic of the reigning Christ that He has His eyes chiefly upon the poor. Most princes rule in the interest of the great ones around them, but our King rules for the good of the poor of His people.

3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. The reign of Christ is the reign of righteousness, the rule of true uprightness and, consequently, it is the reign of peace, love and joy. Oh that His gentle rule were acknowledged by all the kings of this world!

4. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. This is the King we want to reign over us! Oh, that the day were come for Him to take the crowns from all other heads and to wear them on His own! And to take all scepters from other hands and gather sheaves of them beneath His arms, and to be universally proclaimed, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords”! Then would the world’s loud hallelujahs rise as with the sound of mighty thunders. O God, how long shall it be before this glorious King takes to Himself the power that is His by right?

5. They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. All other kings and princes and rulers pass away. Our King, alone, has an everlasting Kingdom. Where are the dynasties that have ruled over vast empires? They have passed almost out of remembrance, but the promise to our King still abides—“They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.”

6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. The reign of Christ, even now, is to the poor dispirited sons of men like rain upon the mown grass! And when He shall come in His Glory, as He will shortly come, His coming shall be as blessed to this world as the gentle showers are to the grass that is newly mown.

7, 8. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. This is God’s decree. As surely as He has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion, so surely will He make Him to “have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” I do, therefore, expect greater Glory for the Cross of Christ than any that the world has hitherto seen. The crescent shall wane and fade away in eternal night, but the light of the Cross of Christ shall burn brighter and brighter unto endless day!

9, 10. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents. Commerce with all its wealth shall yet lend its homage to the Savior. And every ship that crosses the sea shall yet bear its cargo of praise unto His glorious name.

10. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Their barbaric splendor shall find a higher glory in being consecrated to the King of Kings!  
11. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him that has no helper. That is what we look for as the true recognition of religion. The true recognition of religion in a State is not the setting up of some favored sect to be indulged above the rest—there is something better than that reserved for the Christ of God! He must have the first place all the world over—“All kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.”  
12. For He shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper. Again I remind you that this is the distinguishing mark of the Christ of God, that He has a special eye to the poor and needy.  
13-15. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight. And He shall live. With all our hearts we cry, “Long live the King!” And our King shall live forever—to Him alone of all kings may it be truly said, “O King, live forever!” “He shall live”—  
15. And to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised. One of the marks of sovereignty is the king’s visage upon the coinage of the realm, and the use of His name in public prayer. And Christ claims this homage of all His followers—“Prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually; and daily shall He be praised.”  
16. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. The cause of Christ in the earth may be so reduced as to be only comparable to a handful of corn and that handful of corn may be, as it were, sown on the bleak mountainside; yet it shall grow and increase until it fills the whole earth! His Kingdom is without end!  
17-19. His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name forever; and let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen, and Amen. Is not that double Amen the very mark of the Christ? Often when He preached, He commenced His sermons with, “Amen, Amen.” That is, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” He is God’s great “Amen, the faithful and true Witness.” But interpreting the word in the other sense, do not you and I most heartily say, “Amen,” and again, “Amen,” to this royal prayer? “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory.”  
20. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. This is the end of the second great division of the Book of the Psalms. It is. Therefore. most appropriately closed with this verse—“The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” But I think that David, when he had reached this point, felt that he could not ask for anything more than he had already requested in this great petition. If the whole earth should be full of the glory of God, the Psalmist would then have gained the utmost that he could desire! Is it not so with us, also? If the name and the glory of Christ did but cover the whole earth, what more could we wish for? What more could we ask of God? Till that blessed consummation is reached, let us keep on praying, “Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.”

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.  
Sermon #129 New Park Street Pulpit 1

DAVID’S DYING PRAYER  
NO. 129

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 26, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“And let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Psalm 72:19.**

THERE was a time when this prayer would have been unnecessary. A period, in fact, when it could not have been offered, seeing the thing to be asked for was already in being. A time there was when the word, rebellion, had not been uttered against the great Magistracy of Heaven. There was a day when the slime of sin had never been left by the trail of the serpent, for no serpent then existed and no evil spirit. There was an hour, never to be forgotten, when the seraph might have flapped his wings forever and never have found anything of discord, or anything of rebellion or of anarchy throughout God’s universe! There was a day when the mighty angels assembled in the halls of the Most High and without exception did reverence to their liege Lord and paid Him homage due. When the vast Creation revolved around its Center, the great Metropolis—the Throne of God—and paid its daily and hourly homage unto Him. When the harmonies of Creation always came to one spot and found their focus near the Throne of God. There was a time when every star was bright. When all space was filled with loveliness, when holiness, purity and happiness were like a robe which mantled the entire Creation. This world, itself, was once fair and lovely—so fair and lovely that we who live in these erring times can scarcely guess its beauty! It was the house of song and the dwelling place of praise. If it had no pre-eminence among its sister spheres—certainly it was inferior to none of them. Surrounded with beauty, girt with gladness and having in it holy and heavenly inhabitants, it was a house to which the angels themselves loved to resort— where the holy spirits, the morning stars, delighted to sing together over this beautiful and fair earth of ours! But now how changed! How different! Now it is our duty to devoutly bend our knees and pray that the whole earth may yet be filled with His Glory.

In one sense this prayer is still unnecessary, for in a certain sense the whole earth is filled with God’s Glory. “All your works praise You, O God,” is as true, now, as it was in Paradise! The stars still sing their Maker’s praise—no sin has stopped their voices, no discord has made a jarring note among the harmonies of the spheres. The earth, itself, still praises its Maker. The exhalations, as they arise with morning, are still a pure offering, acceptable to their Maker. The lowing of the cattle, the singing of the birds, the leaping of the fishes and the delights of animal creations are still acceptable as votive offerings to the Moat High! The mountains still bring righteousness. On their hoary summits God’s holy feet might tread, for they are yet pure and spotless. Still do the green valleys, laughing with their verdure send up their shouts to the Most High. The praise of God is sung by every wind. It is howled forth in dread majesty by the voice of the tempest, the winds resound it and the waves, with their thousand hands, clap, keeping chorus in the great march of God! The whole earth is still a great orchestra for God’s praise and His creatures still take up various parts in the eternal song, which, ever swelling and ever increasing, shall, by-and-by, mount to its climax in the consummation of all things. In that sense, therefore, the prayer is still inappropriate. God, who fills all-in-all and fills earth and Heaven needs not to have more Glory, as to the essence of His Glory—for He is still glorified in the whole earth!

But David intended this prayer in another sense. “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Not as Creator but as a moral Governor and Ruler. It is as Governor that we have revolted from God and done dishonor to Him. It is as our Master, our Ruler, our Judge, that we have done despite to His Glory and have trampled on His crown. It is, therefore, in this respect that David wished that the whole earth might be filled with God’s Glory. He desired that every idol temple might be cast down—that the name of Jehovah might be sung by every lip. That He in His Person might be loved by every heart and be forever adored as “God over all. blessed forever.” A foolish wish, you say, for it never can be accomplished. Surely the day will never come when hoary systems of superstition shall die. What? Shall colossal systems of infidelity and of idolatry totter to their fall? They have resisted the battering ram for many a year—and yet shall they pass away and shall God’s Kingdom come and His will be done on earth, even as it is in Heaven? No, it is no day dream of a boy, it is no wish of the enthusiast! Mark who uttered that prayer and where he was when he uttered it! It was the prayer of a dying king. It was the prayer of a holy man of God whose eyes were just then lighted up with brightness in view of the Celestial City, as he stood on the mighty Pisgah, “and viewed the landscape over.” It was the prayer of the dying Psalmist, when on the margin of his life he surveyed the ocean—the prayer of a mighty king when he saw the scroll of prophecy unfolded before him for the last time and was about to be ushered into the Presence of his Maker! He uttered this as his last best wish and desire. And when he had uttered it, he sank back in his bed and said, “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended.” It was his last prayer—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.”

First, this morning, I shall try to explain the prayer. Then I shall labor as God shall enable me to inflame the hearts of all Christians to desire the objective of this prayer. Then I will offer a word or two of counsel as to the pursuit of the objective here spoken of. And I will conclude by noticing the promise to buoy our hopes up—by-and-by “the earth shall be filled with His Glory.”

I. First, then, let me EXPLAIN THE PRAYER. It is a large prayer—a massive one. A prayer for a city needs a stretch of faith. Yes, there are times when a prayer for one man is enough to stagger our belief, for we can scarcely think that God will hear us for even that one! But how great this prayer is, how comprehensive! “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” It does not exempt one single country, however trod under the foot of superstition! It does not leave out one single nation, however abandoned, for the cannibal as well as for the civilized, for the man who grasps the tomahawk as well as for the man who bends his knee in supplication—this prayer is uttered, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.”

Let me just very briefly note what I believe the Psalmist meant. He desired that the true religion of God might be sent into every country. Looking from that point of view, as we utter this prayer, what a multitude of thoughts rush into our minds! Lo, yonder we see the hoary systems of ancient superstition! We behold multitudes bowing down before Buddha and Brahma and paying their adorations to idols that are not gods—we pray for them—that they may cease to be idolaters and that God’s name may be known among them! Yonder we see the crescent, gleaming with a pale and sickly light and we pray that the followers of Mohammed may bow themselves before the Cross, renounce the scimitar and return to Him who loved them, casting away all the uncleanness and filthiness of their former religion. We see yonder the scarlet woman on the seven hills and we include her in our prayer. We pray that God may cast down Rome. That He may overturn her deep, Hell-rooted foundations and may cause her tyranny over the nations to cease, that she may no more be drunk with the blood of the slain and no more with her idolatries and witchcrafts lead the nations astray. We include her in our supplications. We look on nations that are almost too debased lo be included in the roll of mankind. We see the Hottentots in his kraal, the Bushman and the Bechuana and we put up our prayer for these—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Let Africa’s center, once thought to be barren but now discovered to be glorious in fertility become fertile, also, in works of Grace. Let the regions from where our black Brethren have been driven to slavery become the homes of blessedness and the regions of God’s praise. We cast our eye to other regions where the scalp is still at the Indian’s belt, where still they wash their hands in blood and delight themselves in murder. We look to that huge empire of China and we see the myriads still lost in infidelity and a partial idolatry which is consuming them and destroying them and we pray, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Yes, it is a great prayer, but we mean it. We are praying against Juggernaut and against Buddha and against every form and fashion of false religion. We are crying against anti-Christ and we are praying that the day may come when every temple shall be dismantled, when every shrine shall be left poor as poverty and when there shall be no temple but the Temple of the Lord God of Hosts and no song shall be sung but the song of Hallelujah unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood!

But we mean more than this. We ask not merely the nominal Christianity of any country but the conversion of every family in every country. “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Is that wish too great, too high? Are we too sanguine in our expectations? No! “The knowledge of the Lord” is to “cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea” and that is entirely! We do not wish to see dry places here and there, but as the deep foundations of the depths are covered with the sea, so we wish that every nation may be covered with God’s Truth. And so we pray that every family may receive it. Yes, we pray that every household may have its morning and its evening prayer. We pray that every family may be brought up in the fear of the Lord, that every child may, on its mother’s knees, say, “Our Father,” and that the answer may come to the infant’s prayer, “Your Kingdom come.” Yes, we ask of God that every house may be like the tents of Judah, consecrated to God. We ask that even the kraal of the Hottentot may become a synagogue for God’s praise. Our desire is that man may become so holy that every meal may become an Eucharist and every cup a chalice and every garment a priestly vestment and that all their labors may be consecrated to the Lord! We are bound to expect it, for it is said, “Even the bells upon the horses shall be holiness to the Lord and even the pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar.”

But we go further than that. We do not ask merely for household conversion but for the individual salvation of every existing being. “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” Should there be one heart that does not beat in God’s praise, or one lip that is dumb in the melody of thanksgiving, then there would be yet a spot left which would not be filled with God’s praise and that one left unconverted would blot and blur the whole great work of filling the earth with God’s Glory. A missionary once said and said truly that if all the people in the world were converted except one man in Siberia, it would be worth while for all the Christians in England to make a pilgrimage to Siberia, if that man’s salvation could not be accomplished in any other way. And so it would! The salvation of one soul is unutterably precious and when we offer this prayer, we exclude none. We pray that the atheist, the blasphemer, the hardened rebel, the profligate may each be filled with God’s Glory. And then we ask for mercy for the whole earth. We leave not out so much as one but so hope and expect the day when all mankind shall bow at the Savior’s feet! When every hand shall bring tribute, every lip a song and every eye shall speak its gladness and its praise! This I believe to be the Psalmist’s prayer—that every man, woman and child might be converted and that, in fact, in every heart and conscience God might reign without a rival, Lord paramount over the great wide world!

II. Well, now, I am going, in the second place, to try to STIR YOU UP, my Brothers and Sisters, to desire this great, this wonderful thing for which David prayed! Oh, for the rough and burning eloquence of the hermit of old who stirred the nations of Europe to battle for the Cross! I would to God this morning I could speak as he did when the multitude were gathered together. Or, like that bishop of the Church who followed him who addressed the mighty multitudes with such burning words of fiery eloquence that at last they heaved to and fro with waves of excitement and every man, starting to his feet and grasping his sword cried, “Deus vult,” “the Lord wills it” and rushed forward to battle and to victory! In a higher and holier sense I preach the crusade today, not as a hermit but as God’s preacher. I come forth to stir you up, men and Brethren, to desire and seek after this great and highest wish of the faithful—that the whole earth might be filled with His Glory! And how shall I stir you up except by leading you to one or two contemplations?

First, I beseech you, contemplate the Majesty of God. Or rather, since I am unable to help you to do that just now, let me remind you of seasons when you have, in some measure, grasped the thought of His Divinity. Have you ever at night gazed upon the starry orbs with the thought that God was the Maker of them all until your soul was steeped in reverent adoration? And have you then bowed your head with wonder and with praise and said, “Great God! How Infinite You are”? Have you ever, in looking upon God’s pure earth, when you have seen the mountains and the clouds and the rivers and the floods, said—

*“These are Your glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty! Yours this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair—Yourself how wondrous then?”*

Oh, I think you must have had some glowing bursts of devotion, somewhat like that burst of Coleridge in his hymn from the valley of Chamounix or like that of Thompson, when he led the Seasons out to sing God’s praise! Or like that matchless burst of Milton, when he extolled God, making Adam in the Garden praise his Maker! Yes, there have been moments when we could bow before God, when we felt our own nothingness and knew that He was All-in-All. Ah, if you can get such thoughts as these, my Friends, this morning, I know that the next thought akin to this will be—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” You cannot bow before God, yourself, and adore Him without wishing that all the rest of mankind should do the same! Ah and the thought has gone further. You have wished that even inanimate objects might praise Him! Oh, you mountains, let the shaggy woods upon your crowns wave in adoration! You that with bald heads lift up yourselves loftier than those minor hills, let the clouds that gird you serve like wings of cherubim to veil your faces! But oh, adore Him, adore Him, for He is worthy of all adoration! Let Him always be extolled! You cannot, I repeat, have great thoughts of God, yourselves, without spontaneously rising up and saying, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.”

But, my Brothers and Sisters, turn your eyes yonder. What do you see there? You see the Son of God stepping from the place of His Glory, casting aside the garments of His Majesty and robing Himself in garments of clay! Do you see Him yonder? He is nailed to a Cross! Oh, can you behold it, as His head hangs meekly on His breast? Can you catch the accents of His lips when He says, “Father, forgive them”? Do you see Him with the crown of thorns still about His brow, with bleeding head and hands and feet? And does not your soul burst with adoration when you see Him giving Himself for your sins? What? Can you look upon this miracle of miracles, the death of the Son of God, without feeling reverence stirred within your bosom—a marvelous adoration that language can never express? No, I am sure you cannot. You see your Savior—you close your eyes that are already filled with tears and as you bend your head upon the Mount of Calvary I hear you say, “Jesus, have mercy upon me.” And when you feel the blood applied to your conscience and know that He has blotted out your sins you are not a man unless you start from your knees and cry, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory, Amen and Amen.” What? Did He bend His awful head down to the shades of death? What? Did He hang upon the Cross and bleed and shall not earth praise Him? O you dumb, surely this might loosen your tongues! O you silent ones, you might begin to speak! And if you do not, surely the very stones will speak and the rocks that once split at His death will again open a wide mouth to let their hallelujahs ascend to Heaven! Ah, the Cross makes us praise Him. Lovers of Jesus, can you love Him without desiring that His Kingdom may come? What? Can you bow before Him and yet not wish to see your Monarch master of the world? Out with you, if you can pretend to love your Master and yet not desire to see Him the conqueror! I give you not a joy for your piety unless it leads you to wish that the same mercy which has been extended to you might reach to others and unless it prompts you to pray this prayer, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory, Amen and Amen.”

But gaze a moment longer. The Man that died for sinners sleeps within a grave. A little while He sleeps until the angel rolls away the stone and gives Him liberty. Do you behold Him, as He wakes up from His slumber and radiant with majesty and glorious with light frightens His guards and stands a risen Man? Do you see Him as He climbs to Heaven, as He ascends to the Paradise of God, sitting at the right hand of His Father till His enemies are made His footstool? Do you see Him as principalities and powers bow before Him, as cherubim and seraphim cast their crowns at His feet? Do you hear Him? Do you hear Him intercede and do you also hear the music of the glorified spirits ever chanting perpetual praises before His Throne? And do you not wish that we might—

*“Prepare new honors for His name,*

*And songs before unknown?”*  
Oh, it is impossible to see the glorified Christ with the eyes of faith, without exclaiming afterwards, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.”

But now one other thought. Common humanity urges us to pray this prayer. Did you ever walk through a village full of drunkenness and profanity? Did you ever see at every ale-house poor wretched bloated carcasses that once were men standing or rather leaning against the posts staggering with drunkenness? Have you ever looked into the houses of the people and beheld them as dens of iniquity at which your soul did turn aghast? Have you ever walked through that village and seen the poverty and degradation and misery of the inhabitants and sighed over it? Yes, you have. But was it ever your privilege to walk through that village in later years, when the Gospel has been preached there? It has been mine. Once it was my delight to labor in a village where sin and iniquity had once been rampant and I can say with joy and happiness that almost from one end of the village to the other, at the hour of eventide, you would have heard the voice of song coming from every roof-top, echoing from every heart. Oh, what a pleasant thing to walk through the village when drunkenness has almost ceased, when debauchery is dead and when men and women go forth to labor with joyful hearts, singing as they go the praises of the ever-living God and when, at sunset, the humble cottager calls his children together and reads them some portion from the Book of Truth and then together they bend their knees—oh, happy, happy households! Yes, we have seen some such places and when our hearts have been gladdened by the sight, we have said, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.” It has sometimes been our delight to tabernacle among the lowly for a little season. We have had our seat given us in the chimney corner for a while and, by-and-by, as the time to retire drew near, the good man of the house has said to the Prophet’s servant, “Now, Sir, will you read for us tonight, as you are here?” And we have noticed the faces of the little group around us, as we have read some portion like this—“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.” And then we have said, “No, we will not pray tonight, you must be priest in your own house and pray yourself.” And then the good man has prayed for his children and when we have seen them rise up and kiss their parent for the night, we have thought, “Well, if this is the kind of family that religion makes, let the whole earth be filled with His Glory! For the blessedness and for the happiness of man, let God’s Kingdom come and let His will be done.” Contrast that, my Brothers and Sisters, with the murderous rites of the Hindu. Contrast it with the savagery and barbarism of heathen lands!

If I could bring some barbarian to stand before you, this morning, he might himself be a better preacher than I can be. With his almost unintelligible utterances and clicks he would begin to tell you the few ideas he had, which ideas began and ended with himself and with the miserable prey on which he lived. You would say, “What? There is such a miserable race as this?” Let us at once kneel down and utter this prayer and then rise up and labor to fulfill it—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory.” I feel that I cannot stir you this morning as I wished. (If I were a Welshman I think I could move your hearts—they have such a knack of waking persons up by what they say). Oh, my soul longs for that day, it sighs for that blessed period! Would God that all sighed and longed for it, too, and were prepared to work and labor, watch and pray, until we should indeed sing with truth—

*“Hallelujah! Christ the Lord  
God Omnipotent shall reign!  
Hallelujah! Christ in God,  
God in Christ is All-in-All!”*

May such a day come, as it certainly will!  
III. And now I am to give you A FEW COUNSELS IN THE PURSUIT OF  
THIS OBJECTIVE.  
First, you cannot pray this prayer unless you seek in your own life to  
remove every impediment to the spread of Christ’s Kingdom. You cannot  
pray it, Sir, you cannot say, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory.  
Amen and Amen”—you who yesterday cursed God! How can the same  
lips that cursed God say, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory.  
Amen and Amen”? You cannot say it, Sir—you who break His Commandments and violate His Laws and run riot against His government. If  
you said it, you would be a vile hypocrite! Is there anything in our character and conduct which has a tendency to prevent the spread of the  
Gospel? Oh, we say it with pain! There are many members of the  
Churches everywhere whose characters are such that if they remain  
what they are, Christ’s Gospel can never fill the whole earth, for it cannot  
fill their hearts! You know the men. They call themselves God’s dear  
people and they would be dear if they were given away—certainly nobody  
would buy them at the lowest price in the world. They say that they are  
His precious ones and they must be very precious, or else He never  
would have any thoughts of mercy towards such a set as they are. And  
they will sometimes say, “Ah, we are the Lord’s elect,” and they live in  
sin! They say there are very few of their sort and we reply, “What a mercy!” If there were, we would need many of our public buildings to be  
turned at once into jails to lock up such people! No, we do not believe in the characters of men who make a profession of religion and yet do not live up to it. Do not tell us about such profession—just be quiet altogether! Do not call yourselves religious and yet act as others do. I prefer a man that is a right down blustering sinner when he is at it! Do not let him go into sin and then mask and cover it all up. There is no use in it. The man is not honest. I think there is some hope for a man who is a down-right thoroughbred sinner, that goes at it and is not ashamed of it. But a rascally, canting hypocrite that comes crawling into our Church and yet lives in sin all the while! Such a man—God Almighty may save him—but it is very seldom that He does save such people. He lets them go on and reap the fruit of their own ways. He lets them find out, after all, that hypocrisy is a sure road to Hell and never can lead to Heaven! We must look well to ourselves, by God’s Spirit, or else we must not pray this prayer—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen and  
Amen.”  
And there is my friend, Mr. Save-All. I am sure he cannot pray this  
prayer, but at least I think I hear him in his soul say, “O Lord, let the  
whole earth be filled with Your Glory.” A contribution is requested to assist the cause in so doing. Oh, no, not at all. Like the old slave woman we  
have all heard of, who sang, “Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel,” and put  
her eyes up in such a devout frame that her brother slave, who was  
passing the plate that day, could not get her to pay any attention to him  
till he jogged her elbow and said, “Yes, Sissy, it is well enough to sing,  
‘Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel,’ if you would give it wings—then it  
might—but you are just singing this and doing nothing at all.” Now, what  
is the good of a man singing, “Fly abroad, you mighty Gospel,” and praying this prayer, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory” if he has got  
six thousand a year coming in for doing nothing at all? It is no use for a  
man to put on a pair of lawn sleeves and say, “Oh, it is my devout desire  
that the whole earth may be filled with His Glory” and then leave the  
world to stare at him and consider what good he is! It is no use for a man  
simply to have a curacy or something of that sort, buy his manuscripts  
cheap, come up and read off two sermons twenty minutes long, go home  
with a good conscience that he has done his duty twice and then say,  
“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory.” Why, my Friends, there is  
no chance of it if that is the way it is to be done—not the slightest in the  
world—to cry, “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory,” and then  
stand still and do nothing at all! Or even merely to do some nominal wellpaid work and feel it is all over. We need something in the ministry a little different before even ministers can pray this prayer in sincerity! I am  
not finding fault with any of my Brothers, but I would recommend them  
to preach 13 times a week and then they can pray this prayer a little better! Three times a week would not do for me. It would hurt my constitution—preaching 13 times a week is good healthy exercise! But you shut yourself up in your study, or what is 10 times worse, you do nothing at all but just take it easy all the week till Sunday comes and then borrow a sermon out of an old magazine, or buy one of the helps for ministers, or take down one of Charles Simeon’s skeletons and preach it! My good man, you cannot pray in that fashion! The poorest Sunday school teacher has a better right to pray that prayer than you have! You go to a fire that is raging vehemently and say, “Oh, let it be put out!” and stand with your hands in your pockets while a little boy that is standing there and  
passing the bucket may pray that prayer sincerely, but you cannot! No, my Brothers, you must be up and doing for your Master, or else

you cannot pray this prayer. You say, “I am doing my duty.” But my  
Friend, that is not much use—you must do a little more than that. Doing  
your duty, as you think, is often doing but a very small part of your duty.  
What is a man’s duty? “Why, as much as he is paid for, Sir.” Oh, no, I  
think not! A man’s duty is to do whatever his hand finds to do with all  
his might. And until he does that, he cannot with any sincerity offer this  
prayer, “Let the whole world be filled with His Glory. Amen and Amen.”  
Ah, there are some here that I could mention, who by their unparalleled  
philanthropy, by their unique and unrivalled love of their fellow creatures  
have done much to fill the earth with God’s Glory. They have let the  
world see what Christian men and Christian women are able to do when  
God’s love has touched their hearts! There are to be found some who by  
devoting themselves to the service of their Master and spending and being spent for Him, have done much to heighten the opinion of the world  
towards Christianity and make them think better of the Christian  
Church than they would have done if it had not been for these few rare,  
mighty heroes in the midst of us! “Let the whole earth be filled with His  
Glory. Amen and Amen.” But it cannot be, speaking after the manner of  
men, unless we, each of us, labor and endeavor as God shall help us, to  
extend the Kingdom of our Master.  
And now, my Friends, have I been urging you to an impossible toil?  
Have I been telling Christians to pray for that which never can be  
granted? Ah, no, blessed be God! We are taught to pray for nothing but  
that which God has been pleased to give. He has told us to pray that His  
Kingdom may come and His Kingdom will come and come most assuredly, too! Hark! Hark! Hark! I hear mustering for the battle! Yonder in the  
dim distance I see the armies gathering. Yes, I can dimly see their ensign  
and behold the flag that waves before them! Who are these that come?  
Who are these? These are nobler and better men than we! These are warriors of Christ, as yet, perhaps, unborn. These are the mighty men, the  
rear-guard. These are the imperial guard of Heaven who have long been  
fighting. The enemy has sometimes fled, but so far we have achieved but  
little. The phalanx of the foe still stands fast and firm and we have  
blunted our blades against the shields of the mighty. As yet the victory is not complete. The Master stands on the hill with His reserve. Lo! I see them—they are coming, they are coming! Some of us shall live to see them—men whose tongues are made of fire, whose hearts are full of flame, who speak like angels and preach like cherubim! The men are coming and happy shall the man be who marks the triumph! Each tramp of theirs shall be the tramp of victory, each blast of theirs shall level walls of spiritual Jerichos, each blow of their horn shall clear an acre of valiant foes! Each stroke from their sword shall cleave a dragon and every blow from their arm shall be mighty to overturn thrones and scepters and kings! They come, they come! And till they come, what shall we do? Why fight on and hold our posts! Let us be cheered with the thought that victory is certain. The hour comes when this mighty band of heroes shall sweep the earth with the banner of victory! And when, in years to come, you and I shall look upon the plain of battle, we shall see there an idol broken, there a colossal system of wickedness dashed in pieces, there a false prophet slain, there a deluder cast away! Oh, glorious shall be that day when victory shall be complete! When the horse and the rider shall be overthrown! When the battle that is without blood and without smoke, without rolling of garments of warriors shall be completed by the  
shout of victory through Him who has loved us!  
Beloved, we will wait a while. We will still continue on this side with  
our Master, for though we are now fighters, we shall be winners, by-andby! Yes, Man, Woman, you who are unknown, unnoted but are striving  
for your Master by prayer and praise and labor—the day is coming when  
everyone of you shall have a crown of victory! The hour is coming when  
your heart shall beat high, for you shall share the conquest! Those men  
who are coming, without whom we cannot be made perfect, shall not  
have all the honor. We who have borne the brunt of the fight shall have a  
share of the glory. The victors shall divide the spoil and we shall divide  
the spoil with them! You, tried, afflicted, forgotten and unknown—you  
shall soon have the palm branch in your hand and you shall ride in triumph through the streets of earth and Heaven when your Master shall  
openly make a show of principalities and powers in the day of His victory!  
Only still continue, only wrestle on and you shall be crowned! But I have got one word to say and then, Amen. You know in Roman  
warfare there were special rewards given for special works. There was the  
mural crown for the man that first scaled the rampart and stood upon  
the wall. I am looking on this great congregation with a thought in my  
mind which agitates my spirit. Young men! Young men! Is there not one  
among you who can win a mural crown? Have I not one true Christian  
heart here that is set for work and labor? Have not I one man who will  
devote himself to God and His Truth? Henry Martyn! You are dead. And  
is your mantle buried with you? Brainerd, you sleep with your fathers.  
And is your spirit dead, too, and shall there never be another Brainerd? Knibb, you have ascended to your God. And is there nowhere another Knibb? Williams, your martyred blood still cries from the ground. And is there nowhere another Williams? What? Not among this dense mass of young and burning spirits? Is there not one who can say in his heart, “Here am I, send me”? “Lo, this hour, being saved by God’s Grace, I give myself up to Him, to go wherever He shall please to send me, to testify His Gospel in foreign lands”? What? Are there no Pauls? Have we none who will be Apostles for the Lord of Hosts? I think I see one who, putting his lips together, makes this silent resolve—“By God’s Grace I this day devote myself to Him. Through trouble and through trial I will be His, if He will help me, for missionary work or for anything else! I give up my all to God and if I may die as Williams did and wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, I will be proud. And if I may live to serve my Master, like a Brainerd and die at last, worn out, here I am. Do but have me, Master, give me the honor of leading the forlorn. The hope of leading the van  
guard of Christianity. Here I am—send me!”  
O Lord, accept that young man! Lo, I consecrate him this day in Your  
name for that service! These outstretched hands this morning give a benediction to you, young hero of the Cross! Your Brother’s heart beats  
with you—go and go to victory! And if it must be mine to stay here to labor in a more easy and pleasant part of the vineyard, which I dare not  
leave, still I will envy you—that you have the honor of going to far distant  
lands. And I will pray for you, that your success may be great and that  
through you the kingdoms of this world may be brought to Christ and  
the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth! But we will all pray this prayer  
in our houses alone—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory. Amen  
and Amen.”  
You who are enemies to God, beware, beware, beware! It will be a hard  
thing to be found on the side of the enemy in the great battle of right!

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #486 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SINNER’S END  
NO. 486

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 28, 1862, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Until I went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood I their end. Surely You did set them in slippery places: You cast them down into destruction.”  
Psalm 73:17, 18.**

LACK of understanding has destroyed many. The dark pit of ignorance has engulfed its thousands. Where the lack of understanding has not sufficed to slay, it has been able seriously to wound. Lack of understanding upon doctrinal truth, providential dealing, or inward experience has often caused the people of God a vast amount of perplexity and sorrow, much of which they might have avoided had they been more careful to consider and understand the ways of the Lord.

My Brethren, if our eyes are dim, and our hearts forgetful as to eternal things, we shall be much vexed and tormented in mind, as David was when he understood not the sinner’s end. For, indeed, it is a great mystery to ordinary reason to see the ungodly prospering and pampered while the righteous are chastened and afflicted. Let us, however, receive a clear understanding with regard to the death, judgment and condemnation of the proud sinner. Then at once our sorrows and suspicions are removed and petulance gives place to gratitude. See the ox paraded through the streets covered with garlands—who envies its lot when he remembers the axe and the altar? The child may see nothing but the flowers, but from the man of understanding, no childish ornament can conceal the victim’s misery.

The best place in which to be instructed with heavenly wisdom is the sanctuary of God. Until David went there, he was in a mist—but entering its hallowed portals, he stood upon a mountain’s summit and the clouds floated far beneath his feet. You ask me what there could have been in the ancient sanctuary which could have enlightened David as to the end of the wicked. It may be, my Brethren, that while he sat before the Lord in prayer, his spirit had such communion with the unseen God, that he looked into unseen things and saw, as in an open vision, the ultimate doom of the graceless.

Or it may be that the hallowed songs of Israel’s congregation foretold the overthrow of the enemies of Jehovah, and stirred the royal soul. Perhaps on that holy day the priests read in the scanty pages of the then written work some ancient story, such as refreshed the Psalmist in his happier seasons. It may have been that they rehearsed, in the ears of the people, the years beyond the flood, and the universal death which swept a world of sinners to their eternal prisons with a flood of wrath. Or it may be that they read concerning Sodom and Gomorrah and the fiery shower

which utterly consumed the cities of the plain.

It is not impossible that the theme of meditation led the devout monarch back to the plagues of Egypt, and the day of the Lord’s vengeance when He overthrew proud Pharaoh and his hosts in the midst of the Red Sea. The book of the wars of the Lord is full of notable records, all revealing most clearly that the right hand of the Lord has sooner or later dashed in pieces all His enemies. Possibly when David went into the sanctuary of God, the Law was read in his ears. He heard the blessings for obedience, the curses for rebellion.

And as he listened to the thundering anathemas of the Law which curses none in vain, it may be that he said, “Now I understand their end.” Certainly a due estimate of the Law of God, and the justice which maintains its dignity will clear up all fears concerning the ultimate escape of the wicked. Such a Law and such a Judge allow not the slightest suspicion that sin will always prosper. Moreover, Brethren, David could not well go up to the sanctuary without witnessing a sacrifice, and as he saw the knife uplifted and driven into the throat of the victim, and knew that he, himself, was preserved from destruction by the sufferings of a Substitute, represented by that lamb, he may have learned that the wicked, having no such sacrifice to trust to, must be led as sheep to the slaughter, and as the bullock is felled by the axe, so must they be utterly destroyed.

By some of these means, either by the sight of the sacrifice, or by his own meditations, or by the Word read and the expositions given by Prophets or priests in the sanctuary—it was in God’s own house that he understood the end of the wicked. I trust, Beloved, if you lack understanding in any spiritual matters, you will go up to the house of the Lord to inquire in His temple. The Word of God is to us as the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest. Prayer asks counsel at the hand of the Lord, and often the lips of the minister is God’s oracle to our hearts.

If you are vexed at any time because Providence seems to deal indulgently with the vile and harshly with you, come to the spot where prayer is likely to be made. And while learning the justice of God and the overthrow which He will surely bring upon the impenitent, you shall go to your houses calmed in mind and disciplined in spirit. May you sing as Dr. Watts puts it—  
may see a feast of ingathering at the end of the year. That this may be the best of days to many, the birthday of many immortal souls. The burden of the Lord weighs down my soul this morning. My heart is filled even to bursting with an agony of desire that sinners may be saved. O Lord make bare Your arm this day, even this day!

*“I saw the wicked rise,  
And felt my heart repine,  
While haughty fools, with scornful eyes  
In robes of honor shine.  
The tumults of my thought  
Held me in dark suspense,  
Till to Your house my feet were brought,  
To learn Your justice from there.  
Your Word with light and power  
Did my mistakes amend—  
I viewed the sinner’s life before,  
But here I learned their end.”*

This morning we have selected our subject for many ends, but more especially with the anxious desire that we may win souls for Christ. That we

In enlarging upon our solemn subject, first, let us understand the sinner’s end. Secondly, let us profit by our understanding of it. Thirdly, let us, having received this understanding, anxiously and earnestly warn you whose end this must be except they repent.

I. First, then, gathering up all our powers of mind and thought, LET US ENDEAVOR TO UNDERSTAND THE SINNER’S END. Let me rehearse it in your ears. The end of the sinner, like the end of every man in this world, is death. When he dies, it may be that he will die gently, for often there are no bands in their death but their strength is firm. A seared conscience gives a quietude of stupidity just as a full forgiveness of sin gives a peacefulness of perfect rest. They talk about another world as though they had no dread. They speak of standing before God as though they had no transgression.

“Like sheep they are laid in the grave,” “He fell asleep like a child,” say his friends. And others exclaim, “He was so happy, that he must be a saint.” Ah, this is but their apparent end. God knows that the dying repose of sinners is but the awful calm which heralds the eternal hurricane. The sun sets in glowing colors, but O, the darkness of the black tempestuous night! The waters flash like silver as the soul descends into their bosom, but who shall tell the tenfold horrors which congregate within their dreadful deeps?

Frequently, on the other hand, the death of the wicked is not thus peaceful. Not always can the hypocrite play out his game to the end. The mask slips off too soon, and conscience tells the truth. Even in this world, with some men, the storm of everlasting wrath begins to beat upon the soul before it leaves the shelter of the body. Ah, then, the cries, the groans! What dread forebodings of the unquiet spirits! What visions of judgment! What anxious peering into the midnight of future banishment and ruin! Ah, then the cravings after a little longer span of life, the clutching at anything for the bare chance of hope!

May your ears be spared the dreadful outcry of the spirit when it feels itself seized by the invisible hand and dragged downward to its certain doom. Give me sooner to be shut up in prison for months, and years, than to stand by dying beds such as I have myself witnessed. They have written their memorial on my young heart. The scars of the wounds they gave me are still there. Why, the faces of some men, like mirrors, reflect the flames of Hell while yet they live! All this, however, is but of secondary importance compared with that which follows death. To the ungodly there is awful significance in that verse of the Revelation, “I looked and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

One woe is past but there are other woes to come. If death were all, I were not here this morning. For little matters it in what style a man dies, if it were not that he shall live again. The sinner’s death is the death of all

in which he took delight . No cups of drunkenness for you again, no violin, no lute, no sound of music, no more the merry dance, no more the loud lascivious song, no jovial company, no high-sounding blasphemies. All these are gone forever. Dives, your purple is plucked from off you, the red flames shall be your mantle. Where now is your fine linen? Why is your nakedness thus revealed to your shame and contempt? Where now are your delicate tables, O, you who did fare sumptuously every day?

Your parched lips shall crave in vain the blessed drop to cool your tongue. Now where are your riches, you rich fool? Your barns are, indeed, pulled down—but you need not build greater—your corn, your wine, your oil have vanished like a dream, and you are poor, indeed, cursed with a depth of penury such as the dog-licked Lazarus never knew. Death removes every delight from the graceless. It takes away from his eyes, his ears, his hands, his heart, everything which might yield him solace. The cruel Moabites of death shall cut down every fair tree of hope, and fill up with huge stones every well of comfort. There shall be nothing left for the spirit but a dreary desert, barren of all joy or hope, which the soul must traverse with weary feet forever and ever!

Nor is this all. Let us understand their end yet farther. No sooner is the sinner dead than he stands before the bar of God in his disembodied state. That impure spirit is set before the blazing eye of God! Its deeds are well known to itself. It needs no opening of the great books as yet. A motion of the eternal finger bids it go its way. Where can it go? It dare not climb to Heaven. There is but one road open—it sinks to its appointed place. The expectation of future torment plagues the soul with a self-kindled Hell. Conscience becomes a never-dying, ever-gnawing worm.

Conscience, I say, cries in the souls of men, “Now where are you? You are lost and this your lost estate you have brought upon yourself! You are not yet judged,” says conscience, “yet you are lost, for when those books are opened, you know that their records will condemn you.” Memory wakes up and confirms the voice of conscience. “It is true,” she says, “it is true.” Now the soul remembers its thousand faults and crimes. The judgment also shakes off its slumber, holds up its scales, and reminds the man that conscience clamors not amiss. Hope has been smitten down, but all the fears are living and full of vigor—like serpents with a hundred heads, they sting the heart through and through.

The heart bowed down with unnumbered dreads moans within itself— “The awful trumpet will soon sound, my body will rise. I must suffer both in body and in soul for all my sins, there is no hope for me, no hope for me! Would God I had listened when I was warned! Ah, would to God that I had turned at the faithful rebuke, that when Jesus Christ was presented to me in the Gospel I had believed on Him! But no, I despised my own salvation. I chose the fleeting pleasures of time—and for that poor price I have earned eternal ruin! I chose rather to drown my conscience than to let it lead me to Glory. I turned my back upon the right, and now here I am, waiting like a prisoner in a condemned cell till the great assize shall come and I shall stand before the Judge.”

Let us go on to consider their end. The day of days, that dreadful day has come. The millennial rest is over, the righteous have had their thousand years of glory upon earth. Hark! The dread trumpet, louder than a thousand thunders, startles death and Hell. Its awful sound shakes both earth and Heaven. Every tomb is rent and emptied. From the teeming womb of earth, that fruitful mother of mankind, up stand multitudes upon multitudes of bodies, as though they were new-born. Lo, from Hades come the spirits of the lost ones—and they each enter into the body in which once it sinned, while the righteous sit upon their thrones of glory, their transformed bodies made like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus the Lord from Heaven.

The voice of the trumpet waxes exceedingly loud and long. The sea has given up her dead. From tongues of fire, from lion’s jaws, and from corruption’s worm, all mortal flesh has been restored, atom to atom, bone to bone. At the fiat of Omnipotence all bodies are refashioned. And now the Great White Throne is set with pomp of angels. Every eye beholds it. The great books are opened, and all men hear the rustling of their awful leaves. The fingers of the hands that once was crucified turns leaf after leaf and names of men are sounded forth—to Glory, to destruction— “Come you blessed.” “Depart you cursed.” These are the final arbiters of glory or of ruin.

And now where are you, Sinner, for your turn is come? Your sins are read and published! Shame consumes you. Your proud face now mantles with a thousand blushes. You would cover yourself, but you cannot and, most of all, you are afraid of the face of Him who today looks on you with eyes of pity, but then with glances of fiery wrath—the face of Jesus, the face of the Lamb, the dying Lamb—then enthroned in judgment. Oh how ashamed you will be to think you have despised Him, to think that though He died for sinners, you did scorn and scoff Him, did malign His Followers, and slander His religion!

How piteously will you crave a veil of granite to hide your shameful face from Him. “Rocks hide me! Mountains fall upon me! Hide me from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne.” But it must not—it must not be—

*“Where now, oh, where shall sinners seek  
For shelter in the general wreck?  
Shall falling rocks be over them thrown?  
See rocks, like snow, dissolving down.”*

O, Sinner, this is but the beginning of the end, for now your sentence is read out, your doom pronounced. Hell opens her wide jaws and you fall to destruction. Where are you now? Body and soul remarried in an everlasting union, having sinned together, must now suffer together, and that forever. I cannot picture it. Imagination’s deepest dye paints not this tenfold night. I cannot portray the anguish which both soul and body must endure—each nerve a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on—each mental power a blazing furnace heated seven times hotter with raging flames of misery. Oh, my God, deliver us from ever knowing this in our own persons!

Let us now pause and review the matter. It behooves us to remember concerning the sinner’s latter end, that it is absolutely certain. The same

Word which says, “he that believes shall be saved,” makes it also equally certain and clear that, “he that believes not shall be damned.” If God is true, then sinners must suffer. If sinners suffer not, then saints have no glory, our faith is vain, Christ’s death was vain, and we may as well abide comfortably in our sins. Sinner, whatever philosophy may urge with its syllogisms, whatever skepticism may declare with her laughter and sneers, it is absolutely certain that, dying as you are, the wrath of God shall come upon you to the uttermost.

If there were but a thousandth part of a fear that you or I might perish, it were wisdom to fly to Christ. But when it is not a, “perhaps,” or a, “maybe,” but an absolute certainty that he who rejects Christ must be lost forever, I do plead with you, if you are rational men, see to it and set your houses in order, for God will surely smite, though He tarry ever so long. Though for ninety years you avoid the arrows of His bow, His arrow will in due time find you, and pierce you through—and where are you then?

And as it is certain, so let us remember that to the sinner it is often sudden. In such an hour as he thinks not, to him the Son of Man comes. As pain upon a woman in travail, as the whirlwind on the traveler, as the eagle on his prey, so suddenly comes death. Buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, chambering and full of wantonness, the ungodly man says, “Go your way for this time. When I have a more convenient season I will send for you.” But as the frost often comes when the buds are swelling ready for the spring, and nips them on a sudden, how often does the frost of death nip all the hopeful happiness of ungodly men and it withers once and for all?

Have you a lease on your life? Lives there a man who can insure that you shall breathe another hour? Let but your blood freeze in its channels. Let but your breath stop for a moment, and where are you? A spider’s web is a strong cable when compared with the thread on which moral life depends. We have told you a thousand times, till the saying has become so trite that you smile when we repeat it—life is frail, and yet you live O men, as though your bones were brass and your flesh were adamant, and your lives like the years of the Eternal God. As breaks the dream of the sleeper, as flies the cloud before the wind, as melts the foam from the breaker, as dies the meteor from the sky—so suddenly shall the sinner’s joys pass forever from him—and who shall measure the greatness of his amazement?

Remember, O sons of men, how terrible is the end of the ungodly. You think it is easy for me to talk of death and damnation, and it is certainly not very difficult for you to hear. But when you and I shall come to die, ah, then every word we have uttered shall have a weightier meaning than this dull hour can gather from it. Imagine the sinner dying. Weeping friends are about him. He tosses to and fro upon yonder weary couch. The strong man is bowed down. The last struggle is come. Friends watch the glazing of the eyes. They wipe the clammy sweat from the brow. At last they say, “He is gone! He is gone!”

Oh, my Brethren, what amazement must seize upon the unsanctified spirit then! Ah, if his spirit could then speak, it would say, “It is all true that I was likely to hear. I spoke ill of the minister the last Sunday in the year, for trying to frighten us, as I said. But he did not speak half so earnestly as he ought to have done. Oh, I wonder why he did not fall down upon his knees and beg me to repent? But even if he had, I should have rejected his entreaties. Oh, if I had known! If I had known! If I had known all this! If I could have believed it. If I had not been such a fool as to doubt God’s Word and think it all a tale to frighten children with. “Oh, if I had known all this! But now I am lost! lost! Lost forever!”

I think I hear that spirit’s wail of utter dismay, as it exclaims, “Yes, it has come. The thing I was told—it has all come to pass. Fixed is my everlasting state. No offers of mercy now. No blood of sprinkling now. No silver trumpet of the Gospel now—no invitations to a loving Savior’s bosom now! His terrors have broken me in pieces, and as a leaf is driven with the whirlwind, so am I driven I know not where. But this I know, I am lost, lost, lost beyond all hope.” Horrible is the sinner’s end. I shudder while thus briefly I talk of it. O, Believer, take heed that you understand this well.

Do not fail to remember that the horror of the sinner’s end will consist very much in the reflection that he will lose Heaven. Is that a little? The harps of angels, the company of the redeemed, the smile of God, the society of Christ. Is this a trifle—to lose the saint’s best rest, that heritage for which martyrs wade through rivers of blood? That portion which Jesus thought it worth while to die, that He might purchase? They lose all this, and then they earn in exchange the pains of Hell, which are more desperate than tongue can tell.

Consider a moment! He that indicts the punishment is God. What blows must He strike! He did but put out His finger and He cut Rahab and wounded the dragon in the Red Sea. What will it be when stroke after stroke shall fall from His heavy hand? Oh, Omnipotence, Omnipotence, how dreadful are Your blows! Sinner, see and tremble—God Himself comes out in battle against you! Why, the arrows of a man, when they stick in your conscience, are very sharp—but what will the arrows of God be?

How they will drink your blood and infuse poison into your veins! Even now, when you feel a little sickness, you are afraid to die. And when you hear a heart-searching sermon, it makes you melancholy. But what will it be when God dressed in thunder, comes out against you, and His fire consumes you like stubble? Will God punish you? O Sinner, what punishment must that be which He inflicts? I tremble for you. Flee, I pray you, to the Cross of Christ, where shelter is prepared.

Remember, moreover, it will be a God without mercy, who will then dash you in pieces. He is all mercy to you today, O Sinner. In the wooing words of the Gospel He bids you live! In His name, I tell you, as God lives, He wills not your death, but would rather you should turn unto Him and live. But if you will not live. If you will be His enemy. If you will run upon the point of His spear, then He will be even with you in the day when mercy reigns in Heaven and Justice holds its solitary court in Hell. O that you were wise and would believe in Jesus to the salvation of your souls!

I would have you know, O you who choose your own destructions, that you shall suffer universally. Now, if our head aches, or if our heart is palpitating, or a member is in pain, there are other parts of the body which are at ease. But then, every power of body and of mind shall suffer at one time. All the chords of man’s nature shall vibrate with the discord of desolation. Then shall suffering be unceasing. Here we have a pause in our pain, the fever has its rests, paroxysms of agony have their seasons of quiet. But there in Hell the gnashing of teeth shall be unceasing, the worm’s gnawing shall know no cessation! On, on forever—forever a hot race of misery.

Then, worst of all, it shall be without end. When ten thousand years have run their course, you shall be no nearer to the end than at first. When millions have been piled on millions, still the wrath shall be to come—to come, as much as if there had been no wrath at all. Ah, these are dreadful things to talk of, and you who hear or read my sermons know that I am falsely accused when men say that I dwell often upon this dreadful theme, but I feel as if there is no hope for some of you, unless I thunder at you. I know that often God has broken some hearts with an alarming sermon, who might never have been won by an inviting and wooing discourse.

My experience goes to show that the great hammer of God breaks many hearts, and some of my more terrible sermons have been even more useful than those in which I lifted up the Cross and tenderly pleaded with men. Both must be used—sometimes the love which draws—and another the vengeance which drives. Oh, my Hearers, I cannot bear the thought that you should be lost! As I meditate, I have a vision of some of you passing away from this world. And will you curse me? Will you curse me as you go down to the pit? Will you accuse me, “You were not faithful with me, Pastor. You did not warn me! Minister, you did not strive with me”?

No, by the help of my Lord, through whose Divine Grace I am called to the work of this ministry, I must, I will, be clear of your blood. You shall not make your bed in Hell without knowing what an uneasy resting place you choose. You shall hear the warning. It shall ring in your ears. Who among us shall dwell with everlasting fire? Who among us shall abide with the eternal burnings? I do assure you a true love speaks to you in every harsh word I utter—a love that cares too much for you to flatter you. A love which must tell you these things without mitigating them in any degree, lest you perish through my trifling. “He that believes not shall be damned.” “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?” Why will you reject His mercies? God help you by His Holy Spirit to understand your latter end and lay hold on Jesus now.

II. This brings us to our second remark—If we have understood the sinner’s end, LET US NOW PROFIT BY IT. How can we do this? We can profit by it, first, by never envying the ungodly again. If at any time we feel with the Psalmist that we cannot understand how it is that the enemies of God enjoy the sweets of life, let us cease at once from such questionings, because we remember their latter end. Let David’s confession warn us—

*“Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I  
To mourn and murmur and repine,  
To see the wicked placed on high,  
In pride and robes of honor shine!  
But oh, their end! Their dreadful end!  
Your sanctuary taught me so—  
On slippery rocks I see them stand,  
And fiery billows roll below.  
Now let them boast how tall they rise,  
I’ll never envy them again;  
There they may stand with haughty eyes,  
Till they plunge deep in endless pain.”*

If the sinner’s end is so terrible, how grateful ought we to be, if we have been plucked from these devouring names! Brothers and Sisters, what was there in us why God should have mercy on us? Can we ascribe the fact that we have been washed from sin in Jesus’ blood, and made to choose the way of righteousness—can we ascribe this to anything but Divine Grace—free, rich, Sovereign Grace? Come then, let us with our tears for others mingle joyous gratitude to God for that eternal love which has delivered our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. Above all let us prize the sufferings of Christ beyond all cost.

Oh, blessed Cross, which has lifted us up from Hell. Oh, dear wounds, which have become gates of Heaven to us. Can we refuse to love that Son of Man—that Son of God? Will we not today, at the foot of His dear Cross, give ourselves to Him anew, and ask Him to bestow on us more Grace, that we may live more to His honor and spend and be spent in His service? Saved from Hell, I must love You, Jesus. And while life and being last, I must live and be prepared to die for You.

Again, Beloved Friends, how such a subject as this should lead you that profess to be followers of Christ to make your calling and election sure! If the end of the impenitent is so dreadful, let nothing content us but certainties with regard to our own escape from this woe. Have you any doubts this morning? Have no peace of mind till those doubts are all solved. Is there any question upon your spirit as to whether you have real faith in the living Savior? If so, rest not, I pray you, till in prayer and humble faith you have renewed your vows and come afresh to Christ. Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith—prove yourselves—build on the Rock—make sure work for eternity, lest it should happen, after all, that you have been deceived. Oh, if it should turn out so, alas, alas! Alas, for you to have been so near to Heaven and yet to be cast down to Hell!

Now this subject should teach Christians to be in earnest about the salvation of others. If Heaven were a trifle, we need not be zealous for the salvation of men. If the punishment of sin were some slight pain, we need not exercise ourselves diligently to deliver men from it. But oh, if “eternity” is a solemn word, and if the wrath to come is terrible to bear, how should we be instant in season and out of season, striving to win others from the flames! What have you done this year, some of you? I fear, Brother and Sister Christians, some of you have done very little.

Blessed be God, there are many earnest hearts among you. You are not all asleep. There are some of you who strive with both your hands to do your Master’s work—but even you are not as earnest as you should be.

The preacher puts himself here in the list, mournfully confessing that he does not preach as he desires to preach. Oh, had I the tears and cries of Baxter, or the fervent seraphic zeal of Whitfield, my soul were well content. But, alas, we preach coldly upon burning themes, and carelessly upon matters which ought to make our hearts like flames of fire.

But I say, Brethren, are there not men and women here, members of this Church, doing nothing for Christ? No soul saved this year by you? Christ unhonored by you? No gems placed in His crown? What have you been living for, you cumber-ground? Why stand you in the Church, you fruitless trees? God make you—oh, you that do little for Him—to humble yourselves before Him and to begin the next year with this determination—that knowing the terrors of the Lord, you will persuade men, and labor and strive to bring sinners to the Cross of Christ.

III. But we must leave that point of instruction and come to our last and pleading point, and that is very earnestly, to WARN THOSE WHOSE END THIS MUST BE UNLESS THEY REPENT. And who are they? Please remember we are not speaking now of people in the street—of drunkards, and harlots, profane swearers, and such like—we know that their damnation is sure and just—but, alas, I need not look far! If I glance along these seats, and look into faces upon which my eye rests every Sunday, there are some of you, some of you who are unconverted still!

You are not immoral but you are unregenerated. You are not unamiable but you are ungracious. You are not far from the kingdom but you are not in the kingdom. It is your end I speak of now, yours, you sons of godly mothers. Yours, you daughters of holy parents—your end, unless God gives you repentance. I want you to see where you are standing today. “Surely you did set them in slippery places.” If it has ever been your lot to tread the glaciers of the Alps, you will have seen upon that mighty river of ice, huge wave like mountains of crystal and deep fissures of unknown depth, and of an intensely blue color. If condemned to stand on one of these icy eminences with a yawning crevasse at its base, our peril would be extreme. Sinner, it is on such slippery places you stand, only the danger is far greater than my metaphor sets forth.

Your standing is smooth—pleasure attends you. Yours are not the rough ways of penitence and contrition—sin’s road is smooth—but ah, how slippery from its very smoothness! O be warned, you must fall sooner or later—stand as firmly as you may. Sinner you may fall now, at once. The mountain yields beneath your feet, the slippery ice is melting every moment. Look down and learn your speedy doom. Yonder yawning gulf must soon receive you, while we look after you with hopeless tears. Our prayers cannot follow you—from your slippery standing place you fall and you are gone forever. Death makes the place where you stand slippery, for it dissolves your life every hour. Time makes it slippery, for every instant it cuts the ground from under your feet.

The vanities which you enjoy make your place slippery, for they are all like ice which shall melt before the sun. You have no foothold, Sinner! You have no sure hope, no confidence. It is a melting thing you trust. If you are depending on what you mean to do—that is no foothold. If you get peace from what you have felt or from what you have done—that is no foothold. It is a slippery place where you stand. I read yesterday of the hunter of the chamois springing from crag to crag after the game he had wounded. The creature leapt down many a frowning precipice but the hunter fearlessly followed as best he could.

At last, in his hot haste, he found himself slipping down a shelving rock. The stone crumbled away as it came in contact with his thicklynailed shoes, which he tried to dig into the rock to stop his descent. He strove to seize on every little inequality, regardless of the sharp edges. But as his fingers, bent convulsively like talons, scraped the stone, it crumbled off as though it had been baked clay, tearing the skin like ribands from his fingers and cutting into his flesh. Having let go his long pole, he heard it slipping down behind him, its iron point changing as it went. And then it flew over the ledge bounding into the depths below. In a moment he must follow, for with all his endeavors he is unable to stop himself.

His companion looks on in speechless horror. But Heaven intervenes. Just as he expects to go over the brink, one foot is arrested in its descent by a slight inequality. He hardly dares to move lest the motion might break his foothold. But gently turning his head to see how far he is from the brink, he perceives that his foot has stopped not a couple of inches from the edge of the rock—those two inches further—and destruction had been his lot.

Ungodly Man, ungodly Woman, in this mirror see yourself. You are sliding down a slippery place, you have neither foothold, nor handhold. All your hopes crumble beneath your weight. The Lord alone knows how near you are to your eternal ruin. Perhaps this morning you are scarcely two inches from the edge of the precipice. Your drunken companion who died a few days ago has just now gone over the edge. Did you not hear him falling? And you, yourself, are about to perish. Good God! The man is almost gone! Oh that I could stop you in your downward course! The Lord alone can do it, but He works by means.

Turn round and gaze upon your past life. Behold the wrath of God which must come on account of it. You are sliding down the slippery places to a fearful end—but the angel of mercy calls you—and the hand of love can save you. Hear how Jesus pleads with you—“Put your hand in Mine,” He says, “you are lost, Man, but I can save you now.” Poor wretch! Will you not do it? Then you are lost. Oh why will you not, when love and tenderness would woo you? Why will you not put your trust in Him? He is able and willing to save you, even now. Believe in Jesus, and though you are now in slippery places, your feet shall soon be set upon a rock of safety.

I know not how it is, the more earnestly I long to speak, and the more passionately I would set forth the danger of ungodly men, the more my tongue refuses. These weighty burdens of the Lord are not to be entrusted, it seems, to the power of oratory. I must stammer and groan them out to you. I must in short sentences tell out my message and leave it with you. I have the solemn conviction, this morning that there are scores, and hundreds of you who are on the road to Hell. You know you are. If conscience speaks truly to you, you know you have never sought Christ, you

have never put your trust in Him, you are still what you always were— ungodly, unconverted.

Is this a trifle? Oh, I ask you—I put it to your own judgments—is this a thing of which you ought to think carelessly? I pray you, let your hearts speak. Is it not time that some of you began to think of these things? Nine years ago we had some hopes for you, those hopes have been disappointed up till now. As each year rolls round you promise yourself that the next shall be different. But there has been no change yet. May we not fear that you will continue entangled in the great net of procrastination until at last you will have eternally to regret that you kept deferring and deferring and deferring, till it was too late?

The way of salvation is not hard to comprehend. It is no great mystery, it is simply “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Trust Christ with your soul, and He will save it. I know you will not do this unless the Holy Spirit constrains you, but this does not remove your responsibility. If you reject this great salvation you deserve to perish. When it is laid so clearly before you, if you refuse it, no eye can pity you among all the thousands in Hell or all the millions in Heaven—

*“How they deserve the deepest Hell  
Who slight the joys above!  
What chains of vengeance must they feel  
Who break the cords of love.”*

May I ask all Christian people to join in prayer for the ungodly? When I cannot plead as a preacher, I bless God I can plead as an intercessor. Let us spend, all of us, a little time this afternoon in private intercession. May I ask it of you as a great favor—occupy a little time this afternoon, each child of God, in praying for the unconverted among us. Conversion work does go on. There are many always coming to be united to the Church, but we want more. And we shall have more, if we pray for more.

Make this afternoon a travailing time and if we travail in birth, God will give us the spiritual seed. It is to the Holy Spirit we must look for all true regeneration and conversion. Therefore let us pray for the descent of His influence, and depend upon His omnipotence—and the great work must, and shall be done. Could I address you in the tones of an angel, yet I could not have more to say than this, “Sinner, fly to Christ.” I am glad I am weak, for now the Master’s power shall be the better seen. Lord, turn the sinner! Turn and make him feel the danger of his state—and by Your Grace, find in Christ a ransom and a rescue—and to Your name be glory. Amen.

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—END OF VOLUME EIGHT— Sermon #467 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FLESH AND SPIRIT—A RIDDLE  
NO. 467

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 31, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“So foolish was I and ignorant: I was as a beast before You. Nevertheless I am continually with You: You have held me by my right hand. You shall guide me with Your counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” Psalm 73:22-25.**

OUR Lord Jesus was tempted in all points like we are. With some reserve we might almost say the same of David. Of all the worthies whose lives are written out at length in Holy Writ, David possesses an experience of the most striking, varied and instructive character. In his history we meet with temptations, and complications of temptations not to be discovered, at least as a connected whole, in other saints of ancient times. Trials which stand out in the lives of other men as isolated hills form whole chains and ranges of mountains in the case of the son of Jesse. David knew the trials of all ranks and conditions of men.

Kings have their troubles and David wore a crown—the peasant has his cares and David handled the shepherd’s crook. The wanderer has many hardships and David abode in the caves of Engedi—the captain has his difficulties and David found the sons of Zeruiah too hard for him. The Psalmist of Israel was tried by his friends. His counselor, Ahithophel, forsook him. “He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.” His worst foes were of his own household. His children were his greatest afflictions. Amnon disgraces him, Absalom excites revolt, Adonijah disturbs his dying bed.

The temptations of poverty and wealth, of honor and reproach, of health and sickness, all tried their power upon him. He had tribulations from without. I need not remind you that during his long life they came from every quarter. He had temptations from within, for the man after God’s own heart not only knew what it was to be assailed, but to be carried by storm, by fierce and terrible passions. I may grant, perhaps, that Job’s trial was more severe than any that fell to David. But yet I know not. Possibly the burning of Ziklag—when his wives were carried away captive, and all that he had was consumed, and his men spoke of stoning him—may have been even a severer trial than Job’s when he sat upon a dunghill and scraped himself with a potsherd.

And I am not sure, but I think that mournful procession over the brook Kedron in David’s later life, when his own son thirsted for his blood, had in it a Gethsemane bitterness that is hardly to be found in the tribulation which fell to the Patriarch of Uz. Job must fairly yield the palm in one respect, for his was no life-long siege but only one sharp and furious attack. David, however, no sooner escaped from one trial, than he fell into another. He no sooner emerged from one season of despondency and alarm, than he was again brought into the lowest depths and all God’s waves and billows rolled over him.

Now, it is from this cause, I take it, that David’s Psalms are so universally the delight of experienced Christians. Into whatever frame of mind we may be cast, David seems to have described our emotions, whether they ARE of ecstasy or depression, to the very letter. He was an able master of the human heart, because he had been tutored in that best of all schools, the school of real, heartfelt, personal experience. You will find that as we grow matured in Divine Grace and in years, we love the Psalms more.

Many young Believers are most fond of the doctrinal parts of Scripture, and I admire that holy curiosity which leads them to desire to understand all the revelation of God in the Doctrines of Grace. Practical Christians are often more fond of studying the Evangelists and Proverbs. But I find that the gray-headed veterans, the sorely troubled Christians, those who have done business on great waters—while they love the doctrines, while they delight in the practices set forth in the life of Christ— yet somehow or other the Psalms of the sweet Singer of Israel yield them savory meat such as their soul loves. And they are made in the Psalms to “lie down in green pastures” of tender grass.

Probably the first remark which will be suggested by reading the Psalms will be this—how varied they are. What an extraordinary man David is, what changes there are in the weather of his soul, what bright sunlight days, what dark cloudy nights, what calms as though his life were a sea of glass, what terrible trials as if the glass were mingled with fire. One time we find him crying, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me,” and another he sings, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul and all that is within me bless His holy name.” One hour we hear him sigh forth, “I sink in deep mire where there is no standing,” and then we find him exulting, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear: the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?”

How wondrously he rises to Heaven and how awfully he dives into the deeps. Surely, Brethren, we who have known anything of spiritual and inner life do not marvel at this, for we also change. Alas, what a contrast between the sin that does so easily beset us, and the Divine Grace which gives us to reign in heavenly places. How different the sorrow of an abject distrust which breaks us in pieces as with a strong east wind, and the joy of a holy confidence which bears us on to Heaven as with a propitious gale!

What changes between walking with God today, and falling into the mire tomorrow. Triumphing over sin, death, and Hell yesterday, and today led captive by the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. Verily, we cannot understand ourselves, and a description which would suit us yesterday would be ill-adapted for today, and quite out of place for tomorrow. Scarcely ever are we in the same mind even an hour. Great God, how infinitely glorious are You in Your immutability, when contrasted with Your fickle, frail, unstable creature—man.

It falls to my lot, this morning, to open up in some humble measure, the secrets of inward experience. I can but hope to do it in a very shallow measure, for I am but a youth, and am not worthy to instruct some of you who have been men of war from your youth up. Yet I may serve the weaklings of the flock, if I inform them of the strife they must expect from the flesh, and comfort their hearts with a foretaste of the certain victory which the Lord has secured to them through the Holy Spirit. We shall

 first listen to the confessions of the Psalmist concerning the flesh. Then, to his expressions with regard to the Spirit. Then, to his soul’s exultation when looking to both flesh and Spirit, he cries out, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? There is none upon earth that I desire besides You.”

I. First, we are to listen to THE PSALMIST’S CONFESSION CONCERNING THE FLESH.  
Remember, Beloved, this is a saint of God. This is a highly advanced saint—this is the man after God’s own heart. This is one of the special favorites of Heaven—one of the men to whom God revealed Himself as He does not unto the world. And yet you hear him telling us his inner life, and he begins by saying, “So foolish was I and ignorant: I was as a beast before You.” The word “foolish,” when it issues from David’s mouth, means more than it signifies in ordinary language. To be called a fool is no great compliment to any man. But when that word means atheist— despiser of that which is good—when it means a forgetter of God, a lover of evil, a destroyer of one’s own soul, then to be called a fool is something at which a man may take offense, indeed.  
David, in one of the former verses of the Psalm, writes, “I was envious of the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked,” which shows that the folly he intended had sin in it. Now he puts himself down as being one of these fools, and adds a little word which is to give intensity to the adjective—“SO foolish was I.” How foolish he could not tell. It was a sinful folly, a folly which was not to be excused by frailty, but to be condemned because of its perverseness and willful ignorance. What? And do we call ourselves wise? Do we, followers of the lowly Savior, profess that we have attained perfection, or have been so chastened that the rod has whipped all our willfulness out of us?  
Ah, this were pride, indeed! If David was foolish, what fools should you and I be in our own esteem if we could but see ourselves. Look back, Believer—think of your not trusting God when He has been so faithful to you—think of your foolish outcry of, “Not so, my Father,” when He crossed His hands in affliction to give you the larger blessing. Think, I say, of the many times when you have read His Providences in the dark, misinterpreting His dispensations and groaning out, “All these things are against me,” when they were all working together for your good!  
Think how often you have chosen sin because of its pleasure, when indeed, that pleasure was a root of pain and bitterness to you! How often you have forgotten to honor God when you had noble opportunities of serving Him. I, for one, must take my place at the bar and plead guilty to the indictment of a sinful folly. And I think everyone who knows his own heart, however far advanced in Divine Grace he may be, must do the same. In the present tense I put it sorrowfully, “So foolish am I.”  
Further, our Psalmist adds, “and ignorant.” A man who, after years of such experience as David, to say, “I am ignorant,” must either be very humble, or else there must be such a force upon his conscience that he cannot resist the confession. And indeed, if you will read the Psalm, and see into what a mistake David had fallen—that of envying the present prosperity of the ungodly—you may grant that he was ignorant, indeed, to forget the dreadful end of those who only prosper that they may be fattened like bullocks for the slaughter. But you and I have been quite as ignorant. We said yesterday, “Now I shall never doubt God again. He has helped me through this great trouble, and I know that I shall be able to trust Him, come what may.”  
But this very morning you awoke with a distrustful thought. What ignorance is this, to forget the lesson which you learned but yesterday, and which you thought you knew by heart? Here you have been trying for months to resign yourself to God’s will. He took away from you one very dear to you, and you longed to say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” And you did say it by an overwhelming effort, but you cannot say it now, for feeling has trod down faith. You are so foolish and so ignorant that you have forgotten what you vowed to learn. And what you meant to say perpetually, you have failed to say in this, perhaps the first great trial in your life.  
Some men think when they have learned six or seven doctrines, that now they know everything. And certain other folks I know of, when they pass through a few years of experience, set themselves up for standards. Ah, Beloved, when we think we know best, and fancy that we have grown wise, then we prove our folly. Our impudence is engraved on our foreheads, and FOOL is written there in capital letters, when we think we are wise. Oh, the depths of the wisdom of God! Who can understand the full meaning of the Doctrines of Grace! Oh, the depths of the experience of the Believer who shall dare to profess that he has passed over all the seas, and has crossed all the mountains over which a Believer must climb!  
If we could but see ourselves, we should consider our knowledge to be nothing, and our ignorance to be all. We are in the twilight, let us not call it noon. We are in the mists and fogs, let us not suppose that we are in an unclouded atmosphere. When we think we see all wisdom, it is because we are blind. And when we fancy we have discovered everything, it is because we are mocked by the illusions of our pride, and see nothing as yet aright. I know I address some of you who, when you are alone, quietly engaged in meditation, think to yourselves “Well, if ever there was such a stupid saint as I am, I am much mistaken. I seem to have the least understanding of any man. I read the Scriptures, and by God’s Grace I sometimes get a hold of them, but at seasons I cannot for the life of me even believe them to be true. I know the power of prayer, but yet there are times when I could not pray if my soul depended on it, and can only groan. In fact, sometimes, “if anything is felt, it is only pain to find I cannot feel.  
“Yet I have been fed under the ministry. I have had many troubles and much communion with Christ, but yet here I am, knowing nothing, just a schoolboy, sitting on the lowest form and trying to spell out his A, B, Cs—such a thorough fool that I often pride myself upon my knowledge and condemn my brother for ignorance, not seeing the beam that is in my own eye, trying to pull the mote from his eye.” Is this the soliloquy of your heart? I know it has often been mine. If it is yours, we have just hit the meaning of David when he uses this expression—“So foolish was I and ignorant.”  
But now comes the crowning word, which you would think too degrading for David—“I was as a beast before You.” Indeed, the original has in it no word of comparison. It ought to be rather translated, “I was a very beast before You,” and we are told that the Hebrew word being in the plural number gives it a peculiar emphasis, indicating some monstrous or astonishing beast. It is the word used by Job which is interpreted “Behemoth”—“I was a very monster before You”—not only a beast but one of the most brutish of all beasts, one of the most stubborn and intractable of all beasts.  
I think no man can go much lower than this in humble confession. This is a description of human nature, and of the old man in the renewed saint which is not to be excelled. How far does this hold true in your experience and mine? Well, I think first we have often been made to compare ourselves to beasts because of our worldly-mindedness. There is the swine grubbing in the earth for its roots. What cares it about the stars? And even the fleet horse as it crosses the meadow, what knows it about the angels and the harps of Heaven? Educate the beast as you may, it has no care beyond its fleshly appetite.  
Oh, how much are we like this, even we who are renewed by Divine Grace! The last six days it has been, “Shop, shop, shop,” with you from morning to night. You bowed at the family altar and you tried to pray at eventide but carking care depressed you till it was hard to offer real supplication. A thousand things have bewildered you. The cashbook, the daybook, those losses, those many workmen to be looked after, or the servants in the house have distracted your mind and the world comes in till you feel, “O that I could get rid of these things for a moment! O that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!”  
But you cannot, for your soul lies cleaving to the dust. Perhaps there comes a knock at the door just when you want to be knocking at God’s door, and someone wants to see you when you want to see your God. You cannot rest in Jesus as you would. You are called upon to look after accounts, shillings, five pound notes, creditors and debtors, until you cry, “O God, I am like a beast before You. How can I ever hope to enter Heaven?” You remember that hymn of Dr. Watts, commencing—

*“Come holy Spirit, heavenly dove.”*

What a sweet beginning, but how dolefully true are the middle verses. Surely they never ought to be sung but to be sighed—  
*“Dear Lord and shall we ever live  
At this poor dying rate—  
Our love so faint, so cold to You,  
And Yours to us so great?”*

What is this but the same confession in other words, “I was as a beast before You.”

Let us add another shade of black to the picture. We might often compare ourselves to the beast from our want of any emotion towards heavenly things. I am quite sure Rutherford was right when he said, “No devil in the world is so bad as having no devil.” Not to be tempted, is perhaps the worst temptation that can befall a man. There are times—I suppose it is so with you, it is with me—times when my soul is like a dead calm and these seasons I dread—

*“No stir in the air, no stir in the sea  
The ship was as still as a ship could be.”*

What mariner likes these dead calms? I am sure I tremble to encounter more of them. Better the healthy hurricane than the pestilential quiet. You would pray, but you cannot command the earnestness and fervor you desire. You would repent, you

 feel that you would repent, but no tear will flow, for the heart is hard.

You would praise God and the lips can utter the words, but the soul cannot join the music. You would stir yourself to some lofty emotion but you cannot. The heart will not feel, it has grown cold, and a sort of death-sleep has come over you like the sleep which is said to fall upon the wanderer in the snow when he comes near to death. Oh, to be roused from this is a blessing sent from Heaven—to be stirred even though it is by a hurricane of affliction, or a thunderclap of trouble. It is an awful thing to be in this apathetic state. Then it is that the Believer cries, “I am as a beast before You.”

You are dead as the seat you sit on each Sunday. Going to the ordinance itself, eating the bread and drinking the wine, yet feeling no fellowship with Christ. Joining in the song and loving it but singing with no feeling, no heart. Going to Prayer Meetings, feeling you would not stay away for all the world, and yet no life, no power, no thought, no vigor. Does some young Christian look at me and say, “What? Do old Christians feel like that?” I say, “They do, at times.” Sad is it that we should have to confess man to be so vile, but such he is, and such each of us have found ourselves out to be. And let the Believer live but a little while, and he will have to use David’s language and cry, “I was as a beast before You.”

See yet again, how often have we had to complain that we are like the beasts for our short-sightedness! The beast cannot look forward to eternity. It cannot cast its eye down the centuries and look to the fulfillment of prophecy in the fullness of time. It has to be content with the things that are near, the things of the hour, and of the day. Even so shortsighted are you and I! We think we see the end when we are only viewing the beginning. We get our telescope out sometimes to look to the future, and we breathe on the glass with the hot breath of our anxiety. And then we think we see clouds and darkness before us if we are in trouble. We see every day new straits, attend and wonder where the scene will end. But we conclude that it must end in our destruction.

“God has forgotten to be gracious,” we think, “He has in anger shut up His heart of compassion.” Oh this short-sightedness! When you and I ought to believe in God—when we ought to look at the Heaven that awaits us and the glory for which these light afflictions are preparing us. When we ought to be looking through the cloud to the Eternal Sun which never knows an eclipse! When we should be resting on the invisible arm of the immortal God, and triumphing in His love, we are mourning and distrusting. God forgive us for this. In these things, verily, we have been as beasts before Him.  
I might add again, how often Believers have to complain that the animal passions will bestir themselves in them until they feel the beast within them. I shall not go deep into this path of painful experience. I only hint at it that some who may have been surprised at it as though it were a novelty, may know that it is common to man. He that has fellowship with God will sometimes feel the devil within him till he thinks himself a devil, and sometimes, too, (the Lord have mercy upon His servants) when the temptation comes in an unguarded moment they may be betrayed and Satan may triumph. If then, they can look back upon a burst of anger or sin and not say after it, “I was as a beast before You, O God,” then I despair of them.

Other men commit these sins. Other men fall into these iniquities, but it remains for the Christian, only, to abhor himself on account of them. To sin is no spot of God’s children. But to hate sin, humbly to confess it, and to lay in the very dust with abasement on account of it—this is one of the choice requirements of the truly begotten sons of Heaven. Oh, I know that many of you, with a groaning that could not be uttered, have been made to feel in your heart that though you are the elect of God, and bought with precious blood, and the Spirit of God dwells in you, yet still you are, when the flesh prevails, as beasts before God.

In deed, my text, as I have said, seems to make us even worse than the beasts, for the comparison which David uses is not to a common and ordinary creature, but to some dread monster, a Behemoth. When we look within, there is nothing lovely. We are all a mass of distorted parts wrongly joined together. There is much of pride, and lust, and anger— and what is there of good? Brethren, our Apostle said in him there dwelt no good thing, and you and I are no better than he. Nothing good but everything that is evil. And all the evil put into the most exaggerated form and shape, until he that has seen himself, has been ready to go mad to think that he should ever be such a being as he is.

O Grace Divine! O sovereign love! Were it not for these we should lie down in despair, when we think of the unseemliness of our nature. More stubborn than Behemoth are we! God can tame the creatures. Man can even put a bit into the mouth of the horse, and he has a bridle for the ass. But we, more intractable than the brutes, are not to be restrained from sin. They are obstinate, but their obstinacy may be quelled and overcome. Sometimes harshness and another, kindness, can subdue the most stubborn brute. But our tongue and heart can no man tame. Evil, only evil, and that continually, still remains in our heart, kicking against the pricks even to the last—remaining even unto death like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.

What shall I say of human nature as the Christian discovers it in himself? I will only say it is impossible to exaggerate its evil. Describe it in the blackest and foulest terms, and you shall find, after all, Believers who will say man is worse than your black portrait, for only David’s language will suit us, “So foolish was I and ignorant: I was as a beast before You.”

I shall not dwell longer on this part. I have, indeed, only brought it out because I know there are so many young Christians who are dreadfully alarmed when they discover what they are by nature and who, indeed, begin on a wrong theory by supposing that the Grace of God comes to make old Adam new—whereas the Grace of God does not change our old nature. It gives us a new nature, which subdues the old—but the old nature is there, still. Old Adam is old Adam even when the new Adam is in the heart. The flesh is evil, undiluted evil, just as much as before Christ entered the soul. Therefore, Divine Grace struggles with the flesh, good strives with evil, and the life of the Believer becomes a constant and perpetual battle—the one principle striving against the other till Divine Grace, at last, gets the victory and the saint is “afterwards received to Glory.”

II. We shall now turn to the faithful EXPRESSIONS OF THE SPIRIT and God help us while we enlarge upon them. How changed the language now! Nothing of the beast, here, but rather the spirit seems to grow angelic and to borrow Heaven’s harps. Hear its first sweet word like music. “Nevertheless.” As if, notwithstanding all, not one atom the less was it true and certain that David was saved, and accepted, and that the blessings he is now about to speak of were his by a perpetual entail— “Nevertheless I am continually with You.” Here is Divine regard. Fully conscious of his own lost estate, and of the deceitfulness and vileness of his nature, yet, by a glorious burst of faith, he says, “Nevertheless I am continually with You”!

I shall not preach on that, but just let you think it over. Let each one soliloquize—“I today, a black and detestable sinner, am nevertheless, if I believe in Jesus, continually with God! Continually upon His mind, He is always thinking of me for my good. Continually before His eyes. The eyes of the Lord never sleep but perpetually watch out for my good. Continually in His hands, so that none shall be able to pluck me from them until Omnipotence itself shall be overcome. Continually on His heart, engraved there, worn there as a memorial, even as the high priest wore the names of the twelve tribes upon his heart forever.

Tried and afflicted Soul, vexed with the tempest within, look at the calm without. “Nevertheless”—O say it in your heart and suck the comfort from it, “I am continually with You.” You always think of me, O God. The heart of Your love continually yearn towards me. You are always making Providence work for my good. You never pluck me from Your heart. You have set me as a signet upon Your arm. Your love is strong as death—many waters cannot quench it. Your affection is hot as coals of juniper and yet, yet it is true, I am as a beast before You, and when You look at me You can see nothing in me, apart from Christ, but what is debased and beast-like. Surprising Grace, You see me in Christ and though in myself, abhorred, You behold me as wearing Christ’s garments and washed in His blood*—*

*“With the Savior’s garments on Holy as the Holy One.”*

And I am thus continually in Your favor—“continually with You.” Oh, it is a child’s faith—an infant faith, to be able to say, “I am with God,” when I have the light of His favor shining on me. But oh, when I see the blackness of my heart, still to believe that I am continually with Him— this is a man’s faith, what if I say, Brethren—a giant’s faith? It is so easy when you have many graces and many virtues to say, “Christ can save me.” Yes, but when your follies stare you in the face, when your sins rebuke you, still to say, “Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean,” this is faith, indeed. Blessed faith is that that does not shut its eye to the disease, but seeing it, and knowing all its venom and deadly power, still trusts it to the Balm of Gilead, and believes that it can heal!

But you will notice next that our Psalmist is not content with claiming Divine regard, he goes on to speak of Divine help and gracious operation. You hold me by the right hand”—Here is a recognition of

 the past. I am black and full of sin and treachery, why have I not fallen more? Because Your hand has held me up. O God, if You had not kept Your saints, they had been the vilest of transgressors. Oh, what should any of us have been, though we may be as stars now, if it had not been for God’s right hand? What should we have been but black blots forever, if God had left us?

Look back, Beloved, at the temptations from which you have been delivered, the trials from which you have escaped—to what do you owe all these? Why, to the fact that He has held you by your right hand and is holding you by your right hand now. Let the present be a theme for gratitude. At this hour your feet are almost gone, but not quite, for He holds you. At this moment you are ready to say, “The Lord has forgotten me. God will be gracious no more.” But He has as firm a grip of you today as ever He had. Oh, what joy it is to feel that God has a firm hold of us! If we only feel that we have a hold of Him, then our hand may fail. But if He has a hold of us, then neither death nor Hell shall ever triumph in casting us down.

And this is true of the future. He will hold us with His right hand. If we believe on Christ today, we shall certainly be kept till we see the face of Christ in Glory everlasting. Here am I but a stripling, fresh come to the battle, and there may be many years of wars and fighting for me but, “I know that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” Here are some of you whose hair has turned gray with many years of trial in the wilderness. What do you say, has God forgotten you? Veterans in God’s army, has He forsaken you? Has He deserted any of you in the moment of trial? No. Then let us, together, young and old, bless His name, that He holds us with His right hand.

But what next? We must not tarry long on any one sentence. Our Psalmist goes on to speak of Divine guidance. “You shall guide me with Your counsel,” says he. “I am foolish, I shall be sure to choose the wrong way. I am ignorant, I do not even know the right way. I am a beast and those beastly instincts of mine will constantly lead me astray. But You shall guide me by Your counsel.” See, Brethren, how he throws himself on his God—he will have nothing to do with himself. “YOU shall” is his confidence. He is completely weaned from looking within. He casts himself flat on his God. “You shall guide me with Your counsel.” That counsel

I take it, means first,  
God’s decrees—

*“He that formed in the womb,  
He shall guide me to the tomb.  
All my times shall ever be  
Ordered by His wise decree.”*

Graciously has He ordained every step of our way from this time till we arrive in Heaven. Graciously has He ordained every temptation and trial—

*“Not a single shaft can hit,*

*Till the God of love sees fit.”*  
I shall do, after all, what He decrees, have nothing but what He ordains, suffer nothing but what He thinks fit. I shall do nothing without His permission or aid. I must prevail, for thus His counsel runs to bring His many sons to Glory—“You shall guide me by Your counsel.” Many people do not like predestination, but I think when they get washed up on a rock in some dark troublous day, they will be glad to cling to this Truth of God.

Brethren, I thank God that I know there is as much in the decrees of God for a grain of dust that pains my eye, as there is in the cloud and tempest. The chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses. In the great, and in the little, Jehovah reigns. Standing in the chariot of Providence He holds the reins, and when the horses seem to be wild and to know no bit or bridle, He guides them according to His will. O rest in this, Believer—He shall guide you with His counsel. But this counsel also represents the written Word—His decree is His counsel, His written Word is our counsel, His counsel to us.

Happy is the man who has God’s Word always to direct him! What were the mariner without his compass? What were the Christian without the Bible? This is the unerring chart, the map in which every shoal is described, and all the channels from the port of destruction to the haven of salvation mapped and marked by One who has sailed along the sea. Blessed, blessed be You, O God, that we may trust You to guide us now, and guide us even to the end! And all this is to us who are like brutes before Him! O my Soul, have you ever known what it is to be thoroughly cast down till there was no hope left for you, and yet to be carried up till there was no doubt left?

‘Twas but yesterday I knew the whole of this experience in my own heart. A more wretched miserable being than I, Hell could scarcely produce, and yet a more happy joyful-hearted creature Heaven could hardly find. How, you say, how was this? When I looked within and marked depravity and death everywhere, my soul was troubled almost unto death. But when I looked to Christ and saw the fullness of the Covenant, and the complete way in which He covered all my sins and blotted out all my iniquity, my spirit was like a bird that had escaped from the fowler and soared singing up to Heaven with joy and gratitude. “You shall guide me with Your counsel.”

Then comes the last, Divine reception. “And afterward receive me to Glory.” Oh, how sweet is this—“receive me to Glory.” Catch it, Christian? I do not want you to think of what I say this morning. I want you to think of what you have felt and what your Lord is doing for you. He will receive you, to Glory—you! Why, if it had been said, “He shall damn you to all eternity,” your heart would have said, “Ah, that I richly deserve.” But He says, “I will receive you to Glory.” Slipping, sliding, falling, and yet I will bring you safe at last! Wandering, erring, straying, yet I will receive you to Glory!

Full of sin, even to the last, full of sin, haunted with unbelief even to your dying hour—tempted, perhaps on your deathbed—your very couch a part of the battlefield, and your pillow a castle to be stormed or to be defended—yet I will receive you to Glory. Brethren, that moment when you and I shall be received into Glory—can we conceive it? You are gone, frail body, no more pain. But better still, you are gone, vile flesh—no more temptation, no more sin. Old Adam, you shall rot. Let the worms devour you—glad am I to be rid of you—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in.”*

And this is your portion and my portion, though doubts and fears prevail, and we hardly dare to say that Christ is ours. Yet, resting on Him, on Him only, having nothing of our own, looking to His flowing wounds, covered with His matchless righteousness, saved at last we shall be, and we will sing forever to that matchless Divine Grace which saved us even to the end.

III. To conclude, the Psalmist has been looking at his complex self—at the flesh and groaning over it. And then at his spirit, confident in its God, and he winds up the whole story thus—“WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT YOU?” I have known men lose their property and yet they did not say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You?” I have known a man lose his wife and yet look to earth to find some comfort. I have known him lose child after child, and yet he still thought the world had many charms. I have known him sick, yet he has had pleasure in vanity.

But there is one thing which cannot happen—a man cannot know himself so as to feel his folly and his ignorance, to feel the beast-like character of his nature, without at once turning his eye to Christ. There is nothing that makes one love Christ, I think, so much as a sense of His love balanced with a sense of our unworthiness of it. It is sweet to think that Christ loves us. But oh, to remember that we are black as the tents of Kedar, and yet He loves us! This is a thought which may well wean us from everything else besides. That He should love me when I have some graces and some virtues is not a great marvel. But that He should love me, when in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing?

When I have no charms, no beauties, not one attractive attribute, not one trait of character that is worthy of His regard—that He should love me then—oh, if this does not make me swear a divorce to the world, what can? Methinks, Believer, you will come to Jesus and put your hand in His and say, “You, You alone are mine. No other love can I have but this. I cannot love the world, when I have known such affection as Yours. And when I see how little I deserve it, I must love You.” Then, the spirit flies to Heaven, thinking of all that joy and rapture which is to come, but remembering, as it enters Paradise, that it was on earth but as a beast before God.

It looks all round through Heaven and says to angels, “I cannot think of you, I can only think of Him who could love so base, so vile a creature as I am.” Surely, passing by principalities and powers, forgetting for awhile the blood-washed company, the sacramental host of God’s elect, we shall look for the Throne where Jesus sits, and we shall sing to Him and this shall be the song, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory forever and ever.” Contemplate much, Believer, your own sad state, contemplate yet more your own safety and perfection in Christ. And these two things together shall make you despise the world and its joys, make you tread on the world and its trials, and make you feel such a knitting and union of heart to Christ, to Christ Jesus only, that you may say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You.”

I thought I saw just now before my eyes a dark and horrible pit and down deep below, where the eyes could not reach, lay a being broken in pieces, whose groans and howling pierced the awful darkness and amazed my ears. I thought I saw a bright one fly from the highest Heaven and in an instant dive into that black darkness till he was lost and buried in it. I waited for a moment and to my mind’s eye I saw two spirits rising from the horrid deep, with arms entwined, as though one was bearing up the other, I saw them emerge from the gloom. I heard the fairest of them say, as He mounted into light, “I have loved you and given Myself for you.”

And I heard the other say, who was that poor broken one just now, “I was foolish and ignorant, I was as a beast before You.” Before I could write the words both spirits had risen into mid air and I heard one of them say “You shall be with Me in Paradise,” and the other whispered, “Nevertheless I am continually with You.” As they mounted higher, I heard One say, “None shall pluck you out of My hand,” and I heard the other say “You hold me by my right hand.” As still they rose they continued the loving dialogue. “I will guide you with My eyes,” said the bright One. The other answered, “You shall guide me with Your counsel.”

They reached the bright clouds that separate earth from Heaven and as they parted to make way for the glorious One, He said, “I will give you to sit upon My Throne even as I have overcome and sit upon My Father’s Throne,” and the other answered, “And You shall afterward receive me to Glory.” Lo the clouds closed their doors and they were gone. I thought again they opened and I saw those two spirits soaring onward beyond stars and sun and moon—right up beyond principalities and powers—on, beyond cherubim and seraphim. Right on beyond every name that is named, until in that ineffable brightness, dark with insufferable light, the awful glory of the Deity whom eye cannot see, both those spirits were lost and there came the sound of joyous hallelujahs from the spirits which are before the Throne of God.

May it be your lot and mine thus to be brought up, for we are thus fallen. May it be ours to be thus caught up to the third Heaven, for we are thus broken and cast down into the lowest Hell by nature. God give us faith in Christ. Faith in Christ—that is the link, the bond, the tie. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief.”

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GUIDANCE TO GRACE AND GLORY  
NO. 2389

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, DECEMBER 2, 1894.  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 4, 1888.

**“You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.” Psalm 73:24.**

The Psalmist, here, evidently perceives that his Lord is near. He does not so much speak of God as to Him—“You shall guide me with Your counsel.” You know what the French call, tutoyage—you-ing and youing—there is something of that kind of language in the text, a speaking in tones of hallowed familiarity with God. As if the Lord were close by, the Psalmist says to Him, “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory”—not in the way of prayer asking God to do so, but in childlike confidence expressing the conviction that it shall be so and rejoicing in the blessed assurance of it. “You shall”—I know You will, I am sure of it, I have firm reliance on it, and I bless You for it—“You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.” It is not every man who can talk like that and it is not every believing man who has yet attained confidence enough to dare to speak so. It is well if you can only pray that this may be the case with you, but the sweetness lies in grasping this Truth of God with a childlike delight and, with unfaltering faith believing it to be yours. “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.”

The Psalmist had been, to some extent, finding fault with the Providence of God. There had been, in his mind, a quarrel with God’s proceedings. He saw the wicked in great power, having all their wishes and desires gratified in every way, while he, himself, was sorely plagued and chastened, and he could not quite understand it. But now, even though he does not comprehend it, he yields to God’s superior judgment, he lays aside his own logic and arguments and he says, “No, Lord, I will no longer be a debater, but You shall guide me. I will no longer look for present joy, I will look to that which is to come afterward. You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward shall come my brilliant days, my times of joy—afterward You will receive me to Glory.” You see that after drifting about for a while, the Psalmist has come to a good anchorage. He has found a resting place, as the birds do, when, after wandering away, they fly back to their nest and he sings, “Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.” Sitting down once more at the feet of his Lord, he looks up into those dear, tender, loving, watchful eyes and he says, “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory. My discussions are all over now. My questions are at an end. I will rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, and my soul shall be content with His will, whatever it is.” I pray that what the Holy Spirit may lead me to say upon my text may have an effect something like that upon any tempest-tossed spirits here. May they also be brought to rest in the Lord!

First, dear Friends, I will speak concerning the conviction which led the Psalmist to take a guide. Secondly, I will say a little upon the confidence which led him to take God for his Guide. Thirdly, I will talk to you about the delightful commerce between the Psalmist and his God which began when God had become his Guide, and continued throughout his life. And then, the fourth point, which shall be our finis, shall be, the sure result of this guidance. “You shall afterward receive me to Glory.”

I. First, then, concerning THE CONVICTION WHICH LED THE PSALMIST TO TAKE A GUIDE. Happily for him, that conviction came very early. If I am to have a guide on my journey, I should like to have one at the beginning, for it is the starting that has so much to do with all the rest of the way. If I start due south when I ought to have gone north, I shall have to retrace many a weary step! Dear young Friends, if you can have God to be your Guide, now, in the morning of life, how happy you will be! It will influence for good the whole of your future existence, depend upon it! As the river is colored by the glacier from which it flows and never, even when larger and deeper, quite loses the whiteness of its mountain source, so, if you begin with God at the fountainhead and spring of life, there will be a peculiar charm around your pathway as long as you live! Permit me to say that I have found it so myself. I can say to my Lord and do often say it, “O God, You have taught me from my youth, and until now have I declared Your wondrous works! Now, when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not.” There is a sweet plea when years multiply upon you, if you can say to the Lord—

*“In early years You were my Guide,  
And of my youth the Friend.”*

David began to experience Divine guidance while he was a shepherd boy and it was well for him that it was so. But why did he ever feel that he needed a guide? I suppose it was because of a work of Grace upon his heart, for, naturally, we do not like being guided. The mother’s apron strings grow irksome to the young man when he finds the down coming upon his cheek—he will have his own way—is it not manly to be one’s own master? Allow me to say that there is no worse master! You had better serve the greatest tyrant than be your own master! But it is often thus with the young—at first they call it liberty to have their own way. And it is only when the Grace of God softens and sobers them, when He gives the young men wisdom, knowledge and discretion, that they begin to dream that they need a guide.  
I heard a good old man speak, the other day. He was a doctor of divinity and I introduced him to the children, in a somewhat merry manner, by telling them that he was a doctor of divinity and that doctors of divinity knew everything, and a few things beside. But when he began to speak, he said, “My dear Children, I do not know everything, but I will tell you one thing that I do know, I know that I do not know much. I have been a long time learning it, but I have, at last, learned that I do not know much.” And when he had expatiated upon that, he said, “and, dear Children, I have learned another thing—I know that I am not fit to take care of myself. I wonder,” he added, “whether all the boys and girls here have yet come to that conviction, that they are not fit to take care of themselves, and that they need somebody to lead them all the way through life.”

It is a fine piece of knowledge when you have learned as much as that! I pray that all who are young may learn it soon and that others who, by painful experience, begin to see that they are not quite as wise as they thought they were, will come to the conclusion that they are not fit to manage themselves, after all—and that they need a higher power, a wiser eye, a keener mind, a mightier hand, a more supreme will to govern them than any that they have of their own.

I suppose that the Psalmist said to the Lord, “You shall guide me,” because he had been convinced of his own folly and, therefore, felt that it was well to commit himself into wiser hands. And also, perhaps, that he had obtained some knowledge of the difficulties of the way. The way of life is a trying one to most people. To many it is very difficult. To those who find it easy, it is probably less so than to those who find it difficult. It is a very unfriendly world to live in if you have to fight with poverty, or if you have to work hard to provide for the day’s needs. But I question whether it is not a worse world to the man who has not to work and who has all that heart can wish. The most perilous position for a young man to be placed in is, very early in life, to have a large income with nobody to check him in spending it, and to be permitted to do just whatever he likes.

Oh, those very smooth ways—how many slip therein who might have stood, perhaps, had the road been rougher! But to no one of us is the path of life an easy one if we desire to be pure, clean, upright and accepted with God. He is, indeed, a fool who attempts to walk in

 that way without a guide! Look at yourself, full of folly. Look at the way, full of pitfalls and dangers of every kind. You may well stop and say, “I must have a guide, I dare not go alone a step further on such a perilous path.” No doubt the Psalmist had seen others set out without a guide and he had heard of their falls, and of their ruin. You have not lived long, young man, but you have been in the world long enough to have seen or to have heard of many who seemed likely to be great and good who, nevertheless, have come to an evil end. That will be your portion, too, as well as theirs, if you venture to walk in this difficult way without a guide.

The Psalmist’s desire to have a guide also showed his great anxiety to be right. I wish that all men began life with an earnest desire to act rightly and that each one would say, “I shall never live this life, again. I should like to make it a good one as far as I can.” Since you cannot come back to mend it, but, as it is, it will have to be presented before the great Judge of All, seek to do that which is right each day and to obey your God every hour you live. If this were the intense desire of everyone of us, we would be driven at once to this conclusion—“I must have a guide. I want to live a glorious life and if I am to do so, I must be helped in it, for I am incompetent for the task by myself.”

I am merely giving you the outline of a sermon. I have not time to fill it up, so now I leave this first point, the conviction which led the Psalmist to take a guide.

II. Secondly, let us think of THE CONFIDENCE WHICH LED HIM TO TAKE GOD AS HIS GUIDE. If we were but in our right senses, we would all do so!

A man, looking about wisely for a guide, will prefer to have the very best—and is not God, who is infinitely wise, the best Guide that we can have? Who questions it? Is not the Lord, also, the most loving, the most tender, the most considerate, the most fatherly of all beings who can be chosen as a guide? Wisdom, when attended with discourtesy and unfeeling roughness, may be shunned by us, but Divine Wisdom, dressed in robes of love and tenderness, invites us to run into her arms! Choose God, I pray you, because He so well knows the way and because He has such a tender love for poor trembling humanity.

Choose Him, also, because of His constant, unceasing, Infallible care. If I choose a guide who may die on the road, I am likely to be unhappy, but God will never die. If I choose a guide who, being my friend at the start, will not care for me when I have advanced half way on my journey, I am unwise in my choice. But God cannot change, He will always be the same! If I had to ascend the Alps and I selected a guide who could help me over the easy portions of the road, but would be unable to aid me in the more difficult parts of it, I should again be unhappy. The Lord is a Guide who will never fail, never alter and never die. Oh, you are wise, indeed, if you will say to Him, “My God, You shall guide me with Your counsel!”

But will God guide us? Well, it were in vain to choose Him if He would not! But of all beings, God is most easy of access. You know how it is with some of us who are very, very, very busy and who scarcely ever have a moment’s rest at all from the rising of the sun till far into the night. There is a knock at the door. There is another knock at the door. There is another and, at last, if we are to be prepared for our public duties, we are obliged to say that we cannot be seen—we must have a little time to ourselves. But there is never an hour when God cannot be seen, never a moment when His door will not open to any who come to ask advice of Him! And God is everywhere, so that, wherever you are, you can find Him—not only in the place where you bow the knee in private prayer, but out on the exchange, amid the throng of men, or in the streets, or on the omnibus, or in the ship at sea, or in the train—anywhere and everywhere! A breath, an aspiration will find Him, or—

*“The upward glancing of an eye,”*  
a sigh, an unexpressed desire and you have come to Him at once! And He has servants everywhere to do the bidding of His love when we have sought His help.

The Psalmist was truly wise in saying to the Lord, “You shall guide me with Your counsel.” Dear Friends, are you equally wise in that way? I see young men and women here in considerable numbers—will not each of you say, “Yes, Lord, it is even so. From this 4th day of October, my heart says to You, ‘You shall guide me with Your counsel’”?

III. Now I must pass on to my third point, only skimming the surface of the subject. Think of THE HEAVENLY COMMERCE WHICH NOW BEGINS BETWEEN THE SOUL AND ITS GUIDE.

How does God guide men? Here, let me warn you against the superstitions which some persons use with the idea that God will guide them in that way. Above all, avoid the superstition which some practice by opening the Bible at random in the hope of being guided by the text which comes first to sight! You will often be misled if you act thus. The heathen acted so with Virgil and I think the heathen were, in that respect, better than Christians, because when they played the fool, they did it with Virgil—not with God’s Book. Do not so, I pray you. One of these days you may open at this text, “He went and hanged himself,” and if you are not satisfied with that passage, you may open the Bible at another place, and find it written, “Go, and do you likewise,” but that will not excuse you if you commit suicide! Nothing can be more wicked and absurd than such a practice as that.

How, then, does God guide us? First, by the general directions of His Word. You need to know what God would have you to do. Nine times out of ten, look to the Ten Commandments and you will, at least, know what you must not do—and knowing what you must not do, you will be able to conclude what you may do. There are some wonderfully plain directions in God’s Word as to all manner of circumstances and conditions. You may often imitate the saints of old and you may always imitate their Master! And, in imitating Christ, you will know what to do. This is the question that will guide you as to your course of action—What would Jesus Christ have done if He had been in my circumstances? Apart from His Godhead, in which you cannot copy Him, what would the Man, Christ Jesus, have done? Do that—for it is sure to be the wisest thing! So, first, be guided by the general directions given in God’s Word.

The next way of guidance is that there are great principles infused in every man who takes God for his Guide. Among the rest, there are principles like this—avoid everything that is evil. That one direction post will often stop you and show you which way you ought not to go, because, if there is anything wrong about the road, however profitable it may seem to be, however easy and pleasant it is and, above all, however customary it is for others to go that way, you must not travel along it! There are many in the broad road, but you must not make one more. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there are that find it.” You keep to the narrow way and you will be in the right road.

The next general principle of our holy religion is that we ought to live for the Glory of God, alone. You could not have a much better guide than such questions as these—“What action would reflect most honor upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Which course would be most creditable to my religious profession? Which would be likely to do most good?” Follow that rule—it is almost equal to the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest if you have these questions to guide you!

You are bid, also, to show love to your fellow men. If you are in a difficulty about two courses of action, do the more loving of the two—that by which you can most deny yourself and most benefit your fellow creatures—especially with reference to their salvation. Thus, by infusing principles of self-denial, principles of faith in God, principles of humility and contentment, the Word of God and the Spirit of God supply us with directions on the road we are to travel.

Next to this, God guides His people on the way of life by giving a certain balance of the faculties. When we come to God in penitence—when we are born again of the Spirit and live by faith in Christ—then, first of all, fear is banished and faith takes its place. We are then better able to judge which is the right road. “There were they in great fear, where no fear was.” Many a man has done wrong because he had not the courage to do right, but you who have been born again have not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of love, courage and faith! And you have a sound mind, so that thus you are guided aright. By your faculties being left undisturbed by fear, your mental balance is maintained!

Obstinacy is a shocking thing as a guide in life. Young men have resolved that they will do so and so if they die for it. Yes, but the Grace of God dethrones obstinacy and gives us, in its place, acquiescence in the Divine will. Bowing with submission to the will of God—by that very fact we are furnished with unerring guidance!

Haste, too, is the author of a great deal of mischief in human life. Men are in such a hurry that they make all manner of mistakes, but the habit of praying about everything is, in itself, a great guide. You have to stop a while and the very stopping lets you see more than you would have seen in your hurry. The habit of praying before you leap leads to the habit of looking before you leap—and then, when you perceive that you cannot leap—prayer gives you enough of prudence to resolve that you will go round some other way. Thus you are wisely guided in life.

Above all, the Grace of God guides us very much by the dethroning of self as the traitorous lord of our being and makes us loyal to Christ. When a man acts out of loyalty to Christ, he is pretty sure to act very wisely and rightly. On this point, alone, I would have liked to have had an hour’s talk with you, but I must draw my remarks to a close.

I believe that, over and above this infusion of right principles, and balancing of the faculties, there is a special illumination of mind which comes from dwelling near God. Everybody knows how near akin sin is to insanity. Well, now, remember that holiness is as near akin to perfect wisdom as sin is to insanity! When you yield yourself to the holy influences of God’s Presence, you shall have given to you what men call “shrewd commonsense,” but what is really an illumination of mind which comes from dwelling near God and being made like He!

And, lastly, I believe that at the very worst times, when all these things will fail you as a guide, you may expect mysterious impulses, for which you can never account, which will come to you and guide you aright. There are many stories, which I should like to have told, relating to instances in which men of God have been directed, by some strange impulse on their minds, to do things which they had never thought of doing. And what they have done has turned out to be for the saving of life, or for deliverance from great evils. Oh, yes, if you live near God, He will say things to you that He will not tell anybody else! There are monitions of the Spirit which come to men who deal intimately with the Invisible that do not come to everybody—only let not every fool who gets a silly notion into his head run away with the idea that it came from God!

Only this week, a young man said to me, “You believe the Bible, Sir?” “Yes, I believe the Bible, certainly.” “Do you believe what God says?” “Certainly I do.” “Well,” he said, “I had a revelation, the other night and a voice said to me, ‘Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it.”’ “All right,” I said. And he then said to me, “That door leads into your College and you are to take me in.” I replied, “So I will when I get a revelation that I am to do so, but, you see, the revelation, whatever it is worth, has only come to you and I shall not let you in till I have one to the same effect.” I have a notion that I shall never have that revelation, and that he received it, not from God’s Word, but through a slight aperture in his cracked brain! There are many persons who get revelations of that kind, to which we pay no sort of attention. The mysterious impulses that I mean come only to those who are really serving God and who, in closely waiting upon Him, find that “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant.”

IV. But I must finish my discourse. The finis was to be, THE SURE RESULT OF THIS GUIDANCE. “You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.”

On earth there is no real glory for us unless we are guided by God’s counsel. There is no true glory for any man who takes his own course. Glory is for those of you who put your hand into the hand of the great Father and pray Him to forgive all your iniquities for Christ’s sake and lead you in the way everlasting. Afterward, He will receive you to Glory. This is a delightful thought, but I can now only answer this one question. When we die, who will receive us into Glory? Well, I do not doubt that the angels will. John Bunyan’s description of the shining ones who come down to the brink of the river to help the pilgrims up on the other side of the cold stream—I doubt not is all true, but the text tells us of Somebody better than the angels who will come and receive us! Our dying prayer to our Lord will be, “Into Your hands I commend my spirit,” and His answer will be, “I receive you to Glory.” Our heavenly Father stands watching for the moment when our redeemed spirit shall pass into His hands that He may receive it! Our Savior, who bought us with His precious blood, stands waiting to receive the jewel for which He paid so dear a price! The Spirit of God, who dwells in us, is also waiting to perfect the work which He has carried on so long—and to lift us up into the blessedness of the Eternal City.

Oh, how I wish that every person here who has not yet yielded himself or herself to Christ, would do so now! Breathe silently these words before you leave the pew. I will give you a second or two in which to do it—“You shall guide me with your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.” Bow your heads and let that prayer be offered.

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Lord, You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory! For Jesus’ sake, accept this resolve! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *Psalm 39.*  
To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.

Jeduthun was one of those who led the sacred song in the House of God in David’s day and, long afterwards, we find the son of Jeduthun still engaged in this holy service! What a blessing it is to be succeeded in the work of God by your children from generation to generation! May that be your privilege, my dear Brothers and Sisters! May your families never lack a man to stand before the Lord God of Israel to sing His praises! This is called, “A Psalm of David.” His life was a very checkered one. Sometimes he was very joyous and then he wrote bright and happy Psalms. But he was a man of strong passions and deep feelings, so at times he was very sad. And then he touched the mournful string. This is a very sorrowful Psalm, but it is full of teaching. How grateful we ought to be that such a man as David ever lived and that he had such wonderful experiences! It may be said of him that he was—

*“A man so various, that he seemed to be*

*Not one, but all mankind’s epitome.”*  
Well was he made the type of Christ in whose great heart the joys and sorrows of humanity met to the fullest! Thus the Psalmist sings—

Verse 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways. It is not everybody who would like to remember what he has uttered, but David could remember and dwell upon what he had formerly said—“I said, I will take heed to my ways.” That is a good thing to do. He that does not take heed to his ways had need do so. Heedless and careless and heedless and graceless are much the same thing. He that does not take heed of what he does will be sure to do wrong.

1. That I sin not with my tongue. He that does not sin with his tongue usually has his whole nature under government. The tongue is the rudder of the vessel and if that is managed well, the ship will be rightly steered. “I said, I resolved, I determined and I uttered my determination—I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.” Just then David was sinning in his heart, for it was in a great state of ferment, but he said, “I will not sin with my tongue.” It was with him as it sometimes is with the captain of a vessel—if someone on board is suffering from the yellow fever, the ship master will not send a boat to shore for fear of spreading infection. His vessel will be in quarantine till all danger is past. It was thus with David—while all within him was seething and boiling in feverish impatience, he said, “I shall not speak for the present, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.”

1. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. The marginal reading is, “with a muzzle for my mouth.” David would not speak at all and herein he was not right. If he had said, “I will keep my mouth with a bridle,” as our translation has it, that would have been perfectly proper. We ought never to leave off bridling our tongue, but David muzzled his. He would not speak at all while the wicked were before him. He knew that they would misconstrue his words, that they would make mischief of whatever he said, so he muzzled himself when in their company.

2. I was dumb with silence. “I did not speak, I could not speak—‘I was dumb with silence.’”  
2. I held my peace, even from good. David’s conduct proves that even when we are doing something which is right, we are apt to overdo it, and so we stray into a vice while pursuing a virtue! You can run so close to the heels of a virtue that they may knock out your teeth—you may be so ardent for one good thing that you may miss another—“I held my peace, even from good.”  
2. And my sorrow was stirred. Not giving it vent, it boiled and seethed. “My sorrow was stirred.” Sometimes a little talk is a great easement to a troubled spirit, but, as David was dumb, his sorrow was not still.  
3. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing, the fire burned. There was an inward friction, his griefs kept revolving till his heart grew hot. This heat generated fire which burned so vehemently that, at last, the Psalmist could not help himself, and he was obliged to speak.  
3. Then spoke I with my tongue. Whether rightly or wrongly, he must say something! He could not hold himself in any longer—“Then spoke I with my tongue.”  
4. LORD. If you must speak, address your words to the Lord! So David does. He does not speak to the wicked, but he prays to God most holy.  
4. Make me to know my end. Did he wish to die? Perhaps so. You remember that one of the two men who never died once prayed that he might die. Elijah did so. And David does so, here, I think, if I put a hard construction on his speech—“Lord, make me to know my end.” But if I read it more tenderly, I may make it to mean, “Lord, help me to recollect that my sorrows will not last forever!” That thought will tone them down and keep them in check—“Make me to know my end.”  
4-5. And the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, You have made my days as an handbreadth. That is, the breadth of your four fingers—all the length of life is to be measured by a span.  
5. And my age is as nothing before You. All that exists is as nothing before God. What are even the elder-born of angels but the infants of an hour in contrast with the ages of eternity? The world, itself, is only like a bubble blown yesterday! The sun is as a spark struck from the anvil of Omnipotence but a few days ago! And as for man, compared with the eternal God, he is “as nothing.”  
5. Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. Or, as the Hebrew has it, every Adam is all Abel. Was not Abel the child of Adam, and was he not soon cut off? Every man, even at his best state, is altogether vanity! What poor creatures we are! Our breath is not more airy than we, ourselves, are! Our lives are but as a mist that is blown away by the wind. “Selah.” When the Psalmist had come so far, he stopped a while, to tighten up the strings of his harp—such pressure as he had given it had taken away its melodious tones and it needed to be brought, again, up to concert pitch.

6. Surely every man walks in a vain show. Like players, or actors, all of us are walking in a phantom show which is not really anything, but only seems to be.  
6. Surely they are disquieted in vain. They make a dreadful noise in the tumult of the battle, the din of the exchange, the hum of the streets, the fret and worry of the counting house, but it is all in vain.  
6. He heaps up riches, and knows not who shall gather them. If a man does succeed in amassing wealth, it is a poor success. The muckrake gathers and then comes the fork that scatters. One man hoards it up and another takes as much delight in squandering it! They think that they have entailed their estate and that their name and house will continue as long as the sun, but it all comes to nothing. “Vanity of vanities,” said the son of David, “all is vanity,” and his father had said so before him!  
7. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in You. There is no vanity in that declaration! Now we are on the Rock, now we have come to something real. When a man trusts in the unchanging God and hopes in the ever-blessed Savior, he has come out of his state of vanity—“My hope is in You.”  
8. Deliver me from all my transgressions. We had not expected David to offer that prayer. We might have thought that he would say, “Deliver me from all my troubles and from my many vexing thoughts.” But no, he lays the axe at the root of the evil—“Deliver me from all my transgressions.” There is only One who can do that, even the glorious Son of God, who lived and died to save His people from their sins!  
8. Make me not the reproach of the foolish. “The wicked will be ready enough to catch me up and pour scorn upon me. Lord, keep me so right with You and so near to Yourself that they may never be able to reproach me!”  
9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because You did it. This verse should read, “I will be dumb, I will not open my mouth because You have done it.” That is a better silence than the first, for the Psalmist is getting into a right state. This is the proper silence—the other was brazen—this is golden! God help us to know how and when to practice it! Never speak against God whatever He does—open not your mouth when He chastens because whatever He does must be right!  
10. Remove Your stroke away from me. Having come to complete submission, he ventures to pray for deliverance from his sorrow. You may pray very boldly and very freely when you can truly say, “Your will be done.” David had said that he would not open his mouth against his God—and now he begins to plead, “Remove Your stroke away from me.”  
10. I am consumed by the blow of Your hand. When God strikes it is no playing matter—a blow of His hand consumes us!  
11. When You with rebukes correct man for iniquity, You make his beauty to consume away like a moth. As a moth eats up the fur or the cloth and spoils it, so, when God’s corrections come upon us, our beauty is soon gone. Poor beauty it must be that can so soon go! Lord, let Your beauty be upon us, for no moth can ever eat into that!  
11. Surely every man is vanity. Selah. In the fifth verse, you see that when the Psalmist reached that point, he stopped, and said, “Selah,” and he does so, again, here. Striking his music with a heavy hand—he has put it out of tune, again, so he pauses and begins to tighten the strings up once more. You and I often need to be tightened up like the strings of a harp, to put us in right order before we go on to praise or to pray.  
12. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry. See how David’s “prayer” grows into a “cry”? It deepens in intensity—there is more power in a cry than in an ordinary prayer—it shows more earnestness and implies greater urgency! “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry.”  
12. Hold not Your peace at my tears. That is a still more powerful mode of pleading. Tears are the irresistible weapons of weakness. Women, children, beggars and sinners can all conquer by tears—when they can win by nothing else! If they will take to these pearly drops and especially if they can look through them to the crimson drops of a Savior’s blood, they can win what they will of God—“Hold not Your peace at my tears.”  
12. For I am a stranger with You. The Believer is a stranger in this world, just as God is! The Lord made the world, but the world does not know its Maker and it does not know His people—  
*“‘Tis no surprising thing,  
That we should be unknown!  
The Jewish world knew not their King,  
God’s everlasting Son.”*  
“I am a stranger,” not to You, but, “with You, a stranger even as You are.” There is another very beautiful meaning to this expression. You know how the Orientals exercise hospitality to strangers? When they once take them into their tent, they supply them liberally and treat them honorably. “I am a stranger with You.” I am a poor alien who has come into God’s House, to tarry for a while with Him, I have eaten of His salt, I have cast myself upon His protection, so He will certainly take care of me—“I am a stranger with You.”  
12. And a sojourner, as all my fathers were. “They did not remain here. My fathers used this world merely as an inn, at which they stayed for a night. In the morning, they hurried on to the City that has foundations, on the other side of Jordan—  
*“To the islands of the Blessed,  
To the land of the Hereafter,”*  
where the saints dwell forever with their Lord!  
13. O spare me—“Deal gently with me! Do not break me in pieces! If You must smite me, yet do not altogether crush me. O spare me”—  
13. That I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more. “Let me be able to take a little nourishment and to gather my faculties together, yet again, that I may sing to You some sweeter hymn before I cease to be in the land of the living, and go out of this world.” So, you see, this is a sweet Psalm, after all! It is a bitter sweet—a sweet bitter—a Psalm that tends towards our spiritual health. Many of us understand what David meant by it. May others, who as yet do not, soon be taught its gracious lessons! Amen.

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Sermon #288 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

“LET US PRAY”  
NO. 288

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 6, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“But it is good for me to draw near to God.”  
Psalm 73:28.**

THERE are many ways by which the true Believer draws near to God. The gates of the king’s palace are many. And through the love of Jesus and the rich grace of his Spirit, it is our delight to enter and approach our heavenly Father. First and foremost among these is communion, that sweet converse which man holds with God, that state of nearness to God, in which our mutual secrets are revealed—our hearts being open unto Him, His heart being manifested to us. Here it is we see the invisible and hear the unutterable.

The outward symbol of fellowship is the sacred Supper of the Lord at which, by means of simple emblems, we are divinely enabled to feed, after a spiritual sort, upon the flesh and blood of the Redeemer. This is a pearly gate of fellowship, a royal road which our feet delight to tread. Moreover, we draw near to God even in our sighs and tears, when our desolate spirits long for His sacred Presence, crying, “Whom have I in Heaven but You and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You!” And as often as we read the promise written in the Word and are enabled to receive it and rest upon it as the very words of a Covenant God, we do really “Draw near to Him.”

Nevertheless, prayer is the best used means of drawing near to God. You will excuse me, then, if in considering my text this morning, I confine myself entirely to the subject of prayer. It is in prayer mainly, that we draw near to God. Certainly it can be said emphatically of prayer, that it is good for every man who knows how to practice that heavenly art, in it to draw near unto God. To assist your memories, that the sermon may abide with you in later days, I shall divide my discourse this morning in a somewhat singular manner.

First, I shall look upon my text as being a touchstone, by which we may try our prayers, yes, and try ourselves, too. Then I shall take the text as a whetstone to sharpen our desires, to make us more earnest and more diligent in supplication, because “it is good to draw near to God.” Then I shall have the solemn task in the last place of using it as a tombstone, with a direful epitaph upon it for those who do not know what it is to

draw near to God. For “A prayerless soul is a Christless soul.”

I. First, then, regard my text as A TOUCHSTONE by which you may test your prayers and thus try yourselves.  
That is not prayer of which it cannot be said that there was in it a drawing near unto God. Come here then with your supplications. I see one coming forward who says, “I am in the daily habit of using a form of prayer both at morning and at evening. I could not be happy if I went abroad before I had first repeated my morning prayer, nor could I rest at night without again going over the holy sentence appointed for use at eventide. Sir, my form is the very best that could possibly be written. It was compiled by a famous bishop, one who was glorified in martyrdom and ascended to his God in a fiery chariot of flame.”  
My Friend, I am glad to hear, if you use a form, that you use the best. If we must have forms at all, let them be of the most excellent kind. So far so good. But let me ask you a question—I am not about to condemn you for any form you may have used—but tell me now and tell me honestly from your inmost soul, have you drawn near to God while you have been repeating those words? For if not, O solemn thought!—all the prayers you have ever uttered have been an idle mockery.  
You have said prayers, but you have never prayed in your life. Imagine not that there is any enchantment in any particular set of words. You might as well repeat the alphabet backwards, or the “Abracadabra” of a wizard, as go over the best form in the world, unless there is something more than form in it. Have you drawn near to God? Suppose that one of us should be desirous of presenting a petition to the House of Commons? We wisely ask in what manner the petition should be worded. We procure the exact phrases. And suppose that in the morning we rise and read this form, or repeat it to ourselves and conclude with, “And your petitioners will ever pray,” and the like?

We do the same again at night, the same the next day and for months we continue the practice. One day meeting some member of the House, we accost him and astonish him by saying, “Sir, I wonder I have never had an answer from the House, I have been petitioning these last six months and the form that I used was the most accurate that could be procured.” “But,” says he, “how was your petition presented?” “Presented! I had not thought of that, I have repeated it.” “Yes,” he would say, “and you may repeat it many a long day before any good comes from it! It is not the repeating it, but the presenting of the petition and having it pleaded by some able friend that will get you the boon you desire.”  
And so it may be, my Friend, that you have been repeating collects and prayers. And have you ignorantly imagined that you have prayed? Why, your prayer has never been presented. You have not laid it before the bleeding Lamb of God and have not asked Him to take it for you into the sacred place where God abides and there to present the petition with His own merits before His Father’s Throne. I will not bid you cease from your form. But I do beseech you by the living God, either cease from it, or else beg the Holy Spirit to enable you to draw near to God in it.  
Oh, I beseech you, take not what I may say for any censoriousness. I speak now as God’s own messenger in this matter. Your prayer has not been heard and it neither can nor will be answered unless there is in it a true and real desire to draw near to God. “Ah,” says another, “I am pleased to hear these remarks, for I am in the habit of offering extempore prayer every morning and evening and at other times. Besides, I like to hear you speak against the form, Sir.” Mark, I did not speak against the form, that is not my business upon this occasion. One class of sinners is always pleased to hear another class of sinners found fault with.  
You say you offer an extempore supplication. I bring your prayer to the same touchstone as the former. What is there in the form that you can extemporize, that it should be so much better than that which was composed by some holy man of God? Possibly your extempore form is not worth a farthing and if it could be written, might be a disgrace to prayermakers. I bring you at once to the test—have you in your prayer drawn near to God? When you have been on your knees in the morning, have you thought that you were talking to the King of Heaven and earth? Have you breathed your desires, not to the empty winds, but into the ear of the Eternal? Have you desired to come to Him and tell Him your wants and have you sought at His hands the answer to your requests? Remember, you have not prayed successfully or acceptably unless you have in prayer endeavored to draw near to God.  
Suppose now, (to take a case) that I should desire some favor of a friend. I shut myself up alone and I commence delivering an oration, pleading earnestly for the boon I need. I repeat this at night and so on month after month. At last I meet my friend and I tell him that I have been asking a favor of him and that he has never heard my prayer. “No,” says he “I have never seen you, you never spoke to me.” “Ah, but you should have heard what I said. If you had but heard it surely it would have moved your heart.” “Ah,” says he, “but then you did not address it to me.  
You wrote a letter, you tell me, in moving strains, but did you post the letter? Did you see it was delivered to me?” “No, no,” you say, “I kept the letter after I had written it. I never sent it to you.” Now mark, it is just the same with extempore prayer. You plead. But if you are not pleading with God, to what effect is your pleading? You talk, but if you are not talking to a manifestly present God, to what effect is all your talking? If you do not seek to come near to Him, what have you done? You have offered sacrifice, maybe, but it has been upon your own high places and the sacrifice has been an abomination. You have not brought it up to God’s one altar. You have not come up to the Mercy Seat, where is His own visible presence! You have not drawn near to God and consequently your prayers, though they are multiplied by tens of thousands, are utterly valueless to your soul’s benefit. Drawing near to God is an indispensable requisite in accepted prayer.  
But, now, lest I should be misunderstood as to this drawing near to God, let me attempt to describe it in degrees, for all men cannot draw near to God with the same nearness of access. When first the life of grace begins in the soul you will draw near to God, but it will be with great fear and trembling. The soul conscious of guilt, and humbled thereby, is overawed with the solemnity of its position. It is cast to the earth with the grandeur of that God in whose presence it stands. I remember the first time I ever sincerely prayed in my life. But the words I used I remember not. Surely there were few enough words in that petition. I had often repeated a form. I had been in the habit of continually repeating it.  
At last I came really to pray. And then I saw myself standing before God, in the immediate presence of the heart-searching Jehovah and I said within myself, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear—but now my eyes see You. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” I felt like Esther when she stood before the King, faint and overcome with dread. I was full of penitence of heart, because of His majesty and my sinfulness. I think the only words I could utter were something like these—“Oh, Ah.” And the only complete sentence was, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” The overwhelming splendor of His majesty, the greatness of His power, the severity of his justice, the immaculate Character of His holiness and all His dreadful grandeur—these things overpowered my soul and I fell down in utter prostration of spirit.  
But there was in that a true and real drawing near to God. Oh, if some of you when you are in your Churches and Chapels, did but realize that you are in God’s Presence, surely you might expect to see scenes more marvelous than any of the convulsions of the Irish revival. If you knew that God was there—that you were speaking to Him, that in His ear you were uttering that oft repeated confession, “We have done the things that we ought not to have done, we have left undone the things that we ought to have done”—ah, my Friends, there would be then a deep humility and a solemn abasement of spirit. May God grant to us all, as often as we offer prayer of any sort, that we may truly and really draw near to Him, even if it is only in this sense.  
After new life as the Christian grows in grace, although he will never forget the solemnity of his position and never will lose that holy awe which must overshadow a gracious man—when he is in the presence of a God, who can create or can destroy—yet that fear has all its terror taken out of it. It becomes a holy reverence and no more a slavish abject dread. Then the man of God, walking amid the splendors of deity and veiling his face like the glorious cherubim, with those twin wings, the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, will, reverent and bowed in spirit, approach the Throne. And seeing there a God of love, of goodness and of mercy, he will realize rather the covenant character of God than His absolute Deity.  
He will see in God rather His goodness than His greatness and more of His love than of His majesty. Then will the soul, bowing again as reverently as before, enjoy a sacred liberty of intercession. For while humbled in the presence of the Infinite God, it is yet sustained by the Divine consciousness of being in the presence of mercy and of love in infinite degree. This is a state to which men reach after they have had their sins forgiven, after they have passed from death unto life. Then they come to rejoice in God and draw near to Him with confidence.  
There is yet a third and higher stage, which I fear, too few among us ever arrive at. When the child of God, awed by the splendor and delighting in the goodness of God, sees something which is more enchanting to him than either of these, namely, the fact of his relationship to God, he sees on the Throne, not simply goodness, but his Father’s goodness, not merely love, but love which has from all eternity been set upon him. Love which has made him its darling, which has written his name upon its breast. Love which for his sake did even deign to die. Then the child of God comes near to the Throne, then he takes hold of his Father’s knees and though conscious of the greatness of the God, yet is he still more alive to the loveliness of the Father and he cries, “My Father, hear my prayer and grant me my request, for Jesus’ sake.”  
In this position it sometimes happens that the child of God may pray in such a way that others cannot understand him at all. If you had heard Martin Luther pray, some of you would have been shocked. Perhaps it would have been presumption if you had prayed as he did, because Martin Luther was God’s own son and you, alas, are destitute of sonship. He had a liberty to talk to God as another man had not. If you are not the son of God, if you have no realization of your adoption, the utmost you can do is to come into the King’s court as a humble beggar. May God give you grace to get further. May you come there, not simply as a petitioner, but as a follower of the Son of God—a servant.  
But happy is the man who has received his full adoption and knows himself to be a son. It were rudeness for anyone to do that to a king which a king’s son may do. A king’s own child may talk familiarly to his own parent. There are love-doings and words of high and hallowed familiarity and of close and sacred communing, between God and His own adopted child, that I could not tell you. There are things that are something like what Paul heard in Paradise—it is scarce lawful for a man to utter them in public—though in private he knows their sweetness. Ah, my dear Hearers, some of you, I doubt not, know more about this than I do, but this I know, it is the happiest moment in one’s life when we can go up to our Father and our God in Christ Jesus and can know and feel of a surety that His infinite love is set on us and that our love is gone forth to Him.

There is a sweet embrace that is not to be excelled. No chariots of Amminadib the heavenly rapture can describe—even Solomon’s Song itself, glowing though its figures be, can scarcely reach the mystery—the length, the breadth, the height of the embracing of God by the creature and the embracing of the creature by its God. Now, I repeat, it is not essential to the success of your prayers that you should come up to this last point. Possibly you never may attain to this eminence of grace. Nor even do I think that it is absolutely necessary that your prayer should come to the second point to be prayer. It should be so and it will, as you grow in grace.  
But, mark, you must draw near to God in some one of these three grades either in a lowly sense of his majesty, or in a delightful consciousness of his goodness, or in a ravishing sense of your own relationship to him, or else your prayer is as worthless as the chaff, it is but as whispering to the wind, or the uttering of a cry to the desert air, where no ear can hear nor hand can help. Bring your prayers, then, to this touchstones and God help you to examine them and be honest with yourselves, for your own soul’s sake.  
II. I have thus concluded the touchstone. I now come to the second head of the discourse, which is THE WHETSTONE—to whet your desires, to make you more anxious to be much in prayer and to be more earnest in it. “It is good for me to draw near to God.”  
Now, first and foremost, let us remark that the goodness of prayer does not lie in any merit that there is in prayer itself. There is no merit whatever in prayer. And wherever the idea of the merit of prayer could come from, one is at a loss to know, except that it must have come from a near relative of the Father of Lies, who resides somewhere in Italy. There is no doubt that old Rome was the birthplace of the idea, it is too absurd and wicked to have come from any less abominable place. If a beggar should be always on your door-step, or should be always meeting you in the street, or stopping you on your journeys and asking you to give him help, I suppose the last thing you would understand would be the merit of his prayers.  
You would say, “I can understand their impudence, I can allow their earnestness, I can comprehend their importunity, but as for merit, what merit can there be in a beggar’s cry?” Remember, your prayers at the best are nothing but a beggar’s cry. You still stand as beggars at the gate of mercy, asking for the dole of God’s charity, for the love of Jesus. And He gives freely. But He gives, not because of your prayers, but because of Christ’s blood and Christ’s merit. Your prayers may be the sacred vessel in which He puts the alms of His mercy. But the merit by which the mercy comes is in the veins of Christ and nowhere else. Remember that there can be no merit in a beggar’s cry.  
But, now, let us note that it nevertheless is good, practically good for us to pray and draw near to God. And the first thing which would whet our desires in prayer is this—prayer explains mysteries. I utter that first because it is in the Psalm. Poor Asaph had been greatly troubled. He had been trying to untie that Gordian knot concerning the righteousness of a Providence which permits the wicked to flourish and the godly to be tried. And because he could not untie that knot, he tried to cut it and he cut his own fingers in the act and became greatly troubled. He could not understand how it was that God could be just and yet give riches to the wicked while His own people were in poverty. At last Asaph understood it all, for he went into the house of his God and there he understood their end.  
And he says—looking back upon his discovery of a clue to this great labyrinth—“It is good for me to draw near to God.” And now, my dear Hearers, if you would understand the Word of God in its knotty points, if you would comprehend the mystery of the Gospel of Christ, remember, Christ’s scholars must study upon their knees. Depend upon it, that the best commentator upon the Word of God is its Author, the Holy Spirit and if you would know the meaning, you must go to Him in prayer. Often when a Psalm has staggered me in reading it and I have not understood it—if I have knelt down and tried to read it over in that position and see if I could realize the meaning in my own heart, some one word in the text has glistened and that one word has been the key to the whole.  
John Bunyan says that he never forgot the divinity he taught, because it was burnt into him when he was on his knees. That is the way to learn the Gospel. If you learn it upon your knees you will never unlearn it. That which men teach you, men can unteach you. If I am merely convinced by reason, a better reasoner may deceive me. If I merely hold my doctrinal opinions because they seem to me to be correct, I may be led to think differently another day. But if God has taught them to me—He who is Himself pure Truth—I have not learned amiss, but I have so learned that I shall never unlearn, nor shall I forget.  
Behold, Believer, you are this day in a labyrinth—whenever you come to a turning place, where there is a road to the right or to the left—if you would know which way to go, fall on your knees, then go on. And when you come to the next turning place, on your knees again and so proceed again. The one clue to the whole labyrinth of Providence and of doctrinal opinion and of sacred thought, is to be found in that one hallowed exercise—prayer. Continue much in prayer and neither Satan nor the world shall much deceive you. Behold before you the sacred ark of the Truth of God. But where is the key? It hangs upon the silver nail of prayer—go take it down—unlock the casket and be rich.  
A second whetstone for your prayers shall be this—prayer brings deliverance. In an old author I met with the following allegory. As I found it so I tell it to you. Once upon a time, the king of Jerusalem left his city in the custody of an eminent captain, whose name was Zeal. He gave unto Zeal many choice warriors to assist him in the protection of the city. Zeal was a right-hearted man, one who never wearied in the day of battle, but would fight all day and all night, even though his sword did cleave to his hand as the blood ran down his arm. But it happened upon this time that the king of Arabia, getting unto himself exceeding great hosts and armies, surrounded the city and prevented any introduction of food for the soldiers, or of ammunition to support the war.  
Driven to the last extremity, Captain Zeal called a council of war and asked of them what course they should take. Many things were proposed, but they all failed to effect the purpose and they came to the sad conclusion that nothing was before them but the surrender of the city, although upon the hardest terms. Zeal took the resolution of the council of war, but when he read it, he could not bear it. His soul abhorred it. “Better,” said he, “to be cut in pieces, than surrender. Better for us to be destroyed while we are faithful, than to give up the keys of this royal city.” In his great distress, he met a friend of his, called Prayer. And Prayer said to him, “Oh, captain, I can deliver this city.”  
Now Prayer was not a soldier, at least he did not look as if he was a warrior, for he wore the garments of a priest. In fact he was the king’s chaplain and was the priest of the holy city of Jerusalem. But nevertheless this Prayer was a valiant man and wore armor beneath his robes. “Oh, captain,” said he, “give me three companions and I will deliver this city—their names must be Sincerity, Importunity and Faith.” Now these four brave men went out of the city at the dead of night when the prospects of Jerusalem were the very blackest. They cut their way right through the hosts that surrounded the city. With many wounds and much smuggling they made their escape and traveled all that night long as quickly as they could across the plain to reach the camp of the king of Jerusalem.  
When they flagged a little, Importunity would hasten them on. And when at any time they grew faint, Faith would give them a drink from his bottle and they would recover. They came at last to the palace of the great king, the door was shut, but Importunity knocked long and, at last it was opened. Faith stepped in. Sincerity threw himself on his face before the throne of the great king. And then Prayer began to speak. He told the king of the great straits in which the beloved city was now placed, the dangers that surrounded it and the almost certainty that all the brave warriors would be cut in pieces by the morrow. Importunity repeated again and again the wants of the city. Faith pleaded hard the royal promise and covenant.  
At last the king said to Captain Prayer, “Take with you soldiers and go back, lo, I am with you to deliver this city.” At the morning light, just when the day broke—for they had returned more swiftly than could have been expected, for though the journey seemed long in going there, it was very short in coming back, in fact they seemed to have gained time on the road—they arrived early in the morning, fell upon the hosts of the king of Arabia, took him prisoner, slew his army and divided the spoil and then entered the gates of the city of Jerusalem in triumph. Zeal put a crown of gold upon the head of Prayer and decreed that henceforth whenever Zeal went forth to battle, Prayer should be the standard-bearer and should lead the van.  
The allegory is full of the Truth of God. Let him that hears understand. If we would have deliverance in the hour, “Let us pray.” Prayer shall soon bring sweet and merciful deliverances from the Throne of our faithful God. This is the second sharpening of your desires upon the whetstone.  
And now a third. It was said of Faith, in that mighty chapter of the Hebrews, that Faith stopped the mouth of lions and the like. But one singular thing that Faith did, which is as great a miracle as any of them, was this—Faith obtained promises. Now the like can be said of Prayer. Prayer obtains promises. Therefore “it is good for you to draw near to God.” We read a story in the History of England, whether true or not we cannot tell, that Queen Elizabeth gave to the Earl of Essex a ring, as a token of her favor. “When you are in disgrace,” she said, “send this ring to me. When I see it I will forgive you and accept you again to favor.”

You know the story of that ill-fated noble, how he sent the ring by a faithless messenger and it was never delivered and therefore he perished at the block. Ah, God has given to each one of His people the sacred ring of promise. And he says, “As often as you are in need, or in sorrow, show it to Me and I will deliver you.” Take heed then, Believer, that you have a faithful messenger. And what messenger can you employ so excellent as true, real, earnest prayer? But, take heed it is real prayer. For if your messenger miscarries and the promise is not brought to God’s eye, who knows, you may never obtain the blessing. Draw near to God with living, loving prayer. Present the promise and you shall obtain the fulfillment.  
Many things might I say of prayer. Our old divines are full of encomiums concerning it. The early fathers speak of it as if they were writing sonnets. Chrysostom preached of it as if he saw it incarnate in some heavenly form. And the choicest metaphors were gathered together to describe in rapturous phrase the power, no, the omnipotence of prayer. Would to God that we loved prayer as our fathers did of old. It is said of James the Less, that he was so much in prayer that his knees had become hard like those of a camel. It was doubtless but a legend, but legends often are based on truths. And certain it is that Hugh Latimer, that blessed saint and martyr of our God, was accustomed to pray so earnestly in his old age when he was in his cell, that he would often pray until he had no strength left to use and the prison attendants had need to lift him from his knees.  
Where are the men like these? Oh, angel of the covenant, where can you find them? When the Son of Man comes shall He find prayer on the earth? Ours are not worthy of the name of supplication. Oh that we had learned that saved art, that we could draw near to God and plead His promise. Watts has put several things together in one verse— *“Prayer clears the sky;  
“Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw.” Prayer is a Heaven climber—  
“Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw.”  
Prayer makes even Satan quake—  
“For Satan trembles when he sees,  
The weakest saint upon his knees.”*  
I have thus given you three reasons why we should be diligent in prayer. Let me add yet another, for we must not leave this part of the whetstone until we have thoroughly entered into the reasons why “it is good for us to draw near unto God. Let me remark that prayer has a mighty power to sustain the soul in every season of its distress and sorrow. Whenever the soul becomes weak, use the heavenly strengthening plaster of prayer. It was in prayer the angel appeared unto the Lord and strengthened Him. That angel has appeared to many of us and we have not forgotten the strength we received when on our knees.  
You remember in the ancient mythology the story of him who as often as he was thrown down recovered strength because he touched his mother earth. It is so with the Believer. As often as he is thrown down upon his knees he recovers himself, for he touches the great source of his strength—the Mercy Seat. If you have a burden on your back, remember prayer, for you shall carry it well if you can pray. Once on a time Christian had upon his back a terrible burden that crushed him to the earth, so that he could not carry it. He crept along on his hands and knees. There appeared to him a fair and comely damsel, holding in her hand a wand and she touched the burden. It was there, it was not removed, but strange to say the burden became weightless. It was there in all its outward shape and features, but without weight.  
That which had crushed him to the earth, had become now so light that he could leap and carry it. Beloved, do you understand this? Have you gone to God with mountains of troubles on your shoulders, unable to carry them and have you seen them, not removed, but still remaining in the same shape, but of a different weight? They became blessings instead of curses. What you thought was an iron gross suddenly turned out to be a wooden one and you carried it with joy, following your Master.  
I will give but one other reason, lest I should weary you and that certainly is not my desire—but to quicken you rather than to weary you. Beloved, there is one reason why we should pray, those of us who are engaged in the Lord’s work in any way—because it is prayer that will ensure success. Two laborers in God’s harvest met each other once upon a time and they sat down to compare notes. One was a man of sorrowful spirit and the other joyous, for God had given him the desire of his heart. The sad Brother said, “Friend, I cannot understand how it is that everything you do is sure to prosper. You scatter seed with both your hands very diligently and it springs up and so rapidly, too, that the reaper treads upon the heels of the sower and the sower himself again upon the heels of the next reaper.  
“I have sown,” said he, “as you have done and I think I can say I have been just as diligent. I think, too, the soil has been the same, for we have labored side by side in the same town. I hope the seed has been of the same quality, for I have found mine where you get yours—the common granary. But alas, my seed, Friend, mine never springs up. I sow it. It is as if I sowed upon the waves, I never see a harvest. Here and there a sickly blade of wheat I have discovered with great and diligent search, but I can see but little reward for all my labors.” They talked long together, for the Brother who was successful was one of a tender heart and therefore he sought to comfort this mourning Brother. They compared notes, they looked through all the rules of husbandry and they could not solve the mystery, why one was successful and the other labored in vain. At last one said to the other, “I must retire.” “Why?” said the other, “Why this is the time” said he “when I must go and steep my seed.” “Steep your seed?” said the other. “Yes, my Brother, I always steep my seed before I sow it. I steep it till it begins to swell and germinate and I can almost see a green blade springing from it and then you know it speedily grows after it is sown.” “Ah,” said the other, “but I understand not what you mean. How do you steep your seed and in what mysterious mixture?” “Brother,” said he, “it is a composition made of one part of the tears of agony for the souls of men and the other part of the tears of a holy agony which wrestles with God in prayer— this mixture if you drop your seed in it, has a transcendent efficacy to make every grain full of life, so that it is not lost.”  
The other rose and went on his way and forgot not what he had learned, but he began to steep his seed, too. He spent less time in his study, more time in his closet. He was less abroad, more at home, less with man and more with God. And he went abroad and scattered his seed and he, too, saw a harvest and the Lord was glorified in them both. Brethren, I do feel with regard to myself and therefore, when I speak of others I speak not uncharitably, that the reason of the nonsuccess of the ministry in these years, (for compared with the days of Pentecost, I cannot call our success a success) lies in our want of prayer.  
If I were addressing students in the college, I think I should venture to say to them, set prayer first in your labors. Let your subject be well prepared. Think well of your discourse, but best of all, pray it over, study on your knees. And now in speaking to this assembly, containing SundaySchool teachers and others who in their way are laboring for Christ, let me beseech you whatever you do, go not about your work, except you have first entreated that the dew of Heaven may drop on the seed you sow. Steep your seed and it shall spring up. We are demanding in our days more laborers—it is a right prayer. We are seeking that the seed should be of the best sort—it is a right demand.  
But let us not forget another which is even more necessary than this, let us ask, let us plead with God, that the seed be steeped, that men may preach agonizing for souls. I like to preach with a burden on my heart— the burden of other men’s sins, the burden of other men’s hardheartedness, the burden of their unbelief, the burden of their desperate estate, which must before long end in perdition. There is no preaching, I am persuaded, like that—for then we preach as though “We never might preach again as dying men to dying men.” And, oh, may each of you labor after the latter fashion in your own sphere, ever taking care to commit your work to God.  
I will tell you here an incident of the revival. It is one I know to be correct. It is told by a good Brother who would not add a word thereunto, I am sure. It happened, not long ago, that in a school which is sustained by the Corporation of the City of London, in the north of Ireland, one of the bigger boys had been converted to God. And one day, in the midst of school, a younger youth was greatly oppressed by a sense of sin and so overwhelmed did he become that the master plainly perceived that he could not work and, therefore, he said to him, “You had better go home and plead with God in prayer in private.” He said, however, to the bigger boy, who was all rejoicing in hope, “Go with him. Take him home and pray with him.”  
They started together. On the road they saw an empty house. The two boys went in and there began to pray. The plaintive cry of the young one, after a little time changed into a note of joy, when, suddenly springing up, he said, “I have found rest in Jesus, I have never felt as I do now. My sins, which are many, are all forgiven.” The proposal was to go home. But the younger lad forbade this. No, he must go and tell the master of the school that he had found Christ. So hurrying back, he rushed in and said, “Oh, I have found the Lord Jesus Christ.” All the boys in the school, who had seen him sitting sad and dull upon the form, remarked the joy that flashed from his eye, when he cried “I have Christ.”  
The effect was electric. The boys suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. The master knew not where they were gone. But looking over into the playground, he saw by the wall were a number of boys, one by one, in prayer asking for mercy. He said to the elder youth, “Cannot you go and tell these boys the way of salvation—tell them what they must do to be saved?” He did so and the silent prayer was suddenly changed into a loud piercing shriek, the boys in the school understood it and, impelled by the Great Spirit, they all fell on their knees and began to cry aloud for mercy through the blood of Christ. But, this was not all.

There was a girls’ schoolroom in the same building over head. The ear had been well tutored to understand what that cry meant and soon interpreted it and the girls, too, affected by the same Spirit, fell down and began to cry aloud for the forgiveness of their sins. Here was an interruption of the school! Was ever such a thing known before in a schoolroom? Classes are all put aside, books forgotten. Everything cast to the winds, while poor sinners are kneeling at the foot of the Cross seeking for pardon. The cry was heard throughout the various offices attached to this large school and it was heard also across the street and passersby were attracted—men of God, ministers and clergymen of the neighborhood were brought in—the whole day was spent in prayer and they continued until almost midnight. They separated with songs of joy, for that vast mass of girls and boys, men and women, who had crowded the two schoolrooms, had all found the Savior.  
Our good brother, Dr. Arthur, says, that he met with a youth while traveling in Ireland and he said to him, “Do you love the Savior?” And he said, “I trust I do.” “How did you come to love Him?” “Oh,” said he, “I was converted in the big schoolroom that night. My mother heard that there was a revival going on there and she sent me to fetch my little brother away. She did not want him, she said, to get convicted. And I went to fetch my brother and he was on his knees crying, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.’ I stopped and I prayed, too, and the Lord saved us both.”  
Now to what are we to attribute this? I know many of the Brethren there—the Presbyterians and others—and I do not think there is any difference or any superiority in their ministry over anything we can see or hear in London. And I think they themselves would subscribe to the truth of what I assert. The difference is this—there has been prayer there— living, hearty prayer has been offered continually, perhaps by some who did not live in Ireland. God alone knows where that revival really begun. Some woman on her bed may have been exorcised in her soul for that district and may have been wrestling with God in prayer. And then the blessing has descended.  
And if God will help you and help me to lay near to heart the neighborhood in which we live, the family over which we preside, the congregation we have to address, the class we have to teach, the laborers we employ, or any of these, surely, then, by mighty prayer we shall bring down a great blessing from high. For prayer is never lost. Preaching may be, but prayer never is. Praying breath can never be spent in vain. The Lord send to all the Churches of Great Britain, first of all, the power of prayer and then shall there come conversions of multitudes of souls through the outpoured energy of the Holy One of Israel!  
III. I shall have little time to close up the third point, further than to remark that while I have been preaching I do hope there have been some here who have heard for themselves. Ah, my Hearers, religion is more solemn work than some men think. I am often shocked with the brutality of what are called the lower classes of society and with their coarse blasphemies. But there is one thing—and I speak honestly to you now, as fearing no man—there is one thing that is to me more shocking still and that is the frivolous way in which the mass of our higher classes spend all their time.  
What are your morning calls but pretenses for wasting your time? What are your amusements but an attempt to kill the time that hangs laboriously on your hands? And what are many of your employments but an industrious idleness, spinning and knitting away of precious hours which God knows will be few enough when you come to look back upon them from a dying bed. Oh, if you did but know what you are made for and your high destiny, you would not waste your time in the paltry things that occupy your hands and your souls. God Almighty forgive those wasted hours which if you be Christians ought to be employed for the good of others. God forgive those moments of frivolity which ought to have been occupied in prayer.  
If such a congregation as this could but be solemnly alive to the interests of this land and the poverty of it, to its miseries, to its wickedness—if but such a host as I have here could solemnly feel this matter, how much good would certainly come to us! This would be the best missionary society—so many hearts of tenderness and affection—all beating high with an anxious desire to see sinners brought to Christ. Ah, we cannot approve of the doctrines of the Romish Church, but still sometimes we have to be abashed at their zeal. Would God that we had sisters of mercy who were merciful indeed. Not dressed in some fanciful garb, but going from house to house to comfort the sick and help the needy!  
Would that you all were brothers of the heart of Jesus and all of you sisters of Him, whose mother’s heart was pierced with agony, when He died that we might be saved. Oh, my dear Hearers, this I speak with an earnest anxiety that the words may be prophetic of a better age.  
But now, there are some of you here, perhaps, that never prayed in your lives, toying like glittering insects, wasting your little day. You know not that death is near you. And oh, if you have never sought and have never found the Savior—however bright those eyes—if they have never seen the wounds of Christ, if they have never looked to Christ, they shall not simply be sealed in death, but they must behold sights of fearful woe eternally. Oh may God grant you grace to pray. May He lead you home to your houses, to fall on your knees and for the first time to cry, “Lord have mercy upon me!” Remember you have sins to confess and if you think you have not, you are in a sad state of heart—it proves that you are dead in trespasses and sins—dead in them. Go home and ask the Lord to give you a new heart and a right spirit and may He who dictates the prayer graciously hear.  
And may you and I, and all of us, when this life has passed away and time is exchanged for eternity, stand before the Throne of God at last. I have to preach continually to a congregation in which I know there are many drunkards, swearers and the like—with these men I know how to deal and God has given me success. But I sometimes tremble for you amiable, excellent, upright daughters, who make glad your father’s house and wives that train up your children well. Remember—“Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”  
And as we must be honest with the poor, so must we be with the rich. And as we must lay the axe to the root of the tree with the drunkard and the swearer, so must we with you. You are as much lost as they are and shall as surely perish as they do, unless you are born again. There is but one road to Heaven for you all alike. As a minister of the Gospel, I know no rich men and no poor men. I know no working classes and no gentlemen. I know simply God’s sinful creatures, bid to come to Christ and find mercy through his atonement.  
He will not reject you. Put the black thought away. He is able to save. Doubt Him not. Come to Him. Come, and welcome—God help you to come. God Almighty bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #879 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

AN ASSUREDLY GOOD THING  
NO. 879

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 4, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“It is good for me to draw near to God.”  
Psalm 73:28.**

WHEN a man is sick, everybody knows what is good for him. They recommend remedies by the score—salts from the earth, herbs of the field, drugs from the east, minerals from the rock, extracts, compounds, cordials, concoctions, quintessences and I know not what besides—as many medicines as there are men—all these are cried up as good for our complaint. Amid such a Babel it is well for a man if he knows on his own account what is good for himself.

Certainly in spiritual things, whatever others may recommend, it is of the first importance in all our trials to know by personal experience for ourselves what is in the highest sense good for us. One of your friends may commend a course of vigorous action and another may bid you sit still. One may persuade you to contemplate your trial from its darkest side and another may call your attention solely to the brighter lights. But if you know, through having passed through the trial before, what is truly good in such a case, it will be best to take your stand upon it and not be led away by every “lo! here,” and “lo! there.”

The Psalmist, although he might have been surrounded by a thousand counselors, puts them all aside, and strong in the confidence which his experience gave him, he declares, “It is good for me to draw near to God.” It may seem good in the worldling’s eyes to go his way to his wine cups, and to make merry in dance. It may seem good to yonder truster in an arm of flesh to seek out his friends and his kinsmen and entrust his case to their discretion. It may seem good to the desponding to retire in melancholy to brood over his sorrows, and to the dissipated to endeavor to drown all care in vanity, but to me, says the Psalmist, it is good, preeminently good, that I should draw near unto God.

I. Now, in this statement, the Psalmist, first of all, TACITLY CONDEMNS OTHER COURSES OF ACTION. Take the text in connection with the Psalm of which it is the conclusion and you will see at once that he repents of a certain course of thought to which he had given way and the recoil from his error is the exclamation, “It is good for me to draw near to God.” It is as if he meant to say, “It is not good for me to do what I have done, it is infinitely better for me to draw near to God.”

We learn from this that it is not a good thing for us to try and fathom the mysteries of Providence. What have we to do with measuring the great depths of Providence? Is not this meddling with things too high for us? It should be enough for us to commit our boat to the Great Pilot, trusting all to Him who rules all—being well assured that He will bring His own beloved to their desired haven. We need not be curious to know the exact depth of all the deep places of the earth—it is enough that they are in His hands. Nor need the strength of the hills provoke our anxiety, for it is His, also. Yet such is the tendency of the human heart, that we crave to comprehend all things in the little hollow of our hand. We aspire to calculate the infinite and sum the total of the immeasurable. It is with us as though foolish children should determine to measure the great and wide sea and therefore should push off from the shore in a little boat to drift away, they know not where, in imminent hazard of their lives.

Theories upon predestination, followed up by speculations upon the facts of Providence—these are enough to drive men mad and are certain to drive them into wicked thoughts—unjust towards God and depressing towards themselves. Gotthold in his “Emblems” tells us of the adventures of his child. The father was one day sitting in his study and when he lifted his eyes from a book which had engrossed his attention, he saw standing upon the window ledge his little son. He was troubled and frightened to the last degree, for the child stood there in the utmost peril of falling to the ground and being dashed to pieces. The little one had always been anxious to know what his father was doing so many hours in the day in his study and he had at last, by a ladder, managed to climb with boyish daring till there he stood outside the window, gazing at his father with his little eyes.

“So,” said the father, as he took the child into his chamber and rebuked him for his folly, “So have I often tried to climb into the council chamber of God, to see why He did this and that. And thus have I exposed myself to peril of falling to my destruction.” My God, it is not good for me to pry into Your secrets with curiosity, but it is good for me to draw near unto You in sincerity.

In connection with this Psalm we may also learn that it is not good for us, under any circumstances, to get very far from God. The verse that precedes the text runs thus—“They that are far from You shall perish.” Now, the tendency of repeated affliction, is, in the carnal mind, to drive us away from God. “Surely He deals harshly with me,” says the sufferer. “No good has come to me since I began to attend a place of worship and to become religious. Evil after evil has happened to me in connection with my profession of godliness.” Because of this the ungodly man, who was a formalist in his religion, gives it all up. “It were better,” says he, “that I should find what pleasure I can in sin since I can find none in godliness.”

If God treats His hypocritical servants roughly, they soon turn against Him. When the loaves and fishes fail, the admiring multitudes go away. Two or three tosses upon the waves make bad sailors hate the sea and a trial or two will soon drive empty professors into an utter dislike of godliness. This is often the sieve in which God tries His people and discerns between the chaff and the wheat. A dog may follow you as you pass by, if you offer it a bone—but if you give it a stroke from your staff—see if it will follow you, then! Yet, to its own master, the faithful creature will cling with even greater tenderness if it is beaten. If you are God’s own child, affliction will not make you fly from Him but to him, saying, “Show me why You contend with me.”

But if you, in mere formality, follow at God’s heels, as the dog pursues the stranger for a bone, then you will readily enough turn against the Lord if He chastens you. By this may we judge ourselves whether we are God’s servants or not. Beloved, it can never be a good thing to take offense at the dealings of the Lord. His ways are the best for us—to forsake them is always evil. Whatever temporary comfort we may gain by following the paths of evil, it will be shallow and short-lived—and soon a consequent and terrible darkness will cover our spirits. To depart from God’s Law is always hazardous traveling. By-Path Meadow is never good for pilgrims. You may seem to gain in this world by walking apart from God in the indulgence of a dishonest practice, but the gain will be loss in the long run.

You may find a temporary deliverance from your pressing sorrow by a sinful step, but you will purchase the deliverance at an awful price, since sorrow will return to you multiplied sevenfold and will find you naked, because your clear conscience, which was once your shield, has been vilely cast away. He that, amidst a thousand troubles, keeps his heart whole by standing firm in his integrity, may battle against all the world and all the hosts of Hell and not be afraid! But he who gives way for the sake of policy shall find that a wounded spirit none can bear and the weakness that shall come upon him, through having turned aside to crooked ways, shall be such as shall cost him a far more dolorous lamentation than all his afflictions could have wrung from him.

Thus, at the outset of this sermon, we are warned that to peer into God’s secrets is not good and to depart from God on account of His dealing severely with us, is the very worst policy that we can follow.

II. Coming more closely to the text, we observe WHAT IS IN THE TEXT PLAINLY COMMENDED—“To draw near to God”—what does this mean? To draw near to God, Brothers and Sisters, implies first that we are reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. For a man to attempt to draw near to God while God is angry with him would be a species of insanity. As well might the moth draw near to the candle, or the stubble approach the flame! God is “a consuming fire,” and while our hearts are evil there can nothing come of an approach to God but destruction!

Before any one of us can draw near to God in acceptable prayer and praise, we must wash in the fountain that Christ has filled from His dying veins. Do you believe in the Atonement, my Hearer? Believing in it, have you also received it? Do you rest your soul’s salvation upon the accomplished mediatorial work of Jesus Christ? If not, you are such an enemy to God that you may by no means even think yourself capable of drawing near to Him. Your back is towards Him and the faster you walk, the further from God will you journey, and your end will assuredly be to hear from Him the word, “Depart.”

You have been departing all your life! You shall go on departing throughout eternity—departing from the God whom you have hated and despised and forgotten. Before, then, we can draw near to God, we must have come with repentance and faith to the Cross and have looked up to Him who bled there and we must have accepted Him as our salvation. I ask you whether you can accompany me in the first step? Have you laid hold on eternal life in Christ Jesus?

Next, in order to draw near to God, the soul must grasp the thought that God is near to it and the soul must have a clear sense of who and what God is. Ignorance is an effectual barrier to any approach to God, seeing that our drawing near is not physical since God is always equally near to our bodies. It is mental and spiritual, and therefore, to such an approach there must be an intelligent knowledge and apprehension of the Lord. We must know Him as good, as great, as just, as holy, as merciful, as true, as faithful. And, knowing Him—understanding something of His Character— we must then grasp the thought that He is even now here, close at hand, nearer to us than any earthly friend could be, for He possesses our heart and compasses us on every side.

As nothing can be nearer to the fish than the water in which it lives, so nothing can be nearer to us than God, in whom we live and move and have our being. The Lord is not round about us merely, but He is in our souls, filling their every corner and chamber, entering into the core and center of our physical and mental nature. Now, when our mind is filled with these two thoughts—God near us and reconciled to us—we have become capable of spiritually drawing near to Him. As yet I have not succeeded in my description. How shall I tell you what to draw near to God is? It is prayer, but it is more than prayer.

I bow my knee and I begin to ask the Lord to help me in my time of trouble. I tell Him what my trial is. I put up my requests, uttering them with such words as His Holy Spirit gives me on the occasion. But this, alone, is not drawing near to God. Prayer is the modus operandi, it is the outward form of drawing near to God—but there is an inner spiritual approach which is scarcely to be described by language. Shall I tell you how I have sometimes drawn near to Him? I have been worn and wearied with a heavy burden, and have resorted to prayer. I have tried to pour out my soul’s anguish in words but there was not vent enough by way of speech, and therefore my soul has broken out into sighs and sobs and tears.

Feeling that God was hearing my heart-talk, I have said to Him, “Lord, behold my affliction. You know all about it. Deliver me! If I cannot exactly tell You, there is no need of my words, for You see for Yourself. You searcher of hearts, You read me as I read a book. Will You be pleased to help Your poor servant? I scarcely know what help it is I need, but You know. I cannot tell You what I desire, but teach me to desire what You will be sure to give. Conform my will to Yours.”

Perhaps at such a time there may be a peculiar bitterness about your trouble, a secret with which no stranger may intermeddle, but you can tell it all to your God. With broken words, sighs, groans and tears, you lay bare the inmost secret of your soul. Taking off the doors of your heart from their hinges, you bid the Lord come in and walk through every chamber and see the whole. I do not know how to tell you what drawing near to God is better than by this rambling talk. It is getting to feel that the Lord is close to you and that you have no secret which you wish to keep back from Him, but have unveiled your most private and sacred desires to Him. The getting right up to Jesus, our Lord. The leaning of your head, when it aches with trouble, upon the heart that always beats with pity. The casting of all care upon Him—believing that He cares for you, pities you and sympathizes with you—this is drawing near to God! It is good for me to draw near to God if this is what drawing near to God is.

Let us make a further attempt at the definition. Drawing near to God may assume the form of praise. It were a sad proof of selfishness if we never approached our God except to ask for something. Brethren, I hope we often feel that our heavenly Father has been so bountiful and kind and tender to us, that our cup runs over and our heart pours itself out in the language of some grand old Psalm, or we sing like the Virgin, “My soul does magnify the Lord, my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” Thus to draw near to God in song is something, but there is a still further approach. The soul will sometimes climb so near her God in thankfulness that words fail her and she sits down, like David, in the Lord’s Presence, wondering, “Why all this for

 me? What am I and what is my father’s house, that You have brought me here? O Lord, Your mercy overwhelms me! Come, then, expressive silence, speak the Divine praise.”

You have seen a little child when it is greatly pleased with a gift from its mother. It says but little by way of gratitude, but it begins to kiss its mother at a vehement rate, as though it never could be done! Such drawing near in love exists between a regenerate soul and its God. True saints fall to close embraces of gratitude, exhibiting thankfulness inexpressible, real and deep and, therefore, not to be worded—weights of love too heavy to be carried on the backs of such poor staggering bearers as our words. This is drawing near to God and it is good for us.

As when on a sultry day the traveler strips off his garments and plunges into the cool refreshing brook and rises from it invigorated to pursue his way, so it is when a spirit has learned, either in prayer or in praise, to really draw near to God! It bathes itself in the brooks of Heaven (streams branching from the river of the Water of Life) and goes on its way refreshed with heavenly strength! Still, I have not fully described drawing near to God. To draw near to God has in it the element of looking at the matter in the Divine light. Our light here below is nothing better than candlelight at its best. Now, by candlelight, there are many things of which we cannot judge. Colors are not truly seen by candlelight. Only by sunlight is the brightness of the tints apparent.

We too often judge our afflictions and the Providential dispensations of God by the candlelight of human reason. Oh, if we could draw near to God and get into His light and begin to look at things in their eternal bearings, how good it would be! To take the sacred picture of Providence and, with our eyeglass, look at the canvas inch by inch, is practically to see nothing. But to view the work of the Divine Artist as a whole—with all its lights and shades and all the fair proportions which manifest the matchless skill! That would be to see, indeed! The fault of us all is this—we judge Providence by the moment instead of regarding it in its true magnitude, stretched upon the framework of that eternal love which knows neither beginning nor end.

Your dear child dies. Yes, and what calamity could be heavier? But if the death of one shall be the salvation of others and if the child’s death is but the child’s admission into Paradise, the matter wears another aspect. It is no longer such a subject for tears as it otherwise might have been. Poverty scowls in your house—yes, and a sore ill is poverty—but if this poverty of pounds, shillings and pence should mean the reclaiming of a lost soul! If this trouble should be really needed to get us out of an ill position and to bring us into a holier and happier state—preparatory for Heaven—what would the loss of all earthly riches be compared with the winning of Heaven?

Brothers and Sisters, we do not know how to judge! But if we must indulge our propensity to sit upon the bench, it would be good for us to get so near to God that we should weigh events in His scale and consider matters according to His measurement. Further than this, a man may be enabled not merely to draw so near to God as to see things in God’s light, but he may even rise so high as to be pleased with anything and everything that pleases God. This is a high attainment when a soul can honestly say, “If I could have my will, it should be my will that God’s will should be done. Let Him do wholly as seems good in His sight. If it is for His Glory that I pine in sickness, then I would not wish for health. And if it is for His honor that I should be poor and despised, then I would not wish for comforts or for esteem.”

The heart has need to pass through many a furnace before it attains to this, yet, my Brethren, we very soon reach this point with regard to those we love on earth, for we would very cheerfully give up our own wishes to please some dear one. In fact, it is with very many their highest happiness if there is anything that is needed by the object of their affection, to deny themselves anything and everything, if but their dear one’s wish may be fulfilled. And shall we thus yield up ourselves at the shrine of a wife, or a husband, or a darling child—and shall we not rejoice to surrender self for our gracious Lord? Shall we put our idols higher than our God?

Shame upon us if anything in Heaven or earth is hard to do or suffer for our Lord. Let us ask to be able to say, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will. If it pleases You, my God, it pleases me.” No, let the Lord have His way. If we could stand in His place, if we could have our way in opposition to Him, yet should it not be, but we would petition for the privilege of denying ourselves in order that His eternal purpose might be fulfilled. Brothers and Sisters, may we learn to draw near to God in such a sense as this! May the secret of the Lord be with us! May the Spirit of the Lord overshadow our spirits! May His will be our joy, His light our delight and Himself our all in all!

We must now leave this point. We can go no further. Words are scarcely the proper medium by which to instruct you in the art of drawing near to God. We must show you our fruit ripened under so Divine a sun! You must know the sweetness of communion for yourselves and knowing it for yourselves, you will subscribe with heart and soul to Asaph’s commendation, “It is good for me to draw near to God.”

III. Thirdly, we shall occupy a little time in enquiring THE GROUNDS FOR SUCH AN UNQUALIFIED COMMENDATION—“It is good for me to draw near to God.” First, it is good in itself. How can it be otherwise than good to have access to Him who is the highest good? The courtier counts it a high honor and satisfaction to sun himself in the presence of his monarch. He basks in the royal smile. Shall not the courtiers of Heaven count it an equal good to stand in the favor of the King of kings and to delight themselves with the glory of His majesty?

It is a pleasure to draw near to God. As the enlivening breath of summer awakens the joyous emotions of creation, filling the gardens with beauty and the groves with song, even so the Countenance of the Lord is the source of the highest pleasure to the renewed soul, enlightening it with celestial happiness! Out of Heaven there are no such joys as those discovered in living near to God. Albeit, everything that is pleasant is not, therefore, good—yet for once here is a good thing which is sound as well as sweet, as holy as it is happy, as Divinely excellent as it is humanly desirable. Besides, to draw near to God is elevating. He that draws near to the earth grovels and becomes earthy. He that draws near to the heavenly One is changed from glory to glory into the image of the heavenly.

You shall know a man by his company, for we are all much shaped by our acquaintances. And he that has an acquaintance with God shall be discerned of all men, for his face shall shine and all his life and character shall be transfigured with holiness! Let but Jehovah dwell in a bush in the desert and lowliness is forgotten in glowing glories! And even thus let the Holy Spirit rest upon the earnest of His servants and the fishermen of Galilee shall become royal wonder-workers, whose names shall be as the names of the great ones that are on the earth. Approaching to God is, therefore, good in itself. For a chosen creature there is nothing better than to draw near to the Creator. It is so elevating, so honorable, so delightful!

Brothers and Sisters, it is good to draw near to God if you consider for a moment our relations to God. Remember gratefully that we are His children which have been born into His family—and who shall deny but what it is a good thing for the child to come near to its parents? Where is the babe happier than on its mother’s breast? There its cares are at an end, its sorrows cease—it cries itself to sleep upon the warm breast of love, when elsewhere it had been disturbed with rude alarms. It is good for me, my God, like a babe to come nestling into Your bosom. It is always good for the chickens to shelter beneath the wings of the hen. The hawk may be in the air, but they are perfectly safe from cruelty—and when the child of God cowers down beneath the everlasting wings and learns the meaning of David’s words, “He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust,” oh, then it is good, indeed!

We are the sheep of His pasture and none shall doubt but what it is good for the sheep to draw near to the Shepherd. In His Presence is fullness of joy and nowhere else but there. He makes His sheep to lie down in green pastures because He is near them. It is His transporting Presence that leads them beside the still waters. It must be good for those who are of the family of Christ to live very near to their elder Brother, through whom all the inheritance comes to them. We are the disciples of our blessed Teacher and Master, and where should a disciple be but near his Lord? He wishes to be taught—let him sit at the Teacher’s feet.

The Believer is an imitator of Christ. He that would imitate his copy must keep his copy near him and before his eyes. We are “imitators of God’s dear children,” and therefore shall find it most helpful in our labor after the heavenly image, to draw very near, study very closely, and habitually dwell near to the Lord. Brethren, it is good for us to draw near to God, again, because of our pitiable character and condition. We are weakest of the weak and where should weakness lean but upon Him who delights to put forth His power for the upholding of the feeble? We are exceedingly foolish—even the wisest saints are foolish, apt to be deceived and prone to error. Where, then, can our folly be safer but under the careful guidance of Infallible Wisdom? It must be good for us when we get into dilemmas, to enquire at the Divine Oracle and ask which is the way that we may walk.

Besides, we are many of us so prone to despond that if others of more elastic step could afford to live without their God, certainly we could not. Timorous spirits will find it especially good to cultivate intimate communion with God, for unless they do this, depression of spirit may grow upon them and despondency may degenerate into despair. It is good for such to plume their wings and mount above the clouds, if the clouds have such deadly effect upon their joys. I cannot imagine a single quality in the child of God which does not argue for the necessity and benefit of drawing near to God. Search yourselves through and through and what will you find in your original nature that you can depend upon?

O you who live nearest to God, take care to examine the secrets of your heart and see if there is not within much to disgust and little to content you! See if there is anything in you by nature that you can rejoice in, or that you can lean upon! Now by your weakness, by your folly, by your sinfulness, by your unbelief—by every evil quality that must ruin you unless Divine grace prevents—I urge you to draw near to God! And as each of these evils shall be overcome, you shall find increasingly that it is good to draw near to God.

Dear Friends, the correctness of the commendation in our text might be proven to you in many ways. We must trouble you with a few more arguments. It is good for you to draw near to God because of the removal of many evils with which you are constantly surrounded. You business people have to be busy in the world from Monday morning till Saturday night and a man who is called to business ought to be diligent in it. There is no sin in diligence—in fact, it is a virtue. But the tendency of business is, in many cases, to make a man covetous. In others, fretfulness is the great failing and all worldliness is a strong besetment. You are unmindful of your Lord very frequently and too greedy for gain. In fact, unnumbered evils rise from our daily avocations like dust from our dry roads as we make our pilgrimage along them.

In what way can a Christian shake the dust from his garments? How can he wash his face from the grime of his daily labor? Why, only by drawing near to God! Maintain with earnest regularity your morning and evening prayers. Do more than that—demand from time that it shall yield a little space for eternity. Force yourself to be alone. Pray God that your heart may be with Him while your hands are in your daily work. See to it that while you are in the world you are not of it, because your aspirations, your thoughts and desires are going upward, and your communion is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. You will find that business becomes less dangerous. You shall find that the cares of it are less bitter and the joys of it are less intoxicating if you draw near to God.

I do not know what may be the peculiar position which your affairs are in this morning, but I venture upon the remark that from the evil which springs out of your present condition there is no cure like drawing near to God. Are you solitary and alone? Have you much leisure? Great temptations lurk in leisure—draw near to God and they vanish and leisure becomes space in which to serve your God! Are you suffering today under very severe trials? Ah, it will be sweetly good to you to draw near to God, for then you will not become impatient nor will you be permitted to think hard things of your gracious God and Father.

Beyond the evils which drawing near to God will remove, there are many good things which drawing near to God will confer. These I cannot particularly instance, for they comprehend everything. There is no blessing in the Covenant of Grace which prayer cannot obtain, which close approaches to God will not ensure. Let me gather them up under these short heads—Are you a worker for God and do you lack strength? Draw near to God and get it. Are you struggling and wrestling against a mighty inward sin or outward error? Then draw near to God and you will learn the way to victory. Like the old fable of the giant whom Hercules would gladly destroy—who rose every time he fell to the ground stronger than before because he touched his mother, earth—so the Christian, every time he is overcome, if he falls upon his God, rises stronger than before!

Take care, O tried Believer, that you get near your God and you shall be strong. Are you a minister? Do you preach the Gospel? It is always good for an ambassador to receive his orders fresh from court—and good for us it is when we come into the pulpit with a message all glowing from the Master’s mouth! Oh, I can say, if no one else can, it is good for me to draw near to God! Nothing else could keep my soul standing in the midst of responsibilities so overwhelming and trials that are neither few nor small! I had long since been utterly confounded were it not that I have been taught by experience to draw near to God and breathe the bracing air of Heaven before I come among you to talk of the things of God.

Perhaps, my dear Friend, you are conscious of having fallen into sin and you say, “Do not talk about drawing near to God to me! I am so unworthy.” Well, if there is one to whom it is good to draw near to God above another, you are the man! You who have the most sin have most need of Divine Grace. Where will you obtain pardon but by drawing near to God through Jesus Christ? You who are the foulest with inbred corruption— how will you win the victory over your natural depravity but by drawing near to the Strong for strength through the blood of the Atonement and seeking the power of the Holy Spirit? I say to you, Brothers and Sisters, whether it is sin or sorrow, whether it is temptation or depression— whatever may be the evil which assails you this day—it must be in the highest degree good for you to draw near to God!

We have said enough, I think, to prove our point, but this much more must be added. This drawing near to God is a remedy for evil open to every child of God by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. You are poor, yes— but you can draw near to God without a golden bridge! You are ignorant— you can draw near to God without Latin or Greek! You are not gifted with rhetorical powers—you tell me you cannot put six sentences together. Remember our gracious God does not require you to be a Demosthenes or a Cicero! You can draw near to God even though you cannot say a word! A prayer may be crystallized in a tear. A tear is enough water to float a desire to God. Yes, and if you cannot even weep, the very bitterest tears are those that drop inside the head—and these the Lord will cherish!

When parching grief will not let the eyes relieve the heart with tears, the Lord can and will deliver. When no other balm will avail, it will be good for you to draw near to God—and you have the Lord’s permission to do so. Yes, in the long hours of the watchful night in the sick chamber you can draw near to God and in the sultry hours of the busy day you have no need to seek your oratory or your closet—you can draw near to God in the field and the shop. Here in this pew, or there in the street! Yonder in your lonely attic, or in your miserable cellar, or in the midst of the ribald talk and the coarse society of wicked workmen with whom you are toiling! Anywhere, even though it were at the gates of Hell, you can draw near to God!

There is never a possibility for Satan to block up this road, nor rob you of this privilege. Thus you bear about with you, O Believer, a charm against every ill—a weapon that will stand you in good stead against every foe. And when the waters of the last black river shall roar in your ears and your blood shall be made to freeze and your heart and your flesh shall fail you—then as you draw near to God by committing your spirit unto Him, you shall find that He is the strength of your life and your portion forever! It shall always be good for you to draw near to God. There is no need that I should say more in conclusion, except to finish by a word of practical advice. If it is, indeed, so good to draw near to God, let us do it at once!

Children of God, have you been living at a distance from your Father? The silver bell rings this morning and invites you to return. An angel voice cries, “Come back! Come back! Come back!” Will you not answer, “I will arise and go to my Father”? Have you had a little prosperity, a thriving time in business and have you ungratefully forgotten the God who gave you this? Oh, now that the prosperity is for awhile removed, out of the darkness let the voice of longsuffering Mercy be heard, for it calls to you, “Return unto Me, backsliding child, return.” It shall be good for you to acquaint yourself with God, now, though you have lost the privilege of communion for awhile. The privilege has not lost its sweetness. It will still bring you countless blessings to approach your God.

Do I address any dear friend here who is very happy and rejoicing? I hope his joy will abide with him and that he will rejoice in the Lord always! But it will be good for him, at this bright hour, to draw near to God. Communion with God will give a deeper and healthier tone to your joy so that it shall not intoxicate you. You shall have all the true mirth that lies in earthly comfort, but the evil element shall be neutralized—your feet shall stand on your high places, but your soul shall not be puffed up with pride. Fellowship with God is good for you! O seek it now! Draw near to God at once!

I would suggest to each Believer the propriety of trying to get between now and the next Lord’s-Day, a special season alone. Strain after a devotional vacation. Surely if you can spare time for holidays and recreations, you can clear a space for special drawing near to God. I believe this Church would be visited with a very great ingathering if all the members of it made it a solemn matter of duty to draw near to God especially and particularly. I feel persuaded the ministry would revive in freshness, converts would be more numerous and the people of God more rejoicing if we did this. We might expect to see a general revival of religion if all the faithful in Christ’s Church drew near to Him with greater vehemence of supplication, a higher expectation and a greater boldness of faith. May God give us Divine Grace to attempt this!

Alas, I have been very conscious, while preaching this morning, that my subject has small attractions for a great many present because they never did draw near to God and what I have spoken will seem to them to be an idle tale. Ah, my dear Friends, if you live and die a stranger to God, as you have lived up to now, God, whom you do not know today will not know you in another world. No love-knowledge will He have of you. You will ask of His Son for mercy, but He will reply, “I never knew you. Depart from Me, you cursed.” You will need an interest in Jesus’ blood in the next world! You will need to have a part in the love of Christ when He comes in His kingdom.

But as you do not know Him here, He will not know you there. Woe is me that I should have to tell you this! Do you know what becomes of those that forget God? The Scripture is very plain, “The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.” Shall that be your portion? Will you always be forgotten of God? Oh, it would be good for you to draw near to God! And you may do so, for Jesus welcomes those who desire forgiveness! You have but to ask Him to accept you and He will!

In your pew this morning, the prayer may successfully assault His ear—send it up—“You Son of David, I desire to draw near to God. Introduce me to Your Father’s Presence by the merit of Your sacrifice.” You shall not seek in vain, dear Heart! Christ will have pity upon you and you shall be saved! O that today, today, TODAY you might learn, for the first time, that it is good to draw near to God!

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFOFE SERMON—Psalm 73.*  
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THE COVENANT PLEADED  
NO. 1451B

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.  
“Have respect unto the Covenant.” Psalm 74:20.

HE will succeed in prayer who understands the science of pleading with God. “Put Me in remembrance: let us plead together,” is a Divine command. “Come now, let us reason together” is a sacred invitation. “Bring forth your strong reasons, says the Lord,” is a condescending direction as to the way of becoming victorious in supplication. Pleading is wrestling— arguments are the grips, the feints, the throes, the struggles with which we hold and vanquish the Covenant Angel! The humble statement of our needs is not without its value, but to be able to give reasons and arguments why God should hear us is to offer potent, prevalent prayer.

Among all the arguments that can be used in pleading with God, perhaps there is none stronger than this—“Have respect unto the Covenant.” Like Goliath’s sword, we may say of it, “There is none like it.” If we have God’s Word for a thing we may well pray, “Do as You have Said,” for as a good man only needs to be reminded of his own words in order to be brought to keep them, even so is it with our faithful God—He only needs that we remind Him of what He has said—to do them for us. If He has given us more than His Word, namely, His Covenant, His solemn Compact, we may, then, with the greatest composure of spirit, cry to Him, “Have respect unto the Covenant,” and then we may both hope and quietly wait for His salvation.

I need not tell you, for you are, I trust, well-grounded in that matter, that the Covenant here spoken of is the Covenant of Grace. There is a Covenant which we could not plead in prayer, the Covenant of Works, a Covenant which destroys us, for we have broken it. Our first father sinned and the Covenant was broken. We have continued in his perverseness and that Covenant condemns us. By the Covenant of Works none of us is justified, for we still continue to break our portion of it and to bring upon ourselves wrath to the uttermost. The Lord has made a new Covenant with the Second Adam, our federal Head, Jesus Christ our Lord—a Covenant without conditions, except such conditions as Christ has already fulfilled.

It is a Covenant ordered in all things and sure which now consists of promises only—which run after this fashion—“I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people.” “A new heart also will I give them and a

right spirit will I put within them.” “From all their transgressions will I cleanse them.” It is a Covenant, I say, which once had conditions in it, all of which our Lord Jesus fulfilled when He finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. And now the Covenant is all of promise and consists of Infallible and eternal shalls and wills which shall abide the same forever.

We shall talk of the text thus—What is meant by the plea before us, “Have respect unto the Covenant”? Then we will think a little of where it derives its force. Thirdly, we will consider how and when we may plead it. And we will close by noticing what are the practical inferences from it.

I. Let us begin by this—WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PLEA, “Have respect unto the Covenant”? It means this, does it not? “Fulfill Your Covenant, O God! Let it not be a dead letter. You have said this and that, now do as You have said. You have been pleased by solemn sanction of oath and blood to make this Covenant with Your people. Now be pleased to keep it. Have You said and will You not do it? We are persuaded of Your faithfulness, let our eyes behold Your Covenant engagements fulfilled.” It means, again, “Fulfill all the promises of Your Covenant,” for indeed all the promises are now in the Covenant! They are all yes and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us!

And I may say without being unscriptural that the Covenant contains within its sacred Charter every gracious Word that has come from the Most High, either by the mouth of Prophets or Apostles, or by the lips of Jesus Christ Himself! The meaning in this case would be—“Lord keep Your promises concerning Your people. We are in need. Now, O Lord, fulfill Your promise that we shall not lack any good thing. Here is another of Your promises—‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.’ We are in rivers of trouble! Be with us now! Redeem Your promises to Your servants. Let them not stand on the book as letters that mock us, but prove that You meant what you wrote and said and let us see that You have power to make every jot and tittle good of all You have spoken. For have You not said, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away?’ Oh, then have respect unto the promises of Your Covenant.”

In the connection of our text there is no doubt that the suppliant meant, “O Lord, prevent anything from turning aside Your promises.” The Church was then in a very terrible state. The Temple was burnt and the assemblage broken up. The worship of God had ceased and idolatrous emblems stood in the Holy Place where once the Glory of God shone forth! The plea is, “Do not suffer the power of the enemy to be so great as to frustrate Your purposes, or to make Your promises void.” So may we pray—“O Lord, do not suffer me to endure such temptation that I shall fall! Do not suffer such affliction to come upon me that I shall be destroyed, for have You not promised that no temptation shall happen to me but such as I am able to bear and that with the temptation there shall be a way of escape? Now have respect unto Your Covenant and so order your Providence that nothing shall happen to me contrary to that Divine agreement.”

And it also means, “So order everything around us that the Covenant may be fulfilled. Is Your Church low? Raise up in her midst, again, men who preach the Gospel with power who shall be the means of lifting her up! Creator of men, Master of human hearts, You who can circumcise human lips to speak Your Word with power, do this and let Your Covenant with Your Church, that You will never leave her, be fulfilled! The kings of the earth are in Your hands. All events are controlled by You! You order all things, from the minute to the immense! Nothing, however small, is too small for Your purposes! Nothing, however great, is too great for Your rule! Manage everything so that in the end each promise of Your Covenant shall be fulfilled to all Your chosen people.”

That, I think, is the meaning of the plea, “Have respect unto the Covenant.” Keep it and see it kept. Fulfill the promises and prevent Your foes from doing evil to Your children. Precious plea, assuredly!

II. And now let us see FROM WHERE IT DERIVES ITS FORCE. “Have respect unto the Covenant.” It derives its force, first, from the veracity of God. If it is a covenant of man’s making we expect a man to keep it—and a man who does not keep his covenant is not esteemed among his fellows. If a man has given his word, that word is his bond. If a thing is solemnly signed and sealed, it becomes even more binding and he that would run back from a covenant would be thought to have forfeited his character among men.

God forbid that we should ever think the Most High could be false to His Word! It is not possible! He can do all things except this—He cannot lie—it is not possible that He should ever be untrue. He cannot even change—the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. He will not alter the thing that has gone out of His lips. When, then, we come before God in prayer for a Covenant mercy we have His truthfulness to support us. “O God, You must do this. You are a Sovereign—You can do as you will, but You have bound Yourself by bonds that hold Your majesty—You have said it and it is not possible that You should go back from Your own Word!” How strong our faith ought to be when we have God’s Truth to lean upon! What dishonor we do to our God by our weak faith, for it is virtually a suspicion of the fidelity of our Covenant God!

Next, to support us in using this plea, we have God’s sacred jealousy for His honor. He has told us, Himself, that He is a jealous God. His name is Jealousy—He has great respect unto His honor among the sons of men. Hence this was Moses’ plea—“What will the enemy say? And what will You do unto Your great name?” Now, if God’s Covenant could be trifled with and if it could be proven that He had not kept the promise that He made to His creatures, it would not only be a dreadful thing for

 us, but it would bring grievous dishonor upon His name and that shall never be! God is too pure and holy and He is altogether too honorable ever to run back from the Word that He has given to His servants.

If I feel that my feet have almost gone, I may still be assured that He will not suffer me wholly to perish, else were His honor stained, for He has said, “They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” He might give me up to my enemies so far as my deserts are concerned, for I deserve to be destroyed by them—but then His honor is engaged to save the meanest of His people and He has said, “I give unto them eternal life.” He will not, therefore, for His honor’s sake, suffer me to be the prey of the adversary, but will preserve me, even me, unto the day of His appearing! Here is a good foothold for faith!

The next reflection that should greatly strengthen us is the venerable character of the Covenant. This Covenant was no transaction of yesterday—before the earth was, this Covenant was made! We may not speak of first or last with God, but speaking after the manner of men, the Covenant of Grace is God’s first thought. Though we usually put the Covenant of Works first in order of time as revealed, yet in very deed the Covenant of Grace is the older of the two. God’s people were not chosen yesterday, but before the foundations of the world! And the Lamb slain to ratify that Covenant, though slain 1800 years ago, was in the Divine purpose slain from before the foundations of the world. It is an ancient Covenant—there is nothing so ancient!

It is to God a Covenant which He holds in high esteem. It is not one of His light thoughts—not one of those thoughts which lead Him to create the morning dew that melts before the day has run its course, or to make the clouds that light up the setting sun with glory which soon have lost their radiance. No, it is one of His great thoughts—yes, it is His eternal thought, the thought out of His own inmost soul—this Covenant of Grace. And because it is so ancient and to God a matter so important, when we come to Him with this plea in our mouths we must not think of being staggered by unbelief, but may open our mouths wide, for He will assuredly fill them! Here is Your Covenant, O God, which of Your own spontaneous Sovereign will You did ordain of old, a Covenant in which Your very heart is laid bare and Your love which is Yourself, is manifested! O God, have respect unto it and do as You have said and fulfill Your promise to Your people!

Nor is this all. It is but the beginning! In one sermon I should not have time to show you all the reasons that give force to the plea—but here is one. The Covenant has upon it a solemn endorsement. There was the stamp of God’s own Word—that is enough! The very Word that created the universe is the Word that spoke the Covenant! But, as if that were not sufficient, seeing we are unbelieving, God has added to it His oath! And because He could swear by no greater, He has sworn by Himself! It were blasphemy to dream that the Eternal could be perjured and so He has set His oath to His Covenant in order that, by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, He might give to the heirs of Grace strong consolation!

But more, that venerable Covenant thus confirmed by oath was sealed with blood! Jesus died to ratify it! His heart’s blood bedewed that Magna Charta of the Grace of God to His people. It is a Covenant which God the Just must keep! Jesus has fulfilled our side of it—has executed, to the letter, all the demands of God upon man! Our Surety and our Substitute has at once kept the Law and suffered all that was due by His people on account of their breach of it. And now, shall not the Lord be true and the Everlasting Father be faithful to His own Son? How can He refuse His Son the joy which He set before Him and the reward which He promised Him? “He shall see His seed: He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.”

My Soul, the faithfulness of God to His Covenant is not so much a matter between you and God as between Christ and God, for now it so stands—Christ, as our Representative, puts in His claim before the Throne of Infinite Justice for the salvation of every soul for whom He shed His blood—and He must have what He has purchased! Oh what confidence is here! The rights of the Son, blended with the love and the veracity of the Father, makes the Covenant to be ordered in all things and sure! Moreover, remember, and I will not detain you much longer with this, that up till now nothing in the Covenant has ever failed! The Lord has been tried by millions of His people and they have been in trying emergencies and serious difficulties—but it has never been reported in the gates of Zion that the promise has come up short—neither have any said that the Covenant is null and void!

Ask those before you who passed through deeper waters than yourselves. Ask the martyrs who gave their lives for their Master, “Was He with them to the end?” The placid smiles upon their countenances while enduring the most painful death were evident testimonies that God is true! Their joyous songs, the clapping of their hands in the fire and their exultation even on the rack or when rotting in some loathsome dungeon—all

these have proven how faithful the Lord has been! And have you not heard with your own ears the testimony of God’s dying people? They were in conditions in which they could not have been sustained by mere imagination, nor buoyed up by frenzy and yet they have been as joyful as if their dying day had been their wedding day!

Death is too solemn a matter for a man to play a masquerade. But what did your wife say in death? Or your mother, now with God? Or what of your child who had learned of the Savior’s love? Can you not recall their testimonies even now? I think I hear some of them and among the things of earth that are like the joys of Heaven, I think this is one of the foremost—the joy of departed saints when they already hear the voices of angels hovering near and turn round and tell us in broken language of the joys that are bursting in upon them—their sight blinded by the excess of brightness and their hearts ravished with the bliss that floods them! Oh it has been sweet to see the saints depart!

I mention these things, now, not merely to refresh your memories, but to establish your faith in God. He has been true so many times and never false—and shall we now experience any difficulty in resting on His Covenant? No, by all these many years in which the faithfulness of God has been put to the test and has never failed, let us be confident that He will still regard us and let us pray boldly—“Have respect unto the Covenant.” For, mark you, as it has been in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be, world without end! It shall be to the last saint as it was with the first! The testimony of the last soldier of the host shall be, “Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised.”

Only one more reflection here. Our God has taught many of us to trust in His name. We were long in learning the lesson and nothing but Omnipotence could have made us willing to walk by faith and not by sight. With much patience the Lord has brought us, at last, to have no reliance but on Him and now we are depending on His faithfulness and His Truth. Is that your case, Brothers and Sisters? What then? Do you think that God has given you this faith to mock you? Do you believe that He has taught you to trust in His name and has brought you this far to put you to shame? Has His Holy Spirit given you confidence in a lie? And has He worked in you faith in a fiction? God forbid! Our God is no demon who would delight in the misery which a groundless confidence would be sure to bring to us.

If, then, you have faith, He gave it to you and He that gave it to you knows His own gift and will honor it! He was never false yet, even to the feeblest faith—and if your faith is great, you shall find Him greater than your faith, even when your faith is at its greatest! Therefore be of good cheer. The fact that you believe should encourage you to say, “Now, O Lord, that I have come to rest upon You, by Your Grace , will You fail me? I, a poor worm, know no confidence but Your dear name—will You forsake me? I have no refuge but Your wounds, O Jesus; no hope but in Your atoning Sacrifice; no light but in Your light—will You now cast me off?”

It is not possible that the Lord should cast off one who thus trusts Him! Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Can any of us forget our children when they fondly trust us in the days of their weakness? No, the Lord is no monster! He is tender and full of compassion, faithful and true—and Jesus is a Friend which sticks closer than a brother. The very fact that He has given us faith in His Covenant should help us to plead—“Have respect unto the Covenant.”

III. Having thus shown you, dear Friends, the meaning of the plea and where it derives its force, we will now pause a minute and observe HOW AND WHEN THAT COVENANT MAY BE PLEADED. First, it may be pleaded under a sense of sin—when the soul feels its guilt. Let me read to you the words of our Apostle, in the eighth chapter of Hebrews, where he is speaking of this Covenant at the 10th verse. “For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My Laws into their minds and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Now, dear Hearer, suppose that you are under a sense of sin? Something has revived in you a recollection of past guilt, or it may be that you have sadly stumbled this very day and Satan whispers, “You will surely be destroyed, for you have sinned.” Now go to the great Father and open this page, putting your finger on that 12

th verse and say, “Lord, You have in infinite, boundless, inconceivable mercy entered into Covenant with me, a poor sinner, seeing I believe in the name of Jesus. And now I beseech You have respect unto Your Covenant. You have said, ‘I will be merciful to their unrighteousness’—O God be merciful to mine! You have said, ‘Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more’—Lord, remember no more my sins! Forget forever my iniquity!”

That is the way to use the Covenant! When under a sense of sin, run to that clause which meets your case! But suppose, beloved Brother or Sister, you are laboring to overcome inward corruption with intense desire that holiness should be worked in you? Then read the Covenant, again, as you find it in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah at the 33rd verse. It is the same Covenant, only we are reading another version of it. “This shall be the

Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, says the Lord, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” Now, can you not plead that and say, “Lord, Your Commandments upon stone are holy, but I forget them and break them. But, O my God, write them on the fleshy tablets of my heart! Come, now, and make me holy! Transform me! Write Your will upon my very soul that I may live it out, and from the warm impulses of my heart serve You as You would be served. Have respect unto Your Covenant and sanctify Your servant.”

Or suppose you desire to be upheld under strong temptation, lest you should go back and return to your old ways? Take the Covenant as you find it in Jeremiah at the 32nd chapter at the 40th verse. Note these verses and learn them by heart, for they may be a great help to you one of these days. Read the 40th verse of the 32nd chapter of Jeremiah. “And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.” Go and say, “O Lord, I am almost gone, and they tell me I shall finally fall, but O, my Lord and Master, there stands Your Word! Put Your fear in my heart and fulfill Your promise that I shall not depart from You.” This is the sure road to final perseverance!

Thus I might take you through all the various needs of God’s people and show that in seeking to have them supplied they may fitly cry, “Have respect unto the Covenant.” For instance, suppose you were in great distress of mind and needed comfort? You could go to Him with that Covenant promise, “As a mother comforts her children, even so will I comfort you—out of Zion will I comfort you.” Go to Him with that and say, “Lord, comfort Your servant.” Or if there should happen to be a trouble upon us, not for yourselves, but for the Church—how sweet it is to go to the Lord and say, “Your Covenant runs thus—‘the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her.’ O Lord, it seems as though they would prevail! Interpose Your strength and save Your Church.”

If it ever should happen that you are looking for the conversion of the ungodly and desiring to see sinners saved, but the world seems so dark, look at our text again—the whole verse. “Have respect unto the Covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty”—to which you may add, “But You have said that Your Glory shall cover the earth and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Lord, have respect unto Your Covenant! Help our missionaries, speed Your Gospel, bid the mighty angel fly through the midst of Heaven to preach the everlasting Gospel to every creature! Why, it is a grand missionary prayer, “Have respect unto the Covenant.” Beloved, it is a two-edged sword to be used in all conditions of strife and it is a holy balm of Gilead that will heal in all conditions of suffering!

IV. And so I close with this last question, WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL INFERENCES FROM ALL THIS? “Have respect unto the Covenant.” Why, that if we ask God to have respect unto it, we ought to have respect unto it ourselves! Have a grateful respect for it. Bless the Lord that He even condescended to enter into Covenant with you. What could He see in you to give you a promise, much more to make a Covenant with you? Blessed be His dear name, this is the sweet theme of our hymns on earth and shall be the subject of our songs in Heaven!

Next, have a believing respect for it. If it is God’s Covenant, do not dishonor it. It stands sure. Why do you stagger at it through unbelief?— *“His every work of Grace is strong  
As that which built the skies!  
The Voice that rolls the stars along  
Speaks all the promises.”*

Next, have a joyful respect for it. Awake your harps and join in praise with David—“Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant.” Here is enough to make a Heaven in our hearts while yet we are below—the Lord has entered into a Covenant of Grace and peace with us and He will bless us forever! Then have a jealous respect for it. Never suffer the Covenant of Works to be mixed with it. Hate that preaching—I say not less than that—hate that preaching which does not discriminate between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, for it is deadly preaching and damning preaching!

You must always have a straight, clear line, here, between what is of man and what is of God, for cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm! And if you have begun with the Spirit under this Covenant, do not think of being made perfect in the flesh under another Covenant! Be you holy under the precepts of the heavenly Father, but be you not legal under the taskmaster’s lash! Return not to the bondage of the Law, for you are not under Law, but under Grace! Lastly, have a practical respect for it. Let all see that the Covenant of Grace, while it is your reliance, is also your delight. Be ready to speak of it to others! Be ready to show that the effect of its Divine Grace upon you is one that is worthy of God, since it has a purifying effect upon your life!

He that has this hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure. Have respect unto the Covenant by walking as such people should who can say that God is to them a God and they are to Him a people. The Covenant says, “From all their idols will I cleanse them.” Then don’t love idols. The Covenant says, “I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean.” Then be clean, you covenanted ones, and may the Lord preserve you and make His Covenant to be your boast on earth and your song forever in Heaven! Oh that the Lord may bring us into the bonds of His Covenant and give us a simple faith in His dear Son—for THAT is the mark of the covenanted ones! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 74.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK.”—237, 228, 742.  
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THE ARROWS OF THE BOW BROKEN IN ZION  
NO. 791

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 19 , 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“There broke He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.”  
Psalm 76:3.**

THE writer of this song of triumph gloried as a patriot in the defeat of his country’s foes—he did better, he triumphed as a believer in Jehovah in the victories which were worked by the power of the Lord his God! I have sometimes wished that we English Christians blended in ourselves a little more of the two characters of patriots and Believers. I am persuaded that if our poets had been holy and devout men, and at the same time bold patriots, like David, they would not have lacked subjects for the most glorious national hymns.

The events of English history are no less stirring than the annals of Judah and Israel. What a theme for a master singer would be the defeat of the proud Spanish Armada, or the frustration of Rome’s knavish tricks on November the Fifth, or the gallant fights of Oliver and his valiant Ironsides, or the landing of William III and the overthrow of the hopes of the enemies of the Gospel! Our national minstrelsy has never been so devout as it should be and we are poor in holy national songs as compared to the Hebrews. May the taste of coming ages improve in this respect.

Let us, in the events which occur in our own tune, see the hand of God—and if we cannot write psalms and hymns, yet at any rate let us feel the spirit of glowing thanksgiving to that God who has bid the ocean gird our native isle and thus protected her with a better guard than gates of brass or triple steel! Blessed be the Lord our God, Who, till now, has held the shield of Omnipotence over this land and made it the citadel of liberty, the refuge of the oppressed, and the stronghold of the Gospel of Christ.

We will not, however, detain you with such subjects, but invite you to more spiritual considerations. Our Salem is the peaceful Church or God, and our Zion is the abode of Gospel worship where the general assembly of the first-born unite in holy joy. The Psalmists of Israel, when they rehearsed the Lord’s mighty acts in the midst of His people, spoke of the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. And we who believe in Jesus can join with the song of Moses the song of the Lamb, while we behold the overthrow of sin, death and Hell by our all-glorious Champion, and cry with all our hearts and voices, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

Israel chanted her paean of victory over the accursed Canaanites whom Joshua slew with great slaughter. They were firmly established in their own country. They dwelt in cities which were walled up to the heavens and they rushed forth to war, riding in chariots of iron with sharp scythes upon their axles, and spearmen darting their javelins afar. Their warriors were swift and valiant and their numbers like the sand of the sea. But, behold, their boasted armies dissolved at the advance of Joshua as the hoar frost melts in the sun!

Hittites and Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites fell before the sword of the Lord and Israel magnified Jehovah who “smote great kings, and slew famous kings, and gave their land for an heritage, even an heritage unto Israel His servant: for His mercy endures forever.” We also have a better Canaan in prospect and more terrible enemies have been subdued by Jesus, the Captain of our salvation—let us not be slow to praise the name of the Lord! No Jew could forget the victories achieved under the leadership of David over the Philistines. They had giants among them and their ranks were filled with veterans—men of war from their youth up—yet the sling and the stone brought down the champion, and the troops of God were made valiant in battle, turning to flight the armies of the aliens!

Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, for even thus has Jesus vanquished evil and given His servants Grace to conquer through His blood. This Psalm commemorates the grand defeat of Sennacherib. No swords or spears were used—the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty men of valor, and all the leaders and captains in the camp—so that the proud Assyrian returned with shame to his own land. This victory was the subject of many a holy song in Judah’s happy land. But the everlasting defeat of the accuser of the Brethren by the angel of the Covenant of Grace should waken yet more thrilling music in the choirs of the Church of the living God.

All the wonders recorded in the book of the wars of the Lord are eclipsed in the Gospel annals, for they are but the destruction of men’s bodies, the temporary deliverance of cities and of nations from the oppression of war. But the Gospel tells of eternal redemption. As spiritual affairs far exceed material interests, so the spiritual victories of God in the midst of His Church are far more resplendent than His triumphs against His foes on behalf of Israel. May the Holy Spirit quicken us, raise our courage, strengthen our faith and confirm our confidence in Him while we think upon what God has done and is doing in the midst of His Church.

“There broke He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” Right valiantly has the Lord worked for us and in us, and He will also do great things by us.

I. First, he has fought victoriously FOR US. Our God has worked great spiritual victories for us by which all the ingenious weapons of our many adversaries have been snapped. Let me remind you, Beloved, in the first place, of what the Lord our God did in the day of our redemption by the sufferings of Christ. Let us celebrate the triumphs of Cavalry! The Lord of angels descended from Heaven and left the glories of His Father’s Throne to take upon Himself the form of a servant and to be made in the likeness of man. Throughout the whole of His life of humiliation He was attacked by the enemy, but He was victorious at every point.

Hell strived to empty out all its quivers upon Him and the sword of Satanic malice sought with its keenest edge to wound Him, but never was He staggered or so much as scarred. He quenched every fiery dart and repelled every barbed arrow. The prince of this world watched Him with jealous eyes and scanned Him from head to foot but found no place for the entrances of sin—nothing within His soul upon which evil could gain a footing. Jesus was unconquerable to show us that in the power of Divine Grace manhood may overcome the sword of evil and break the arrows of temptation. At last the fullness of time ushered in that dreadful night when all the powers of darkness met and collected all their infernal might for one last tremendous charge—buckler, and sword, and arrow and every weapon of offense and defense were wielded by the leaguered hosts of Hell—but all in vain.

Our Champion was hard put to it. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. He was numbered with the transgressors. He was led away like a malefactor, tried and condemned. The Lord Jehovah made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all, but in all, and over all He was more than conqueror! You never can forget, for it is written upon the fleshy tablets of your grateful hearts, how His enemies dragged Him to the Mount of Crucifixion. How they fastened Him to the accursed tree, lifted Him up all bleeding and suffering, exposed Him to the glare of the sun, dashed the Cross into its place dislocating all His bones! How they sat around and stared upon Him and mocked His miseries! But in all this He remained invincible!

These griefs, which were outward and conspicuous to our eyes, were but a small part of His agonies—the inward strife, the internal conflict, the soul-desertion and depression were far heavier. Sin’s utmost weight, the fury of vengeance, the curse of the Law, the sword of Justice, the malice of Satan, the bitterness of death—all these He knew and more. And yet, single-handed, He sustained the fight and earned the crown! That glorious cry, “It is finished,” was the deathblow of all the adversaries of His people, the breaking of “the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.”

I think I see before me the hero of Golgotha using His Cross as an anvil and His woes as a hammer. He is dashing to shivers bundle after bundle of our sins, those poisoned “arrows of the bow.” He is trampling on every charge, and destroying every accusation. What glorious blows the mighty Breaker gives! How the weapons fly to fragments, beaten small as the dust of the threshing floor! Behold, I see Him drawing from its sheath of hellish workmanship the dread sword of hellish power! See He snaps it across His knee as a man breaks dry and brittle firewood, and casts it into the fire. Like David, he cries, “He teaches My hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by My arms.” “I have pursued My enemies, and destroyed them, and turned not again until I had consumed them. And I have consumed them and wounded them that they could not arise: yes, they are fallen under My feet...Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth; I did stamp them as the mire of the street.”

Beloved, no sin of a Believer can now be an arrow to mortally wound him. No condemnation can now be a sword to kill him, for the punishment of our sin was borne by Christ. A full atonement has been made for all our iniquities by our blessed Substitute and Surety. Who now accuses? Who now condemns? Christ has died, yes, rather has risen again! Let Hell, if it can, find a single arrow to shoot against the Beloved of the Lord! They are all broken, not one of them is left. Christ has emptied the quivers of Hell, has quenched every fiery dart and broken off the head of every arrow of wrath! The ground is strewn with the splinters and relics of the weapons of Hell’s warfare—which are only visible to us to remind us of our former danger, and of our great deliverance.

Sin has no more dominion over us! Jesus has made an end of it, and put it away forever. O you enemy, destruction has come to a perpetual end! Let us talk of all the wondrous works of the Lord and you who make mention of His name keep not silent. When our Lord, after a short sojourn in the grave, rose again on the third day, His resurrection effectually crushed all the remaining hopes of Hell. So long as He was in the tomb, it might seem as though His people were in jeopardy. But when He “rose again for our justification,” our security was no longer in doubt! In His death He paid the debt. In His resurrection He obtained the receipt, and exhibited the precious writing to Heaven, and earth, and Hell, by nailing the handwriting of ordinances to His Cross.

The rising of Christ from the grave is to us the warrant of our final perseverance. Has He not Himself said, “Because I live, you shall live also”? It is to us the pledge of our resurrection, for as the Head has arisen, so all the members of the body must arise. Had Jesus seen corruption, had the grave still held His body in vile durance, our hope would have been but slender. But now that Jesus lives, and death has no more dominion over Him, we rejoice that by one sacrifice He has perfected forever them that are set apart. Our risen Lord shines forth in transcendent majesty beside the empty tomb, surrounded by the broken swords and bucklers of His people—

*“Shout, you seraphs! Gabriel, raise  
Fame’s eternal trump of praise!  
Let the earth’s remotest bound  
Hear the joy-inspiring sound  
Hallelujah. Lives again our glorious King! ‘Where, O death, is now your sting?’  
Once He died our souls to save;  
‘Where’s your victory, boasting grave?’ ”*

Yet further, when, after 40 days our Lord ascended from us to take possession of the purchased possession in our name, and to prepare a place for us at the right hand of the Father—in that day He again gave to Hell such a defeat as it shall never be able to recover. Had Jesus Christ remained still upon the earth, it had been thought that Heaven was still shut to Believers and we might have entertained a fear that between us and the celestial gate there would be such hordes of enemies that we should never be able to hew a pathway to our rest. But Jesus has completely cleared the king’s highway to Glory for all His saints, and they traverse in safety the road to the celestial gate! As the watchmen fled from the grave’s month when the living Lord arose, and as the stone was rolled away from the sepulcher, so all the fiends that might have kept us out of Heaven have fled also, and every barrier to our entrance to the celestial reward is effectually removed.

See the Incarnate God returning to His Throne! Your imaginations can conceive the splendor of His triumphal entrance when all the angels hailed Him with glad acclaim and disembodied spirits who had long ago been redeemed by the foresight of His death met Him with their congratulations and the Paternal Deity said, “Well done” and bade Him take His reward at His right hand. Ah, then He led captivity captive and made a show of His enemies openly! Then He finally broke the “arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle,” and gave to His people a conformation of the assurance that it shall never be possible to keep so much as

 one of them out of the eternal rest since their Covenant Head has taken possession on their behalf—to hold it safely for each one until “the adoption to wit the redemption of our body.” Nor is the story quite ended yet. Jesus is now exalted far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named.

But the enemy of our souls, though defeated, continues maliciously to attempt our destruction. Satan’s head is bruised but still he lives and continues perpetually to assault the saints of God. We seldom stand before the angel without Satan comes forward as our accuser. The accuser of the Brethren unceasingly clamors against the saints, but here is our joy— whatever may be the arrows of Satan’s bow, whatever sword he may wield against us—there He stands, our great Captain, our Shield and the Lord’s Anointed! And as fast as the arrows of accusation are shot, He breaks them! And as often as the sword is drawn, He turns aside its edge!

Courage, Christian! Your foes may be unceasing in their attacks, but Jesus Christ is unfailing in your protection! For Zion’s sake He does not hold His peace and for Jerusalem’s sake He does not rest. His intercession comes up perpetually before the eternal Throne—and the constant presentation of His Omnipotent merit evermore preserves the tempted, succors the needy, and upholds those that are ready to fall. Let us be of good cheer, for there, in the New Jerusalem to which our laboring souls aspire, the intercession of Jesus breaks “the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” Nor does it end there, for here below our exalted Lord is master over all events! Providence is ruled and guided by the Man whose head was surrounded with the crown of thorns—

*“Lo! In His hands the sovereign keys  
Of Heaven, and death, and Hell.”*

To this hour the adversaries of the Truth of God seek the overthrow of the Church of God. We may be sometimes idle, but they are always diligent. “The enemy goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” He assails the people of God in successive ages from different points of the compass with cunning and fury, and we should have poor hope—we who are like a few lambs in the midst of wolves—if it were not that our Master is present by His eternal Spirit and rules all things by His Providential government! He can make those wheels which are so high that they are terrible, to revolve that the greatest enemies of the Church shall be cut off or shall be converted! And He can raise up from the dunghill men that shall be princes in the midst of Israel, to be defenders of the Truth and shepherds to His people.

He can cause to be born in a humble cottage in the woods a Luther who shall shake off the fetters from the nations! He can bring forth from the wildest village of France a Calvin whose words shall be as nails fastened by the master of assemblies! And He can raise a flaming Knox and nourish his fiery spirit in Geneva till Scotland needs him—or raise up in the quiet parsonage of Lutterworth a Wickliffe to shine as the morning star of the Reformation in England. God is never short of men! He never has to worry Himself of means! He knows no difficulties or dilemmas. If His Church needed it, He could, tomorrow, make emperors relent of their sins and doff their crowns to become ministers of the Word, and constrain the most violent persecutors of the Church to crouch at her feet and lick the dust.

Let us be confident in the reigning power of our ever loving Savior! Let us be reassured by the history of the Church in the past, and expect to see Divine interpositions in our own day. Fear not, for still it shall be said of Zion, “There broke He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” For His redeemed ones it is most evident that the Lord Jesus is more than conqueror, not only putting adverse darts aside, but breaking them. He not merely averts the violence of the sword, but He breaks that sword, tearing the buckler from the enemy and leaving him defenseless—stripping him of all his arms, both of offense and defense— that his defeat may be total and irretrievable. “Arms and the man, I sing,” said the great Roman poet. A nobler theme, by far, would be, “Arms and the Son of God.”

II. May we have help from on high while we now ask you to consider the victories which Jesus Christ has won in us. Brethren, we who are members of the Church of Christ have been subdued by Sovereign Grace. Whereas once we were enemies, we are now reconciled unto God by the death of His Son. Now, if we could each tell his story of conversion the children of God would be ready to burst out with one simultaneous shout of joy as they perceived that in the midst of His Church, the Lord, in the hearts of His people, has broken the arrows of the bow!

Let me take you back to the time of your conversion. Some of us were very stout-hearted. We knew the Truth of God but we did not love it. We understood the Gospel and we abhorred it. We were often entreated to consider the welfare of our souls, but we cared for the frivolities of the moment and we let the realities of eternity slip by. We were thundered at by the Law! We were gently wooed by the Gospel. The tears of a mother, united with the earnest warnings of a teacher, and the admonitions of a pastor—all these were powerless upon our slumbering conscience. Some of us went to great lengths of rebellion and hardened ourselves more and more until it seemed impossible for us to do enough against the Lord our God.

When we talk of great and vile sinners it brings tears to our eyes as we remember that such were some of us, but we have been washed. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, the bringing in of great sinners is, indeed, a glory to Christ—and the salvation of great moralists is not a secondary victory, for perhaps of the two it is more difficult to subdue the righteous self than the sinful self of men. To have made those who have been kept pure outwardly to feel their inward impurity, and to bewail it is a triumph great and masterly! Rejoice when the harlot bows before the Savior with breaking heart! Be glad when Saul of Tarsus yields his persecuting heart to the Savior’s scepter! But equally adore the majesty of love when the young man who has kept all these commandments from his youth up seeks the one thing which he lacks and trusts his heart with Jesus Christ without delay!

When we shall get to Heaven we will astonish the angels with what we shall have to tell—the depths of sin out of which we have been delivered— the fiery lusts from which we have been rescued—the stiff necks that have been made to bow, and the unyielding knees that have been compelled to bend! Glory be unto God! I cannot help saying so again, Glory be to God! As I look around this place and think of some of you in whom God’s great and wondrous arm has been revealed in redeeming you from all your iniquities, I dare make it my boast that here the Lord has broken “the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle!”

Since conversion, dear Friends, how often has the great Conqueror been obliged to interpose on our behalf to save us from our rebellious lusts? I do not know how you find it, but it strikes me that conflict is the principal feature of the Christian life this side Heaven. We know what communion is. We are no strangers to the banqueting house where the banner of love is waving. But still, to contest every inch of ground on the road to immortality, to wrestle hard with sins, and doubts and fears is our average experience. We do get beyond this sometimes, but not for long. We have soon to come back again, either to fight with the lions, or Apollyon, or to climb the Hill Difficulty, or to traverse the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or to pass through Vanity Fair, or to endure the sleepy influences of the enchanted ground, or to be in Doubting Castle!

It is not an easy path to Heaven—it is warfare from beginning to end. There are times with us when we are so sorely beset with temptations that our feet have almost gone, our steps have well near slipped. We had long before this fallen, to our shame and confusion, if another arm than ours had not held us up. Oh, what strong temptations some of us have endured! Those of us who have passionate, fiery, strong, willful natures have to fight frequently against suggestions which we would scarcely whisper in the ear of those we love the best. We have overcome as yet. We have been upheld till now. But who could have held us up but the Lord Himself?

Our temptations occasionally are plied so craftily and are so exactly fitted to the situation, so precisely adapted to the state of our bodily health, or the condition of our outward business that it is a wonder that we have not yielded. Yes, and we have almost yielded, as we must mournfully acknowledge, and then Apollyon has hissed at us from between his teeth: “You have been unfaithful to your Lord already in your heart. You know you have gone back in your soul and broken your covenant. How can you hope to be accepted at the last? Go back to the world at once, for you are playing the hypocrite, you know you are,” says he, “for your heart is deceitful. Go back, therefore, in your outward life.”

Though we have been able still to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and have kept the weapon of All Prayer in our hand, yet we have been almost overcome, and have narrowly escaped. We have to bless God that we have escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler, but only escaped as by the skin of our teeth. We have not broken the arrows of the bow. We have not been able to break the sword of the enemy— but Christ has done it, blessed be His name! We have fled to the foot of His Cross. We have looked up and seen the streams of His precious blood. We have cowered down beneath the shadow of the Atonement and we have come away strong to fight with our corruptions and to overcome our besetting sins.

Further than this, those who know anything of the inner life, if their inward struggles are at all like mine, will frequently have to contend with doubts and fears, suspicions and forebodings. Glory be to God, it is not always so. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” My Brothers and Sisters, we often walk in darkness and see no light. Many of God’s people are harassed with questions as to their interest in Christ, or are afflicted with deep depression of spirit. And when it is so, if we try to comfort them, what a task it is! I have tried all the promises of the Bible which I could remember upon some of the sorely troubled ones. I have reminded them of the Person of Christ, and His consequent power. The suffering of Christ and His consequent ability to cleanse from sin.

And frequently I have had this answer, “When God shuts up, who can deliver?” and I have been made to feel, as a pastor, very often, that I could not quench the fiery darts of the enemy for other people—that I could not break the sword of the enemy for others—or even for myself! What a sweet relief it is to be assured that Jesus can break the arrows of the bow, subdue our doubts, and cause His people with reviving courage to say, “Rejoice not over me, O my enemy, for when I fall I shall rise again!” I have seen many excellent Believers whose lives have been examples to us all, who, nevertheless, have said, “If you knew what was in my heart, you would not speak to me as a Christian. Oh, how great are my sins! I feel that I live at a great distance from God. I am of little or no service to His Church. When I am in trouble, I do not act like a Believer and cast my burden upon the Lord, but I bear it till my soul is sorely burdened.”

Then I have read to them such a Psalm as the one which follows our text, where David says, “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. You hold my eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” I have always found such souls get relief when they have come to Christ just as they did at first—and if they have said, “I am afraid I never did come,” they have soon rejoiced in the light of His countenance when they have been able to add, “But if I never came, I will now”—

*“Just as I am—though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fights within, and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come.”*

To creep to the foot of the Cross feeling as if the earth would open and swallow you up, and yet resolved that if you perish, you will perish with your arms about the Atonement, resting on the expiatory Sacrifice—this is the sure way to comfort. Tried one, you cannot perish beneath the Cross! You must be safe there! Standing there, you shall understand that there Jesus breaks “the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” To leave this subject for a moment, I would notice that all which is yet to come in the inner life is secured by our Lord Jesus Christ. As up till now we have not been mortally wounded, nor have cast away our confidence altogether, so shall it be to the close. No doubt other conflicts will arise—the past seems to warrant our prophesying that the future will not be calm and peaceful—the hours of old age and consequent debility are stealing on apace.

The days of sickness, and all the depression of spirit which sickness usually brings are drawing near. Last of all, and most terrible to some, the solemn article of death approaches, and speak of it as we may, death is terrible to a living man. The river of death is cold and chill, and for a man to plunge into it boldly will need more than ordinary courage. But let us not sit down and deplore our future ills, nor petulantly wish to avoid life’s trials—we cannot if we could—let us set our face steadfastly towards Jerusalem and go onward, persuaded that every foe in advance is already defeated! Christ Jesus leads the way! No enemy has been able to stand against Him and none shall stand against us all the days of His life!

Death has lost its sting since Jesus died. “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I wish that I had the power to speak of these things as they deserve, but I leave them with you as topics for your thankfulness. O my Brothers and Sisters, how we ought to praise and bless God for what He has worked in us from the first day until now! A dear friend said just before service, “I am very grateful, and what is more, if I am not grateful, I ought to be, for I owe so much.”

Oh, if ever I get to Heaven, I will sing the loudest of any there for I am sure I shall owe more to God than any of you! The responsibilities of my office overwhelm me. When I sit and think of the many, many, many who call me by the name of pastor, and the tens of thousands that read the word which I preach every week, I am overwhelmed! If I shall at the close of life be able to say as George Fox, the Quaker, said after his last sermon, “I am clear! I am clear!”—I would give all the world if I had it, to know that I shall be able to say that—for this is my one and sole desire, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but being wrapped about with the fair white linen of His. If safe at last, I shall have to praise Him who has delivered me from a thousand temptations, and kept my feet safe in slippery places.

I know that to each one of you your place seems as peculiar as mine does to me. I do not doubt but what I am as much fitted for mine as you are for yours, and therefore I believe that your condition has its peculiar dangers, and I doubt not you receive peculiar helps and special deliverances. Defraud not my Master of your gratitude! Give Him your hearts. Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar, for God is our God which has showed us light! Let what He has done for us bind us to Him, and encourage us to hope in Him. “You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.”

III. And now, lastly, as this has been done for us, and in us, it will be done BY US. The Church of God is God’s battle-ax and weapons of war in fighting His battles for truth and righteousness. And, up till now history shows that none have been able to stand against God in the midst of His people. If I could give you a brief epitome of Church history, I should be glad to do so, but there is not time this morning, and will not be, I fear, at any of our services today. But it is a fact, that along the whole spiritual battle the victory has been to God’s people.

At first the enemy attacked the Church with persecution. Those rough and barbarous weapons of war were used which were to be found in the Coliseum with its wild beasts and cruel men, or in the axe, the stake, and the rack. Men have grown somewhat wiser now, but in those days men and devils sought to destroy the testimony of our God by the destruction of the saints. And what was the result? O Persecution, where are your trophies? The virgin daughter of Zion has shaken her head at you and laughed you to scorn! The Church, like a good ship beaten by the waves, has cut through every billow and has been hastened on her way by the storm. Washed and cleansed and purged by opposition, the more the Church has been opposed the more brightly glorious has she shone forth!

God was in the midst of her and helped her. He helped her and that right early. Our pulse beats fast, and our blood grows hot when we read of the persecutions of old pagan Rome. And when we turn to the story of the Reformation, and see the hunted ones among the Alps, the Huguenots driven out of France—our own Lollards and the Covenanters of Scotland— we feel proud to belong to such a race of men! We glory in their lineage and are amazed that the policy of persecution should so long have been continued by shrewd, sharp-witted men, when it ought to have been clear to them that in every case in which they persecuted the Church of God, it multiplied the more exceedingly! God has, indeed, broken “the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle,” by sustaining His people in times of persecution.

The Church has also been assailed with deadly errors. There is scarcely a doctrine of our holy faith which has not been denied. Every age produces a new crop of heretics and infidels. Just as the current of the times may run, so does the stream of infidelity change its direction. We have lived long enough, some of us, to see three or four species of atheists and deists rise and die—for they are short lived—an ephemeral generation. We have seen the Church attacked by weapons borrowed from geology, ethnology, and anatomy. And then from the schools of criticism fierce warriors have issued, but she survives all her antagonists. She has been assailed from almost every quarter, but the fears that tarry in the Church today are blown to the wind tomorrow!

Yes, the Church has been enriched by the attacks, for her divines have set to work to study the points that were dubious, to strengthen the walls that seemed a little weak, and so her towers have been strengthened and her bulwarks consolidated. To disprove the Word of God and to overthrow Christianity is still the fond dream of wicked men, and therefore we may expect yet worse attacks. There are looming in the future, even now, fresh clouds of skeptical theory, but as certainly as God has blown away these things like chaff before the wind in times gone by, so will He in the days that are yet to come. It is in the Church itself that the victory is generally won. I am inclined to believe that the writers against different heresies, when they have done their best, have done comparatively little with the masses—and that our learned men, when they assail new forms of skepticism, however successful they may be with the few—do but very little with the many.

The true place of victory is not in the scholar’s study, nor in the classroom of the university, but in the Church itself. If you want to answer the infidel, live a holy life! If you desire to stop the skeptic, let your faith bring forth patience, your patience experience, your experience hope that makes not ashamed. Zeal for the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, earnest prayer for the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom and industrious effort for the spread of the Truth will be much more victorious over the insinuations of evil men than the most cogent arguments that reason can devise. There, on the death-bed of the consumptive girl with scarcely strength enough to speak, she bears witness that Christ is precious and His love a sweet savor in her departing moments—THERE our precious Jesus breaks the arrows of the bow!

There, in the working man’s cottage which was once the haunt of drunkenness and the den of vice and the abode of misery—but which has now become a little paradise where the children are trained for Heaven, where father and mother are knit together in love—THERE the Grace of God breaks the shield, and the sword, and the battle! There where the weeping sinner finds peace. Where the troubled merchant wins rest to his spirit. Where the tempted young man overcomes the temptation and stands fast in the day of trial—THERE it is where suffering is endured with patience, where labor is performed with perseverance, where the command is obeyed with holiness and sin is resisted with steadfastness! THERE it is that the Gospel of Jesus breaks the “arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.”

My dear Friends, let nothing ever daunt us as a Church. God has given us some signal triumphs in the conversion of remarkable sinners—let nothing, therefore, ever hinder us in seeking the conversion of men. Some of you I know are industrious every day in seeking to turn men to Christ. Do not give up the most hardened cases where you get nothing but a sneer, or even where the door is slammed in your face! Do not be cast down at rebuffs or blasphemies—those who are most opposed frequently yield first. It is harder work to deal with those who say, “Yes, yes, yes,” but who forget what we say—it is more hopeless work to deal with them than with those who turn against us and seek to tear us apart.

In God’s name push on, you soldiers of the Cross! The darkest alley may be made light! The back courts of London may become the courts of King Jesus! The house that is now a den of infamy may be purged, and be made to have a Church within its walls! Be confident, in the energy of the eternal Spirit, that He can subdue the hardened heart! Be steadfast in the exercise of minister and continue to preach the Gospel, for it is by preaching through the Holy Spirit that men shall be saved! Brothers and Sisters, we anticipate the happy day when the whole world shall be converted to Christ! We are looking forward to the time when the gods of the heathen shall be cast to the moles and to the bats—when Romanism shall be exploded and the crescent of Mohammed shall never again wave to cast its baleful rays upon nations.

We expect the time when every sail that whitens the deep shall bear the herald of the Cross! When kings shall bow down before the Prince of Peace and all nations shall call their Redeemer blessed! I know that some despair of this. They look upon the world as a vessel that is breaking up and going to pieces, never to float again. We are to pluck, they say, the elect from off her, and the world itself is to be destroyed and cast away as an unclean thing. We are of another mind and look for something more glorifying to God than this desponding theory.

We know that the world and all that is in it is one day to be burnt up, and afterwards we look for new heavens and for a new earth. But we cannot read our Bibles without the conviction that—

*“Jesus shall reign wherever the sun  
Both his successive journeys run.”*  
We are not discouraged by the length of His delays. We are not disheartened by the period which He allots to the Church in which to strive and struggle with little success and much defeat. We believe that God will

never suffer this world, which has once seen Christ’s blood shed upon it, to be always the devil’s stronghold. Brethren, Christ came here to take the lion by the beard and to rend him, and to deliver this world entirely and altogether from the detested sway of the powers of darkness. It shall be so, for Jesus cannot lose His reward! We expect to see the mountain of the Lord arise—it has arisen now—it is no mean hill already. But we expect to see it rise higher, and higher, and higher till it shall be exalted upon the top of the hills—above all the highest peaks of earth—and nations shall flow unto it.

The handful of corn upon the top of the mountains shall yet shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. What a shout shall that be when men and angels shall join together to cry, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” What a satisfaction will it be in that day to have had a share in the fight, to have helped to break the arrows of the bow, and to have aided in winning the victory for our Lord Jesus!

In closing, let me solemnly remark how unhappy are those who are on the side of evil! It is a losing side and it is a side where to lose is to lose forever. Be reconciled unto God! This is the Gospel message. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, while His wrath is kindled but a little.” Lastly, how happy are they who trust themselves with this conquering Lord, and who fight side by side with Him doing their little in His name and by His strength! Thrice happy, my Brothers and Sisters, are we to have the honor of winning souls! Let us seek to get more of such honor! Let us be insatiable to promote Christ’s Gospel! Let us be ambitious to the highest bent of our minds to extend the Redeemer’s kingdom! And God do so to you, and more also, as you shall seek to do unto Him, and unto the sons of men for their good evermore. Amen.

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A SERMON  
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**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 11, 1872.

**“I cried unto God...You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”  
Psalm 77:1-20.**

THIS Psalm describes the condition of a child of God under deep depression of spirit. He is much tried and bowed, and yet, at the same time, the saint at last gets the victory and, before the Psalm is over, the clouds are all removed from the sky and the heart rejoices in the sunlight of Divine Love. It is known to every Believer that the experience of a Christian is very variable. We are like our own strange weather in this land. South winds blow and all is warm and balmy, but in a few hours the north wind comes, or the cutting east wind—and soon the ground is covered with snow or hard white frost—and yet, perhaps, in another day or two there will be a storm! Some Believers have all spiritual weathers in a week. Being somewhat excitable, perhaps naturally, they readily take to themselves wings and mount aloft, but then as a high soar is often followed by a great fall, these very Believers are soon sighing and crying out of the very depths and half doubt whether they are the people of God at all! Nor must I say that is common to merely excitable people. Some of the very noblest heroes in the Christian army have had a very dark experience to go through. If you read the life of Martin Luther, of whom we may well say that never braver soldier fought beneath the banner of the Cross, you will find him the subject of the most terrible exercises. He was strong in his God, but he was very weak in himself—subject to ferocious temptations—temptations the like of which probably few of us have ever known because we are not men of his gigantic mold, and God does not allow trials to come upon us which were only suitable for him. He oftentimes seemed to lie at Hell’s gates, but then, again, the man seemed as if he had looked Heaven in the face and lived in perpetual communion with his God!

John Bunyan’s description of the progress of the pilgrim to Heaven would lead us to expect that there would be changes, for at one time we find the pilgrim safely housed in the Palace Beautiful—all around him is redolent with the odor of flowers and the song of birds—next day he descends to the Valley of Humiliation. Even there he has a conflict or two, but a little farther on he comes to the Valley of Death Shades and there he has to fight for every step, while darkness surrounds him and the adversary of souls comes forth to meet him! We are uphill and downhill all the way to Heaven! Like the children of Israel, our path to Canaan lies through a wilderness, and though, blessed be God, the Grace of Heaven has made the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as a rose, yet are there fiery serpents in it and it is a wilderness, after all. Notwithstanding all that God does for us while in it, this state in this present world is a state of bondage. “We that are in this body do groan, being burdened”—longing for the time of the home-bringing, when we shall come to our own country and be at rest forever and forever!

Now at this time I shall not attempt to describe all the spiritual conflict with error. If I am not able to describe that—(and who is?)—I can at least speak with a measure of assurance of the spiritual experience of some of God’s servants, for I will go no deeper than I have gone, myself, and if I do that, I shall be able to speak with some measure of assurance.

First, then, let us make the remark that the child of God may undergo great spiritual trials. But, secondly, we shall ask you to consider the conduct of the child of God when in the condition—very different from that of the worldly man. And, thirdly, we shall notice those springs of comfort which relieve saints in that spirit, and will relieve us also. First, then—

I. A TRUE CHILD OF GOD MAY UNDERGO VERY DEEP MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL TRIALS.  
No superficial trials, such as are common to men, but really overwhelming trials seem to come to those who are favorites of Heaven, who lean their heads on Jesus’ bosom, and are among the most gracious of the Lord’s chosen. Asaph’s trial was no light one—it was a great grief that came upon him. From some words in the Psalm, one would think it was a personal disease under which he was suffering. But from other words it would seem to be a deep affliction that had come upon his family and those he loved. This had caused him to be depressed in spirit and heavy in soul to a very solemn degree, for he declared that his sore ran in the night, and ceased not. He complained that his spirit was overwhelmed. Don’t, therefore, conclude that you are no child of God because the joys you once had are gone! I am delighted when I have been with young Christians full of their first joy—and I earnestly pray that it will be very long before those joys are dampened, but at the same time, it may be prudent to let them know that should those joys depart, it will be no evidence whatever that God’s love is departed, too! We must always beware of living by feeling. It is pleasant in summer, but it is an ill way of living in the winter of the soul. We walk by faith, not by sight, nor yet by feeling, for we remember that our feelings are often of a very mixed character—and what we think to be holy joy may be, some of it, animal excitement—may not be altogether that joy of the Lord which is our strength. Don’t, don’t, I beseech you, base your evidence of the possession of salvation upon your joy, because if you do, you will be in sad trouble when your joy varies or flies. Build your hope on something better than unsubstantial delights, namely, on the finished work of faith, such as the poor publican had, still crying, even in your best frames, “God be merciful to me a sinner! God be merciful to me a sinner,” for between here and the gates of Heaven you will have to go by a weeping cross, perhaps many times—and if the Lord loves you more than others, you will have more trials than others—strange trials shall come to you! Therefore, regard it not as though some strange thing had happened to you. Some of the best of God’s people may pass through the deepest trouble.

And remark, next, that this may not only be very deep, but very frequent. It appears to have been so with Asaph. He describes himself as being by day and by night vexed with his trouble. It was not a transient cloud—it was a heavy storm that brooded over his spirit. For 40 days and nights the heavens seemed to pour down their torrents and his soul felt no rest. Do not wonder if you sometimes shall come into that condition. I pray you may not, but if you do, I say be upon your guard not to condemn yourself! You remember how holy Job’s friends, when they saw him upon a dunghill scraping himself with a potsherd, began to tell him that he must be a hypocrite, or he would not be there? How could he be what he professed to be, and yet be there? Now that is exactly what the devil will tell you! If you are in deep trials and are on a dunghill, too, he will say that—and perhaps some of your Christian friends will say the same. It will be very ungenerous and not like Christ if they do. Worst of all, perhaps you, yourself, will think the same. But let the warning of this evening help to keep you from such a temptation. It is no evidence whatever that God has no love to you if He chastens you, for remember who it was—that it was none other than a great servant of God who said, “All the daylong have I been plagued and chastened every morning.” And He who was still greater, even your blessed Lord and Master, was the “Man of Sorrows” and the acquaintance of grief. Do not, then, for your own soul’s sake, permit an insinuation as to God’s love being shown in your happiness, or His hatred being manifest in your depression of spirit! Do not allow it to cross your mind! Some of the best of God’s servants have, moreover, not only been in the deeps, and been there long, but when in such a condition they have refused to be comforted. Read the second verse—“My soul refused to be comforted”—as if he had put away everything that could cheer him! A man of God, and a poet, too—a man Inspired and who could cheer others, as he has done by the sweet lays which he has left us in the Book of Psalms—yet when these sweet things were brought before him, he said, “Put them away!”  
And have you never known, O you advanced Christians—(I know you have)—what it is to say of a promise, “No. It is very precious, but I am afraid I should deceive myself if I were to think, ‘That is mine.’”? You have found the word come very preciously home to your soul when you have heard a sermon—and then at night, when you have tossed upon your bed, you have said—“I am afraid it would be nothing better than presumption if I were to suck in all the consolation out of that.” All the while the comfort was yours, and you might have had it—the sweets were meant on purpose for you—and yet you could not take them! Now there is something good about that. A holy anxiety is a thing that is desirable, and I would never preach up the full assurance of faith so as for a moment to speak a word against that holy anxiety! My soul has often said, “I will not be comforted till Jesus comforts me”—put away the peace that many have spoken and said, “No! No peace shall ever come to my soul except the peace, the Master’s peace—peace from His own lips by His own Spirit. And I believe that is right, but sometimes that anxiety may be carried to an unbelieving extent and state! We set up tests for ourselves that are not warrantable and condemn ourselves when God does not condemn us! And though we are the precious children of God, comparable to fine gold, we reckon ourselves to be as the earthen vessels, the work of the hands of the potter. It is very easy to write bitter things against yourself when the clouds of darkness are hanging over your soul. This good man did so—he refused to be comforted.  
When this occurs, it is not at all remarkable if the grief of soul that is caused in the man should break his sleep. Observe how he puts it, “You hold my eyes waking.” The eyelids—those guards of the eyes were made to keep their station. The eyes would still be open. There was no rest for the man. And who can rest when he does not know that he is a saved soul? Let me doubt whether I am God’s child, and dare I rest? I am often astounded at the ease with which some men talk of their doubts and fears. Do not know whether you are saved or not, and yet go to sleep? Perhaps you may wake in death! An enemy to God, or afraid that you may be, and yet find rest? My dear Brothers and Sisters, I will not condemn your doubts, but I must condemn you if you can be in ease at all while you are under them, for surely this is a matter of the first importance—“Am I His, or am I not?”  
Am I really regenerate, or is it all pretence? Am I made to seem to live, while I am dead? Or am I truly one of these whom God has made to be a new creation in Christ Jesus? Now when a man gets really disturbed about that, and that is the question, and he is afraid lest God’s mercy and God’s promise should not be to him, that he is left to himself to perish—when a man is in that state, he cannot rest—he must then feel that until this quarrel is over and this problem is decided, he can find no rest for the soles of his feet.  
Moreover, in such circumstances, it may sometimes occur that the good man cannot tell his story to anybody else. So it is here—“I am so troubled that I cannot speak”—dare not tell it to anybody else—too great a grief to be unburdened. He could whisper it low at the Redeemer’s feet, “My Lord, have pity on Your servant,” but he cannot come and tell others because he does not know that any other has been through the same. He is afraid that his course is singular and so remarkable that if he were to mention it, his Brothers and Sisters would shun him! Besides, perhaps he has begun to mention it to some and they, not understanding him, have given him such a harsh reply that he shrank altogether from them. There are many fat cattle that push and push with horn and shoulder the lean ones of God’s flock, and ‘tis ill, ‘tis ill when we do this.” He that is troubled in spirit and cast down is often as a lamb despised by those who are at ease. He may be the best man of the whole company and yet, if he were to tell his experience, they would think him to be the worst. He may be the best in the whole Church and yet such may be the turmoil of his soul, sometimes, that were he to narrate his experience, many who are not to be compared with him for a moment would fight shy of him altogether! He has a grief within him which he cannot tell.  
And now comes one other point, and this, perhaps, is the worst phase of the depression through which this man of God may go, namely, that even that which ought to comfort him, will minister to his yet greater grief. He says, “I remembered God, and was troubled.” Why, Brothers and Sisters, our thoughts of God are refreshing to us, they always should be! Just as good meat ought to nourish the body (only when the body is sick, that good meat turns to mischief), so thoughts of God ought always to delight our soul—and I rejoice that they do for the most part. In our pilgrimage there is nothing yields us such a delightful song as the thought of our God, the Father, the Savior, and the blessed indwelling Spirit! But when the soul is sick, and a gracious soul may get sick in that way, the very thoughts of God become a trouble. See how it is. You will think, “He is very just—how can I stand in His sight?” But He is very gracious. Yes, and how gracious He has been to me, and how unworthily have I made any return for that Grace! He is loving, ah, and very loving. How can I expect that I should taste of that love after the poor return I have made? And shall every attribute of God’s will at such times seem to be black against you. His very faithfulness you will feel. “Ah, if He is faithful to His promise, what part and lot shall I have in that promise? It must be, after all, a mere delusion of mine that my name is written in His Book! How can it be that I shall have a share among His chosen?” Whereas, when the soul is right, every attribute of God is cheering, when once it gets in darkness, and gets away from the foot of the Cross—gets away from looking with a poor sinner’s tearful eyes to the sinner’s Savior, simply and alone, shall every attribute of God’s seem to roll with thunder and flash with lightning on his spirit! I do know what this means. I have stood and seen the storm fly over my head, cloud on cloud, blacker and yet blacker, and my spirit crushed and utterly broken, until not a hope was left! Then have I seen one rift in the midst of the cloud, and a lone star shining there, the Star of Bethlehem and, looking up, all seemed calm beneath my soul, even on that sea! Just then the storm stopped at sight of that star and there I seemed to see the love of God to the very guiltiest of men, to the off-scouring of sinners and the refuse—and resting as a little child, humbly, simply, and alone, upon what the Master did for sinners on the Cross—joy and peace have come back! But many and many, and many a child of God has known what it is to see every hope blasted, all experience gone and all Grace withered—that is, apparently so, for it was not really so—because after all, perhaps we are never richer than when we think we are the poorest of all, never so well clad as when we know we are naked in ourselves, never so near to God as when we feel we are near to Hell if the Grace of God does not interpose!  
Thus I have given you but a very brief outline of the mental and spiritual trials through which an heir of Heaven may sometimes pass. Now, secondly—  
II. WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE CHILD OF GOD WHEN HE GETS INTO THIS DEPRESSION OF SPIRIT?  
Well, I will tell you what a man does when he is not a child of God. He cries, with Pliable, “The first time I get out of this, if I get out on the side nearest my house, you may have the brave country to yourself, for I am not going floundering through this bog of mud.” Anybody’s dog will follow me if I feed it, but only my own dog will follow me if I beat it. And any man will be a Christian, or profess to be one, while it is all joy, and silver slippers, and gravel walks—but only the man who really loves God, who says, “All the daylong have I been plagued and chastened every morning”—it is only the man of God who can say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him—if He takes away my comfort, and I have no joy but in Himself, still will I cling to Him.”

Now Asaph did not go off, as many men would, to worldly pleasures to make up his loss. He did not say, “Well, well, I am not as happy as I used to be in my religious profession—I shall go to a theater, or find joyful companions, or stick to business to drown my thoughts.” No, no. He, just as the child which has been chastened by its parent (if it is what it should be) can only find comfort by clinging to the very parent that chastened it, and ask for a loving, forgiving kiss! And even so it is with the chastened child of God—he clings to God the more, the more he is made to smart. So the first thing Asaph did was he prayed. “I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice.” Oh, sweet consolation of prayer! Would not some hearts be utterly broken if they could not pray? This is the sweet vent that we get for our fermented griefs. Our spirits are soon at rest when we can but pray. Let us pray! “Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe God; believe also in Me.” You see how Asaph puts it twice, “I cried unto God with my voice even unto God with my voice.” He betook himself to prayer!  
The next thing he did was, he betook himself to meditation. “I remembered God.” (Fifth verse). “I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.” (Sixth verse). “I call to remembrance my song in the night. I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.” He began to meditate more, to meditate on his God—to meditate on what God had done for other saints—to meditate upon his own former joys and helps in times of trouble, and to meditate upon the sweet songs which he had then uttered when he, himself, had been in trial before. Now this was a sweet way of gaining consolation. Does the Lord smite me? Well, then, I will think of the day when He caressed me! Am I in trouble, and has He put me in it? Then I will think of the times when I was in troubles, before, and He brought me out of them! He has been with me in six troubles—will He leave me in the seventh? I have gone through the waters. He was there with me—will He leave me now that He has brought me so far? Can it be that with so long a time of love, He will now desert His child? This gathers force. Aged Christian, you are 60 or seventy. You expect to live another ten years, and God has preserved you for seventy—cannot you trust Him for the other ten? After so much kindness in the past, will He cease now? Oh, it is good to go over these things and then to recollect when, in years gone by, you were in as bad a condition as you are now, and you sang all the while! Ah, dear Friend, you lost one you dearly loved, but you were supported. What? Are you going to sink now? Why, the time was when you could play the man for Christ! Why, you ran the risk of losing all that you had for His name’s sake—and are you going to throw down your weapons now? You are like the old navigator who had been round the world and when he got into the Thames coming home, the wind blew. “Oh,” he said, “Have I been round the world, and am I going to drown in a ditch? Not I!” And so I say to you—have you passed through all these troubles and difficulties and are you going to be lost, after all? Remember your song in the night, and begin to sing again! Let the new song be in your mouth. One who long loved music said, “Glory be to You for all the Grace I have not tasted yet!” If you cannot sing of what you are tasting, think of what you are to taste in the Glory Land that is before you, when you get there! Be of good comfort—meditation shall console you!  
Then this man of prayer, after using prayer and meditation, betook himself to these employments. If you notice, he spent his time in selfexamination—“In communion with my own heart and my spirit, I made diligent search.” Show me why You contend with me. Lord if I am chastened, tell me why. If I have lost the light of Your Countenance, why do You hide Yourself from me? For what sin is it that You are rebuking me? What Grace is it that You would strengthen in me? What idol is it that You would take away from me? What duty have I neglected, of which You would remind me? I commune with my own heart, and look within to see if there is the cause of the distress—and look up to God, my Father, and say, “Why do You leave me? Why have You forsaken me?” And then I repeat to myself, “Why are you cast down O my Soul? Why are you disquieted within me?” “Oh,” says one, “I don’t care much about selfexamination. Mark you, I do not think much of your religion.” There are a great many people in the world in trade that do not like looking at their books and when a man does not want to know the position of his trade, I think we can, most of us, make a pretty shrewd guess at where he is! And when a man is afraid of self-examination, when he is afraid of a heart-searching discourse or heart-searching Providence, he may be pretty sure there is something rotten within. God deliver us from being unwilling to know the very worst of our position! May we be always anxious to know the worst, than for a moment to be flattered! Let us, then, if we would get comfort, get to self-examination!  
And then, once again, in time of trouble this man of God took to holy arguments and devout reasoning. Here is the question, Will the Lord cast off forever? He may put His child aside for a moment, but can He quite forget? Can He quite leave? Can He ever cast off those that are His own beloved? Will He be favorable no more? He has said, “For a small moment have I forsaken you,” but will He make that small moment into forever? I know He turns a deaf ear to His people for a moment—but will He never hear prayer again? Has He not said that He is a God that hears prayer? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Oh, it is a grand thing when a man says—“Can it be that God has left off being merciful? Is not His very name, ‘Love’?” That is His very Nature. He delights in mercy—can it be true that God has left off His mercy? It cannot be! Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Another question—Can it be that God won’t keep His Word? Will His promise be broken? I know it may tarry awhile, but can it be that it shall fail, and fail forevermore? And then He puts it again, “Has God forgotten to be gracious—got out of the habit of being gracious? He used to be always gracious to those who sought His face—has He forgotten it? Is it possible? Has He, in anger, shut up His tender mercy? Can it be? Can it be?” Oh, Beloved, if we were sometimes thus to school ourselves and cross-question our own unbelief, the Holy Spirit would give us comfort. “Can the woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, she may forget, yet will not I forget you. I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” They that trust in the Lord shall not want any good thing. “Fear not, I am with you. Be not dismayed, I am your God. I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.” Is all this nothing? Are these promises, and ten thousand more, only so many words and so much chaff? O you wicked unbelief! The virgin daughter of Zion has shaken her head at you, and laughed, because you have not a foot to stand upon—no argument to defend yourself. Away with you, you lie, you child of Hell! Away with you! I must believe in my God. I will fall back into His arms. I will confide, again, in His eternal faithfulness. Is He a God, and can His love grow weary of saving? He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Yes, He will do it, and to the last jot and tittle shall His Word be fulfilled and His promises shall be kept for they are yes and amen in Christ Jesus to the Glory of God by us. God grant us Grace thus to battle with unbelief! And now, in the third place, as we have seen the man in his condition and what he does, let us now consider—  
III. SOME OF THOSE COMFORTABLE THINGS WHICH MAY HELP US OUT OF THAT POSITION, or help us not to fall into it! First, observe that the great source of comfort, to the tried Believer—any Believer—is to be found of God. All those questions were about his God. “I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord. I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate also on all Your work, and talk of Your doings.” If you get to meditating on your own works, you won’t get much comfort out of them! And if you get to talking of your own doings, you are brewing for yourself bitter drinks. But when the soul looks at God, at God’s Mercy, God’s Grace, and Christ the Incarnate God, and the finished work of Christ—at His merits—then it is that the soul is comforted! All that there is in us that may be seen in a time of depression is of man. We must look right away to Him in whom our hope lies. I will not lift up my eyes to anything else. From where comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who has made Heaven and Earth! Child of God, store your mind with His knowledge and His Glory. Seek to know the Lord Jesus! Ask to be instructed in the knowledge of Him, for then in the times of difficulty you will have a store ready to your hand—great reasons for consolation which will be comfortable to your spirit!  
But do you notice how he dwells upon the works of God and the power of God? “You are the God that does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the people. Lord, You can help me. My case is difficult, but You are strong enough. You are able to help me.” Oh, this is the way to get comfort—to know the power of God, which is past finding out. One thing especially the Psalmist dwelt upon, and that is Redemption—“You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.” When there is no light anywhere else, there is at Calvary! Look there to the Paschal Lamb, and to the going out of Egypt by blood, and to the ransoming of His people. Do you think that Christ bought you with His blood and that you should lie in Hell and perish? Do you believe in redemption of that kind which does not redeem? Have you a Savior who came to save those whom He never will save? Do you believe in such a Savior? Then I marvel not at your doubts and fears! But if you have reliance upon the mighty God, in whose hands the pleasure of the Lord must prosper, and who shall see His Seed and rejoice in the travail of His soul, then, leaning on Him whose hands were stretched to the nail for you, you have good ground for joy, confidence and peace! Study the Atonement, study the Redemption, study the Cross and you will be readily comforted!

At the close of the Psalm, Asaph, after his usual habit, takes himself away to the Red Sea and suggests as a ground for comfort what God did there. There were His people—slaves, and in bondage—and He brought them out. He will bring you out! Pharaoh was very strong and he said, “I fear not the Lord, neither will I let the people go.” But God was stronger than Pharaoh and He will be stronger than the devil and all your enemies! Then they came out and there was the Red Sea before them, and how could they get through the sea? “The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid.” You have many troubles and many sins—they will fly before the Presence of God! Then they came into the wilderness—how could they ever traverse that? Then the Lord was pleased to send them their bread each morning, and to continually give them their water. Whereas their clothes could not be very speedily replenished, their garments grew not old, so to speak. They had no guide, no one with them that could well conduct them through the wilderness, but the fiery, cloudy pillar went before them! They never went a step awry, for that fiery, cloudy pillar led them all the way. Now your condition is the same as theirs—and you shall have the same supplies. Be not cast down! Rejoice in the Lord and go forward. “He led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron”—so the Psalm closes—and He will lead you, and lead you safely! They set out to go to the land of Canaan, and to the land of Canaan they came. And if you are resting upon the blood of Christ, and depending upon His eternal merit, He shall surely bring you in and you shall stand in your lot in the end of the days! Therefore comfort one another with these words and be of good cheer!  
But as for those who have no Savior, I know of no comfort for them in the time of trouble. Unbeliever, you shall live without consolation. You shall die without consolation, and live forever after—without consolation! May you turn. “Turn you, turn you! Why will you die?” May the Lord bring you to see that in Christ, alone, is your help found. Get Him to be your comfort from this day forth, and forever! Amen, amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**ACTS 26:1-28.**

Three times we have in Holy Writ a graphic report of the conversion of Paul. This may be accounted for partly from its being one of the most remarkable events of early sacred history, Paul having had a greater effect upon the Christian Church than any other living man. At the same time I think it teaches us that the Holy Spirit sets especial store by the facts connected with this very remarkable conversion. If He gives it three times in the sacred Volume, we ought to give it a triple attention and see if we cannot learn from it.

Verses 1-3. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, You are permitted to speak for yourself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand and answered for himself: I think myself happy, King Agrippa. because I shall answer for myself this day before you touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews. Especially because I know you to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: therefore I beseech you to hear me patiently. With what courtesy does he speak! Paul is bold, but see how he is all things to all men! And he begins an address for his life with great adroitness and skill—teaching us that we are to use all the courtesies of life to those to whom they belong, and never to cause needless irritation. There is enough offense in the Cross of itself, without our being offensive when uplifting it.

4-7. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly setting God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. For the Pharisees did hold very firmly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and Paul often instances this, as being the very thing, though no longer a Pharisee, to which he was glad to give witness.

8-11. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. He had the courage of his convictions. Believing a thing, he did not let it lie idle. He regarded the Christians as a pestilent sect and, therefore, he hunted them down. He abhorred the name of Jesus of Nazareth as that of an imposter and, therefore, he determined that no stone should be left unturned to overthrow His power.

12-14. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, Why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks. Not, “It is hard for Me to bear it,” but, “It is hard for you,” as if, though conscious of being persecuted, our Lord, in that Divine Unselfishness which is so natural to Him, forgot the kicks that were given to Him and only thought of the injury which Saul was doing to himself, when, like an ox that strikes out against the goad, he injured himself.

15-28. And I said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom you persecute. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen, and of those things in the which I will yet reveal to you: delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send you, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning has made you mad! But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the King knows of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believe you the prophets? I know that you believe. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost you persuade me to be a Christian.

—Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2578 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

REFUSING TO BE COMFORTED

NO. 2578

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JULY 1O, 1898.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 18, 1883.

**“My soul refused to be comforted.”  
Psalm 77:2.**

WHEN you meet with a person in great distress, you feel at once a desire to comfort him. That is to say, if you have an ordinarily tender heart. You cannot bear to see another in trouble without trying to minister to that diseased heart. But supposing that the person refuses to be comforted? Then you are foiled. What can you do? It is as though you met with a hungry man and offered him bread, but he rejected it. You tried to give him daintier food, but he scorned it. You asked him what he could eat, but he altogether refused to accept any form of nourishment. Then what could you do? Your cupboard might be full and the door might be freely opened, but if the man would not eat, you could not remove his hunger. So, if a man in trouble refuses to be comforted, how are you to cheer and solace him? One man can lead a horse to the water, but a thousand cannot make him drink if he will not—and when a man in trouble refuses to be comforted, then lover and friend are put far from him—and his acquaintance into darkness. Indeed, they soon need to be comforted, for disquietude is contagious and, sometimes, those who come to comfort another, go away provoked by his perversity. Many a man, whose heart was full of pity, has, at last, become indignant, and so has increased the sorrow which he intended to comfort—he has grown angry with the man who willfully put aside what was intended to encourage him.

With those few prefatory remarks, let us come to the text. “My soul refused to be comforted.” Note, concerning a man in such a case, first, possibly he may be right. Secondly, he is probably wrong. Thirdly, he may one day regret his conduct, as did Asaph, for, while he tells us that his soul refused to be comforted, he writes it down—not as an example for us to follow, but for our warning!

I. First, then, when a man’s soul refuses to be comforted, POSSIBLY HE MAY BE RIGHT.  
He may have a great spiritual sorrow and someone who does not at all understand his grief may proffer to him a consolation which is far too slight. Not knowing how deep the wound is, this foolish physician may think that it can be healed with any common ointment. I have known men to say to a person in deep distress things which have really aggravated him and his malady, too. “As he that takes away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singes songs to a heavy heart.” “Oh,” they have said, “there is really nothing the matter with you, after all!” When the arrows of God were drinking up your soul, they have said, “you are low-spirited.” Who would not be low-spirited when he has to face an angry God? “You are very nervous,” says another. “I am afraid you are going off into religious melancholy—you need cheerful society and amusement.” That is poor consolation for one who feels that he is ready to die and that his soul chooses strangling rather than life! Reduced as he is to such a point of agony in his spirit, it is no wonder that the man should put away these comforters and say with Job, “‘Miserable comforters are you all.’ Mine is not a sorrow that can be removed by the bowl or by the violin. Mine is not a grief that can be charmed away with your merriment, or laid to sleep by your ridicule. The wound is too deep and too severe for you to cure.” The man acts rightly when he puts aside these physicians without skill, of whom it may be said, “They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, where there is no peace.” You may send such comforters away from you, for it is right to refuse to be comforted by them. You will do well to say, with Toplady—  
*“If my Lord Himself reveals,  
No other good I want,  
Only Christ my wounds can heal,  
Or silence my complaint.  
He that suffered in my stead,  
Shall my Physician be.  
I will not be comforted  
Till Jesus comforts me.”*  
So, too, it is equally right to refuse to be comforted when the comfort is untrue. When a man is under a sense of sin, I have known his friends say to him, “You should not fret; you have not been so very bad. You have been, indeed, a very good sort of fellow.” One says, “I can recollect how kind you were to So-and-So and how honestly you behaved under suchand-such a temptation. You have not committed any very terrible sin— God help the world if you are a great sinner! I do not know what will become of the rest of us.” Another says, “You have only to pray and go to a place of worship, perhaps be a little more regular in your attention to religion and it will all come right again. You are not so bad as you think you are.” Be off with you! Such talk as that is a lie and the man whom God has really awakened to feel his state by nature will refuse to be comforted by such falsehoods as those! However friendship may flatter, the man himself says, “I know that I have broken God’s Law and that I deserve His wrath.” Conscience will not be quieted by all the soft speeches of officious but ignorant friends! I charge you, before God, if the Spirit of Truth has begun to trouble you, never drink these sweet but poisonous consolations! Never think that you are good, or that you can make yourself good. Refuse to be comforted in any such way. That comfort which does not come from truth and from God’s Word, applied by the Holy Spirit, is a comfort to be rejected with scorn!  
We have known others who have tried to comfort poor, mourning, repentant sinners in an unhallowed way. They have said, “You need to raise your spirits. I can recommend you some fine old wine which will do you a world of good.” Another will say, “You should really mix a little more in society and shake yourself up. You should get with some happy, lively people—they would soon take this melancholy out of you.” Have you ever heard the story which was current in Rowland Hill’s day, and which I believe was true, about a certain comic actor who, at that time, carried all the sway in London and made all laugh who went to see and hear him? The poor man, himself, suffered from depression of spirit to the very worst degree, insomuch that life had become a weariness to him. He went to consult a certain physician who was noted for dealing with hypochondriacs and melancholy persons. The doctor said to him, “Now, my Friend, you are evidently very low in spirits—you should go to the theater. I went the other night, hearing So-and-So, and he made me laugh at such a rate that I am quite sure, if you went and heard him, you would soon get rid of all your melancholy.” The patient took the doctor by the hand and said, “Doctor, I am that man. I have made all London laugh, but my heart is breaking all the while.” What said Solomon? “I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove you with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure. And, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad. And of mirth, What does it do?” I am sure that a person who is really troubled in spirit will increase his sorrow if he attempts to cure it in that way. It is only putting more fuel on the flame. It seems such a mockery to the spirit, when it is burdened with a sense of sin, to tell it to dance and make merriment! “Can I be merry on the brink of Hell?” cries the sorrowful man. “In danger every moment of death and certain that if death came, I should be lost, can I enjoy mirth? It cannot be!”  
There was a certain king of Hungary, a pious, gracious man, who was, at one time, deeply cast down and depressed. He had a brother, a worldly courtier, who rallied him about his despondency and, as far as he dared, mocked the poor broken heart of the king. It was the custom in Hungary that if a man was to be suddenly executed, a trumpeter should stand under his window and sound a blast of a certain kind—and then he was taken away to be put to death. The king sent the trumpeter, at the dead of night, to sound that blast under his brother’s window. The courtier knew what it meant, so he arose at once, but he begged the executioner to first take him to the king—and there he stood, white as a sheet and trembling from head to foot. “Brother,” said the king, “what ails you?” “What ails me?” he said, “why, you sent your trumpeter under my window, and he sounded the death-blast, and I suppose that I am to die!” “Well,” answered the king, “you tremble now, yet it is only because you are to die, whereas I have heard the thunder-blast of God and I stand in fear of everlasting judgment! Now, dear brother,” he added, “perhaps you can sympathize with me. I only sent the trumpeter that you might be enabled to look with a little more compassion upon me when I am in trouble before God.”  
Ah, it is not laughter or mirth that will comfort the soul that has heard the voice of God saying, “You have sinned and I must punish you. You have lived a careless, godless life, and now you must come to judgment. Can you answer for one of a thousand when I shall set your sins before My face? When I shall bring forth a plummet to try you and to see how you stand, how will you endure that test?” No, no! Put aside all those hollow, unhallowed, empty comforts, and say, “My soul refuses to be comforted in that way.”  
In a word, Brothers and Sisters, let me say that if your hearts are troubled on account of sin, refuse every comfort except that which comes through being washed in the precious blood of Christ which can make us whiter than snow! Refuse every comfort short of being born again and made a new creature in Jesus! Make this solemn resolve—“I will sooner die in prison than be let out except by His dear pierced hands. I will tremble before the wrath of God rather than I will dare to presume upon His mercy. I will wait till I have looked into the dear face of Him who died for me, and have read my pardon, there, before I will be comforted.” If you resolve not to be comforted except in that Scriptural way, you will do well.  
II. But now, in the second place, with brevity, I want to show when this refusal is wrong. PROBABLY HE IS WRONG who says, “My soul refused to be comforted.”  
It is quite wrong if it is a temporal matter that causes your sorrow. Why do you refuse to be comforted, my Friend? “I have lost one who was very dear to me—my beloved mother.” “I have lost my child,” says another. “It is my husband who has been taken away,” says a third, while a fourth cries, “I have been bereaved of my dearest friend, and my soul refuses to be comforted.” What, then, have you nobody left? “No, nobody.” And has God done you a wrong? Did not your mother belong to Him? Was not your child His? He has only taken back what He lent you for a while— and because you have lost this one cistern, will you never drink of the fountain? Because the star is gone, will you never enjoy the sunlight? O dear Friend, I pray you, talk not so!  
“Ah,” says another, “but I have lost my health! I found out, but a few days ago, that I have a deadly disease which will take me off, before long and, therefore, I refuse to be comforted.” What? You will go down to your grave rebelling against God? Why should you not be sick? Better people than you have gone Home by consumption, or cancer, or by some other malady. Would it not be well to make your submission to God about that matter and ask that you may have a Heaven to go to, and a place of joy when death comes? “Ah,” cries another, “but all my earthly prospects are blighted. I thought that I should get on in the world, but now I find that I cannot, the door is locked against me. I can never be comforted.” Are there no other doors? Are you sure that what you call your prospects would have been blessings to you if you had realized them? Does not God know better than you do and will it not be wise for you to pluck up courage and, as the world’s poet says—  
*“To take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them”?*  
Better far is it to act like that than to sit down in sullen gloom, or in fierce wrath against God!

“Ah,” says another, “but mine is a very peculiar trouble. My love has been slighted. One whom I loved very dearly has proven faithless and discarded me.” Yes, and your heart is broken, and well it may be. But, my Friend, will you therefore refuse to love Him who never forsakes those on whom He once sets His affection? Would it not be wiser to turn the current of your heart’s love towards Him who is faithful and true, and who loves even to all eternity? That would be a wiser course of action, surely! Refuse not to be comforted, I pray you—you are only driving the dagger deeper and deeper into your wounds. You are making the bitter waters more bitter. All that you do in this direction is but increasing your sorrow. You are like sailors pumping the seawater into the ship instead of pumping it out! You are heaping on another burden, much heavier than God has put there, by refusing to be comforted. Instead of doing that, think of the mercies that you still have, think of how God can bless your troubles to you, think of the shortness of life, think of the glories of Heaven, think of the sufferings of your Lord who endured much more than you are called to bear—and no longer refuse to be comforted, for, if you do, worse troubles may come to you.  
I heard a woman say to her child, as I passed her door, “If you don’t leave off crying, I’ll give you something to cry about.” And I have known that to happen with some of the Lord’s children. They have had very small troubles and they have fretted and rebelled against God until they have had a much greater sorrow—they have had something to cry about! Oh, do not refuse to be comforted, but yield yourself to God! Willingly submit to the discipline of your dear Father’s hand.  
But now I will suppose that yours is a spiritual trouble and yet you refuse to be comforted. Listen to me, I pray you, for a few minutes, for I am sure that I shall describe some of you. The Gospel is meant for sinners, for guilty sinners, for Hell-deserving sinners. It is meant for persons just like you, yet you put it away from you and refuse to be comforted. It would be such a comfort to you if you accepted it—you would have such joys as you never knew before. But no, you will not touch it, you turn aside from it. There are kind friends who, at one time, encouraged you to cast yourself upon Christ, but now you try to avoid them, you get out of their way if you can. You feel so sad that you do not want to be cheered, you scarcely desire to be encouraged. Perhaps I speak to some who have gone so far astray that they say, “We cannot go back to the House of Prayer now.” It is a horrible thing when people fall into such depths of sorrow that when they most need to come and hear, and be comforted, the devil says to them, “Don’t go there any more—you will hear nothing for your comfort. The preacher will only confirm your condemnation,” and so he tries to keep them away from the means of Grace. “Oh,” says one, “I used to delight in the Prayer Meeting, but I dare not go to it now! I feel that no prayers will ever be any blessing to me. I used to love to hear Pastor’s voice, once, and I have laughed for very joy while hearing it. But now I do not want to listen to it any longer.” No, you are refusing to be comforted.  
It is also a terrible thing when Satan leads men to neglect the private means of Grace. They shut up the Bible and do not read it, being afraid that every Word should turn out to be a curse that will only make their sorrow deeper. Or, if they do read a promise, they say, “That is not for us. It may be true to everybody else, but not to us.” As to private prayer, such a man says, “I cannot pray. God would not hear me, anyway, I am such a hypocrite. I have been such a backslider, I am so false, I am so guilty. It is no use for me to try to pray.” That which ought to be the channel of sweetest consolation is neglected by those who refuse to be comforted! Some of them will even go so far as to deny the testimony of God. He says that He is merciful—they say that He is not. God declares that there is a propitiation for sin in the blood of Christ—they say that there is none. Jesus says, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out”—they say that He would cast them out if they came to Him. He invites them to come—they say that they cannot come. While He bids them to come near to Him and warns them that there is nothing in their way but their own evil hearts—yet they give God the lie and reject the only Savior!  
They also refuse the testimony of those of us who are God’s witnesses—though this is but a small matter after refusing God’s own testimony! We come and say, “Friend, if you will believe, you shall see the Glory of God. If you will simply cast yourself upon Christ, you shall live.” Yet they do not believe us. There are some of you who would not doubt anything that I told you, I am sure that you would not—your esteem and affection would lead you to receive almost anything that I stated as fact— and yet you have put away from you, you have refused and rejected that glorious testimony which it is my life’s work to tell to you, namely, that Jesus Christ will receive you and cleanse you from every sin, if you will but come to Him just as you are and put your trust in Him! No, you refuse to be comforted. But how wicked this refusal is! What a wrong you do to our honest love! What a wrong you do to the matchless love of God!  
Do you not remember the story of the good man who wanted to teach his little girl what faith was? He went down into the cellar, took away the ladder by which he had descended, and called to his child. “Ruth,” he said, “jump into my arms.” It was very dark down there, so she said, “Please, father, I can’t see you.” Then he replied, “you do not need to see me, I can see you—jump down.” With a merry laugh she sprang into the dark and was, in an instant, resting on her father’s bosom. Now, God bids us do just that! Can you not, by faith, take a leap in the dark, into your Heavenly Father’s arms? This is what you will do if you are really His child—but you will not do it unless you can say, “I will trust and not be afraid.”  
I will tell you why people sometimes refuse to be comforted. One says, “I have been depressed such a long time.” Yes, but when the night is long, is that any proof that the morning will not come? It looks to me to be a good argument that the daylight is not very far off. “Oh,” says another, “but my depression is so deep! You cannot conceive how miserable I am.” Can I not? I think I have been in that dark dungeon where you now are and in the very corner where you are hiding. But even if I could not fully sympathize with you, the depth of your distress is to me an argument for your comfort, for God will first help the most helpless—and where there is the most misery, there will His mercy most swiftly come. So I look upon you with great hopefulness! If you are so thoroughly broken down, the Lord will surely speak comfort to you among the very first. “Ah,” says another friend, “but I am under the impression that I shall never be saved.” Perhaps you are, but I am under another impression, namely, that you will be saved! And I am under another impression, which I know is true—that is, if you will only cast yourself upon Christ by a simple faith, you shall be saved at once! I know that impression is true because here is the seal that made it—“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” These are the words of Him who cannot lie or change! Do you still refuse to be comforted?  
“Oh,” says one, “but if you knew me, Sir, you would not talk so, for I have been such a great sinner!” I think that is very likely. “Oh, but I mean it, Sir!” I hope you do. I trust you are not adding lies to your other sins. “But, Sir, I have been such a sinner!” Yes, I know what you mean, and I believe it. And I will tell you something about yourself that you probably do not believe—you are a worse sinner than you think you are. “Oh, that cannot be!” you say. But I tell you that it is—you do not know what a sinner you are. Sin is a more horrible thing than imagination, itself, can conceive it to be. “But I deserve the hottest place in Hell,” says one. Yes, but suppose that it is so, and that all you say is true? Yet, in the name of God, I tell you that “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,” for, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” What is your sin? Have you committed falsehood, theft, fornication, murder? Is there any crime which you have committed which I dare not mention—some secret sin which has polluted you and left you a black blot upon the face of God’s earth? Yet come along with you, whoever you may be! If you are the sweepings of Helldom, yet come along with you, for Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost—let me say that word again—“He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.”  
Do not refuse to be comforted, for if you do, you will be a spiritual suicide! The man who will not eat and so dies of starvation is as much a suicide as he that puts the pistol to his head and blows out his brains. He that rejects Christ, damns himself as surely as he that gives himself, body and soul, to the devil. He that refuses what God has provided and will not have pardon through the precious blood, dashes himself upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler and fixes himself upon the point of the javelin of Divine Justice! Do not do it, I implore you! Be not among those who refuse to be comforted!  
III. But now, lastly, for my time is nearly gone, YOU WILL HAVE TO REPENT OF REFUSING TO BE COMFORTED.  
Possibly you will have to repent in a very terrible way. Suppose, now, that you should refuse to be comforted, and so should willfully go into a yet darker and deeper dungeon of despair? Suppose that your Christian friends should grow weary of you—I hope they will not—but suppose that godly man, or that godly woman who has so long followed you up, should, at last, despair of you and leave? Where would you be, then? And suppose that because you shut your eyes to the Light of God, God should take it away? What if you should have to move to a region where nobody will want to comfort you, where no minister will labor and travail for your soul’s salvation, where you shall sit under a dry and lifeless ministry, or perhaps under none at all—and you shall be left to go on down, down, down? God prevent it! But if ever that should be your sad lot, I hope there may still remain about you sufficient relics of life to make you say, “Oh, that I had been willing to be comforted when I might have been, and had accepted the testimony of Grace before I had passed beyond the reach of those blessed means of mercy!” But I do not mean to dwell upon that thought, for I have something much more cheerful to say.

I hope that many here present who have refused to be comforted, will yet regret it when they shall be enjoying the fullness of comfort. One of the things that I have sometimes said to myself, when I have been alone, has been this, “How foolish you are!” And if anybody had heard me, he would have known that I was upbraiding myself in the spirit of Christian and Hopeful when they were locked up in Giant Despair’s castle. You remember how Bunyan tells us that the pilgrims began to pray on Saturday, about midnight, and continued in prayer till almost the break of day, when Christian called out, “What a fool am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.” So he pulled it out of his bosom, put it in the lock, opened the door of the dungeon, and they soon were out! When they came to the outer door leading to the castle yard, the key fitted that, and they went through. Then they came to the great iron gate—the lock went horribly hard, but Christian kept working away at it and, at last, the bolt shot back, the big gate was open—and they escaped.  
But Giant Despair heard the noise and came down. And he was just about to fall upon his poor prisoners, when he was taken with a shaking fit—I have always been glad that the cruel old giant used to have epilepsy, so he could not catch the two pilgrims—and away they went! I am sure that when they got out, Christian kept saying to himself, “What a fool I have been! What a fool I have been! I have been lying in that dungeon all this while, when I might have been out ever so long ago.” If I ever hear you, who have had a similar experience, cry, “What a fool I have been,” I shall say, “That is quite right! You have hit the nail on the head this time,” for, whenever a man doubts the mercy of God, the best thing that I can say of him is that he is a fool! I could say a far worse thing than that, but when you refuse the sweet mercy, the tender love, the overflowing forgiveness, the generous kindness of the heart of Christ, you certainly act like a fool. And then, when you come to your right mind, I am sure that you will ask yourself, “How could I have refused so long to be comforted?”  
Now, finally, when you and I get to Heaven, we shall regret that we ever refused to be comforted. “Oh,” says a poor sinner over there, “now you are drawing the long bow.” Which do you mean—for myself or for you? “Why, Sir, you said, ‘When you and I get to Heaven.’” Very well, which is the, “you,” and which is the, “I,” that you are quibbling about? Do you think that it is such a very great wonder that I should get to Heaven? If you do, I altogether agree with you, for it will be a wonder, indeed! “No,” you say, “I mean that it will be a wonder if I get there.” Yes, and I, too, think it will be so. You and I will be about equal wonders if we get there—and when we are there, by the rich mercy of God, by the infinite love of Christ—and we shall be, you know, as surely as we are here if we will but believe in Christ—you and I will meet together, one day, in Heaven. Why should we not? I will promise to meet you there! Come, we will make a bargain of it—I am going by Christ, the Way, and if you go by Christ, the Way, we shall get to the same place! And there will be the King in His beauty. I will guarantee you that you will not take much notice of me, or I of you, for the sight of the King will be so ravishing! Oh, what a Countenance! Oh, what a Glory! Oh, that matchless Lover of our souls! And I believe that, then, we shall, each of us, say, “However could I have refused to be comforted by Him when He had loved me with an everlasting love, when He had chosen me from before the foundation of the world, when He had bought me with His precious blood, when He had sought me by His Holy Spirit, when He had clothed me with His righteousness, when He had taken me into the family and made me His brother and a child of God, when He had gone to Heaven on purpose to prepare a place for me and sent His Spirit down to earth to prepare me for the place? Yet there was a time when I refused to be comforted by Him!” I think, if we could weep in Heaven, we would certainly weep glad tears of deep and solemn regret that ever we should have stood out against Him to whom we are married. Oh, on that wondrous wedding day, when He shall consummate His love and ours, He will not say, “You were difficult in the wooing. You refused Me many times.” But I do believe that I shall say to myself, “How could I have refused Him? How could I have treated Him so terribly?” And as I look at His dear hands, still scarred, I shall say to Him, “O my Savior, I cost You Your life, Your heart’s blood, and though I long refused You, yet You would have me! Oh, love unutterable! How I will love You throughout eternity!” But what regret we must feel that we ever rejected Him! Do not refuse to be comforted, dear Friend—come along with you and take at once the mercy that Jesus waits to give!  
One little illustration, and I have done. I have noticed that when a dog is very hungry, he does not stand upon etiquette There is a butcher’s shop and no invitation is given to him to enter—but he makes himself very free and in he goes! There is a very nice little bit of meat on the block and the butcher has not the courtesy to offer it to him, though there is no creature that would more welcome it. So what does my friend, the dog, do? Why, he just makes a grab at it, seizes the meat, and then away he goes down the street! Now, if he can only get time to eat it, I will defy the butcher to get it away from him if he has taken it right into himself! I want you, poor Sinner, to be like that dog! There is the mercy of God—you do not believe that you ought to have it. Come and lay hold of it, for let me tell you this—Christ never takes away from the jaws of faith what faith once dares to seize! Take it and you have it! Believe even if you seem to have no right to believe! Commit a heavenly felony upon Divine Mercy! If the devil tells you that it is felony, come and take the mercy all the same, for he can never steal it from you! If you once get it, you have it forever. Oh, take it, then!—  
*“Artful doubts and reasoning be  
Nailed with Jesus to the tree.”*  
Come and trust Him and He is yours forever! The Lord help you to do it, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 77.**

This “Psalm of Asaph” has a mournful tone in it. At times the writer is in the deeps, but we may be quite sure that he will end the Psalm cheerfully because he begins it with prayer. No matter what sorrow falls to your lot, if you can pray, you will rise out of it. When Jonah went to the bottoms of the mountains, in the belly of the fish, and took to praying, it was well with him. If you, dear troubled Soul, can but pray, you need not despair.

Verse 1. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. You see, he cried, and he cried again—and at his second call the door of mercy was opened to him. God sometimes makes petitioners wait that they may become more earnest and that they may really feel the value of the thing they are seeking. So Asaph says, “I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice.” That is the way to get the blessing! You will often find, dear Friends, that it helps you to pray if you use your voice in prayer—there is no necessity to speak, you can pray without the use of the lips—but it often helps your thoughts if you are able to express them aloud.

2 *.*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. He could not sleep, so he took to prayer. Which is the greater mercy—prayer or sleep—I cannot say. In the Psalmist’s case, I suppose that prayer, just then, was better than sleep. His trouble so pressed upon him that it gave him no respite whatever—so all through the night he continued to cry unto the Lord.

3 *.*I remembered God, and was troubled. God is the fountain of all comfort, yet there are times when even a godly man can find no comfort in God. Asaph, perhaps, remembered the dark side of God’s attributes. Justice seemed to stand over him with a drawn sword. Holiness frowned upon him. Power threatened to crush him. Truth stood up to condemn him. He could not find any comfort, even in his God.

3 *.*I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. He was covered right up, like a ship that has gone down in deep water. “I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.” Whenever you see this word, “Selah,” it means lift up the notes, retune the strings of the harp, get the mind and heart ready for something in a rather different strain.

4 *.*You hold my eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. You thought that the Psalmist was going to say, “I cannot sleep.” He has given up the attempt to do that, so now he tries to talk, but utterance fails him. Shallow brooks sound as they flow, but deep griefs are still, and a man may be so troubled in heart that he cannot speak—he can only explain his sorrow by groaning and tears.

5 **,**6*.*I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night. I commune with my own heart: and my spirit makes diligent search. He looked back into the records of ancient history to see if God had ever forsaken a praying man. He thought upon his own experience and he remembered how, when it was night with him before, God made him to sing like a nightingale in the darkness. So he asks himself, “Has God changed? Will He give me no songs, now? Will He leave me to perish?” Thus have the best of men, in their sore troubles, had to put to themselves solemn questions, but they have not always been able to answer them.

7-9. Will the Lord cast me off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah. If you are a child of God, yet never had to ask these questions, you ought to be very grateful. But if you have to ask them, be very thankful that Asaph asked them before you! And believe that as he had a comfortable answer to them, so shall you. It is always a comfort when you can see the footprints of another man in the mire and the slough, for if that man passed through unharmed, so may you, for his God shall also be your Helper. But only think of this inspired Psalmist, this sweet singer of Israel, being so troubled and broken in spirit that he says, “Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?”

10. And I said, This is my infirmity. “This is a trouble appointed to me, I must bear it.” Or, “This is because of the weakness of my faith. God has not changed—it is I who has changed. ‘This is my infirmity.’”

10 *.*But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. “I will remember what God has done with that right hand of His. I will remember when I used to sit at His right hand—

*“‘What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But now I find an aching void  
The world can never fill.’”*

It is a good thing to make a record of your experiences when they are sweet. You may need that record, one of these days. I do not believe in always keeping a diary, for one is apt to put down more than may be true, but there are times of special mercy when I would say, “Write that down for a memorial and keep it by you, for the day may come when that record will minister comfort to you.”

11, 12. I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate also on all Your work. “I will not have any more of my works—I will meditate on Your work. I will get to You, my God, and think of what You have done; especially of Your works of Grace, how brightly they shine! I will meditate also on all your work.”

12, 13. And talk of Your doings. Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Or, “is in holiness.” God’s way is sometimes in the sea, but it is always a holy way. God never deals with His people, or with any of His creatures unjustly or unrighteously. “I cannot trace God,” Luther once said, “but I can trust Him.” And from that saying of his we have coined the phrase, “To trust Him when you cannot trace Him.” When you are unable to see God’s footprints because He rides upon the storm, yet still say, “Your way, O God, is in holiness.”

13, 14. Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God that does wonders: You have declared Your strength among the people. See how the Psalmist comforts himself with what God had done—and he went right back to the Red Sea for his illustration! Somehow, God’s people in the olden times always liked to sing the Song of Moses. By a kind of instinct, they thought of the Red Sea, as if to remember the redemption that God worked out for His people when He destroyed Pharaoh and all his host. Let us go there, too, and think of the Red Sea of our Savior’s blood where all our sins were drowned!

15-17. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: Your arrows also went abroad. I suppose that there was a storm at the time of the passage of the Red Sea, so that the deep-mouthed thunder spoke to the quaking heart of Pharaoh, while the flashing lightning set the heavens on flame and made Egypt’s chivalry tremble as the horse and his rider went down into the sea.

18, 19. The voice of Your thunder was in the Heaven: the lightning lighted the world: the earth trembled and shook. Your way is in the sea. Where you cannot see His footprints, “in the sea,” where there seems to be no way at all, there God makes a highway! Are you in such trouble, dear Friend, that you cannot see the possibility of escape? Remember this verse—“Your way is in the sea.”

19, 20. And Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. There the Psalm stops, just when you thought there was more to be said. The Holy Spirit knows how to leave off—and He closes abruptly with a sublimity seldom equaled. God’s people need to know no more than this, that God is leading them! Asaph does not say that Moses and Aaron led them—“You led Your people.” Moses and Aaron were only the Lord’s servants and under-shepherds—“You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” May He always be our Leader! Amen.

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A SERMON FOR THE MOST MISERABLE OF MEN  
NO. 853

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1869, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“My soul refused to be comforted.”  
Psalm 77:2.**

In this refusal to be comforted, David is not to be imitated. His experience in this instance is recorded rather as a warning than as an example. Here is no justification for those professors who, when they suffer bereavements or temporal losses, repine bitterly and reject every consoling thought. We have known persons who made mourning for departed ones the main business of life years after the beloved relative had entered into rest. Like the heathen, they worship the spirits of the dead. The sufferer has a right to mourn, a right which Jesus Christ has sealed, for, “Jesus wept,” but that right is abused into a wrong when protracted sorrow poisons the springs of the heart and unfits the weeper for the duties of daily life.

There is a “hitherto” beyond which the floods of grief may not lawfully advance. “What?” said the Quaker, to one who wore the weeds of mourning many years after the death of her child and declared that she had suffered a blow from which she should never rally—“What? Friend, have you not forgiven God yet?” Much of unholy rebellion against the Most High will be found as a sediment at the bottom of most tear bottles. Sullen repining and protracted lamentation indicate the existence of idolatry in the heart. Surely the beloved object must have been enshrined in that throne of the heart which is the Lord’s alone, or else the taking away of the beloved object, though it caused poignant sorrow, would not have excited such an unsubmissive spirit!

Should it not be the endeavor of God’s children to avoid excessive and continued grief because it verges so closely upon the two deadly sins of rebellion and idolatry? Sorrow deserves sympathy, but when it springs from a lack of resignation, it merits censure! When Believers refuse to be comforted, they act as mere worldlings might do with some excuse, for when unbelievers lose earthly comforts they lose their all. But for the Christian to pine and sigh in inconsolable anguish over the loss of a creature good is to belie his profession and degrade his name. He believes of his trial that the Lord has done it—he calls God his Father—he knows that all things work together for good. He is persuaded that a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of Glory is being worked out for him. How, then, can he sit down in sullen silence and say, “I will not be comforted!”?

Surely, then, the Truths of God which he professes to believe have never entered into his soul! He must be a mere speculative theorizer and not a sincere Believer! Beloved, shame on us, if with such a faith as ours we do not play the man! If the furnace is hot, let our faith be strong. If the burden is heavy, let our patience be enduring. Let us practically admit that He who lends has a right to reclaim His own—and as we blessed the giving, so let us bless the taking hand. At all times let us praise the Lord our God! Though He slay us, let us trust Him. Much more, let us bless Him when He only uses the rod.

Our text, however, might very fittingly describe individuals who, although free from outward trial or bereavement, are subject to deep depression of spirits. There are times with the brightest-eyed Christians when they can hardly brush the tears away. Strong faith and joyous hope at times subside into a fearfulness which is scarcely able to keep the spark of hope and faith alive in the soul. Yes, I think the more rejoicing a man is at one time, the more sorrowful he will be at others. They who mount highest descend lowest. There are cold-blooded individuals who neither rejoice with joy unspeakable nor groan with anguish unutterable.

But others of a more excitable temperament, capable of lofty delights, are also liable to horrible sinking of heart. Because they have gazed in ecstasy within the gates of pearl, they are too apt to make a descent to the land of death shade and to stand shivering on the brink of Hell. I know this, alas, too well. In the times of our gloom, when the soul is well near overwhelmed, it is our duty to grasp the promise and to rejoice in the Lord. But it is not easy to do. The duty is indisputable, but the fulfillment of it impossible.

In vain is it for us, at such seasons the star of promise and the candle of experience—the darkness which may be felt seems to smother all cheering lights. Barnabas, the son of consolation, would be hard put to it to cheer the victims of depression when their fits are on them. The oil of joy is poured out in vain for those heads upon which the dust and ashes of melancholy are heaped up. Brothers and Sisters, at such times the unhappy should wisely consider whether their disturbed minds ought not to have rest from labor. In these days, when everybody travels by express and works like a steam-engine, the mental wear and tear are terrible and the advice of the Great Master to the disciples to go into the desert and rest awhile is full of wisdom and ought to have our earnest attention.

Rest is the best, if not the only medicine for men occupied in mental pursuits and subject to frequent depression of spirit. Get away, you sons of sadness, from your ordinary avocations for a little season if you possibly can, and enjoy quiet and repose—above all, escape from your cares by casting them upon God. If you bear them yourself, they will distract you so that your soul will refuse to be comforted. But if you will leave them to God and endeavor to serve Him without distraction, you will overcome the drooping tendency of your spirits and you will yet compass the altar of God with songs of gladness.

Let none of us give way to an irritable, complaining, mournful temperament. It is the giving way which is the master mischief, for it is only as we resist this devil that it will flee from us. Let not your heart be troubled. If the troubles outside the soul toss your vessel and drive her to and fro, yet, at least let us strain every nerve to keep the seas outside the boat lest she sink altogether. Cry with David, “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me?” Never mourn unreasonably. Question yourself about the causes of your tears. Reason about the matter till you come to the same conclusion as the Psalmist, “Hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him.”

Depend upon it, if you can believe in God, you have, even in your soul’s midnight, 10 times more cause to rejoice than to sorrow. If you can humbly lie at Jesus’ feet, there are more flowers than thorns ready to spring up in your pathway. Joys lie in ambush for you. You shall be compassed about with songs of deliverance. Therefore, companions in tribulation, give not way to hopeless sorrow! Write no bitter things against yourselves! Salute with thankfulness the angel of hope and say no more, “My soul refused to be comforted.”

My main bent, this morning, to which I have set my whole soul, is to deal with these mourners who are seeking Christ but up till now have sought Him in vain. Convicted of sin, awakened and alarmed—these unhappy ones tarry long outside the gate of Mercy, shivering in the cold, pining to enter into the banquet which invites them—but declining to pass through the gate which stands wide open for them. Sullenly—no, I will not use so harsh a word—tremblingly they refuse to enter within Mercy’s open door, although infinite Love itself cries to them, “Come and welcome! Enter and be blessed.”

I. Concerning so deplorable a state of heart, alas, still so common, we will remark in the first place that IT IS VERY AMAZING. It is a most surprising thing that there should be in this world persons who have the richest consolation near to hand and persistently refuse to partake of it. It seems so unnatural that if we had not been convinced by abundant observation, we should deem it impossible that any miserable soul should refuse to be comforted. Does the ox refuse its fodder? Will the lion turn from his meat? Or the eagle loathe its nest?

The refusal of consolation is the more singular because the most admirable comfort is within reach. Sin can be forgiven. Sin has been forgiven! Christ has made an atonement for it. God is graciously willing to accept any sinner that comes to Him confessing his transgressions and trusting in the blood of the Lord Jesus. God waits to be gracious! He is not hard nor harsh. He is full of mercy. He delights to pardon the penitent and is never more revealed in the Glory of His Godhead than when He is accepting the unworthy through the righteousness of Jesus Christ! There is so much comfort in the Word of God that it were as easy to measure the heavens above, or set the limits of space, as to measure the Divine Grace revealed in it.

You may seek, if you will, to comprehend all the sweetness of Divine love, but you cannot, for it passes knowledge. Like the vast expanse of the ocean is the abounding goodness of God made manifest in Jesus Christ! Amazing is it, then, that men refuse to receive what is so lavishly provided! It is said that some years ago, a vessel sailing on the northern coast of the South American continent was observed to make signals of distress. When hailed by another vessel, they reported themselves as, “Dying for water!” “Dip it up then,” was the response, “you are in the mouth of the Amazon river.” There was fresh water all around them—they had nothing to do but to dip it up—and yet they were dying of thirst because they thought themselves to be surrounded by the salt sea!

How often are men ignorant of their mercies! How sad that they should perish for lack of knowledge! But suppose after the sailors had received the joyful information, they had still refused to draw up the water which was in boundless plenty all around them? Would it not have been a marvel? Would you not at once conclude that madness had taken hold upon the captain and his crew? Yet, so great, dear Friends, is the madness of many who hear the Gospel and know that there is mercy provided for sinners, that unless the Holy Spirit interferes they will perish! Not through ignorance, but because, for some reason or other, like the Jews of old, they judge themselves, “unworthy of everlasting life,” and exclude themselves from the Gospel, refusing to be comforted!

This is the more remarkable because the comfort provided is so safe. Were there suspicions that the comforts of the Gospel would prove delusive—that they would only foster presumption and so destroy the soul— men would be wise to start back as from a cup of poison! But many have satisfied themselves at this life-giving stream! Not one has been injured, but all who have partaken have been eternally blessed. Why, then, does the thirsty soul hesitate, while the river, clear as crystal, flows at his feet?

Moreover, the comfort of the Gospel is most suitable. It is fully adapted to the sinful, the weak and the broken-hearted. It is adapted to those who are crushed by their need of mercy and adapted equally as much to those who are the least sensible of their need of it. The Gospel bears a balm in its hand suited to the sinner in his worst estate—when he has no good thing about him and nothing within which can, by possibility, be a ground of hope. Does not the Gospel declare that Christ died for the ungodly? Is it not a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom, said the Apostle, “I am chief”? Is not the Gospel intended even for those who are dead in sin?

Don’t we read such words as these, “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we where dead in sins, has quickened us together in Christ (by grace are you saved)”? Are not the invitations of the Gospel, so far as we can judge, just the kindest, most tender and most attractive that could be penned and addressed at the worst emergency in which a sinner can be placed? “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money; come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

No qualifying adjectives are used to set forth a degree of goodness in the person invited—but the wicked are bid to come—and the unrighteous are commanded to turn to God! The invitation deals with base, naked, unimproved sinnership! Grace seeks for misery, unworthiness, guilt, helplessness and nothing else. Not because we are good, but because the Lord is gracious, we are bid to believe in the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus and so to receive comfort! Strange that where consolation is so plentiful—where comfort is so safe, where the heart-cheer is so suitable—souls should be found by the thousands who refuse to be comforted! This fact grows the more remarkable because these persons greatly need comfort and, from what they say, and I trust also from what they feel, you might infer that comfort was the very thing they would clutch at as a drowning man at a rope!

Why, they scarcely sleep at night by reason of their fears. By day their faces betray the sorrow, which, like a tumultuous sea, rages within. They can scarcely speak a cheerful sentence. They make their household miserable. The infection of their sorrow is caught by others. You would think that the very moment the word, “hope,” was whispered in their ears they would leap towards it at once! But it is not so. You may put the Gospel into what shape you please and yet these poor souls who need your pity, though, I fear, they must also have your blame, refuse to be comforted. Though the food is placed before them, their soul abhors all manner of meat and they draw near unto the gates of death. Yes, you may even put the heavenly cordial into their very mouths, but they will not receive the spiritual nutriment! They pine in hunger rather than partake in what Divine love provides.

Need I enlarge on this strange infatuation? It is a monstrosity unparalleled in Nature! When the dove was weary, she remembered the ark and flew into Noah’s hand at once. These are weary and they know the ark, but they will not fly to it. When an Israelite had slain, inadvertently, his fellow, he knew the City of Refuge. He feared the avenger of blood and he fled along the road to the place of safety. But these know the Refuge and every Sunday we set up the signposts along the road, but yet they come not to find salvation!

The destitute waifs and strays of the streets of London find out where the night refuges are and ask for shelter! They cluster round our workhouse doors like sparrows under the eaves of a building on a rainy day! They piteously crave for lodging and a crust of bread! Yet crowds of poor benighted spirits, when the House of Mercy is lighted up and the invitation is plainly written in bold letters—“Whoever will, let him turn in here”—will not come! They prove the truth of Watts’ verse*—*

*“Thousands make a wretched choice  
And rather starve than come.”*

‘Tis strange, ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis amazing!!  
II. Secondly, this strange madness has a method in it and MAY BE  
VARIOUSLY ACCOUNTED FOR. In many, their refusal to be comforted  
arises from bodily and mental disease. It is in vain to ply with Scriptural  
arguments those who are in more urgent need of healing medicine, or  
generous diet, or a change of air. There is so close a connection between  
the sphere of the physician and the Divine, that they do well to hunt in  
couples when chasing the delusions of morbid humanity. And I am persuaded there are not a few cases in which the minister’s presence is of  
small account until the physician shall, first of all, wisely have discharged  
his part.  
I shall not, this morning, therefore, further allude to characters out of  
my line of practice, but I shall speak of those whose refusal to accept comfort arises from moral rather than physical disease. In some the monstrous refusal is suggested by a proud dislike to the plan of salvation. They would be comforted, yes, that they would, but may they not do something to earn eternal life? May they not, at least, contribute a feeling or emotion? May they not prepare themselves for Christ? Must salvation be all gratis? Must they be received into the House of Mercy as paupers? Must they

come with no other cry but, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Must it come to this—to be stripped, to have every rag of one’s own  
righteousness torn away—as well righteousness of feeling as righteousness of doing? Must the whole head be confessedly sick and the whole  
heart faint and the man lie before Jesus as utterly undone and ruined, to  
take everything from the hand of the crucified Savior? Ah, then, says flesh  
and blood, I will not have it! The crest is not easy to cleave in two—the  
banner of self is upheld by a giant standard-bearer—it floats on high long  
after the battle has been lost. But what folly! Indeed, for the sake of indulging a foolish dignity we will not be comforted!  
O Sir, down with you and your dignity! I beseech you, bow down now  
before the feet of Jesus and kiss the feet which were nailed for your sins.  
Roll yourself and your glory in the dust. What are you but an unclean  
thing? And what are your righteousnesses but filthy rags? O take Christ  
to be your All-in-All, and you shall have comfort this very morning! Let not  
pride prompt a fresh refusal, but be wise and submit to Sovereign Grace.  
In others it is not pride, but an unholy resolve to retain some favorite sin.  
In most cases, when the Christian minister tries to heal a wound that has  
long been bleeding, he probes and probes again with his lancet, wondering why the wound will not heal. It seems to him that all the circumstances point to a successful healing of the wound. He cannot imagine  
why it still continues to bleed, but at last he finds out the secret. “Ah,  
here I have it. Here is an extraneous substance which continually frets  
and aggravates the wound. It cannot heal while this grit of sin lies within  
it.”  
In some cases we have found out that the sorrowing person indulged  
still in a secret vice, or kept the society of the ungodly, or was undutiful to  
parents, or unforgiving, or slothful, or practiced that hideous sin, secret  
drunkenness. In any such case, if the man resolves, “I will not give up this  
sin,” do you wonder if he is not comforted? Would not it be an awful thing  
if he were? When a man carries a corroding substance within his soul, if  
his wound is filmed over, an internal disease will come of it and prove  
deadly. I pray God none of you may ever get comfort till you get rid of  
every known sin and are able to say*—  
“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whatever that idol is,  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only You.”*  
There must be a plucking out of the right eye and a cutting off of the  
right arm if we are to inherit eternal life! Foolish, indeed, is he, who, for  
the sake of some paltry sin—a sin which he himself despises, a sin which  
he would not dare to confess into the ears of another—continues to reject  
Christ. Might I take such a one by the hand and say, “My Brother, my Sister, give it up! Oh, for God’s sake, hate the accursed thing and come now  
with me! Confess to Jesus, who will forgive all your foolishness and accept  
you this morning, so that no longer you shall refuse to be comforted.” Some refuse to be comforted because of an obstinate determination  
only to be comforted in a way of their own selecting. They have read the life  
of a certain good man who was saved with a particular kind of experience.  
“Now,” they say, “if I felt like that man, then I shall conclude I am saved.”  
Many have hit upon the experience of Mr. Bunyan, in “Grace Abounding.”  
They have said, “Now, I must be brought just as John Bunyan was, or else  
I will not believe.” Another has said, “I must tread the path which John  
Newton trod—my feet must be placed in the very marks where his feet  
went down, or else I cannot believe in Jesus Christ.”  
But, my dear Friend, what reason have you for expecting that God will  
yield to your self-will? And what justification have you for prescribing to  
the Great Physician the methods of His cure? Oh, if He will but bring me  
to Heaven, I will bless Him, though He conduct me by the gates of Hell! If I  
am but brought to see the King in His beauty, in the land which is very far  
off, it shall make no trouble to my heart by what method of experience He  
brings me there! Come, lay aside this foolish choosing of yours and say,  
“Lord, do but have mercy on me. Do but give me to trust Your dear Son  
and my whims and my fancies shall be given up.”  
I fear, in a great many, there is another reason for this refusing to be  
comforted, namely, a dishonoring unbelief in the love and goodness and  
truthfulness of God. They do not believe God to be gracious! They think  
Him a tyrant, or if not quite that, yet one so stern that a sinner had need  
plead and beg full many a day before the stern heart of God will be  
touched. Oh, but you do not know my God! What is He? He is LOVE! I tell  
you He needs no persuading to have mercy any more than the sun needs  
to be persuaded to shine, or a fountain to pour out its streams! It is the  
Nature of God to be gracious! He is never so Godlike as when He is bestowing mercy.  
“Judgment is His strange work.” It is His left-handed work. But mercy,  
the last manifested of His attributes, is His Benjamin, the child of His  
right hand. He delights to exercise it. Is it not so written, “He delights in  
mercy”? Alas, Alas, Alas, that God should be slandered by those to whom  
He speaks so lovingly! “As I live, says the Lord,” here He takes an oath,  
and will you not believe Him? “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no  
pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked should turn from  
his way and live.” “Turn, turn! Why will you die, O house of Israel?” He even seems to turn beggar to His own creatures and to plead with  
them to come to Him. His heart yearns as He cries, “How shall I give you  
up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as  
Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My  
repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not man.” O do  
not, I pray you, be unbelieving any longer, but believe God’s Word and  
Oath and accept the comfort which He freely offers to you this morning in  
the words of His Gospel!  
Some, however, have refused comfort so long that they have grown into  
the habit of despair. Ah, it is a dangerous habit and trembles on the brink  
of Hell! Every moment in which it is indulged a man grows accustomed to  
it. It is like the cold of the frigid zone which benumbs the traveler, after awhile, till he feels nothing and drops into slumber and from that into death. Some have despaired and despaired until they had reason for despair and until despair brought them into Hell. Despair has hardened some men’s hearts till they have been ready to commit sins which hope  
would have rendered impossible to them. Beware of nursing despondency! Does it creep upon you today through unbelief? O shake it off if possible! Cry to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to loose you from this snare of  
the fowler! For, depend upon it, doubting God is a net of Satan and  
blessed is he who escapes its toils. Believing in God strengthens the soul  
and brings us both holiness and happiness—but distrusting and suspecting and surmising and fearing hardens the heart—and renders us less  
likely ever to come to God! Beware of despair! And may you, if you have  
fallen into this evil habit, be snatched from it as the brand from the burning and delivered by the Lord, who looses His prisoner.  
III. Thirdly, this remarkable piece of folly ASSUMES VARIOUS FORMS.  
If I were to give a catalog of the symptoms of this disease which I have met  
with and have jotted down in my memory, I should need not an hour, but  
a month. For as each man has something peculiar to himself, so each  
form of this melancholy bears about it a measure of distinctness. I can  
scarcely put them under various heads and species—they are too many  
and too mixed. I think they say a sheep has so many diseases that you  
cannot count them. And I am sure men have a great many more mental  
maladies than can be counted, too.  
You might as well count the sands on the seashore as enumerate the  
soul’s diseases. But certain forms are very common. For instance, one is a  
persistent misrepresentation of the Gospel, as though it claimed some hard  
thing of us. Persons have been sitting in these seats, now, for years, who  
have heard us say and who know the truth of it, from God’s Word, that all  
that is asked of the sinner is that he should trust in the work which Jesus  
Christ has worked out—should trust Christ, in fact. We have in all manner of ways, as numerous and varied as our ingenuity could suggest,  
sought to show that there is nothing for the sinner to do! That he is to be  
nothing, but just get out of the way and let Christ and the Grace of God  
be everything!  
We have tried to show that to trust in Christ, which is the great saving  
act, is looking to Him, Resting on Him. Depending on Him. We have multiplied figures and metaphors to make this plain. And yet, as soon as ever  
we begin to talk to some of these who refuse to be comforted, they say,  
“But I am afraid, Sir, that I have never been sufficiently made to feel the  
evil of sin.” Now, did we ever say that feeling of sin was the great saving  
Grace? Does not the Word of God put it over and over again that believing  
saves the soul, not feeling? Yet these people virtually deny the Gospel and  
set up another Gospel—a Gospel of feeling in the place of a Gospel of  
trusting!  
“Oh, but,” they will then say, “I have had these desires so many times  
before and they have all gone and I cannot expect that I should be accepted now.” This is another denial of the Gospel! They make it out that  
God will only accept those who have experienced good desires but never  
repressed them. They reduce the Gospel into this kind of thing—“You who never have repressed good desires, you may come.” But the Gospel says, “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” I could not give you all the shapes and ways in which they will evade and mystify the Gospel, but assuredly they use as much ingenuity to make themselves

 unhappy, as the most ardent spirit that ever lived ever used to discover a country or to  
win a crown!  
Another shape of this malady is this—many continually and persistently  
underestimate the power of the precious blood of Jesus. Not, if you brought  
them to look, that they would dare affirm that Jesus could not save, or  
that His blood could not pardon sin, but, virtually, it comes to that. “Oh, I  
am such a sinner!” And what if you are? Did not Christ come to save sinners, even the very chief? What has the greatness of your sinnership to do  
with it? Is not Christ a greater Savior than you are a sinner? Towering  
high, the mountain of His mercy is far above the hills of your guiltiness!  
Yes, but you do not think so. Yes and herein you limit the efficacy of an  
Infinite Atonement and so dishonor the blood of Jesus Christ! There are some who will then say, “But I have sinned such-and-such a  
sin.” What? And cannot the blood of Jesus wash that away? “All manner  
of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” There is no sin which  
you can by any possibility have committed, which Jesus cannot pardon if  
you will come to Him and trust Him, for, “the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s  
dear Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Why, believe me, Sinner, though your  
sin is such that, of itself, it will damn you to all eternity, beyond all  
hope—though it is such, that could your tears forever flow, not a particle  
of it could ever be washed out—yet in a moment it shall vanish if you do  
but now trust in that bleeding Savior.  
There is nothing in your sin that can now obstruct the power of the  
bleeding Savior. God will at once forgive you. But I know that you will still  
slander my Lord Jesus and refuse His comfort. I pray Him, therefore to  
forgive you this wrong and bring you, by His Holy Spirit, into a saner  
mind, to believe that He is able and willing and to doubt no more. Many  
cast their doubts into the shape of foolish inferences drawn from the doctrine of predestination. I do not find that the doctrine of predestination impresses people in the way of sadness in any way except that of religion! Everybody believes that there is a predestination about the casting of  
lots, and yet the spirit of gambling is rife everywhere and men in crowds  
subscribe to the public lotteries, which to our shame, are still tolerated.  
They know that only two or three can win a large prize, yet away goes the  
money and nobody stands at the office door and says, “I shall not invest  
my money because if I am to get a prize I shall get a prize and if I am not  
to win a prize I shall not do so.” Men are not such fools when they come to  
things of common life as they are when they deal with religion! This predestination sticks in the way of many as a huge stumbling block when  
they come to the things of God.  
The fact is, there is nothing in predestination to stumble a man. The  
evil lies in what he chooses to make of it. When a man wants to beat a  
dog, they say he can always find a stick to do it with. And when a man  
wants to find excuses for not believing in Christ, he can always discover  
one, somewhere or other. For this cause so many run to this predestination doctrine, because it happens to be a handy place of resort. Now God  
has a people whom He will save, a chosen and special people, redeemed  
by the blood of Christ. But there is no more in that doctrine to deny the  
other grand Truth that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is not condemned, than there is in the fact that Abyssinia is in Africa, to contradict  
the doctrine that, Hindustan is in Asia!  
They are two Truths of God which stand together and though it may  
not always be easy for us to reconcile them, it would be more difficult to  
make them disagree. There never seems to me to be any need to reconcile  
the two Truths, nor, indeed, any practical difficulty in the matter. The difficulty is metaphysical and what have lost sinners to do with metaphysics? Fixed is everything, from the motion of a grain of dust in the summer’s wind to the revolution of a planet in its orbit—and yet man is as free  
as if there were no God—as independent an actor as if everything were left  
to chance! I see indelible marks both of predestination and free agency  
everywhere in God’s universe! Then why do you ask questions about  
your election when God says, “whoever will”? It is foolish to stand and ask  
whether you are ordained to come when the invitation bids you come!  
Come, and you are ordained to come! Stay away, and you deserve to perish!  
Yonder is the gate of the hospital for sick souls and over it is written,  
“Whoever will, let him come,” and you stand outside that house of mercy  
and say, “I do not know whether I am ordained to enter.” There is the invitation, man! Why are you so mad? Would you talk like that at Guy’s or at  
Bartholomew’s Hospital? Would you say to the kind persons who picked  
you up in the street and carried you to the hospital, “Oh, for goodness  
sake, do not take me in, I do not know whether I am ordained to go in or  
not”? You know the hospital was built for such as are sick and wounded  
and when you are taken in you perceive that it was built for you. I do not  
know how you are to find whether you were ordained to enter the hospital  
or not, except by going in, and I do not know how you are to find out your  
election to salvation, except by trusting Jesus Christ, who bids you trust,  
and promises that if you do so you shall be saved!  
You may smile, but these things which to some of us are like spiders’  
nets through which we break, are like nets of iron to those desponding  
ones whose soul refuses to be comforted. I have known others and here I  
shall close this list, who have tried to find a hole in which to hide their  
eyes from the comforting light in the thought of the unpardonable sin. The  
greatest divines who have written on this subject have never been able to  
prove anything about it except that all the other divines are wrong! I have  
never yet read a book upon the subject which did not, one-half of it, consist in proving that all who had written before knew nothing at all on the  
subject. And I have come to the conclusion, when I have finished each  
treatise, that the writer was about as right as his predecessors and no  
more.  
Whatever the unpardonable sin may be, and perhaps it is different in  
every person—perhaps it is a point of sin in each one, a filling up of his  
measure beyond which there is no more hope of mercy—whatever it is,  
there is one thing that is sure, that no man who feels his need of Christ and sincerely desires to be saved can have committed that sin at all. If you had committed that sin, it would be to you death. “There is a sin which is unto death.” Now, death puts an end to feeling. You would be given up to hardness and to incorrigible impenitence. The reason why you could not be saved would be because your will would become fast set  
against all good and you never would will to be saved.  
There is no difficulty in salvation when the will is made right—and if  
you have a will and God has made you willing to come to Christ and to be  
saved, you have no more committed the unpardonable sin than has the  
angel Gabriel who stands at God’s right hand! If your heart palpitates still  
with fear. If your soul still trembles before the Law of God and dreads His  
wrath, then still are you within the bounds of mercy! And the silver trumpet sounds this morning sweet and shrill, “Whoever will, let him take of  
the water of life freely.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be  
saved.”  
IV. We will not continue that dreary catalog, but turn to a fourth consideration, namely, that this refusal to be comforted INVOLVES MUCH OF  
WRONG. Much of it we can readily forgive, still we must mention it. When  
you hear the Gospel and refuse to be comforted by it, there is a wrong  
done to the minister of God. He sympathizes with you. He desires to comfort you and it troubles him when he puts before you the cup of salvation  
and you refuse to take it.  
Now, I do not say that we, in our private persons, claim any great respect from you. But I do say that to reject God’s ambassador may not be a  
light sin. And to cause the man whom God sends to speak words of mercy  
to you to go, with a heavy heart, again and again to his knees, may be  
such a sin as will rankle in your soul in years to come if it is not repented  
of. But worse than that, you wrong God’s Gospel. Every time you refuse to  
be comforted, you do as good as say, “The Gospel is of no use to me. I do  
not esteem it. I will not have it.” You put it away as though it were a thing  
of nothing.  
You wrong this precious Bible. It is full of consoling promises and you  
read it and you seem to say, “It is all chaff.” You act as if you had winnowed it and found no food in it. It is a barren wilderness to you. Oh, but  
the Bible does not deserve to have such a slur cast upon it! You do wrong  
to the dear friends who try to comfort you. Why should they so often bring  
you with loving hands the Words of comfort and you put them away?  
Above all, you do wrong to your God, to Jesus and to His Holy Spirit. The  
Crucifixion of Christ is repeated by your rejection of Christ. That unkind,  
ungenerous thought that He is unwilling to forgive, crucifies Him afresh.  
Grieve not the Holy Spirit*—  
“He’s waited long, is waiting still—  
You use no other friend so ill.”*  
He is the Spirit of consolation and when you refuse the consolation,  
you virtually reject Him—reject Him to your shame! Think, dear Friends,  
wherever you may be this morning—your refusing to be comforted is very  
wrong because it is depriving the Church of what you might do for it. Oh,  
if you became a cheerful Christian, what another in Israel you might be! I  
think I hear you sing as the virgin did of old, “He has remembered the low  
estate of His handmaiden.” How would you rejoice with Hannah that, “He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes.” How would your exultant Psalm go up to Heaven, “He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has

sent away empty.”  
The world—what a wrong you are doing to it! Why, that part of the  
world which comes under your influence is led to say, “Religion makes  
that woman miserable. It is religion which makes that man so sad.” You  
know it is not so! But they put it down to it—they say, “Religion drives  
people mad.” I would sooner lose this right hand and this right eye, too,  
than have such a thing said of my religion! I cannot bear, when I do anything wrong that men should say, “That’s your Christianity.” If they lay  
the blame on me, who so well deserved it, then let me bear it! But to lay it  
on the Cross of Christ—oh, this makes a man shudder!  
V. I will close with this remark—that SUCH A REFUSAL SHOULD NOT  
BE PERSISTED IN. It is unreasonable to be sad when you might rejoice. It  
is unreasonable to be wretched when Mercy provides every cause for making you happy. Why are you sad and why is your countenance fallen? If  
there were no Savior, no Holy Spirit, no Father willing to forgive, you  
might go your way and put an end to your existence in despair. But while  
all this Divine Grace is ready for you, why not take it?  
One would think you were like Tantalus, placed up to his neck in water, which, when he tried to drink, receded from his lips—but you are in  
no such condition. Instead of the water flowing away from you, it is rippling up to your lips! It is inviting you but to open your mouth and receive  
it! While it is unreasonable to continue such a persistence, it is also most  
weakening to you. Every hour that you continue sad you spoil the possibilities of your getting out of that sadness. You are dissolving the strength  
even of your bodily frame. And, as for your soul, the pillars are being  
shaken. And, mark you, it is most dangerous, too, for maybe—oh, I pray  
God it may not be!—it may be that God, who gives you light when He sees  
you shut your eyes again, will say, “Let his sun be darkened and his moon  
be turned into blood. The creature which I made for light rejects it and no  
light shall ever come to it, even forever.”  
The king who kills the fatlings and makes ready the feast and brings  
you to the table, if He sees you still refuse to partake, may swear in His  
wrath that you shall not eat of His supper. I have known parents, when  
their children cried for nothing, take care to give them something to cry  
for. And, maybe, if you are miserable when there is no cause for it, you  
may have cause for it—cause that will never end. Oh, by the blood and  
wounds of Jesus! By the overflowing heart of God! By the eternal promises  
of Divine Grace! By the Covenant which God has made with sinners in the  
Person of His Son! By the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, put not from you the  
consolation which God provides! Say no longer, “My soul refuses to be  
comforted,” but cast yourself at Jesus’ feet and trust in Him, and you are  
saved!  
God bless you and grant this prayer for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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A QUESTION FOR A QUESTIONER  
NO. 1843

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Psalm 77:9.**

ASAPH was very grievously troubled in spirit. The deep waters were not only around his boat, but they had come in, even, into his soul. When the spirit of a man is wounded, then is he wounded, indeed, and such was the case with this man of God. In the time of his trouble he was attacked with doubts and fears, so that he was made to question the very foundations of things. Had he not taken to continual prayer, he would have perished in his affliction. But he cried unto God with his voice and the Lord listened to him. Nor did he only pray, but he used the fittest means for escaping from his despondency. Very wisely this good man argued with himself and sought to cure his unbelief. He treated himself homeopathically, treating like with like. As he was attacked by the disease of questioning, he gave himself questions as a medicine. Observe how he kills one question with another, as men fight fire with fire. Here we have six questions, one after another, each one striking at the very heart of unbelief. “Will the Lord cast off forever? Will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He, in anger, shut up His tender mercies?” If questions are raised at all, let us go through with them—and as the Savior answered one question of His opponents by another—so may we, also, silence the questions of unbelief by further questions which shall strip our doubt of all disguises.

The question which makes our text is meant to end other questions. You may carry truth as far as you like and it will always be truth. Truth is like those crystals which, when split up into the smallest possible fragments, still retain their natural form. You may break the Truth of God in pieces; you may do what you like with it and it is still the Truth of God throughout—but error is diverse within itself and always bears its own death within itself. You can see its falsehood even in its own light. Bring it forward, strip it of its disguises, behold it in its naked form and its deformity at once appears! Carry unbelief to its proper consequences and you will revolt from it and be driven by the Grace of God to faith. Sometimes our doubts assume appearances which are not their own and are hard to deal with, but if we make them take their own natural shapes, we shall easily destroy them.  
The question before us is what the logician would call a raductio ad absurdum—it reduces doubt to an absurdity. It puts into plain and truthful words the thought of an unbelieving mind and at once it is seen to be a horrible notion. “Is His mercy clean gone forever?” One might smile while reading a suggestion so absurd and yet there is grave cause for trembling in the profanity of such a question. “Has God forgotten?” We stumble at the first word. How can God forget? “Has God forgotten to be?” We snap the question at that point and it is blasphemous. It is no better when we give it as a whole—“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” The bare idea is both ridiculous and blasphemous! Again, I say, it is wise, when we are vexed with evil questioning, to put down the questions in black and white and expose them to the daylight. Drive the wretched things out of their holes! Hunt them in the open and they will soon be destroyed. Let the Light of God into the dark cellar of your despondency and you will soon quit the den in sheer disgust at your own folly. Make a thought appear to be absurd and you have gone a long way towards conquering it.

The question now before us is one of very wide application. I shall not attempt to suggest all the ways in which it may be employed, but I am going to turn it to three uses this morning. The first is for the man of God in distress. Let him take this question and put it to his own reason and common sense—and especially to his own faith—“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” When we have handled the question in that way, we will pass it over to the seeking sinner who is despondent and we will ask him whether he really believes that God has forgotten to be gracious. When this is done, we may have a moment or two left for the Christian worker who is dispirited—who cannot do his work as he would wish to do and who mourns over the little result coming from it. “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Will you be allowed to go forth weeping, bearing precious seed— and will you never come rejoicing again, bringing your sheaves with you? We shall have quite enough matter to fill up our time and many fragments remaining when the feast is over. May God the Holy Spirit bless the word!

I. TO THE MAN OF GOD IN DISTRESS, this question is commended, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
What kind of distress is that which suggests such a question? Where had Asaph been? In what darkness had he wandered? In what tangled wood had he lost himself? How came he to get such a thought into his mind?  
I answer, first, this good man had been troubled by unanswered prayers. “In the day of my trouble,” he says—“In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.” And he seems to say that though he sought the Lord, his griefs were not removed. He was burdened and he cried unto God beneath the burden, but the burden was not lightened. He was in darkness and he craved for light but not a star shone forth. Nothing is more grievous to the sincere pleader than to feel that his petitions are not heeded by his God. It is a sad business to have gone up, like Elijah’s servant, seven times, and yet to have seen no cloud upon the sky in answer to your importunity. It tries a man to spend all night in wrestling and to have won no blessing from the Covenant Angel. To ask and not to receive; to seek and not to find; to knock and to see no open door—these are serious trials to the heart and tend to extort the question—“Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Unanswered prayer is very staggering, even to strong faith, but the weak faith of a tried Believer is hard put to it by long delays and threatened denials. When the Mercy Seat, itself, ceases to yield us aid, what can we do? You will not wonder, then, considering your own tendency to doubt, that this man of God, when his prayers did not bring him deliverance, cried out, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Besides that, he was enduring continued suffering. Our text says, “My sore ran in the night.” His wound was always bleeding—there was no cessation to his pain. At night he woke up and wished it were morning. And when the daylight came, he wished for night again, if, perhaps, he might obtain relief. But none came. Pain of body, when it is continuous and severe, is exceedingly trying to our feeble spirits. But agony of soul is still worse. Give me the rack sooner than despair! Do you know what it is to have a keen thought working like an auger into your brain? Has Satan seemed to pierce and drill your mind with a sharp, cutting thought that would not be put aside? It is torment, indeed, to have a worm gnawing at your heart, a fire consuming your spirit—yet a true child of God may be thus tormented. When Asaph had prayed for relief and the relief did not come, the temptation came to him to ask, “Am I always to suffer? Will the Lord never relieve me? It is written, ‘He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds’—has He ceased from that sacred surgery? Has God forgotten to be gracious?”

In addition to this, the man of God was in a state of mind in which his depression had become inveterate. He says, “My soul refused to be comforted.” Many plasters were at hand, but he could not lay them upon the wound. Many cordials offered themselves, but he could not receive them— his throat seemed closed. The meadows were green, but the gate was nailed up and the sheep could not get in! The brooks flowed softly, but he could not reach them to lie down and drink. Asaph was lying at the pool of Bethesda and he saw others step in to be healed, but he had no man to put him into the pool when the waters were troubled. His mind had become confirmed in its despondency and his soul refused to be comforted.  
More than that, there seemed to be a failure of the means of Grace for him. “I remembered God and was troubled.” Some of God’s people go up to the House of the Lord where they were accustomed to unite in worship with delight, but they now have no delight. They even go to the Communion Table and eat the bread and drink the wine, but they do not receive the body and blood of Christ to the joy of their faith. Soon they get to their chambers, open their Bibles and bow to their knees and remember God— but every verse seems to condemn them—their prayers accuse them and God, Himself, seems turned to be their enemy. And then it is little wonder that unbelief exclaims, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
At the back of all this there was another trouble for Asaph, namely, that he could not sleep. He says, “You hold my eyes waking.” It seemed as if the Lord, Himself, held up his eyelids and would not let them close in sleep. Others on their beds were refreshed with “kind nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep.” But when Asaph sought his couch, he was more unrestful there than when he was engaged in the business of the day! We may speak of sleeplessness very lightly, but among afflictions, it is one of the worst that can happen to men. When the chamber of repose becomes a furnace of anguish, it goes hard with a man. When the Psalmist could not find even a transient respite in sleep, his weakness and misery drove him to say, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Moreover, there was one thing more—he lost the faculty of telling out his grief—“I am so troubled that I cannot speak.” There are some people to whom we would not tell our trouble, for we know they could not understand it, for they have never been in deep waters, themselves. There are others to whom we could not tell our trouble, though they might help us, because we feel ashamed to do so. To be compelled to silence is a terrible increase to anguish—the torrent is swollen when its free course is prevented. A dumb sorrow is sorrow, indeed! The grief that can talk will soon pass away. That misery which is wordless is endless. The brook that ripples and prattles as it flows is shallow, but deep waters are silent in their flow. When a man falls under the power of a dumb spirit, it needs Christ, Himself, to come and cast the devil out of him, for he is brought into a very grievous captivity. We who know what a poor thing human nature is when it is brought into affliction are not surprised that the man of God said in such a case, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Having thus, you see, put the doubt in the most apologetic style and mentioned the excuses which might mitigate the sin of the question, I am now going to expose its unreasonableness and sinfulness by considering what answers we may give to such a question? I shall endeavor to answer it by making it answer itself—  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Answer—Has God forgotten anything? If He could forget, could He be God? Is it not absurd to speak of Him as short of memory, of whose understanding there is no searching? Shall we speak of Him as forgetting, when to His mind all things are present and the past and the future are always before Him as in a map which lies open before the beholder’s eyes? Oh child of God, why do you talk thus? Oh troubled heart, will you insult your God? Will you narrow the infinity of His mind? Can God forget? You are forgetful! Perhaps you can scarcely remember, from hour to hour, your own words and your own promises—but is the Lord such an one as you are? Not even the least thing is passed over by Him! He has not forgotten the young ravens in their nests, but He hears when they cry. He has not forgotten a single blade of grass, but gives to each its own drop of dew. He has not forgotten the sea-monsters down deep in the caverns of the ocean. He has not forgotten a worm that hides itself away beneath the sod! Therefore banish the thought, once and for all, that your God has forgotten anything, much less that He has forgotten to be gracious!  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Then He has forgotten an old, long, ancient, yes—eternal habit of His heart! Have you not heard that His mercy endures forever? Did He not light up the lamps of Heaven because of His mercy? Do we not sing, “To Him that made great lights: for His mercy endures forever. The sun to rule by day, and the moon and stars to rule by night: for His mercy endures forever”? Since the creation has He not, in Providence, always been gracious? Is it not His rule to open His hands and supply the need of every living thing? Did He not give His Son to redeem mankind? Has He not sent His Spirit to turn men from darkness to light? After having been gracious all these myriads of ages. After having manifested His love and His Grace at such a costly rate, has He forgotten it? You, O man, take up a practice and you lay it down—you do a thing now and then—and then you cease from your way. But shall the eternal God who has always been gracious forget to be gracious? Oh, Lord, forgive the thought!  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Why, then, He must have forgotten His purpose! Have you not heard that before the earth was, He purposed to redeem unto Himself a people who should be His own chosen, His children, His peculiar treasure, a people near unto Him? Before He made the heavens and the earth, had He not planned in His own mind that He would manifest the fullness of His Grace toward His people in Christ Jesus? And do you think that He has turned from His eternal purpose, torn up His Divine decrees, burned the Book of Life and changed the whole course of His operations among the sons of men? Do you know what you are saying to talk so? Does He not say, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed”? Has He said and will He not do it? Has He purposed and shall it not come to pass? Banish, then, the thought of His forgetting to be gracious!  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Then He must have forgotten His own Covenant, for what was the purport of His Covenant with Jesus Christ, the second Adam, on the behalf of His people? Is it not called a Covenant of Grace? Is not Grace the spirit and tenor and object of it? Of old He said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” And in His Covenant He ordains to show this Grace to as many as are in Christ Jesus. Now, if a man’s covenant is confirmed, it stands fast. Nothing that occurs after a covenant has been made can alter it—and God, having once made a Covenant, turns not from His promise and His oath! The Law, which was 430 years after the Covenant made with Abraham, could not change the promises which the Lord had made to the believing seed, neither can any accident or unforeseen circumstance make the Covenant of Grace null and void! Indeed, there are no accidents with God, nor any unforeseen circumstances with Him! He has lifted His hand to Heaven and has sworn! He has declared, “If My Covenant is not with day and night, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob.” The Lord has not forgotten His Covenant with day and night, neither will He cast off His believing people! He cannot, therefore, forget to be gracious.  
More than that, when you say, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” do you not forget that in such a case He must have forgotten His own Glory, for the main of His Glory lies in His Grace. In that which He does out of free favor and love to undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving men, He displays the meridian splendor of His Glory! His power, His wisdom and His Immutability praise Him, but in the forefront of all shines out His Grace. This is His darling attribute—by this He is illustrious on earth and in Heaven above! Has God forgotten His own Glory? Does a man forget his honor? Does a man turn aside from his own name and fame? He may do so in a moment of madness, but the thrice holy God has not forgotten the Glory of His name, nor forgotten to be gracious!  
Listen, and let unbelief stand rebuked. If God has forgotten to be gracious, then He must have forgotten His own Son! He must have forgotten Calvary and the expiatory Sacrifice offered there! He must have forgotten Him that is always with Him at His right hand, making intercession for transgressors! He must have forgotten His pledge to Him that He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Can you conceive that? It is verging upon blasphemy to suppose such a thing! Yet it must be that He has forgotten His own Son if He has forgotten to be gracious!  
Once more, if this were the case, the Lord must have forgotten His own Self, for Grace is of the essence of His Nature, since God is Love. We forget ourselves and disgrace ourselves, but God cannot do so. Oh Beloved, it is part and parcel of God’s own Nature that He should show mercy to the guilty and be gracious to those who trust in Him. Have you forgotten, as a father, your children? Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? These things are barely possible, but it is utterly impossible that the great Father should forget Himself by forgetting His children! That the great Lord who has taken us to be His peculiar heritage and His jewels should cease to value us and forget to be gracious to us is an impossibility!

I think I hear someone say, “I do not think God has forgotten to be gracious except to me.” Does God make any exceptions? Does He not speak universally when He addresses His children? Remember, if God forgot to be gracious to one of His believing people, He might forget to be gracious to them all! If there were one instance found in which His love failed, then the foundations would be removed and what could the righteous do? The Good Shepherd does not preserve some of His sheep, but all of them! And it is not concerning the strong ones of His flock that He says, “I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish”—He has said it of all the sheep, yes, and of the smallest lamb of all the flock, of the most scabbed and wounded, of all that He has purchased with His blood! The Lord has not forgotten Himself in any one instance—but He is faithful to all Believers.  
Now, let us attend to the amendment of the question. Shall I tell you, Friend, you who have put this question, what the true question is which you ought to ask yourself? It is not, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” but, “Have you forgotten to be grateful?” Why, you enjoy many mercies even now! It is Grace which allows you to live after having asked such a vile question! Grace is all around you, if you will but open your eyes, or your ears. You had not been spared after so much sin if God had forgotten to be gracious!  
Listen—Have you not forgotten to be believing? God’s Word is true, why do you doubt it? Is He a liar? Has He ever played you false? Which promise of His has failed? Time was when you did trust Him—then you knew He was gracious—but you are now doubting without just cause! You are permitting an evil heart of unbelief to draw you aside from the living God! Know this and repent of it—and trust your best Friend.  
Have you not also forgotten to be reverent? Otherwise how could you ask such a question? Should a man say of God that He has forgotten to be gracious? Should he imagine such a thing? Should the keenest grief drive to such profanity? Shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Shall anyone of us begin to doubt that Divine Grace which has kept us out of the bottomless pit and spared us to this hour? Oh, heir of Glory, favored as you have been to bathe your forehead in the sunlight of Heaven full often and then to lean your head on the Savior’s bosom—is it out of your mouth that this question comes—“Has God forgotten to be gracious”? Call it back and bow your head unto the dust and say, “My Lord, have mercy upon Your servant, that he has even thought thus for an instant.”  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Why, surely you have forgotten, yourself, or you would not talk so! You have forgotten that you owe everything to your Lord and are indebted to Him even for the breath in your nostrils! You have forgotten the precious blood of Jesus! You have forgotten the Mercy Seat. Yu have forgotten Providence. You have forgotten the Holy Spirit! You have forgotten all that the Lord has done for you. Surely, you have forgotten all good things, or you would not speak thus! Shake yourself from the dust. Arise and leave the dunghill of your despair and sing, “His mercy endures forever.” Say in your soul—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Thus much to the child of God. May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, apply it to every troubled heart.  
II. Furthermore, I desire to talk a little with THE SEEKING SINNER IN DESPONDENCY. You have not yet found joy and peace through believing and, therefore, I will first describe your case and what it is that has made you say, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
You labor under a sense of guilt. You know that you have transgressed against God and you feel that this is a terrible thing, involving wrath to the utmost. The arrows of God are sticking in your soul and rankling there. You cannot trifle with sin as you once did—it burns like a fiery poison in your veins! You have been praying to get rid of that sense of sin, but it deepens. The case I am stating is very clear to every child of God, but it is not at all clear to the man who is enduring it. He cries, “The more I pray; the more I go to hear the Word; the more I read the Bible, the blacker sinner I seem to be. ‘Has God forgotten to be gracious?’”  
Moreover, a sense of weakness is increasing upon you. You thought that you could pray, but now you cannot pray. You thought it the easiest thing in the world to believe, but now the grappling-irons will not lay hold upon the promises and you find no rest. You cannot, now, perform those holy acts which you once thought to be so easy. Your power is dried up, your glory is withered. Now you groan out, “I would but I can’t repent, then all would be easy. Alas, I have no hope, no strength. I am reduced to utter weakness.” We understand all this, but you do not—and we do not wonder at your crying—“Has God forgotten to be gracious.”  
“Oh, but Sir, I have been crying to God that He would be pleased to deliver me from sin, but the more I try to be holy the more I am tempted! I never knew such horrible thoughts before, nor discovered such filthiness in my nature before. When I get up in the morning I resolve that I will go straight all the day, but before long I am more crooked than ever. I feel worse, rather than better. The world tempts me, the devil tempts me, the flesh tempts me, everything is wrong with me. ‘Has God forgotten to be gracious?’ I have prayed the Lord to give me peace and He promises to give rest, but I am more uneasy than ever and cannot rest like I used to. I used to be very happy when I was at Chapel on Sunday. I thought I was doing well to be at public worship. But now I fear that I only go as a formalist and, therefore, I mock God and make matters worse. I rested once in being a teetotaler, in being a hard-working, honest, sober man—but now I see that I must be born again! I used to rest, once, in the idea that I was becoming quite religious, but now it seems to me that my betterness is a hollow sham and all my old nests are pulled down.”  
My Friend, I perfectly understand your case and think well of it, for the same has happened to many of us. You must be divorced from self before you can be married to Christ—and that divorce must be made most clear and plain—or Jesus will never make a match with you. You must come clear away from self-righteousness, self-trust, self-hope, or else, one of these days, when Jesus has saved you, there might be a doubt as to whether He is to have all the Glory, or to go halves with self! He makes you nothing that He may be All in All to you. He grinds you to the dust that He may lift you out of it forever. Meanwhile, I do not wonder that the question crosses your mind, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
Let me show how wrong the question is. “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” If He has, He has forgotten what He used to know right well. David was foul with his adultery—remember that 51st Psalm—but how sweet was the Prophet’s message to the penitent king—“The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die!” “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,” was a prayer most graciously answered in that royal sinner’s case. Remember Jonah and how he went down to the bottom of the mountains in the whale’s belly and was brought even to Hell’s door. Yet he lived to sing, “Salvation is of the Lord,” and was brought out of the depths of the sea. Remember Manasseh, who shed very much innocent blood and yet the Grace of God brought him among thorns and made him a humble servant of the Lord. Remember Peter, how he denied his Master, but his Master forgave him and bade him feed His sheep.  
Forget not the dying thief and how, in the extremity of death, filled with all the agonies of crucifixion, he looked to the Lord and the Lord looked on him—and that day he was with the King in Paradise! Think, also, of Saul of Tarsus, that chief of sinners, who breathed out threats against the people of God—and he was struck down and, before long was, in mercy, raised up, again, and ordained to be a chosen vessel to bear the Gospel among the heathen! If God has forgotten to be gracious, He has forgotten a line of things in which He has worked great wonders and in which His heart delighted from of old. It cannot be that He will turn away from that which is so dear to Him.  
“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Then why are all the old arrangements for Grace still standing? There is the Mercy Seat—surely that would have been taken away if God had forgotten to be gracious! The Gospel is preached to you and this is its assurance, “Whoever believes in Him is not condemned.” If the Lord had forgotten to be gracious, He would not have mocked you with empty words.  
Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, is still living and still stands as a Priest to make intercession for transgressors. Would that be the case if God had forgotten to be gracious? The Holy Spirit is still at work convincing and converting—would that be so if God had forgotten to be gracious? Oh Brothers and Sisters, while Calvary is still a fact and the Christ has gone into Glory bearing His wounds with Him, there is a fountain still filled with blood where the guilty may wash! While there is an atoning Sacrifice, there must be Grace for sinners! I cannot enlarge on these points, for time flies so rapidly, but the continuance of the Divine arrangements, the continuance of the Son of God as living and pleading and the mission of the Holy Spirit as striving, regenerating, comforting—all this proves that God has not forgotten to be gracious!  
Remember that God, Himself, must, according to nature, be always gracious so long as men will put their trust in the great Sacrifice. He has promised to be gracious to all who confess their sins and forsake them— and look to Christ—and He cannot forget that Word without a change which we dare not impute to Him! God might sooner forget to be than forget to be gracious to those to whom He has promised His Grace. He has promised to every poor, guilty, confessing soul that will come and put His trust in Christ that He will be gracious in pardoning sin—and so it must be!

I shall come to close quarters with you. I know your despair has driven you to the question, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” and I would silence it by putting other questions to you. Is it not you that have forgotten to believe in Christ? “I have been praying,” says one. That is all very well, but the Gospel is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” not, “He that prays.” “I have been trying to come to Christ.” I know that, but I read nothing about this trying in Holy Scripture and I fear your trying is that which keeps you from Jesus. You are told to believe in Christ, not to try to believe! A minister in America, some time ago, was going up the aisle of his Church during a revival, when a young man earnestly cried to him, “Sir, can you tell me the way to Christ?” “No,” was the answer, very deliberately given. “I cannot tell you the way to Christ.” The young man answered, “I beg pardon. I thought you were a minister of the Gospel.” “So I am,” was the reply. “How is it that you cannot tell me the way to Christ?” “My Friend,” said the minister, “their is no way to Christ. He is, Himself, the Way. All that believe in Him are justified from all things. There is no way to Christ; Christ is here.”  
O my Hearer! Christ Himself is the Way of salvation and that way comes right down to your feet and then leads right up to Heaven! You have not to make a way to the Way, but at once to run in the way which lies before you. The way begins where you now are—enter it. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, now, and you are saved! And then you will no more ask the question, “Is His mercy clean gone forever?”  
“Oh,” says one, “but I have been looking to reform myself and grow better. And I have done a good deal in that way.” That is not the Gospel! It is all very right and proper, but the Gospel is, “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” The other day I saw my bees swarming—they hung on a branch of a tree in a living mass! The difficulty was to get them into a hive. My man went with his veil over his face and began to put them into the skep and I noticed that he was particularly anxious to get the queen bee into it, for if he once had her in the hive, the rest would be sure to follow and remain with her. Now, faith is the queen bee. You may get temperance, love, hope and all those other bees into the hive, but the main thing is to get simple faith in Christ—and all the rest will come afterwards. Get the queen bee of faith and all the other virtues will attend her!  
“Alas!” cries one, “I have been listening to the Gospel for years.” That is quite right, for “faith comes by hearing.” But remember, we are not saved by mere listening, nor even by knowing, unless we advance to believing. The letter of the word is not life—it is the spirit of it that saves. When tea was first introduced into this country, a person favored a friend with a pound of it. It was exceedingly expensive and when he met his friend next, he enquired, “Have you tried the tea?” “Yes, but I did not like it at all.” “How was that? Everybody else is enraptured with it.” “Why,” said the other, “we boiled it in a saucepan, threw away the water and brought the leaves to the table, but they were very hard and nobody cared for them.” Thus many people keep the leaves of form and throw away the spiritual meaning. They listen to our doctrines, but fail to come to Christ. They throw away the true essence of the Gospel, which is faith in Jesus! I pray you, do not act thus with what I preach! Do not bury yourself in my words or even in the Words of Scripture, but pass onward to the life and soul of their meaning, which is Christ Jesus, the sinner’s hope!  
All the aroma of the Gospel is in Christ! All the essence of the Gospel is in Christ and you have only to trust Him to enjoy eternal life! You guilty, worthless sinners—you at the gates of Hell, you who have nothing to recommend you, you who have no good works or good feelings—simply trust the merits of Christ and accept the Atonement made by His death and you shall be saved—your sin shall be forgiven, your nature shall be changed, you shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus—and you shall never say again, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
III. The time has gone and, therefore, THE DISAPPOINTED WORKER must be content with a few crumbs. You have been working for Christ, dear Brother, and have fallen into a very low state of heart, so that you cry, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” I know what state you are in. You say, “I do not feel as if I could preach; the matter does not flow. I do not feel as if I could teach; I search for instruction and the more I pull, the more I cannot get it.” “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Can He not fill your empty vessel again? Can He not give you stores of thought, emotion and language? He has used you—can He not do so again?  
“Ah, but my friends have gone; I am in a village from which the people remove to London and I lose my best helpers.” Or, perhaps you say, “I work in a back street and everybody is moving out into the suburbs.” You have lost your friends and they have forgotten you—but, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” You can succeed so long as the Lord is with you. Be of good courage, your best Friend is left. He who made a speech in the Academy found that all his hearers had gone except Plato—but as Plato remained, the orator finished his address. They asked him how he could continue under the circumstances and he replied that Plato was enough for an audience. So, if God is pleased with you, go on, the Divine pleasure is more than sufficient! “The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Did not Wesley say, when he was dying, “The best of all is, God is with us”? Therefore fear not the failure of friends.  
“But, Sir, the sinners I have to deal with are such tough ones. They reject my testimony, they grow worse instead of better. I do not think I can ever preach to them again.” “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” You cannot save them, but He can. “But I work in such a depraved neighborhood. The people are sunk in poverty and drunkenness.” “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Does not He know the way to save drunks? Does not He know how to rescue the harlot and the whoremonger and make them clean and chaste?  
“Ah, but the Church in which I labor is in a wretched state. The members are worldly, lukewarm and divided. I have no Brethren around me to pray for me, as you have. They are always squabbling and finding fault with one another.” That is a horrible business, but, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Cannot God put you right and your Church right? If He begins with you by strengthening your faith, may you not be the means of healing all these divisions and bringing these poor people into a better state of mind—and then converting the sinners round about you? “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”  
“Ah, well,” says one, “I am ready to give it all up.” I hope you will not do so. If you have made up your mind to speak no more in the name of the Lord, I hope that Word will be like fire in your bones, for if God has not forgotten to be gracious, provoked as He has been, how can you forget to be patient? Is it possible, while God’s sun shines on you, that you will refuse to shine on the fallen? If God continues to be gracious, you ought not to grow weary in well-doing.  
Perhaps I speak to some dear Brother who is very old and infirm. He can hardly hear and scarcely see, so that he reads his Bible with difficulty. He gets to the service, now, but he knows that soon he will be confined to his chamber and then to his bed. His mind is sadly failing him. He is quite a wreck. Take this home with you, my aged Brother, and keep it for your comfort if you never come out again—“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Oh, no! The Lord has said, “Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” Having loved His own which were in the world, the Lord Jesus loved them unto the end! And He will love you to the end. When the last scene comes and you close your eyes in death, blessed be His name, you shall know that He has not forgotten you!  
“I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” is the Lord’s promise and His people’s sheet-anchor. Therefore, let us not fear when our frail tabernacles are taken down, but let us rejoice that God has not forgotten to be gracious. Though our bodies will sink into the dust, they will, before long, rise again, and we shall be in Heaven forever with the Lord. Blessed be His name. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 77.**HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—196, 77, 502. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #272 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

LIMITING GOD  
NO. 272

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

**“They limited the Holy One of Israel.”  
Psalm 78:41.**

MAN is always altering what God has ordained. Although God’s order is ever the best, yet man will never agree with it. When God gave forth the Law it was engraved upon two stones. The first table contained the commandments concerning man and God, the second dealt with man and man. Sins against God are sins against the first table—sins against man are offenses against the second table. Man, to prove constantly his perversity, will put the second table before the first, no, upon the first, so as to cover and conceal it. There are few men who will not allow the enormity of adultery, fewer still who will dispute the wickedness of murder. Men are willing enough to acknowledge that there is sin in an offense against man.

That which endangers the human commonwealth, that which would disturb the order of earthly governments—all this is wrong enough even in man’s esteem, but when you come to deal with the first table it is hard, indeed, to extort a confession from mankind. They will scarce acknowledge that there is any such thing as an offense against God, or if they do acknowledge it, yet they think it but a light matter. What man is there among you that has not in his heart often lamented sins against man, rather than sins against God? And which of you has not felt a greater compunction for sins against your neighbor, or against the nation, than for sins committed against God and done in His sight?

I say that such is the perversity of man, that he will think more of the less than the greater. An offense against the Majesty of Heaven is thought to be far more venial than an offense against his fellow creature. There are many transgressions of the first table of which we think so little that we scarcely ever confess them at all—or if we acknowledge them, it is only because the Grace of God has taught us to estimate them aright. One offense against the first table which seldom agitates the mind of an unconvicted sinner is that of unbelief and with it, I may put the want of love to God.

The sinner does not believe in God, does not trust in Him, does not love Him. He gives his heart to the things of earth and denies it to his Creator. Of this high treason and rebellion he thinks nothing. If you could take him in the act of theft, a blush would mantle his cheek. But you detect him in the daily omission of love to God and faith in His Son Jesus Christ and you cannot make him feel that he is guilty of any evil in this. Oh, strange contortion of human judgment! Oh, blindness of mortal conscience, that this greatest of iniquities—a want of love to the All-Lovely

and a want of faith in Him who is deserving of the highest trust—should be thought to be as nothing and reckoned among the things that need not to be repented of!

Among such sins of the first table is that described in our text. It is consequently one of the masterpieces of iniquity and we shall do well to purge ourselves of it. It is full of evil to ourselves and is calculated to dishonor both God and man, therefore let us be in earnest to cut it up both root and branch. I think we have all been guilty of this in our measure. And we are not free from it even to this day. Whether we are saints or sinners, we may stand here and make our humble confession that we have all “tempted the Lord our God and have limited the Holy One of Israel.”

What then, is meant by limiting the Holy One of Israel? Three words will set forth the meaning. We limit the Holy One of Israel sometimes by dictation to him, at other times by distrust of Him and some push this sin to its farthest extreme by an utter and entire disregard of His goodness and His mercy. These three classes all in their degree limit the Holy One of Israel.

I. In the first place, I say we limit the Holy One of Israel by DICTATING TO HIM. Shall mortal dare to dictate to his Creator? Shall it be possible that man shall lay down his commands and expect the King of Heaven to pay homage to his arrogance? Will a mortal impiously say, “Not Your will but mine be done”? Is it conceivable that a handful of dust, a creature of a day that knows nothing, should set its judgment in comparison with the wisdom of the Only Wise? Can it is possible that we should have the impertinence to map out the path of boundless wisdom, or should decree the footsteps which Infinite Grace should take and dictate the designs which Omnipotence shall attempt?

Startle! Startle at your own sin! Let each of us be amazed at our own iniquity. We have had the impudence to do this in our thoughts. We have climbed to the throne of the Highest. We have sought to take Him from His Throne that we might sit there. We have grasped His scepter and His rod. We have weighed His judgments in the balances and tried His ways in the scales. We have been impious enough to exalt ourselves above all that is called God.

I will first address myself to the saint and with the candle of the Lord attempt to show to Israel her secret iniquity and to Jerusalem her grievous sin.

Oh heir of Heaven, be ashamed and be confounded, while I remind you that you have dared to dictate to God! How often have we in our prayers not simply wrestled with God for a blessing—for that was allowable—but we have imperiously demanded it. We have not said, “Deny this to me, O my God, if You so please.” We have not been ready to play as the Redeemer did, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will,” but we have asked and would take no denial. Not with all humble deference to our Lord’s superior wisdom and grace, but we have asked and declared that we would not be content unless we had that particular blessing upon which we had set our hearts.

Now, whenever we come to God and ask for anything which we consider to be a real good, we have a right to plead earnestly, but we err when we go beyond the bounds of earnestness and come to impudent demand. It is ours to ask for a blessing, but not to define what that blessing shall be. It is ours to place our head beneath the mighty hands of Divine benediction, but it is not ours to uplift the hands as Joseph did those of Jacob and say, “Not so, my father.” We must be content if He gives the blessing cross-handed—quite as content that He should put His left hand on our head as the right. We must not intrude into God’s almonry—let Him do as seems Him good. Prayer was never meant to be a fetter upon the sovereignty of God, much less a licensed channel for blasphemy. We must always subjoin at the bottom of the prayer this heavenly postscript, “Father, deny this if it is most for Your glory.” Christ will have nothing to do with dictatorial prayers, He will not be a partaker with us in the sin of limiting the Holy One of Israel.

Oftentimes, too, I think, we dictate to God with regard to the measure of our blessing. We ask the Lord that we might grow in the enjoyment of His presence, instead of that He gives us to see the hidden depravity of our hearts. The blessing comes to us, but it is in another shape from what we expected. We go again to our knees and we complain of God that He has not answered us, whereas the fact has been that He has answered the spirit of our prayer, but not the letter of it. He has given us the blessing itself, but not in the shape we asked for it. We prayed Him to give us silver, He has given us gold. But we, blind creatures, cannot understand the value of this new-shaped blessing and therefore we go grumbling to Him as if He had never heard us at all.

If you ask, especially for temporal mercies, always take care to leave the degree of those mercies with God. You may say, “Lord, give me food convenient for me,” but it is not yours to stipulate how many shillings you shall have per week, or how many pounds in the year. You may ask that your bread may be given you and that your water may be sure, but it is not yours to lay down to God out of what kind of vessels you shall drink, or on what kind of table your bread shall be served up to you. You must leave the measuring of your mercies with Him who measures the rain and weighs the clouds of Heaven. Beggars must not be choosers and especially they must not be choosers when they have to deal with Infinite Wisdom and sovereignty.

And yet further, I fear that we have often dictated to God with regard to the time. As a Church we meet together and we pray God to send us a blessing. We expect to have it next week—it does not come. We wonder that the ministry is not blessed on the very next Sabbath Day—so that hundreds are pricked in the heart. We pray again and again and again and at last we begin to faint. And why is this? Simply because in our hearts we have been setting a date and a time to God. We have made up our minds that the blessing must come within a certain period. And as it does not come, we do as it were spite our God by declaring we will stop

no longer. Then we decide we have waited time enough—we have no more patience—we will be gone. It is clear the blessing will not come. We waste our words, we imagine, by seeking it.

Oh, how wrong is this!—What? Is God to be tied to hours, or months, or years? Do His promises bear dates? Has He not Himself said, “Though the vision tarry, wait for it, it shall come, it shall not tarry.” And yet we cannot wait for God’s time, but we must have our time. Let us always remember it is God’s part to limit a certain day to Israel, saying, “Today, if you will hear My voice.” But it is not our part to say to God, “Today if You will hear my voice.” No. Let us leave time to Him, resting assured that when the ship of our prayers are long at sea, they bring home all the richer cargo and if the seeds of supplication are long buried, they shall produce the richer harvest. For God, honoring our faith which He has exercised by waiting, shall multiply His favors and enlarge His bounty. Your prayers are out at interest at a great percentage. Let them alone. They shall come back—not only the capital, but with compound interest—if you will but wait till the time runs out and God’s promises becomes due.

Brothers and Sisters, in these matters we cannot acquit ourselves and I fear that much more than this will be necessary before our sin is fully unveiled. We have limited the Holy One in other ways and I may remark that we have done this with regard to our prayers and efforts for others. A mother has been anxious for her children’s conversion. Her eldest son has been the object of her fervent prayer. Never a morning has passed without earnest cries to God for his salvation. She has spoken to him with all a mother’s eloquence. She has prayed in private with him, she has used every means which love could suggest to make him think of a better world.

All her efforts at present seem to be wasted. She appears to be plowing upon a rock and casting her bread upon the waters. Year after year has rolled on—her son has left her house. He has commenced business for himself—he begins now to betray worldliness. He forsakes the House of Prayer which his mother frequents. She looks round every Sabbath morning, but John is not there. The tear is in her eye. Every allusion in the minister’s sermon to God’s answering prayer makes her heart beat again. And at last she says, “Lo these many years have I sought God for this one blessing. I will seek no longer. I will however, pray another month and then, if he hear me not, I think I can never pray again.

“Mother, retract the words. Blot out such a thought from your soul, for in this you are limiting the Holy One of Israel. He is trying your faith. Persevere, persevere while life lasts and if your prayers are not answered in your lifetime, perhaps from the windows of Heaven you shall look down and see the blessing of your prayers descend on the head of your child.

This has been the case, too, when we have sought to do good to our fellow men. You know a certain man in whose welfare you take an extraordinary interest. You have availed yourself occasionally of an opportunity of addressing him. You have pressed him to attend the House of God, you have mentioned him in your private devotions and often at your family altar. You have spoken to others that they might pray with you, for you believed the promise, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven.” But now months have rolled on and your friend seems to be in a more hopeless condition than ever. Now he will not go to the House of God at all. Perhaps some ungodly acquaintance has such power over him that your efforts are counteracted by his evil influence.

All the good you can do is soon undone and you are ready to say, “I will never use another effort. I will turn my attention to someone else. In this man’s case, at least, my prayers will never be heard. I will withdraw my hand. I will not use unprofitable labor.” And what is this but limiting the Holy One of Israel? What is this but saying to God, “Because You have not heard me when I wished to be heard—because you have not exactly blessed my efforts as I would have them blessed, therefore I will try this no more!” Oh impudence! Oh impertinence to the majesty of Heaven! Christian! Cast out this demon and say, “Get you behind me, Satan. For you savor not the things that are of God.” Once again attempt and not once, but though a thousand times you fail, try again, for God is not unfaithful to forget your work of faith and your labor of love. Only continue to exercise your patience and your diligence. In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand, for either this or that shall surely prosper in its appointed season.

While thus charging the people of God with sin, I have been solemnly condemning myself and if a like conviction shall abide upon all my believing hearers, my errand is accomplished. I will address myself now to those who cannot call themselves the children of God, but who have lately been stirred up to seek salvation. There are many of you who are not hardened and careless now. There was a time when you were callous and indifferent, but it is not so with you at the present moment. You are anxiously saying, “What must I do to be saved?” and have been, perhaps, very earnestly in prayer during the last two or three months.

Every Sunday morning’s service sends you home to your knees and you cannot refrain from sighs and tears even in your daily business, for you cry as one that cannot be silenced, “Lord, save, or I perish!” Perhaps Satan has been putting it into your heart that since your prayers have not been heard it is now of no avail. “Oh,” says the Evil One, “these many months have you prayed to God to put away your sin and He has not heard you. Give it up—never bend your knees again. Heaven is not for you—make the best of this world. Go and drink its pleasures. Suck in its joys, lose not the happiness of both worlds—make yourself happy here, for God will never bless you and save you hereafter.”

And is this what He has said? Oh, listen not to Satan. He designs your destruction. Hearken not to his voice. There is nothing he desires so much as that you should be his prey. Therefore, be on your watchtower against him and listen not to his flattery. Hearken to me for a season and God bless you in the hearing, that you may no longer limit the Holy One of Israel.

Sinner what have you been doing, while you have said “I will restrain prayer because God has not as yet answered me.” I say what have you been doing? Have you not been stipulating with God as to the day when He shall save you? Suppose it is written in the book of God’s decree, “I will save that man and give him peace after he has prayed seven years,” would that be difficult for you? Is not the blessing of Divine mercy worth waiting for? If He keeps you tarrying at His gate day after day—though should you wait fifty years—if that gate opens at last, will it not well repay your waiting? Knock Man, knock again and go not away. Who are you that you should say to God, “I will have peace on such a day or else I will cease to supplicate”? This is a common offense with all poor trembling seeking souls. Confess it now and say unto God, “Lord I leave the time with You, but I will not cease to supplicate, for—

*‘If I perish I will pray,  
And perish only there.’”*

And do you not think again that perhaps the cause of your present distress is that you have been dictating to God as to the way in which He shall save you? You have a pious acquaintance who was converted in a very remarkable manner. He was suddenly convicted and as suddenly justified in the sight of God. He knows the very day and hour in which he obtained mercy and you have foolishly made up your mind that you will never lay hold upon Christ unless you feel the same. You have laid it down as in a decree, that God is to save you, as it were, by an electric shock, that you must be consciously smitten and vividly illumined, or else you will never lay hold on Christ. You want a vision. You dictate to God that He must send one of His angels down to tell you He has forgiven you.

Now rest assured God will have nothing to do with your dictation. With your desire to be saved He will have to do, but with your planning as to how He should save you, He will have nothing to do. Oh, be content to get salvation any way you can, by His grace, if you do but get it. If you cannot have it like the prodigal son, who felt his father’s arms about him and knew his father’s kiss and had music and dancing in the moment that he was restored—if you cannot come in by the front door, be content to enter at the back. If Mercy comes on foot do not despise her, for she is just as fair as when she rides in her chariot. Be content to go in sackcloth before God and there to bemoan your guilt and to lay hold on Him who takes away the sin of the world.

Sinner, believe in Christ—that is God’s command and your privilege. Cast yourself flat on His atonement—trust Him and Him alone and if God chooses not to comfort you in the way in which you have expected, yet be content to get the blessing so long as you receive it at all. Limit not, I beseech you, the Holy One of Israel.

Upon this point of dictation I might tarry very long and give many instances. But I choose rather to close up this first head of my discourse by observing once again, what a heinous offense, what an unreasonable iniquity it is for any of us to attempt to dictate to God. Oh Man, know that He is sovereign—

*“He everywhere has sway,  
And all things serve His might.”*

Will you, a beggar, dictate to the King of kings, the Lord of lords, when the angels veil their faces before Him and scarcely dare to look upon His brightness? Will you dare to lord it over Him and command your Maker?

Shall infinite wisdom stoop to obey your folly and shall Divine goodness be cooped and caged and imprisoned within the bars of your frantic desires? What? Do you dare to mount the steps of His Throne and affront Him with your haughty speeches, when cherubim dare not look upon His brightness—when the pillars of Heaven’s starry roof tremble and start at His reproof? Will you seek to be greater than He is? Shall mortal man be greater then his God? Shall he dictate to the everlasting—he who is born of a woman and of few days and full of folly?

No, go to His Throne, bow yourself reverently before Him—give up your will, let it be bound in golden fetters a bond-slave to God. Cry this day, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, and let it be not as I will, but as You will.” Thus, then, I have discoursed on the first part of the subject.

II. In the second place, we limit the Holy One of Israel by DISTRUST. And here again I will divide my congregation into the two grand classes of saints and sinners. Children of God, purchased by blood and regenerated by the Spirit, you are guilty here. For by your distrust and fear you have often limited the Holy One of Israel and have said, in effect, that His ears are heavy—that they cannot hear and that His arms are shortened—that they cannot save. In your trials you have done this. You have looked upon your troubles, you have seen them roll like mountain waves—you have hearkened to your fears and they have howled in your ears like tempestuous winds and you have said, “My boat is but a feeble one and it will soon be wrecked. It is true that God has said that through tempests and tossing He will bring me to my desired haven. But alas, such a state as this was never contemplated in His promise. I shall sink at last and never see His face with joy.”

What have you done, fearful one? O you of little faith, do you know what sin you have committed? You have judged the Omnipotence of God to be finite. You have said that your troubles are greater than His power, that your woes are more terrible than His might. I say retract that thought—drown it and you shall not be drowned yourself. Give it to the winds and rest assured that out of all your troubles He will surely bring you and in your deepest distress He will not forsake you.

“But,” says one, “I did believe this once and I had hoped for an escape from my present predicament. But that escape has failed me. I did think that some friend would have assisted me and thus, I imagined I should have come out of the furnace.” Ah, and you are distrusting God because He does not choose to use the means which you have chosen. Because His election and your election are not the same, therefore you doubt Him. Why Man, he is not limited to means—to any means, much less to one of your choosing. If He delivers you not by calming the tempest, He has a better

way in store. He will send from above and deliver you. He will snatch you out of the deep waters lest the floods overflow you.

What might Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego have said? Suppose they had got it into their heads that God would deliver them in some particular way. They did have some such idea, but they said, as if to prove that they trusted not really to their thought about the deliverance— “Nevertheless, be it known unto you, O king, we will not worship your gods, nor bow before the image which you have set up.” They were prepared to let God have His will, even though He used no means of deliverance. But suppose, I say, they had conferred with flesh and blood and Shadrach had said, “God will strike Nebuchadnezzar dead—just at the moment when the men are about to put us into the furnace the king will turn pale and die and so we shall escape.”

O my Friends, they would have trembled, indeed, when they went into the furnace if they had chosen their own means of deliverance and the king had remained alive. But instead of this, they gave themselves up to God, whether He delivered them or not. And, though He did not prevent their going into the furnace, yet He kept them alive in it, so that not so much as the smell of fire had passed upon them. It shall be even so with you. Repose in God. When you see Him not, believe Him. When everything seems to contradict your faith, still stagger not at the promise. If HE has said it, He can find ways and means to do it. Rest assured, Sinner, He would come from His Throne to do it Himself in Person, rather than suffer His promises to be unfulfilled. The harps of Heaven should sooner lament an absent God than you should have to mourn a broken promise. Trust in Him, repose constantly on Him and limit not the Holy One of Israel.

Do you not think that the Church as a great body has done this? We do not, any of us, expect to hear that a nation is born in a day. If it should be said that in a certain Chapel in London this morning some thousand souls had been converted under one sermon, we should shake our heads incredulously and say it cannot be. We have a notion that because we have only had drops of mercy of late, we are never to have showers of it. Because mercy seems only to have come in little rills and trickling streamlets, we have conceived the idea that it never can roll its mighty floods like the huge rivers of the western world. No, we have limited the Holy One of Israel. Especially as preachers have we done it. We do not expect our ministry to be blessed and therefore it is not blessed. If we had learned to expect great things we should have them. If we had made up our minds to this—that the promise was great, that the Promiser was great, that His faithfulness was great and that His power was great—and if with this for our strength we set to work expecting a great blessing, I think we should not be disappointed. But the universal Church of Christ has limited the Holy One of Israel.

Why, my Friends, if God should will it, you need not ask where are to come the successors of such-and-such a man. You need not sit down and ask when such-and-such a one is gone where shall be another who shall preach the word with power. When God gives the word, great shall be the multitude of them that publish it. And when the multitude shall begin to publish, believe me, God can move thousands as easily as be can move tens and where our baptismal pool has been stirred by ones and twos he can bid millions descend to be baptized into our holy faith. Limit not, O limit not, you Church of the living God, limit not the Holy One of Israel!

And now I turn to the poor troubled heart and although I accuse you of sin, yet I doubt not the Spirit shall bear witness with the conscience, and leading to Christ, shall this morning deliver you from its galling yoke. Poor troubled one, you have said in your heart, “my sins are too many to be forgiven.” What have you done? Repent, and let the tears roll down your cheek. You have limited the Holy One of Israel. You have put your sins above His grace. You have considered that your guilt is more omnipotent than Omnipotence itself. He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Christ. You cannot have exceeded the boundlessness of His Grace. Be your sins ever so many, the blood of Christ can put them all away. And if you doubt this, you are limiting the Holy One of Israel.

Another says, I do not doubt His power to save, but what I doubt is His willingness. What have you done in this? You have limited the love, the boundless love of the Holy One of Israel. What? Do you stand on the shore of a love which ever must be shoreless? Was it deep enough and broad enough to cover the iniquities of Paul and does it stop just where you are? Why, are you the limit, then? You stand as the limiting landmark of the grace of the Holy One of Israel? Out upon your folly! Get rid of this, your mistrust. He whom love has embraced the chief of sinners, is willing to embrace you, if now hating your sin and leaving your iniquity, you are ready to put your trust in Jesus. I beseech you, limit not the Holy One of Israel by thinking He is unwilling to forgive.

Are you conscious of the sin you are committing when you think God unwilling to save? Why you are accusing God of being a liar. Does not that alarm you? You have done worse than this, you have even accused Him of being perjured, for you doubt his oath. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live.” You do not believe that? Then you make God to be perjured. Oh, tremble at such guilt as this, “No, but,” you say, “I would not accuse Him. But He would be quite just if He were unwilling to save me.” I am glad you say that. That proves you do not accuse His justice. But I still say you are limiting His love. What does He say, Himself? Has He limited it? Has He not Himself, said, “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters and he that has no money; come you, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price”! And you are thirsty and yet you think that His love cannot reach you!

Oh, while God assures you that you are welcome, be not wicked enough to throw the lie in the teeth of mercy. Limit not the Holy One of Israel. “But, Sir, I am such an old sinner.” Yes, but limit not God. “But I am such a black sinner.” Limit not the efficacy of the cleansing blood. “But I have aggravated Him so much.” Limit not His infinite longsuffering. “But my heart is so hard.” Limit not the melting power of His grace, “But I am so

sinful.” Limit not the potency of the atonement. “But, Sir, I am so hardhearted and I feel so little my need of Him.” Limit not the influences of the Spirit by your folly or your stubbornness but come as you are and put your trust in Christ and so honor God and He will not dishonor your faith.

If you will but now for half a moment consider how faithful God has been to His children and how true He has been to all His promises, I think that saint and sinner may stand together and make a common confession and utter a common prayer—“Lord, we have been guilty of doubting You. We pray that we may limit You no longer.” Oh, remember, remember more and more God’s Love and goodness to His ancient people, remember how He delivered them many a time, how He brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Think how He fed them in the wilderness, how He carried them all the days of old. Remember His faithfulness to His Covenant and to His servant Abraham, and will He leave you, will He forget His Covenant sealed with blood? Will He be unmindful of His promise, will He be slow to answer or slack to deliver?

Forbid the thought, drive it far away and now come and at the foot of the Cross renew your faith. In the sight of the flowing wounds renew your confidence and say, “Jesus, we put our trust in You. Your Father’s grace can never fail, You have loved us and You will love us in spite of our sins, You will present us at last before Your Father’s face in glory everlasting.”

III. And now, to conclude, I want your solemn attention while I address myself to a very small number of persons here present—for whose sorrowful state I feel the greatest pity. It has been my mournful duty as pastor of so large a congregation, to have to deal with desperate cases. Here and there, there are men and women who have come into a state which, without meaning to wound them, I am free to confess I think, is sullen DESPAIR. They feel that they are guilty. They know that Christ is able to save. They also doctrinally understand the duty of faith and its power to bring peace but they persevere in the declaration that there is no mercy for them. In vain you find a parallel case. They soon discover some little discrepancy and so escape you. The most mighty promises lose all their force because they turn their edge by the declaration—“That does not mean me.”

They read in the Word of God that, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” They are sinners, but they cannot think He came to save them. They know right well that He is able to save them to the uttermost. They would not say they had gone beyond the uttermost, but still they think so. They cannot imagine that free grace and sovereign love can ever come to them. They have, it is true, their gleams of sunshine—sometimes they believe—but when the comfortable presence of God is gone, they relapse into their old despair.

Let me speak very tenderly and O that the Spirit of God would speak also! My dear Brothers and Sisters, what are you doing? I ask you. What are you doing?—if you are not limiting the Holy One of Israel? Would you dishonor God? “No,” you say, “I would not.” But you are doing it. You are saying that God cannot save you, or if not saying that, you are implying—that all the torture you have felt in your conscience and all the anxiety you have in your heart, have never yet moved God to look on you. Why, you make God to be the most hard-hearted of all Beings! If you should hear another groan as you are groaning, you would weep over him. But you think that God looks on you with cold indifference and will never hear your prayer. This is not only limiting—it is slandering the Holy One of Israel.

Oh, come forth, I beseech you, and dare to believe a good thing of your God. Dare to believe this, that He is willing now to save you—that now He will put away your sins. “But suppose, Sir, I should believe something too good?” No, that you cannot do. Think of God as being the most loving, the most tender-hearted Being that can be and you have thought just rightly of Him. Think of Him as having a mother’s heart that mourns over its sick babe. Think of Him as having a father’s heart, pitying his children. Think of Him as having a husband’s heart, loving his spouse and cherishing her and you have just thought rightly of Him. Think of Him as being one who will not look on your sins, but who casts them behind His back. Dare for once to give God a little honor.

Come, put the crown on His head—say, “Lord, I am the vilest rebel out of Hell, the most hard-hearted, the most full of blasphemous thoughts. I am the most wicked, the most abandoned. Lord let me have the honor now of being able to say, ‘You are able to save even me.’ And on Your boundless love, Your great, Your infinite Grace, do I rely.”

One of Charles Wesley’s hymns, which I forget just now, has in it an expression something like this—Lord, if there is a sinner in the world more needy than I am, then refuse me. If there is one more undeserving than I am, then cast me away. If there is one that needs grace and mercy, pity and compassion, more than I, then pass me by. “But, Lord,” says he in his song, “you know I, the chief of sinners am, the vilest of the vile, the most hardened and the most senseless. Then, Lord, glorify Yourself by showing to men, to angels and to devils, what Your right hand can do.”

May the Holy Spirit enable you now to come forth from the dungeon of despair and no longer limit the Holy One of Israel. I shall add no more, but leave the effect of this sermon with my God. May, by His grace, every one of us believe Him better and have greater thoughts of Him and never let us be guilty henceforth of confining, as it were, within iron bonds the limitless One of Israel.

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GOD’S DEALINGS WITH EGYPT AND ISRAEL  
NO. 2723

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, APRIL 21, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,**  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 27, 1880.

**“And smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham: but made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.”  
Psalm 78:51, 52.**

THERE is a very sharp line of division here between the Egyptians and the Lord’s own people, and that line of division always has existed and always will, for all attempts to blend the seed of the serpent with the seed of the woman must fail. Between the Church and the world, however debased the Church may become, and however reformed the world may be, there will still be a clear distinction even until the end—and that distinction will be seen in the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when “before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”

At the present moment, in this congregation, though no human eye can read all our characters, there is a clear division among us who are here. If some infallible “teller” could now divide the house into Yeses and Noes, separating those who are on God’s side from those who are not, the spectacle would be a very striking one. I pray that each one’s own conscience may, at least in some measure, make that division and that we may all think within ourselves whether we fear the God of Israel or do not fear Him—whether we are for Him or against Him—for you can be well assured that as God dealt with Egypt of old, so will He deal with all His adversaries! And as He dealt with Israel of old, so will He deal with all His own people. The “parable” (for that is the expression with which the Psalm begins), will be written out again in history, and be repeated, enlarged and intensified throughout eternity. God has made an everlasting distinction between those who fear Him and those who fear Him not—and that distinction will be seen in His dealings with the children of men.

I want you, first, to spend a few minutes in solemnly and sadly thinking of the punishment of Egypt. And then we will more joyfully meditate upon the salvation of Israel.

I. First, let us think of THE PUNISHMENT OF EGYPT.  
Egypt, through its kings, had become the determined adversary of God. “Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice?” was the challenge flung down by Pharaoh in defiance. And the Lord, who is a Man of War, was not slow to accept it. Then came that great conflict between the stony-hearted king and Jehovah, the God of Israel. To all but the eye of faith, it seemed a very hopeless thing to expect that Israel should ever come forth out of Egypt. They had been so long oppressed and downtrodden that they were really only a vast herd of slaves—they had not the spirit of free men. And when Moses was sent by God to lead them out of the house of bondage, they were rather a hindrance to their deliverer than a help to him. They were a poor race of serfs crushed beneath Pharaoh’s iron heel, yet Jehovah was their God and they were His people. They might be grimy with their labors at the brick kiln. They might sweat in the iron furnace, but God was on their side and He acknowledged them as His people. Notwithstanding their degradation and their sorrow, He heard their cry and He came down to deliver them—and then it became a battle royal between Jehovah of Hosts and proud Pharaoh of Egypt. God determined to strike blow after blow—to deal more gently with the tyrant at the first than He did at the last—and to end the battle by letting all men see that potsherds cannot strive successfully against a rod of iron, and that puny man, at his strongest, is as nothing before the might of his Maker! God caused all the first-born of Egypt to die on one night and so delivered His people with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

Let us learn from this, that when God comes to try conclusions between Himself and His enemies, He may allow a certain time to elapse before He overthrows them. He may, for awhile, smite gently, and so give opportunities for repentance. But if they are not accepted, we may depend upon it that God is not playing with sinners. They may fancy that He is, and they may delight to listen to those dulcet voices, those velvetlined mouths that preach, nowadays, soft things to sinners who stand out in enmity against God—but they will find that they have been deceived when God comes to close quarters with them—and they will curse the man who has deceived them and made them continue to resist the Most High to their eternal ruin! For, when He once lays hold of the sword and buckler, His own words are, “I will ease Me of My adversaries.” And we may rest assured that when He comes forth to execute judgment, He will do it as thoroughly as He did when He “smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.”

I can imagine Pharaoh dreaming that he had defeated Jehovah. He possibly said to his courtiers, “I have not seen that man, Moses, for the last four days. Certainly, he has plagued this country enough, but he has played his last card now—we shall never hear of him anymore. I have stood out and I have won the day—let us have a great feast unto our gods, for, after all, we have triumphed.” They spread the tables and they brought out the goblets. And the impious king drank on till far into the night. But what was that cry that made him start? What are those thousands of cries all through the palace and all around it? Pharaoh’s eldest son has fallen dead in a moment! He had had him crowned a little while before and associated him with himself in the government of the kingdom—but there he lies, struck dead in his father’s presence and before all the nobles of the land! All in the court who were first-born sons perished there in the king’s sight! And when he went out into the open air, that he might cool his fevered brow, he heard those awful cries from all the houses of the Egyptians, for there was not a house in the land in which there was not one dead. What do you now think, proud king? Can you stand against this unseen Power? God has struck you now even to the heart and broken your proud spirit in pieces!

We may all rest assured that God has ways of punishing us if we continue in rebellion against Him. We may live a long life and never think of Him. We may live a blasphemous life and defy Him. And He may, for a time, afflict us as He plagued Pharaoh with the flies and the locusts and the milder judgments—but He will deal with our souls in sterner fashion in the next world when He comes to mete out vengeance without mercy, because His Grace was utterly despised by us. David said, “Your hand shall find out all Your enemies: Your right hand shall find out those that hate You.” So He will and He will know how to strike us in the most tender place if we still continue to resist Him.

In the case of Pharaoh, it was his own chickens that came home to roost—his sins brought their own punishment. He had slain many of the children of Israel and God had, in effect, said to Him, “Israel is My firstborn. Let My people go.” But as he would not let God’s first-born go, God’s stroke of judgment came upon his first-born. This is, perhaps, the most dreadful truth about future retribution—that a man will see his own sin in his suffering just as he sees his face in a glass. Hell is sin fully developed—a man’s own soul permitted to go to extreme limits with that which it now carries out in a mitigated form—and so, becoming like a furnace heated seven times hotter than usual, tormenting itself beyond all power of imagination!

I do not know anything more awful to one’s own self than to know that one has done wrong. When conscience is aroused, then you can go to Jesus and be washed from the stains of guilt—and how sweet is that sense of perfect cleansing! But that conscience will still remain to accuse those for whom there will be no washing! That sense of sin will still be present, only a hundred times more vividly—and there will be no bath that can take away the sin. We shall continue to feet the guilt of our transgressions, but we shall not be able to find the sugar on the pill which tempted us when we were here, and we shall have to let it lie like a burning fire within our spirit, forever seeing our own sin, the sin of our whole life, all that we did, said and thought, coming home to us, just as Pharaoh’s evil conduct came home to him.

I do not like speaking upon these horrible themes and I would not mention them if they were not true—and if men could be led to escape from sin by more tender topics—but their ears are dull of hearing, so they need the trumpet to sound an alarm! And the watchman is bound to give warning in the time of danger, for it is written, “If the watchman sees the sword come, and blows not the trumpet, and the people are not warned; if the sword comes, and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.”

Remember also, dear Friends, that there was no escape from that judgment of God upon Egypt. The Israelites were sheltered under the sprinkled blood of the paschal lamb and not one of them was harmed. But Egypt’s lintels and doorposts had no sprinkling of the blood on the bunch of hyssop and, therefore, not one first-born son in their houses escaped.

Nor was there any possibility of recovery from that blow. They could not restore to life one of those who fell by the mysterious stroke of the avenging angel who flew so swiftly through the land. And when God deals with men in judgment, none of them shall be able to escape. If they could go to the top of Carmel, He would find them there. If they should plunge into the depths of the sea, even there would He give commandment to the crooked serpent—and they would be punished for their sin. If they should borrow the wings of the morning and fly unto the uttermost parts of the earth, His warrant officers would be there first, waiting to arrest the fugitives. There is no escape from God’s judgment and no recovery from His blows. Let God kill the first-born in Egypt and they are killed! Let God condemn the ungodly and they are condemned! Let God curse them, and they are, indeed, cursed! What the curse of God must mean, may you and I, my dear Hearers, never know!

I want to turn away from this sad part of my subject, but before I do, I must ask each one of you this question—Are you an enemy of the God of Israel? If so, you can see, in the punishment of Egypt, how He will deal with you. You cannot be victorious in this fight, so yield at once! Possibly you say, “No, I am not an enemy of God, yet I never think of Him.” But He made you! He breathed into you the breath of life and yet you say that you never think of Him? What a shameful slight you thus put upon Him, His Majesty! He is here close to you at this moment. He surrounds your every step with mercy and yet you never think of Him? Shall I give you one of His own messages to remember? It is a very dreadful one— “Consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.” May none of you ever come to know what that terrible verse means!

I am glad that it is not the duty of the preacher to look into the future and to see even one of you perishing in sin. I could not bear to turn my eyes that way, nor even to think of it as possible. Escape, I pray you, while you can escape! Flee from the wrath to come! Lay hold on eternal life! The door of God’s mercy is open at present and whoever believes in Jesus Christ passes in through that door. In fact, He is the Door, as He said, “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, He shall be saved.” Oh, that you may come unto God by Him, and that there may be peace between you and God henceforth and forever!

II. Now I will leave that sorrowful part of my theme, for I want to speak about God’s own people while we think of THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL. The second verse of our text runs thus—“He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.”

I might say a great deal about how they came to be His people—by His eternal choice and Sovereign Grace—but I am not going into the doctrinal side of the subject so much as the practical. Let me say, then, that God has His people to this day—He has a people in this world right now who are as distinctly His as the Jews were—and who are even more separated from the rest of mankind than the children of Israel were from the heathen nations by whom they were surrounded. The all-important question for each one of you is—Do you belong to the Lord’s people? I will tell you what is their distinguishing mark—they are those who have faith. Abraham is the father of the faithful. He believed God and all those who rely upon God as Abraham did, are Abraham’s spiritual seed—and the Lord is their God. He chose them, but they have also chosen Him. They can truly say, “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”

Now, can we who are here say that we believe in the invisible God and that we are trying to worship Him in that simple way which He prefers? We do not invent gaudy ceremonies, nor anything that springs of willworship—we remember that our Lord Jesus said to the woman at the well, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” This is the special and distinctive mark of the child of God, that whereas another man takes into his calculation only as much as he can see, or hear, or touch—this man bases his chief calculation upon God whom he cannot see and whose voice he never heard with his ears—and he lives as seeing Him who is invisible, trusting in Him whom, not having seen, He loves. I ask you, dear Friends, is that your character? Have you been brought to trust in Jesus Christ’s blood for the pardon and cleansing of all your sins? And is your life now a life of faith upon the Son of God? “The just shall live by faith” and that faith is the mark of God’s people in the world—they have faith in Him while others have not.

Many men believe in themselves. They boast of being self-made men. It is as well that they did make themselves in that sense, for they are no credit to anybody else! Some people have placed their reliance upon others. In their exercise of faith they go no further than friends whom they can see. Their friends, inasmuch as they rely upon them, and not upon God, practically become their gods. Whatever a man depends upon, whatever rules his mind, whatever governs his affections, whatever is the chief object of his delight—is his god. So we can all judge whether Jehovah is our God or not. Do we realize His Presence and power? Do we know that there is such a God? Do we love Him? Do we delight ourselves in Him? Can we truly say that the greatest joy we ever have is that there is such a God and that He is ours, and we are His? The ungodly man who thereby proves that he is a fool, says in his heart, “There is no God.” He wishes there were none, but to the child of God, it would be the greatest loss that he could sustain if he were to lose his God. He delights himself in God. God is his exceeding joy. He is, indeed, his all. This is the mark of the people of God and God has such a people scattered up and down in all churches and throughout the entire world—and those are the people with whom He will deal as He dealt with Israel of old—“He made His own people to go forth like sheep.”

That leads us to our second point, which is that God brings these people out from among all others. He brought Israel up out of Egypt and if you are one of His people, He will fetch you out of the world. You may live for years in the world, as the Israelites lived in Goshen, and you may say to yourself, “I do not want a better heritage than this.” But if you are one of the Lord’s own, He will turn that Goshen of yours into a place of bondage until you sigh, and cry, and long to be delivered from it! God did not drive His people out of Egypt, but He led them—they came willingly and gladly, for Egypt had become a place of misery to them. So does the world become, with all its sinful pleasures. Its fine glories turn to emptiness and vanity to the true child of God and God fetches him out of it all.

I have been astonished, sometimes, at the way in which God fetches out His people. Some of them get as far into the enemy’s country as ever they can, but He brings them out. Some have gone into drunkenness, others into blasphemy, some even into what they call Free Thought— which is a state of sad bondage to the soul—and they have thought that there they would never be reached by God’s mercy, yet He has tracked them out, brought them back to Himself with weeping and supplication, and made them loathe the place and the company that they once loved! When that prodigal son went away from home, with his purse full of gold and silver, it did not look as though he would ever go back to his father. Look at him there in the far country, wasting his substance with riotous living! What vile company he frequented! There was nothing filthy but he delighted in it—and so it came to pass that in process of time, a citizen of that country sent him into his fields to feed swine.

The prodigal had neither swine nor fields of his own. He had been living at such a rate that he had spent all that he had. Yet he did come back to his home, for he was his father’s own child—he was obliged to go back or to starve. It is a good thing for prodigals to be brought to extremities. Some time ago I met with a young man, the son of a very godly father, and I was grieved to hear him ridicule religion and ridicule it very bitterly, too. In the course of our conversation, he said that he was keeping racehorses, and I said to him, “Keep as many as you can, for there is no hope of your ever coming back to God till you have spent all that you have, so spend it as fast as you can. Get down to the swine trough, and when you are ready to fill your belly with the husks, I daresay you will want to come back.” He said that I was very sarcastic, but I told him that I was in solemn earnest and that I thought that was the usual way in which profligates went. When they have spent all, there arises a mighty famine in the land—and when they begin to be in need, they come back. But why should any of you need God to use such rough methods of fetching you back to Him? Go home at once, poor wandering child, to the great God who waits to welcome you! Oh, that His Spirit may constrain you even now!

So we see that God still has a people in the world and that He will fetch out those people of His from the rest of mankind. With a high hand and an outstretched arm He will bring them out, even as He brought Israel out of Egypt!

Notice, next, that the Lord not only brings His people away from others, but He brings them to Himself—“He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.” He Himself going before them through the desert way like a shepherd. Oh, that God would, this very hour, bring out of the world and unto Himself some of those whom He has chosen, for that is the soul’s true place—following God as the sheep follow the shepherd! Where can any soul be so much at home as with the God who made it? Where is a son ever so completely in his right place as when he is at his father’s table? Where can my poor heart ever hope to find rest but on the bosom of my God? Oh, that the Lord would, in His infinite mercy, bring any wanderers who are here to Himself! The way to God must always be through Jesus Christ—He Himself said, “No man comes unto the Father, but by Me.” O poor wandering Souls, come to God through Jesus Christ His Son! Follow where He leads and always walk in His way!

Further, in bringing sinners to Himself, God will also bring them to one another. “He made His own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.” He does not say that they should be like a solitary dog that comes at his master’s whistle, but like a flock of sheep that move together in one direction. One mark of the children of God is that they love one another and that they associate with each other. Why have we been guided to form churches, and other Christian communities? It is because we are gregarious creatures and need mutual sympathy and companionship. Christ’s sheep are not like ravening wolves that hunt in pairs, or singly, but they delight in company. There are some professing Christians who seem as if they could get on best by themselves, but I think that the most of us are never so happy as when we are enjoying fellowship with those who love the same Savior whom we love! We say, concerning the place where we meet with the saints—

*“There my best friends, my kindred dwell, There God my Savior reigns.”*

There is no society for you young people who have been lately converted like the Church of Jesus Christ. So seek admission into it—join with the rest of your Brothers and Sisters in Christ and make your home with them. I think that you hardly give evidence of being God’s child if you go in and out of His house and never speak to anybody there, and never acknowledge anyone as a Brother or Sister in the Lord. Where the Father is love, the Spirit is love and the elder Brother is love, love should rule in all the household! “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” It is one of the marks of God’s people that they love each other! He leads them forth like a flock of sheep. He brings them into union with one another. He gives them happy fellowship in His Church and so guides them to Heaven.

That is our last point—the Lord brings His people out from the world, and brings them to Himself, and to fellowship with one another—and then He guides them to a place of rest, even as He led Israel into Canaan. The Lord is gently leading all Believers onward towards their blessed resting place above. You are not going down into Egypt, Brother, like poor old Jacob went with the wagons in the olden times—you are going up to Canaan! You shall be fed all through the desert—the manna shall fall all round your tent every morning, the water from the smitten Rock shall flow close to you through all your wanderings—and your Lord Himself has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Your hair is whitening, you lean heavily upon your staff, you have not many more years of pilgrimage left, but to the end of your wilderness journey, your feet shall not swell, neither shall your garments wax old upon you—still shall your shoes be iron and brass, and as your days, so shall your strength be! Jehovah never yet forsook any soul that trusted Him!

Some of us can bear witness to His faithfulness—not for so many years as others of you have seen—but some of us can talk of 30 years’ experience of a faithful God. And though we have forgotten Him and grieved Him, He has never once broken any promise that He has made! Oh, the deliverances we have had, the merciful interpositions of His gracious hand on our behalf! He is a good God, a blessed God! His praises we can never fully sing. The service of God is happiness below as it is eternal bliss above. If I knew that I would die like a dog. If it could be proven to me that my faith would all turn out to be a delusion, I would like, somehow, never to be free from the delusion! It is so blessed a thing to serve God, even in this life! He gives us such joy and peace that though many are the afflictions of the righteous, yet His service is perfect freedom—and to honor Him is our supreme delight. Blessed be His holy name!

Then comes the end, the passage of the river Jordan and the entrance into the promised inheritance. Perhaps you are asking, “How shall I ever cross that river to enter into the portion that God has marked out for me by line and lot?” Do not be afraid! Many timorous saints go over that long-dreaded stream dry-shod—they never know that they are dying. How many fall asleep on earth and open their eyes in Heaven! I can fancy them almost thinking, “Am I really in eternity?” Yet the soul will never need to ask that question when once it has entered the pearly gates—

*“O blissful hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God.”*  
An ethereal joy, such as I never knew to the full, before, shall fill my

spirit when once I am absent from the body, present with the Lord! Do not be afraid to die, Beloved, but rather look at death as an experience to be desired. I have not the slightest wish to escape it. Those who live till Christ comes and do not die will have no preference over them that fall asleep in Him. Indeed, they will lose the fellowship with Him, in His death and burial, that others will have. I like that verse which I have often quoted—

*“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing, But gladly put off these garments of clay; To die in the Lord, is a Covenant blessing, Since Jesus to glory thro’ death led the way.”*

Yes, Brothers and Sisters, our great Joshua will assuredly bring us into the Promised Land, Jordan or no Jordan! We shall have our lot and our inheritance beyond the river, that is, if we truly trust in Him. How about that matter? Are you resting in Jesus Christ the one Mediator between God and men? Have you faith in the living God? A living people must have a living God. Oh, if your money is your god, if your belly is your god, if this world is your god, if Satan is your god you will have Egypt’s doom! But if, through Christ Jesus the Lord, God is your one hope, and joy, and confidence, then be not afraid, for He will lead you through the wilderness and He will bring you into your eternal rest! God grant it, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 37.**

It may be, beloved Friends, that there is a word of comfort for some of you in this “Psalm of David.” If any of you have been perplexed and worried, and there has been a stern conflict within your spirit, here are some cheering words which will bring a message from God to you.

It may be worth your while to remember that the 37th Psalm and the 73rd are upon the same subject. They are the same figures, reversed, but they both deal with the great mystery which has vexed the hearts of godly men in all generations.

Verses 1, 2. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. What a contrast there is between the grass before the mower comes with his scythe, and that same grass when it is cut down! And there is the same kind of difference between the glory of ungodly men at one moment and their destruction the next. How beautiful the fertile meadow appears before you mow its many-colored flowers, yet in how short a time all its beauties are cut down and withered in the sun!

3, 4. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. The Psalmist begins with, “Fret not yourself . . . neither be envious,” but he advances to something higher. He seeks to lead his hearer or reader up to “trust in the Lord,” and then still further up to, “delight in the Lord.” A Christian should constantly be on the rising scale—though he is always in the way of change, it should be a change for the better. Take care, dear Friends, that you are people of simple trust—“Trust in the Lord”—and then you shall advance to delight in Him! “Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

5, 6. Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. It may be very dark with you just now, but God will turn your midnight into noonday. It is only He who can do it, therefore be sure to commit your way unto Him—“trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

7. Rest in the LORD. Not only rest on Him, but rest in Him—get into such close fellowship with Him that you really “rest in the Lord.”

7, 8. And wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. It is fretting that leads to anger and all manner of evil, but when the heart truly rests in God, it forsakes wrath. When we get away from resting in the Lord, we soon drift out upon a very stormy sea where our poor little boats are not able to hold their own. Therefore is it most necessary for us to obey the injunction, “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil.”

9, 10. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. The very house he inhabited, the grand estate which he called his own, shall be called by the name of another owner and he shall be blotted out of remembrance.

11-15 . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. They were so eager “to cast down the poor and needy” that they used both sword and bow against them, yet they could not succeed in their evil designs, for God took care of His own people and, therefore, the Psalmist was able to say concerning their enemies, “Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.”

16. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. “Many wicked.” That is a strong expression! The Psalmist does not merely mention the riches of one wicked man, but he says, “A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked.”

17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. He keeps on upholding them. He holds them up and, in another sense, He lifts them up on high and holds them up near to Himself in the glorious sunshine of fellowship with Him.

18. The LORD knows the days of the upright. He is well acquainted with their bright days and their dark days. He keeps a diary of all their ever-changing experiences. “The Lord knows the days of the upright.”

18. And their inheritance shall be forever. There is an accompaniment upon Covenant blessings which ensures their enjoyment by all the chosen seed—and they shall never be taken from them. “Their inheritance shall be forever.”

19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. They shall not only get, as we say, “a sup and a bite,” but, “they shall be satisfied.” And that even “in the days of famine,” when other people starve! They are well fed whom God feeds! There is no table like the one furnished and supplied by Omnipotence. He who is infinite in resources can readily supply all our necessities.

20, 21. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall vanish. Into smoke shall they vanish away. The wicked borrows, and pays not again: but the righteous shows mercy and gives. He prefers to do that rather than to lend; it generally comes to the same thing in the long run and he may as well know from the first what he is really doing. “The righteous shows mercy and gives.”

22, 23. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth; and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way. What a beautiful expression that is, “the steps of a good man”—the very steps, the little things, the daily actions, the ordinary progress of a good man—“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delights in his way.” Our way is sometimes rough, but if God takes a delight in it, it must be right. It is a joy to us to know that the lives of godly men are delightful to the Most High.

24. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with His hand. There may be a stumble, or even a fall, and he will grieve over it. He may suffer great losses and he may think that there is an end to his mercies, but it shall not be so. God’s servants are like the sheep—they may fall many times, but they are soon up again. Hypocrites are like the swine—when they fall, they wallow in the mire, which is their congenial element.

25. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. David had not seen the seed of the righteous begging bread, but we have often seen it, for, when the seed of the righteous do not behave themselves, they have to suffer poverty as well as other people. But, under the Old Covenant, David could truly say that he had not seen this grievous sight. Yet many of us could go as far as David did in the first part of the verse—“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken.” No, that shall never be the case and it is a very amazing circumstance which they who have to distribute charity have often noticed—how seldom, comparatively, do they find godly people very greatly reduced. Somehow or other, God provides for them.

The trouble we have with our Orphanages is to find the orphans of godly men and women, for they are very few compared with those of other people, You may look over any list you like, and you shall find that very seldom are the saints reduced to absolute poverty. Yet, when poverty does come, and it does come to some of the very best of men and women, then God blesses it to them and bears them up beneath it, so that they do not really lack any good thing. As for the gracious man—

26-37 . He is ever merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the LORD loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment. The Law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. When you come to sum up the whole of his life, the total of it amounts to this—“peace.” After all his varied experiences, God did give him rest and with all the turmoil and tossing which came occasionally upon him, still he was a man to be envied. It is the end to which we must always look, after all—and concerning the perfect and upright man the Psalmist says, “the end of that man is peace.”

38, 39. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD. It is not the result of their own goodness or merit—it is wholly “of the Lord.” Righteous men are saved men because the Lord saves them by His Grace and that is where they put their confidence.

39. He is their strength in the time of trouble. Dwell on that sweet short sentence. Not only does the Lord give them strength, but He, Himself, “is their strength in the time of trouble.” He is so near to His people that all the Omnipotence of His Godhead is theirs. Are you in trouble just now, dear child of God? Well, you have strength enough to carry you through it all if this is true, as it is—“He is their strength in the time of trouble.” If God Himself is your strength, do not talk about being weak! Of course you are weakness, itself, apart from Him—do not expect to be anything other than that—but then remember the Psalmist’s declaration, “He is their strength in the time of trouble.”

40. And the LORD shall help them. Do you need anything more than this great promise? You have a heavy load to carry, but it is nothing to Him who is Omnipotent. “The Lord shall help them.”

40. And deliver them. He shall help them while they are in the trouble and bring them out of it in due time.  
40. He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him. O dear Friends, lean hard upon God! Lay down all your burdens at your Savior’s feet and rest there in holy and happy confidence in Him! May the Lord give to all of us the Grace to enjoy this sweet rest, for His dear Son’s sake. Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 114, 885, 846.  
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TURNING BACK IN THE DAY OF BATTLE

NO. 696

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**“The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.”  
Psalm 78:9.**

I DO not think that it has ever been clearly ascertained to what particular historical event Asaph here refers, and I do not find that any of the commentators mention a very obscure passage in the First Book of Chronicles which I venture to suggest may give us the explanation. In the first Book of Chronicles, the seventh chapter and the twentieth verse, you read—“And the sons of Ephraim, Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.”

This event appears to have occurred while the children of Israel were still in Egypt. It has been supposed by some that these sons of Ephraim made a raid upon the promised land and attacked the men of Gath. Believing the land to be theirs by promise they went to take it before they had Divine authority to do so. They made God’s decrees the rule of their life instead of God’s revealed will, and so they soon fell into trouble—as those people always do who make that mistake—and their father Ephraim mourned over them many days.

But it appears to have been, rather, an attack made upon them by some men of Gath. The people seem, some of them, to have been of Egyptian origin and they probably made an attack upon the cattle of the men of Ephraim. These young men defended their cattle for a time, but at last—if this is the event which this Psalm refers to—it would appear they turned their backs and so fell slain. That may or may not be. Still there are other passages in history which might serve to illustrate the text.

You are aware that Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, and probably on account of this the ark of God was first placed at Shiloh. On the occasion when Hophni and Phinehas were slain, the children of Israel, we are told, fled. It appears to have been the peculiar duty of the men of Ephraim, in whose tribe Shiloh was, to guard the ark. It may be possible that they were set around the ark as a bodyguard to it, but fled at the approach of the Philistines, or fell slain together with Hophni and Phinehas on that terrible and disastrous day.

If this is the event alluded to you will find the history of it in the fourth chapter of the First Book of Samuel. Perhaps, however, reference is made to the whole history of the tribe of Ephraim, that though they were well armed and were dexterous men in the use of the bow, yet on many occasions they turned their backs in the day of battle. Whether any of these explanations interpret the historical reference or not, the subject in itself will furnish us with a theme for meditation.

I. We will first consider for a little while WHAT THESE MEN DID. They turned their backs. When the time for fighting came they ought to have shown their fronts. Like bold men they should have kept their face to the foe and their breast against the adversary. But they dishonorably turned their backs and fled.

This, I am sorry to say, is not an unusual thing among professing Christians. They turn back—they turn back in the day of battle. Some do this at the first appearance of difficulty. “There is a lion in the way,” said the slothful man, “I shall be slain in the streets.” They hear that there is some trouble involved in Christian service or that some persecution may be met with in the pursuit of the Truth of God and straightway they look before they leap, as the world has it, and turn back to the way which they suppose to be that of safety.

Timorous and Mistrust come running down the hill crying, “The lions! The lions!” And thus may a pilgrim turn back towards the City of Destruction. Others are somewhat braver. They bear the first brunt. When the skirmishers begin these are as bold as any! They can return blow for blow and you hear them boast, as they buckle on their armor, at such a rate that you would suppose, if you did not know that boasters are seldom good at fighting, that they must certainly be victorious. During the first thrust they stand like martyrs and behave like heroes, but very soon, when the armor gets a little battered and the fine plume on their helmet a little stained, they turn back in the day of battle.

Some professors bear the fight a little longer. They are not to be laughed out of their religion. They can stand the jeers and jests of their old companions. When they find that they are hated by the society which once loved them so much they can put up with that, and they are very much complimented by themselves on having done it. “Cowards,” they say, “are those who flee. But we shall never do that!.”

But by-and-by the skirmishers have done their work. And if it comes to a hand-to-hand fight the struggle begins to be somewhat more arduous and now we shall see what metal they are made of. The enemy gets hold of them and—

*“That desperate tug their soul might feel*

*Through bars of brass and triple steel.”*  
Then they find that they are being hugged in the wrong place! They are touched in a tender part and so they also turn back in the day of battle! And, alas, sad as it is to say it—firmly as we believe that every child of God is safe, yet is it true that many who profess to be so, after having fought so long that you would suppose the next thing would be for them to rest upon their laurels and receive their crown—just at the very last they fall and turn back!

We have seen gray-headed apostates as well as juvenile ones. There have been those who seemed to wear well for a time but at last one crushing blow came which they could not bear and they gave way before it! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it is only those who persevere to the end that will be saved! And only those who have a true faith in Jesus Christ have a sure evidence of their election of God! These are they who shall be clothed with white raiment and shall sit down upon His Throne forever.

But how many who say they will to do this, after all, turn back? I may be describing—I hope I am not—some actual case here. Some of you may say, as you turn the thought over in your minds—

*“My feet had almost gone.*

*My steps had well near slipped.”*  
That young man over yonder was so much jeered at the other day by those with whom he works that he felt it was very unkind and he did think something about renouncing his religion altogether. And my other Brother yonder, who has had so many losses, has lately had such a time as he never had before and he thinks nobody else ever had. He cries, “God has forsaken me!” He cannot just now say, “Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.” He thinks, “Surely I had better turn to the world. I had better leave my religion and give it up, for I am encompassed about with such a terrible conflict that I shall never win the victory!”

Ah, Brethren, these are often the trials that God sends, and it is by these that He separates the chaff from the wheat and lets us see who are true soldiers and who are only the lackeys who wear regimentals, but have not the soldier’s heart pulsing beneath the scarlet. God grant us Grace to be found at last men that turned not back in the day of battle! If I take the history of the children of Ephraim, I should say that they turned their backs and failed to defend the ark. There are some who, when they are defending the Truth of God, shun controversy. They are of such a timid disposition—a loving disposition they call it—that as soon as ever the war-trumpet sounds they find it to be their duty to attend to the baggage in the rear.

They are very brave men, indeed, in that particular quarter of the conflict where it does not happen to rage. But there in the front—where the corpses are piled on heaps, and where the battle-axes drip with gore— they never will be found because they have not the courage to fight and to conquer for Jesus. As far as they are concerned the ark of God may be taken by the Philistines because they turn their backs. These Ephraimites ought, too, as Joshua had set the example, to have conquered Canaan and to have driven out the Canaanites still left.

Ah, my Brethren, there are some of you whose sins still live because you have turned your backs upon them, but not in the right sense, for you have turned your backs against contending with sin. There is that bad temper of yours—you have given up trying to curb it. You say, “Well, you know many of God’s children have bad tempers,” whereas you know that this is very wicked thing to say. You ought to slay that Agag! You have no business to tolerate a bad temper. You must never have any peace with that spiteful temper or that hasty temper of yours—you must down with it, or else it will down with you—and if you do not overcome it, it will overcome you. Rest assured that you are guilty and that you turn your back if you do not fight with it.

So too with that worldliness of yours and that want of a prayerful spirit. If you say, “Well, I will be content to be as I am. I will not try after a high state of piety,” you turn your backs, my Brothers and Sisters. You ought to slay all these Canaanites—and you must do it in Christ’s name and not spare so much as one of them—but say, “they compass me about, like bees, yes, they compass me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.”

And then, when these people turned their backs, Canaan was not won. So it is with you. The Lord’s kingdom is not yet fully extended. And just when you ought to be pushing far and wide the conquests of the Cross, and be letting this great city of ours know that the King reigns mighty to save, you turn back in the day of battle! There are some Christians here who are doing nothing. I should not say this, perhaps, if I were preaching on Sunday, for I thank God that I could not in my own heart say it of my own members.

The most of them are doing, I believe, as much as lies in them. Or if not, I hope they very soon will be. But I am persuaded that there are many other Christians who are not doing what they should do. They are shrinking from practical service. They come in here, perhaps, on a Thursday night and get a little bit, and they go elsewhere on other evenings of the week and pick up sweet morsels and crumbs. They like being fed very well but they do not like work so much. There is a certain little company that come here on weekday evenings, into whose ears I should like to whisper and ask them what they are doing for Christ.

They are spiritual vagrants who go from one place to another but have no settled home where they work for the Master. And they are of very little credit to anybody. We must, all of us, have a sphere of labor! And though I am glad to see all of you, as many as like to come, yet I pray you do have your own place for your own work, and are not like the children of Ephraim who “turned back in the day of battle.”

II. Having thus observed what these men of Ephraim did, we come to look at the inopportune time WHEN THEY DID IT. They turned back, and their doing so would not have mattered much had they done it in a day of feasting. They could always be spared, then. But that was not when they did it. They always had their faces to the front when there was any feasting to be done. They turned back. When? On holidays, when the banners waved high and the silver trumpets sounded?

No, they were in the front then! Exeter Hall! May meetings! How many people are in the front there and then? When there is something sweet to feed upon they do not think of turning back! But these people turned back on a different occasion—they turned back in the day of battle. They turned back, it seems, then, just when they were to be tried. Ah, how much there is we do that will not stand trial! How much there is of godliness which is useful for anything except that which it is meant for! It is all in vain for me to say, if I have bought a waterproof coat, that it is good for everything except keeping the water out. Why, then it is good for nothing!

And so there are some Christians who have got a religion that is good for every day except the day when it has to be tested—and then it is good for nothing! An anchor may be very pretty on shore, and it may be very showy as an ornament when it lies on the ship’s deck or hangs from the side. But what is the good of it if it will not hold when the wind blows and the vessel needs to be held fast? So, alas, there is much of religion and of godliness, so called, that is no good when it comes to the day of trial.

The soldier is truly proved to be a soldier when the war trumpet sounds and the regiment must go up to the cannon’s mouth. Then shall you know, when the bayonets begin to clash, who has the true soldier’s blood in him! But ah, how many turn back when it really comes to the conflict— for then the day of trial is too much for them! They turned back at the only time when they were of any sort of use. A man who has to fight is not of any particular use to his country, that I know of, except when there is fighting to be done. Like a man in any other trade, there is a season when he is wanted.

Now, if the Christian soldier never fights, of what good is he? That is a very remarkable passage in one of the Prophets where the Lord compares His people to a vine, and then He says of them in words of which I will give the sense, “If the vine bears fruit it is very valuable, but if it bears no fruit, then it is good for nothing at all.” An oak without fruit is valuable for its timber, and even thorns are useful, for you may make a hedge of them.

Smaller plants may be used for some medicinal purposes, but the vine, if it bears no fruit, is absolutely good for nothing. “Will a man even make a peg of it, to hang a vessel?” said the Prophet. No, it is of no service whatever. So is it with the Christian. If he is not thorough and true he is no good at all. You can make nothing of him whatever. He is, to use Christ’s expressive words, “Neither fit for the land nor even for the dunghill, and men cast him out.” Who would enlist a soldier that knew he would turn back? And who among us would like to be in his regiment? Take off his colors, play “The Rogue’s March,” and turn him out of the barracks!

And this is what will happen to some professors who turn back in the day of battle! Their regimentals will be torn off, and they will be excluded from the Church of God because they turned back in the day of trial and at the time when they were needed. They turned their backs, too, like fools, in the day when victory was to be won. The soldier wants to distinguish himself. He wants to rise out of the ranks. He wants to be promoted. He hardly expects an opportunity of doing this in time of peace! But the officer rises when in time of war he leads a successful charge. And so it is with the Christian soldier. I make no advance while I am not fighting. I cannot win if I am not warring. My only opportunity for conquering is when I am fighting.

If I run away when there is a chance of winning the crown, then I am like the ship that does not come out of harbor when there is a fair wind, or like the man who does not avail himself of the high tide to get his vessel over the bar at the harbor’s mouth. I cannot win without fighting and therefore I thank God when the trial comes, and count it a joy when I fall into manifold temptations—because now I may add to my faith one virtue after another—till my Christian character is all complete. To throw away the time of conflict is to throw away the crown!

Oh simple Heart! Oh silly Heart, to be afraid of suffering for Jesus! You are, in fact, afraid of reigning with Him, for you must do the one if you would do the other. You, young woman, who are so alarmed at a little laughing, remember you cannot go to Heaven without being laughed at sometimes in the circle in which you move, or the family in which you live. He that will live a godly life in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution! Since, then, this is the way to Heaven, why do you turn from it? Be not like these children of Ephraim who turned back when there was a crown to be won!

They turned back, once more, when turning back involved the most disastrous defeat. The ark of God was taken. “Ichabod,” the enemy cried, for the glory was departed from Israel because the children of Ephraim turned back in the day of battle. And so, dear Friends, unless God gives you preserving Grace to stand fast to the end, do you not see that you are turning back—to what? To perdition! You do not turn back merely to the world. That is what it looks like, perhaps, to you—but you really turn back to Hell!

If, after having once put your hand to the plow, you look back, you are unworthy of the kingdom. But what are you worthy of? Why, those “reserved seats” in Hell! Did you ever think of that? There are such, and let me quote a passage, which proves it. We are told in one place of darkness “reserved” for some who were “wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever!” When you turn back you turn back to those reserved places where the darkness is more black and the pain more terrible. Oh, may God save you from ever turning back in the day of battle! This, then, is when they did it—they turned back in the day of battle.

III. But now let us notice WHO THEY WERE THAT TURNED BACK. They were “children of Ephraim,” and they are described as “being armed and carrying bows,” or bows throwing forth sharp arrows. They were men of a noble parentage. They were the children of Ephraim. Joshua was of that line and he was the greatest of conquerors who led the people into the promised land.

And you professors, you profess to be descended from our Joshua— Jesus the Conqueror—and will you turn back? Are you followers of the Savior who gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and are you afraid or ashamed of anything? He gave His face to be spat upon, and will you hide your faces at the mention of His name because fools choose to laugh at you? Followers of Joshua, and yet afraid? Followers of Jesus, and yet blush? God grant that we may never blush except when we think that we ever blushed at the thought of His Son!

Oh, You dear, despised, and persecuted One, I see You on Your way amidst the scoffers! One plucks Your beard. Another pulls Your hair. A third casts his accursed spittle into Your face! Another beats You, Another cries, “Let Him be crucified.” They mock You with all forms of mockery. Taunt and jeer they heap upon You! They fill Your mouth with vinegar and give You gall to drink. They pierce Your hands and Your feet, and yet You go on along Your way of kindness and of mercy!

And I—what have I ever suffered compared with You? And these, Your people—what have any of these endured, or what can they endure— compared with all Your griefs? Your martyrs follow You. Up from their fiery stakes they mount to their thrones! Confessors follow You! From dungeons and from racks their testimony sounds. And, shall we, upon whom the ends of the earth are come in these softer and gentler times— shall we turn back, and say we know not the Man? O God, forbid! Keep us faithful unto You, that we, the sons of Ephraim, may not turn back in the day of battle!

Then, again, they were armed, and had proper weapons—weapons which they knew how to use—and good weapons for that period of warfare. And as Christians, what weapons have we? Here is this “Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Here is a quiver filled with innumerable arrows, and God has put into our hands the bow of prayer, by which we may shoot them—drawing that bow by the arm of faith against our innumerable foes. What weapons of holy warfare do you need better than those which this sacred armory supplies?

Read the last chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and see how the Apostle, with a triumphant glorying, takes you through God’s armory and bids you look at the various pieces of armor, and the various weapons that are provided for you. If you lose the battle, it is not for want of being armed! And if you desert from the ranks it is not for the want of bows!

But what is more, another translation seems to show that these Ephraimites were very skillful in the use of the bow and yet they turned back. Oh, may God grant that none of us who have preached to others, and preached to others with fluency and zeal, may ever have our own weapons turned against us! I may make a confession here now. I have read some of my own utterances and have trembled as I have read them. And afterwards I have wept over them, not wanting to alter them, not regretting them, but fearing and trembling lest I should have my own words used in judgment against me at the Last Great Day, for there can be no more dreadful thing that for a man to have known and taught the Word to others and then to hear the Master say—just listen to it— “You wicked servant! Out of your own mouth will I condemn you!”

O God! Condemn me out of anybody’s mouth rather than out of my own! It will be a dreadful thing to have known how to use the bow and yet not to win the victory—to have been a sort of drill sergeant to God’s people, showing them how to use the weapons—and then not to have fought the battle one’s self! This will be a terrible thing! Some of you know how to use this Bible. You are acquainted with it. You have studied its doctrines. You know the points of divinity and theology. You are well-read in the teachings of God’s Word—you know how to use the bow. And some of you pray very sweetly at Prayer Meeting.

Ah, Beloved, what I said about myself may well apply to you! Some of you are Sunday school teachers and others tract distributors. And you all know how to use the bow. I hope I can say to you who sit here that I have, like Saul, taught you to use the bow. We have sought to teach you young men to use God’s Word both in prayer and in other exercises of your holy faith. But, Beloved, if you turn back, the art which you have learned shall rise up in judgment against you to condemn you! If, as professors taught the use of God’s Word you are marched out to fight, but have not courage enough for the conflict, and turn your backs and slink into inglorious ease or into vain-glorious self-righteousness, or into false glorious pleasure, oh, how terrible must be your ruin at the last! May you not be like the children of Ephraim, who, though skilled in the use of the bow, yet turned back in the day of battle! This, then, is who they were.

IV. And do you now ask—WHY DID THEY DO IT? Why did they, indeed? We might well have been at a loss to tell, for they were armed and carried bows. What, then, was the reason? The Word of God tells us and gives us three reasons. You will find them in the verses following the text. “They kept not the Covenant of God and refused to walk in His Law and forgot His works, and His wonders that He had showed them.” “They kept not the Covenant.”

Oh, that great Covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” When you can fall back upon that, how it strengthens you! When you can read in it eternal thoughts of Divine love to you, and can hear Jesus say, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” How it encourages you to go forward! You cannot be killed—you are invulnerable! You have been dipped in the Covenant stream that makes you invulnerable from head to foot! Why, then, should you fear to face the foe?

If you forget that Covenant you will soon turn back, and so prove that you are not in it! But the remembrance of it gives strength to God’s people to persevere since they feel that God’s purpose is that they shall persevere, and so win the victory. The Covenant, however, not only secures safety, but it also provides all sorts of blessings. If a Christian always had his eye on the Covenant storehouse he could never desert his God for the world! Will a man leave a treasury that is full of gold to go to a beggar’s cottage for money? Will a man turn from the flowing stream that comes cool and fresh from Lebanon’s melting snow to go and drink of some filthy, stagnant pool?

No, not he, and when a man knows the treasures of Divine Grace that are in Christ Jesus and remembers that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He has made Him a Covenant for the people—will such a man turn back? Assuredly not, but every promise of the Covenant will enable him to face his foes and prevent his turning back in the day of battle.

Perhaps, however, the covenant which we forget is the covenant we feel we made with Christ in the day when we said, “My beloved is mine, and I am His.” When we give ourselves up in a full surrender—body, soul, and spirit—to God, oh, let us never forget that covenant! Supposing we should lose our character for Christ’s sake? Did we not give Christ our character to begin with? You are of no use in the ministry, my dear Brother, if you are not quite willing to be called a fool, to be called a thief, or even to be called a devil! You will never be successful if you are afraid of being pelted. The true minister often finds his pulpit to be a place but little preferable to a pillory, and he is content to stand there feeling that all the abuse and blasphemy which may come upon him are only the means by which the world recognizes and proves its recognition of a God-sent man.

Oh, to rest upon the covenant which is made in Grace and to hold fast the covenant which Christ has compelled us to make with Him, resolved that even should He take all away, our joy, our comfort, and our ease, we will still stand to it, and still keep the Covenant!

Another reason why they turned back was that “they refused to walk in His Law.” When we get a proud heart we very soon get beaten. With the face of a lion, but the heart of a deer, such an one is afraid of the world. If I am willing to do what God tells me as He tells me, when He tells me and because He tells me, I shall not turn back in the day of battle. They also seem to have turned back because they had bad memories. “They forgot His works and the wonders that He had showed them.”

My dear Friends, we the members of this Church have seen many of God’s wonders and have rejoiced in them! But if we were to forget these we should lack one means of comfort in our own darkness. Some of you have had very wonderful manifestations of the Lord’s kindness. But if you forget all these I should not wonder if you should prove to be a mere professor and turn your back! God’s true people are like that Mary, whom all generations call, “blessed.” They treasure these things in their hearts. We ought to stir up our remembrances of God’s loving kindness, for if we do not it will soon be a powerful reason for our turning back in the day of battle.

Oh, have we not fought in days gone by, and shall we now be afraid? Have we not slain old Giant Grim? Did we not fight with dragons and with lions? Have we not gone through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Have we not had a conflict with Apollyon himself, foot to foot, and shall Giant Despair or his wife Mrs. Diffidence make us afraid? No! In the name of God we will use the good old sword, the true Jerusalem blade that we wielded before, and we shall yet again be more than conquerors through Him that loved us! Let us, then, not forget God’s works in the days of yore, lest we fail to trust Him in the days that are to come. This was why they turned back.

V. And now the last enquiry is—WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THEIR TURNING BACK? One result of their turning back was that their father mourned over them. We are told, in the passage I quoted first, that, “Ephraim their father mourned for them many days.” What a lamentation it brings into the Christian Church when a professor falls! There is one heart which feels it with peculiar poignancy—the heart of him who thought he was the spiritual father of the person so falling.

There are no griefs connected with our work like the grief of mourning over fallen professors, especially if these happen to be ministers—men who are armed and carry bows—for when they turn back, well-equipped and well-skilled in war—it is heart breaking work indeed! I do not exaggerate. I know I only speak the sober truth when I say that if I could submit to any form of corporeal torture that I have ever heard of, I would be willing to bear it sooner than submit to the torture I have sometimes felt over members of this Church, or what is worse, over young men educated in our College, or what is worse still, over ministers who have been for some time settled over their flocks, falling.

If at any time you desire to be malicious towards the man whom you look upon as your spiritual father. If you would send an arrow through his very liver and smite him with a dagger in the core of his heart—you have nothing to do but to turn back in the day of battle and you have done it! It were better that you had never been born than that you should go back to the world! It were better that you should be taken out of this house a corpse than that you should live to disgrace the profession which you have espoused—especially those of you who stand in a prominent place. O God, keep us who witness before the multitude! Keep us by Your eternal power! Keep us as the apple of Your eye! Hide us beneath the shadow of Your wings, or else we who are chief and foremost, though armed and carrying bows, shall yet turn back in the day of battle!

Another result, which you perhaps will think more important by far, was that owing to their turning back the enemy remained. Owing to many Christians not doing what they ought to do in the day of battle, Romanism is still in this land, and infidelity is rife. If, in the days of Elizabeth and Cranmer, men had acted up to the light they then had we should not be as we now are, a semi-Popish nation. Had Luther himself been faithful to some of the light to which he shut his eyes he might have inaugurated a more perfect Reformation than that for which we are still devoutly grateful to God and for which we always cherish his memory.

There was a need of thoroughness even in that day. And at the present moment, if some of our Brethren were but faithful to their own convictions they would not be bolstering up an alliance of the State with a depraved Church. They would not dare to perform some ceremonies which are atrociously bad, and many of us, if we acted according to our inward monitor, would not do many things which we are now doing. Oh, may God give us Grace to smite the foe! What has sin to do in this world? Christ has bought the world with His blood, and oh, for Divine Grace to clear sin out of Christ’s heritage!

The earth is the Lord’s, and the kingdoms of the world and they that dwell in them—and if we were but faithful to God we should not turn back in the day of battle and Rome and all our foes would be slain. Then, again, if we did not turn our backs, the country would be conquered for Christ. I do not like the way in which some Brethren say that if we were more faithful half of London would be saved. I say that I believe God’s purpose is achieved, but still we are bound to speak of our sins according to their tendencies—and the tendency of our lack of confidence in God, and our not boldly persevering—is to destroy souls. Paul talked once of destroying with meat him for whom Christ died, that being the tendency to destroy such souls if they could be destroyed.

So, humanly speaking, the darkness of the world at present is owing to the unfaithfulness of the Church, and if the Church had been as true to Christ as she was in the first century, long before this there would not have been a village without the Gospel nor a single empire in the world in which the Truth of God had not been proclaimed. It is our turning back in the day of battle that leaves Canaan unconquered for our Lord!

But, worse than this, the ark itself was actually taken. My dear Friends, those of you who are armed and carry bows, men of learning, men who understand the Scriptures, I do pray you, do not turn back just now, for just now seems to be a time when the ark of God will be taken! It can never really be so, but still we must mind that it be not the tendency of our actions. We are in great danger from what some people will not believe—but what is most certainly a fact—and that is the marvelous increase of Popery in this land.

There are certain Brethren who are always harping upon this one string till we have grown sick of the theme. But, without at all endorsing their alarm, I believe there is quite enough for the most quiet and confident spirit to be alarmed at. The thing has become monstrous and there is need to awaken the anxious care and the earnest efforts of God’s Church. You need not be long without good evidence of this. Every nerve is being strained by Rome to win England to itself, and, on the other hand, while we have less neology and less of all sorts of skepticism throughout the whole country, I am afraid that we have more of it than we used to have inside the Church itself!

There are many doctrines that are now matters of question which I never heard questioned ten years ago. I am not altogether sorry for this, but rather glad, because there are some doctrines which are not preached now, but which will be preached more in the future in consequence of doubts being thrown upon them. But it is a very ominous sign of the times that most of those Truths of God which we have been accustomed to accept as being the received and orthodox faith of Christendom are now being questioned, and questioned, too, by men who are not to be despised—men who from their evident earnestness, from their deep knowledge and from their close attention to the matter—deserve a hearing in the forum of common sense, even if they do not deserve it from spiritual men.

We must, all of us, hold fast the Truth of God. If there is a man who has got a truth, let him draw his bow and shoot his arrows now and not turn back in the day of battle. Now for your arrows! Now for your arrows! The more our foes shall conspire against Christ, the more we must make war against them! Give them double for their double! Reward them as they reward you. Spare no arrows against Babylon. “Happy shall he be that takes your little ones and dashes them against the stones.” Happy shall he be who slays the little errors, who kills the minor falsehoods, who does battle against Popery in every shape and form and against infidelity in all its phases!

If we do not come to the front now, the ark of God, as far as we are concerned, will be taken! And then, worst of all, we shall hear the Philistines shouting while God’s Church is weeping! The Philistines are good hands at shouting. They shout rather loudly about nothing, but when they get a little they bark loudly enough, then. If they see but one Christian turn back—what rejoicing there is! They ring the bells and make great mirth over the fall of the very least among us! But if those of us who are armed and carry bows should turn back in the day of battle, oh, “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of Philistia rejoice, lest the sons of the uncircumcised triumph!” May God grant that we may never make mirth for Hell. If Satan must have merriment may he find it anywhere rather than in us. Oh, may we stand at last, and, having done all may we still stand!

To conclude, Brethren. If we do not stand fast, you know what will come of it. Supposing the Churches of which we are members do not stand fast—what will come of you and what of me? What became of Shiloh? What became of Ephraim? Instead of the ark being any longer in the custody of Ephraim it was taken away from Shiloh and God transferred the custody of it to Judah, and it rested upon Mount Zion under the government of King David. So, mark you, whenever a Church becomes unfaithful and turns back in the day of battle, God takes away from it the keeping of His ark and entrusts it to others.

“I have looked upon a neighbor of yours,” said He, “who is better than you.” And so He takes the sword and gives it to David, and thus, perhaps, may He do with us. There are many Churches that were once flourishing but now are deserted altogether. So it may be with us individually, and with the Churches at large unless we are faithful to God.

Now I have said nothing to the unconverted. My drift seemed to be to speak to professing Believers. Some of you say you never went to this war and therefore you will not turn back. You never made a profession. Ah, dear Friends, it will be a very poor excuse at the Last Great Day to say, “I never made a profession”! Did you ever hear of a thief being brought up at the Mansion House before the Lord Mayor who said, when he was accused of being a thief, “Why, my Lord, I am not a very honest man. I never professed to be. I never professed that I would not pick people’s pockets. I never professed that I would not steal a watch if I had the chance. I was regularly known as a thief. I never professed to be anything else, therefore you cannot blame me.”

If a man should make such a defense as that, I should think it very likely that the Lord Mayor would give him an extra six months and I think it would serve him right. You smile at this, but the very same argument may be applied to you. “Well,” you say, “you know I do not make any profession of religion.” That is to say, you do not make any pretense of serving and loving the God who made you, who gave you life and has kept and preserved you in it. You do not make any profession of being washed in the precious blood of Christ. You do not make a profession of being on the road to Hell.

Well, may God save you from that excuse and may He give you Grace to look it in the face and say, “Well, I do not dare even hope that I am saved—I know I am not.” Then, my Friends, if you are not saved, you are lost! I would like to stop while you turn that thought over, and when you have done so I would say, “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” May God’s eternal mercy seek and save you, and, if it is His will, may He find you, and lead you to put your trust in Jesus Christ! And resting upon Him, and looking to His Cross, you shall not, as the children of Ephraim did, “turn back in the day of battle.”

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